

NORD grant Application for WLIT 390: ShadowPlay (An Interdisciplinary course)

Linda C. Ehrlich, DMLL

Project Description

My goal is to redesign the current SAGES 287G SHADOWPLAY class as an upper-level Topics in World Literature class (WLIT 390). The current SAGES course is designed to challenge the freshman/sophomore student with a multidisciplinary approach that includes science, the (visual and performing) arts, history, and Asian Studies. I would like to redesign the course to include a substantial research component and a practicum that gives the students actual teaching experience in the public school and/or community. These goals reflect the Nord grant goals of "direct benefits to student learning" in a program that would not normally be funded by a department or school.

Designing the current SAGES class has been an intense learning experience for me. While this semester's students (all sophomores) are all working hard, I do find myself constantly simplifying the course design. With the assistance of the Nord grant, I would like to expand my original vision of the course for students whose research skills are more advanced. The WLIT 390 course will be interdisciplinary and will also offer a service-learning practicum. It will be of relevance to students majoring in Modern Languages, Philosophy, Classics, Art History, Film Studies, Theatre and Dance, to name a few fields.

The current Practicum with the Cleveland Museum of Art allows the Case students to work directly with Distance Learning professionals in writing a script for 4th graders in Alberta, Canada about shadows that appear in 15 selected CMA images. The planning and implementation of this Practicum has been an extraordinary experience for me (and hopefully for the students). Its one shortcoming is that the Case students are not able to actually teach the script they are developing. I can understand the CMA's insistence on professional teachers for its Distance Learning classes, but I would like the Case students in the revised class to also have the opportunity to interact with public school students, or other members of the community, to teach a pilot mini-course of their own design. For the WLIT course, I will work with the Center for Community Engagement to make such a service-learning opportunity possible. This will help make the diverse readings about shadows come alive for the Case students.

In the redesigned class, I will reorganize, and expand, the current materials into the following framework:

- Introduction (the science of shadows)

- Shadowplay in the Arts

 - Shadows in Film

 - Shadows in Art History

 - Shadows in the Performing Arts (dance and shadow puppetry)

To facilitate the design of the more advanced course, I am requesting the following as part of the Nord grant:

Digitizing Assistant (30 hours, \$300)

I intend to hire a student from the current class who has performed well, and who has the necessary technical skills, to assemble a DVD of sequences from films relevant to this topic. The student-assistants in the Freedman Center are not trained in DVD-authoring. I will also ask the research assistant to scan images which could be incorporated into Powerpoint presentations. I have worked with a student research assistant in the past, and I know that the proper person is invaluable in applying his/her eye to the creation of visual aides. The DVD of sequences, and the scanned images, will make it possible for me to have an overview of the images I'll use in my revised course. They will also help enliven the class.

Research assistant (10 hrs., \$150)

I have come to realize that I must assemble my own packet of course readings for subsequent offerings of this class. I would like to hire a research assistant for a small number of hours, to assemble a collection of readings and to inquire about copyrights. The main textbook, Viktor Stoichita's *A Short History of the Shadow*, fails to address many crucial issues about this topic, and is completely Eurocentric. Another option—Gombrich's *Shadows: The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art*—is out-of-print. I have scanned several articles about shadow puppetry, atomic shadows, and shadows in painting for the current class, but it is only a beginning. If possible, I would like to hire the current writing instructor (who has played a central role this semester and will be in Cleveland next semester as he completes his dissertation) to investigate other potential readings, and to work with Karen Oye of KSL to obtain copyright clearance for selected crucial essays to form a packet for the students' use.

Initial Book Purchase Request: \$300

Listed below are just a few of the books I would like to order to help my course planning and teaching:

White, Donna R., ed. *Peter Pan In and Out of Time*. Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2006.

E.H. Gombrich's *Shadows: The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art* (out of print.) I would like to order a personal copy, and also work with the Case Copy Center to make a professional scan of one chapter of the book (including color scans) which I could place on Reserve.

In Praise of Shadows (Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, and Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, 2008)

Klaedelabuk, K.B. *ShadowPlay: Shadow and Light in Contemporary Art*. Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag, 2005.

Casati, Roberto. *The Shadow Club*. Transl. From Italian by Abigail Asher. Knopf, 2003.

Initial DVD Purchase Request: \$350

I rely heavily on visual images in my class. It would be extremely helpful to have my own copies of the DVDs so I do not have so much concern about library deadlines and placing everything on reserve. (I am also concerned since the reserve multimedia system is not as secure as one would want.) Some of my requested DVD purchases include:

Peter Pan, dir. Walt Disney, 1952/1998

Peter Pan (silent), dir. Herbert Brenon, 1924/1999

Peter Pan (staged version), dir. Vincent Donehue, with Mary Martin, 1990.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, dir. Robert Wiene, 1920

Nosferatu, dir. F.W. Murnau, 1922

Sunrise, dir. F.W. Murnau, 1927

Shadow of a Doubt, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1943

The Third Man, dir. Carol Reed, 1949

Shadow Magic, dir. Ann Hu, 2000

Year of Living Dangerously, dir. Peter Weir, 1982

Jerome Robbins: Something to Dance About (documentary, with sequence about Peter Pan)

Short research trip: Lincoln Center Library of the Performing Arts/NYC in June (2011): \$1393

As its website announces, the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts houses "one of the world's most extensive combination of circulating, reference, and rare archival collections in its field." I would like to spend four days there researching the shadow and dance aspect of this course. (For the SAGES class I have invited a guest dancer/choreographer David Shimotakahara of Groundworks Dance Theatre for a lecture-demonstration of a dance involving shadowplay which was performed by his company.) This section of the class needs considerable more research.

At the Library of the Performing Arts, I plan to explore examples of dances with conspicuous use of shadowplay, using their "prodigious collections of non-book materials such as historic recordings, videotapes,...press clippings, programs, posters and photographs," and the "thousands of films and videotapes in the Jerome Robbins Archive of the Recorded Moving Image." Materials in the Jerome Robbins Archive do not circulate and the staff must retrieve them from closed stacks. Particularly exciting for me is the (non-circulating) Claire Holt Collection of Indonesian Dance (dating from the 1930s and later).

While in NYC, I will also meet with Dierde Towers, Director of the *Dance on Screen* festival. She and I met last May, and we have corresponded about a dance she choreographed using shadows as part of the design. Her dance, (Black) Light, draws on Spanish gypsy legends of shadows and dance as curative forces.

Specific expenses related to this research-trip include:

Plane fare: \$275

Lodging (4 nights): \$650

Per diem (4 days): \$168

Transportation within NYC (and to/from airport): \$200

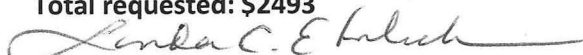
Xeroxing fees at the Library: \$100


Timeline

Drawing on the momentum created by the SAGES class, I want to move immediately into the redesign process. Although I will be teaching overseas during the Winter 2011 term, I can set up the DVD-authoring and scanning project with the student digitizing assistant, and the essay search plan with the research assistant, before leaving in mid-December. I can also start the book and DVD purchase requests, and arrangements for the (June) research trip to NYC.

I do intend to teach during the May-mester term; this will allow us time to wrap up the project upon my return. I will propose this new WLIT class for Spring 2012.

Total requested: \$2493


Linda C. Ehrlich


Antonio Candau, Chair, DMILL