



CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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October 28, 2011

Dear Nord Grant Selection Committee:

The Arab Spring sparked student interest in democratization and rejuvenated development agencies' commitment to it. Media reports describe this process of dismantling authoritarian governments and introducing civil liberties and competitive elections, but from these sources students have developed only a superficial understanding. Meanwhile, development agencies are again directing resources to democracy promotion after a decade of pessimism and scaling back. With these new funds have also come new techniques including local democracy assessment and data-driven strategic planning. In light of these developments, I will use a 4,000 USD Nord grant to design a course that educationally impacts students in two ways: the course will provide students hands-on experience with development agencies' new techniques and in-depth knowledge of democratization. This course will appeal to undergraduates majoring in Political Science and International Studies as well as those interested in careers in development.

To provide students with hands-on experiences, an undergraduate research assistant and I will research and write three case studies and will create two datasets. Each case study will describe how components of democracy, such as succession processes for local officials, historically differed across subnational units of a now-democratic country. Scholars have largely ignored the issue of subnational variation in democracy, so there are not existing studies that students can use. In class, students will augment the case studies with their own research on factors that promote democracy to analyze how democracy develops evenly within countries. This exercise resembles the local democracy assessment work that development agencies are beginning to do.

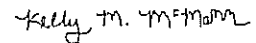
The research assistant and I will create the datasets from Varieties of Democracy data, a collaboration among scholars, including myself, to measure democracy in a disaggregated manner in all countries of the world from 1900 to the present. From this vast amount of data, my research assistant and I will create user-friendly datasets to enable undergraduates to explore the following questions: Has democracy been more likely to endure when the introduction of civil liberties preceded the introduction of competitive elections, when competitive elections preceded civil liberties, or when they were introduced simultaneously? Has democracy been more likely to thrive throughout a country when it has been imposed from the national capital or when it has emerged from below? The class exercises using these datasets mirror the data analysis development agencies are now seeking in order to more effectively use their resources for democracy promotion.

To provide students with an in-depth knowledge of democratization I will select relevant course readings, develop writing assignments, and design in-class exercises. While these tasks are standard to course development and do not require grant monies, the development of the cases studies and

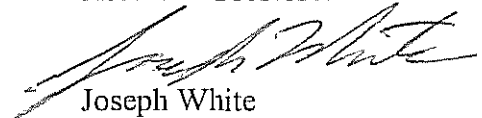
creation of the datasets do. The Nord grant will fund approximately eight hours of work each week by the undergraduate research assistant from January 1 to December 31, 2012, in preparation for the course first being offered in spring 2013. As this proposal is for course development, a Nord grant is the best fit. My department does not provide funds for course development nor does it fund graduate students who would be available to help.

Once the course is designed and underway, I will assess whether students acquired the hands-on experience and in-depth knowledge by evaluating their analyses of the case studies and datasets and their other writing assignments and by reviewing student course evaluations. Based on these assessments I will revise the course. Once the revisions are completed, I will share the datasets, case studies, and philosophy of the course with other instructors. Possibilities include posting the datasets on the Varieties of Democracy web site and sharing the cases studies and course philosophy in the flagship teaching journal in political science, *PS*, with links to my web page.

Sincerely,



Kelly M. McMann  
Associate Professor



Joseph White  
Chair and Professor

## **Budget Justification**

**Undergraduate research assistant** 4,000 USD

The research assistant will be paid 10 USD per hour for 400 hours between January 1 and December 31, 2012 to help with the completion of three case studies and two datasets. Specific tasks will include gathering materials about local politics historically in three countries, providing summaries of variation in different components of democracy within each country, selecting relevant indicators from the Varieties of Democracy dataset, and combining and formatting these indicators for undergraduates' ease of use.

**TOTAL REQUEST** 4,000 USD