

Application Details

Manage Application: ALG Textbook Transformation Grants Round 8

Award Cycle: Round 8

Internal Submission Deadline: Sunday, December 11, 2016

Application Title: 280

Application ID: #001273

Submitter First Name: Hongjie

Submitter Last Name: Wang

Submitter Title: Associate Professor

Submitter Email Address: hongjie.wang@armstrong.edu

Submitter Phone Number: 912-344-3130

Submitter Campus Role: Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)

Applicant First Name: Hongjie

Applicant Last Name: Wang

Co-Applicant Name(s): --

Applicant Email Address: hongjie.wang@armstrong.edu

Applicant Phone Number: 912-344-3130

Primary Appointment Title: Associate Professor

Institution Name(s): Armstrong State University

Submission Date: Monday, December 12, 2016

Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):

Hongjie Wang

Associate Professor of History

Hongjie.Wang@armstrong.edu

Caroline Hopkinson

Reference Librarian,

Caroline.Hopkinson@armstrong.edu

Sponsor, (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

Robert Smith

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Armstrong State University

Proposal Title: 280

Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:

Civilization I

HIST 1111

Spring, Summer and Fall semesters every year

Average Number of Students per Course Section: 36

Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year: 8

Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year: 288

List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item): Robert W. Strayer, Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Volume 1: (to 1500). Second Edition. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012)RequiredPrice: \$83.85

Requested Amount of Funding: 5800

Original per Student Cost: 83.85

Post-Proposal Projected Student Cost: 0

Projected Per Student Savings: 83.85

Projected Total Annual Student Savings: 24,148.80

Creation and Hosting Platforms Used ("n/a" if none):

Desire2Learn

LibGuides

Proposal Category: Specific Top 100 Undergraduate Courses

Final Semester of Fall 2017

Instruction:

Project Goals:

This project aims to transform Dr. Hongjie Wang's current World Civilization I class (HIST1111, core course listed under Area B-Global Perspectives and required for all history majors) into one with online readings and new assignments and assessments by replacing originally required expensive print textbooks and adopting free digital textbooks and primary sources on the internet (main target resource sites include MERLOT, OpenStax, The Internet Classics Archive, Historical Text Archive and free resources through Library of Congress) and library subscription resources (such as JStor, Films on Demand, Oxford Journal Online). The implementation of the project not only brings huge savings for students taking this popular class at Armstrong State University (\$24,148.80 total savings for about three hundred students per academic year), but also enhances students' information literacy by directing them to determine the nature and extent of materials online, select information resources, and evaluate information for currency, relevance, bias, authority and accuracy. The grant will help us redesign the current course, evaluate and choose appropriate online resources, and develop workable course websites (including a formal course site on Desire2Learn and LibGuides, a reference site hosted by Armstrong's Lane Library). This project will also serve as a model for the faculty of the History Department and the College of Liberal Arts at Armstrong to explore new methods of instruction and assessment based on free online materials in this digital age.

Statement of Transformation:

The transformation of the current HIST1111 World Civilization I class includes the replacement of the traditional expensive textbooks (the main textbook currently in use is *Ways of the World*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012, \$83.85) with online materials that are freely available to students. Dr. Hongjie Wang (PhD in History from Brown University) with eight years of teaching experience in world history, will redesign the current course, develop new assignments and assessment tools, evaluate online materials, and create a new website on Desire2Learn and an additional reference site for the class with the assistance of his team partner Caroline Hopkinson (librarian and reference specialist). The instructor, the students and the faculty in the History Department at Armstrong will all be positively affected by the transformation—the instructor will enrich and diversify his teaching methods by adopting new learning materials; and the students taking this class will save money on books and gain useful skills in information literacy for the 21st century (such as determining the nature and extent of source materials needed to complete a project or explore a topic, critically selecting and evaluating materials, and responsibly integrating and documenting sources from internet). Further, this

new class will be the first history class at Armstrong to adopt free online textbooks. Through multiple arrangements of teaching demonstrations, class observations and discussions, this project will create a replicable model for the rest of the faculty in the History Department (15 professors who teach a total of more than 50 courses per semester). These faculty will have a template for developing courses that similarly have a positive impact on pedagogy and lower the cost of college for students.

Transformation Action Plan:

The steps to accomplish this transformation include (detailed timeline will be provided in next section):

- 1) In Spring semester of 2017, our team will identify, review and select new course materials from reliable internet resource hubs and databases, i.e. MERLOT, OpenStax, The Internet Classics Archive, Historical Text Archive, etc. For example, concerning the topic of Silk Road, this new class will instruct students to explore the rich information provided by the Silk Road Studies Program of Central Asia and Caucasus Institute (<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/>) and participate in the discussions with specialists on the forums on the site. Meanwhile, students will be asked to examine the primary source materials on the topic through Silk Road Seattle Project hosted by University of Washington (<https://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/texts.html>), which offers colorful readings on Silk Road from different perspectives (ie. Chinese, Turkish, Italian) during different time periods (ie. late classical era, medieval, and early modern).
- 2) In Spring semester of 2017, we'll design a new syllabus with detailed links of new online readings, assignments and assessment tools including topic discussions, website evaluations, research projects and map explorations.
- 3) By the end of Summer semester 2017, develop both a main course website with all discussion forums and quiz questions and assignment submission dropboxes on Desire2Learn and a reference page with information about research tools and online resources guide on the school's library website. The website on D2L will be accessible to all students taking the class through the Port of Armstrong eClassroom, and the reference page on the library site will be available to the public.
- 4) during the fall semester of teaching in 2017, we will monitor students' progress in the class by checking students' involvement in learning activities on the course website (function provided by D2L).
- 5) throughout the teaching semester (and each semester thereafter), we will assess project's impact on student success by collecting and analyzing the numbers and rates of Drop, Fail, and Withdraw as well as midterm and final grades during and at the end of semester. Midterm surveys and one-on-one interviews will also be conducted to help the instructor adjust reading

materials and assessment tools and improve teaching effectiveness during the semester.

6) During and after the fall semester of 2017, this class will arrange at least two class observations and faculty discussions to share the ideas and methods of adopting free online materials in teaching world history. At least one teaching demo or forum will be arranged to share experience in adopting free internet sources.

7) In the spring semester of 2018 (and every semester thereafter), based on students' evaluations and feedbacks and faculty colleagues' suggestions and critiques, we will conduct a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the reading materials and student assessment tools, and adjust and enrich the readings accordingly; such evaluations of readings will be conducted each semester thereafter.

Work distributions:

Dr. Hongjie Wang (course instructor and team leader) will be responsible for drafting the course syllabus, designing course organization and topics, targeting/evaluating/selecting reading materials for class, developing course assignments and assessment tools, and building the website on Desire2Learn. Dr. Wang will also be responsible for organizing teaching demos, faculty observations and evaluation meetings of teaching materials during and at the end of the semester of teaching.

Caroline Hopkinson (librarian and reference specialist) will help to identify information resources (both library subscription and those that are open source on the Web), find open source illustrations, help devise learning activities that support information literacy learning objectives, as well as create a reference guide page for students to consult during the course.

Course websites availability

The main course website on D2L will be open to all students taking this class; the reference guide page, hosted on the Armstrong library site, is open-accessed and available to all of the campus and the general public.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures: Quantitative measures will include DFW Rate—tracking numbers and rates of students who drop, fail, or withdraw from the class (DFW) for each semester. Student performance—collecting data on their performance on quizzes, exams and other assignments at the end of semester. Class registration rate—Every academic year, tracking changes in registration rate (including the number of students on waiting list) in compare with the same courses offered by other faculty taught with traditional textbooks—supported by Registrar Office through SHIP banner system. Qualitative measures will include Students evaluation—the standard student class evaluation (SmartEval adopted by Armstrong) at the end of the semester. Midterm student feedback—a midterm class survey for comments and concerns from students (which will be used for adjustments in selecting readings and designing assessment tools). Post-course survey—a post-class survey at the end of semester, asking for comments and suggestions for future improvements to the class. One-on-one interviews with selected students about their experience in the class at the end of semester (interviewees will be chosen based on their classroom performances to cover diverse groups—at least three students will be selected respectively from students with high, medium and low grades). Long-term follow-up of students—we plan to conduct surveys or interviews with a number of students who finish this class and continue taking other humanities and social sciences courses which are taught with traditional textbooks. We hope to learn their comparisons about the effectiveness of the two kinds of courses based on their direct learning experiences. Student Assistants may be recruited to help fulfill this mission. We plan to conduct the first round of survey in the following semester of the implementation of the course. Peer observation—for each semester, at least two faculty members from the department will be invited to observe the lectures and review course materials, who will write peer

observation reports. Teaching Demonstrations and Department and College Forums—for each semester, we plan to organize at least one teaching demo and one teaching forum among department and college colleagues to present the use of the new materials and assessment tools, as well as course websites, inviting comments and suggestions. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected will be utilized in the final report as well as within ALG program communications.

Timeline:

Jan. 9, 2016. Upon receipt of notice of award, project starts with a formal meeting among team members and other parties involved (i.e. Department head, Department secretary, and student assistants if available).

Jan. 30, 2017. The whole team will participate ALG kick-off meeting.

March 1, 2017. Completion of the first round of internet resources research, locating reliable and accessible resources. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

April 1, 2017. Completion of the draft syllabus of the class with major topics and draft assignments developed. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

May 1, 2017. Completion of the second round of internet research for specific materials appropriate to the class being designed. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

June 1, 2017. Completion of polished syllabus for the class with detailed class materials and assignments. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

July 1, 2017. Meeting among team members and all other parties (department head, department secretary, ITS Dept) involved to determine the building of websites for classes.

Aug 1, 2017. Completion of the design of course websites, seek evaluations from faculty and students. All assigned materials and workable links will be tested. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

Aug. 15, 2017. Begin implementation of the course.

Sep. 1, 2017. Collect Drop and Withdrawal data. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

Oct. 1, 2017. Conduct midterm survey to gather students' feedbacks. Conduct peer observations. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

Nov. 1, 2017. Completion design of class evaluation survey. Conduct one-on-one interviews with selected students. Arrange monthly team meeting to report progress.

Dec 1-15, 2017. End of semester, summative assessment using DWF and student performance data for the whole semester, completion of final report.

Jan. 1, 2017. Review teaching materials and assessment tools, make adjustments and modifications based on students' evaluations and performances.

Feb 1, 2018. Arrange teaching demo and forum in History Department and Liberal Arts College to share teaching experience and gather suggestions and comments, in hopes of improving this class in the future and setting a workable model for more faculty interested in adopting affordable textbooks and free online sources.

Mar. 1, 2018. Track students from the class who are taking other humanities and social sciences courses taught with traditional textbooks and conduct follow-up interviews. Student Teaching Assistants may be needed.

Note: this is a long process and we will make sure to conduct a full review of the course materials (based on students' responses and faculty's comments) in order to make adjustments and improvements.

Budget:

Total: \$5,800

\$5,000 overload compensations

The instructor (Dr. Wang) will receive \$4000 overload compensations during the semester of the implementation of the course for designing and teaching the course, conducting all surveys and evaluations, organizing teaching demo and forum, and communicating with other involved parties from the department and college.

The team member (Ms. Hopkinson) will receive \$1000 to support her research, skill improvements as librarian and reference specialist, and travel to professional conferences during the academic year.

\$800 for two team members to attend the required in-person kickoff meeting on Jan. 30, 2017

Sustainability Plan:

Once the redesign of History 1111 Civilization I is completed there will be no significant additional costs. After it is implemented for the first time in fall 2017, the same class (with all materials and websites) will be offered consistently every semester thereafter. The impact of

the new course will be ongoing. It is a core course listed under Area B-Global Perspective section and required for all major students. The class is offered every semester (spring, summer and fall) during the academic year; it is one of the most popular courses at Armstrong, and Prof. Wang's classes are always full (total 288 students in 8 sections throughout the academic year; actually in most cases more students from the waiting list would be admitted into classes). Students will continue to benefit academically from the new course design and financially because of the cost savings.

Further sustainability plan includes:

1) keep maintenance of course websites by modifying, enriching, and updating source materials and web links regularly based on assessment of teaching effectiveness and students' responses/suggestions from each semester;

2) on a regular base (at least once a semester after the implementation), we will organize teaching demos and faculty forums in the History Department and College of Liberal Arts to demonstrate the adaptation of free online source materials in teaching HIST1111 and share teaching experience with colleagues interested in adopting free online sources;

3) keep working as a team to develop new courses with affordable textbooks and free online sources; courses may include Prof. Wang's Modern China, Traditional China, History of Japan and Historiography courses.

August 22, 2016

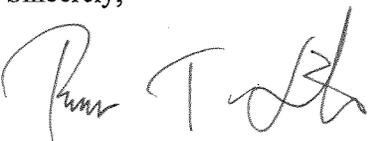
To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Armstrong State University, I am very pleased to be writing this letter of support for the Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation grant proposal authored by Dr. Hongjie Wang of Armstrong's Department of History. His proposal, entitled, "Learning World History with No Expensive Textbooks: A Redesign of HIST 1111 (World Civilization I) by Adopting Free Online Sources", proposes to replace the existing commercial textbook with a combination of a free online textbook and primary sources that are available to all online. Besides saving our students significant money, the proposed project has the benefit of also teaching students how to discern quality online resources from less credible ones. This would provide a great benefit to our students, as HIST 1111 is a very popular Core class, with an annual enrollment of approximately 300 students each year. As a result, the proposed project will have a significant impact.

As with all of these grant proposals, it is important to recognize that commercially published textbooks are generally quite expensive and as a result, students often feel that they cannot afford to purchase the text and hence, do not do so. Thus, assembling the proposed no-cost alternative to a traditional textbook will have a significant impact on costs for the large number of students who annually take HIST 1111 on our campus and will also impact students' performance, as all will have access to materials for free.

Armstrong recognizes the importance of engaging our students in Core disciplines and the proposed project will further this objective, by utilizing freely available materials and teaching students how to find high-quality, credible online material. Further, the Provost's office will support this campus team, working with the Department of History, as well as the rest of the campus, to broaden the university's adoption of open source materials wherever appropriate. It is hoped that this team will develop a campus model that will assist other faculty and departments in their efforts to investigate and adapt open source material, leading to broader implementation of the open textbook concept at Armstrong. I am very pleased to recommend this project wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,



Robert T. Smith, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Professor of Mathematics