

## Faculty Development Grant Statement Relating to Goals (4b)

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The Bush Grant 4b project for which I received funding is designed to create a study abroad course entitled, “Mongrel Nation: Imperialism, Internationalism, and English Identity”. The award allowed me to create the course on-site over two weeks in June 2004. This course will be offered over Spring Break 2005 and will be based in London with excursions to Canterbury, Brighton, and Oxford. The course will examine English cultural heritage with an eye towards the various immigrants/conquerors that have settled in England over the past two-thousand years. Thus, questions of “diversity”, “globalism” and “international perspectives” are necessarily a part of this educational experience (see Interim Report under “Purpose and Course Description” for a more detailed explanation).

This project relates to goal number four of the Faculty Development Grant—*In what ways have we enhanced assessment of student learning? How can we apply that to the curriculum?* One outcome of this grant-funding project has been my ability to consider modes of assessment with greater clarity. By considering what, specifically, I wanted my students to learn while studying abroad in London over ten days, I had to hone my expectations. Thus, instead of concentrating solely upon English history, I want them also to consider profound moments of cultural influence. After much rumination, these are the goals of the course, as outlined in my Interim Report:

The major educational goals that students on this study abroad course will master include being able to:

- Describe major cultural and historical shifts in English identity
- Understand the basic sociological ramifications of colonialism, post-colonialism, and post-imperialism
- Confidently discuss questions of English identity, nationalism, and the Diaspora
- View American identity and policy from a foreign perspective

Although not directly related to the objectives listed above, I also want to teach my students how to travel abroad. I have strong feelings that international travel makes an individual a more informed citizen. Thus, I want them to ask questions of their American identity and I want them to feel that they can travel internationally by themselves once they return from this trip. In other words, I want to encourage the idea that they can explore the world on their own—they do not need an Augustana professor with them next time.

Assessment of these educational goals is accomplished through: Preliminary Papers, Reflective Academic Journals, Exams, and Analysis Papers (see Interim Report pages six through eight for greater detail). Since this course will be offered for the first time over Spring Break 2005, it was useful to sharpen my expectations and to consider what major points I wanted my students to learn.

As for the second question, *How can we apply that to the curriculum?*, I’m not sure that I would want to assess all of my classes via such rubrics because it might mean teaching towards a test, which is counterproductive for the exploration of literature and creative writing (literature by its very nature encourages disparate readings and, good readings, involve opening the text up rather than shutting it down). I fear that strict assessment criteria such as I have employed for this particular study abroad course could limit metaphysical queries and the critical thinking that literature generally fosters. For my study abroad course

in England, however, we are dealing with specific moments of cultural influence and—since this course serves largely as an introductory “primer” to the complexities of national identity and international travel—a tight rubric grooms my expectations and enhances student learning