



Application for Professional Development Grant in Internationalization



Brought to you by the Internationalization Steering Committee (ISC), part of the Internationalization Initiative at PCC

Name: Ali Esteghlalian

Department: Community Education

Campus: Sylvania

Email:

Phone:

(number that will work during campus closure)

Check one: FT faculty PT faculty

- Projects can be modification of course materials, new course materials, or another project that adds an internationalization component or international focus to a course. We encourage you to be creative!
- Award amounts are expected to be between \$500 and \$1000, depending on the complexity of the project, the potential benefit for students, and the potential for use by multiple courses or instructors.
- Submissions become property of PCC and may be used as examples for future grant applications, on the PCC website, or otherwise shared inside or outside of PCC.
- Applicants will be expected to present about their project at a future meeting, to be determined in collaboration with the ISC (Internationalization Steering Committee).
- Applications will be reviewed and awards determined by members of the ISC.
- Applicants who are selected for an award will be asked to sign a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). Payments will be made after the project is completed and a final report is submitted.
- All work must be completed by the end of Winter Term 2021 (March 19).

Please answer the questions on the next page. Add extra space or additional pages as needed.

1. Title of project

Expanding the Cultural Scope of *Living Lovingly**

**Living Lovingly' is a personal development course that was designed and is currently taught by Ali Esteghlalian at PCC Community Education.*

2. Description of project (about 200-500 words).

I currently teach a Community Education course entitled '*Living Lovingly*' which is an interactive, poetry-based, personal development class that uses poetry from the English language to facilitate discussions around various aspects of love, and about fostering loving relationships among members of a community at different levels (e.g., family, local, regional, national and international, etc.) The course also explores and builds upon the subject of self exploration, self love and self acceptance, as the essential foundation of one's ability to connect with others productively and to be able to build healthy, loving relationships.

For this course in its current format, I use poems written in English by a variety of poets from the US, UK and other English speaking countries. Although there is some diversity in the background of the writers whose poetry I use for the class (e.g., European- American, Arab-American, African-American, English, Scottish, Irish, etc.), the perspectives are mostly from the English speaking world. As we are becoming increasingly more aware of the need to learn about 'global' perspectives on a range of issues that directly or indirectly affect us and influence our daily lives (security, health, trade, travel, etc.), it seems essential to go beyond one's linguistic and cultural boundaries. Expanding our vision allows us to learn about how others think, tolerate, value and connect with each other, and ultimately, live at peace by loving one another, especially in multicultural societies.

This proposal is for supporting my efforts for adding new viewpoints to the course by researching and collecting poetry related to love and loving from three additional languages, namely *Persian*, *Japanese* and *Arabic*. Using these new languages and their cultural contexts, outside the English speaking world, will provide students with new perspectives on

how love and loving relationships are viewed and fostered in other cultures, and are expressed in their respective languages. The opportunity of obtaining this grant will give me and my future students access to a richer source of perspectives about love (Japanese, Persian and Arabic) and will provide awareness on the importance of poetry in other cultures.

In my current class (10 sessions / quarter), I designate a theme for each session and engage the class in a variety of in-class exercises and home assignments to explore the 'theme' chosen for that particular week (e.g., hope, giving permission to oneself, etc.)

To help explore and delineate these various facets:

- i) I select poetry for each session relevant to the topic of discussions, and
- ii) Students are asked to write free-style poetry that help them internalize the concepts discussed.

To complement the above approach, I will research and study a number of sources (from the above mentioned languages and cultures) with the goal of:

- i) Studying and identifying new themes / aspects of love (the culture specific views) to complement the current topics.

As an example, the concept of '*universal love*' is a central theme in the gnostic poetry of *Rumi*, *Ibn-Arabi*, and the like. While the core of such a concept is formed by the *love for the divine*, the ensuing spiritual enrichment of the *Seekers* (the ones seeking to understand the divine and to become one with the universe as the manifestation of the divine) help them grow and feel at peace with the world and fellow humans. Persian and Arabic literature are a rich source of poetry for delineating and teaching this type of concepts.

- ii) Researching and identifying new inspirational pieces of poetry that would enrich students' experience.

My research will also involve finding the best and most accurate translations of the foreign language poetry that I'll select for the class so that the translations are a true representation of the writers' intent and their cultural context.

3. Please provide a brief answer to each of the following:

a. What is it you hope to gain from completing this project? How will it benefit your students?

The proposed project for internationalizing the *Living Lovingly* course will:

i) help me, as the course instructor, enrich the original syllabus by adding new material and new types of poetry from three additional languages and cultures (e.g., Japanese Haiku, Persian quatrains, Arabic ghazals, etc.) to expand the perspective of the course and create a more culturally inclusive view of 'love'

ii) provide the course participants with an expanded scope on how love, as a universal human emotion, is viewed and fostered in different cultures. This subsequently helps students expand their intellectual and cultural horizons by learning about other cultures and their respective emotional experiences and expressions

iii) help me, as an educator, to be able to develop an abridged version of the course that can be used and shared with other instructors / courses at PCC or other publicly funded institutions in Oregon. As explained below, the requested grant will enable me to develop material that can be easily used by myself and other instructors in their classes to complement their current syllabus or to provide fresh and out-of-the-box perspectives for their students. There are a variety of courses offered at PCC that can benefit from the results of this grant: *Languages, Poetry related classes, Social Studies, Intercultural Communications, etc.*

The multiple benefits of the proposed research will create a win-win situation for me as the instructor and for the PCC community as a whole, as the funding agent.

b. Is this project replicable? (preference will be given to projects that can be used in more than one course or by more than one instructor). Please explain.

Yes! The material that will be collected and organized in the form of teaching modules, lecture material, detailed examples, etc. can be used and shared with other instructors / courses at PCC, or even with educators at other publicly funded institutions in the State of Oregon, and in other states, and potentially with other national and international institutions. As I begin to explore and learn more about the 'open learning forums', I can share the product of the proposed research in open educational forums to benefit other educators statewide and even at the national scale.

The proposed project has a great potential for *cross-enrichment* of other courses at PCC or elsewhere. The following example demonstrates this potential benefit in a simple but concrete way. In Summer 2020, I was invited to provide a lecture (a full 2-hour session) at the *Islamic Civilization* course offered by PCC's Community Education department. I selected some of the lecture material that I normally use in my '*History of Persia & Modern-day Iran*' which I teach at PCC Community Ed, and was able to provide a highly relevant and informative lecture (based on feedback from students and course instructor) on how Persia/Iran contributed to the development of Islamic Civilization during the Medieval period (650-850 AD).

Therefore, I can envisage that the new material developed by this grant can be shared with other educators and used in a wide range of classes and workshops at PCC. The examples include Cultural Awareness | Language and Literature Classes | Cross-cultural Communications | Self-help Classes, such as *Cultivating Self Compassion*, *Improved Self Talk*, etc., all currently offered at PCC.

Because of the current COVID related restrictions, PCC presently provides no travel services (e.g., *Adventure Tours*, *Cultural Tours*, *Educational Tours*, etc.) However, it is very likely that once the current travel restrictions are lifted, there will be an increase (either a surge or a gradual upward trend) in international travel business at PCC. In an entrepreneurial sense, this is an opportune time to invest in enriching a current course by incorporating some culture specific references for a range of countries (Japan and Arabic countries) through which future travelers (clients of PCC travel services) can familiarize themselves with the cultural context and social aspects of the

countries to which they will travel. The outcome of the proposed research can be used to organize and deliver brief cultural lectures for the PCC's travel services' prior to their departure.

How would you be able to share what you have done with other faculty at PCC?

In addition to what I described above, I will create single-session *workshops* and *discussion forums* to share what I have collected and developed through the Internationalization Grant. This will help disseminate the knowledge gained and will inform the faculty of the availability of this material for their use. I will also make myself available to serve as an invited speaker at their classes to share the material developed through this grant. This will enrich the current courses and will enable students to learn from global perspectives and cultural insights learned from other cultures.

c. Is there anything in your background or experience that will help you to accomplish this project?

1. I currently teach (or will teach) several courses at PCC Community Education, divisions of *Language & Culture*, *Home & Garden*, and *Personal Development*. Therefore, I have the advantage of knowing the audience and having taught several courses for the community. I have some knowledge of the audience and their learning needs in such courses.
2. I am also a native speaker of Persian language which I intend to use as a rich source for finding relevant poetry for the class. For example, the widely known poetry of Persian poets such as *Rumi* and *Omar Khayyam* discusses the concept of 'love' in many dimensions (e.g., divine, romantic, nature, humanity, etc.) and is a potential source of literary material for the class.
3. Furthermore, in researching other languages, I can utilize my own language skills. I have been formally trained in French and Arabic languages, and have linguistic skills that will prove useful for conducting the proposed research.
4. As a teacher, I have a rich international background, i.e.,

have traveled through 60+ countries, lived in several countries and cultures, and have worked with many international teams in a wide range of professional environments. As a result, I have come to enjoy, appreciate and respect multiculturalism and diversity in a classroom which is a prerequisite for being able to teach a course that aims to expand students' perspectives and encourage them to go beyond their native cultures, especially when it comes to valuing, loving and appreciating one another.

Please email your completed application to: Ron Bekey, ISC Chair, rbekey@pcc.edu by Friday December 11, 2020 at midnight.