

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication Grant
Deadline Monday, February 22, 2016

Please use this checklist and budget. Include with your completed application. For more information about Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication grants, please see <https://gustavus.edu/kendallcenter/grant-opportunities/presidential-grant.php>.

FACULTY INFORMATION

Name: Rob Kendrick

Email: rkendric

Rank:

Department: English

Assistant professor

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name: Erin Ingram

Email: eingram2

Major(s): English

Graduation Year: 2018

CHECKLIST

Project Details

- ☒ Brief description of the proposed project including its collaborative nature
- ☒ Clear statement of anticipated outcomes
- ☒ Likely placement for publication or performances
- ☒ Anticipated research completion date

Participant Details

- ☒ Names and brief biographies of all participants
- ☒ Explanation of how this project fits into the career of the faculty member
Note: Applications from faculty at all career stages are encouraged
- ☒ Explanation of how this project fits into the educational trajectory of the student
Note: Statement should be written by the student; include year of graduation; student eligibility is limited to full-time returning students

☒ **Presidential Budget Proposal Form**

- ☒ If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future applications. Check to give permission. This decision will not influence the application evaluation.

Submit electronically as a PDF to cblaukat@gustavus.edu at the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning.

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration Grant

Budget Information

Faculty Stipend (\$300 per week, up to \$3,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks)

Student Summer Stipend (\$400 per week, up to \$4,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks)

Student Summer Campus Housing (\$60 per week, for a maximum of 10 weeks)

Budget Maximum (\$8,100 for all categories)

Item		Amount
Equipment (e.g., transcription machine, camera, cassette recorder – but not to include computer hardware)		\$
1:	Cost:	
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
Materials (e.g., books, printing, software, lab supplies)		\$
1: books for Erin	Cost: \$500	500
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
Travel Costs (cannot include conference travel, see http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php for allowable travel expenses)		\$
Airfare:		
Mileage: Number of miles___ @ \$0.56/mile		
Lodging:		
Meals:		
Stipends & Housing		\$
Faculty Stipend	\$300 per week, up to \$3,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks	3000
Student Summer Stipend	\$400 per week, up to \$4,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks	4000
Student Summer Campus Housing	\$60 per week, up to 10 weeks	600
Total Expenses		\$ 500
Amount Requested (Total Expenses + Requested Stipends + Housing)		\$ 8100

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project? (If no, skip a, b, and c below.)

☐ Yes

☒ No

- a. Funding Source:
- b. Amount:
- c. Please explain how the Presidential grant will be used in addition to the other funding, and (if relevant), how the Presidential grant project would be impacted if external funding is not approved.

Erin Ingram and I propose what is perhaps an innovative application for the Presidential Faculty-Student Grant: two distinct projects of literary and cultural interpretation which share theoretical frames and the theme of marginalization. Through mutual mentoring and peer review, Erin and I will complete the articles described below this summer for conference presentation and submission for publication during the 2016-17 academic year. Our work plan is to meet daily for at least ten weeks this summer, sharing and commenting on article drafts produced through June and early July, which we will then spend the rest of the summer revising into publishable/presentable form. During next academic year, then, Erin and I will shadow each other through the processes of conference presentation and submission for publication, thereby enlightening Erin in the demands of academic research and professional academic life, which she is now entertaining as an attractive career option (and, yes, my sense of ethics compelled me to explain the state of the academic job market! Nevertheless . . .).

The collaborative nature of the proposal resides, first of all, in the theoretical lenses we will use in developing our interpretive arguments. Much published research in literary studies, pre-eminently scholarship on more recent literature and cultural objects, relies on literary theory. The objects of our research—the lyrics of Tyler the Creator and their provocative deployment of racist/misogynist/homophobic vocabularies; and Thorn Kief Hillsbery's novel *What We Do Is Secret* (2005), the first-person narrative of a thirteen-year-old LA queer punk as he tries to survive and to discover who he is—share the themes of alienation and marginalization. These intersections allow me and Erin to align our independent projects through a shared body of literary and cultural theory, primarily through queer, feminist, and critical race studies lenses.

As we begin immediately this summer to analyze our primary texts and draft early ideas into complete thoughts, our complementary work will be expanding our theoretical reach with the aim of developing the best interpretive models for each of our projects. Reading new theory and evaluating how it can help our interpretations, we will test its use with the work of Tyler the Creator and Hillsbery. At this stage, I have identified José Esteban Muñoz's queer utopianism (*Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, 2009), Tavia Nyong'o's "Do You Want Queer Theory (or Do You Want the Truth)? Intersections of Punk and Queer in the 1970s" (2009), and J. Jack Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (2005) as important theoretical positions for our interpretations. Erin and I will explore the relevance of a philosopher whose ideas have received little attention in queer, feminist, and critical race theory: Emmanuel Levinas. His philosophical treatises on interrelationality—the ideal openness we should embody when we encounter another, put simply—seem, to my mind, promising as an addition to queer, feminist, and critical race theory committed to social equity and full citizenship for the marginalized.

My project, in brief, investigates the novel *What We Do Is Secret* as an important cultural document in the ways identity intersects, that is, is made up of sometimes conflicting elements (race, religion, nation, sexual and gender expression, socioeconomic class, for example), and how some identities compel a shadow existence on society's margins. The narrator-protagonist Rockets Redglare (!)—and through him, the novel itself—claims his place, ultimately, in "American" identity. In fact, the novelist's manipulation of language, where Rockets upends standard English usage (coded as the status quo) through the challenge of his own punk-queer speech, attempts to mark out a space for marginalized others in their diverse intersectionalities in US culture. The novel forms part of my FTS, Punks/Skaters/Queers: Representing American Subcultures; my FTS student last year and current English advisee, Erin knows and admires it and will provide informed feedback as I draft and revise the article. *GLQ: A Journal of Gay & Lesbian Studies* and *Lambda Nordica* will be the first journals to which I submit the article.

This research departs from my training and scholarship in Renaissance/early modern literature; nevertheless, it accords well with the expansion of my teaching range over the past eleven years. While I offer early modern courses for the English Department and continue research in early modern literary studies (conference paper on *Measure for Measure* this March), I also regularly teach the introductory theory course, Art of Interpretation, and Queer Theory, and focus on subcultures in my FTS. *What We Do Is Secret* is ideal for my entry into a new research area in queer and other theories and contemporary American literature, given its richness for the kind of theoretical applications that are not typically very welcome in early modern scholarship. As I move toward tenure (imagine a glacier), demonstrating how my teaching across the board motivates my research seems desirable for a liberal arts teacher-scholar. In addition, Hillsbery's novel has so far been understudied (one article indexed so far in the primary literary studies database, the MLA Bibliography), and I hope my work can extend its reach in "serious" academic dialogue, since its language games and reimagining of American identities and communities deserve wider notice.

Since Erin and I are proposing ourselves as a single research team with independent but interlaced projects, she describes her project and her academic biography in what follows:

"The lyrics of Tyler the Creator are often incendiary, misogynistic, homophobic, and even racist. However, I do not think that his lyrics are carelessly cruel, there is intent, albeit obscured in vulgarity. Through close-reading and literary theory, particularly those of queer theory, post-structuralism, Marxism, and race/ethnic theory I believe that this intent can be made clearer. These lyrics are expressions of a young man's (aged 18-20 when producing the analyzed albums) inner turmoil having been raised in our white, classicist, ableist, and heteronormative society and having to reconcile that with his blackness, impoverished upbringing, mental disorders, and non-heteronormative attitude (e.g., rejection of some masculine coded actions, practice of some feminine coded actions). Trying to reconcile these extreme opposites produced an understandably violent effect; therefore, it is only natural for the artistic expression of these paradoxes to be equally violent. It is easily comparable to the radical punks of the 70s/80s whose equally incendiary music and style defied norms. The study of lyrics such as these is quite important, specifically because this music is targeted at and consumed by high-schoolers and college students, who are growing in a zeitgeist of change and ethical dispute. I, myself, consume this music; and since I am a proponent of social justice, there has always been a sort of ethical dilemma within myself as to whether or not I should continue to support this music. Completing this research and answering the questions of whether or not Tyler the Creator's lyrics are justified in their violent expression could, I think, redefine what it can mean to be socially progressive, offering new interpretations on potentially misunderstood artistic expression. By this, I mean that utilising the power of language (which is normally in the sphere of the patriarchy) specifically those words which the dominant discourse uses to marginalize certain peoples, against the patriarchy is a prospective method of dismantlement.

I have taken several classes which have more than prepared me for the tasks and responsibilities necessary for quality research, these are: Renaissance Studies, Modern Poetry, Punks Skaters & Queers (FTS), Queer Theory, Foundations in Literary Studies, and Art of Interpretation. In the latter four courses, Rob was/is my professor, thus his methods and the lenses our research will share are not unfamiliar to me whatsoever. All of these classes have founded and built upon my ability to perform analysis, close-reading, explication, and research, not to mention the skills of concision and 'original' thought. More specifically, Renaissance Studies urged me to critique the scholarship of academics within the Medieval and Renaissance studies. We had to ask questions such as: How is this relevant? Is the writer coherent, organized? What are the biases of this research, are they acknowledged? What is this research lacking? I intend to apply questions such as these upon my own research to make sure that it is in fine form.

Queer Theory has prepared me for one of the most difficult (I think) aspects of research, theory. I have worked closely with Butler (and other queer theorists), Freud, Lacan, and currently Derrida and Saussure in *Art of Interp.* In Queer Theory's mini-research projects, I used Judith Butler to analyse a psychological thriller (*Stoker*) and then, not unlike my current proposal of research, applied Lee Edelman's theory of the death drive to the lyrics of one of my favorite artists. It is with the previously mentioned skills and abilities that I intend to conduct my research on the inflammatory lyrics of Tyler the Creator, explication and close reading of his lyrics; research and questioning of appropriate theory; and finally using said theory to analyse and ultimately answer the question of my research: are Tyler the Creator's lyrics justified in their violent expression or simply careless cruelties?"

As Erin and I confessed at the start, our proposal skirts the letter of the Presidential Faculty-Student Grant, perhaps, although we are convinced that our application and related projects very much embrace the spirit of the grant: the development of faculty and student research for audiences beyond the traditional classroom. We thank you for considering our application.