

## Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

**Deadline Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Please complete this checklist and attach it as the cover page of your grant application, whether you submit electronically or via hard copy.

### **Faculty Information**

Name: Barbara Fister

Department: Library

Email: fister@gac.edu

Rank: professor

### **Checklist**

- ☐ **Description of previous projects (and outcomes) funded by RSC grants**
- ☐ **Complete project description, including separate statements of:**
  - 1. Purpose.** What are the intellectual, conceptual, or artistic issues? How does your work fit into other endeavors being done in this field?
  - 2. Feasibility.** What qualifications do you bring to this project? What have you done/will you do to prepare for this project? What is the time period, i.e. summer, summer and academic year, academic year only? Is the work's scope commensurate with the time period of the project?
  - 3. Project Design.** This should include a specific description of the project design and activities, including location, staff, schedules or itineraries, and desired outcomes.
- ☐ **RSC Budget Proposal Form**
- ☒ **X** If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future faculty applications. This decision will not in any way influence the evaluation of my application. Check box to give permission.

Submit electronically as a PDF to [cblaukat@gustavus.edu](mailto:cblaukat@gustavus.edu) at the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning.

## Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant Proposal

Barbara Fister, February 6, 2014

I am applying for an RSC grant to support my sabbatical research on online reading communities. Previously, I have received the following RSC grants.

- 2008 – “Scandinavian Crime Fiction in English Translation Website” (<http://scandicrimeproject.wordpress.com/> ) I continue to maintain this site. The accompanying blog has averaged slightly over 100 visitors daily since it was created.
- 2004 - "How Crime Fiction Reflects Social Anxieties." This project resulted in an article in the only peer-reviewed journal devoted to the crime fiction genre: "Copycat Crimes: Crime Fiction and the Marketplace of Anxieties." *Clues: A Journal of Detection* 23.3 (Spring 2005): 43-56.
- 1992 - "Teaching Research: Perspectives from Two Fields." The findings of this study were reported in a book chapter, "Connected Communities: Encouraging Dialogue Between Composition and Bibliographic Instruction." Invited chapter in *Writing Across the Curriculum and the Academic Library: Implications for Bibliographic Instruction*, ed. Jean Sheridan, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995, 33-51.
- 1990 - "Third World Women's Literature." This research was published as *Third World Women's Literatures: A Dictionary and Guide to Materials in English*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995.
- 1989 - "The Research Processes of Undergraduates." This study, published as "The Research Processes of Undergraduate Students." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 18 (July 1992): 163-169, has been cited 122 times.

Beginning in the summer of 2014, I will be working on a project that will explore social reading practices online using mixed methods. During the yearlong project, I will also experiment with new approaches to sharing scholarship.

There hasn't been much research to date on online communities of avid readers that have formed to discuss books and the reading experience together. Their existence has become more visible with the advent of the Goodreads social network, which was recently acquired by Amazon and which currently claims 25 million members, as well as its older, geekier cousin LibraryThing. Yet online reading communities date back to the early days of the Internet, with Usenet groups, Compuserve forums, and Listservs, such as Dorothy-L, founded in 1990 and currently subscribing nearly 3,000 members. Thousands of Yahoo and Google groups devoted to books have formed in the past three decades. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other popular social networks are also sites for book discussion and self-representation through reading choices. Such communities provide intriguing sites for researchers to explore what group members get out of reading for pleasure, observe the social aspects of reading, and witness how informal critical communities participate in the formation of cultural tastes around books. They also are places to observe social interactions in a digital space, including the negotiation of

difference, the evolution of group social norms, and how readers respond to interactions with authors who use these networks as community participants and for marketing purposes.

I plan to focus my study on readers of crime fiction in the English-speaking world. I am already a long-term participant in a number of online groups focused on that genre and have contacts with founders and participants in reading-focused groups that pre-date the Web. Last fall, I was invited to join the Digital Reading Network, a UK-based research group based at Bournemouth University, which connects me with scholars interested in digital reading experiences. I expect to use mixed methods including interviews, surveys, and participant-observation.

Because I am interested in open access to scholarship and emerging academic publishing practices, I also plan to make my research process and findings public online as the research progresses, soliciting reader and scholar feedback. By the end of the academic year I hope to assemble the posts into a book-length work published online using CommentPress , PressBooks, or another web publishing platform. Though this is an ambitious timeline, I have experience with these platforms and with the process of assembling short-form writing into longer works, so believe it's feasible with this general timeline:

- Summer 2014: conduct initial interviews with founders and participants in early online reading communities, post results and analysis. Develop and test survey instrument. In June I will be guest-blogging about reading communities online for the Digital Reading Network (<http://www.digitalreadingnetwork.com/>)
- Fall 2014: Conduct survey, analyze, and post results for comment, explore the range of reading communities online, post findings, and identify three communities for ethnographic participant observation.
- Spring 2015: Conduct participant observations using *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method* by Tom Beollstorff, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T. L. Taylor (Princeton, 2012) for guidance. Conduct interviews with readers who have influential online presences. Gather and edit posts into a single volume using a Web publishing platform, adding an introduction and a summary chapter.

1. Enter your **Name**
2. Enter the **Stipend Costs**
3. Enter the Project Costs (both individual costs and **Total Project Cost**)
4. Enter **Total Amount Requested** (Total Project Cost + Stipend)

Name Barbara Fister

**Stipend** (Please check one box to indicate your distribution preference)

*Note: The RSC grant will fund up to 1,500 towards **Project Costs**. If your project costs will exceed this amount, you may opt to apply a portion (or all) of your stipend to cover these additional costs. If this option is your preference, please select "Partial Amount".*

☒ **Full Amount** (\$700- assistant professor; \$600-associate professor; \$500-full professor)

☐ **Partial Amount** (apply a portion of the full amount to project costs)

Partial Amount:

**Project Costs: List each item individually with its cost. Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

*I. Equipment (e.g. transcription machine, camera, digital recorder, but not computer hardware)*

1.	Amount _____
2.	Amount _____
3.	Amount _____

*II. Materials (e.g. books, printing, software, lab supplies)*

1. one month subscription to SurveyMonkey	Amount <u>\$25.00</u>
2.	Amount _____
3.	Amount _____

*III. Personnel (e.g. typist, transcriptionist, student assistant)*

1.	Amount _____
2.	Amount _____
3.	Amount _____

*IV. Travel (cannot include conference travel, allowable expenses listed at:*

<http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php>.

Total Project Cost: \$25

**Total Amount Requested (Total Project Costs + Stipend)** \$525

*Note: The RSC grant will fund up to an amount equal to your Project Stipend + \$1500 for Project Costs.*

#### **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project?

☒ Yes      applied for but did not receive NEH fellowship

☐ No

**If no, skip a, b, and c below.**

a. Funding Source:

b. Amount:

c. Please explain how the Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grant will be used in addition to the other funding, and (if relevant), how the RSC grant project would be impacted if external funding is not approved.

#### **AREA OF FOCUS GRANT**

One RSC grant will be designated an **Area of Focus** from the Academic Strategic Plan or the Mission of the College. For the 2014-2015 grant period the Area of Focus is **Global Engagement**.

**Would you like your proposal to be considered for the Global Engagement Area of Focus RSC?**

*Note:* If your proposal is not selected for the Area of Focus RSC, it will be placed in the general pool of RSC applications.

☐ Yes

☒ No

**If you selected "Yes" above, please provide a short description of how your project impacts global engagement initiatives.**