

Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

Deadline February 10th

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: ___Martin Lang_____

Dept: ___Communication Studies_____

Email: ___mlang3_____

Rank: ___Assistant. 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**

☐ **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.**

Submission instructions

Electronic — Submit a single document containing the entire application to rsc-proposals@gustavus.edu.

NAME _____

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: Please indicate the amount that you would like to apply towards project costs (\$ 0) and the remaining stipend after this deduction (\$ 600)

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. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

IV. Travel (cannot include conference travel, see <http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php> for allowable expenses)

1. Airfare, MSP-Bangalore, India RT
2. _____
3. _____

Project Costs Amount

I. Equipment

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

II. Materials

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

III. Personnel

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

IV. Travel

1. \$1561
2. _____
3. _____

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

\$1561

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED (Total Project Costs + Stipend)

\$2161

(Note: The RSC grant will fund up to an amount equal to your Full Stipend + 1,500 for Project Costs)

Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant Application
Narrative for Martin J. Lang
February 2012

Purpose:

The project linked to this RSC proposal carries both short- and long-term aims. The immediate goal is the production of a scholarly article exploring the journalistic practices of major news outlets in India as they relate to a critical ongoing issue, the recent initiative to develop nuclear power plants across that country. The long-term goal is the development of an ongoing reciprocal relationship with Visthar and its principals in to establish the possibility for mutually beneficial research and creative agendas.

In recent years, several global powers (including the U.S., Russia, and France) have developed preliminary agreements to establish nuclear power plants in various sites across India. The controversial nature of nuclear power and the implications of “nuclear colonialism” have not been lost on many citizens of India, particularly those of lower socioeconomic standing who will be most affected by issues such as displacement, pollution, and nuclear disaster (for example, at least one of the sites has experienced measurable earthquakes within the past decade). However, the rapidly accelerating need for cheap power and economic development in India has proved a significant motivation despite these concerns. While recurring protests at several proposed sites have been reported in the mainstream media around the globe, Indian news outlets have seemed slow to respond to this news in their own country, causing some to suspect their objectivity in covering this vital story. My research will offer a comparative textual analysis of the news coverage of various Indian news outlets, including print, TV and radio, at both national and local levels. This aspect of the study will help discern the content of news reports and prominent trends or biases that may exist. In addition, the project will include interviews and conversations with newsmakers, scholars and affected citizens in India to help ensure my analysis reflects a perspective grounded in the experience of the people who are living these matters on a day-to-day basis.

My hope is that this project will be the first of several collaborations with Visthar, a non-profit organization based in India whose mission includes advocating for peace and justice across the nation. Visthar has long included education as a key aspect of its mission, and Gustavus has proven a strong partner through the Social Justice, Peace, and Development study abroad program. Visthar is considering an expansion of its education and research mission and has invited me for a stay as scholar-in-residence to undertake the research project above as well as the development of media-oriented curricula for their clientele. I also have personal connections to Visthar; through Siddarth Selvaraj, a Gustavus alumnus and dear friend, I have come to know his father David, who is the director of Visthar. We have had multiple conversations and plotted several schemes over the past few years to initiate an “intellectual exchange” that will support my own research agenda while

providing vital resources to bolster the organization's social justice mission. This established relationship gives me great confidence for a successful and ongoing collaboration that can include publication, documentary film production, and teaching opportunities throughout my career. This may well be a germinal and defining moment for my research and creative work. However, I have not yet travelled to India to lay the proper groundwork. This RSC grant will give me the resources I need during my sabbatical to take this ambitious and promising step forward.

Feasibility:

I earned my PhD in Rhetorical Studies with a concentration in Media Studies from the University of Minnesota in 2005. My dissertation presented a deep analysis of local mainstream news coverage of the Minnesota legislature's casino gaming debates of 2002-2003. The state was considering an expansion of state-sponsored gambling, but such a drastic policy change had massive implications for the state's 11 American Indian tribes, many of whom rely heavily on gaming income for basic survival. My analysis revealed a pattern of "incognizant racism," with news reports reflecting a White perspective that diminished or dismissed the potential harms to some of the state's most vulnerable populations. I have parlayed this expertise into a course at Gustavus, Perspectives on the News, that examines the processes of news reporting and their potential impacts on greater society. My work in media studies, particularly news media, prepares me quite well for the study of India's news outlets. I have also studied and taught extensively the theories of power and hegemony that are part and parcel of the feminist and cultural studies approaches I adopt in my work; these seem highly relevant both to the specific context of India's burgeoning nuclear program (and protests) and to Visthar's overall mission.

Upon approval, I will begin my work on the news project by initiating research here in the States. I will begin to assemble a suitable sample of Indian print news and, where available, radio/TV/internet news relative to the topic at hand. A good deal of the textual analysis can be conducted from most anywhere, and that work will extend before and beyond my visit to India. (Collection of some data, particularly radio and TV newscasts, will be nearly impossible from anywhere but India itself, so a significant portion of my time there will be dedicated to collecting that sample material. Non-print news archives are notoriously sparse even in the U.S., and electronic access to such massive amounts of data is not yet feasible in most cases.) I will also become more familiar with theories of international media regulation and political economy. Though the U.S. corporate media model is fast usurping alternatives around the globe, nuances still exist, and I will need to understand the relationship between India's national and local governments and the news outlets themselves. Because I am already quite familiar with the basic literature around news and media studies theory, I will be better able to refine my preparation research to more topical subjects.

The news project will begin sometime early in my sabbatical, with August as a likely start date. Research will continue before and after my visit to India, which will likely fall in January or February 2013 and last four to five weeks. This date will be determined in part by the ability of Visthar to provide resources necessary for the project. One consideration is the availability of expert interview subjects; Visthar has connections to both scholars and news executives in India and will be able to assist in arranging meetings for me. Some variables are yet unknown and must be considered, such as the often cyclical schedules of these persons. When the project seems likely to move forward, these answers can be pursued in earnest. Work will continue after my return from India, with hopeful completion by the end of my sabbatical period.

The long-term development of collaborative relations doesn't adhere so cleanly to a defined timeline, but I expect it will bear fruit at regular intervals for years to come.

Project Design:

Stage one: Stateside Research

This work will be conducted primarily via internet databases as I sort and collect relevant news stories for the study sample. I will also be reading related scholarship and theoretical work.

Stage Two: India Visit

Based at Visthar's site in Bangalore, India, I will continue to collect sample material with an emphasis on those things procured only locally (ie. recording TV and radio news programs). In addition, I will travel locally for interviews with experts and with citizens affected by the proposed nuclear sites who may be engaging in the protests. Visthar has graciously agreed to provide some in-kind support for this stage, offering food and housing while I am on the ground.

Stage Three: Stateside Analysis

At this stage, I will wrap up sample collection and begin the analysis of materials with a target completion date of June 2013 and the intended outcomes being publication in a major journal within my discipline as well as a full report to Visthar in a format that is most functional for their purposes.