

**The Townsend Center for the Humanities
Disciplinary Innovation in Undergraduate Education:
“Course Threads” in the Humanities**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

DEADLINE: October 26, 2007

The Townsend Center invites proposals from faculty (as individuals or in teams) who have an interest in participating in a new project on Disciplinary Innovation in Undergraduate Education funded by the Mellon Foundation. Two proposals will be funded each academic year beginning in the Spring, 2008, and the program will last four years. (Thus, a total of eight groups will be funded over the course of the project.) Awards of \$30,000 will be made to each successful proposal. These funds may be distributed to individual faculty in the group for research related to work on the topic or may be used for such things as course development and enhancement, technology and office assistance, or for activities such as lectures, symposia, etc., related to the proposal.

Project Description

The Project on Disciplinary Innovation is meant to invite new ways of thinking about the architecture of relationships among undergraduate courses in the humanities and related fields at U.C. Berkeley. The program is built around several premises: that institutions of higher education have remained surprisingly attached to a grid-like departmental structure for teaching even though cutting-edge research in the humanities has gone in very different directions; that many undergraduates at Berkeley find little coherence in their course programs beyond what they take in the major; and that Berkeley faculty are themselves often unaware of the substantial areas of intersection among courses in different departments.

Rather than generate new programs, interdisciplinary majors, or requirements, the aim of this project is to establish a flexible model for cross-disciplinary education by bringing to light some of the hidden "threads" that connect courses across existing departments and disciplines. Topics or issues pertinent to a range of disciplines will be identified by interested faculty and starred as belonging to a particular humanities thread. Each "thread" will be comprised of a relatively robust number of courses in different departments as well as by some introductory activity and a capstone experience that students may elect. For purposes of illustration, examples of potential course threads are: "Revolution" (which might include courses in History, History of Art, Political Science, Philosophy, French, Slavic Languages and Literatures, EALC, Sociology, and Comparative Literature); "Media" (which might include courses on the history of recorded sound, on printmaking and the history of prints, on the new digital media, on the transition from oral to print cultures, on film and photography, etc.); "Popularity" (which might include courses on populist political movements, on popular culture in its many forms, on the history of popular taste in various fields, and on the spread of literature in the vernacular languages). The possibility of following a particular thread or path of interest, once marked by the faculty, will be an option for undergraduates to choose, not a requirement.

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**Please submit to: Disciplinary Innovation Project,
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Program Guidelines

Proposals may be submitted by individuals; however the working group must be comprised of at least 4 ladder-rank faculty from no fewer than 3 departments. (Lecturers and graduate students may not be funded under the terms of the award.) Each group will meet periodically throughout one semester (no fewer than 4 times) and, on completion, submit the following results of their work:

- a bibliography with historical, geographical, and multi-disciplinary components;
- an inventory of existing undergraduate courses that can be included in the thread, as well as current course descriptions for each;
- a proposal for (a) an introductory activity (e.g., cluster of lectures, freshman seminar, podcast or webcast presentations); and (b) a “capstone” experience (e.g. senior seminar, thesis, internship)
- proposals for any new courses or for team-teaching that might be relevant to the subject of the thread. Note: the creation of new courses is not required, but is nonetheless invited by the Center.
- content for a “thread” website

The project calls for the threads to be launched within a year of completion of the group’s work. Successful proposals will also be eligible for additional funding for implementation in the year following its activities.

Application Procedure:

Ladder-rank faculty interested in proposing a “course thread” for 2007-2008 should complete the enclosed application form and return it to the Townsend Center no later than October 26, 2007. Proposals will be reviewed by a Townsend Center Committee and awards will be announced approximately four weeks after the application deadline.

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

Name (s) of Convener(s)	Rank & Department(s)	e-mail/phone
Other Faculty Participants	Rank & Department(s)	email contact
(Please indicate if they have already agreed to participate)		
Proposed “Course Thread” Title:		
Include here or in an attached sheet a brief description and intellectual justification for proposed “thread” (250-500 words)		

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Examples of courses you teach or are aware of in the proposed “thread”

Please indicate how you might allocate the funds:

____ **Faculty Research** **Amount:** _____

____ **Website Development** **Amount:** _____

____ **Administrative and/or** **Amount:** _____
Technical support

____ **Supplies** **Amount:** _____
(Books, Photocopying, etc.)

Other (Please specify)

_____ **Amount:** _____

_____ **Amount:** _____

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