

Application Part 2: Project Proposal

SOAR Research Proposal Summer 2015

Multiculturalism and Stereotype in the Twenty-first Century

Faculty Mentor:

Christopher Shorr, Associate Professor of Theater Arts, English Department

Student Researcher:

Samantha Weinberg

Secondary English Education Major, Theater Minor (Undeclared)

Class of 2018

Start date and length of project:

June 1, 2015; 10 weeks

Description of the project:

Multiculturalism and Stereotype in the Twenty-first Century is a project Ms. Weinberg would like to undertake in order to expand her knowledge on the social implications and impacts of stereotype and multiculturalism, and communicate this knowledge with the Moravian College community. This project will result in the creation of a full-length theater production that will take place in the fall semester of 2015. In order to properly prepare for the creation of this piece, Ms. Weinberg will research a variety of modern stereotypes and cultural minorities. She will also research the origins of specific stereotypes and the historical uses of particular stereotype in theater, such as the prevalence of minstrelsy in 19th century American culture and the influence of stereotype on the depiction of particular cultures in theater as a whole. This would be done using library resources, online resources such as the JSTOR database, and through interviews of members of both majority and minority communities. She would also attend pertinent theater productions to gain inspiration and insight on how to communicate the ideas stemming from the research through the art of theater. Ms. Weinberg would then be responsible, along with her faculty mentor, for development of a complete script focusing on these subjects that would be produced during the 2015 fall semester.

Roles, Responsibilities, Schedule:

Ms. Weinberg will work both independently and in conjunction with Professor Shorr to ensure the timely completion of each stage of the process and the quality of the final product. She will be lead researcher for the project, as well as co-author of the script for production.

In addition to providing ongoing guidance for the research, and insuring the successful hitting of benchmarks in the process, Professor Shorr will be developing a set of theatrical conventions that can be used to frame this material, and will guide the student in using those conventions effectively to communicate the message. Along with Ms. Weinberg, he will co-author the script.

The project will encompass ten weeks, beginning June 1, 2015. The dates outlined below are subject to change depending on time needed to adequately complete each phase of the project, however, all aspects will still be completed within the ten weeks.

Weeks 1 – 3:

- Conduct research through interviews, online databases, library sources
 - Emphasis will be placed on major cultural stereotypes of the modern era
 - Additional research will be done on the history and origins of particular stereotypes
- Create an outline of subjects and specific stereotypes to be addressed during the writing process

Weeks 4 – 7:

- Write a complete draft of a working script based on research conducted in weeks 1-3
 - Create dramatic symbols/metaphors to illustrate thematic content
 - Develop dramatic structure
 - Develop characters

Weeks 8 – 10:

- Edit script from weeks 4-7 as needed
- Create list of props and costumes needed for production of final performance
- Develop preliminary scenic concepts to support thematic content

Benefits:

The student will gain many benefits as a result of her research and her work on this project. She will strengthen her overall research skills utilizing the library resources and online resources such as the JSTOR database. She will also be given an opportunity to develop her interviewing skills as a part of her research process. Additionally, she will be able to use this opportunity to participate in all of the steps of creating an original theater production, from initial concept design to staging a full-length performance. Above all, this summer research project allow Ms. Weinberg to take what is currently a personal passion, and expand and deepen this into academic research and scholarship.

For Prof. Shorr, this project continues a line of scholarship and investigation of stereotype and cultural understanding seen in his satirical musical theater series "The Pan Show" and most recently in his play "Journey From The East" which, inspired by the influx of Chinese into Southside Bethlehem, explores American anxiety about a "rising China" on the world stage.

Application Part 3: Student Statement of Purpose

SOAR Research Proposal: Summer 2015

Multiculturalism and Stereotype in the Twenty-first Century

Student: Samantha Weinberg, '18. Secondary English Education Major, Theater Minor (Undeclared).

Faculty: Christopher Shorr, Associate Professor of Theater Arts, English Department

Other: On-campus housing requested beginning June 1, 10 weeks.

Statement of Purpose:

The twenty-first century thus far has been an age of growing globalization and increasingly available information, which has allowed for more minority cultures to make their presence known amongst the majority population. This has had many various impacts on society, including an increasing number of stereotypes concerning these minority groups. Often, the general public does not address this backlash to multiculturalism and inclusion. By bringing these stereotypes and negative responses to the public in a format that allows for analysis and critique, I hope to help change the way society looks at stereotype and the way that stereotype is used in theater. I believe that if presented with a critique of an oppressive majority, the Moravian College community will be prompted to begin a discussion about how issues of multiculturalism can be addressed.

This project aims to present a thorough criticism of majority cultures through the use of theater and performing arts. I will work alongside Professor Shorr to develop a list of modern stereotypes and stigmas that are significant issues today, based on thorough research of individual minority groups. This research, consisting of written material acquired through JSTOR and the library catalogue and of interviews conducted on and off campus, will provide context and background information for a full-length performance. This dramatic piece will be written during the end of the summer sessions and produced during the 2015 fall semester. Overall, I hope to include both Moravian students and members of the Bethlehem community in this production, allowing this piece to reach a wider audience than if the production was exclusive to Moravian students.

In addition to finding material online and in print through library resources, I hope to conduct a series of interviews of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds. This process will help add a personal element to the final result, allowing the production to connect with a wider audience and promote further understanding of minority communities. These interviews would consist of people

of various races, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, and so on.

Rationale and Expected Outcomes:

Multiculturalism and Stereotype in the Twenty-first Century would be a benefit to Moravian College, the Bethlehem community, others involved in theater or the performing arts, and to my own future goals. This project would be a benefit to Moravian College and the Bethlehem community by bringing new cultures and ideas to a public forum, allowing for continued discussion of these topics. The project would result in a complete, finished production, giving students an additional opportunity to get involved with theater and the performing arts at Moravian College. Additionally, the content of the piece would result in continued discussion of multiculturalism at Moravian and potentially pave the way for a better experience for students identifying with the cultures and subjects addressed.

This project will also be a benefit to my own studies, both in the present and in the future. Seeing as I plan to pursue a degree in education, additional knowledge of the challenges certain minority groups face will be incredibly helpful for knowing how I can best teach my future students. Also, as I plan on self-designing a minor in theater, this project will help me to learn more about the intricacies of the performing arts. Through this project, I will be given the chance to explore the process of playwriting from start to finish and to experience seeing one's own play produced and put on stage.

Application Part 4: Expense Proposal

SOAR Research Proposal: Summer 2015

Multiculturalism and Stereotype in the Twenty-first Century

Student: Samantha Weinberg, '18. Secondary English Education Major, Theater Minor (Undeclared).

Faculty: Christopher Shorr, Associate Professor of Theater Arts, English Department

Expense Proposal: Travel

As part of the research for this project, Ms. Weinberg will attend three theater productions in New York City that address issues of cultural identity. This is part of the research process, and will aid in the identification and discussion of elements used to dramatize similar themes. The trips to New York will include three plays, one being featured on Broadway, one off-Broadway, and one off off-Broadway. Examples of pertinent productions (subject to ticket availability and other factors) are "Hand to God" and "Avenue Q," due to the fact that the subjects of race, sexual identity, gender identity, and the relationship between majority and minority cultures are addressed in these works.

Breakdown of Costs:

We request the maximum travel stipend of \$500 in order to cover the combined costs of bus fares, ticket costs, and additional expenses. The bus fares for all three trips would cost \$135 total, with each individual trip costing \$45. The projected ticket costs add up to approximately \$225, though these costs are subject to change depending on the final shows selected. The budget for tickets would ultimately be divided up to account for all three shows; approximately \$150 would be dedicated to a Broadway performance, \$50 for an off-Broadway performance, and \$25 for an off-off Broadway performance. If funds are available, the faculty mentor will accompany, and additional research funds may be used to support expenses above and beyond the \$500 budget.

Bus fares: \$135 (\$45 per trip)

Tickets: \$225

Meals/additional expenses: \$75 (\$25 per trip)

Total Requested: \$500