



DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Humanities Connections guidelines at

<https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-connections-planning-grants>

<https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-connections-implementation-grants>

for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Guidelines have changed: this document from a previous grant cycle may diverge from current requirements in multiple ways (including narrative length and project design specifications). Humanities Connections grants now offer funding at two levels, **Planning** and **Implementation**. Previous sample narratives will not reflect this distinction: they may contain elements appropriate for current Planning grants as well as those called for in current Implementation grants.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Community, Memory, and a Sense of Place
Institution: Rochester Institute of Technology
Project Director: Lisa Hermsen
Grant Program: Humanities Connections

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Humanities Connections: Community, Memory and a Sense of Place

Project Summary

This Humanities Connections Grant proposes a new three-course immersion in RIT's general education curriculum. By studying community in and beyond Rochester from a host of disciplinary perspectives – historical, geographical, literary, environmental and socioeconomic – undergraduates will gain a better understanding of how communities have formed, changed and often retained a distinct sense of place amid shifting economic, political and technological forces. The immersion allows students to take three different classes while at RIT, each emphasizing a different disciplinary perspective on community, memory and place. This course sequence also emphasizes the importance of experiential learning by allowing students to work on engaged research projects focusing on a single community in Rochester. Through field trips, archival research, and interactions with local figures (from business figures to community leaders), students will contribute to an on-going digital archive that documents community, memory and place in a different Rochester region each year. In this way, students will learn about the various ways that people have understood their neighborhood, school districts, community institutions and more during times of both seeming stasis and rapid change. The project team includes interdisciplinary faculty who have significant NEH grant experience as well as those dedicated to innovative curricular programs at RIT. The project team firmly believes that a combination of rigorous academic coursework and experiential learning will provide RIT students with a dynamic new program of study that enhances their appreciation of humanities inquiry on and off campus.

Humanities Connections: Community, Memory and a Sense of Place

Intellectual Rationale:

According to urban theorist Richard Florida, our very understanding of community has shifted in recent years. Where stable communities built through decades of industrial ascension once prospered, now deindustrialization, globalization, and accelerating technological change have eroded American institutional life and with it a series of powerful understandings of community, memory and sense of place. In cities ranging from Rochester to Portland, new aggregations of creative groups – including engineers, doctors, artists and writers -- have promised to revitalize the urban core while simultaneously redefining the meaning of both community and sense of place. While Florida's understanding of urban change remains much contested, it nevertheless poses a central question framing this grant proposal: how should we as citizens, students and scholars seek to understand community, memory and sense of place when a dizzying array of economic, political and technological changes constantly challenge traditional understandings of the world around us? Indeed, a host of recent scholars in both the humanities and social sciences have paid increasing attention to this question. As sociologist Robert Putnam has put it trenchantly, while during the “first two-thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into ever deeper engagement in the life of their communities,” more recently “that tide reversed and... we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities.” Neighborhood groups and local politicians have noted something similar, pointing out that we must find new ways to appreciate American community life. As one Rochester politician recently put it, “if you don't understand local communities, you won't understand global ones.”

This Humanities Connections grant will create a new three-course immersion in RIT's general education curriculum that allows students to study community, memory and sense of place from two complementary perspectives: coursework and experiential learning. Immersions – defined as a three-course sequence on particular theme -- are required as part of an RIT bachelor's degree. This immersion introduces students to the scholarly study of community by offering three linked and concurrently-run courses on the subject. Students may take any one of three classes examining community from various historical, literary, economic and social perspectives. They will then have the opportunity and incentive to complete the immersion by taking the remaining classes in the sequence during subsequent years. Beyond rigorous classroom study, students in all courses will also work on engaged research projects focusing on Rochester neighborhoods – beginning with historic Marketview Heights – that illuminate the lived meaning of community, memory and diversity amid new economic and social conditions. By interacting with business leaders, reformers and residents, we hope to show our students that understanding community and sense of place requires not only intellectual investigation but immersions in communities themselves.

Recognizing that RIT students need a firm grounding in humanities inquiry, each of the three courses focuses on a distinct theme and will survey literature in various field study. In “Industry, Environment, and Community,” students will examine Rochester through the lens of industrialization, immigration, technological innovation, and environmental change between the 1890s and 1990s – an era that saw Rochester's rise as a regional business center and then decline as “Rust Belt” town beset by unemployment and environmental pollution from the industrial age. In “Literary Geographies,” students will survey the diverse ways that writers have cultivated a distinct sense of place in and beyond Rochester through fiction, memoirs, maps and other

nonfiction genres that make a place social and culturally visible. In “Reforming Rochester,” students will examine the city’s dynamic history of social reform during the 19th and early 20th centuries, as successive waves of abolitionist, women’s rights, and religious reformers attempted to turn Rochester itself into a model American City.

All classes revolve around the common idea that community and place are capacious, ramifying and necessary concepts for 21st century students to grasp as they enter an increasingly diverse workplace and world. Using historian and urban planner Timothy Creswell’s text *Place: A Short Introduction* as a starting point, all three courses meditate on the way that place (both in and beyond Rochester) is understood not merely as a geographical marker but “a way of understanding the world.” Creswell asks us – as we will ask our students – to look at American and global society as a “world of places” that teaches us “to see things differently” when we immerse ourselves in a particular community’s history, memory and understanding of itself. According to philosopher Edward Casey’s *The Fate of Place*, the very concept of modern identity stems from the power of place: our need to create narratives about how communities, folkways, and societies developed and must be remembered. The corollary principle, as social historian Walter Licht has argued, is that knowledge of “the world of places” must not be erased during a new era of technical innovation and global development; rather, understanding distinct places (such as Rochester’s Marketview Heights, Philadelphia’s Textile Corridor, or Silicon Valley’s early chip manufacturing zone) is critical to thinking about a range of contemporary civic matters, from the efficacy of community redevelopment plans to the need for environmental remediation in the urban core. Ultimately, we hope to show students that understanding community, memory and sense of place remains a complex but worthwhile endeavor. As philosopher Dimitri Nikulin

notes, we become more engaged citizens when thinking about the connections among place, the past and the present.

Although we will remind students of Benedict Anderson's notion that all communities are in some sense imagined through both media and memory, our project builds on the notion that community is a tangible entity that exists in various forms, from memoirs to maps. Indeed, borrowing from Walter Licht, who has worked with civic and political groups in Philadelphia, we want students to see that cities themselves are comprised of "networks and niches" woven through time. Here, we will introduce students to cutting-edge work on community, memory and place, including digital humanities projects that map community formation, environmental change, and economic shifts through time. For instance, students in "Literary Geographies" will use the award-winning website "Digital Harlem" (<http://digitalharlem.org/>) to examine the way that this famed neighborhood evolved from a relatively small community enclave, where African Americans sought refuge from race prejudice North as well as South, to an international mecca for black artists, musicians and writers in the 1920s. "Digital Harlem" maps neighborhood change during five-year increments, showing streets, schools, churches and community centers in a continuous process of development to meet community needs. More broadly, all classes consider the importance of the "spatial turn" in the humanities, which, as David Bodenhamer argues, sees geography as a key explanatory tool for how things came to be; as he puts it, we must understand mapping "not for the trivial and self-evident reason that everything occurs in space, but because where events unfold is integral to how they take shape." As the classes "Reforming Rochester" and "Industry, Environment, and Community" detail, Rochester's geography and built environment – particularly the city's siting on the Genesee River and its connection to the Erie Canal – played a key role in its development as an entrepot of business, immigration, innovation,

education and reform. Even today, Rochester prides itself on being a trade and high-tech hub that retains a sense of its reform past (local airport terminals are named after famed reformers Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony).

To ensure that our courses offer not only scholarly rigor but an experiential foundation, each class will feature a student engagement project focusing on a single Rochester community. Initially, we will focus on Marketview Heights. Like many so-called Rust Belt communities that prospered during the heyday of industrialization – thus allowing residents to build durable, still recognizable places – this section of Northeast Rochester has struggled in recent years. Though it played a key role in Rochester’s industrial and urban growth – particularly in the garment trades - - Marketview Heights is now a diverse neighborhood often at the edge of a revitalizing local economy trying to navigate a range of complex issues, including new immigration patterns, political representation in city and metropolitan political debates, the fate of community redevelopment projects, and the meaning of area history and memory in a new global era emphasizing constant change.

More than just “City as Text” activities, we hope that this part of the class will immerse students in the way that community members define place from the ground up. This neighborhood has been the focus of a decade-long program between RIT’s University/Community Partnerships and Marketview Heights residents. With the help of RIT professors, area residents are now creating an oral history archive documenting the memories and experiences of multiple generations of families. Through field trips, guest lectures and research activities, students will learn about how neighborhood residents have navigated economic, political and social change.

In this way, we hope to model humanities inquiry at the experiential level. As many studies have shown, experiential learning allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to real world

contexts, reinforcing important habits of mind and analytical tools that remain relevant beyond the university environment: the significance of understanding historical context, the ability to sort through diverse opinions on complex subjects, reading sources (texts, reports, oral histories and maps) fully and critically. According to the Faculty Innovation Center at the University of Texas, our contemporary “educational environment needs to intentionally create rich connections between the formal and experiential curriculums. This is critically important at RIT, where students taking internships to fulfill their degree requirements travel more than average undergraduates. By better preparing them to appreciate community and sense of place, we hope to revivify the signal importance of the humanities well beyond campus.

Content, Design and Implementation:

The three-courses in community, memory and sense of place will be offered concurrently beginning in the spring semester of 2018 and will run each academic year thereafter as a set of linked classes focusing on a different local community. In the summer and fall of 2017, the project team will engage in a series of preparatory meetings and planning sessions. In the first week of August, team members will gather for a “Boot Camp” designed around class readings, teaching resources, and discussions on experiential learning. Each day will be dedicated to key humanities questions and resources. On Monday, co-director Richard Newman will convene a seminar on the general concept of community and sense of place. Using Timothy Creswell’s reader on “Place,” Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*, and oral historian Michael Frisch’s *Portraits in Steel* (featuring the photographs of Milt Rogovin), which documents the memories of former steel workers in the nearby city of Lackawanna, New York (roughly 70 miles from Rochester), we will share ideas about teaching community, memory and place. We will ask if there are broad lines of agreement

among literary scholars, philosophers, social scientists and historians about community and sense of place? How and why do humanities scholars study memory? How do social scientists understand community? What are the best ways to engage students taking our disparate courses?

Over the next three days, our boot camp will examine scholarly literature designated for each course. On Tuesday, co-director Richard Newman will share readings on Rochester reformers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, including Milton Sernett's *North Star Country*, which examines the development of Rochester's vibrant antebellum social reform community. We will also consider primary source readings by celebrated Rochester abolitionist Frederick Douglass on racial equality after the Civil War and Susan B. Anthony on women's rights struggles in the late 1800s. Why did a new generation of reformers gather in Rochester during the 19th century and what influence did they have locally and nationally? On Wednesday, Kristoffer Whitney will examine scholarship on Rochester's industrial expansion, built environment and community growth, including Carol Breyer's biography of Kodak founder and industrialist George Eastman, whose shadow still looms large in the local business and philanthropic communities. Whitney will ask us to think about the way that industrial environments shaped area neighborhoods and communities as well as the way that national and international economic trends impacted Rochester's growth. On Thursday, co-director Lisa Hermsen will discuss readings on both narrative theory of place and the spatial humanities, especially David Bodenhamer et al's reader, *The Spatial Humanities*, which includes work by humanities scholars on the importance of geomapping. Hermsen will also focus on Marilynne Robinson's award-winning novel *Gilead*, which conjures a distinct sense of place in the 19th century Midwest. In what ways does literature allow communities to maintain their distinctiveness? How has recent inter-disciplinary work on spatial humanities reframed our understanding of community? On Friday, our boot camp will consider best practices in experiential

learning and community engagement through a seminar led by team member Ann Howard, who has been instrumental in forming partnerships with several Rochester neighborhoods. She will focus on the ways that experiential learning bolsters humanities study.

In Fall 2017, co-directors Hermsen and Newman will work with a student assistant and RIT librarian and team member Marcia Trauernicht on a resource guide for student projects. Focusing on the three major libraries -- the RIT Wallace Center, the Rochester Public Library, and the University of Rochester Rush Rees Library – we will collect information on local history and neighborhoods, including family archives, photographs, newspapers and books. This resource guide will be digitized and circulated to project team members, who will use it to prepare students for their class projects. In addition, in November 2017 the team will gather for a one-day seminar on using Rochester history in the classroom led by project team member and city librarian Christine Ridarsky.

With this foundation established, our courses will debut in Spring 2018. Classes will be offered through the General Education curriculum and be designated as writing and reading intensive, which caps enrollment at 19 students. Running courses concurrently will maximize initial interest in the new immersion and allow the project team to synchronize key group activities (including lectures by community leaders and site visits to various neighborhood landmarks). In addition, concurrent classes will create a common forum among students – facilitated by the creation of online discussions -- encouraging robust dialogue across course topics and disciplines. With a different neighborhood serving as the focus of the three-course concentration in ensuing academic years, students will be encouraged to take each of the courses in the immersion (though there are no prerequisites for any class). The project team will assess the strengths and weakness of running courses concurrently so that future versions may run more smoothly and efficiently.

All classes will have a dual focus: course readings and experiential learning projects. In the first half of the semester (seven weeks), students will be introduced to key readings, concepts and questions in each course. In “Industry, Environment, and Community,” students will examine the ways that social scientists have studied community through time and space. Surveying the “new labor history” (including Walter Licht and Thomas Dublin’s *Face of Decline*), environmental studies on community growth (including William Cronon’s study of Chicago’s expansion, *Nature’s Metropolis*) and recent work on deindustrialization (such as Allen Dietrich Ward’s look at Pittsburgh, *Beyond Rust*), Professor Whitney will bring economic history into conversation with community history, cultural geography and environmental history. Looking more closely at Rochester shifting economic and demographic trends, students will also read Blake McKelvey’s *Rochester on the Genesee: the Growth of a City* and Carol Breyer’s critical biography of Rochester business titan George Eastman. Bringing the local immigration story up to date, students will examine a report by the “Utica Center for Small Cities and Rural Studies” showing that Rochester has attracted an increasing number of Asian, African and Hispanic immigrants since 2000 – a trend that is revivifying many area neighborhoods. Professor Whitney will ask students several broad questions: what are the historical connections between economic livelihood and community identity? How have immigration and deindustrial trends shaped and then reshaped definitions of community and identity in and beyond Rochester? What was the environmental legacy of industrialization in the Rust Belt and how are places like Rochester (or Pittsburgh) dealing with it? After taking this class, students will have a better understanding of Rochester’s relationship to national economic, environmental, and immigration trends, particularly the way they impact definitions of community and sense of place.

The “Literary Geographies” course draws upon narrative theory and geomapping to help students understand how communities have defined both their cultural and social environments and thus themselves. Using an interdisciplinary approach, Professor Hermsen will survey the ways that literature, nonfiction, and geomapping projects illuminate distinct regional identities that have endured through time. In addition to “Digital Harlem,” students will read selections from Colson Whitehead’s *Colossus of New York* on race and place in Gotham, Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*, and James Howard Kunstler’s *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape*, which offers a nonfiction understanding of literary geography. On the spatial turn in the humanities, students will read from David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris’s *GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*. Students will also read local family histories, including that of Frank and Caroline Werner Gannett, a Rochester founding family best known for the news media empire they created. Students will also practice writing nonfictional stories of their own neighborhoods, using memories of actual events and geomapping software (ArcGIS) to detail a place or scene. Throughout, Professor Hermsen will ask students to consider how the study of stories, oral histories and maps reveal (or conceal) realities about certain communities, places and memories? What are the strengths and weaknesses of various genres in preserving memory and sense of place? How is technology changing things in the 21st century? By the end of the class, students will have a more critical understanding of the way that literary scholars and digital humanists create and explore texts that illuminate the deeper meaning of community, memory and sense of place.

In “Reforming Rochester,” students will focus on the meaning of deep historical context by studying social activism in Western New York during the 19th and early 20th centuries. As Professor Newman will show, from the advent of the Erie Canal onward, generations of Rochester

reformers sought to improve social and political conditions in a city that grew by leaps and bounds. By reading about early temperance advocates in Paul Johnson's classic study, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, as well as Milton Sernett's *North Star Country*, students will see that reform struggles in Rochester responded to a variety of economic and social concerns. Autobiographical accounts by Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony will sharpen student focus on racial and gender reform in the 19th century – movements that made Rochester famous as a community grappling with egalitarian reform. (For instance, Douglass sought to desegregate his daughter's school in the 1850s while Anthony was arrested in Rochester for trying to vote in 1872). Lori Ginzberg's biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Anthony's famed colleague who lived in nearby Seneca Falls) carries the women's rights struggle through the 20th century, illuminating the continued importance of Rochester as a reform community. Students will also read work by two under-appreciated Rochester religious reformers, Walter Rauschenbusch and Howard Thurmond, both of whom advocated versions of the social gospel movement challenging reformers to immerse themselves in local communities and thereby improve material and spiritual conditions throughout the world. Both figures taught at area divinity schools, influenced national reformers (including Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.), and participated in a series of non-violent reform movements in the early 20th century, leaving a legacy of civic-minded reform that remains today. After studying this range of reform figures, and examining essays on race, gender and community reform in Rochester during the 20th century via selected volumes of *Rochester History* (published by the Rochester Historical Society and now available online), Professor Newman will focus on several key questions: What legacy did these reformers leave to subsequent generations of Rochesterians? How has their memory been preserved in monuments, memorials and other public ways and with what purpose? Did Douglass and Anthony always agree about reform strategies? Did

Rauschenbusch and Thurmond see social reform as part and parcel of a modern religious sensibility, or were they reacting to grave social and cultural problems few others were addressing? Students should leave this class understanding that history remains an important part of both community identity and civic memory, particularly in Rochester, which still struggles to solve contemporary social ills on various fronts.

In the second half the semester (seven weeks), students in all classes will begin engaged research projects on Marketview Heights. During Week 7, we will start with a common reading: Jerre Mangione's *Mount Allegro*. A well-known 20th century author whose family hailed from Marketview Heights (his nephew is the still-living jazz great Chuck Mangione), Mangione headed the WPA writer's project in the 1930s and later became a professor of literature at the University of Pennsylvania. *Mount Allegro* is Mangione's memoir of growing up in a Sicilian immigrant family in Rochester (Mangione's publisher originally advertised the book as fiction, though it was autobiographical). The book tours Mangione's old neighborhood, detailing his family life, area social institutions, and the general sense of community pervading Marketview Heights. Team member Ann Howard will lead a combined class seminar on *Mount Allegro* -- featuring break out discussions -- on how the neighborhood has changed since Mangione's time, including the way that Asian, African American and Hispanic groups have re-shaped neighborhood identity and community life. Students will also take a common field trip to the Rochester Public Market, founded in 1905 and the neighborhood's signature institution. The group will also gather at the nearby public library for brief talks by, and discussion with, community members. How has their neighborhood changed and remained the same? What political, economic, and social concerns do they have? How and why do residents hope to keep a distinct sense of place going? We will discuss

these and other questions with students, always mindful of the way community-centered narratives fit into our broader studies.

Students will then work on research projects, which will be focused on discrete topics they can finish by semester's end. Projects may include, but are not limited to, finding and annotating maps of Rochester and Marketview Heights; crafting and editing brief histories of the neighborhood; creating overviews of political, economic and settlement patterns in the broader Rochester area; and annotating and summarizing oral histories of residents. The team's pedagogical approach will be that of experiential learning – asking students to use their archival research and work with community members to frame their understanding of key questions: How does history and memory impact the community's definition of itself? How has both immigration and economic change challenged longstanding notions of work, family life, and social cohesion? Based on their studies, what should a digital community archive include?

The project team will offer guided research opportunities during the rest of the semester. In Week 8, librarians Christine Ridarsky and Marcia Trauernicht will hold a common seminar on research materials in area libraries. In Weeks 9 through 13, team members will be stationed at various research repositories while students work individually and in groups on their projects. Team members will also plan weekly update meetings, including “problem solving” sessions with students.

In the final week, all three courses will meet for a conference featuring project presentations by individuals and groups. This will become the basis for the digital humanities project on community life in Rochester. Based at RIT, it will be housed on the Digital Humanities Project website and shared with the Rochester Public Library. As more community projects are planned in future immersions, they will be added to the digital archive. Using several community-

based digital projects as a guide -- including “Digital Harlem,” “Montréal L’Avenir Du Passe” (on fin de siècle Montreal’s geography and built environment), and “Philadelphia: Workshop of the World,” we will also discuss what a Rochester community website might include. We will also consider what students and faculty learned during the semester. How did both the project and class immersion reshape their understanding of humanities inquiry?

At the end of the semester, project co-directors Hermsen and Newman will hire a New Media student from RIT with expertise in web design (Hermsen worked with New Media students on a successful online project in 2013). The student will work with the entire team in the summer and fall to curate the community archive. We will unveil the project at a public ceremony in RIT’s Wallace Center library in November 2018. It will also be featured on the Rochester Public Library’s website, under the label *Rochester Voices*.

Collaborative Team:

The project team is comprised of an interdisciplinary group of scholarly experts and librarians committed to both humanities inquiry and engaged research work with area communities. Co-director Dr. Lisa Hermsen is the Caroline Werner Gannett Chair in the Digital Humanities and the past chair of RIT’s English Department. She specializes in several fields, including the rhetoric of science and the history of psychiatry. She is the author of *Manic Minds*, a history of bipolar disorder that focused on several communities, including asylum patients. She will help oversee all of the project team’s activities, especially the digital project. Student and the creation of the community archive. She will also teach the class on “Literary Geographies.”

Co-Director Dr. Richard Newman is Professor of History at RIT and formerly Edwin Wolf 2nd Director of the Library Company of Philadelphia. The director or co-director of six NEH

seminars and workshops, including a 2011 Landmarks Workshop on the Rochester Reform Trail, he is also the author of several books on American reformers, including *Love Canal: A Toxic History*, which focuses on the community of activists that mobilized against toxic waste hazards in Niagara Falls. He will help oversee all of the project team's activities, including the boot camp and the collection of resources on Rochester archives. He will also teach the class "Reforming Rochester."

M. Ann Howard, JD, Professor of Science, Technology, and Society, and Director of RIT University/Community Partnerships, teaches environmental policy and environmental studies courses. Professor Howard specializes in engaged research and has worked on oral history projects with residents in several Rochester communities, including Marketview Heights. She will facilitate the project team's work on experiential learning and plan and facilitate all meetings with Marketview Heights residents.

Dr. Kristoffer Whitney is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Science, Technology and Society. He holds a PhD in the History and Sociology of Science from the University of Pennsylvania and is an expert on environmental policy, the built environment, and environmental reform. His article "Domesticating Nature" won the distinguished 2016 David Edge Prize for the best essay on the Sociology of Science. He will teach the course on "Industry, Environment, and Community" and help students work on engaged research for use in the final digital project.

Christine Ridarsky is the City Historian at the Rochester Public Library. An expert in public history, genealogy, and archives management, she has taught classes at several area universities. Since her appointment in 2008, she has expanded the use of Rochester history in high school and college curricula. She will help students use primary sources and help curate the community digital project.

Marcia Trauernicht is the Interim Director of RIT Libraries and a specialist in digitization. Since 2002, she has helped improve student use of both primary and secondary sources. She will aid student research on campus and help digitize documents and images for the final community project.

Institutional Context:

RIT is one of the nation's largest private universities, with nearly 19,000 full-time students and nearly 2000 faculty, and the humanities plays an integral role in students' educational life. The College of Liberal Arts remains the largest academic unit on campus, with over 150 faculty members. Comprised of 15 departments, it offers the majority of RIT's general education courses and introduces students to 13 degree programs in both the humanities and social sciences. Against national trends, courses in history, philosophy, environmental studies, and international relations are experiencing increasing enrollments (with roughly 80% of available seats filled). New interdisciplinary majors prominently feature the humanities, from Museum Studies to Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS), while programs in history, philosophy and literature – including the annual Frederick Douglass Lecture in African American History – bring nationally-renowned scholars to campus to interact with undergraduates as well as faculty. Recently elevated to a Carnegie I status, RIT remains committed to providing students with a rigorous humanities education.

Impact and Dissemination:

This new three-course immersion will allow RIT students and faculty to engage in a powerful new form of interdisciplinary study. Not only will students have the opportunity to

examine community, memory and sense of place from both scholarly and experiential perspectives but, by taking linked courses running concurrently, students will be able to share common experiences (public lectures, fields trips, project research) in the general education curriculum. Creating such impactful programs has been an increasing priority at RIT, which emphasizes the importance of collaborative study for both students and professors. This immersion will also serve as a model for a minor -- five linked courses -- in Community Studies, and perhaps a major. Several faculty have expressed interest in teaching classes linked to community, memory and sense of place; this project will stimulate discussion about expanding RIT offerings on these topics. Indeed, co-directors Hermsen and Newman will plan a seminar on what we learned in the Faculty Colloquium Series at RIT (Fall 2018). Finally, by curating a community archive that is made available on the Rochester Public Library's website, we hope to illuminate the importance of humanities study well beyond campus. As we teach new iterations of the immersion, we plan to collaborate with other communities in the greater Rochester area. At the end of the project, the co-directors will propose a paper on the immersion for the Annual National Conference for Imagining America, a professional organization dedicated to community engagement (<http://imaginingamerica.org/>).

Evaluation:

We will evaluate the project in several ways, including monthly assessment, student surveys and the production of white paper on "Lessons Learned." During the grant period, the co-directors will meet monthly to assess progress on the project. At the end of Spring 2018, instructors in each class will ask students to complete surveys focusing on three key questions: How interesting was this course as part of the general education curriculum? What did you learn about

humanities inquiry through both coursework and experiential projects? And how likely are you to take classes in the sequence again? After examining these qualitative surveys, as well as student enrollment data, we will meet with members of the project team to discuss lessons learned. How did this immersion impact our teaching in and beyond the various fields of expertise? We will invite members of RIT's Innovative Learning Institute to further discuss ways to improve future courses in light of student commentary. And we will meet with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts to discuss administrative support for the immersion in subsequent years. Among other things, we will consider the benefits of running classes concurrently (versus offering courses throughout the academic year) and refining the student projects on Rochester communities (perhaps by offering an expanded list of research topics).

Results from these inquiries will allow the co-directors to prepare a white paper by December 2018. Building on insights from our quantitative and qualitative evaluations, co-directors Hermsen and Newman will present their preliminary findings at a faculty symposium in October. The final white paper will feature commentary by each member of the project team and will focus on several key themes: the importance of teaching community through inter-disciplinary inquiry; the impact of experiential learning on faculty pedagogy as well as student educational experiences; and the impact of the three-course immersion on RIT's general education curriculum, including the possibility of expanding the curriculum on community and sense of place. With this review completed and submitted to NEH, we will plan for the next iteration of the immersion in 2019.

RIT Humanities Connections Grant: Community, Memory and Sense of Place

Appendix I: Plan of Work and Schedule of Activities

August 2017: Project Team Boot Camp: Key Readings, Framing Ideas, Pedagogical Approaches.

Project team members will assemble for a preparatory “Boot Camp” at the Wallace Center Library on the RIT campus.

All meetings offer seminary style discussion 9am to Noon; Lunch 12-1:30.

Monday Aug 7: Defining A Sense of Place: Group Discussion Facilitated by Co-Directors Newman and Hermsen

Texts, Creswell, *Place: A Reader*; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Frisch and Rogovin, *Portraits in Steel*

Framing Questions: How have literary scholars, philosophers, social scientists and historians understood community? Is there common ground to their various disciplinary approaches?

Tuesday Aug 8: Reforming Rochester: Key Readings and Concepts: Discussion Facilitated by Co-Director Newman:

Texts: Milton Sernett, *North Star Country*; Douglass, *Life and Times*, Anthony, Selected Writings, Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*.

Framing Questions: How and why did abolitionists, women’s rights activists and religious reformers come to identify Rochester as a “reform” city during the 19th and early 20th centuries? What are the legacies of these reform movements today in the greater Rochester area?

Wed. Aug 9: Building Rochester: Industry, Environment, Community: Discussion facilitated by team member Kristoffer Whitney.

Texts: Carol Breyer’s *George Eastman*, Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River*; Blake McKelvey, *City on the Genesee*.

Framing Questions: What defined Rochester’s industrial build up? How did immigration impact city growth and identity? What defined the built environment?

Thursday Aug. 10: Literary Geography in and Beyond Rochester: Discussion facilitated by co-director Hermsen

Texts: David Bodenhamer et al, *The Spatial Humanities*, Marilyn Robinson *Gilead*, “Digital Harlem.”

Framing Questions: How has geography informed understanding of community and sense of place? How does the “Spatial Turn” reconceptualize Studies of community? How does literature convey community meaning?

Friday, Aug. 11: Experiential Learning: Marketview Heights and Beyond. Discussion facilitated by team member Ann Howard.

Texts: Mangione, *Mount Allegro*; Marketview Heights Oral History Project samples.

Framing Questions: What have we learned by working with residents in the community and how can this inform both pedagogy and student projects in our courses?

September – November 2017: Getting Sources Ready: Archive Survey of Rochester Libraries.

Co-Directors Newman and Hermsen will create a plan of work with the student assistant for gathering and collating information on Rochester community history in area libraries. The project codirectors and student assistant will also work with team members Ridarsky and Trauernicht to ensure quality control of archival and online resources.

September 5: Meeting with co-directors, team librarians and student assistant at RIT’s Wallace Center Library.

Goal: Create protocols for student research on holdings on Rochester community history in area libraries.

October 10: preliminary report by student assistant to project co-directors.

November 3: Final report due on Rochester sources. Guide is circulated to Project team.

November 10: Seminar session: “Studying Rochester History.”

12-1pm: lunch

1-2:30pm: Lecture and facilitated discussion by Rochester city historian Christine Ridarsky on sources available for student research

2;30-3pm: Break

3-4:30: Lecture and facilitated discussion by Ann Howard on using archival and other resources to understand Marketview Heights

Inter-session: December-January: Class syllabi circulated and posted online.

Spring 2018: Classes Meet Concurrently on Tuesday, Thursday schedule (90 min classes).

Common Classes and field trips: Week 1 (introduction); Week 7-8 (Marketview Heights); Week 14 (final conference on student projects).

May 2018: Preliminary evaluations of classes and projects produced by team.

Summer 2018: Project team works with RIT New Media student on design of community project website.

September 17, 2018: National Citizenship Day: Preliminary presentation of project website.

October 2018: Co-directors Hermsen and Newman present colloquium to RIT faculty on new immersion on community, memory and sense of place.

November 2018: Final Community Project Launched at RIT Wallace Center Library.

December 2018: Final NEH grant report completed by project co-directors.

Appendix II: Bibliography

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