



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

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 current guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at <https://www.neh.gov/program/spotlight-humanities-higher-education>.

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

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: *Finding Your Place: Teaching the History of People of Color in Connecticut*

Institution: Connecticut State University System

Project Director: Leah Glaser

Grant Program: Spotlight on Humanities in Higher Education Development Grants



October 31, 2022

Re: Spotlight on Humanities in Higher Education Grant, 2023

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), located in the City of New Britain, requests funding to develop and pilot a new course with not only historical content about long-neglected communities of color, but content specific to Connecticut, and in response to new state educational legislation. Our goal is to train Connecticut's future educators to teach to K-12 audiences about the state's diverse history and culture through innovative curriculum based in local, place-based resources. Place-based learning connects students to their communities and builds community through collective memory. With this course, we aim to model new ways of training teachers earning their Bachelors in Secondary and Elementary History/Social Studies Education, *before* they get to the classroom. Additionally, many teachers return for their master's degree in Public History, specifically so that they can enlist place-based and experiential learning in their classrooms. This course is a first step in what we hope will become the foundation for a CCSU-based center for teaching Connecticut's culture and history by showing a commitment to diversity and inclusion through both content and pedagogy. We hope a successful assessment of this course will allow us to enlist additional funding and resources from inside and outside the university to continue offering the course, with experts, sites, and community partners, and to run summer workshops and programming to support teachers and museum educators already in the field.

Humanities content and activities. This upper undergraduate/graduate level, semester long course about the history of people of color in Connecticut will include the tools and resources to introduce place-based curriculum into K-12 classrooms as a method for teaching this historical content. The field of Public History, interdisciplinary in practice, has long-recognized "place" to be as important as time for understanding historical actors and events. Connection to place grows more critical with the rising climate crisis. In addition to building upon our proven instructional strategies for training our teachers, faculty can enhance CCSU's Social Studies education and Public History programs to take advantage of university resources and community partners to empower teachers to include more voices and perspectives.

While place-based learning is not new, many Connecticut classrooms have not enlisted it. As far back as 1991, the National Park Service with the National Trust for Historic Preservation developed the "Teaching with Historic Places" program (TwHP) to provide lesson plans around historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Along with that of our community partners (discussed later), these examples can serve as models for current and future teachers, with the nomination forms for those properties providing local historical content unavailable in other publications. The program provides a guide for "infusing place in Social Studies Methods classes."¹ The National Park Service's African American Civil Rights Network includes TwHP as a partner in education.² And in 2015, Connecticut's

¹ See Beth Boland, "Teaching with Historic Places: Where did History Happen?" CRM (Thematic Issue) 16:2 (1993), 1 and National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/teaching-with-historic-places.htm>, accessed October 16, 2022; Charles S. White, "TwHP: The 'Power of Place' in the History/Social Studies Methods Course," <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/teachingwithhistoricplaces/methods-course.htm>, accessed October 16, 2022.

² The federally-funded "Our Place in History" teacher development program provides a similar model. David A. Gruenewald, Nancy Koppelman and Anna Elam, "'Our Place in History:' Inspiring Place-Based

[Social Studies Frameworks](#) recognized the value of place-based learning and urges teachers to “enlist local and state history wherever and whenever possible when teaching United States history in elementary school, middle school, and high school” to “help students develop a sense of place and a sense of connection to the community where they live and go to school” and “as windows into the larger themes of United States history and to use local/state examples whenever possible. We strongly suggest that teachers use critical resources found at local historical societies, museums, and other historic sites.” Seven years later, we hope to provide teachers with the promised activities to support this framework.

We believe this statement about community connection, and “sense of place” is critical for engaging students in inclusive history.³ Most students still learn history almost solely from the pages of textbooks and think of history in national terms starring individual leaders and charted on timelines, jarringly disassociated from their cultural and natural environment and their communities (ideas that other Humanities disciplines like Geography, Anthropology, and Sociology study). This social studies course will highlight places historically connected and meaningful to communities of color, whose stories, perspectives and experiences, while often left out of historical narratives, remain on the landscape and through material culture. Examples include Indigenous history focusing on Connecticut tribal nations from pre-contact to their stories of reliance, survival, and influence into the twentieth and twenty-first century state history; African American History from the state’s West Indies slave trade to the leadership and contributions of the Black community to the state’s development, including actions to secure civil rights, economic security, and political power up through the present; Connecticut’s Hispanic heritage starting with immigration from Puerto Rico to current Latino immigration and contributions to Connecticut and the United States. Introducing this content and related locally-based resources to teachers while they are still in training will not only make our students more marketable, but it can also serve as an incentive for recruiting teachers from these under-represented communities.

Students currently learn a rich range of historical content through our course offerings, how to make decisions for teaching their adolescent students, and about the opportunities for exciting lessons and activities created through fields like Black studies and African American history, Puerto Rican and Caribbean studies, Latino/a and Latin American histories, women’s and gender histories, and labor and class studies as well as conventional political and economic histories. However, this course will avoid dividing the class units along hard lines of ethnicity and race in recognition of intersectional stories. Organized chronologically, as different groups contribute to the state’s historical development, we will also emphasize some places in history that these communities meet to include Afro-Latino and Afro-Indigenous people. We will highlight intersectional historical themes including and beyond colonial-era slavery, rights advocacy for political, educational, and housing equality from freedom to the present, and immigration from Afro-Latino countries (i.e., the Caribbean) that inherited the complex racial identities of colonial Spain. Therefore, identifying how the histories of various marginalized groups intersect, cooperate, and conflict will inform how our university faculty teach inclusive content as well.

We hope to blend our faculty’s specific content areas to develop a course that would not only work together structurally, but empower the students to develop ideas for classroom curriculum, facilitated by faculty scholars, while also developing relationship with historical and community organizations. This development grant will also serve as a vehicle to coordinate our university resources and engage in long overdue inter-disciplinary cooperation around places. We will invite faculty from other Humanities departments like Anthropology to inform our planning, as well as off-campus experts, to help identify and

Social History in Schools and Communities,” in “Place-Based Education and the Museum,” *Journal of Museum Education* 32:3 (Fall 2007), 233-242, “Promise of Place: Curriculum and Planning” <https://promiseofplace.org/curriculum-planning>, accessed October 20, 2022.

³ Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks, February 2015. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Social-Studies/ssframeworks.pdf>.

frame content. These include professionals with experience in “hard history” and place-based learning to conduct workshops.

Project Personnel. The primary instructors for this course will pull from CCSU History faculty and from the Witness Stones Project. CCSU has an established twenty-year old Public History program that has long emphasized the place-based study of history and interdisciplinary methodology and practices. **Dr. Leah S. Glaser**, Professor of History and coordinator of the Public History program, will serve as **Project Director**. Dr. Glaser has worked in the Public History field for thirty years and is actively involved in professional best practices for Public History educators through the National Council on Public History. She has regularly enlisted community partnership in her teaching over the last 15 years. **Primary instructors** include content specialists **Juan Coronado**, Associate Professor of History and Director of Latino Studies. Dr. Coronado, an expert in oral history and coordinator of the CCSU History Harvest, which has begun to collect and digitize items from the local Latino community, has been involved in the state-wide development of a Latinx History curriculum and will oversee the Latinx piece of the course. We currently have a one-year appointment for a Public History and African-American History specialist, **Camesha Scruggs**. The History Department is currently conducting a tenure-track search to permanently fill this position. This hire, to begin in Fall 2023, will also have interest and expertise in public history as place-based learning, and teach in the program. **David Naumec, PhD**, will provide instruction on Native people in the state. As a museum professional who worked for over a decade at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, Dr. Naumec, who is currently a visiting professor, is also a material culture specialist.

Supporting the content are social studies curriculum specialists **Aimee Loiselle, PhD** and Social Studies Coordinator, who has expertise in the post-World War II history of Puerto Rican Women, in Connecticut, specifically around labor. **Dennis Culliton**, the Director, Witness Stones Project, LLC, will be instrumental in developing this course inspired by the inquiry and project-based curriculum he, a former middle school Social Studies teacher advising on numerous state education initiatives, designed. **Kristen Levithan, MALS** (Social Studies) is the Educator for CT Explored Magazine, with expertise and experience in place-based learning. **Dr. Katherine Hermes**, CCSU History Professor Emeritus, has particular expertise in colonial and Native American history. Her present role as the publisher of *CT Explored* history magazine, based in-house, will allow her to collaborate with CCSU around this curriculum, in partnership with the magazine. The support of History Professor **Mary Ann Mahony, PhD**, director of the Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean Center, and **Oluwatoyin Ayeni**, director of the Center for Africana Studies will also be invaluable.

Institutional context and benefit. Central Connecticut State University is a mid-sized urban university that caters to a substantial population of first-generation students and to a growing minority population, especially Hispanic/Latino students. In 2021-2022, 34% of undergraduate students were first-generation college students, with 49% of the Fall 2022 incoming class identifying as first-generation college students. Approximately 1/3 of undergraduate and graduate students identified as minority students, with close to 20% of students identifying as Hispanic/Latino and 12% of students identifying as African American. The university, under the leadership of President Zulma Toro, is working toward becoming a Hispanic serving institution. Additionally, in its drive to make higher education more equitable, CCSU is one of fifteen universities in the country participating in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Transformation Accelerator Cohort 2021-2023. The program is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is intended to assist “institutions eliminate race, ethnicity, and income as predictors of student success.”

As the first teacher’s college in the state of Connecticut (originally the Connecticut Normal School), CCSU continues to offer a variety of complete pre-K-12 educator training programs for students. The university coordinates programs for Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Special Education and

Literacy/TSOL specialties, and Secondary 7-12 content areas. The university reaches a wide range of future educators and curriculum coordinators who will teach and design class pathways throughout the state. The course can serve as a funnel to a course sequence designed for students enrolled in the BSEd (Bachelor of Science in Education), but it will also be open to graduate students, pursuing a Post-Baccalaureate certification who hold a BA in a non-History discipline, but the state requires them to take History courses for certification. Many of our graduate students are teachers earning their MA, as the state requires teachers to earn a master's after five years in a school district. The course can also support Elementary Education majors concentrating on History as a discipline. Students who plan to complete their student teaching and education requirements at CCSU learn how to link history and other social studies content to curriculum goals, lesson planning, and assessments. Finally, undergraduate and graduate public history students interested in museum education will also find this course valuable.

This proposed course will be an innovative response to two major initiatives from the State of Connecticut to promote curriculum that explores the histories, experiences, and communities of people of color: PA 19-12 and the forthcoming revised Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards. In 2019, the state legislature passed Public Act No. 19-12 with two key components. In the first, the state requires that all school districts develop curriculum throughout K-12 to teach the Holocaust, the Great Famine, African American history and black studies, Puerto Rican history and Latino studies, Native American history, labor history and history of capitalism, and climate change. The second initiative emerged from students and community activists around the state who wanted to see a 9-12 high school requirement to offer Black studies and Latino studies. This grassroots effort led to the creation of a curriculum package by the State Education Resource Center (SERC) for a one-credit high school course. [Those piloting these courses have seen some political pushback, but students and teachers are excited](#) and motivated.⁴ Local boards of education and teachers are expected to present a more diverse and inclusive curriculum to our increasingly diverse public schools across the state.⁵

This mandate needs support at the college level to provide a toolkit of content and techniques to teachers in training so they can successfully present rich and diverse content from Connecticut. In the summer of 2021, CCSU offered a 5-day workshop at which teachers received training from expert faculty and experienced classroom teachers, developing content knowledge while building lessons and activities to include Black and Latino Studies. With the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in the process of revising the state content standards, the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies (CCSS), Connecticut Democracy Center, and Connecticut Humanities, alongside dedicated educators throughout the state, have collaborated to update K-12 content expectations and to address the curriculum goals of PA 19-12. The course we hope to develop will support the recommendations of SERC, the group that created the Black and Latino Studies course for the High Schools today (and includes state legislators) to change the way we teach teachers and develop courses at the university level to prepare teachers to meet these new state mandates.

The CCSU History Department can provide a powerful kaleidoscope of content expertise and our attention to teachers. Furthermore, our diverse student body, resources and relationships, and a decades old public history program, the CCSU History Department provides advantages to train Connecticut's future educators to teach the inclusive history in the state and be able to locate and root those stories to K-12 students' experiences and to where they live. We have several pieces in place to develop this concept into a unique and valuable course that will serve as a foundation for broader efforts to connect students and national history to Connecticut's local stories and resources. This grant will not only enlist historical documents, but we plan to work across disciplines, primarily Anthropology, Sociology, English, and

⁴ Alison Cross, "Course Teaches 'real, hard' history of US: Students, teachers praise Black, Latino Studies in mandate's first year: "Representation matters," *Hartford Courant* (October 16, 2022) 2:1.

⁵ Connecticut is politically organized by town (169), and most have their own school district.

languages, as well as interdisciplinary programs like American Studies, African-American Studies, and Latino/a/x Studies.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the CCSU History Department already works in formal in-house community partnerships with CT Explored Magazine and the Witness Stones Project (WSP), both of which feature proven place-based lesson plans we can share with students. We intend to leverage these non-profit partners for this project. The WSP a unique and successful educational non-profit has reached over 7,000 students in Connecticut, to bring the virtually unknown *northern* story of those enslaved locally using inquiry/project and primary document-based learning to reveal the collective role of these individuals on Connecticut's economy and institutions and their local stories of agency and resistance. The award-winning curriculum provides perspectives that motivate teachers/citizens to learn more, and will serve as a model for place-based curriculum alongside another in-house partner, CT Explored Magazine. Students will learn to connect to local sources and local stewards of historical documents in archives, material artifacts in museums, and historic sites. Through on-site visitation, our third in-house partner, the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) will help identify, evaluate, and share some of the innovative historical preservation and interpretation across the state, focusing on existing programming, and provide honorariums for those organizations to share their curriculum.

Furthermore, our own institutional resources, notably the Center for Africana Studies, allows for a continued telling of the growth of African American Society focusing on oral history, archaeology, the growth of African American Churches, African American led Abolitionist Movement, and African American Society today. But equally important will be the support CCSU's Latino/a/x Studies Program, the Latin American, Latino and Caribbean Center, the Center for Community Engagement and Social Research (CCESR), and our twenty-year old Public History Program as facilitators for this course and initiative. Connecticut Humanities and the State Historic Preservation Office nominated five state sites as "Sites of Conscience" that are already developing ways to address inclusive and sometimes hard or "difficult history" at and about historic sites. We plan to invite representatives from "Sites of Conscience" and the "Awkomat Educational Initiative," a Connecticut-based, multi-tribal, multi-cultural, and multi-discipline coalition founded to provide support about the history of Native people, to introduce faculty and students to the sensitivities of teaching and discussing these histories through workshops.

CCSU had successfully administered federal grants in the past. From 2005-2012, the CCSU History Department won and administered sequential Teaching American History Grant (American Voices), of just under one million dollars each, from the U.S. Department of Education, working with teachers in grades 4-12 to reinvigorate the study of American history in the elementary and middle school classroom. In 2015, CCSU Latino Studies won a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association to organize film screenings for the PBS documentary, *Latino Americans*, including discussions by noted scholars, class activities, and public receptions. We recruited and organized lectures by National Humanities Award Winner Dr. Vicki L. Ruiz and Organization of American Historians Distinguished Scholar Dr. Lorrin Thomas as part of this grant. Furthermore, as recently as 2021, CCSU organized a teacher training institute on the teaching of African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies. Here is the link. <https://www.ccsu.edu/pa1912/>

Assessment of student mastery and faculty evaluation.

We will measure student success through papers, projects, and a final portfolio that will feature an original essay of local historical significance, as well as ideas and strategies for developing curriculum at a particular site that can be used in the teacher and teacher candidates' classrooms. Student evaluations will help assess the success of faculty efforts after the initial pilot course. We will meet at least three times throughout the semester to review content and refine assignments.

Work Plan

We anticipate a two-year project in two parts, development and execution/piloting. We will then assess the course, and refine the course to make it part of our regular course offerings.

June -August 2023:

With Witness Stones Director Dennis Culliton, faculty will engage in at least five 2-4 hour team planning meetings. If we are not able to schedule (week #4 and 5) speakers in the summer, we will hold these during the school year.

Meeting #1 (may be extended meeting):

Discussion about content, themes, and periodization

Identifying points of historical intersectionality among and between people of color

Dennis Culliton will explain methods and ideas behind the Witness Stones and train faculty (as a model)

Meeting #2:

Examination of place-based learning with other existing state and national curriculum (CT Explored, and Teaching with Historic Places-TwHP)

w/ Leah Glaser and Kristen Levithan, CT Explored

Meeting #3:

Examination of place-based learning with Awkomawt Educational Initiative (Chris Newell)

Meeting #4:

Examination of place-based learning with Sites of Conscience (Braden Paynter)

Meetings #5 and #6: Development of draft syllabus:

- Make decisions about course schedule

- Discuss and agree to about content, themes, and periodization

- Identifying points of historical intersectionality among and between people of color in consultation with Historical Archeologist specializing in Caribbean communities, Dr. Elizabeth Clay (Anthropology).

September 2023- April 2024.

Project Director and course instructors will continue to brainstorm, refine the syllabus, and identify and evaluate models and continue to work with in-house community partners to do so (CLHO and CT Explored Magazine). MA History Graduate Assistant and BSEd student workers, ideally those planning on becoming Social Studies teachers will also review and assess/evaluate resources for ease of understanding and screening course content for clarity and usability. They will “workshop curriculum” to help refine content, readings, resources, etc. They will help publicize the class via marketing, social media, print media, and traditional flyers.

September- December 2024

Pilot course.

January 2025

Meet to review student grades and evaluations. Refine course content accordingly.

February-May 2025

Formalize the course with paperwork through the university curriculum committee to make a regular course offering and assign a number for the course catalog.