Daria Valentini
"Annual Conference of the American Association of Italian Studies"
Pedagogy Travel Grant Proposal

Project Description: I am applying for a Pedagogy Travel Grant to attend the Annual Conference of the American Association of Italian Studies (AAIS) in New York City from May 8-11, 2009. Among the many conference sessions I plan to attend are two sessions on the specific uses of pordcasts in the intermediate and upper level courses of Italian. I am at a point in my exploration of digital media and its pedagogical implementation that I need to learn directly from some of my peer teachers of Italian. This conference is the closest and best opportunity to do this. One of the relevant sessions is entitled "Teaching Italian with Technology-Based Aids: Issues and Perspectives." While both audio and video resources will be discussed, I am eager to incorporate both as podcasts in my future teaching.

The preparation of pedagogically innovative material as part of my revision of IT 331-332 at Stonehill is in process. While I already use Youtube, Evoca, and several digital images of varying types, digital audio and video in the form of podcasts represents a new direction for me. Existing digital audio content is widely available, and with the help of Dr. Glenn Everett, I have access to the newly created iTunes University site where I can upload my own material. For technical assistance, I will rely on Dr. Everett and his staff of student workers to help make such resources available. Yet pedagogically, the best use of my time this spring and summer is to learn from others in Italian Studies who have developed supporting activities around such multimedia.
One of the greatest challenges when using the Internet is its vastness. Students and teachers alike can be helped when the expertise in selecting and designing pedagogically worthwhile resources is shared. This is my hope and expectation at the upcoming AAIS Conference. The sessions being offered look more promising than those I have seen advertised in prior years.

Furthermore, I have spoken with Dr. Everett about this implementation, and I plan on attending his upcoming technology workshop in the spring. Following this session, I will begin uploading acceptable content and writing supplementary learning activities and other materials for the effective use of this multimedia by students in IT 331-332 during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Finally, as a way to share what I have learned with the scholarly community, I would like to organize a session on "Digital Audio and its Application to Different Disciplines" for the Fall 2009 Academic Development Day. In preparation for this, I will reach out to other faculty members in the Stonehill community to seek representatives from other departments who might be willing to collaborate on this session. I would welcome Dr. Everett's input and assistance in arranging such a collaborative panel of early adopters of this technology in their teaching. If no other faculty members were to be available, I will restructure this session for another possible venue.
Proposed budget:

AAIS 2009 Conference Registration $180
Two nights lodging* $320
Meals for three days $150
Transportation (mileage plus tolls and parking at the conference site) $200
TOTAL $750*

*Hotels in New York City, including the hotels listed on the conference website, cost between $220 and $270 per night. This year the AAIS was not able to block off a set of rooms in any hotels at discounted rates. Therefore, in order to stay within the cap of $750, I have booked a hotel room in New Jersey, approximately 15 miles from the conference location for the duration of the conference.