

<b>Name</b>	Helga Duncan
<b>Department</b>	English
<b>What course are you proposing to collaborate on?</b>	ENG304
<b>In which semester would you be teaching this class?</b>	
<b>Project Title</b>	Reading and Researching Spenser's Fairie Queene

### Project Proposal (250–500 words)

Eminent literary scholar John T. Shawcross recently observed that “[r]eliance on the Web has created a body of researchers who derive information and texts solely from the Internet, but very often that information is inaccurate, incomplete, nonspecific of source, and biased. Moreover, many students simply accept whatever answers appear without further verification or without full information that the project being pursued should engage.”<sup>1</sup> The Faculty–Librarian Partnership Program is thus a most timely project that addresses a pressing problem facing college faculty and staff: how to prepare students for careers in a world over-saturated with information whose value is often dubious. I would like to become a part of this project and enter into a collaborative alliance with a librarian for a four-credit pilot course I will teach in the spring of 2012, tentatively entitled “Reading and Researching Spenser’s Fairie Queene.” The major scholarly goal of this course is to offer students a problem-based 4-credit “intensive” course format, centered on carefully (but not heavy-handedly) supervised, independent work in the archives. By “work in the archives” I mean individual and group engagement with information and data collected in disparate settings and from a wide variety of sources, among them online resources, traditional book- and journal-based research, even a visit to a rare books library in the area. An important aspect of “working in the archives” will be the evaluation of information obtained through various research processes. Such a project is best achieved in close collaboration with an “integrated librarian” with whom I would like to design custom learning tools for the course (tutorials, blogs, and wikis).

In partnership with a research librarian I would also like to offer students the opportunity to engage in bibliographic studies and training, as a means of evaluating the epic poetry of Edmund Spenser and his project of fashioning Englishness and English nationhood. By basing the course on conversations about research methodologies and knowledge production I aim to expose students to the problem of how the textual practice of literary criticism has shaped our understanding and assessment of Spenser as a poet of nationhood, and thus helped to construct the (early) modern nation. In collaboration with a librarian I would like to develop assignments that encourage the meta-critical engagement with literature by allowing students to ponder the purposes and ideological outcomes of critical labor, and their own work as English majors. Such a course, grounded in an ambitious research agenda which forms the basis of sophisticated readings of literature, would benefit greatly from the professional expertise of a research librarian who can introduce students to the many resources of the Stonehill College library and beyond, through technological tools, information sessions, and a virtual presence on the course’s eLearn site.

This course with its research-oriented design also offers a most intensive and enduring learning experience that will involve students intellectually in a more personal fashion by asking them to generate knowledge and

also interrogate what constitutes valid knowledge and constructive knowledge gathering processes. Providing time and space for the development of greater intellectual autonomy in students through a concentration on research competence and bibliographic studies will translate into the development of solid professional skills that are portable and useful in a variety of fields. This course—though its subject is the early modern epic poetry of Edmund Spenser— focuses chiefly on training students to work efficiently in the archives and therefore acquire important professional skills that have application in a wide variety of fields.

---

**Course Description/Syllabus**

The course syllabus will be mailed to Patricia Neagle.

---