

## 2008-2009 Grant Proposals

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### Patricia Leavy "American Educational Research Association Conference" Pedagogy Travel Grant proposal

*Project Proposal:* The funds will purchase travel to and participation in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference that will be held April 13-17, 2009 in San Diego. My regular academic development funds have already be used for travel to an international women's studies conference in which I presented my research, as well as maintaining my professional memberships so in order to attend this event on pedagogy I need these funds. On this note, I would like to add that I self funded approximately half of my trip to the women's studies conference where I presented my research in a panel hosted by Judith Lorber. I also self-funded my participation at the ASA (American Sociological Association) conference this past August. At that conference, I attended several sessions, took an emergent technologies workshop, had two book signings for my latest books, and met with several publishers. All of this, I had to self fund. I could not really afford to fund either of these conferences; however, it would be detrimental to my research/career not to participate in these conferences. Therefore, I need this funding in order to attend AERA which is the largest and most prestigious national educational research conference.

I want to attend these meetings in order to attend a series of workshops and sessions that will alter and enhance my teaching of both department requirements as well as my elective courses. I want to attend sessions that cover: teaching theory and research methods, critical theory and problem-based learning, arts-based approaches to learning, and teaching feminism. Most broadly, I hope to learn strategies for promoting critical thinking and engagement.

*Benefits:* In particular, I want to attend a series of sessions and workshops on "problem-based learning" (PBL) as well as a series of sessions and workshops on "arts-based approaches to learning." With respect to the former, I have been committed to learning studying the learning benefits of problem-based-learning as evidenced by my teaching and learning strategies seminar project on PBLs. It is my understanding at this point that incorporating PBLs into my classes could help turn my students into active learners (rather than passive learners). PBLs promote critical thinking skills which are a part of the core academic mission of Stonehill College as well as a primary goal in the discipline of sociology. However, learning how to properly develop and use PBL is challenging and requires extensive effort. AERA has a special interest group that specializes in PBL and my courses would benefit greatly from my attendance at their sessions. I will use what I learn to develop PBLs for both my elective and required courses. I believe this will greatly benefit all of my future students.

I think the integration of PBL is particularly important at Stonehill because the students have a tendency to be very passive in the classroom. I want to use this experience to help change that aspect of the academic culture. With regard to the latter, I have recently published a book titled *Method Meets Art* which is about how social researchers can use arts-based approaches to research (ABR). I consider the content of this book cutting-edge with respect to research methodologies. During the course of my research I continually thought about how some of the research practices covered could be translated into teaching practices. In particular, arts-based approaches to research could be incorporated into my elective Images & Power course as well as my required courses in Research Methods and Qualitative Research. I suspect if I learn more I will find that there are strategies that may impact my teaching more broadly. The AERA membership is putting together a special interest group on ABR (arts-based research) and this coming conference will have several sessions about ABR and educational benefits as well as workshop opportunities. The information and techniques I learn in these sessions will inform the structure and content of my courses.

*Community Outreach Plans:* In addition to revising my course syllabi for the benefit of my students, I will present a paper at the New England Sociological Conference Fall 2009: the conference theme is tentatively scheduled to be "The Teaching Professor." I also commit to either a break-out session at Academic Development Day or a Teaching

Roundtable (based on the needs identified by the CTL). Eventually, I would like to publish an article about emergent practices in teaching sociology in a peer-review journal or anthology.

*Budget:* \$1,750 (all in reimbursement)

I am applying in this early round of grants in order to take advantage of early registration fees as well as lowered hotel and airfare costs. I still anticipate fairly significant out-of-pocket expenses (as you will note, for example, I have not included any funds for travel to and from airports, nor any funds for meals, nor will the funds requested fully cover my airfare).

Hotel: \$1,100

Airfare: \$330

Conference Registration and Renewal Membership Fees: \$320