

Pedagogy Travel Grant Application Form

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Amount requested (\$750 max)	\$750
Conference or workshop you wish to attend.	COMCAR-Italia (Colloquium on Material Culture and Religion)
Description of the workshop or conference and what you hope to get out of it.	<p>I was accepted into the Colloquium on Material Culture and Religion (COMCAR) in Italy for summer 2018. This two week program is highly selective and limited to only twelve participants yearly. This seminar is designed to help faculty who are primarily textual scholars engage with material culture and archaeology. The goal is for participants to incorporate such media into their pedagogy and research. The program provides unparalleled access to sites, artifacts, and field experts in Pompeii, Herculaneum, Rome, Ostia, and the Vatican. Since I currently offer Stonehill's classes in New Testament, Greco-Roman Religions, and Biblical Archaeology, expanding my experience and expertise in material culture will massively improve my teaching across all of my courses. First, this program provides admission to areas that are usually restricted to the public, including recent excavations under the Vatican and many other "off limits" sites within Rome. I feel very strongly that our students deserve to have exposure to the most current and innovative discoveries and methods in the fields of Religious Studies and History. Sharing my experiences from this seminar with our students will provide them with learning opportunities that they may not be able to receive otherwise. Recent discoveries also make the ancient world and the Catholic tradition more accessible and vibrant for our students, who often have no natural affinities with such a distant past. Second, since many of my courses also have a significant visual component, I plan to take many photographs, providing me with fresh digital images of temples, churches, and smaller finds. I find that such images are critical since many of our students are visual learners. Furthermore, these images are particularly effective when working with our Cleartouch systems, which can show every nuance of color, shape, and definition when viewing a quality image of an artifact or artwork. Accordingly, in a class exercise I often will combine a reading from a text with an interesting and relevant image to promote deeper discussion and analysis. Integrating these approaches engages my students like nothing else can, resulting in consistent participation and sometimes novel insights. Above all, it makes learning about the ancient world more concrete and applicable to them. For example, pictures of dining rooms in Pompeii can greatly inform students about the workings of Roman household religions, how the Christian Eucharist developed, and the construction and definitions of ancient gender roles.</p>

Discuss the benefit to the Stonehill community

I believe that many students will benefit from my participation in this program. As indicated above, my particular emphasis on combining textual and visual pedagogies is generally well received and highly praised in student evaluations. My REL 100 course (taught three times per academic year) is an introduction to Mediterranean religions and it includes units on sacred space and aesthetics, ritual practice, and gender, all of which rely heavily on visual images. As already indicated, many of my other courses also are visually oriented, and since nearly all of these are listed as Moral Inquiry and/or Catholic Intellectual Traditions they generally fill to capacity. Another benefit is that this seminar hopes to foster truly interdisciplinary pedagogy among its members. Likewise, I am always trying to make my classes more interdisciplinary by demonstrating how all of the Humanities can function together to promote more creative and adventurous scholarship from our students.

How will you share your project findings or outcomes with the Stonehill community?

In the past I have participated in a variety of presentations at Stonehill and would be happy to continue this tradition. If asked to discuss interdisciplinary scholarship or pedagogy, the use of material culture in the classroom, or even another Cleartouch training for Academic Development Week I would be happy to do so. The Catholic Identity Committee also has a yearly academic panel linked to faculty research and the topic of annual Moreau lecture, and I could easily imagine discussing my work on Christian iconography, religious competition, or interfaith dialogue as part of one of these events.

Please detail your budget.

The COMCAR fees total \$3500. These are covered by a combination of funding from an external grant through the University of Texas and a Stonehill Summer Institute Grant.

I am asking for \$750 from the CTL through the Pedagogy Travel Grant to partially cover roundtrip airfare from Boston to Rome. Airfare for mid July is currently \$1300-\$1500.