**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants**

**Final Report**

*To submit your Final Report, go to the Final Report submission page on the ALG website:* [*http://affordablelearninggeorgia.org/site/final\_report\_submission*](http://affordablelearninggeorgia.org/site/final_report_submission)

* ***Syllabus or syllabi*** 
  + ***(if multiple files, compress into one .zip folder)***
* ***Qualitative/Quantitative Measures data files*** 
  + ***(if multiple files, compress into one .zip folder)***
* ***Photo of your team or a class of your students w/ at least one team member, minimum resolution 800x600px*** 
  + ***(nearly all smartphones take photos larger than this size by default)***

*Follow the instructions on the webpage for uploading your documents. Based on receipt of this report, ALG will process the final payment for your grant. ALG will follow up in the future with post-project grantee surveys and may also request your participation in a publication, presentation, or other event.*

# **General Information**

**Date: December 17, 2019**

Grant Round: Twelve

Grant Number: 385

Institution Name(s): Gordon State College

Team Members (Dr. Craig Soaries( Assistant Professor of Communication and Humanities), Dr. Doug Davis (Professor of English), Dr. Caeser Perkowsi (Professor of English), Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh, (Professor of Art and Humanities)

Project Lead: Dr. Craig E. Soaries

Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: Humanities 1500

Final Semester of Implementation: Fall 2019

Average Number of Students Per Course Section: 35

Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation of Revised Resources: 2

Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation of Revised Resources: 350

# 1. Narrative

**The Key Outcomes of Project**

The purpose of this funded project as clearly stated in the initial request for funding ($10,800) was three-fold and successful. There were three transformative goals accomplished.

***Goal One****: Student Savings:* The previous HUMN 1501/1502 textbook and supplemental publisher web materials cost students nearly $300.00 per course. The first goal of this proposal was to remove that cost by creating an electronic resource archive that instructors will utilize to provide free course content to students. This was successfully accomplished by the collaborative efforts of the following professors: Dr. Craig E. Soaries, Dr. Doug Davis, Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh, Dr. Caesar Perkowski.

***Goal Two****: Student Engagement:* Establishing an electronic resource archive of teaching materials for our Humanities courses will allowed the team to undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the HUMN 1501/1502 courses, increasing student engagement through the development of course content representing a broader cultural heritage that reflects the students’ own backgrounds and through innovative, interactive use of technology that was more welcoming than a traditional textbook. Through the creation of an extensive, accessible internet based sources, the faculty had the ability draw from the combined talents, knowledge and experience of each other’s background and compiled in one convenient D2L site. From this site instructors are free to customize and present relevant, culturally based and focused materials to their students.

***Goal Three****: Student Success:* The establishment of an electronic resource archive and redesigned course that better reflects our students’ own varied cultural heritages encouraged full engagement of students and student success. The goal was to improve the course’s current ABC% of 61% to over 70%. We realized a 90% success rate with students expressing their enjoyment interest retention in classes.

We also took advantage of the invitation to share our grant award success with other faculty in a special presentation that described that grant writing process, strategy of implementation and overall success with the new curriculum. As a result other faculty decided to work on a textbook free course and submit for funding. And they were successful and currently engaging in the process. Conclusively, our team provided some inspiration for other Gordon faculty to consider a new approach to teaching and learning on the students’ part.

**Lessons Learned**

As a team of faculty members collaborating to improve and redesign the course we were amazed and intrigued with how much collective knowledge and information we maintain among us. Clearly the decision to design and implement a textbook free course was in the best interest of students as well as faculty. We had the opportunity to draw from each other’s strengths, research and expertise. We also discovered that students were much more willing to be involved in the learning process as we taught from a collective knowledge base albeit in our own unique classes. In hindsight there is nothing we would have done differently during the process as we generated great success working together as well as delivery of the new course to our students.

In continued discussion, that group of faculty reached a consensus that the best means of addressing our student needs for an accessible guide to the breadth of cultural contributions to the humanities would be to first, comprehensively review and revise the two HUMN 1501/1502 courses, combining them into a single course (as had been so previous to 2008), one that breaks away from the historical perspective (trying to cover a large time period) in favor of immersing students in a problem or theme (such as Love, Faith, or War) that can be explored through multiple cultures as they have engaged with art, music, literature, philosophy, and theology. A revised HUMN 1500 course introduced the broad humanities in a way that our Art, Music, or Theatre Appreciation courses do not: providing students with an introductory foundation for understanding these intellectual pursuits while engaging them via material that reflects the breadth of their assorted cultural heritages and encouraging them to continue explorations of the field in both their continued education and their lives outside of school.

**The Timeline**

The Gordon State College Mini-Grant Team met consistently in Spring 2019 and devoted both collective and individual time to design, create an ***Electronic Resource Archive,*** containing a repository of global materials referencing the visual arts, literature, music, philosophy, and theology, built to share free learning materials with our students. This completely eliminated the high cost of current course materials while offering new opportunities to connect with and engage our students. Throughout the Summer of 2019 the team completed final revisions which was implemented as a new Humanities course, in Fall 2019.

# 2. Selected Quotes

“Cultural reports were fun. It was good to watch different things and examine them.”

“I liked everything in this class!”

“The course gave me a sense of appreciating the things I’m interested in.”

# 3. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

## 3a. Uniform Measurements Questions

*The following are uniform questions asked to all grant teams. Please answer these to the best of your knowledge.*

**Student Opinion of Materials**

**Was the overall student opinion about the materials used in the course positive, neutral, or negative?**

Total number of students affected in this project: 158

* Positive: 87 % of 158 number of respondents – 137 students
* Neutral: 13% of 158 number of respondents -- 21 students
* Negative: \_\_0\_\_\_\_\_ % of 0 number of respondents

**Student Learning Outcomes and Grades**

**Was the overall comparative impact on student performance in terms of learning outcomes and grades in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

*Student outcomes should be described in detail in Section 3b.*

Choose One:

* X Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Neutral: Same performance outcomes over previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Negative: Lower performance outcomes over previous semester(s)

**Student Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) Rates**

**Was the overall comparative impact on Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) rates in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

**Drop/Fail/Withdraw Rate:**

*Depending on what you and your institution can measure, this may also be known as a drop/failure rate or a withdraw/failure rate.*

13 % of students, out of a total 158 students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One: (REFER TO STATS ED SENT)

* \_x\_\_ Positive: This is a lower percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

## 3b. Measures Narrative

*In this section, summarize the supporting impact data that you are submitting, including all quantitative and qualitative measures of impact on student success and experience. Include all measures as described in your proposal, along with any measures developed after the proposal submission.*

According to Gordon State’s IR annual grade distribution review:

In the academic year 2017-2018 (fall-spring), 232 students took either HUMN 1501 or 1502 with textbook and longstanding course design: 183 students (79%) earned an ABC while 49 students (21%) earned a DWF.

In the academic year 2018-2019 (fall-spring), 171 students took either HUMN 1501 or 1502 with textbook and longstanding course design:  138 students (80%) earned an ABC while 33 students (20%) earned a DWF.

**We initiated the new “HUMN 1500” course design in fall 2019 with no-cost electronic archive, and 158 students took that class: 137 students (87%) earned an ABC grade while 21 students (13%) earned a DWF.**

# 4. Sustainability Plan

It is the intent of the faculty to continue to develop and update online resources and materials developed during the transformation of the course for students. We also will consistently collaborate and discuss successes and learning curves as instructors. Using the feedback from students and analyzing the grades of students will also be taken into consideration each semester. As a required part of Gordon’s curricula provides an readily accessible platform for analysis and consideration.

# 5. Future Plans

As of the end of the first semester of implementation, Fall 2019, the instructors involved in this new curriculum and approach reported the following:

*Students noted that they were able to access the resources from anywhere at any time.*

*There were also quite pleased the textbook for the course was free. This grant helped them save money. The resources and the materials were easy to comprehend and enjoyable.*

*This project enabled us to compile and create resources that are flexible in nature so that current and future professors who teach this course can modify and use the resources to fit their need.  The resources are divided into units (chapters) so that a variety of approaches can be used in terms of choosing subject matter for the course. For example, a professor who has a background in literature and cinema may focus more on utilizing the units on film and literature.  The units (chapters) not only provide valuable information for students to read but also include links to videos, articles and webpages.  Each module includes at least one assignment that can be used for discussion. The assignments are designed to deepen the students’ knowledge of topics from the week’s reading.*

*Because of the easy accessibility many students were inclined to conduct deeper and more extensive research on selected topics.*

A consensus of professors that taught the revised course with the new curriculum agreed that the success rate was 87% passing with a grade of C or better! This would not have been possible without the grant awarded in the Affordable Learning Grant Program Textbook Transformation Grants, Round Twelve.

It is the faculty’s intent to present at state and regional conferences that explore the impact of free textbook access and online drive information access.

# 6. Description of Photograph

* *On the Final Report Submission page, photo submitted. In this document, list the names of the people shown in this separately uploaded photograph, along with their roles.*

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**All of the professors involved in the new design of the Humanities Course, (from left to right) Dr. Craig E. Soaries (Assistant Professor of Communication and Humanities), Dr. Casesar Perkowski (Professor of English), Dr. Doug Davis (Professor of English/Humanities), Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh (Professor of Art and Humanities).**