

Final Report

Project title: **Digital Indigenous Studies**

Clarence Lo, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director, Peace Studies,
project co-leader

Joanna Hearne, Associate Professor of English project co-leader

Professor Mark Palmer, Assistant Professor of Geography project co-leader

Project dates: November 15, 2013 – May 15, 2015

Report submitted May 5, 2015

Outcome achieved:

The Digital Indigenous Studies project enabled Professors Hearne and Palmer to work with 30? undergraduates combining and applying digital technologies to address issues of concern to Native American communities underserved by information technologies.

The students in the Fall 2014 course, English 3110/ Peace Studies, Geography, Honors 3496, completed final projects for the course using a wide variety of media. For example, Erin Burris, Lindsey Marschka, and Emily Sewell's project, "Identity & Orientation through Virtual Exploration: The Implications of Digital Representation of Landscape as seen in the Osage Nation" was a geo-referenced video mashup utilizing GPS and aerial views of landscapes, superimposed with video clips and photography highlighting significant places. Audio was also layered, including an indigenous language spoken prayer and English narratives conveying local Indigenous knowledge. <http://vimeo.com/113245153> Burris et al also crafted a Power Point presentation to the class which tied their multimedia to course themes. Received, curated representations of place convey particular perspectives and senses of identity; new media can convey alternate perspectives and identities. Several individual papers also resulted from the Burris et al project, including one describing the evolution of the project and its relation to the concept of visual sovereignty and other course themes, and a reflective essay on the place of interdisciplinary courses and pedagogies in the university curriculum and its general education architecture.

Other projects analyzed the history of endangered Indigenous languages in the Guiana Shield (northern South America), and a prototype for a digital dictionary that incorporated digital platforms for indigenous language and culture preservation (Julie Saperstein). Saperstein began with the "Living Kiowa Survival Dictionary" produced by Randy and Cedric Sunray and extend it and planned for the expansion of the project. <http://jds4k3.wix.com/digitaldictionary> Some students also used Survey Monkey and online chat rooms for distribution of questionnaires.

In a presentation and paper by Blake Bodenhamer, Misha Brown, Caitlyn Stevens, and Jordan Inman titled "LaDonna Harris' Activism and the Power of Indigenous Storytelling," the students in the course interviewed a filmmaker and discovered how traditional Native values passed down through family stories sustain LaDonna Harris' political activism in national movements such as Idle No More and Americans for Indian Opportunity.

The course and project funded by IIF is notable not only for the depth and sophistication of the student learning outcomes, but for the extraordinarily high teaching evaluation questionnaires.

On a five point scale, the instructor rating was 4.95; the course rating 4.74 by 20 students. Many of the comments pointed to the innovative combination of technologies. "The instructors were very passionate about the topic and were able to teach the subject on many platforms." "The variety of learning tools, articles, film... field trips, discussion etc was incredibly beneficial." "Technology use was EYE-OPENING [emphasis in original] to say the least. Loved incorporating GIS mapping and geography into ALL disciplines....Best class @ Mizzou."

Impact of application of technology for students:

The course has demonstrated the possibilities for students creating mashup projects, and writing critical papers that point to the larger significance of their projects. Questions pertaining to digital geographic information are important to global organizations like UNESCO. There is a call for greater participation by local and indigenous people in development projects and nominations of World Heritage sites around the world. Our combining technology and local

knowledge though GIS and multimedia narratives has demonstrated the opportunities for students creating alternative geographic information systems at the University of Missouri.

In addition, the videoconference sessions with Indigenous digital artists and scholars have continued to have multiple uses beyond the original class funded by IIF. Jacqueline Land (undergraduate) has transcribed the session with animator Carol Geddes (Tlingit Nation), and graduate student Trisha Henderson-Brown is transcribing the session with experimental video artist Marcella Ernest (Ojibwe Nation). These transcripts are becoming part of their ongoing research projects, with potential for publication (Jackie Land was awarded a Rising Star award and a campus-wide Undergraduate Achievement award for her work on Indigenous animation). Undergraduate student Lindsey Marschka is involved in ongoing grants through Geography and Julie Saperstein has been admitted to the graduate program in Geography.

IIF funds employed

\$ 10,416 was awarded for a Graduate Research Assistant; the same amount was expended. For travel and honorarium, \$6996 was awarded and \$5022 expended. For equipment, \$7500 was awarded and \$4630 expended. (See budget below.)

The English 3110/ Peace Studies, Geography, Honors 3496 course will be offered again in Fall 2016. The visiting scholars and media practitioners were essential for providing living examples to the students of how new informational technologies can be combined and deployed to benefit underserved Indigenous communities. Live interaction in person and on Skype with external experts generated much discussion in the Fall 2014 class, and the flow of diverse counterpoints of technique and Indigenous culture should be continued.

The project co-directors respectfully request a **carry forward** of \$1974 in same category unexpended funds to the end of the Fall 2016 semester, to help defray the cost of Skype sessions and visiting lecturers.

A \$2870 category transfer and carry forward is also requested for a graduate research assistant to transcribe and edit some of the Skype sessions for publication, and oversee undergraduates working along these lines. Our ongoing project will build up these materials over time and make them available to other students at MU and scholars nationally, thereby showcasing what has been accomplished at MU. During the Fall 2016 course, the research assistant will also provide technical assistance for student projects in editing and up and down loading streaming video on our website.

BudgetInterdisciplinary
Innovation Funds employed

Co Project Leaders
 Time volunteered & not compensated:
 Clarence Lo, PhD
 Joanna Hearne, PhD
 Mark Palmer, PhD

Graduate Research Assistant,
Anastacia Schulhoff, MA

Spring 2014 1/4 time	\$ 1250	
Summer 2014 full time	6666	
Fall 2014 1/4 time	2500	
	----- subtotal GRA	\$ 10,416

Travel and honorarium: experts visiting MU

Jodi Byrd UIUC	1776	
Meeting room & dinners (w/Byrd)	610	
Jeff Palmer	1000	
Skype-in fees, virtual guest lectures in class: D. Craig \$ 300, Geddes 300, Sakakibara 300 Ernest 300, Ross and Rein, 150	1350	
Gas in MU Van for student travel to sites	286	
	----- subtotal visitors	5,022

Equipment

Cameras (6) and accessories	4030	
Zoom Recording Devices (6)	600	
	----- subtotal equipment	4,630

Total Dec 2013- May 2015

\$ 20,068
 Interdisciplinary
 Innovations funds expended