### COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

# 2016 Application Form for ASC Grants for New Service-Learning Course Proposals

Application Deadline: March 1, 2016

You MUST use this form to submit your proposal. Please send submission (form and supplementary materials) to Linda Hood (<u>hood.82@osu.edu</u>), Executive Assistant to Associate Executive Dean Steven Fink.

1. Working Title of Course Proposal: "Teaching Philosophy in High School"

#### 2. Applicant Information

- Name: Julia Jorati
- Title: Assistant Professor
- Department: Philosophy
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#### 3. Course Description

• Provide general description of course goals of proposed undergraduate course.

The course goals are the following:

- Give students a taste of the joys and challenges of teaching
- Allow students to explore ways to spark philosophical conversations beyond the college classroom, and ways to share their philosophical expertise with a broader audience
- Help students reflect on how the general public (and high school students in particular) can benefit from exposure to philosophical topics and methods; then help our students find ways to implement the results of these reflections
- Teach students about a variety of teaching methods and give them the chance to try out some of these methods
- o By doing all of the above, students will also gain a new perspective on the discipline of philosophy

#### • Provide general description of content of proposed undergraduate course.

The course will cover various teaching methods that work particularly well in a high school context. We will also read and discuss some education research that is especially relevant to this kind of teaching. Based on that theoretical foundation, we will then create concrete lesson plans together. Those lessons will aim to



The Ohio State University

introduce high school students to philosophical topics and methods that are likely to be particularly relevant or helpful to them. For instance, we might plan a lesson or set of lessons about the notions of justice or fairness; about freedom of choice; or about the meaning of life. We might also plan lessons more directly focused on critical thinking and analytic reasoning, that is, lessons in informal logic. The lesson plans that we design will incorporate a variety of different instructional methods and discussion formats in order to make these lessons as engaging and effective as possible.

### • Provide general description of service-learning component of the course.

Students in the course will form teams of 2–4; there will be at least one graduate student on every team. Each team will meet with a group of students from a local high school throughout the semester, implementing the jointly created lesson plans. The details have yet to be worked out, but I plan to have each team conduct about 6–10 lessons total. In this way, local high school students will not only get a taste of philosophy (which is not typically taught in high schools), but also to meet and develop relationships with Ohio State students.

# • Provide general explanation of how service-learning activities will contribute to the course goals.

The service-learning activities contribute directly and straightforwardly to all of the course goals. By introducing high school students to philosophy, OSU students will get a taste of teaching; they will also get the chance to try out the teaching methods we learned about and gain a new perspective on the discipline of philosophy.

# • Optional: Should you happen to already have a tentative syllabus (with course number), please provide it.

I have not yet developed a complete syllabus, in part because I want to work closely with the community partners in selecting material, and in part because I will need to read up on recent developments in education research. (I earned a degree for high school teaching from a German university in 2008, but I would like to incorporate more recent research and approaches). However, here are some things that I would currently include on a syllabus:

- *Level*: The course will be at the 5000-level, that is, it will be a dual-career course that can be taken by undergraduates and graduate students.
- *Prerequisites*: 6 credit hours of Philosophy course work; or Grad standing in Philosophy; or permission of instructor.
- *Assessment*: There will be several components. (1) Each teaching team will submit a portfolio with their teaching material and with reflections about each lesson. These reflections will include information about what worked well and what did not work so well, hypotheses about why these things did or did not work, and ideas about how to avoid some of the shortcomings that they noticed. It will also include reflections about how philosophy can be helpful for high school students and for the general public more broadly. (2) The instructor will observe each of the teams at least once while they are

teaching and evaluate their implementation of the lesson. (3) Each student will give a short presentation on a particular teaching method or discussion format. (4) Active class participation will count toward the final grade; every student is expected to make significant contributions to our joint lesson planning.

### 4. Community Focus and Reciprocity

• Identify and provide a brief profile of the intended community partner(s). (If a specific partnership has not yet been confirmed at the time of the grant proposal, provide a clear explanation of the kind of community partner(s) being sought and provide some examples of appropriate candidates for community partner(s).) *Community partners must be tax-exempt nonprofits or organizations with an easily identified public service component to their mission*.

The intended community partners are public high schools in Columbus. One concrete example of a community partner is Beechcroft High School which, like most other Columbus City schools, has a high degree of ethnic and economic diversity. Our service project could, for instance, be incorporated into one or more of the existing AVID Programs in Columbus City schools—programs designed to help underachieving students who have high academic potential prepare for entrance to colleges and universities. AVID programs especially target students who are underrepresented in higher education; the programs place particular emphasis on improving the students' critical thinking skills.<sup>1</sup> At least three high schools in the Columbus City school system have AVID programs: Beechcroft, Marion-Franklin, and Northland. These programs would provide a natural framework for collaboration with our service learning course and they would likely be my initial target. If the teachers in charge in these AVID programs are not interested in a collaboration, I will contact teachers who teach regular classes and who might like to incorporate some philosophy lessons into their classes. (One of my colleagues started an outreach program at UNC Chapel Hill that involved philosophy lessons at high schools. He says that it was fairly easy to find teachers who were enthusiastic about cooperating with the philosophy department, and who were willing to make available some of their class time for philosophy lessons.)

# • Describe the community partners' participation in the development of the service project.

Once I have identified community partners, I will work closely with the teachers to select a list of topics and learning goals that are suitable. For instance, if we partner with one or more AVID programs, I will work with the respective teachers to find content that will fit well into their curriculum. That content might be logic and critical thinking, since improving the students' reasoning, writing, and critical thinking skills are central goals of AVID. Learning some elementary logic and practicing critical thinking and analytic reasoning skills would fit perfectly into that kind of program; philosophy has been shown to be a highly effective way of learning those skills. If we partner with teachers who teach regular classes, the content of our lessons would be tailored to those classes. For example, in a Civics class we could teach lessons from political philosophy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For more information, see <u>http://www.avid.org/what-is-avid.ashx</u>

# • How does the service project reflect priorities and stated goals/needs of community partners and collaborative planning by all partners?

The goals of secondary education include preparing students for college and teaching them general skills that are helpful for the workplace, for good citizenry, and for a good life. Philosophy can help with all of these goals, as studies have shown.<sup>2</sup> It can help students develop critical thinking and analytic reasoning skills; it can also help them think more systematically about difficult issues with which they are grappling, such as ethical or political questions and important life choices. Moreover, because of the intrinsic interest and relevance of many philosophical questions, philosophy can spark the intellectual curiosity of students more effectively than many other, more traditional subjects in high school.

### • Describe the anticipated community benefit and impact of the service project.

As the previous answer points out, high school students can benefit immensely from receiving philosophical training. Yet, regular high school teachers are not typically in a position to deliver such philosophical training to their students. Our project can therefore provide benefits that high schools cannot usually provide. In addition to these benefits, the collaboration might encourage some high school students to consider getting a college degree. Working closely with a small group of Ohio State students might provide students with role models; it might make college seem less mysterious and more attainable. Moreover, the skills that students will acquire in our philosophy lessons are likely to benefit them in other high school courses and help them prepare for college.

## 5. Letter of Support from Department Chair

[See attached]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See a bibliography here: <u>https://docs.google.com/document/d/1n41h2pqe4dTb3Ek41NfZv2WAC\_LUZH\_buQoFYyRzyg0</u>



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February 26, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in strong support of Professor Julia Jorati's proposal to create a service learning course within the Philosophy Department. If this course is approved, I anticipate it being a regular part of our course offerings on a continuing basis. This course would be the first service learning course in our department. A survey of recent graduate students last summer made me aware that there is untapped interest in such a course among our majors.

I strongly believe in the value of service learning for our students, and in the value of bringing philosophical discussion and instruction to high school students. This proposal strikes me as a great opportunity for students at three different levels. The high school students will get an opportunity to encounter philosophical ideas and learn how to engage with them in discussion. The undergraduate students will get a first taste of mastery—being experts in the material they have been learning about instead of always the novices. This will also help them to consolidate their own understanding, and better position them to know how to talk about what they have learned with others. And the graduate students will have the opportunity to expand their pedagogical understanding by working simultaneously with high school students and with undergraduates whom they are helping to train in how to train others.

The course will fit into our undergraduate curriculum as an elective course that will count toward our major requirements. For our graduate students, it will count toward their total course number requirement in pursuit of the Ph.D.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can answer any other questions. I very much hope it will be possible to support this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

BLDN

**Justin D'Arms** Professor and Chair