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The National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference

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The National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference
Atlanta, November 8-11, 2018
Shu Yang, Department of World Languages and Literatures
 Instructional Development Project/Travel Grant Award 2018-2019



Activity

The Instructional Development Travel Grant enabled my trip to "The National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference" in November 8-11, 2018, in Atlanta, Georgia.

The theme of this conference is "Just Imagine. Imagine Justice: Feminist Visions of Freedom, Dream Making and the Radical Politics of Futures."

I presented my paper titled "Who/What Defines a Good/Bad Woman: Jiang Qing Negotiating Identity, Scandal, and Justice" in the session "Revolution Incomplete: Entanglements of Body, Gender, Race in Republican China" on November 10.

It benefited both my research and my teaching.



Objectives and Outcomes

•In the Fall semester 2018, I was teaching a cross-listed course (LANG 3800/GWS 3700), titled "Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese Literature and Culture." This course is cross-listed between the department of World Languages and Literatures and Gender and Women's Studies.

•It is the first time that issues on gender/sexuality through Chinese literary and cultural texts are taught on the WMU campus. I, as the course instructor, appreciate this opportunity to improve the quality of the course via attending and presenting at such a high-profile, prestigious, national conference on gender and women's studies.

•There were multiple benefits to my course.

Benefit-1

•**Feedback to my paper/presentation/course material**

•The paper I presented was also included in this course when we discussed gender roles and gendered values of Republican and Socialist China. In presenting on the material and receiving questions or comments from the conference audience, it gave me a chance to reflect on the effect of instructing on it in the classroom. Like the students of this course, many in the conference audience found Republican and Socialist Chinese gendered constructions new to them too. Due to the fact that the conference presentation resembled a classroom teaching in many ways (such as the organization of slides, clarity regarding material introduction and explanation, and the handling of questions), it definitely provided useful feedback on how I should present my materials, orally, textually, and visually; and how to better engage the audience with the historical period, the ideology, and the specific texts in hand.

Benefit-2

•**Other papers in our session that can be learned from and used in class**

•Other papers in our session all address gender or women related issues in Republican China. Hearing their papers updated me with current research trends in the field, informed me with possible topics or texts suitable for the classroom, and enriched my knowledge of this period which will positively result in a more comprehensive and confident instruction for my own course.

Benefit-3

•**Materials and ways of presenting them**

•By listening to our session papers and participating in other sessions and events taking place during the conference, it exposed me to a wide variety of materials regarding gender and women's studies. I was able to collect useful materials and information and to learn from other scholars in regard to presentation styles, speech manner, and slides organization. One of my objectives focuses on the way in which other scholars/presenters bring stimulating materials to their first-time audience. This is a subtle issue but it matters greatly in the classroom: a gender/sexuality course often involves unconventional or disturbing materials and the appropriate or smart ways of presenting them often influence classroom atmosphere and student attention and interest.

Benefit-4

•**Improve my knowledge of Gender and Women's Studies, as well as its teaching protocols**

•As my main field of expertise is not gender and women's studies per se, this conference offered a precious chance for me to further learn about the field, its frontiers, theoretical grounds, and recent discursive trends. This "training" is crucial for my teaching. Because this course is cross-listed, I have students from the department of Gender and Women's Studies in addition to other departments. A better knowledge of this field and discipline would equip me with better skills and competence when discussing problems or giving instructional advice to students who are seeking degree in this discipline.

•The conference had specific roundtables and individual sessions on teaching gender/women in the classroom. I attended some for first-hand information to benefit my own instruction.

•This experience particularly contributed to student learning outcomes specified in the course design, including informing students with fundamental concerns in gender and women's studies, inspiring them to bring gender and sexuality issues in China into cross-cultural dialogue with Western theories and practices, and equipping them with the basic repertoire of skills to interpret and critique questions surrounding gender and women.

Benefit-5

•**Networking for resource-sharing and guest speaking opportunities**

•Due to its national profile, the conference provided a great chance for me to network with scholars, instructors, as well as students in other institutions. I learned from their experiences of offering/taking gender related courses at their home institutions. We shared resources or ideas about teaching/learning. This networking also sowed the seeds of future interactions. Since many gender scholars and writers (including some big names such as the iconic Alice Walker) appeared at the conference, I had sought opportunities for potential campus visits or guest lectures with them, which would benefit not only my class but also our community.

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JUST IMAGINE. IMAGINING JUSTICE:
 Feminist visions of freedom, dream making
 and the radical politics of futures

Nov 8 -11, 2018
 Hilton Atlanta
 Atlanta, Georgia

