

**Project title:**

**AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, INTERCAMPUS WEBSITE:  
TEACHING 17<sup>th</sup>- AND 18<sup>th</sup>-CENTURY POLITICAL AND LITERARY CULTURE**

**Faculty Professional Development Grant**

Principal Investigator: Malcolm Smuts, Professor of History  
Department of History  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
100 Morrissey Blvd.  
Boston, MA 02125  
617-287-6875  
Malcolm.Smuts@umb.edu

Other Participants: Cheryl Nixon, Assistant Professor of English  
Department of English  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
100 Morrissey Blvd.  
Boston, MA 02125  
617-287-6723  
Cheryl.Nixon@umb.edu

Adam Zucker, Assistant Professor of English  
Department of English  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
170 Bartlett Hall  
Amherst, MA 01003  
413-545-5522  
azucker@english.umass.edu

Campuses and Disciplines: University of Massachusetts Boston,  
Departments of History and English  
University of Massachusetts Amherst,  
Department of English

Amount Requested: \$8000

**Concise Summary:**

This pilot project – planned under the auspices of the Research Center for Urban Cultural History on the Boston campus and the Massachusetts Center for Renaissance Studies in Amherst – seeks to initiate development of an online archive of texts, images and music to support humanities courses. As a pilot we propose developing a website for a cross-

listed graduate course under development by Malcolm Smuts (UMB History) and Cheryl Nixon (UMB English) on *Politics, Theatrical Media and Literary Culture in London, 1658-1720*. Adam Zucker (UMA English) will extend the site by supplying material for the period 1625-58, in which he specializes. This century – encompassing the English Civil War, Glorious Revolution and great stock market scandal of the South Sea Bubble – saw a proliferation of new media used to express controversial political ideas, ranging from newspapers to satiric plays, elaborate street demonstrations, visual satires and popular ballads. The website will provide a wide sample of these materials, enabling students to grapple with the challenge of integrating disparate sources into genuinely interdisciplinary interpretations of the period. The Five College Early Music Program and the Boston Public Library have both expressed interest in helping with the project. The funds requested will pay for reproduction fees, honoraria for musicians and logistical support from work-study students necessary to develop the site. Once we have completed the pilot project we will encourage other faculty to add comparable packets of material focused on other topics to the site, which will remain publicly available as an expanding educational resource.

Signature of Investigator's Department Chair:

Signature of Investigator's Dean:

Signature of Campus Provost:

## Project Narrative

The internet has enormously expanded the range of sources available for teaching courses on cultural history by providing an increasing number of high quality reproductions of manuscripts, printed texts, maps, images and recordings on the web. But this material is dispersed over literally thousands of websites that can be bewildering and time-consuming to sort through, and the range of sources available online rarely corresponds to the complete requirements of any particular course. To take full advantage of the internet's potential to enrich undergraduate and graduate teaching, faculty need help both in locating material already available online, and adding new items tailored to their pedagogical needs. Ideally students should also be able to interact with a course website and add material to it based on their own research.

We propose a pilot site that will serve as a model for the development of an expanding archive of web-based sources and tools for interdisciplinary courses on cultural history throughout the University system. Two interdisciplinary Centers – the Research Center for Urban Cultural History in Boston and the Massachusetts Center for Renaissance Studies on the Amherst campus – have agreed to oversee the project.

The project grows out of the teaching and research interests of the three faculty directly involved and is related to a new team-taught graduate course under development by two of them. Malcolm Smuts, in the Boston History Department, is a specialist on seventeenth century English political culture. His published work has integrated traditional historical methods with perspectives drawn from literary studies and art history, and he has attempted to bring this interdisciplinary approach into the classroom at both undergraduate and levels. He has been actively involved with the Center for Renaissance Studies since its inception in the mid 1990s, teaching a cross listed graduate course under its auspices in 1993, and organizing several scholarly conferences and workshops for high school teachers it has sponsored. Cheryl Nixon, in the English Department on the Boston campus, has been working with Smuts on the proposed course, entitled *Politics, Literary Culture and Theatrical Media in London, 1658-1725*. A specialist in eighteenth century literature, she has particular interests in Daniel Defoe and in the history of the book. This last is an expanding area of interdisciplinary research, concerned with how books and other printed materials were produced, marketed and used in the past, which combines textual analysis with investigations of printing technology and the social and economic conditions surrounding the manufacture, dissemination and consumption of printed texts. She has created innovative courses to introduce students to this field, in the process developing a relationship with the Rare Books and Manuscripts department of the Boston Public Library. Adam Zucker, of the Amherst English Department, is an innovative scholar of English drama in the 1630s, with an especially strong interest in plays dealing with London. His work has drawn upon research by historians, including Smuts, to open new perspectives into ways in which plays commented on the urban environments in which they were embedded.

The century covered by the proposed site, between 1625 and 1725, was an especially eventful one in both the political and cultural history of England and its capital city. It witnessed the Civil War and Glorious Revolution, the first great age of party politics and the greatest stock market scandal of the eighteenth century, the South Sea

Bubble. These conflicts deeply affected all areas of English culture, stimulating the rise of new genres and media. The first English newspapers appeared in the Civil War of the 1640s, along with a flourishing tradition of partisan journalism. Although momentarily checked by Restoration censorship, a free press re-emerged in the 1680s and expanded steadily thereafter, participating actively in the competition of Whig and Tory parties. There was a parallel explosion of political pamphlets and more ephemeral kinds of printed propaganda, especially during the frequent election campaigns of the decades around 1700. After a period of closure from 1642 to 1660 the theatres re-emerged at the Restoration in more modern form, with moveable stage scenery, musical accompaniments and the first English actresses, who rapidly became public celebrities. Numerous forms of politically charged street theatre also developed, ranging from great court ceremonies to raucous demonstrations, like Pope burning processions that whipped up hatred of Catholics. Visual media, including early printed caricatures and music also played prominent roles. At the end of our period, John Gay's *The Beggars Opera* savagely mocked the Whig politicians tainted by the South Sea Bubble. But long before this vernacular ballads had expressed political views, sometimes in ribald form, as in the collection entitled *Rump Songs* of ballads mocking the so-called Rump Parliament.

Unfortunately this period is almost never treated in an integrated fashion in American university curricula. In the survey courses on England or Britain taught in History departments, the need to cover complex political events in a few weeks precludes in-depth attention to political culture. In English departments the years 1625 to 1700 are commonly overshadowed by attention to Shakespeare and his contemporaries in the early seventeenth-century, and the rise of the novel after 1700. When the period is taught courses are usually organized around individual authors (Dryden and Milton) or genres (e.g. Restoration theatre and satire). More holistic approaches exploring relationships between political events and cultural trends affecting different genres and media are rare.

And yet it is precisely a holistic approach that is needed to recapture the enormous vitality and enduring contributions of this century. The website will be designed to facilitate teaching that challenges both the disciplinary boundary between historical and literary scholarship, and conventional divisions between chronological periods, generic types of literature, art and music, and elite vs. popular culture. We want to explore relationships between popular ballads and opera, Grub Street journalism and canonical literary works, court portraits and printed caricatures, street demonstrations and the professional stage, while locating all these forms in concrete historical and geographic settings.

To do this effectively we need to assemble a broad array of source materials organized in ways that students find helpful. While some sources will be available in printed editions or inexpensive compact discs, many are not, especially when it comes to popular and journalistic media that traditional courses usually ignore. In addition to providing individual sources the website will be designed to help students *integrate* information by challenging them to think about relationships between London topography, political events and a range of printed, visual, theatrical and musical forms of expression.

The starting point will be to assemble a set of maps and illustrations of the city itself. This can be readily achieved because the period produced superb series of engraved topographical maps, giving birds-eye views of London and its neighborhoods.

Once these have been scanned, in a form that allows users to “zoom in” on specific districts, we will begin to add additional sociological and cultural detail, for example by marking theatres, book shops, gathering points and processional routes, and using color to differentiate between rich and poor neighborhoods and districts whose inhabitants tended to favor one side or the other in particular political controversies. We will also supply links between the maps and painted and engraved scenes taken at ground level, as well as contemporary descriptions of streets, neighborhoods and topographical features. We will include material from manuscript sources Smuts has uncovered: for example depositions illustrating how people moved around the city and probate inventories and tax records showing how certain houses were furnished and inhabited. Once the site is operational students will be invited to supply additional detail as they conduct their own research. The website will therefore become richer as it is used, while allowing users to familiarize themselves with seventeenth century London geography through an interactive tool that will be much more effective than any printed description.

The next step will be to add units dealing with the material culture and physical environments associated with important political and cultural activities. For example we will supply information about the royal court, including floor plans of royal palaces, illustrations of court costume, information about rules of access and vignettes from contemporary sources illustrating the nature of court life. Similarly we will provide visual documentation on London theatres, on the coffee houses where people gathered to discuss politics, and on musical instruments and the role of music in seventeenth century London life.

Finally we will add reproductions of different kinds of historical documents: digital photographs of seventeenth century pamphlets, newspapers, engravings and other material objects, and recordings of seventeenth century ballads on social and political topics. Some of these reproductions can be obtained without cost or for a nominal fee from the collections of the Center for Renaissance Study and the Boston Public Library. Others will be available – probably for a slightly higher cost – from the Yale Center for British Art, which has a superb collection of paintings, engravings and material objects from the period, including some very rare items. Some music will need to be specially recorded and this will require a more substantial investment. A good selection of theatrical music is now available on commercial recordings but popular ballads are much harder to find. Although many ballad texts have been placed online the experience of reading a ballad is different from that of actually hearing it sung. Fortunately the Five College Early Music Program possesses its own recording studio, along with period instruments and a wealth of talent on which to draw. Costs will be kept within limits because we will only require a singer and perhaps a single accompanist for each recording. But we have been advised by Robert Eisenstein, Director of the Program that ten minutes of recorded music will require a two hour recording session, and that we will have to pay honoraria for his services in supervising the recordings, as well as those of any faculty performers.

We see the website improving our teaching methodologies by allowing us to emphasize several aspects of historical and literary inquiry: 1) The importance of working with **primary sources** when learning about the past. The website will give students unparalleled access to raw materials of historical enquiry unavailable or inaccessible by other means. 2) The importance of understanding the **highly visual and**

**aural nature** of early modern culture. Theatrical performances, street fairs and carnivals, popular music, and unique textual forms including maps, pamphlets, and broadsides would have been experienced in a simultaneous, multi-layered, mutually-reinforcing way. We will be replicating that experience. 3) The importance of a **multi-media classroom** to stimulating new thinking, especially about relationships between (for example) maps, printed texts and images in reconstructing events like a Lord Mayor's procession or the execution of Charles I. 4) The importance of **technological engagement, exploration, and creation** to the learning process. We will formulate assignments encouraging to students to not only investigate the website materials, but understand how technology enables historical sources to be presented and synthesized in ways unlike those possible in any other media. A final project will allow students to locate new seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources and add them to the website

### **Project Deliverable and Dissemination**

The outcome of the project will therefore be a website that serves the specific needs of a team-taught cross-listed graduate course on the Boston campus, and that will also be designed to facilitate the addition of more material in future years. We anticipate that it will be easy to enlarge the unit we have created, by adding material relating to London politics and culture before 1625 and after 1725, and we will encourage faculty who specialize in these fields to do so. Since the site will be publicly available faculty on non-UMass campuses will also be able to use it. Links will eventually be added to other existing websites that deal with related subjects, for example the Old Bailey Project, which has provided online access to criminal trial records in eighteenth century London.

There is a strong possibility that we will eventually publish an article on the site in the online journal *History Compass*, for which Smuts is an editor. Sponsored by the British commercial firm Blackwells Ltd., one of the largest publishers of academic journals in the English speaking world, *History Compass* and its sister journal *Literature Compass* (for which Elizabeth Fay is an editor) reach a global audience, and would therefore provide an ideal vehicle for making the site more widely known.

As already stated we anticipate that additional units dealing with other periods will also be added to the site, once it is operational. It may well be possible to seek outside funding to support this effort. The National Endowment for the Humanities has several programs that will fund website development, such as their *Digital Humanities Start-up Grants* or their partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services, *Advancing Knowledge*. Our immediate goal is to demonstrate the potential of this kind of project, in a way that also draws upon the resources of two University campuses and other institutions like the Boston Public Library, thereby establishing a pattern of collaboration that will provide a foundation for future collaboration. Although we have framed this project as a Professional Development Grant for the faculty members directly participating, we believe that it has significant potential to lead to larger initiatives.

### **Budget**

Workstudy student assistance:	\$1800
Fees for photographs and reproductions:	\$1970
DreamWeaver 8 Software (best web price)	\$ 230

Musical recordings:	<u>\$4000*</u>
Total:	<u>\$8000</u>

\*We have established that a two hour recording session with two professional musicians from the Five College faculty and a professional to supervise the recording will cost approximately \$1700. We anticipate recording about 30 minutes of music, with a mix of performances by an unaccompanied vocalist, a vocalist accompanied by a fiddle or lute, and perhaps a short recording involving a larger number of performers, to reflect the different ways in which popular music was sung and heard in the period.

### **Timetable**

Spring/Summer 2007: Begin detailed discussions for the planning and organization of the site. Start locating documents, engravings and other items to be included. Initiate detailed discussions with Robert Eisenstein, Director of the Five College Early Music Program, of recordings to be made. Malcolm Smuts will look for and digitally photograph relevant documents at the National Archives of England while on a research trip in July and August.

Fall 2007: September: Begin constructing the site by obtaining a web address and devising the basic design (entry page, layout, etc.). Begin uploading material, including maps and topographical engravings. Smuts and Nixon to complete their course proposal for submission to both English and History Departments, for offering in Fall 2008. October-December: Continue uploading documents. Begin constructing links to maps for the topography unit. Begin recording sessions of music.

Spring 2008: Finish uploading materials and constructing links. Test the completed site.

**Qualifications.** Malcolm Smuts, Professor of History, University Massachusetts Boston, author *Court Culture and a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia, 1987); *Culture and Power in England* (London, 1998) and numerous articles. He supervised the development of the website of the North American Society for Court Studies and continues to oversee the “Research Links” pages of the international Society for Court Studies website into which it was incorporated ([www.courtstudies.org](http://www.courtstudies.org)).

Cheryl Nixon, Assistant Professor of English, University of Massachusetts Boston. author *Novel Definitions: An Anthology of Eighteenth-Century Criticism of the Novel* (Broadview, 2007); curator “Crooks, Bawds, and Maids Less Than Virtuous: Books in the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London,” a rare books exhibit at the Boston Public Library (December 2006-May 2007).

Adam Zucker, Assistant Professor of English, University of Massachusetts Amherst author “Laborless London: Comic Form and the Space of the Town in Caroline Covent Garden.” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 5.2 (Winter, 2005), pp. 94-119; co-editor, *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern English Stage, 1625-1642* (New York, 2006).