# 2011-12 UPD Application

**Book Project:** Haiti in World History: New Perspectives

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COAS  
History  
Rank: Associate Professor  
Year appointed to TT: 1999

**Name::2:**  
Rank:  
Year appointed to TT:

**Name::3:**  
Rank:  
Year appointed to TT:

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**Total funds requested** $5,250  
**Types of funds:** Both/either UPD and RSC

Do you have other support for this project: **No**  
Source of support:

Have you submitted or do you plan to submit this proposal to funding source: **No**  
Amount requested:

Have you received a University Professional Development Grant in the past 3 years: **No**
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Description-Outcomes-relevance

I am applying for 3 WTUs of release time for Spring 2012 in order to complete a volume entitled Haiti in World History: New Perspectives. I first conceived of this project in the wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, though its roots are older. As a specialist on the Haitian Revolution, I began work in 2000 (at the urging of the French scholar Yves Benot) on the American reaction to that Revolution. Haitian slaves successfully revolted from 1791-1804 and won freedom and independence from France. As I found, however, the United States and other slaveholding states decided to crush Haiti, to ensure that their own slaves would not try to emulate its example. In a series of articles (2003-9), I discussed the many ways that American slaveowners (and Founding Fathers like Thomas Jefferson) worked in conjunction with the French to impose an embargo on Haiti and ensure its poverty. In 2010, my sadness at the catastrophe in Haiti was deepened by chagrin at how inaccurately its history was being discussed on television and in the newspapers. Pundits spoke of Haiti’s dire poverty but could not explain its roots. Most Americans do not, of course, share Pat Robertson’s view that Haiti’s plight stems from having made a pact with the devil in 1804. But other frequently voiced answers (such as that Haiti is poor because its leaders have always been corrupt) are almost as simplistic. The idea that Haiti would always be a failed state, no matter how much one tried to help it, seemed to me both inaccurate and dangerous (since it would affect to what extent other countries would help rebuild Haiti). Though I was planning to move onto a different project, I realized that it was urgent for me to continue my work on Haiti and to disseminate my findings beyond the narrow circle of Haiti specialists. A message I wrote on how to teach about Haiti was widely circulated on history listservs, and I was interviewed on Chicago Public Radio’s program Worldview. Still, I realized that even those scholars and teachers who were eager to learn about Haitian history had few accessible resources. Though the field has exploded in the last two decades, there has not been a convenient entry point. New scholarship has been produced on Haiti from within Haitian studies, French history, early American history, African diaspora studies and world history, but no systematic analysis or textbook on Haitian historiography [historical scholarship] has been published. I spent all of my spare moments in Spring 2010 designing a new course on Haiti (Hist. 591, Graduate Seminar in World History: Haiti and World History). When I taught it in Fall 2010, my students, who realized they were the only ones in the country able to take such a class, urged me to adapt our curriculum to be available to others. The outcome of this proposed grant will be a reader on Haitian historiography, entitled Haiti in World History: New Perspectives. The prestigious Rewriting Histories series at Routledge is a natural home for this project. The series editor, renowned historian Jack R. Censer, has already approved the project (documentation available on request). The volume will be very relevant to the field: it will fill the hole in the literature by illustrating â€” in a single volume - how the promise of the Haitian Revolution dissipated. Haiti in World History will present what I consider the best recent articles on the country’s history and thus serve as a user-friendly introduction to Haitian history and historiography. The volume will cover everything from French colonialism, through Haiti’s early independent years, through the American occupation of Haiti (1915 â€“ 1934) and the Duvalier (1957 â€“ 1986) and Aristide regimes (1991, 1994-6, 2001-4). My aim will be to present multiple perspectives on Haitian history and to introduce theoretically sophisticated debates in a clear and accessible way. The project will make a crucial contribution to the field, since in addition to choosing what I consider the most essential articles, I will offer an original analysis of the field’s major debates and questions. Haiti in World History will also be distinctive in its methodology: I will focus on Haiti not in isolation, but in world historical perspective. I will note that Haiti’s successes or failures since achieving independence cannot be explained simply by the policies of individual leaders. Whether through embargos, occupations, indemnities or more subtle forms of international pressure, I hope to show, Haiti has never been left alone to determine her destiny. Her history has been a complex interplay of internal and external forces. Jack Censer, the series editor for Rewriting Histories, says that he is certain Haiti in World History will be a â€œground-breaking
I am looking forward to being able to complete this book so that it can be used by students in classrooms across the country, by professional historians who want to understand the Haiti field as a whole, and by any general reader who wants to know more about Haiti's history.

Components-Activities

I have already designed the structure for the book, selected most of the articles/excerpts, and had the prospectus accepted. The remaining components are the following. I need to choose three more articles (see *TBA below); write the book and section introductions; and locate/select articles on any other subjects requested by the reviewers (the project has been accepted already, and is out to reviewers for suggestions).

Here is a complete description of the book. PRELIMINARY TABLE OF CONTENTS â™ Introduction: Overview of Haitian historiography. SECTION I: FROM SAINT-DOMINGUE TO HAITI â™ Section Introduction The first section of the book will treat the late French colonial period and the Haitian Revolution. This area of Haitian history is bursting with new scholarship and competing interpretations. My introduction will discuss how the articles I selected and other new works are refining our understanding of the Haitian Revolution.


Timeline:

As noted above, I have already designed the book, selected most of the articles/excerpts, and had the prospectus accepted. I still need to choose three more articles and write the book and section introductions (a total of 30 - 50 pp.). I will do these activities in the following phases:

Summer 2011: Do more research on the Duvalier and Aristide regimes, and locate/select articles on any other subjects requested by the reviewers.

Spring 2012 (with 3 WTUs of assigned time):

January-mid February 2012: Complete review of major Haitian and French works which will be summarized in
Enhance Professional Growth

This project will enhance my professional growth in numerous ways. First, the reassigned time will allow me to gain a much fuller understanding of the field of Haitian historiography. It will give me the opportunity to read additional works by Haitian and French colleagues. Having a fuller knowledge of the field beyond Anglophone works will enhance my analysis of existing historiography (historical scholarship) on Haiti; it will also allow me to make my History 591 course on Haiti more accurate and comprehensive. Second, reassigned time will help me refine my ability to write theoretically sophisticated material in a student-friendly way. While I have always tried to make my scholarly writings clear, there is a big difference between clear writing for a scholarly journal and a truly successful text for students. I have had some textbook-style experience (such as writing the "Atlantic Revolutions" entry for the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World and compiling the SuperQuiz guide on the French Revolution for the 2009-2010 National Academic Decathlon). However, this will be my first book-length project aimed at students and their instructors. In addition, the project will bolster my reputation in the field of Caribbean history. Though I am well-known among French historians (I will be national program chair for the Society for French Historical Studies' 2012 Annual Meeting), my scholarship on Haiti is less widely known. Completing and then publishing this volume "the first systematic study of Haitian historiography" will greatly enhance my credibility and reputation in this field. It will also benefit the reputation of CSUSM's history department, since I am the only member of the department whose scholarship treats the Caribbean. Finally, I anticipate that the volume will give me the opportunity for greater public engagement on the topic of Haiti. The media has been hungry in the last year for expertise on the subject of Haiti, and I am hoping that my volume will attract the attention of journalists who want a better understanding of how Haiti arrived at its present state.

Supplies

Travel

Registration:                      Mileage: Travel:
Lodging:                          Auto Rental:
Air:                              Parking:
Per diem:                         Other:

Consultants:
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Student Assistants:

Other:

Faculty Assigned Time  5,250 (3 units)

Budget justification:

In order to complete the remaining portions of the book, I need to spend chunks of concentrated time on reading and writing. It would be impossible to do these tasks on top of a full teaching load. However, I am confident that I can complete these tasks with reassigned time equivalent to a 3-unit course. The timeline for publication requires that I devote this time in Spring 2012 in order to meet the publisher’s June 2012 deadline.