

Significance and Social Impact of Project

Thank you for reviewing my application for the Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship for the Annual Year 2020-2021. I am excited to be considered for this fellowship as I believe in the ability of my research to advance Arizona State University's commitment to preparing students who are critical thinkers engaged in their communities, committing to educational inclusion, and furthering interdisciplinary research.

My dissertation research has stemmed from my commitment to connecting to social issues and to improving pedagogy in order to increase accessibility and engage diversity in the classroom. As such, my dissertation centers on the concept of civic identity, both how it has been utilized in the folk music genre during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and how it can serve as a pedagogical framework in the composition classroom. While my analysis of folk music's ability to constitute activist communities is informed by extensive research of rhetorical theory and civil rights history, my pedagogical theorizing is informed by a combination of extensive research on composition theory and my lived experiences as an educator. As such, it presents use-inspired solutions for engaging students on public issues in a way that is inclusive and furthers student knowledge production.

In the analysis portion of my dissertation, I focus on folk musicians' constituting of activist communities during the civil rights movement around a shared sense of civic identity. In doing so, I engage the theories of Maurice Charland and Gregory Clark, among other rhetorical theorists. Essentially, I focus on how artists introduce civil rights protest through use of a traditional form of music that already possesses communal and ideological ties. As explicated by historian Rachel Clare Donaldson, American folk music has historically presented a version of American identity that privileges multiculturalism, economic equality and active participation in our shared democratic processes. In using folk music as a vehicle for knowledge creation and circulation of messages during the civil rights movement, artists were able to constitute communities of activists by using a familiar form of music with preexisting ideological ties. In so doing, they were able to constitute activists around a shared sense of civic identity, encouraging these activists to participate communally in the direct-action campaigns of the civil rights movement.

My research on folk music in the civil rights movement is impactful in that it adds to a growing body of work on social movement rhetoric. As explicated by scholars such as Robert Cox and Christina Foust, continuing research on social movement rhetoric allows scholars a better understanding of rhetorical strategies that have proven effective in the past, which can be vital to social movement organizers of the future. As such, this work has great potential for affecting change outside of the university setting. Additionally, this work will expand scholarship on the civil rights movement, expanding knowledge on a pivotal time in this nation's history and highlighting the voices and

rhetorical practices of African American rhetors. Additionally, my work is interdisciplinary in that it engages the work of historians and communication scholars to advance scholarship in the field of rhetoric and composition, which allows further academic communication across fields.

After analyzing the rhetorical strategies of artists constituting activist communities around a shared sense of civic identity, I apply civic identity as a pedagogical framework for the composition classroom. Through my theorizing, I answer calls from David Fleming, Water Beale, and more recently, the Rhetoric Society of America to recapture

an emphasis on civic engagement in the teaching of rhetoric. I also emphasize the importance of pedagogy as a site of knowledge building, drawing on Brian Gogan's theorizing of his own classroom practices to build an improved framework for teaching writing for publics. As such, I theorize a pedagogical framework that emphasizes a multicultural definition of civic identity that builds upon that of the folk revival. I further theorize the classroom as a proto-public in which students write for public audiences while engaging with the perspectives of classmates, course readings, and their own research to develop deeper knowledge of the social issues they engage. I will culminate this theorizing by producing a 15-week module that provides an exemplar for a class that can be taught in the university setting or can be adapted for other educational settings, emphasizing the importance in making education accessible to various student populations.

The creation of this framework is a very important component in the social impact of my dissertation. This theorizing was born from my work teaching at Arizona State University and at Arizona State Department of Corrections Perryville. In teaching in both university and prison classrooms, I have become inspired to create a pedagogical theory that can guide teachers to effectively engage diversity in the classroom and ensure that all students are respected as co-creators of knowledge in the classroom space. As such, the classroom organized around the principle of multicultural civic identity serves as a proto-public in which students engage with real-world issues and deliberate in a way that productively communicates across difference, dynamically engaging the ways of knowing all students bring to the classroom. As we are currently seeing an uptick in racism and anti-immigration attitudes in our country, engaging students in this type of work is vital. As such, my work has great social impact in that it serves as a method for teaching writing for publics in a way that blurs the lines between the classroom and the outside world, preparing students to become engaged citizens and effective critical thinkers prepared to engage in social change. Additionally, this framework purposefully engages perspectives I have gained from teaching the diverse student bodies at ASU and at the state prison. As such, I build a pedagogical approach that is conducive to expanding access to education and acknowledges the power of all students to become agents of social change.

My dissertation project will not only further research in the field of rhetoric and composition, but it will have greater social impact by recovering rhetorical strategies of the civil rights movement and theorizing a pedagogy that foregrounds diversity and critical thinking as essential to the learning process. This fellowship will allow me to focus on bringing this project to life. After completing this project, I intend to begin my professional academic career by carrying on ASU's mission through continuing to teach and research for positive social change.

Timeline

I will be applying for the fellowship for the Annual Year 2020-2021 and I am confident in my ability to graduate in Spring 2021. As of now, I have passed my Comprehensive exams and completed one chapter of my dissertation as a portfolio paper. Passing the portfolio is the first of the three part exam process needed to reach PhD candidacy in the English Writing, Rhetorics, and Literacies program. As such, this chapter has already been approved by my committee as being of publishable quality. I also passed my Comprehensive Examination, the second part in the exam process, on January 31st. I am scheduled to defend my prospectus and advance to PhD candidacy

on March 2, 2020. My committee has reviewed the timeline attached below and has approved of my plan to defend my dissertation in February 2021. This is two months before the deadline for Spring graduation and as such would allow me to ensure I will graduate on time. As such, my committee is confident in my ability to graduate in Spring 2021.

One advantage that I have in the timing of my dissertation is that I have remained very consistent with my research topic over the course of my PhD. As such, I have been able to apply theories learned in my coursework and independent study to my dissertation topic since I began my degree. I have also presented on my dissertation topic, as well as closely related topics, several times at national and international conferences. Specifically, I presented the work that will become Chapter 2 of my dissertation at the Rhetoric Society of America Conference in 2018. I also presented on music and constitutive rhetoric at the International Society for the History of Rhetoric Conference in 2019. Further, I presented on music and rhetorical theory at the College Composition and Communication Conference, the American Society for the History of Rhetoric Conference and the Popular Culture Association Conference. I have also been accepted to present on my pedagogical theories at three conferences in 2020, the Popular Culture Association Conference, the Southwest Humanities Symposium, and the ASU Composition Conference.

Additionally, I will be able to transition much of my prospectus into the Introduction chapter of my dissertation, allowing a smooth transition into the writing process. Much of my prospectus is written at this point in time and my committee and I are confident about holding my defense in early March, which will allow me to advance to candidacy. Further, I have also already completed all research for my project. During my research process, I kept extensive notes that will allow a smooth recall of information during my writing process. Additionally, I have already decided on methods that I will use for my analysis. In my first analysis chapter, which I have already completed and submitted as a portfolio paper, I utilize close textual analysis, as developed by Michael Leff, to analyze artists' strategies for constituting activist communities around a shared sense of civic identity during the civil rights movement. I utilize the same method for my third chapter, which examines the rhetorical strategies of folk singer Odetta during the movement. For my fourth chapter, I theorize pedagogy, grounding my theory in the work of composition theorists such as David Fleming and Brian Gogan, who argue that teachers of rhetoric should train students to think critically about the issues around them and to prepare them to engage effectively in public spaces. Furthermore, I develop a curriculum that centers on theories of writing for publics, has students analyze arguments already circulating in public spaces, and thoughtfully engage with the diverse perspectives of their classmates.

Outline of Chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of Theories
- Chapter 2: Bob Dylan and Civic Identity: Re-examining the Rhetoric of America's Protest Singer - Analysis of Bob Dylan's use of casuistic stretching to constitute activist communities
- Chapter 3: Odetta and Civic Identity: Uniting the South, Uniting the Nation Around Civil Rights - Analysis of Odetta's use of casuistic stretching to constitute activist communities, particularly in the southern U.S.

- Chapter 4: Civic Identity and the Classroom: Pedagogical theorizing on incorporating a multicultural conception of civic identity into the composition classroom in order to effectively teach writing for publics
- Chapter 5: Conclusion

Timeline:

- October 2019 – Submit Portfolio
- January 2020 – Comprehensive Exam
- March 2, 2020 – Colloquy on Dissertation Prospectus
- March 2, 2020 – Submit Draft of Chapters 1 and 2 to Chair for review (Note: Chapters 1 and 2 are grouped together because Chapter 2 is updated version of portfolio paper)
- April 1, 2020 – Submit Drafts of Chapters 1 and 2 to Committee for review
- April 15, 2020 - Submit Draft of Chapter 3 to Chair for Review
- May 15, 2020 – Complete Revisions for Chapters 1 and 2
- May 15, 2020 – Submit Draft of Chapter 3 to Committee for Review
- June 15, 2020 – Complete Revisions for Chapter 3
- June 15, 2020 – Submit Draft of Chapter 4 to Chair for Review
- July 15, 2020 - Submit Draft of Chapter 4 to Committee for Review
- August 15, 2020 – Complete Revisions of Chapter 4
- August 15, 2020 – Submit Draft of Chapter 5 to Chair
- September 15, 2020 – Submit Draft of Chapter 5 Committee
- November 1, 2020 - Complete Revisions for Chapters 5
- December 2020 – Send complete draft with revisions to committee for review
- January 2021 – Complete requested revisions
- February 2020 – Defend Dissertation
- February 2021 – Complete requested revisions
- March 2021 – Submit Dissertation to ASU