

OSPR Faculty Profile

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Can you tell us a bit about your specific area of scholarship?

I am a medievalist, and my specific area of scholarship is the image of Islam and Muslims in medieval Europe. I wrote my dissertation on the representation of the sect of the Assassins in twelfth- and thirteenth-century European texts. Today my main research interest is the literary motif of the Saracen princess, a high-born Muslim woman who betrays her family and community to marry her Christian lover.

You recently completed a project funded by the New Hampshire Humanities Council. Can you tell us about that project?

The goal of this project was to raise awareness of Medieval Studies (especially medieval history and literature) in public middle and high schools in the state of New Hampshire. To this end, I organized a professional development seminar entitled “A Not-So-Distant Mirror: Teaching the Middle Ages in Middle and High School.” The seminar was divided into five sessions on Late Antiquity, *Beowulf*, the Crusades, *The Canterbury Tales*, and medieval art and architecture. Held on June 28-29, 2010, the seminar was very successful with 28 middle- and high-school teachers attending. At the end of each session, participants were asked to reflect on the material presented and to discuss ideas for possible lesson plans. The breakdown of each session into three sections--lecture, discussion, and the formulating of lesson plans made it possible for the participants not only to become exposed to new ideas, but also to take the time necessary to think about how this information might further their own pedagogical needs and goals.

For those who have not worked with OSPR on a grant application, can you describe what the process was like?

Working with OSPR on the NHHHC grant application was a wonderful experience. I applied twice for an NHHHC grant, the first time on my own and the second with the help of Penny Miceli. Thanks to Penny’s help, I was successful the second time, and she made the whole process much easier and more enjoyable. It was a pleasure to talk about the project with Penny, and she was full of excellent ideas for how to make the proposal more attractive to the New Hampshire Humanities Council. OSPR is a fantastic resource!

Do you have specific suggestions for first-time grant applicants?

Just a couple of things:

- 1) Give yourself a lot of time to think through your proposal. Start early.
- 2) Don’t give up! If you don’t succeed the first time, try (and try) again.