

2016-2017 Proposal for Appalachian Teaching Project

*Scrolling through history: A moving panorama as interpretative model
for The Foxfire Museum in Rabun County, GA*

University of North Georgia
Dr. Bonita Jacobs
President
82 College Circle
Dahlonega, GA 30579

706-864-1993

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Rosann Kent
Director, Appalachian Studies Center
University of North Georgia
201 Vickery House
82 College Circle
Dahlonega, GA 30579
rkent@ung.edu

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PROJECT FOCUS: As part of The Foxfire Museum's proposed digital interpretive program, students from the Appalachian Studies Center at the University of North Georgia will create and digitize a moving panoramic shadow box theater based on oral histories from 1967 to 1977 to help the non-profit increase its capacity to reach a new generation, both in Rabun County, Georgia and beyond.

PROJECT DETAILS:

Course Number, Name, and Instructor:

GASC 4800, Appalachian Experience. Fall 2016. Taught by Rosann Kent, Director Appalachian Studies Center & Dr. Chris Dockery, associate professor of art education. This class will take the lead on the ATP; however, the ATP Master Planning Document specifies the role the students in the following courses will provide.

- GASC 3100, Introduction to Appalachian Studies
- GASC 3500, Special Topics in Appalachian Studies (three sections)

Community Partner(s):

The Foxfire Museum, 98 Foxfire Lane, Mountain City, GA 30562

Description provided by partner: The Foxfire Fund, Inc. is a cultural and historic preservation, literary, and educational non-profit organization located in North Georgia, dedicated to preserving and interpreting the folk life of the Southern Appalachian region and fostering an appreciation for its people and their traditions. The Foxfire Museum's collections of oral history archives, historic log structures, and tools, toys, and kitchen implements dating from the late 19th and 20th Century constitute both a historic record of Southern Appalachian folk life and pathways for exploring contemporary themes in American life. The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning promotes a sense of place and appreciation of local people, community, and culture as essential educational tools.

Need as defined by partner: At the heart of The Foxfire Fund, Inc. stands an extensive collection of primary source oral histories gathered over 50 years by local students from interviews with their community elders. These interviews, which form the content of the acclaimed The Foxfire Magazine produced by students and the even more widely read series of The Foxfire Books provide a vivid, first-hand view of work, home life, and play in Southern Appalachia, in authentic regional vernacular and dialect. Visitors to The Foxfire Museum's 110-acre mountainside site can listen to audio-taped oral histories in our archives building and read interview manuscripts. They can take a self-guided tour of the 27 buildings and

demonstration sites and, by prearrangement, tours guided by our Curator, and view authentic tool, toys, and kitchen implements of the earlier age. Yet this experience falls far short of the dynamic, provocative, and educational humanities adventure it could be.

The board of The Foxfire Fund, Inc. is currently seeking support and partners to design an interpretive program to transform relatively passive archival materials and museum collections into an interactive, informative engagement with the Southern Appalachian history and culture.

The past investments of the Appalachian Regional Commission in the ATP project as well as the Georgia Appalachian Studies Center has positioned our students to produce innovative content for The Foxfire Museum for on-site as well as remote visitors, particularly in the area of agricultural traditions. Since the inception of the Minor in 2012, ATP students in all classes with a GASC prefix contribute toward the Center's signature project, *Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories*, or SAGAS. This interdisciplinary project involves collaborations with the Departments of Visual Arts and Biology and features not only seedsaving and seed banking but also memory banking. Students document ethnocultural memories through storytelling and visual art. Past ATP art installations include a communograph, garden flags, broadsides printed on an antique printer, and a seed machine, Reader Theater, and STEAM programs for rural libraries. A moving panorama that can serve as model for other folklore presentations at The Foxfire Museum not only builds on previous ATP projects but also serves a wider audience than previous ATP areas of Lumpkin and Dawson Counties in north Georgia. See <http://www.thecrankiefactory.com/> for more information on these moving panoramas.

Number and description of planned meetings with the community partner:

Preliminary meetings, both in person and by phone, have already begun. A minimum of one monthly meeting and/or field research trip will be coordinated with The Foxfire Museum's curator. More frequent contact is anticipated by phone or email. For example, the curator may request special performances or lectures. Other opportunities to participate or attend events planned for the partner's 50th anniversary celebration will be incorporated in the syllabi of all courses with GASC prefix. See <https://foxfire50th.org/>

May 2016

Request to explore partnership. Email and phone conversation with Barry Stiles, Interim Director and Curator at The Foxfire Museum.

Request for permission to research in archives. Email and phone conversation to Barry Stiles, Interim Director and Curator at The Foxfire Museum.

Site visit to Appalachian Studies Center by Dr. Wilma Hutcheson-William, professor of Education, Piedmont College, Demorest, GA. As coordinator of The Foxfire 50th/30th Anniversary Education Conference, she invited ATP alumni to perform a Reader Theater based on the lives of local seedkeepers on June 25.

Preliminary field research trip to archives at The Foxfire Museum. Two current students, one ATP Alumna, and both co-mentors attended and met with Barry Stiles, Interim Director and Curator.

June 2016

Phone call with Hunter Moorman, Chairman of Board, The Foxfire Fund, Inc. Second field research trip to the archives in The Foxfire Museum. Three current students and one ATP co-mentor attended.

ATP Alumni perform at The Foxfire 50th/30th Anniversary Education Conference.

July 2016

Field research trips continue. Student locate, scan and analyze material. Summer students work on first art piece.

August 2016

By end of August, all classes with GASC prefix will have visited The Foxfire Museum and met with partner.

September 2016

By the end of September, all students in GASC 4800 Appalachian experience will have participated in at least two field research trip to the archives at The Foxfire Museum and met with partner.

October 2016

Partner reviews progress

November 2016

Partner reviews final concept.
Dress rehearsal for partner and campus.

December 2016

ATP conference

Spring semester 2017

Students film and digitize the performance.
Other activities to be determined with partner.
Final debriefing with partner to be held at end of spring semester.

Concise overview of the project, including its central focus (10-12 sentences):

As the central focus of the ATP project, students will research, create and digitize a crankie performance, or moving panoramic shadow box theater, featuring ethnocultural memories related to Appalachian agriculture, particularly planting by the signs for The Foxfire Museum. The crankie, which will be given to the museum after ATP ends, will serve as an innovative model that high school students, alumni and volunteers can use to present many of the other subject headings in the museum's voluminous collection of oral histories.

To select the material for the crankie, UNG students and community members will be engaged to sift through the archives and locate a manageable number of tapes, artifacts, videos, and photographs with the greatest interest. Students will work with the curator at The Foxfire Museum to identify cultural "icons" from the first 10 years (1966 to 1976).

Using arts based research, students will write, design, and film at least one crankie about planting by the signs. This 19th century entertainment medium, which is making a comeback in performance realms, features a long illustrated scroll wound onto two spools that are loaded into a box with a viewing screen. The scroll is hand-cranked while the story is told. This "parlor panorama" will also be performed live at the partner's request; e.g. at an annual alumni meeting. It will be interactive and the narrators will pause to invite listeners' memories.

Students will then digitally film a studio performance and make that available to the partner as well.

Course Guidelines and Project Goals:

The following Course Guidelines and Project Goals will serve as the focus for the upcoming year's Plan of Work for the Appalachian Studies Center. Faculty mentors in Appalachian Studies will integrate the following goals/objectives/activities/ in the syllabi of courses beginning with GASC prefix.

1. Student Goals:

A. Students will develop leadership skills and awareness of community assets that can foster sustainability. All students will serve on at least one leadership team, which is student-selected and governed. The ATP Master Planning Document will guide and coordinate all work and be reviewed and endorsed by the project partner. In the lead ATP class, leadership teams will be formed around research, creative, marketing, logistics, and technology. Other classes will serve on these teams as well. Taking a cue from an ATP colleague, students will replace the term class with "staff meetings" to emphasize the real-life, accountability of this project.

B. Students will be engaged as active learners and participants in community projects. Using qualitative methodologies (e.g. arts based inquiry and narrative analysis) students will mine archives, photographs, and records during at least one field research trip a month. They will learn how to construct a research plan with primary documents, keep research logs and communicate their progress and findings to the curator. Using narrative analysis, they must mine the oral histories for themes as a way to understand how Appalachians used planting folklore to make meaning in their lives. As cultural journalists, they must immerse themselves in learning the partner's story in order to tell it responsibly. They will attend community events at The Foxfire Museum in June, July, Sept and October. They will meet the alumni who created the books and magazines as well as current high school students who are conducting interviews with living people. Finally, through arts-based research, they will design and create a crankie by identifying visual metaphors, writing a script, cutting images from paper and gluing them to a scroll that is then backlit.

C. Students will engage in active research to assist communities in creative approaches to sustainability through asset development. As a result of their participation in this project, students will be positioned as emerging leaders, scholars, artists and activists who can emulate The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning: learner-centered and community based. Through place-based pedagogy, students will be engaged as active learners and teachers, involved participants, and community researchers. Their insights of the Foxfire journey will be posted on the Appalachian Studies Center's new blog.

2. Student Activities:

A. Active engagement with at least one community partner-organization. Although students will create the crankie primarily for The Foxfire Museum, they will offer live performances for other community groups, pending travel budget and prior commitments. Three libraries have already requested programs.

B. Presentation of research at the ATP conference. UNG plans to send 8 students and 2 faculty co-mentors.

C. Poster. Students will creation an exhibit and poster for poster sessions at the Washington, D.C. conference. The crankie will be available for demonstration.

D. Presentations. Students will present their research to their primary community partner(s) and participate in a poster session or panel discussion at the Appalachian Studies Association's Annual Conference in March 2017.

Project Goals

1. ARC area of research focus. Student research will focus on Rabun county, GA, classified by the ARC as an at-risk county.

2. Washington opportunity. In collaboration with an ATP colleague at Frostburg State, students will tour the American Folk life Center at the Library of Congress. This opportunity will enhance their archival research skills.

3. Broader professional opportunities. As part of the presentation to the Appalachian Studies, two students will be selected to submit a proposal. Proposal writing skills are critical to professional development as is public speaking.

4. ARC Goals. Research will address goals 4 and 5 of the ARC strategic plan:

Goal 4: Natural and Cultural Assets Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets and **Goal 5:** Leadership and Community Capacity Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

Students will learn about the ARC by studying its new strategic plan and attending Skype sessions with ARC representatives. The state program manager for Georgia will be invited to follow us on the new blog, visit the Appalachian Studies Center and attend the crankie performance at The Foxfire Museum.

Project Impact

Community Impact. This project is expected to have significant impact on capacity building for the partner as follows.

1. Increased access to scholarly expertise.

- Faculty co-mentors will pursue a Memorandum of Understanding between UNG and The Foxfire Museum to promote institutional support via the Appalachian Studies Center.

- Faculty co-mentors will serve as resources for the staff of The Foxfire Museum and board of The Foxfire Fund, Inc. For example, Dr. Dockery will serve as the Georgia Humanities Scholar and Rosann Kent will lead the Reader Theater for the ATP Alumni production of [“Every Seed Has a Story”](#) on June 25 for The Foxfire 50th/30th Anniversary Education Conference.

2. Increased access to student volunteers.

- Upon request of the curator, students may serve as a research assistant for certain projects such as the Zuraw Wagon from the Trail of Tears.
- Upon request of the curator, students may provide a much needed labor pool to repair cabins, clear land, or plant gardens for The Foxfire Museum.

3. Increased capacity for community outreach.

- The digitized crankie performance will allow virtual visitors to experience The Foxfire Museum.
- A new generation of Foxfire fans will be created as UNG students use social media to tell its story.