Strategic Planning Grant Application

**Title:** Expanding Student Access to the Islamic World: Central Asia

**Applicant:** Jerry R. Galm, Department of Geography and Anthropology

**Statement of Purpose:** This proposal is designed to build on efforts initiated during the period of my Fulbright Grant (Direct Access to the Islamic World, Fall 2006) to expose Eastern students to peoples and cultures (places, current issues and events, etc.) in the Islamic World. Since October, three women scholars from Uzbekistan have visited Eastern to participate in our departmental effort to foster diversity in the University community. Together we compiled various resources necessary to expand coursework in Anthropology (as well Geography, Social Work, History, and Women’s Studies) to include more and improved information on Central Asia and the Islamic World. Perhaps no region of the world and group of people are more neglected in Eastern Washington University’s (EWU) current course offerings than Central Asia and Islamic nations/cultures in general. At a time of increasing international instability, much of which centers on deteriorating relationships between the West and nations/cultures in the Islamic World, the need for more content-driven courses is critical. This proposal is designed to address this deficiency through the development of new course offerings (and the updating of existing course content) on the culture, geography, and history of Central Asia. This proposal specifically targets (but certainly is not limited to) students in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (hereafter CSBS) through the development of both lower and upper division courses in Anthropology with a proposal for cross listing with other programs/departments (e.g., Geography, History).

It is important to note that this application coincides with two important new developments in the Department of Geography and Anthropology and CSBS that have occurred since the submittal of my preproposal. The first is the hiring of a Visiting Assistant Professor (Dr. Michael Zukovsky) in Anthropology who has a strong research background in Central Asia (Kazakh culture in particular). In his current position, Michael will have no ability to develop new courses. However, he is a valuable resource who has the ability to facilitate not just the development of new courses but also, the design and creation of a minor in Central Asian studies (through Geography-Anthropology). In addition, the Dean of CSBS has just approved a joint position between History and Geography-Anthropology for a Middle Eastern/Central Asian specialist. While important to the immediate goal of creating a minor in Central Asian studies, the ability to expand current goals to establish a Center for Central Asian Studies is a realistic prospect. Minimally, the new position in History will produce additional cross-listed courses designed to augment current efforts to provide our students with expanded information on the Islamic World.

The revised objectives of this proposal then are as follows: 1) to develop, minimally, two new courses on Central Asian cultures (upper division), one of which will be a survey course on Central Asian cultures, while the other is an interdisciplinary course on the Silk Road (lower division) utilizing (at least initially) faculty and resources in Geography-
Anthropology. Both courses will be designed as interdisciplinary offerings (for Geography, Anthropology, International Affairs, and possibly, History) and will be cross-listed; 2) to develop information synopses required for the redesign of six of the seven courses offered by Anthropology in fulfillment of the International Studies requirement to incorporate new information on the Islamic World; and, 3) to prepare a proposal to develop a departmental minor in Central Asia Studies.

While the objectives of this proposal principally support Goal 1 of the Academic Strategic Plan, they clearly address Goals II and III as well. For EWU to promote student learning and success, to retain students who come to our campus, and to promote a better awareness of cultural diversity, it is incumbent on our faculty to address shortcomings in departmental and college curricula. At the same time, promoting new opportunities for faculty to learn and expand their academic abilities promotes new educational experiences for our students in a way that benefits the entire campus community. This process has been undertaken in Anthropology and resulted in a faculty consensus to expand student-learning opportunities to promote a better awareness of nations and cultures in the Islamic World. The first stage of our initiative was to obtain a Fulbright Grant to bring a scholar from the Islamic World to campus. This objective was realized in the fall of 2006 with the award of a Fulbright to the writer and the arrival of a Fulbright Visiting Scholar. This scholar, the Anthropologist/Sociologist Dr. Nodira Azimova, contributed information vital to the development of new courses on the cultures of Central Asia as well as the desired revisions of our departmental International Studies courses. But equally important, as a female scholar and Muslim from Uzbekistan she also presented a new and fresh perspective on the Islamic World. During her period of residency she provided invaluable information and resources on Islamic-based cultures resident in Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Through her many talks and meetings (formal and informal) with students she also shattered many myths about females and female academics in the Islamic World. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of bringing a minority scholar to campus to interact closely with students and the resulting impact this experience had on our students and faculty. Another of Dr. Azimova’s important contributions was to facilitate visitations of two other Fulbright Scholars also from Uzbekistan to EWU. The visitations of Dr. Eleonora Faizullaeva (Social Work) and Dr. Dildora Abidjanova (History) provided unanticipated information and resources to the departmental initiative and proved to be an extremely rewarding experience for students and faculty alike. Most recently, Dr. Faizullaeva arranged for the donation of all films in the Gender Montage: Paradigms in Post Soviet Space series (produced by the Open Society Institute) to me (for use in our department). The present proposal thus represents the second phase of the departmental initiative to expand our curriculum to incorporate new and better information on the Islamic World. A third phase of hiring faculty with strong backgrounds in the cultures (peoples, geography, events, history, gender studies, etc.) of Central Asia is currently in progress and should be realized by the end of the 2006-2007 academic year.

Project Design: The current design for this project does not directly involve other faculty or departments other than in the form of a request to cross list new experimental classes. However, it is our intent that once courses are developed and taught to expand
the courses to be team-taught in order to elaborate interdisciplinary content. This was not
deemed feasible at this juncture due to faculty workloads, the proposal deadline, and the
need to control project outcomes. Concerning the latter point, it must be emphasized that
in the case of both proposed new courses, the intended content is, first and foremost, an
anthropological perspective on the cultures of Central Asia. The proposed geographic
and historical content of the new courses therefore will be consistent with the level of
presentation in other International Studies courses offered by the department. As noted
above, these areas can be expanded at a later date, especially if and as new faculty can be
incorporated in an interdisciplinary team-teaching format.

The course tentatively titled, *Peoples of Central Asia*, will present a survey of the major
cultures of Central Asia past and present. The role of Islam in cultural development and
how the 7th and 11th century movements of religion (Islamic *jihads*), people, and cultures
influenced this region and resulting economic and political relationships with regions to
the east and west. This course will include sections on the modern geopolitics of Central
Asia, the impact of globalization on traditional cultures of this region, and gender studies.
The Soviet era and post-Soviet independence movements in Central Asia will be included
in discussions on globalization. Resources required for this course will include new large
format (i.e., wall) maps of the region and individual nations, new reference books for the
library, and films, including both ethnographic/anthropological/documentary
examinations of Central Asian peoples, but also, cinematic treatments that illuminate
modern conditions and issues.

The second course, titled *The Silk Road*, will be developed as a lower division course
with the intent of exposing a large number of students to the cultures and historical
significance of Central Asia. This course will delve into the archaeology of Central Asia
as a way of introducing the expansion of trade/exchange, cultural interaction, and
changing spheres of socio-political influence that form the historical underpinnings of all
modern Central Asian nations. Regional art, architecture, archaeology, people, places,
the economic significance of the growing commodity exchange, gender studies, and the
cultural impact of the Silk Road will comprise the critical content of this course. Like the
*Peoples* course described above, this course will require new library resources, maps
(and/or DVD/CD presentations, particularly in the areas of art, architecture, gender
studies, and archaeology as some of these are currently available), and films. Certainly,
one important thrust of this course is to introduce information that will eliminate or alter
some of the popular myths and stereotypes regarding the peoples and cultures of Central
Asia.

The second objective of developing new and better information on Central Asian cultures
for inclusion in existing International Studies courses offered through Anthropology will
“piggyback” on the development of the new courses. Developing content “vignettes” for
inclusion in six of the seven International Studies options in Anthropology can utilize the
same resources required for creation of the new courses (the referenced courses are
ANTH 342, 348, 349, 358, 366, and 450). The maps/graphic information, books, and
films will become important departmental resources essential to the revision of these
existing courses.
The final objective of this initiative is to develop a minor in Central Asian Studies. The preliminary proposal is for a 20 credit minor in Anthropology designed to include the two new courses outlined in this proposal, the course Major Civilizations of Asia (ANTH 449) currently offered through our department, and a fourth 5 credit course to be determined. Anthropology, Geography, History, or Women’s Studies are all possible sources for the fourth course in the proposed minor.

Outcomes: The planned outcomes of this proposal are essentially threefold: 1) to enhance student learning by developing courses on Central Asia, a region of the world regrettably underrepresented in the existing curriculum; 2) to promote a better understanding of past and present cultures in Central Asia as a way of eliminating or altering misconceptions, myths, and stereotypes commonly held by many students (and lay public) concerning this part of the Islamic World; and, 3) to provide access to a new area of study and research for our students as a means of promoting intellectual growth, expanding experiential opportunities, and creating employment potentials for EWU students. An overarching goal is to establish a long-term commitment to research in Central Asia that will ultimately include a speakers series, field studies, and student-faculty exchanges with institutions in this region. Development of a minor in Central Asian studies may also stimulate interest in the future development of a Center for Central Asia Studies at EWU. The development of such a Center would provide an even stronger connection between EWU and the regional community since metropolitan Spokane now includes a Russian-speaking community of over 25,000 people. Many in this community come from one of the Central Asian republics or are from southern Russia or Ukraine and have ties to Central Asia. Russian is the academic language of Central Asia, a fact that holds potential for a growing number of (first language) Russian-speaking students at EWU.

Assessment Plan: The assessment component of this initiative will have three parts. The first is an outside review of the syllabi developed for the new courses (including the books, readings, and films selected for use). The reviews will be conducted by at least two of the three Fulbright Scholars who came to EWU this academic year (all three—Drs. Azimova, Faizullaeva, and Abidjanova—have agreed to participate in such a review). The faculties of Geography and Anthropology will conduct a second assessment of the new course proposals (syllabi, overall content, illustrative materials, etc.). At least six members of the combined departmental faculty will participate in this review. The third assessment instrument will be the standard student course evaluations employed for all courses offered by the department. These course assessments will follow current procedures. Departmental assessment instruments consist of a series of questions concerning course content, instruction (methods, presentation, techniques, etc.), and design (readings, additional information, graphic/film presentations, format) delivered as course evaluations at the end of the quarter. Scoring is on a Likert scale (5 highest to 1 lowest) but all evaluations also include space for personal comments. The departmental secretary summarizes these forms at the end of each quarter for review by the instructor. The comments obtained from students will be essentially in the process of fine-tuning these courses as well as for achieving adequate future enrollments.
**Timeframe:** The proposed courses will be developed over the summer of 2006 (July and August). The addition of first new course content on Central Asia will be incorporated in ANTH 342 (Tribes, Bands, and Chiefdoms, an International Studies course) in the spring of 2007. Both proposed new courses, *Peoples of Central Asia* and *The Silk Road*, will be finalized by June 2007 (to be taught as experimental courses in the 2007-2008 academic year). The courses to be included in a minor in Central Asian Studies also will be completed by June 2007. Pending departmental approval of the proposal for a new minor (and the new courses), an application will be made to the Dean (CSBS), and ultimately the appropriate University committees, for review during the 2007-2008 academic year.
PROJECT BUDGET

Amount Requested: $9700. Requested funding includes five weeks of salary (plus approximately 20% for benefits) for the applicant along with $2500 for the purchase of books (on Central Asia and the Islamic World), maps/graphic resources, and videos/films. The salary requested is based on the same formula employed for the Faculty Grants for Research and Creative Activities ($5000/month including benefits for 1.0 FTE) and is less than my base salary as a full professor.

Budgeted Costs

Salary and Benefits: Jerry R. Galm @$5000/month for 1.2 mos. = $6000
+ ca. 20% for fringe benefits = $1200

Subtotal $7200

Supplies/Equipment:

Books, Maps/Graphic Resources $1750
Includes $800 for a copy of Bibliography of Islamic Central Asia and $190 for An Historical Atlas of Central Asia; most ethnographies range between $25 and $80; maps vary but a good wall map will cost between $100-$200.

Films $750
Includes films with content on archaeology, art (art history), architecture, and history. Documentary films range between $175-$250 in price; popular films average between $15 to $25 each.

TOTAL $9700