Summer 2011 FCT Grant recipient report summary
Sharon Albert (Religion Studies) and Mark Stein (History)

This grant supported our work integrating interdisciplinary team-teaching methods into our shared First Year Seminar course, “Arabian Nights, Disney Days.” It is our goal for the Fall 2011 iteration of the course to explore more explicitly with the students the intersections of our disciplines in approaching the primary course text Arabian Nights. We investigated team-teaching methodologies drawing on the research found in James L. Bess (2000) Teaching alone, teaching together: transforming the structure of teams for teaching and James R. Davis (1997) interdisciplinary courses and team teaching.

Building on that foundation we worked on strategies to enhance group discussion leading including increasing and more formally structuring small group discussion. We also developed coordinated writing assignments that underscored the intersection of our disciplines to foreground the idea of interdisciplinarity. We will assess the impact of our project in a number of ways: Students will write short journal entries reflecting on the interdisciplinary nature of the course and engage in peer review across sections. We will also address the effectiveness of the interdisciplinary methods as part of mid-term and semester-end evaluations.