

2022-2023 Faculty Improvement Leave Application Background Information

Application Deadline: Monday, October 4, 2021

Name: Stephannie S. Gearhart

Rank: Professor

Department/School: English

I am requesting a Faculty Improvement Leave for the following period (check one):

Fall 2022

Spring 2023

Academic Year 2022-2023

My Faculty Improvement Leave proposal is for (check box that applies):

Scholarly/Creative Purposes Professional Development Purposes Both

Will the availability of external support affect your Faculty Improvement Leave plans (check one)?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Please specify the nature and amount of external support, and current status of arrangements for this support (if applicable). Please attach documentation.

N/A

I have included my current curriculum vitae (check box)

I have reviewed CBA Article 22 and agree to return to BGSU for a period of at least one academic year of service after completing an approved FIL or reimburse the University for all salary and benefits paid during that leave (Section 4.2) (check box)

2022-2023 Faculty Improvement Leave Narrative Template

FIL Applicant: Stephannie S. Gearhart

Please use the headings supplied below for the narrative section of your FIL application. These criteria will be used at all levels of review (academic unit, Chair/Director, and Dean) to evaluate the merits of your proposal in a consistent and fair manner (CBA Article 22, Section 5.1.2).

1. **Project Description (Approximately 400 – 600 words).** Please offer a precise and clear description of the activities planned while on leave; indicate the project outcomes, procedures and timetable that shall be followed and the prior arrangements that have been made.

How did British and American artists adapt Shakespeare in the 1980s, and how might an understanding of their aesthetic responses to neoliberalism in its nascent stage help us to imagine alternatives to policies and practices that continue to dominate today?

These are the questions at the heart of my new book-length project, which builds upon work I've published, specifically, "Timescapes of Adaptation: Challenging Neoliberalism in *Lear's Daughters*" (*Litteraria Pragensia*, 2016) and "*Lear's Daughters*, Adaptation, and the Calculation of Worth" (*Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 2012). In these articles, I examined a prequel to Shakespeare's *King Lear*, devised in 1987 by a feminist theatre collective, in terms of its gender and class politics. Working on these pieces left me with many questions about the uses of Shakespeare in 1980s and led me to pursue this longer project.

As literary scholar James Shapiro has commented, whenever he is adapted, Shakespeare acts as "a canary in the coalmine," alerting us to a culture's deeply held beliefs. Along these lines, I'm curious to know what was being made of Shakespeare during the rise of neoliberalism as a means of understanding reactions to this ideological shift. In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher formed a "special relationship" that allowed the duo to promote neoliberalism on a global scale. With the support of the Chair of the US Federal Reserve Bank, Paul Volker, Thatcher and Reagan advanced policies that resulted in greater social inequality in Britain and the US and were adopted worldwide, as many other countries' debts were excused in exchange for their commitment to neoliberal ideals. Defending democracy from the so-called "evil empire," Reagan and Thatcher extolled free market capitalism and set the world on a course from which it may seem "there is no alternative." While some adapters of Shakespeare supported this conservative turn, many others imagined alternatives using perhaps the most widely recognized figure in the Western literary canon to do so. What were these alternatives and how might a deeper understanding of them help us to imagine what Mark Fisher has called a postcapitalist society?

In order to explore these questions, while on FIL during AY 22-23 I will begin by building on my preexisting bibliography on this topic with two goals in mind: (1) better grasping how Shakespeare was adapted during the 1980s in the US and the UK, and (2) deepening my understanding of Reagan's and Thatcher's policies and the public's responses to them. This part of the work for the project will occur in Fall 2022 and will result in four outcomes by the semester's end: (1) an annotated bibliography, (2) a table of contents for the book, (3) a presentation of the project at the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference 2022, (4) an abbreviated version of one book chapter submitted to *Adaptation*, an international, peer reviewed journal

published by Oxford University Press. In Spring 2023, then, I will be well positioned to produce the following: (1) a chapter of the book, which will be an expanded version the article composed in Fall 22, (2) another chapter of the book, which will build on my previous work on *Lear's Daughters*, (3) outlines of all remaining chapters of the book, and (4) a book proposal for Routledge. When I return from FIL in AY 23-24, I will be prepared to write the outstanding chapters and to submit the manuscript in its entirety to the publisher.

- 2. Benefits to Faculty Member: Near- and/or Long-Term (Approximately 100-200 words).** *Give a detailed explanation of how the planned activities will enhance your professional capabilities and career trajectory in teaching/librarian effectiveness, scholarly/creative activity, and/or service in alignment with assigned duties/allocation of effort/workload.*

Being afforded the time to do the heavy lifting for a large project such as this will position me favorably to complete my third book and to further establish my reputation in the field of Shakespeare and adaptation. My earlier publications on this topic led to my being invited to the World Shakespeare Congress in 2016 and a book-length study on a topic not yet explored in the field would, I hope, likewise garner the attention of fellow scholars.

Further, as a teacher, I routinely offer courses on Shakespeare and adaptation; having time to immerse myself in focused study on the topic will enrich the courses I will offer upon my return. The new courses I will devise based on my research will strengthen Literature's new proposed undergraduate major and contribute to meeting our ever-expanding MA online program's needs.

Given that my Allocation of Effort is roughly equal in terms of teaching and research, working on this project will positively affect the central aspects of my job, allowing me to raise the research profile of my home unit and to offer BGSU undergraduate and graduate students high-quality educational experiences.

- 3. Benefits to University: Near- and/or Long Term (Approximately 100-200 words).** *Explain how the outcomes of your FIL will strengthen your academic program in alignment with one or more of the University's strategic objectives, e.g., Driving Public Good Through Redefining Student Success; Creating Public Good Through Research, Creative Activities, Partnerships and Engagement, Powering Public Good Through Our People and Community, Supporting Public Good Through Efficient and Effective Processes, Structures and Technologies. (Additional information may be found [at Forward. Our Shared Plan to Create Public Good.](#))*

By increasing my expertise in my field of study, I will be supporting my program in driving public good through redefining student success; powering public good through our people and community; and creating public good through research, creative activities, partnerships and engagement.

My project will enable me to offer new courses in our program's undergraduate and graduate programs that will be accessible to a broad range of students, from the 18 to 22-year-olds for whom the 1980s is a distant historical period familiar to them only through recent trends in fashion, to older students who themselves have lived through the era and have a connection to the issues, texts, and/or policies under consideration.

Further, as class and identity politics will be a central feature of my project, the issues raised in these courses will facilitate discussions about and projects centered on diversity and belonging across a wide range of issues.

These new courses will also benefit students in our online MA program, most of whom are educators who are themselves required to teach Shakespeare. Deepening my expertise on the topic will allow me to serve public school teachers more effectively and to make meaningful connections between BGSU and local educators.

4. Reporting Plan (Approximately 50-100 words)

Provide a specific plan for the format and content of a report to be submitted to the President upon completion of your FIL.

Upon returning from my FIL, I will submit a narrative report on my progress and supporting documents. As per the timeline I have outlined above, I anticipate that these documents will include an article-length version of a chapter, a sample chapter(s), a book proposal (and, possibly, contract), and a syllabus informed by the research I completed during my FIL.

2022-23 AY FIL Application Information: Deadline to Submit Intent to Apply is Tomorrow (Sept. 8)



Lee Nickoson (she, her, hers)

Tue 9/7/2021 12:53 PM

To: Stephannie S Gearhart

Hello Stephannie,

Thank you for informing me of your plan to apply for an FIL for the 2022-23 AY.

All best,

Lee



Lee Nickoson, Ph.D. ([she/her](#))

Professor and Chair

[Department of English](#),

Bowling Green State University

213A East Hall

Bowling Green, OH 43403

Office: 419.372.7543 V

Virtual Office: <https://bgsu.webex.com/meet/leenick>

<https://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/english.html>



BGSU is situated in the occupied homelands of numerous Indigenous and Native tribal nations. This space holds historical and contemporary ties to the Wyandot, Kickapoo, Miami, Odawa, Potawatomi, and multiple other Indigenous tribal nations who were both autochthonous to the area—as were the Woodland peoples—and also forcibly removed to and from the land—as were the Wyandot, who dispersed to the area from the Huron hundreds of years before forced removal under the U.S. Indian Removal Act of 1830 to Kansas and then, later, to Oklahoma.

This area's history reveals an arterial network of complex economic and cultural significance. We, the BGSU community, recognize the stewardship, dedication, and presence of those for whom the Great Black Swamp and the Lower Great Lakes region is home. Through this statement, we aim to trace the past to the present to inform current conditions. It is within BGSU's responsibility as an academic institution to disseminate knowledge about Indigenous peoples and the University's relationships, past and present, with tribal nations and individuals. As such, we recognize the forced relocation of tribal nations to and from this land, and we strive to better decolonize history and present conditions.



From: Stephannie S Gearhart <stephsg@bgsu.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 12:04 PM

To: Lee Nickoson (she, her, hers) <leenick@bgsu.edu>

Subject: Re: 2022-23 AY FIL Application Information: Deadline to Submit Intent to Apply is Tomorrow (Sept. 8)

Hi, Lee. Just a quick note here to officially announce my intent of applying for an FIL for AY 22-23. As per the email below, I'll fill out the College's form