

Touring History: Tracing the Roots of Political Economy in Scotland, England, and France

Jeff Edwards

Project Goals

- Read and reflect on the seminal works of the seven early prominent scholars of political economy
- View and gather copies of primary resources from collections at the University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, and the London School of Economics, Cambridge University
- Visit sites in Scotland, England, and France associated with the founders/scholars of political economy
- Experience Scots, English, and French history, culture, language, traditions, and current life to give context to my work in and beyond the classroom and broaden my personal horizons
- Use this experience to develop enriched curriculum for the courses I teach to share my personal professional development with my students

Although many of the documents associated with and writings of the founders of political economy, Adam Smith (1723 – 1790), Jean Baptiste Say (1767 – 1832), David Ricardo (1772 – 1823), Thomas Robert Malthus (1766 – 1834), James Mills (1773 - 1836), John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873), and Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832), are readily available to all interested scholars, there is something extraordinary about viewing the originals and working with them in the context of where they were formulated. For example, I am excited about the possibility of visiting Adam Smith's office at Glasgow University. I want to experience some of the same sights and sounds that greeted him and his fellow early scholars of political economy.

Words can never describe my excitement last year at a National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of History Workshop about the career and life of John Adams. When I toured the Adams amazing library collection, saw the personal letters of John and Abigail in their own handwriting, and read and photographed the beautiful original charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (1629/1630), I had an idea that has resulted in this Mosal Award Application. I wanted to become as well acquainted with the life and times of my professional heroes, the authors of political economy, as I had become with the Adams documents.

Project Design

To reach my goals in tracing the roots of political economy, I plan to do the following:

- Read the seminal works of the seven fathers of political economy, including Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* (1843), *On Liberty* (1859), *The Subjection of Women* (1869), and *Three Essays on Religion* (1874), Jean Baptiste Say's *A Treatise on Political Economy* (1880), Thomas Robert Malthus' *Principles* (1820 – later published as *Notes on Malthus*), David Ricardo's "Essay on Profits" (1815) and *The High Price of Bullion* (1810), Jeremy Bentham's *Handbook of Political Fallacies* (1824), and James Mill's *The History of India* (1818).

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- Tour Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland, London, England, and Lyons, France to physically trace the roots of political economy. I plan to spend fourteen days and nights in Europe visiting the homes and work places/universities where the seven founders of political economy lived and formulated their ideas, including the University of Glasgow, the University of Edinburgh, the London School of Economics, and the estates of Jeremy Bentham (England) and Jean Baptiste Say (France).
- Prepare a CD-Rom of images from my tour of sites associated with the roots of political economy for use by colleagues and Phi Theta Kappa.
- Develop enriched curriculum for my economics and business classes at Holmes Community College (traditional classes) and Cy-Fair College (online classes).

Personal Statement

During twenty-nine years teaching economics, I have pondered many times how political economy (now Political Science and Economics) seems to spring up full blown in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. I have come to the conclusion that this turn of events came about because of the work of thoughtful scholars who challenged each other to greater intellectual heights through both their writings and personal associations, particularly written correspondence. Smith, Say, Ricardo, Malthus, Mill, Sr., Mill, Jr., and Bentham are each recognized for their unique contributions to the development of political economy. I am intrigued by them, but also fascinated by the interactions between them that made each of them stronger and more creative. Like Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, who both became better painters due to their competition of ideas, the synergy of the lives and works of the founders of political economy changed the way we look at the world.

I have often daydreamed about visiting the places that influenced the founders as they grew up close in terms of their ages and geography and as they rose academically to define the growing discipline of political economy. Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, and Lyons are the crucibles in which their collective economic and political genius stirred to give us intellectual roots we still debate. I want to visit their universities, museums, and those homes that are still extant. By doing so, I believe I will grow in my understanding and appreciation of my discipline, economics, and, as I have never been to Europe, grow in my appreciation of other cultures and as a human being. I hope to return from my virtual travels (my reading and reflecting) and physical travels with fresh insights and creative ideas that will capture the imaginations of my students and colleagues in my traditional and online classrooms and with the presentations I plan to do of my research and travels at both Holmes Community College and Cy-Fair College. Moreover, I plan to share my work with colleagues who feel it will be useful in their own classrooms and with Phi Theta Kappa.

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Timeline

- May 2007 – purchase books and research written and visual materials
- Read or re-read seminal works of Adam Smith, Jean Baptiste Say, David Ricardo, Thomas Robert Malthus, James Mills, John Stuart Mills, and Jeremy Bentham
- August/September 2007 - Arrange travel to England, Scotland, and France for summer 2008
- July 23 – August 7, 2008 – Travel to London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Paris to trace the roots of political economy
- August/September 2008 - Create CD-Rom of visual images of European trip for personal and professional use
- March 2009 - Share experiences and findings about the roots of political economy

Budget

Travel Expenses:

- Roundtrip Airfare between Jackson, MS and London (Gatwick) - \$ 1,182.50 (\$ 1,031.00 + 151.50 taxes)
- Eurail Global Pass - \$ 647.00 (\$ 635.00 + 12.00 Pass Security)
- Lodging - \$ 2,100.00 (14 nights @ \$150.00 (average) per night)
- Meals - \$ 650.00 (13 days, counting travel time, @ \$50.00 per day)
- Subtotal - \$ 4,579.50

Reference Books & Museum Passes:

- Reference books and materials by and about the seven founders of political economy – \$ 185.35
- Museum passes in Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, and Paris - \$ 235.15
- Subtotal - \$ 420.50

Total Expenses for Mosal Funds: \$ 5,000.00

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Provide your title at your institution and list your primary professional responsibilities (50 words or less).

I am a professor of economics and business at Holmes Community College and teach Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Business Law, and Introduction to Business on the Goodman and Grenada campuses.

I am an advisor for the Kappa Alpha chapter (Goodman) and the Beta Lambda Mu chapter, Cy-Fair College, where I teach online.

2. Describe a recent professional activity that has enhanced your ability to fulfill your professional responsibilities as cited above.

Part of the challenge and fun of being a teacher is growing as a learner. To help me grow as a scholar, over the past two years, I have had the privilege of participating in four different National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Landmarks of American History Workshops: (1) *Currents of History: The Columbia River and the Making of the West* at Portland State University, (2) *Remembering The Alamo* at the Alamo (San Antonio Missions National Park), (3) *Mammoth Cave: People, Place, & Culture* at the Mammoth Cave National Park, and (4) *John Adams: Boston and Braintree* in Massachusetts. For each workshop, I spent a week at the landmark site(s) listening to wonderful speakers, working in archives and libraries, and growing in my understanding of the importance of place. Collectively these workshops have informed my teaching and broadened my opportunities for sharing my love of history and economics with colleagues and students outside my classroom.

One of the significant benefits of the NEH grants is the opportunity to create curriculum and projects/assignments that capture students' imaginations, challenge them, and make learning fun. Collectively The NEH workshops have given me a new framework through which to view my main discipline, economics, as well as the business classes I now teach at Holmes Community College. I have used elements of the curriculum from all four workshops to liven my sometimes "cold" discipline. From my experiences, I have developed fully integrated, team taught traditional and online learning communities with both a history professor and political science professor. Taking an interdisciplinary approach has helped my students better understand economic theory and logic.

From my participation in the NEH workshops, I have developed presentations to share with students, colleagues, and community members. Most recently, I co-presented work on John and Abigail Adams to the Cy-Fair Academy of Life Long Learning and on Mammoth Cave as part of a Windows on the World lecture series.

I am hooked on this marvelous learning experience and have applied to participate in a 2007 NEH Landmarks of American History Workshop, *The American Lyceum and Public Culture: The Oratory of Idealism, Opportunity, and Abolition in the 19th Century* in Boston.

3. Explain the significance of a specific contribution to scholarship you made through publication, presentation, workshop, or other scholarly activity (include any available documentation).

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) accepted a presentation, "Lights, Action, Learning: Creating Effective Learning Communities," proposed by my wife and I who had taught learning communities together during the 2003-04 academic year. We spoke to 144 participants about the preparation, opportunities, and challenges of developing a fully-integrated interdisciplinary curriculum. We illustrated melding meaningful assignments to help students understand the connection between disciplines and retention of students. We shared our feedback from students who acknowledged that the learning community experience had enhanced their knowledge while creating closer bonds between classmates than traditional classes (Students spent six, rather than just three, hours together each week).

After presenting at the May 2004 NISOD Conference in Austin, Texas, Susan and I were invited to tailor a workshop presentation for the faculty of Cedar Valley College in Dallas, Texas. We were particularly moved by this request as we had no previous contact with the director who invited us to his college. He just said he enjoyed our presentation, learned a lot, and thought it would be useful for Cedar Valley faculty. We traveled to the college during the fall 2004 semester and had a wonderful, very interactive presentation with a room full of interested faculty. Their enthusiasm encouraged us to also present our work in a North Harris Montgomery Community College District workshop for faculty interested in teaching learning communities. Susan and I also presented at the Texas Distance Learning Association conference in Galveston with a focus of developing online learning communities. I went on to serve two terms as chair of our college's Learning Communities Committee, which encouraged Cy-Fair faculty to develop fully-integrated interdisciplinary learning communities.

After teaching four learning communities at Cy-Fair College, I have begun teaching at Holmes Community College and am working with a colleague to develop my new college's first learning community.

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4. Explain the significance of no more than five awards of recognition you have received for excellence in your field.

1) **Piper Professor** (2007): I was named one of fifteen Piper Professors by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation in San Antonio. This is an award given to Texas professors from community colleges and senior institutions for teaching and professional excellence, particularly over the course of years.

Each college/university nominates one professor a year for consideration. I was selected by a committee of faculty from the pool of Excellence Award recipients to represent Cy-Fair College, since I had been ranked first in the 2006 Excellence Award review. Fewer than 80 community college faculty have won the Piper Professor award in its forty-nine-year history.

2) **Excellence Award** (2006): I was selected one of four faculty Excellence Award winners from Cy-Fair College. Nominations for this award are taken from all members of our Cy-Fair College community. Nominees are asked to submit a portfolio of specific work, including examples of teaching innovation, college leadership, and community service. Finalists for the award are observed teaching in a regular classroom setting by members of the selection committee. As a result of receiving this award, I was inducted this year as an honorary member into our Beta Lambda Mu chapter of Phi Theta Kappa.

3) **NISOD Excellence Award** (2006 & 1991): I have twice been selected by fellow faculty members to receive an Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) at their May conference in Austin. In 1991, I represented Collin County Community College, and in 2006 I represented Cy-Fair College. I am proud to have been selected by two groups of colleagues to be recognized by NISOD.

4) **Paragon Award for New Advisors** (2006): I came to advising late in my career, but once I got here I found the secret so many longtime advisors know: It is a joy to work with our Society's students and colleagues. I have loved working with our Beta Lambda Mu chapter, and having our officers nominate me for this award meant a great deal to me. Winning the award wasn't bad either.

5) **Dr. Martha Newsome Flying High Award** (2004): This award is given to the "hardest working" faculty member at Cy-Fair College by a vote of all faculty and staff. I was honored to receive it for my work with the Faculty Senate, Phi Theta Kappa, our National Model United Nations delegation, and other college and community leadership and service.

5. How has your experience in scholarship, service, and/or leadership contributed to the growth and achievements of your students.

I have spent my entire career as a college teacher trying to be an example of an enthusiastic lifelong learner for my students in economics. I read widely, particularly books and articles about economics, history, government, philosophy, and religion, and strive to keep my knowledge of the world and my discipline up-to-date. I truly believe that making “the dismal science” of economics alive with relevant historical and contemporary examples is a key to the growth in knowledge of my students. I have found along the way, if sufficiently interested and engaged, students will devote more energy and resources to mastering the deceptively difficult logic that constitutes economics. If they happen to fall in love with it along the way, so much the better, and I am always thrilled when students tell me they plan to major in economics because they loved my class. I have worked during my career to share what I’ve learned with my colleagues and to support the work they are doing. In doing so, I hope my students see a teacher with broad and deep interests who exults in scholarly fellowship.

By working with students outside the classroom, I have tried to show them connections between scholarship, leadership, and service. One of the great joys of my career has been opening doors to leadership and service opportunities for students. Most recently, as example, I have worked with students as they prepare to lead a delegation representing Namibia at the 2007 National Model United Nations Conference in New York City. Those students, in turn, created a Model United Nations Club at Aragon Middle School and brought the world, and a measure of *real politick*, to the sixth grade students with whom they have worked this year. One of the leaders of that team was recently named a Guistwhite Scholar and another has also served as Student Government Association President this year. Generating opportunities for students and watching them accept the challenges and grow as scholars, leaders, and citizens is one of the great joys of teaching at a community college and serving as a Phi Theta Kappa advisor.