

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SEMESTER/EXPLORATORY GRANT APPLICATION
Budget Worksheet

BUDGET ITEM	Department or College Funds	Outside Agency Funds	Personal Funds	Undergraduate Research Funds	GRAND TOTAL
Materials Round Trip air fare from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles (see appendix 2) Lodging in inner-city Los Angeles for 6 days at \$58.65 (see appendix 2) Per Diem (6 days at \$40 per day) Public Transportation at \$5 a day for 6 days Photocopying (200 copies at \$.10 each)				\$227.20 \$401.17 \$240.00	\$227.20 \$401.17 \$240.00 \$30.00 \$20.00
Equipment Laptop Digital Camera			I have a laptop and digital camera that will be sufficient for the research		
Mileage to gather Data (.36 per mile)					
Grand Total			\$50.00	\$868.37	\$918.37

Mentor fee 11.00

p. card

Project Description

My research question is: How do stereotypes of African-Americans as used by Disney and Warner Brothers in their animated cartoons change between 1920s and 1960s, in response to changing attitudes towards race in American culture? Animated cartoons are but one of many cultural expressions of attitudes and values. By analyzing the cartoons produced by two major studios, I hope to detect the growing concern for social justice in American society.

African-American stereotypes were first animated by James Stuart Blackton in 1907 when he incorporated the word 'coon' – onto a pair of eyes on a blackface caricature in his short film *Lightning Sketches* (Christopher P. Lehman, *The Colored Cartoon* (2007)). That same year Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) began producing both cinematic and animated films that featured a "mammy" character that would appear often in their productions for over a decade. Many filmmakers continued to use racial tensions and characteristics as a source of humor throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In the post war era, as African-Americans asserted more influence on American culture and demanded greater equality, filmmakers used fewer and more subtle African-American stereotypes until they virtually disappeared in the 1960s.

My project will focus specifically on Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny. During their long careers both characters have incorporated stereotypical black characteristics. Ironically, the origins of characters like Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny can be traced to African-American roots through the trickster Brer Rabbit character in Uncle Remus stories (Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 1977). However, there is only limited published scholarship on the use of African-American stereotypes in animated cartoons and their reflection and promotion of racism in American culture. For example, Leonard Maltin's *Of Mice and Magic: a History of American Animated Cartoons* (1980), completely ignores the historical

influence of black stereotypes in animated cartoon characters. Steven Watts in *Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century* (1995) acknowledges the use of stereotypes but fails to explain in any depth study how these cartoon characters evolved. My research will attempt to fill the gap by focusing on two of the most famous cartoon figures in American history.

I will review films and archival materials at the UCLA Film and Television Archives and the USC Warner Brothers Archives in Los Angeles, California. These archives contain the animated cartoons that feature Mickey Mouse, 1928- present, and Bugs Bunny, 1938 – present, in their complete unaltered forms. In addition to the films, the Warner Brothers Archives have legal and production documents, story and publicity files, correspondence, memoranda, and historical stills from the Looney Tunes series, featuring Bugs Bunny. I have contacted Mark Quigley, archivist of the UCLA Film and Television Archives, and Sandra Joy Lee and Johnathon Auxier, archivists of the USC Warner Brothers Archives. They are assisting me in determining which of the resources and films available may be able to aid in my research. (See appendix 1) This project falls along this research continuum:

Dependent _____ Independent
(Student helping faculty do research) (Student doing own research).

I enrolled in Weber State University in the fall of 2008 with the intent to obtain a double major in English and History education in order to teach humanities on a high school level. However, after immersing myself in the atmosphere of a university, I have altered my educational goals to one day becoming a professor of history. I am currently enrolled in the 3090 Social History course instructed by Dr. Susan Matt. The course has assisted me in creating a framework for this project. I have also done extensive library research for my job as a coordinator for Rise Services.

This research will become the basis of my senior thesis in History and prepare me for graduate work. I plan to present the paper at the annual WSU Research Symposium and to offer the paper for presentation at the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference and at the Utah Conference of Undergraduate Research.

Timeline

October-December, 2009: Read Secondary Scholarship

December, 2009: Research UCLA and USU Film Archives

January – March, 2010: Write Senior Thesis

29 March, 2010: Present Research at WSU Spring Symposium

March, 2010: Submit Research for acceptance at Phi Alpha Theta Utah Conference

Budget Explanation

I plan on spending 5 working days in the archives -- 2 days in the UCLA Film and Television Archives and 3 days in the USC Warner Brothers Archives, from December 14th to December 18th. I will need to fly to Los Angeles from Salt Lake City, tickets being roughly \$227.20 (see appendix 2). I will also need lodgings during my stay. It is important to me that I stay in an area that is safe and central to the archives. On average, the price of lodging is about \$ 68.87 per night (see appendix 2). I am also requesting per diem expenses of \$40.00 a day for 6 days, totaling \$240.00. I will use public transportation of the duration of my stay and estimate spending about \$5 per day for a total of 6 days totaling \$30. This cost, along with any necessary photocopying will be paid with my own personal expenses.