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**Program:** Rhetoric and Writing Studies

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**Title of Presentation:** “Social Media/Microblogging: Identity in Digital Spaces”

**Conference:** Cultural Rhetorics

**Dates:** 9/30/2016 – 10/3/2016

**Location:** East Lansing, MI
 **About the Conference:**
Cultural rhetorics is an interdisciplinary field of study that fosters rhetorical knowledge of the different meaning-making practices in culture/cultural spaces within and outside academia. The purpose of the conference is to create spaces where Cultural Rhetorics scholars and teachers can continue to engage, challenge, and support one another. By encouraging conversations about Cultural Rhetorics in the form of scholarly presentations, artistic performances and installations, and workshops it contributes to making and sharing knowledge.

**Travel Proposal:**

This proposal seeks travel funding, including airfare and hotel, to East Lansing, Michigan to attend and present at the 2016 Cultural Rhetorics Conference. The title of the presentation is “Social Media/Microblogging: Identity in Digital Spaces,” which is part of the panel titled "Exploring the Rhetoricity of Personal Identity(ies) on Social Networking Sites (SNS)." To reduce the cost of airfare of the conference, we are traveling to Detroit, MI and commuting to Lansing, MI.

**Our Panel:**

I will co-present on the identity performance of first-year composition students on Tumblr. Tumblr, a microblogging platform and social networking website, situates texts where students must communicate in a rhetorically effective manner in order to create a virtual presence and digital body that is on the margins of academia. On a weekly basis, we, as first-year composition instructors, ask students to create multimedia texts and respond to their classmates via a Tumblr. While the prompts are predetermined in order to facilitate discussion, the students determine the execution of the multimedia posts. This includes, but is not limited to, the amount of text, audio, and visuals within the post. The popularity of memes and gifs is present in their posts and communicative practices. It is through the use of memes and gifs where an identity is performed for their classmates, students, and general Tumblr community. This presentation is intended to review how meaning-making practices in a digital space changes the process of writing and what it means to be a “traditional” student.

**Benefits: Professional and Educational**While our dissertation topics differ; we are both interested in the notion of the varying meaning-making practices in digital spaces. The educational benefits are tied to furthering our research within our own dissertation topics, as well as our pedagogical practices as RWS instructors.

Professionally, the benefits include, but are not limited to, networking and showcasing how the practical experience-based applications, in addition to theory and pedagogy, create a virtual presence and digital body that is on the margins of academia. Thus, since the purpose of the conference is to engage with other scholars regarding knowledge and culture, we aim to engage with attendees and find ways to improve our approach to Tumblr.

The practical use of Tumblr allows instructors and students to break barriers and perform an identity in a digital space that may not always be replicated in the classroom. Thus, we further scholarship by engaging how it is invaluable to have these discussions in order to pursue different pedagogical practices to apply in our classrooms. This opportunity will allows us to explore important concepts related to RWS, and to learn from other emerging and prominent scholars in the field.  In addition to focusing on the practice and process students employ during the creation of multimodal assignments, we are collaborating, as colleagues, to enhance students’ understanding of the RWS discourse community.

This paper may have potential to be published in *enculturation*, which is a journal that publishes articles that address “theories of rhetoric, writing, and culture.” We feel our paper would fit within the goals of this journal because it closely examines issues of rhetoric, culture, and education, which are central to the journal’s theme.

The conference affords us the opportunity to receive feedback from other scholars that will be important to our work, and help us improve upon our ideas as we attempt to publish.

**Estimated Budget for Travel Costs**

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| Item | Cost | Notes | Total Requested |
| Flight | $389.20 each/778.40 total  | Depart September 30th: El Paso, TX to Phoenix, AZPhoenix, AZto Detroit, MIReturn October 3rd:  Detroit, MI to  Dallas, TX  Dallas, TX to El  Paso, TX Quoted by Anthony Travel 9/6/16   | $389.20 |
| Hotel | $101/night(to cut costs Jasmine Villa and I are sharing a room) | Quality Inn UniversityI was able to find a cheaper rate than the one offered to those attending the conference.  | $303 |
| Conference Registration | $90 | Not requesting this amount. | $0.00 |
| Total  |  |  | $ 692.20 |