Illinois Humanities – The Odyssey Project
Instructor Position in U.S. History
(One quarter-length course with possible annual renewal)

The Odyssey Project, a Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities, is currently seeking an instructor to teach an introductory-level U.S. history course, preferably with an emphasis on U.S. Communities of Color, at our North Side location. This position requires that instructors have an M.A. and prior teaching experience (advanced PhD students are welcome to apply). Instructors are responsible for eleven 2-hour class meetings to be taught in either the late fall/early winter quarter or the spring quarter. Instructors are employed through Illinois Humanities and the compensation for the course is $3800.

If interested, please contact Chris Guzaitis, Director, The Odyssey Project by May 15, 2017 at: chris.guzaitis@ilhumanities.org

Please see below for a more detailed description of The Odyssey Project:

Overview
The Odyssey Project, a Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities, is a free, college-credit earning humanities program for adults who might not otherwise have access to a college education. The requirements for participation are that students are 18 years of age or older, meet income eligibility guidelines (living at our below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level), do not have a B.A. from an accredited college or university in the U.S., and feeling comfortable reading a newspaper (in English for our courses taught in English and in Spanish for our courses taught in Spanish). The core of the Odyssey Project is a 32-week program in which participants receive 110 hours of instruction across five subject areas: literature, art history, philosophy, United States history, and critical thinking and writing. Each subject is taught by a different instructor from a local college or university. The course is offered at three locations in Chicago (the North Side, the South Side, and downtown – the course downtown is taught entirely in Spanish). The course is also offered in Champaign-Urbana at Urbana Adult Education and is funded by University of Illinois and administered through IPRH in partnership with Illinois Humanities. The program is offered free of charge to students, including books and course materials, transportation assistance, snacks, and, when possible, childcare. Bard College grants six, fully transferrable college credit hours in Humanities 101 to students who successfully complete the course.

The Odyssey Project offers a text-based, discussion seminar, focusing on commonly taught college level works. Syllabi and reading lists are roughly equivalent to those a student might encounter in a first-year humanities course at a liberal arts college. The national Clemente Program places a high priority on recruiting excellent and experienced teachers. Faculty are, for the most part, professors at local colleges and universities. Faculty are required to have a Master’s Degree and prior teaching experience. Along with the professor, the Site Coordinator is present at all classes to support both faculty and students.

Curriculum and Schedule
Classes last two hours and meet twice weekly. There are five discrete subject areas: Philosophy, U.S. History, Literature, Art History, and Critical Thinking and Writing. Each subject area (except for Critical Thinking and Writing) is comprised of eleven 2-hour sessions. The academic year begins with Critical Thinking and Writing meeting twice a week for 5 ½ weeks (from September through to October). Students then take two subjects (each meeting once a week) that meet from October through to February and two
subjects in the spring semester from February through to April with the program culminating in a graduation at the beginning of May.

Syllabus
The Bard College Clemente Course is a seminar-style, text-based course. The curriculum consists predominantly of primary texts, and class time is largely devoted to discussion. The class is intended to be as much as possible like an introductory humanities course at a good liberal arts college, except that the amount of material covered in the Clemente Course is much smaller. Because our students may lack both classroom experience and a background in the humanities, and because each subject receives only 22 hours of class time, it is simply not possible to offer a broad survey of any of the subjects. Reading assignments should be no more than 25-30 pages per class, possibly up to 50 pages for the literature class. The challenge for the instructor, then, is to choose a small number of works that students can engage deeply and through which they can acquire skills and habits they will need for further study either on their own or in college. In general, each subject should require in total no more than the equivalent of seven to ten pages of writing. Shorter writing assignments—personal responses, submission of questions for discussion, abstracts, or analysis sheets—are often effective. We discourage giving in-class exams unless they involve discussion or group work.

Students
The class will start with 20 to 25 students. The course is open to adults of any age who live in a household with an income below 150% of Federal poverty level (about $30,000 for a family of four). The only entrance requirement is that students be at least 18 years old, do not already have a B.A. from an accredited college or university in the U.S., that they are able to read an English-language newspaper or Spanish-language newspaper for the program in Spanish (in order to gauge reading-readiness), and demonstrate a desire to complete the course.

The course generally attracts more women than men, and many students have young children as well as full time jobs. The median age is between 35 and 40. Some of our students have not graduated from high school, while others have begun work on Associates or Bachelors degrees. Many have not been in a classroom for decades. In general, they have fallen out of the educational system for personal, family or, especially, financial reasons, and many of them have not only economic but also psychological barriers preventing them from returning to school.

Students are recruited largely through social service agencies in neighborhoods near the host organization. The course is also advertised in local newspapers, churches and neighborhood centers. Interested applicants fill out a short form and submit it with an essay, and they are interviewed by the Site Coordinator, who makes all decisions regarding student acceptance.

All students who complete the course receive a certificate from Bard College, and those who complete all course requirements receive six general humanities credit hours from Bard. Students do receive letter grades, which are averaged across the five subject areas.

Faculty
Faculty is drawn from local colleges and universities. They are well-respected scholars and gifted teachers who are both socially committed and academically active.