



Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence FACULTY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GRANT Interview with grantee Dr. Daniel Pedreira



Dr. Daniel Pedreira is the Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor at Florida International University's Department of Politics and International Relations.

This year, he received the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence Faculty Curriculum Development EU Research grant for his project ***“EU Voices in Comparative Perspective: A Multimedia Curriculum Development Initiative.”***

He was kind enough to answer a few questions about his project.

MFJMCE: Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I am a Miami native currently serving as Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor at FIU's Department of Politics and International Relations. Previously, I earned a master's degree and a PhD in Political Science from FIU, a master's degree in Peace Operations from George Mason University, and a bachelor's degree in International Studies from the University of Miami. I am passionate about teaching a range of courses, including American Government, Latin American Politics, Comparative Politics, Cuban Politics, and Politics of Transitions and Human Rights.

MFJMCE: In a few words, what is the focus of your Faculty Curriculum Development research project for which you received this grant?

The focus of my Faculty Curriculum Development project is to conduct interviews on-location with individuals who can shed light on different aspects of the EU and its members states. These interviews will be uploaded to several podcasts that I have

created to supplement my in-person and online courses, particularly those on Comparative Politics and Politics of Transitions and Human Rights.

MFJMCE: How did the idea for this research originate?

Two years ago, I was trying to find ways to teach my courses in a more dynamic way. Originally focusing on the difficulty of making an online course more attractive to students, I thought of transforming my standard lectures into relatively short, on-location segments that cover the course material. I present all the videos and conduct the interviews so that students better relate the course content to me as their professor. Eventually, I also incorporated the videos into my in-person classes.



Dr. Daniel Pedreira during his trip to Washington D.C. with H.E. Gediminas Varvuolis, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania



Interview with grantee Dr. Daniel Pedreira



Dr. Daniel Pedreira during his trip to Washington D.C. with H.E. Kristjan Prikk, Ambassador of Estonia to the United States

MFJMCE: Your grant proposal mentions that you will use this research and pedagogical material in the classroom. What do you hope students will gain from the course?

I hope that students will take away first-hand knowledge and experience from experts in the topics related to the EU and covered in the course while relating the video content to course lectures and readings. I also seek to expose students to countries and issues that are generally not covered or talked about in other classes, yet play a very important role on many fronts.

MFJMCE: Why do you believe the focus of your course is particularly relevant for students in the United States?

The EU is an institution that is not understood by many, especially in the U.S. At the same time, it plays a vital role on many fronts, and its presence is evident everywhere from commerce and trade to travel and cultural ties. It is important for students in the U.S. to understand why the EU exists, how it functions, how its member states are similar and different, and what successes and challenges it faces currently and in the future. The EU and the U.S. have maintained a close alliance that has been challenged in recent times, and it is important

to learn about these international dynamics to improve that historical connection and relationship.

MFJMCE: Where do you see this research taking you in the future? Do you plan to continue building on this project, or do you have additional plans in mind?

I plan on conducting more interviews in the future, as there are many more aspects of the EU to explore and many more member states to analyze. Luckily, Miami has an extensive diplomatic corps and network of academic experts who can provide additional analysis for future videos to expand the podcast. At the same time, I have established very good diplomatic contacts in Washington, D.C., which will help me follow up and explore additional angles of the EU.

MFJMCE: Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share?

I am very thankful for EU Jean Monnet Faculty Curriculum Development grant because it has allowed me to incorporate more content on the EU into my courses. The meetings that I had as part of my grant have underscored the need to teach students about the important and vital role that the EU has played in maintaining peace in Europe for 80 years and the challenges that it faces. By incorporating this material into my classes, I hope to promote the EU's mission and values among my students.

By Christine I. Caly-Sanchez

