I will employ a student researcher during the summer of 2012 to help to code the narratives using the Atlas.ti system. Last year, the faculty research grant awarded me the funds to purchase the Atlas.ti research program, which allows me to host copies of all of the texts I will use for the study in one place and code them. Through the coding process, we are able to systematically compare all of the texts and trace the genre conventions utilized in the narratives. The program creates analytical reports that provide data visualization of the trends found in the narratives. The graphs and charts created by the program will be included in the book as substantiation of my claims and as a visual aid for readers. A student researcher and I began the work of coding the narratives this summer through a Bobet summer stipend, but the work is not complete. A student coder was extraordinarily useful because it allows me to have two sets of eyes analyzing the documents and coding them. I would like to employ a student researcher in summer 2012 to continue the coding with me.

Last summer, the student assistant cost $1200 (at $10 an hour for 10 hours a week for 12 weeks). I am requesting the $500 of additional Marquette funding for partial payment of the assistant. I will pay for the remainder of the cost from my fellowship.
Where will the results be published, exhibited or performed? The full manuscript will be submitted to Columbia University Press, who has right of first refusal on the project. In the meantime, short sections of the book project will be submitted to PMLA, Callaloo, and Humanity journals for publication. I give several presentations a year to schools about modern slavery, and this book project will be featured in those presentations. The research for this project will also be utilized in my freshman seminar on modern day slavery. I anticipate presenting this research to the Loyola community and elsewhere in the New Orleans area as well.

What other sources of funding (internal and external) have you identified for this project? I have applied for the NEH Summer Stipend, and I intend to apply for other NEH funding opportunities. I hope to apply for a fellowship from the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery at Yale University as well. There are several other smaller funding possibilities including a New York Public Library Schomburg Center grant and other smaller archive/library fellowships that I am considering as well.

List years and amounts of prior Loyola University faculty grants (for the last three years): Bobet summer grant ($1200 for a student assistant), Faculty Research Grant ($600 for software), Faculty Research Grant: $2100 (for costs associated with publication of Metaphor and the Slave Trade)

Does your research involve human subjects? ____ Yes XX No. If yes, funding for this project is contingent on receiving IRB approval. If you have IRB approval prior to submitting your proposal, please attach the approval memo to your application. If you do not have IRB approval at the time of your submission, please complete the IRB protocol as soon as possible after your proposal submission.

Narrative Description of Project:
Abstract: The New Slave Narrative is the very first study of the genre of the slave narrative (a genre widely understood to have been obviated by the eradication of slavery in the US in 1865) as it has been reborn and reshaped in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The book analyzes the literary, political, and personal impulses that have encouraged the reemergence of the slave narrative. The book targets literary and historical scholars interested in the history of this genre, who until now have not recognized its rebirth. It will also provide an analytical framework for understanding the narration of first-person experiences of slavery, which will be valuable in social science, social justice, and policy.

Full proposal attached.
Abstract: I propose to dedicate my summer to completing two chapters of a book project (tentatively) entitled The New Slave Narrative. This book is the very first to study the genre of the slave narrative (a genre widely understood to have been obviated by the eradication of slavery in the US in 1865) as it has been reborn and reshaped in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The book analyzes the literary, political, and personal impulses that have encouraged the reemergence of the slave narrative. The book targets literary and historical scholars interested in the history of this genre, who until now have not recognized its rebirth. It will also provide an analytical framework for understanding the narration of first-person experiences of slavery, which will be valuable in social science, social justice, and policy.

Context: There are nearly 30 million slaves in the world today – people who are forced to work, without pay, under threat of violence, with little or no means of escape. Although slavery was abolished in the US in 1865, it has never been eradicated completely in our own country or in any other. Furthermore, while slavery is illegal in every country in the world, research has proven that it nonetheless persists in every one of them. In fact, slavery is big business, generating between 7 and 10 billion dollars a year for traffickers around the world. It is one of the most lucrative illegal trades, bested only by drug trafficking and gun smuggling. It is estimated that every single year, more than 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders. Millions more are trafficked within the borders of their own countries.

In our post-Freudian world, in which tell-all memoirs are more marketable than most fiction, it might not come as a surprise that former slaves are penning first-person narratives – modern day slave narratives – as a means of expressing pain, as a method for working through trauma, and as a form of activism against human trafficking. The people who are courageous enough to tell their stories are our modern day Frederick Douglasses and Sojourner Truths. They are the people who are leading a movement to eradicate slavery again. And this time, those voices come from every part of the globe.

No social movement can make a case for itself without the testimony of the people who have survived injustice and lived to tell. In the 19th century, slave narratives were an important and powerful component of the anti-slavery movement in both Britain and the United States. Telling their own stories of enslavement became a way for former slaves to prove both their intellectual capacities and their desire to participate in a movement to free others like themselves. Autobiography provided a venue through which to insist on their individuality, their citizenship, their agency, and their inherent freedom in a world that attempted to deny them those basic rights. The narratives that they produced engaged and mobilized politicians and activists to support their movement for freedom for all people.

These earlier narratives of slavery provide the context in which I will explore the narrative expression of enslavement today. After the eradication of slavery in the US, slave narratives ceased to be written for over a century. In the 1990s, survivors of captivity and forced labor (at the time unrecognized as slavery) began to write narratives of their experiences. Because the entire body of this literature has been published for mass market audience in support of activist goals, it has not been read as a literary genre, and indeed has not been studied by scholars of any discipline. The genre of the slave narrative was central to the struggle to abolish
slavery in the 19th century, and I believe that the slave narrative will again play an important role in the eradication of this global crime against humanity in the 21st century. The study of this genre’s return is critical to understanding both slavery and its abolition as it is expressed today.

The Literature: There are currently about fifteen book-length narratives that have been published in the US and Britain that I am analyzing in this study as modern day slave narratives. There are additionally two published collections of narratives of enslavement that were published by anti-slavery organizations. I am myself in the process of publishing a third such collection (with Columbia University Press, forthcoming 2013), which contains about 50 first-person narratives of slavery and begins the work of defining this vast array of texts as a genre. Beyond the published literature, many more of today’s survivors provide their testimonies in court documents, visa applications, non-profit documentaries, interview transcripts, television broadcasts, and news reports. I have collected, read, and researched every published narrative available in print or online, and I have access to the entirety of Free the Slaves’ vast archive of narratives produced through their international activism.

Outline: *The New Slave Narrative* will be the first study to trace the recent reemergence of this genre in the 20th and 21st centuries. The book begins with an investigation of the origins of and influences on the new slave narrative, followed by a chapter that studies the generic conventions that characterize the slave narrative genre across the centuries. The study charts the way slave narrative conventions have largely remained consistent over the centuries despite the vast differences in the forms slavery takes today. The book analyzes both the explicit content and the silences of the narratives to investigate the way slavery is told across temporal and geographic divides. Two chapters on the issue of authenticity will explore the devices of displacement that slave narrators have devised to both express their authentic experience as slaves but also to avoid the pressure to speak about their lives too intimately. A chapter on ghost writers shows that non-slave narrator co-authors tend to do just the opposite, employing sensationalized and clichéd codes to establish a predictable scene of suffering for the average reader. In two chapters on influences on the genre, I interrogate the political, religious, and cultural trends that put pressure on the narratives to conform to the needs of the human rights industry and their concerns about marketability of the narratives they disseminate. Finally, the epilogue considers the preservation of this emerging archive of slave narratives, with the goal that this study might encourage scholars, activists, non-profits, and corporations to contemplate and perhaps renegotiate the powerful role they play in the production of human rights discourse and the slave narrative in particular.

Grant Activities: I will have two chapters of this manuscript completed by the end of Spring 2013 (one is already completed now). I will spend the Marquette grant period bringing at least two more chapters into publishable shape. I will focus my energy on the two chapters on the construction of authenticity in the narratives.

These two chapters will focus on the rhetorical devices that the authors use to develop a sense of their authenticity for the reader. In the nineteenth century, the burden of proof for the narrator was on proving that slavery was an unjust institution, that it should be abolished, and that its victims deserved to be treated in a humane fashion because of their undeniable humanity. His or her goal was to cultivate a sense of moral outrage over the treatment of fellow humans in the south. This is not the case today. Whereas the 19th century slave narrator could reliably
assume that black skin alone was a sign of the legibility of his status as slave for both white Northerners and Southerners, skin color or race is no longer an automatic indicator of slave status. Therefore, while the contemporary slave narrator no longer has to prove that slavery is a moral outrage, she does have to prove that indeed she was a slave. As public awareness increases, this may change, but the majority of the writers featured here are confronted with a skeptical public who are first learning of this phenomenon through reading the former slave’s narrative. This puts pressure on the narrative to provide proof that slavery exists at all and that the narrator was indeed genuinely enslaved.

Despite a cultural predilection for holding up the body as evidence of suffering, the new slave narrative reveals a generic resistance against the bodily detail. The survivor of slavery (especially the survivor of sex slavery) is typically not wont to dwell on the bodily details of her experience despite the fact that and precisely because her body is the space upon which her enslavement was enacted. In the first chapter on authenticity, I will discuss three strategies of displacement I have identified that the new slave narrators use to substantiate their authenticity that also allow them to avoid the bodily detail—the inclusion of paratextual expert authority, the deferral to statistics that indicate the widespread occurrence of similar experiences through which they can universalize their individual experience, and the projection of the experience of slavery onto a vast array of supporting characters.

A chapter on amanuenses continues the discussion of authenticity and reveals the particular narrative conventions and tropes that ghost writers use when they are employed by survivors of slavery to help them compose their narratives. Ghost writers invariably invoke the bodily detail and try to fill in the gaps of slavery’s silences, guided by their sense of what constitutes an “authentic” experience of trauma and slavery. Instead of allowing the survivor’s own language and form dominate the narrative, the story is determined by the conventions of human rights discourse and by our voyeuristic desire for hearing stories of suffering. The ghost-written narratives follow a very predictable formula that exposes the cultural pressures put upon survivors of slavery to make themselves vulnerable to commodification in a consumer-driven human rights marketplace.

**Dissemination:** The full manuscript will be submitted at the end of the grant period to Columbia University Press, who has right of first refusal. They are publishing my edited collection of modern slave narratives (for classroom use) next year and have specifically requested a scholarly critical companion to that text, which this book will fulfill. In the meantime, short sections of the book project will be submitted to *PMLA, Calaloo*, and *Humanity* journals for publication. I give several presentations a year to university audiences about modern slavery, and this book project will be featured in those presentations. I will attend both the American Comparative Literature Association Conference and the African Literature Association conference to present these studies. The research for this project will also be utilized in my freshman seminar on modern day slavery. I anticipate presenting this research to the Loyola community and elsewhere in the New Orleans area as well. Because slave narrative studies are an important aspect of African and African American studies, I believe there will be significant interest in a project of this kind.

**Urgency:** Because this project represents a significant turn in the field of slave narrative studies, I am eager to make submit this book to the press so that I can be the first to break this ground and while the press sees a demand for such a text. In addition, as part of the book is a critique of current events, the timeliness of publication is, of course, an issue.