*Coniuratio!* A Mini-*Reacting to the Past* Game on the Catilinarian Conspiracy

This paper reviews the development and implementation of *Coniuratio!*, a research and classroom activity, in which students debate what course of action the Senate should take after the revelation of Catiline’s conspiracy in 63 bce. Inspired by the principles of *Reacting to the Past*, a student-centered pedagogy that has been implemented at over 300 colleges and universities, *Coniuratio!* provides a venue for students to conduct motivated research on Roman history and culture, learn about and practice the tenets of classical rhetoric, all while honing their skills English (and Latin) communication.

In *Coniuratio!* students are assigned a historical character (e.g. Cicero, Crassus, Paetus, Claudius Pulcher) that they will play during the senatorial debates over how to solve the crisis that confronts Rome. To deliver effective, historically informed speeches, students must first determine the motivations of their characters and what course of action would be most beneficial for them. This requires students to delve into the gritty details and context of the Conspiracy, as well as gain a deep understanding of the life of a first-century Roman, including his family history and status, his relationships with other senators, his own immediate and long-term goals, and how these shape his political allegiances and behavior in (and outside of) the Senate. Students “win” by persuading the Senate to adopt a *sententia* consistent with the personal goals of their characters—either through the force of their arguments and politicking, or by less scrupulous means. As with long-form *Reacting* games, the goal of *Coniuratio!* is not to recreate history as it happened, but for students to immerse themselves within the full complexities of a historical crisis whose outcome they can influence through strategy and persuasive speech. The description of the game includes a survey of the character development research project, the nature of voting and other Senate procedures, the use of money, divine signs, and “nefarious” acts. Examples of student work that illustrate these aspects of the game will be included in the presentation.

The paper concludes by discussing the strengths of this approach for teaching Roman culture and how games of this type can be used to promote the *Communication*, *Culture*, *Connections*, and *Comparisons* goals articulated in the *Standards for Classical Language Learning*, along with examples of preliminary activities that can help lay the foundation for a successful game experience, and how the concept of the “mini-*Reacting* game” can be adapted to other historical moments and in other types of courses.