



The Joy Shechtman Mankoff
Center for Teaching & Learning presents ...

Talking Teaching Spring 2013

PLEASE SAVE THE DATES & JOIN US FOR GREAT CONVERSATIONS . . .

Too often, our discussions about teaching are abbreviated by daily pressures and commitments. Take some time away from your routine, meet up with colleagues, enjoy a good meal, and participate in a Talking Teaching discussion this semester. Topics – suggested by faculty members – are listed below, with times and preliminary descriptions.

Please consider serving as a discussant! For each conversation, eight to ten individuals will bring a question or an idea to spark the continuing exchange of ideas. Imagination, not extended preparation, is the only requirement.

Contact Chad Jones (cjones8@conncoll.edu) or MaryAnne Borrelli (mabor@conncoll.edu) if you are interested in attending or serving as a discussant. We hope to see you often throughout the semester!

TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 11:50AM to 1:30PM

Hood Dining Room

How can you effectively teach sensitive, provocative, or contentious topics?

In every discipline, there are topics that are more difficult to teach—and learn—than others because the topic is considered sensitive, provocative or controversial. Although these topics are among the most important ones we address in the classroom, faculty who teach them may experience a penalty in the form of negative evaluations by frustrated or resistant students. What are some of the ways that we can create a better teaching and learning experience when dealing with such topics? Does a professor's gender, racial, or sexual identity, for instance, play into what students view as a "controversial" or "biased" topic in the first place? If so, how do we address that? Join panelists from diverse disciplines and share strategies for making the teaching of sensitive or controversial topics a more rewarding experience.

Co-Sponsored with the Committee on the Status of Faculty Women. DISCUSSANTS INCLUDE ... Tristan Borer, Simon Feldman, Afshan Jafar, Jennifer Rudolph, Ross Morin, and others.

MENTAL HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 8:30AM TO 10:15AM

Ernst Common Room

How can you appropriately support students who are dealing with mental health challenges?

For many students, emotional and mental health is a difficult goal. 18 to 22 year-olds are undergoing so many physiological and psychological changes that achieving a balance can be problematic. Longtime medications for chronic illnesses may require constant adjustment. The stresses and strains of campus life, from the classroom to the wider community, create formidable pressures. Students can become overwhelmed and lost. How can we identify students who are in need of support, before they are in crisis? What are our responsibilities as a faculty member at a residential college? What actions can we, who are not professional counselors, take to help our students with emotional or mental health challenges?

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING

BEYOND THE 1-TEACHER, 1-CLASS-MODEL

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 11:50AM to 1:30PM

Hood Dining Room

Can connections between instructors and/or classes enrich student learning by exposing them to approaches from different disciplines?

Interdisciplinary teaching can help challenge students and expand their learning. While multiple disciplines can be discussed by a teacher in a single class, connecting multiple teachers and/or multiple classes can further expose students to expertise and approaches from different disciplines. We will discuss the benefits and challenges of team-taught courses and "linked" courses, including insight from faculty participating in the Sherman-Fairchild grant and other interdisciplinary programs. We will also discuss the potential role of these approaches in general education.

Co-Sponsored with Connecticut College Community Coalition & the Student Counseling Services.

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING COURSE OR ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 8:30AM TO 10:15AM

Ernst Common Room

How do you make concepts you are exploring in class more real to students? How do you foster critical thinking skills?

Community-based learning allows students to apply concepts learned in the classroom to real-world settings while also positively contributing to the community. Research shows that community-based learning contributes to students developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, deepens their understanding of social issues and communities, and enhances their abilities to work collaboratively. What are the best ways to integrate community-learning and community-based research into your courses? What are some challenges you may encounter? What are the benefits for you and your students? To help answer these questions, the past two years of recipients of the Holleran Center's Margaret Sheridan Community Learning Grants will discuss their community learning courses and action research projects. We hope this discussion will inspire the development of other community learning courses on campus and provide the opportunity for current faculty using community-based learning and research to share best practices.

Co-Sponsored with the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy.

FEASIBLE ASPIRATIONS

SETTING REALISTIC TEACHING & LEARNING GOALS THAT CHALLENGE & INSPIRE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 8:30AM TO 10:15AM

Hood Dining Room

How can you develop learning goals that contribute to intellectual engagement and growth?

Goals, standards, rubrics, and objectives ... all of these have become an increasingly important aspect of our teaching and our student's learning. At the College and across the country, the push is on to find ways of supporting and evaluating performance in the classroom. Yet it isn't easy to devise goals or to articulate the standards by which achievement will be assessed. It can also be difficult to teach *with* – and not merely teach *to* – the goals that we have set for ourselves, our students, and our classes. What are some strategies for articulating interesting, thoughtful, real goals for teaching and learning? How can these goals, or standards, or rubrics, or objectives, be incorporated into our class meetings and office hours consultations?

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S NEW ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER HOW THE ARC CAN HELP ALL FACULTY AND STUDENTS

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 8:30AM TO 10:15AM

1941 Room, Cro Student Center

What are the priorities of the new Academic Resource Center?

The new Academic Resource Center is committed to assisting all members of the College community with improving their academic skills and ability to learn. In order to achieve this goal, developing new initiatives and programs to reach a changing and diverse student population, the ARC looks forward to working collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administrators. This conversation will inaugurate that collaboration by considering questions such as ... What are the common issues that impede student academic success? What resources are available through the ARC to address these issues before they become problems or crises? How can faculty use these resources to promote positive outcomes for all students to improve their academic skills and ability to learn, maximizing their academic experience and performance and personal fulfillment? *Co-Sponsored with the Academic Resource Center.*

ENRICHING THE CLASSROOM WITH STUDENT EXPERIENCES

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 8:30AM TO 10:15AM

Ernst Common Room

How can you capitalize upon students' learning through internships and work experiences when you design and teach your classroom-based courses?

During the academic year and especially during summer break, our students often participate in internships, research, or summer jobs directly related to their majors and hoped-for careers. How can our students' experiences be more thoroughly integrated into our courses to enrich the learning that takes place in our classrooms? With the exception of students in certificate programs, much of our students' work-world experiences are separate from their academic lives. This conversation will feature faculty members from across the disciplines who have found ways to incorporate their students' off-campus experiences into their courses, helping the entire class to connect their learning to practical applications.

Co-Sponsored with the Faculty Steering and Conference Committee.