



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

Talking Teaching

Spring 2010

PLEASE SAVE THE DATES *and* JOIN US FOR GREAT CONVERSATIONS

Take a moment away from daily pressures and participate in a Talking Teaching seminar this semester. Listed below are the preliminary topics –suggested by faculty members – with descriptions and times.

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.

Please contact MaryAnne Borrelli (mabor@conncoll.edu) if you are interested in attending or serving as a discussant. See you soon!

Teaching Public Speaking

Friday, 12 February 2010, 8:30AM to 10AM

Ernst Common Room

How can we teach students to be effective oral communicators?

Delivery, structure, content. Anxiety. Rapport, pacing, style. Stage fright. Public speaking encompasses a series of intangibles that are not easily distilled into a series of prescriptions. And the anticipation of public speaking can engender such fear that there is often considerable resistance to rehearsing even the most basic of precepts. Given these challenges, how can you help students learn to be effective communicators? How can you model good practices? What are some ways of incorporating this skill into your daily course routines? How can public speaking become part of large or lecture-based courses? This session will provide participants with well-grounded answers—and a few handy guidelines—to these questions.

Teaching Effectively with Technologies II: Moodle

Wednesday, 17 February 2010, 11:50AM to 2PM

Hood Dining Room

How do our colleagues use Moodle to add to the rigor and creativity of their classes?

Widely used for posting course readings, Moodle has the potential to contribute to courses through interactive bibliographies and continuously updated feeds from online sources, faculty feedback, student self-assessments, journals, and discussion forums. Password protected, Moodle course pages are not public, and yet they have the potential to draw on some of the best features of social networking sites, but with a strong intellectual component. Featuring a variety of faculty from across the college who are using Moodle in innovative ways, this session will address such questions as: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Moodle, in relation to different class sizes, formats, and disciplines? How can Moodle stimulate and challenge student learning, enriching it within the classroom and extending it beyond the campus? This conversation will allow faculty to consider Moodle as a tool for stimulating student analysis, study, and intellectual engagement.

Gender, Authority, and the Classroom: Interventions That Work

Friday, 26 February 2010, 8:30AM to 10AM

Ernst Common Room

How can we respond effectively to gender-based resistance in the classroom?

Research shows that women faculty – especially young women faculty – are more likely than their male peers to have their professional authority challenged by their students. Situations may include questioning grades, resisting challenging work-loads, or expressing disrespect in class. What are the most consistent patterns of bias at work in our experiences of teaching and learning? Do women experience bias that is shaped by their race as well as their sex? What are the psychological and social forces that sustain these practices? Do students assume that women are (or should be) with their children when outside the office or classroom? Do women encounter hostility when they behave in ways traditionally associated with men (e.g. hard-driving, direct, and assertive)? Are the definitions for excellence in teaching the same for all regardless of gender or race? Is academic rigor rewarded equally in all faculty? How are colleagues overcoming these constraints? We will focus on interventions that experienced faculty have developed to counter these forms of bias in the classroom.

Cosponsored by the Committee on the Status of Faculty Women

Visual Literacy 101

Friday, 9 April 2010, 8:30AM to 10AM

Hood Dining Room

How can we teach students to understand and employ visual images fluently and reflectively?

In a world that is increasingly shaped by visual images, students need to be fluent in visual language if they are to comprehend the structure and the aesthetics of this communication. If we want students to rigorously and thoughtfully analyze existent visuals – and especially if we want students to participate in visually-based conversations and visually-driven arguments – we cannot simply rely on personal preferences and judgments. Is there a shared “grammar” and language of visual communication? How can we teach these principles and rules in our courses? How can we facilitate their creative use? This conversation will provide an introduction to basic principles of design, offering faculty the opportunity to consider their application in designing assignments across the curriculum.

The “Liberal” Classroom?

Friday, 16 April 2010, 11:50AM to 2PM

Ernst Common Room

How do we balance power and expressiveness in the liberal arts classroom?

We all need to balance our own authority in the classroom with our desire for a classroom space where all voices are welcome. But finding this balance causes its own problems: are we educating students to be democratic participants in society, or to find their place in real hierarchies and legitimate systems of authority? How can we negotiate the need for the classroom to be a “safe” space where students (and where we) do not feel threatened while opening up the possibility of controversy and even personal offense? Are there contradictions inherent in the idea of a “liberal” classroom that might fundamentally destabilize liberal education? This conversation provides an opportunity to weigh different perspectives and practices relating to power and authority in the classroom.