

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

# Talking Teaching

## Spring 2019



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

Talking Teaching is a series of informal discussions of teaching-related topics—often suggested by our colleagues. Talking Teaching provides an opportunity to build community and to stop & reflect on our teaching and on our students' learning experiences. Topics are listed below, with dates & times and preliminary descriptions.

For each conversation, eight to ten discussants will bring their thoughts or questions to spark the collective exchange of ideas. ***We are still seeking additional discussants for these events.*** Interest in the topic, not extended preparation, is the only requirement to be a discussant. Please contact Derek Turner ([dtur@conncoll.edu](mailto:dtur@conncoll.edu)) or Afshan Jafar ([ajafar@conncoll.edu](mailto:ajafar@conncoll.edu)) if you are interested in attending or serving as a discussant. We hope to see you at these events!

## “Hey Professor!”—Managing Office Hours & Email

MONDAY 11 FEBRUARY, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM    HOOD in BLAUSTEIN  
LUNCH SERVED at 11:40 AM

A lot of valuable teaching occurs during office hours, as well as in our email interactions with students. How can you maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of both? Which types of student interactions are best handled in person, and which over email? The answers might not be as straightforward as you think. How can we make office hours more inclusive, so that more students feel welcome to drop by for help or a conversation? And how might we think about balancing the joy of spending lots of time in the office talking with particularly engaged students with the need to complete other tasks (like the sometimes-daunting challenge of responding to emails)? What are some good strategies for using technology more efficiently and staying on top of email correspondence? In the interest of achieving work-life balance, should we consider an institutional policy regarding email expectations and email hours? In this session, we'll explore how teaching, time management, and technology all come together—and we'll share some ideas for effective, efficient practices, along with ideas for possible institutional practices

*Discussants will include Diane Creede, Luis Gonzalez, Karen Gonzalez Rice, Tek-wah King, Suzuko Knott, Jessica McCullough, Purba Mukerji, Jennifer Pagach, Derek Turner, and Marc Zimmer.*

# The Future of Student Evaluations of Teaching

FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM      HOOD in BLAUSTEIN  
LUNCH SERVED at 11:40 AM

What is—and should be—the role of student evaluations at Connecticut College? Our official All-Campus Evaluation (ACE) asks students whether they found the instructor of the course to be organized, prepared, and responsive, and whether the instructor offered timely and constructive feedback. The ACE further asks students whether the course requirements are clear, if the course provides students the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning, and whether, as a result of the course, they developed intellectually and/or artistically in a significant way. Given mounting evidence of bias in student evaluations, and the potential harm they may cause, this Talking Teaching asks: What are student evaluations of teaching good for? How should the results be used during the tenure and/or promotion process? Join us for a discussion with faculty across ranks to think about the future of student evaluations.

*Discussants include Anne Bernhard, Judy Gomez, Afshan Jafar, Ross Morin, Chrissy Needham, Jason Nier, David Patton, Mike Siefert, Kristin Steel, Derek Turner, and others.*

## Writing Student Recommendation Letters: Ethics, Effectiveness, Efficiency, & Empathy

TUESDAY 5 MARCH, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM      HOOD in BLAUSTEIN  
LUNCH SERVED at 11:40 AM

One of our important responsibilities as faculty members is to write recommendation letters for students. These can make the difference in applications for fellowships, for graduate school, and for jobs. It is, however, a challenge to do this well, and the nature of the challenge depends on many variables: the strengths and weaknesses of the student, the audience for the letter, how much the student cares about the application, our letter-writing experience, how much time we have available, and so on. This session will be a practical workshop on letter writing, with discussion of sample letters and hypothetical cases. We'll discuss some strategies for writing effective letters that promote our students, while also thinking about ethical and empathetic ways of handling particularly challenging recommendation requests.

*Discussants include Lori Balantic, Lindsay Crawford, Julia Flagg, Marc Forster, Page Owen, Steve Shoemaker, Dot Wang, and others.*

# Teaching Across the Disciplines through an Intersectional Lens

TUESDAY 9 APRIL, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM

HOOD in BLAUSTEIN

LUNCH SERVED at 11:40 AM

An intersectional lens encourages the analysis of social life in a way that considers the complex, interconnected systems of inequality and privilege such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, and nation. This session provides an opportunity to learn more about intersectionality and to think about whether—and how—to incorporate it into your classes. Can you address intersectionality if the focus of your course is not gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, or ability? We will explore ways of incorporating an intersectional analysis into the design of assignments and courses from a variety of different disciplines. We will also address how to craft an inclusive vision of content and think about teaching tools that will help students participate fully. This workshop could be an opportunity to think about developing a new course that addresses intersectionality, revising a course, or even rethinking a particular assignment or course component. We also welcome anyone who is just interested in thinking about intersectionality and learning what others are doing.

*Discussion led by Danielle Egan and Ariella Rotramel. Discussants include Anne Bernhard, Judy Gomez, and Simon Feldman, and others.*

## Politics in the Classroom

FRIDAY 12 APRIL, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM

HOOD in BLAUSTEIN

LUNCH SERVED at 11:40 AM

It is difficult to avoid the topic of politics these days—whether it's around a dinner table or in the classroom. While those of us in some fields have been trained to handle such discussions, those in other fields may shy away from any discussion of politics during class. Given the clear impact of political decisions and political climate on our students' lives, how do we address politics in our classrooms? While some may feel it is our moral and ethical obligation to address policies and practices that we believe are unjust, others may feel that an academic environment should be neutral on such topics. Join us for a rousing discussion on the topic—neutrality not required for this Talking Teaching!

*Discussants include Phil Barnes, Danielle Egan, Simon Feldman, Ron Flores, Afshan Jafar, John McKnight, Truth Hunter, Denise Pelletier, Larry Vogel, and others.*

# #MeToo in Academia

WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM      HOOD in BLAUSTEIN  
LUNCH SERVED at 11:40 AM

What is our responsibility as teachers and mentors to prepare our students for the gender, power, and sexual politics they will have to face as they enter the professional world—specifically in academia and higher education? Many of us take our current undergraduate students to academic conferences and meetings, and many of our undergraduates will continue on to graduate and professional programs, where they will have to negotiate the complex power relationships and possibly deal with sexual harassment. What are we doing—and what should we do—to prepare our students who enter these situations in which they may be vulnerable to exploitation and potential harassment? In this follow-up to last semester’s successful Talking Teaching “Teaching & Course Design in the Context of #MeToo,” we will discuss these questions and more, and hopefully arrive at concrete steps to better prepare what are often our best undergraduate students for these situations.

*Discussants will include Rachel Black, Stan Ching, Rae Gaubinger, Nina Martin, Emily Tarsis, and many others.*

***Willing to serve as a discussant for one of these events?  
Interested in attending any or all?***

Please contact or Afshan Jafar ([ajafar@conncoll.edu](mailto:ajafar@conncoll.edu)) or  
Derek Turner ([dtur@conncoll.edu](mailto:dtur@conncoll.edu))

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**Please remember to save the dates for  
Camp Teach & Learn 2019  
Wednesday, Thursday & Friday  
May 22, 23, & 24**

If you have any suggestions for discussions or workshops for this year’s  
Camp Teach & Learn please contact Michael at [redner@conncoll.edu](mailto:redner@conncoll.edu).

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