

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

Talking Teaching

Spring 2020



CALL FOR DISCUSSANTS AND PLEASE SAVE THE DATES

Below is our preliminary list of Talking Teaching descriptions of topics, dates, and times. For each conversation, eight to ten discussants will bring their thoughts or questions to spark the collective exchange of ideas. ***We are seeking 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) or Afshan Jafar (ajafar@conncoll.edu) if you are interested in serving as a discussant.
We hope to see you at these events!

Teaching in Dark Times: How to Teach about Climate Change Realistically Without Freaking Out or Succumbing to Despair

MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY, 4 PM PM to 5:30 PM

A TALKING TEACHING “TEA”

When college students look to the future, they can expect to set out into a world in which climate change will be a fact of life: rising sea levels; agricultural disruption; regional impacts like increased wildfire intensity, disrupted monsoon patterns, etc.; ocean acidification; biodiversity loss, and refugee crises that will occur when densely populated coastal regions become uninhabitable. Covering the issue honestly and taking the latest scientific assessments seriously means looking into the abyss and confronting the unsustainability (and quite possibly, the immorality) of our way of life. How do we do that, given that young people are themselves (in varying degrees) going to be victims of climate change?

Crafting Your Narrative for Faculty Reviews

WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY, 4:15 PM to 5:45 PM

PART of the “TALKING THE PROFESSION” SERIES

Candidates for third-year review, tenure, and promotion must craft a narrative account of their teaching, scholarship/creative activity, and service activities. This narrative is a real opportunity to tell the story of one’s career, and to provide context for understanding the materials in the file. However, this is also a weird genre of autobiographical/self-promotional writing in which few of us have any training. In this session, we’ll discuss some different ways of approaching the challenge of writing a personal statement. How long should be? How might one tailor the version that goes to external reviewers? How can one craft an effective personal narrative that does not simply recapitulate details from the cv? What are some ways of making one’s work exciting to readers (e.g. CAPT members, or perhaps department members) who may not be too familiar with one’s field or subfield? How much should one say about work done before arriving at Connecticut College? How much should one say about personal life events? We’ll explore these and any other questions you might have about crafting personal narratives for faculty reviews.

What Do We Know about Student Learning & Experiences at Connecticut College?

FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY, 9:30 AM to 11 AM for BRUNCH

What data do we have regarding student learning at Connecticut College? What information do you wish you understood regarding students' academic experiences and learning outcomes in your courses? We will discuss some of the highlights from recent administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), consider the implications for teaching and learning, and learn what other kinds of information would be valuable to you as you design courses, assignments, classroom exercises, and requirements for the majors and programs with which you are connected.

Our New Social Difference & Power (SDP) Requirement

MONDAY 2 MARCH, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM

Do you have questions about the new Social Difference and Power requirement and programming? Are you ready to submit your course for SDP designation, but not sure about the process? Are you thinking about revising your syllabus or developing a new course, but don’t know where to begin? Our first call for SDP course designation resulted in more than 60 proposed courses from 24 different colleagues. Several reading groups and learning communities have been launched. Come join us for a conversation over lunch to learn more about the new requirement and opportunities to share and learn with colleagues. Bring your questions and ideas!

The Emotional Labor of Teaching

MONDAY 30 MARCH, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM

Teaching certain topics is more emotionally laden than others. Teaching requires emotional investment in our students' success and in their well-being, and that investment can also be exhausting. In the classroom, teaching itself can involve a lot of emotional expression—from joy, to disappointment, from wonder, to grief. Or it can involve the suppression of certain emotions. How should we think about the emotional labor of teaching especially as our students' anxiety and depression rates go up? What kinds of pedagogies or identities might increase ones' emotional fatigue? What are some ways to avoid burn-out from emotional labor?

“Bad” Grades:

What They Mean, and When & Why to Give Them

TUESDAY 7 APRIL, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM

Have you ever struggled to figure out how to assign grades at the lower end of the scale? We will discuss such questions as: What exactly counts as a “bad” grade, and what educational purpose(s) do they serve? Do lower grades convey information to students? Under what circumstances might it be reasonable to give a failing grade? And when and why might an incomplete be a good alternative to giving a bad grade? Do some faculty members (for reasons having to do with identity, tenure status, or contract type) find it easier than others to give bad grades?

Teaching as Performance

WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL, 4:15 PM to 5:45 PM

What can we learn from our colleagues in the performing arts? Are there lessons from performing, acting, and directing that can be applied to teaching? This workshop-style session, led by performance arts faculty, will have exercises taken from performance arts courses in order to help us think about classroom presence, energy, voice, & more.

The Concept of a Lab In the Sciences & Beyond

FRIDAY 24 APRIL, 11:50 AM to 1:30 PM

How is a laboratory different from other traditional kinds of classroom spaces? What kinds of learning take place in a lab? What are some of the special challenges associated with organizing and teaching lab courses? And how do labs work outside of the natural sciences—for example, in Computer Science, and in the foreign languages? Are there other interesting and productive ways of extending the concept of a lab? For example, could we think of Connecticut College as a kind of curricular lab?