



The Craft

A Publication of the Center for Teaching at the University of the South

SEWANEE'S "CELEBRATION OF TEACHING": THE JOY OF LEARNING FROM YOUR PEERS!



On November 1st, a large number of faculty and staff came together to toast our first "Celebration of Teaching" week. Participants at the reception were invited to chat about their experience of visiting classes and being visited during the week. We were thrilled with the high level of participation: twenty-two faculty in many departments/programs opened their doors to visitors, and over fifty faculty and staff made classroom visits.

A wide variety classes were open to visitors, ranging from advanced Chemistry to Psychology 101 to beginning language to Music of Western Civilization and everything in between. Both small seminars and large general education courses

were on the menu. Many visited disciplines very different from their own and enjoyed seeing Sewanee students and faculty approach learning from another perspective.

Several staff members from LITS, Advancement, Student Life, and Admission joined the fun, too, and many expressed appreciation for being able to see what happens in Sewanee classrooms.

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SEWANEE'S "CELEBRATION OF TEACHING" ...

At the reception, participants reflected on their experiences and wrote some of their observations on the CFT walls. These can be viewed in a Google doc linked [here](#). We're still receiving feedback, but as of now, people seem to have enjoyed the experience. If you participated in the week, please don't forget to fill out this [Google form](#) to let us know your thoughts. We'll use your feedback to determine whether to offer this program again in the future.

This program was designed by the CFT advisory board, and we are so grateful to them for the idea and for the thought and time that they put into planning it!



TEACH & TELL: JOURNALING, DEEP LEARNING, LITTLE GRADING!

Last September 28, Prof. Sid Brown of the Religion Department Department hosted a packed-house Teach & Tell entitled "Lots of Journaling, Little Grading." She conveyed to the group that journaling, as a pedagogical tool, is related to reflective learning: in making our students think more about what they are learning, they ultimately also learn more about the process of how they learn. The end result is a deeper understanding not only of the subject matter, but also of themselves as consumers and producers of knowledge.



Sid started her presentation by asking attendees to reflect on how they use reflection as a pedagogical instrument in class. Not surprisingly, most faculty commented that they use reflection as a tool to increase depth in learning. However, most faculty conveyed that checking and grading reflection papers require a considerable time commitment.

Sid provided the faculty with her innovative diagnostic tool! If you are interested, please contact Sid about the document that she shared to the faculty! The key to the entire process is the innovative and meaningful way that Sid structured the self-reporting process. Almost everyone who attended the Teach & Tell left the room excited to try it on their own!

DIFFICULT TOPIC? TRY TEACHING IT THROUGH CLASSROOM SALON!

Last October 24, Prof. Alison Miller of the Department of Art and Art History hosted the Center for Teaching's second Teach & Tell of the year! We have tried WhiteBoards and BlackBoards. *How about a Salon?*



Classroom Salon is a learning platform hosted by Carnegie Mellon University. The students need to open an account in order to access the service but the platform offer several opportunities for innovative teaching, learning, and participation. Students are able to comment on their reading materials and to provide reactions and feedback to the comments

made by their peers. It allows students who are otherwise "quiet" in class the platform and space to engage their colleagues and professor in meaningful discussions outside the classroom beyond the pressure of "class time".

For the teacher, the platform offers analytics of student contribution and participation. As Prof. Miller said in her presentation, the Salon allowed her to do things that she cannot do in Blackboard. *Well then, let's give it a try, shall we?*



PILOT COURSE (RE) DESIGN: A SUCCESS!

On August 16 and 17, the Center for Teaching hosted the first course (re)design experience at Sewanee, funded by a grant from the Jesse Ball duPont Foundation. Approximately 30 faculty and staff (from the Office of Civic Engagement and LITS) came together to talk about designing or redesigning learner-centered courses and syllabi that reflect the Sewanee values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Part of each day was spent in plenary sessions on course design principles (led by CFT co-director Betsy Sandlin), facilitating dialogue in the classroom (led by Cassie Meyer), and inclusive pedagogy (led by Research Help librarians Amanda Sprott-Goldson and Heidi Syler).

The remaining time was spent in small discussion groups facilitated by campus collaborators and special guests: Cassie Meyer from [Interfaith Youth Core](#) led a group that delved more fully into techniques for facilitating dialogue across difference, community engagement consultant and scholar

[Marshall Welch](#) led a group focused on civic engagement courses and the scholarship of engagement, and Sewanee professor [Stephanie Batkie](#) (Director of Writing Across the Curriculum and the Writing Center) led a group that considered open-access writing assignments and inclusion. At the end of the second day, faculty worked in small groups to provide one another with feedback on syllabus drafts. (Continued next page)



PILOT COURSE (RE) DESIGN...

The pilot program was a great success, thanks to the energy and generosity of the participants and facilitators. As one participant remarked:

"This was very helpful in getting me to think about deeper issues in relation to my classes at a time when I can actually hope to address these issues."

Some participants expressed a particular appreciation for learning from their colleagues, both new and experienced: "I found it extremely helpful to have time to discuss courses with more experienced faculty and . . . get to know colleagues in multiple departments." Another remarked:

"I came at this after 18 years of teaching and found it enriching. It was also great to work with people across disciplines."

The CFT is grateful to Cassie, Stephanie, Amanda and Heidi, director of the Office of Civic Engagement Jim Peterman, and Associate Dean Elizabeth Skomp for their assistance in organizing the event as well as to Sewanee Catering and everyone in Media Services for their support.

We are currently seeking funding to be able to offer a similar event next summer, so stay tuned for your opportunity to join us! And if you did join us, be on the lookout for an announcement regarding follow up / check-in opportunities later this semester.



THE BEST DISCUSSION I NEVER LED: REFLECTIONS ON ADVISING AN ALL-WOMEN PHILOSOPHY READING GROUP

By Prof. Mark Hopwood (CFT Advisory Board Member)



Like many teachers, I've often told my students that they are likely to learn just as much from each other as they learn from me. The first time that conviction was really tested was when I agreed to be the adviser for an all women's philosophy discussion group. Although the texts that my students were planning to read were ones that I knew and loved, as a male professor there wasn't any way for me to take part in the discussions without undermining the whole point of the group. I was going to have to let them figure it out for themselves. I applied for a mini-grant from the CfT to buy them some books, made some suggestions for where they might start, and left them to it. By the end of the year, the results of the experiment were clear. My students hadn't learned as much from each other as they would have learned from me. They'd learned far more. In fact, they were so happy

with how things had turned out that they were already planning to continue the discussion group for another year with some new members.

As I talked to each of the students about how the group had gone, I realized there was a lesson in there for me too. Over the past few years the philosophy profession has been wrestling with a long history of institutional sexism, harassment, and the silencing of women's voices. As a male professor in an all-male philosophy department, I'm painfully aware of the possibility of contributing to the image of philosophy as a boys' club. We've tried various things in our department to counteract that impression, from posting pictures of well-known female philosophy majors on our walls to including more female philosophers on our syllabuses. What my experience with the discussion group taught me was that there was something very simple that I could do as a male philosopher to allow women's voices to be heard. Just stop talking.

THE BEST DISCUSSION I NEVER LED...

I should probably back up for a moment to explain how the discussion group got started in the first place. I work on the twentieth century British philosopher Iris Murdoch, and at a conference on Murdoch a few years ago I met Rachael Wiseman. She and her colleague Clare MacCumhaill had just obtained funding for a new project at Durham University entitled "[Women in Parenthesis](#)". The goal of the project was to investigate the connections between five twentieth century female philosophers: Elizabeth Anscombe, Mary Midgley, Philippa Foot, Mary Warnock and Murdoch herself. What makes that group particularly interesting is that all five women were undergraduate students at Oxford at the same time during World War II, and all five went on to become major figures in twentieth century Anglo-American philosophy. In a 2005 [article](#) in the *Guardian* newspaper, the philosopher Jonathan Wolff posed the obvious question: what made it possible for all of these women to become such brilliant philosophers? One of the surviving members of the group, Mary Midgley, wrote [a letter](#) to the *Guardian* in response to Wolff's question. The answer, she said, was simply that due to the war, "there were fewer men around". She continued:

"The trouble is not, of course, men as such – men have done good enough philosophy in the past. What is wrong is a particular style of philosophising that results from encouraging a lot of clever young men to compete in winning arguments".



In their subsequent careers, Midgley, Anscombe, Foot, Warnock, and Murdoch all demonstrated that they were more than capable of making good arguments but, as Midgley wrote: "It was clear that we were all more interested in understanding this deeply puzzling world than in putting each other down." The "Women in Parenthesis" project was inspired by Midgley's letter. Wiseman and MacCumhaill set out to investigate the conditions that enabled those five women at Oxford not only to flourish but to produce a collective body of work that presented a powerful challenge to many of the prevailing philosophical orthodoxies of the time. One of their first ideas was a simple one: to organize an all-women philosophy reading group in Durham to see if it would be possible to recreate the environment in which Midgley, Anscombe, Foot, Warnock, and Murdoch began to develop their ideas.

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THE BEST DISCUSSION I NEVER LED...

When I met Rachael Wiseman at the Murdoch conference, she told me that they were hoping to get similar groups started at other universities, and I replied that I could think of a few students at Sewanee who might be interested. The following year, the Sewanee reading group began.

At the end of the Sewanee group's first year one of the students, Annie Bowers, wrote [an article](#) on her experience for the "Women in Parenthesis" website. In the piece, Annie talked about the bonds that developed between the members of the group, and the ways in which junior and senior philosophy majors helped to mentor younger students. She also talked about the distinctive atmosphere that developed in the discussions, in a way that was strikingly reminiscent of Midgley's letter:

"We worked together toward solutions, we didn't compete. There wasn't any pride involved, leaving the atmosphere totally laid-back and comfortable. This mentality developed completely naturally, never being verbally agreed upon. And of course, the group provided all of us with a much-needed space to vent about the difficulties of being women in the heavily male-dominated field of philosophy."



Reading Annie's piece made me feel proud, but also challenged. I spend a lot of time thinking about how to lead discussions in my classes and how to bring a diverse range of voices into the conversation. From what Annie said in her article, it sounded like the discussions in the reading group were a model of precisely the kind of conversation that I want my students to have. It was the best discussion I've ever led, and I wasn't even there for it.

I knew that the students in the reading group wanted to keep going after their first year, but the start of the following semester was so busy that I realized a couple of weeks in that I still hadn't gotten around to emailing them to organize anything. Feeling bad about this, I told one of the students that I was planning to email them all the very next day to get the discussion group started again. "Oh no," she said brightly. "You don't have to worry about that. Annie emailed us all weeks ago, and we've already agreed on what we want to read this year." She turned to walk out of my office, then paused for a moment at the door and spun around on her heel. "Who knew?" she said smiling. "Turns out the women could do it for themselves."

MEET THE CENTER FOR TEACHING'S FIRST-EVER STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD!

This academic year, the Center for Teaching selected and convened a Student Advisory Board (SAB) to assist it in its programming. The body's mandate is to serve as the liaison between the Center and the students. Such input is pivotal in the development and implementation of programs in the university that relates to teaching and learning. The Student Advisory Board is also expected to run and lead one event a semester.

The Cft Co-Directors sought nominations from various departments and offices in the university and invited them for an innovative interview process. Allow us then to introduce due to our Student Advisory Board for 2018-2109!



Name: Ezechias Nshimiyimana

Class Year: 2020

Hometown: Rutsiro, Rwanda

Major(s): Politics and Economics

Why CFT Student Advisory Board? "I joined CFT advisory board because I believe learning is efficiently done when both the teacher and the learner know each other on a personal level. I think the student-professor interaction outside the classroom is equally as important as in class. Every student has their own unique personality and learning methods. Knowing each student on an individual level enables a professor to help each student in the best way possible and vice versa. In my time with CFT, I hope to provide enough space for interactions between faculty and students."

Adriana Jones-Quaidoo (no picture) is from Prince Georges County, Maryland. She is currently majoring in Economics with a minor in Business: Management and pursuing a creative writing certificate. On her down time, she enjoys watching Criminal Minds and Greys Anatomy. Her passion in life is to help individuals and organizations reach their goals and aid them in becoming the best version of themselves. In the future, she plans to own her own consulting firm, which will equip small businesses and individuals with the means to be successful and maintain longevity in our global society.

THE CENTER FOR TEACHING'S FIRST EVER STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD...



Name: Fleming Smith

Class Year: 2019

Hometown: Athens, GA

Major/Minor: Global Studies/Spanish

Extracurriculars: Student director for Finding Your Place, Editor-in-Chief of *The Sewanee Purple*, Writing Center tutor, member of the Student Conduct Board

Why CFT Student Advisory Board? "I'm excited to be on the board because I think constructive partnerships between students and faculty members can remove barriers to learning and help us understand each other better."



Name: Carlos Zayas-Pons

Class Year: 2020

Extracurriculars: Editor-in-chief for Mountain Goat Literary Magazine, change-bell ringer, Poets Society attendee, *Cabaret* cast member

Why CFT Student Advisory Board? "I wanted to be a part of the student advisory board because I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to give back to the professors who have given so much to me."



Name: Lakeisha Phillips

Class Year: 2022

Hometown: Clarksville, TN

Major: Undeclared

Extracurriculars: SGA Senator, Arcadian Ambassador, Contributing Writer for *The Sewanee Purple*, Women's Basketball

Lakeisha is also the CFT's Student Assistant this year.

OUTSIDE THE GATES

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning Conference

**Austin, TX, January
10-12, 2019**

For nearly 40 years, Lilly Conferences have provided opportunities for the presentation of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Conference participants are made up of faculty and administrators at various stages in their academic careers representing nearly every discipline found in higher education.

The Austin conference maintains the same overall theme: "Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning" while tracks and subthemes vary by year. They offer a variety of sessions so that participants can match their learning preference to the presentations formats: 20- and 50-minute concurrent sessions, traditional plenary addresses, round table discussions, and poster sessions



11th Annual Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy

**January 30-February 1,
2019**

The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center

The conference is a showcase for best practices in teaching and learning, as well as the research that provides evidence of best practices. Ultimately, the conference will provide knowledge and skills related to the teaching and learning that participants will find immediately useful.

The Teaching Professor Conference

June 7-9, 2019

New Orleans, LA

The 2019 Teaching Professor Annual Conference will explore :

- Recent pedagogical research
- Innovative classroom techniques
- The latest technology tools
- Emerging challenges of a global classroom
- Proven best practices in teaching

This event provides a thought-provoking and stimulating forum for educators to share best practices that advance college teaching and learning.

THE ADVISORY BOARD

THE ADVISORY BOARD AND THE CELEBRATION OF TEACHING!

The Advisory Board of the Center of Teaching developed and implemented its first project, the Celebration of Teaching Week held last October 29-November 2, 2018!

The idea developed out of feedback from participants in the Team Observing Peers (TOP) program, with the goal of offering an opportunity to observe and learn from each other's work with a more manageable time commitment. The Board developed a program where faculty would be able to share techniques, jumpstart pedagogical dialogue, and celebrate all of the wonderful teaching that takes place at Sewanee every day!

The Week opened up spaces for us to learn from each other and celebrate each other's work! They allowed the community to share what we do well and to generate ideas on how to be even better at what we do.

Congratulations Team!



ROMULUS
STEFANUT



KATI
CURTIS



EMILY
PUCKETTE



CHRIS
VAN DE VEN



COURTNEY
THOMPSON



MARK
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OUR WEBSITE AND CALENDAR

