



# CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Fall 2011 Newsletter

### CTL's Junior Faculty Seminar Program launched a series of seminars on Discussion Leading with new seminar leader, Robert Lagueux.

#### Next Steps: Programs, Resources and Links

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##### Next steps:

Explore our online resources  
Sign up for the Preparing  
Future Faculty Series. Start  
with the Seminar, then  
workshop on Course Design,  
then create your teaching  
dossier through the seminar  
and workshop on teaching

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Find more information about  
teaching with our  
Instructor's Online Tutorial:  
<http://teaching.uchicago.edu/tutorial/index.html>

3

Discussion Leading Resources:  
Peter Frederick, "The  
Dreaded Discussion"  
*Improving College and  
University Teaching*, 29 (1981)

Peter Filine, "Discussing" *The  
Joy of Teaching* (2005)

David Yamane, "Course  
Preparation Assignments"  
*Teaching Sociology* 34 (2006)

Barbara Gross Davis,  
"Discussion Strategies" *Tools  
for Teaching*

Sign up for next quarter's  
programs at:

[Teaching.uchicago.edu](http://Teaching.uchicago.edu)



This quarter, 30 faculty members and postdoctoral teaching fellows from 18 different departments came together to take on the always prevalent teaching challenge: discussion leading. Robert Lagueux, founding director of the first-year seminar program and director of the teaching academy at Columbia College, led the group in addressing questions such as: What are the

goals of a class discussion, How do we avoid common pitfalls? How can we provoke thoughtful and engaging conversations among our students?

Email [teaching@college.uchicago.edu](mailto:teaching@college.uchicago.edu) to get involved.

### Smart Teaching Spotlight: Megan Heffernan – Discussion Leading

This November, Megan Heffernan requested an individual teaching consultation from the center in order to receive feedback and enhance her teaching. Two of our consultants visited Megan's MAPH core class on a Friday afternoon and were impressed with the deftness with which she led discussion.

Here is what her consultants, Cecilia Lo and Brandon Cline had to say:

Megan has developed an excellent skill set for facilitating discussion, which showed in a robust class dialogue. She has an assertive but congenial classroom presence, asked open-ended questions that encouraged analytical reasoning, and felt comfortable admitting her uncertainty about an issue. When students got stuck in a complex issue (the distinction between the ideological and repressive state apparatus in Althusser's revision of Marx), Megan was adept in helping students break the issue down into a series of smaller, easier to handle questions.



(continued)



She asked students to think back to what they had already learned (what Marxist theory said about the State), helped them reiterate what they had a good handle on (how things worked according to what Marx said about bourgeoisie law), and then built discussion back up to the complex question by asking students to compare and contrast what they already knew and with the new information.

It was also readily apparent that Megan had cultivated a collegial classroom environment: almost everyone participated in discussion, and the interchanges occurred predominately between students without needing to be funneled through Megan.

Mejia, Britni Ratliff, Emily Remus, Jessica Robinson, Ben Schonthal, Mijo Simunovic, Borja Sotomajor, Nicole Tuttle, and Nate Zuckerman.

## Teaching Consultants Program

The Center for Teaching and Learning welcomed a new Teaching Consultant this quarter. Joela Zeller (Germanic Studies) has joined our team of excellent teaching consultants:

Martin Baeumel, Mary Caldwell, Brandon Cline, Laura Hawk, Dan Kimmel, Cecilia Lo, Santiago

# Over 650 students and faculty participated in CTL programs this quarter

## Our Fall 2011 Programs

### Graduate Student Programs:

- “Workshop on Teaching in the College”
- “Workshop on Philosophy of Teaching Statements”
- “Seminar on Teaching Portfolios”
- “Workshop on Teaching Portfolios”
- “Seminar on Course Design”
- “Workshop on Course Design”
- “Creating Assignments to Structure Your Course”
- “PFF Luncheon: Teaching at Liberal Arts Colleges” with faculty from across the Midwest
- “Visual Literacy in the Classroom: How to Find, Create, and Display Images” Amanda Rybin
- “Structuring Your Scientific Paper” Jean-luc Duomont
- Microteaching
- “Increasing Undergraduate Achievement in Science at Highly Selective Universities: an Overview of Some Classic and Recent Studies” Craig Nelson
- “Succeeding at the Academic Job Market in the Sciences” Elizabeth LeClair
- Individual Teaching Consultations and Mid-Course Reviews

### Faculty Programs:

- “SSA Faculty Retreat: Classroom Teaching Issues, Part I: Teaching Students at Different Levels of Ability. Part II: Some Strategies for Leading Effective Discussions” Rob Lagueux
- Junior Faculty Seminar: ‘Leading Discussion’ Rob Lagueux,
- Part I: How and Why, Pitfalls and Solutions’,
- Part II: Some Strategies and Thoughts on Discussion Leading”

### Teaching Consultant Programs:

- “Teaching with Technology” Rob Lagueux
- “Discussion Leading: Case Studies” Rob Lagueux