

Friday @ the Center: September 7, 2007

Welcome Back to a New Academic Year!

I hope that your summer was both restful and productive! Here at the Center we have several projects underway celebrating faculty scholarship, which we will unveil in the next month or two, so watch for updates. In other Center news, please welcome our new Administrative Assistant, Anna Dufault. Anna graduated from SPU in 2002 with a Music major, worked in New York City for a few years, and most recently served as the AA in the School of Theology. In her spare time, she's currently doing a mean Cockney accent in Wing-It Production's improv show, *The Declaration*.

First Impressions

Yes, it was the original title of *Pride and Prejudice*, but it also designates the impact of your course syllabus. An amusing article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in July, called "If Your Syllabus Could Talk," relayed the experiences of a poor English professor who was condemned to proofread every syllabus at her large university campus. What Monica D'Antonio terms "the minimalist" syllabus looked like this:

- Week 1: Chapter 1.
- Week 2: Chapter 2.
- Week 3: Chapter 3.

You get the idea. D'Antonio comments, "Is this professor even remotely interested in teaching this class? Not judging from the syllabus. . . . He will probably lecture for the entire class period, answer questions grudgingly, and give two exams all semester."

A syllabus provides some of the crucial first impressions of any course and is a potent opportunity to let your students know how excited you are about the material, how much you want to help them learn, and what they can expect during the quarter—both from you and from themselves. A good syllabus will pique students' interest by demonstrating to them the relevance, importance, or fascination of the topic. It will clearly spell out in detail the course objectives, procedures, and policies. But it also can convey a sense of welcome and support. So consider first impressions. For inspiration, take a look at the sample syllabus available at <http://www.spu.edu/depts/csfd/teachingops.asp>.

Teaching 101

New or newer full-time and adjunct faculty are invited to attend Teaching 101, an introduction to teaching that will be held on Saturday, Sept. 15, from 9-2, with lunch provided. If you wish to attend, please register with Anna Dufault, adufault@spu.edu, by noon, Sept. 13.

September Grant Advisor Available

The September edition of *The Grant Advisor* can now be accessed through on-campus computers at <http://grantadvisor.com/tgaplus/>. It contains 20-25 full program reviews and over 300 listings of grant and fellowship programs. If it generates any possibilities for you, be sure to contact Laura Lundahl (Lundahl@spu.edu), the SPU academic grant writer, for an initial conversation about your ideas and the grant writing process.

See everyone at Camp Casey on Monday!



Susan

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