

Faculty Newsletter

Volume 8, Number 1
Fall/Winter 2004

Faculty Day Round-up

by Martha Corpus, assistant professor, Library; Rennie Gonsalves, associate professor, English; and Irwin Weintraub, associate professor, Library

The eighth annual Faculty Day, on May 25, was a day to celebrate and recognize the achievements and research accomplishments of the Brooklyn College faculty. It opened with remarks by Vanessa Yingling, Physical Education and Exercise Science, and Provost Roberta S. Matthews, English. Yingling noted, "Faculty Day is a time to present and exchange ideas, contribute to and strengthen one another's projects, and establish new collaborations." Provost Matthews thanked Myra Kogen, director of the Learning Center and chairperson of the Faculty Day Committee, and characterized Faculty Day as "an inspired idea—a brilliant idea—because it gives us the opportunity for an entire day to celebrate the talents of our faculty and formally acknowledge the richness of multiple intellects, interests, and accomplishments."

Morning sessions featured a variety of symposia, ranging from scholarly appraisals of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (in recognition of the film's fiftieth anniversary), to a spirited demonstration of how to build learning communities through curriculum, to a provocative discussion of global anti-Semitism, to insights on research methodology using primary sources.

Lunchtime offered a plethora of poster exhibits on faculty scholarship and projects as well as a series of roundtables where thoughtful discussion focused on such issues as heritage languages, the impact of the New Jersey Nets' move to Brooklyn, new directions in interdisciplinary work, multiple literacies of popular culture, and the future of science at Brooklyn College. Mid-afternoon sessions piqued the artistic sensibility with music, sound, film, and dramatic presentations. The day wound down with more symposia covering public health, journalism, and high school reform, and concluded with an awards ceremony and reception at which faculty members were recognized for distinguished achievements in teaching, research, and service. (See "Honors and Awards," page 9.)



Rear Window Symposium:
Ellen Tremper, English
(at podium), and
Lindley Hanlon, Film.

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Symposia

Paying Attention: Narrative and Perception in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*

Window featured an examination of the 1954 film's take on consciousness from the perspective of the disciplines represented by moderator **Geoffrey Minter**, English, and panelists **Lindley Hanlon**, Film, **Ellen Tremper**, English, and **Bill Seeley**, Philosophy. Hanlon spoke of the profound and stunning interplay of the film's opening scenes, marveling at the free-wheeling camera movement, which offered a "space in time where science and fiction meet." Tremper targeted a "rear view" of *Rear Window* in her literary analysis of the film, noting that the homebound protagonist's (Jimmy Stewart) unresolved romance with the character portrayed by Grace Kelly frames his observations of his neighbors' behavior. Seeley's talk, "Imagining Film: Seeing with the Mind's Eye," dwelt on the seamlessness of Hitchcock's visual narrative—applying psychological and philosophical theories of how we process visual experience and reconstruct it—and drew upon theories of art and imagination from Kendall Walton and Gregorie Currie, among others.

Crossing Boundaries: Building Learning Communities through Curriculum was moderated by Dean of Undergraduate Studies **Ellen Belton**, English, and addressed faculty initiatives to enhance teaching. Panelists **Dorothy Kehl**, English, and **Nehru Cherukupalli**, Geology, paired ESL and geology classes for group work on class assignments. In the ESL class, students worked on taking lecture notes and improving the reading and writing skills required for their geology

class and complemented their study of earth materials and rocks by reading stories about the California gold rush and volcanic eruptions. In the geology class, students learned not only about the science of the formation of coal and oil but also some of the history behind the success of such industrialists as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller. They learned to regard geologists as "detectives of the earth" and how efforts of the Japanese military to use the west-to-east jet stream to deliver bombs via balloons to the United States during World War II were foiled by the detection and identification of fine organisms in sand.

Julia Hirsch and **Joseph Entin**, English, and **Ray Allen**, Music, reported on "Voices Across America: Literature and Music," a collaboration of literature and music classes. In this learning community, English 2 sections were paired with a section of the core music course. The English sections focused on racial and cultural identity and stereotypes in texts, particularly in the movie version of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Entin introduced his students to the history of primitivism, first as a justification of imperialism from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, then in terms of its treatment by writers of the Harlem Renaissance, and finally as a kind of backhand compliment in *Porgy*. Allen guided music students to find elements of the blues and spirituals in such songs as "It Ain't Necessarily So." Students looked at the interrelationship between sound structure in the music and depiction of social structures. Further discussion focused on comments by critics

concerning the authenticity of *Porgy and Bess*. All the presenters expressed satisfaction with their collaborative efforts, and Hirsch noted that the opportunity was “an enriching and wonderful experience.”

Global Anti-Semitism: Sources and Prospects

played to a standing-room-only crowd and featured session moderator **Sara Reguer**, Judaic Studies, and panelists **Mervin Verbit**, Sociology, and **Robert D. Johnson** and **Steven P. Remy**, History. Verbit’s talk, “Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism,” cautioned people to listen carefully when anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist views are being espoused and to challenge the user to define the terms. Anti-Semitism refers to actions that are harmful specifically to Jews, whereas anti-Zionism is a movement against the Jewish nation as a collective entity and to the right of Jews to have a national homeland. Anti-Zionism takes many forms: Some maintain that Jews are a religion, not a people, and a state based on religion is undemocratic; others deny the right of Jews to have a homeland because it occupies seized Arab land and is thus illegitimate; religious Zionism holds that Israel is not a true homeland because it was established as a secular state—only divine intervention can establish the Jewish state. Those who deny Israel legitimacy because they believe it is a place where non-Jews do not have equal rights should be confronted with the fact that Israel is a multiethnic democracy with a Jewish majority that grants the same rights and privileges to all citizens, including Arabs.

Johnson discussed “Confronting Anti-Israel Attitudes on Contemporary College Campuses,” citing the imbalance of objective dialogue and discussion and using examples from Rutgers, Columbia, and other campuses that have Middle East departments with scholars who support a particular view without bringing objectivity and balance to the debate. He pointed to actions on campuses demanding divestment from companies doing business with Israel and to scholars who make unsubstantiated anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist claims. These campuses also tend to oppose conservative viewpoints and condemn conservatives as uninformed and backward.

Johnson concluded that academic institutions should be teaching democratic values and human rights and building academic departments with scholars who are knowledgeable about the entire Middle East.

Remy’s talk, “Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Europe,” argued that growing anti-Semitism in Europe is driven by conspiratorial theories and vestiges of twentieth-century totalitarianism and fascism. Radicals in some nations argue that the United States and Israel are imperialist countries trying to dominate the world. Increased immigration of Muslims from Arabic and African nations into Europe has also sparked a resurgence of anti-Semitism.



This page, clockwise from top:

Public Health without Borders: Jean Grassman (at podium) and Patricia Antonello, Health and Nutrition Sciences.

Trying to Make Smaller Better: A Case Study in High School Reform: Peter Taubman and Hollyce Giles, Education.

Jerry Kruse, Sociology, emeritus, leads a roundtable on the impact of the Nets' move to downtown Brooklyn.





This page, top to bottom:

Taking a break at the groaning board—Sally Bermanzohn, Political Science (far left), and Virah Sahni, Physics, (far right).

Kenneth Axen, Health and Nutrition Sciences and Physical Education and Exercise Science, expounds on fuel stores and obesity.

Kenneth Bruffee, English and Honors Academy, at the Heritage Languages Roundtable.





Peaceful Teaching, Teaching Peace,

moderated by Elaine Brooks, English, featured panelists Geri DeLuca, Len Fox, and Roni Natov, English, and David Forbes, Education. Natov spoke of the importance of establishing a group protocol in the classroom, encouraging students to talk and write in their own words and ensuring that all students are included. DeLuca, coordinator of the Writing Across the Curriculum program, related her experiences studying yoga over the years, explaining how the yoga concept of “radical self-acceptance” can be translated into helping students find their talents, accept themselves, and become less fearful. Fox discussed the central vision of peace education—that of a more peaceful world, which is the major theme of an ESL text, *Making Peace*, that he coauthored with Brooks. Forbes advocated the need for students to engage in contemplative activities in the classroom.

Public Health without Borders:

An International Perspective on

Disease, moderated by Leslie Jacobson,

Health and Nutrition Sciences, included panelists Patricia Antonello, Jean Grassman, and Gerald Oppenheimer, Health and Nutrition Sciences. Antonello’s talk, “Against Women: AIDS, Global Policies, and Health Policies,” covered the plight of minority and low-income women who experience racism, sexism, and class bias from the medical profession when trying to get help for AIDS. Pregnant women are not informed of biomedical advances that can help them and are often advised to terminate their pregnancies to avoid giving birth to babies with AIDS. To gain better access to

health services, these women have organized for collective action, forming groups to counsel other suffering women, initiating lawsuits, and fighting for humane treatment.

Grassman’s talk, “The Public Health Problems of Catastrophes: Russia, Italy, and the United States,” explained that catastrophes result from a mix of factors that occur over time—noncommunication among involved principals, poor safety conditions, failure to follow procedures, mistakes, and other circumstances. She cited Chernobyl’s nuclear reactor leakage in 1986, which spread radioactive materials over a wide area and caused death and illness; the Shelekov Fire in Italy (1992) and the dioxin release from a chemical plant in Seveso, Italy (1976); and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center (2001). She explored the mistakes made before and after the accidents and the changes required to avoid another occurrence.

Oppenheimer spoke on “Shattered Dreams: Confronting the AIDS Epidemic in South Africa and the United States.” It reflects his experiences as the coauthor of an oral history of the AIDS epidemic in South Africa: Five million of the country’s 43.8 million people are HIV/AIDS positive; 11 percent of South Africans are HIV-infected, and by 2010 adult HIV prevalence could reach 25 percent. An estimated 420,000 South African children are orphans as a result of the loss of parents to AIDS; by 2008, that figure is expected to reach 1.6 million. Oppenheimer stated that “in a society where, for many, basic day-to-day existence is already a struggle, AIDS is on

a merciless rampage.” He noted that South Africa has two kinds of medical facilities: the public medicine, which serves 70 percent of the people with 30 percent of the doctors, and the private, quality medicine, which serves 30 percent of the population with 70 percent of the doctors. Despite the end of apartheid, medical care is still based on class, race, and socioeconomic status.

Understanding History: The Values of Interview and Survey Research,

moderated by **Jocelyn Wills**, History, explored research methodology used by **Philip Napoli**, History, **Alex Vitale**, Sociology, and **Robert Cherry**, Economics. Napoli’s research project, “War Talk: Brooklyn’s Vietnam Veterans Remember,” comprised data from taped interviews with Vietnam veterans from Brooklyn. He found similarities with the soldiers fighting today’s war in Iraq: Both are mostly from working-class families, the children of first- or second-generation Americans, and are strongly influenced by neighborhood street gangs. He concluded that the Vietnam war his subjects fought “had one foot in Brooklyn.” In “Challenges in Interviewing Government Officials: Investigating the Origins of ‘Quality of Life’ Policing,” Vitale discussed the problems he encountered in interviewing officials for his research on homelessness and issues of urban life, which often required the reconstruction of political developments that occurred fifteen years earlier. He conducted interviews with police officials, mayors, city council representatives, and other politicians who seemed to have a tough time speaking concretely in terms of issues. To overcome these obstacles, Vitale

used newspaper indices to determine actual events rather than relying on political speeches. He also developed a series of follow-up questions to present to his subjects and never taped his interviews because officials were not comfortable with a tape device. He advised researchers to always obtain institutional or individual approval when interviewing government or police officials. Cherry spoke on “Contentious History: Perceptions of Polish-Jewish Relations During World War II.” His focus was on members of Polish-American organizations, congresses, and museums because they had an interest in and knowledge of the events of past years. If they had not themselves experienced the events, they were the beneficiaries of family memories that were passed down over time. Cherry surveyed about three hundred people and conducted interviews with many others. He encountered terrific opposition to his research, however, with several organizations refusing to give him membership lists, requesting advance review of survey questions, and advising members to not participate in the survey. The research revealed, Cherry noted, that anti-Semitism was rampant among Roman Catholic Poles during the Second World War.

Trying to Make Smaller Better: A Case Study in High School Reform

was led by **Stephen Phillips**, Education, who presented a concise background on the small-school initiative designed to replace such huge failing high schools as Julia Richmond, James Monroe, and Erasmus with three to six small schools within the physical layout of the original

school. Bushwick, one of the lowest-performing schools, where only one in every thirty-four students graduated with a diploma, was selected to be redesigned, and Brooklyn College was asked to help. Several College faculty members served as facilitators and organizers of the Bushwick School for Social Justice (BSSJ). In the process, said Phillips, came a confluence of research interests and teaching. Faculty members participating in BSSJ—**Nancy Romer**, Psychology, and **Peter Taubman** and **Hollyce Giles**, Education—spoke on various facets of the College partnership, from service-learning support features, to the need for corporate reform to ensure that the small-school initiative thrives, to the importance of community involvement in the life of the school.

Artistic Presentations

The Poetics of Sound: An Interactive Performance of Sound and Silence,

with **Douglas Cohen** and **George Brunner**, Conservatory of Music, demonstrated how text and music can be blended into sounds. Cohen and Brunner noted that people often refer to music as beautiful, but each listener has a unique concept of *beautiful*. They wanted to see if they could produce beautiful sounds with electronic music. Brunner played the cello and Cohen sang as background synthetic music reverberated through the room. The purpose of this demonstration was to show how electronic music can be used as an artistic genre by creating numeric algorithms that convert to sound. Audience members, mainly music students

and individuals who play instruments, joined in a discussion about the sounds and how they can be adapted to various instruments.

In **“The Beautiful Changes”:** **Performances of Literature about Change**, Timothy Gura, Speech Communication Arts and Sciences, read from various works, including sonnets from the nineteenth-century English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins and poems by

among whom are an artist and a cowboy in Russia, a philanthropist and volunteer in Costa Rica, and an archaeologist in France. The filmmaker’s goal is to depict Americans not as immigrants but as neighbors in their new countries and explore their motives and reasons for leaving America. The film is a work in progress, and Patkanian plans to continue filming in Greece, Italy, and Turkey “in search of simple people leading simple lives.”



Global Anti-Semitism: Robert D. Johnson, History (at podium); Sara Reguer, Judaic Studies; Mervin Verbit, Sociology; and Steven Remy, History.

Ovid. He held his audience rapt as he acted out the readings in a range of different voices. **Wendy Fairey**, English, read from several poets in a soft and lilting voice that captivated listeners. The audience consensus: This was a rich, passionate, powerful, moving experience.

Bridging Cultures and Communities through Film featured **Irina Patkanian**, Television and Radio, who screened portions of her film *My American Neighbor*. The film is a series of vignettes of transplanted Americans,

Roundtables

Looking Ahead: The Future for Science at Brooklyn College. This wide-ranging discussion, moderated by Dean of Research and Graduate Studies **Louise Hainline**, Psychology, and **Micha Tomkiewicz**, Physics, examined the role of science courses at the College and the level of science exposure by science and nonscience majors. Some stated a need to incorporate science in all courses, believing that students need science literacy to function in today’s science-oriented world. Other points touched on internship opportunities for science majors, grant funding, plans for the College’s new science building, and the need for more time for faculty research in the sciences.

Heritage Languages at Brooklyn College: Can Languages We Leave Behind Continue to Affect Our Lives? **Kenneth Bruffee**, English and Honors Academy, **Mariana Regalado**, Library, and **Eugene Shenderov**, a student in the Honors Academy, led a provocative discussion that raised the following themes and questions: A heritage language can create an alternative

“cultural persona” in people. What can be done to explore those cultural personae and alternative worlds? What do we already understand about the relationship (the friction as well as the mutual benefits) between heritage languages and the dominant language? How can heritage languages be used to help, change, or improve society? How can the College tap its heritage languages as it becomes a global institution? How can students be persuaded that it is in their interest, given our current understanding of the world’s “global” direction, to cultivate their heritage languages? Where do heritage languages make fruitful contact with the existing curriculum? Roundtable participants suggested that faculty introduce heritage languages into more existing courses through the use of translation exercises and library search assignments.

Poster Sessions

Lunchtime poster sessions provided a spectrum of the scholarship and diverse research interests of faculty, covering health, anatomy, nutrition, education, speech therapy, geology, music, and international librarianship. A stroll through the poster area offered insights into the relationship between obesity and diet and between exercise and coronary artery disease, and data on community health internship programs, hypertension, diabetes, and how blueberries enhance memory. Other posters presented new perspectives on museum lighting, the latest “dirt” on fossils in South Dakota, technological research innovations for the classroom, and an exposition on the breathing and vocal functions in speech therapy.



Honors and Awards

The Faculty Day Awards Ceremony and Reception concluded a full day of symposia, posters, and roundtable discussions. **Kenneth Bruffee**, English and Honors Academy, offered introductory remarks and skillfully functioned as master of ceremonies. President **Christoph M. Kimmich** welcomed all and commented on the importance of Faculty Day and faculty recognition.

A number of faculty members were honored for their outstanding achievements. **Michele Emmer**, Speech Communication Arts and Sciences, presented the Award for Excellence in Teaching to corecipients **Anindya Bhattacharya**, Economics, and **Barbara Jo Lewis**, Television and Radio. **Louis S. Asekoff**, English, presented the Award for Excellence in Creative Achievement to **Sally Avery Bermanzohn**, Political Science. **Nancy Romer**, Psychology, presented the Award for College Citizenship to **Geraldine DeLuca**, English. President Kimmich presented a new award, the Claire Tow Distinguished Teacher Award, to **Roni L. Natov**, English (above). He also announced that **Yedidyah Langsam**, Computer and Information Science, is this year’s Murray Koppelman Professor. Concluding the ceremony, and echoing President Kimmich’s theme, **Jack Flam**, Art, spoke about the important role that these honors and awards play in the recruitment and retention of faculty.

—Jerry Mirotznik