Filling Station: A Faculty Research Presentation Series

Spring 2019 Lineup

Dr. David Barnett (Associate Vice President or Program and Curriculum Development): Friday, February 8, 12-12:50 p.m. in 8-200

“Living, Learning, and Teaching Abroad”

The broad aim of the presentation is to persuade the listener that one need not literally teach abroad as a professional instructor to have teaching experiences that are illuminated in their structure and dynamics by reflectively examining them using a metaphorical conception of “teaching abroad.” Soon after I started teaching undergraduate engineering students in Shanghai, China, I became aware to a degree that I had not been before, how much “at home” I had felt previously in college classrooms in New York City. Degree of familiarity matters when we engage with other people – whether we are teaching or conversing or arguing – not because the familiar is better but because discounting the importance of cultural, experiential and other disconnects to our engagement people outside our metaphorical “home,” courts avoidable breakdowns in trust, patience and goodwill. More concretely, I soon realized after reaching China that my *approach* to pursuing the three key goals I give myself when teaching – to be effective, authentic, and ethical – would have to be reengineered for my exciting but challenging new environment. In the presentation I will use examples related to his students’ preconceptions about Americans, my own preconceptions about Chinese, and the micropolitics of teaching and promoting liberal arts disciplines in an authoritarian political context. I will invite listeners to discuss whether, in their own teaching experiences – from the formal to the very informal – they have ever felt themselves moving between contexts that are more, and contexts that are less, *familiar* and, if they have, to discuss adjustments they might make to achieve their goals when “teaching abroad.”

Bio:

David Barnet received his bachelor’s degree from Reed College in Portland, OR, and went on to earn his masters and doctorate from Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, MD, specializing in political theory, with minor fields in public law and philosophy. By the time of his dissertation defense Barnet was living in New York City and working at the Jewish Board of Family and Children’s Services as the Executive Associate to the Executive Vice President & CEO. This nonprofit administrative experience led to an opportunity in higher education administration at Baruch College School of Public Affairs in 2001. For the next 14 years Barnet was a full-time administrator – at Baruch, Purchase College, and John Jay College – who taught as an adjunct when circumstances allowed. From September of 2015 through August of 2018, he served as Teaching Professor and Director of Liberal Arts at the University of Michigan – Shanghai Jiao Tong University Joint Institute in Shanghai, China, where he lead the small team of liberal arts faculty while teaching Academic Writing, Introduction to Political Theory, and Sociological Principles and Problems. Barnet was delighted to join the MCC community as Associate Vice President for Curriculum and Program Development on August 15, 2018.

………………….

Dr. Daniel Tyree (Anthropology): Friday, March 1 12-12:50 p.m. in 8-200

“Variation in Human Skin Color: Evolution and Adaptation”

Variation in human skin color is mainly the result of differing concentrations of the pigment eumelanin (brown and black) within the epidermis. One of the primary functions of eumelanin is to protect the body from the effects of ultra-violet radiation (UVR). Under conditions of intense UVR, the primary selective pressure is to minimize the degradation of the vitamin folate, which is essential for the proper development of the fetus. Consequently, increased eumelanin (darker skin) is favored in high UVR regions (tropics) to ensure successful reproduction. However, since humans get most of their vitamin D from UVR, a total protection from UV is not desirable. Hence, a reduction of eumelanin is essential in areas of low UV exposure (higher latitudes) to allow production of enough vitamin D. Ultimately variation in human skin color is the evolutionary result of an adaptive balance between folate degradation and vitamin D production.

Bio:

Daniel Tyree earned his Ph.D. in Anthropology at The Ohio State University with a focus in Biological Anthropology, a M.A. from California State University, Chico, and a B.A. from Eastern Washington University. He has taught at numerous colleges and universities over the past two decades. Before joining the Anthropology/History/Political Science/Sociology faculty at MCC, he was a lecturer in Anthropology at The Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College. His research has focused primarily on human auxology and evolution. Most recently, he has also researched the effects of environmental change on human health among Somali immigrants.

…………………….

Catherine Smith (English/Philosophy): Tuesday, May 7, 10-11:15 a.m., Room: TBD (In Collaboration with Scholar’s Day)

**“Search and Rescue: How Fiction Brought Her Home”**

After undertaking a creative nonfiction project in which a search for the sailboat my family owned 45 years ago initially proved unsuccessful, what I “found” were many routes to the truth, including a detour into fiction.  My presentation will examine the limitations of fact and memory and explain how fiction threw me a lifeline, leading out of the tricky waters of actuality and into another direction entirely.

Bio:

Cathy Smith is an English professor at Monroe Community College. She has published poetry in several literary magazines and received a New York Foundation for the Arts grant to write her memoir, The Glory Walk, which received a Book of the Year Award in Public Interest/Creative Works from the American Journal of Nursing and was an award finalist for an Independent Publisher Book Award in Aging/Death and Dying.  She co-authored the play Shitty Lives with MCC colleagues which ran at MUCC during the 2015 Fringe Festival in Rochester NY.  She is also a mixed-media artist. Recent exhibits include Images from the Camino at the Little Theatre Café in Rochester NY, April 2015; Boat Dreams in The Director’s Showcases of the Mercer Gallery at MCC, September 2016; Embedded at the Visual Studies Workshop, November 2017.  Upcoming in August, 2019 is Camera Phone Colloquy at ​The Community Darkroom, Rochester NY.

All Filling Station presentations are free and open to the entire college community.