

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Weekly Digest for the Week of October 8, 2008

Welcome to the FYE community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to supporting our new first-year and transfer students create a more successful transition to the University of Connecticut. The Weekly Digest will publish every Wednesday during the Fall semester and contain details about workshops, upcoming events, tips/techniques, and other information geared to help you have the best semester possible with your FYE class. Comments, suggestions and constructive critique are welcomed. E-mail kevin.sullivan@uconn.edu or David.Ouimette@uconn.edu

Thoughts from the Director, David Ouimette

How are we doing?

During the August FYE Instructor/Mentor Luncheon, Keith Barker (KB) spoke for an hour about "*The Attributes of a Well-Managed Classroom*," with specific emphasis on creating a classroom culture promoting effective learning. Well, we are seven weeks into the first semester and how are WE doing? I am hearing various reports that are not atypical for teaching a one-credit FYE class! For example, on the HuskyCT Instructor site discussion list, one instructor writes:

On the flip side, what they lack in email or classroom communications, they seem to make up for in their writing. My mentor and I have assigned bi-weekly "reflections," and I have been impressed with the way they express their thoughts. I can tell that this is a smart and creative group.

The one-hour-a-week format makes teaching this class a challenge, so think about this as a 14-week process that provides an enormous amount of information. As you look out at the 19 faces each week and wonder whether anything is getting through or why they cannot do a simple assignment or respond to a simple question, you must remain confident that what you are doing is important and keep at them.

KB encourages faculty to get feedback from their students by asking three simple questions: 1) What are we doing to help your learning? 2) What are we doing to hinder your learning? 3) What can we do differently to improve your learning? I find that this the perfect time in the semester for this kind of feedback that can really invigorate you and the class. Distribute the three questions to your students and discuss the responses in class for a few minutes. I know that the feedback sometimes surprises me, and often I can clear up confusion and clarify WHY I am asking them to do the writing assignment or the scavenger hunt, etc. For me, students really are appreciative of this process and one of the benefits is that you encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning as well as the class.

Additionally, I have attached another mid-term-evaluation form that I like to do with my class. The goals and aspirations for the FYE (INTD) classes form the basis of this evaluation and really the first-year experience. I encourage you to think about using it not only for the feedback, but also as a discussion tool. Talk about items such as: *My class helps me explore new intellectual ideas*. Oftentimes, students will disagree with this and that is OK. However, I like to respond by saying the purpose of the Writing Assignment and going to three very different events is to explore new intellectual ideas and reflect on them by having a discussion with a peer at the Writing Center. I go on to express that I hope this is happening not only in my class but also across other courses and experiences on campus.

I could go on... but please consider some approaches to getting feedback from your classes and take some time to talk at mid-term what you hope you are accomplishing in your classes. We have set up a couple of roundtable discussions and a writing workshop (see below for details). If you would like to discuss these ideas further, come to the roundtable discussion or just give me a call anytime. Have a good week!

Instructor Roundtable Lunch

Meet with other FYE instructors to share experiences, both exhilarating and not so... Two sessions, both noon to 1:00 PM, one on October 21 (Tuesday) and the other on October 22 (Wednesday) in CUE 213. Box lunch will be provided, so please register before Thursday, October 17, via [Roundtable Signup](#). Thanks!

Writing Assignment Instructor Support

On Monday, October 20 from noon-1:00 PM in CUE 213, FYE and the Writing Center will host a workshop focused on grading student writing. We will discuss strategies for effective, efficient grading; we will address ways to grade for revision; and we will practice grading actual student essays. This workshop is targeted at instructors using the FYE Writing Assignment Templates but will have relevance for any instructors who assign (and grade) writing. Lunch will be provided. Sign up for this workshop by Wednesday, October 16, to [Writing Assignment Workshop](#).

Instructor Information

Some important information for 1800/1820 Instructors

ConnPIRG. Contact ConnPIRG President Alex Nguyen at alexander.nguyen@uconn.edu to schedule a presentation of any length from 15-50 minutes.

AOD Education (Alcohol and Other Drug). Sign-up for the AOD education session by e-mail: nisha.hardnett@uconn.edu. Make sure students fill out this pre-test survey the week before the scheduled AOD presentation. The survey can be found at http://web.uconn.edu/alcohol/consent_form.php.

If you are **not** having AOD present in your class, please consider having your students take a short pre- and post-test that will create a control group for Dr. Lyn's study.

Contact jeffrey.carlson@huskymail.uconn.edu for details.

Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP) Peer Educators. To request a workshop, please send an email to VAWPP@yahoo.com. The email should include: Professor's Name, Course Title, Number of Students enrolled, Location, Date and time, and Workshop preference. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Kathleen Holgerson at Kathleen.Holgerson@uconn.edu or 860-486-4738.

Writing Assignment. The University Writing Center liaison to the INTD 1800 instructors is Mandy Suhr-Sytsma. She is happy to answer your questions/concerns, as well as offer suggestions for the Writing Assignment. Her office is in CUE 125. Her office hours are Monday from 1-3pm and Tuesday from 1:30-3:15pm. Her office phone number is 860.486.2419 and email is mandy.suhrsytsma@gmail.com.

Writing Center Lunchtime Seminars. Each semester the University Writing Center hosts a series of lunchtime mini-seminars on topics related to writing and the teaching of writing. For more information, visit: <http://www.writingcenter.uconn.edu/facultyseries.htm>.

Résumé Assignment. The résumé template has been added to *HuskyCT* → *First Year Programs* - *First Year Instructors* → *Recommended Assignments*. The file will open in Microsoft Word.

Looking for a class on Student Involvement? Contact [Andrea Lama](#) with preferred times and dates for the presentations. "We look forward to helping your students get involved!"

Nutrition and Wellness Services. To request a program or for more information, please contact Amy Pumerantz, Nutrition Coordinator of Student Health Services: 486-0771 or amy.pumerantz@uconn.edu.

Focus on Students

(This section will include helpful activities/assignments/information for your INTD 1800 and INTD 1820 students)

- **Major Fair.** Exploring Majors? Considering a double major? Encourage your students to attend the Major Fair, **Tuesday, October 14th** in the Student Union Ballroom from 4:00-6:00pm. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn about the wide variety of majors offered at UConn! Students will have the opportunity to talk with faculty and student representatives from majors in all of UConn's schools and colleges. For more information, call the ACES office at 486-1788.
- **Discovery Leadership Program Series.** Recommend your students get involved with the Discovery Leadership Program Series. Have students visit www.leadership.uconn.edu and click on Discovery for more information.
- **Long River Review Literary Magazine.** Students may submit works of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry for publication in the Long River Review Literary Magazine. Submissions for the first issue will be accepted until February 12th, 2009. Collection boxes are found in the CLAS building in the main English Department office, in the Freshman English office, and right outside the elevator on the third floor. For more information, email AmandaWLR08@gmail.com.

Special Events: Expand your Students' Horizons!

Encourage your students to attend these events as part of the *Writing Assignment* or for personal enrichment.

October 15

- **Never Perfect—In recognition of the 11th Annual Love Your Body Day**
12:00pm, Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)
For more information visit <http://womenscenter.uconn.edu/events.php>
- **What Will You Do? Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Rally**
5:30-7:00pm, SU 304B: Deliberative discussion, dinner and speakers
7:00pm, SU Green: Candlelight Vigil and speakers

October 17

- **Guerilla Girls**
7:00pm, Jorgensen Center for the Arts
Visit: <http://womenscenter.uconn.edu/events.php>

October 21

- **Ninth Annual International Human Rights Conference on Religion: UNESCO Chair & Institute of Comparative Human Rights**
9:00am, Student Union Theatre
To register call 486-0647. Visit www.unescochair.uconn.edu for more information.

October 26

- **Landscape and Belief: A View Camera in the Himalayas: Kenneth Hanson**
3:00pm, Benton Museum

October 30

- **Radha Devi Joshi Foundation Lecture: "Indian Women in the House of Fiction": Dr. Geetanjali Singh Chanda**
4:10pm, Babbidge Library Class of '47 Room

October 31- November 1

- **2008 East of California Conference: A Movement to Look Back To**
Keynote Address Given by Gary Y. Okihiro
Friday, October 31, 4pm, Student Union Ballroom
Panel Sessions/Roundtables
Saturday, November 1, 10:00am-3:45pm, Student Union Ballroom

November 1**Closing Address Given by Nitasha Sharma**

Saturday, November 1, 4:00pm, Student Union Ballroom

Please direct any questions to Cathy Schlund-Vials (e-mail: cathy.schlund-vials@uconn.edu) or to the Asian American Studies Institute (860-486-4751).

November 3

- **Dr. Maya Angelou**

7:00pm, Jorgensen Center for the Arts

Visit: <http://womenscenter.uconn.edu/events.php>

November 11

- **“Globalization: India Present at the Creation”: Nayan Chanda**

3:30pm, Babbidge Library Class of '47 Room

November 13

- **Dean Robert Gray Memorial Lecture: Maestro Keith Lockhart, conductor of the Boston Pops**

2:00pm, Von der Mehden Recital Hall

Contact Kirk Matson, Theatre Production Manager, von der Mehden Recital Hall, UConn

Kirk.Matson@uconn.edu 860.486.2969

- **“Waking from Dreams of India” : Neil Chowdhury**

4:00pm, Room 101 Dept. of Art and Art History

HuskyCT Training

Do you feel you need a quick refresher for HuskyCT? Contact [Lesa von Munkwitz-Smith](mailto:lesa.von.munkwitz-smith@uconn.edu), 6-1735, to arrange a session – your office or the FYP office in 235 CUE.

If interested, FYE instructors may attend HuskyCT workshops in room 214 of the CUE, courtesy of the IRC:
http://www.irc.uconn.edu/IRC_workshops.htm.

Workshop Date	Workshop Title
Oct. 14, 11:00 to noon	HuskyCT Assignment Tool
Oct. 21, 3:00 to 4:00	HuskyCT Group Manager and Selective Release
Oct. 24, 10:30 to noon	HuskyCT Quiz and Survey Basics