

## 2009-2010 Seminar Participants

### "Revision of FA 317 Art and Psychology"

*Carol Calo*

#### *Rationale:*

I am applying to participate in the Teaching and Learning Strategies Seminar during the fall semester of 2009 so that I may explore different pedagogical approaches and develop specific strategies for teaching interdisciplinary courses. As a tenured professor who has been teaching art history at Stonehill for 16 years, I am constantly trying to improve and update my teaching methods. This seminar will be a fruitful opportunity to discuss current pedagogical practices with my colleagues and apply them to revising a course I have taught repeatedly, FA 317 Art and Psychology.

#### *Project Description:*

The focus of my project will be to revise an upper-level interdisciplinary course, Art and Psychology, which is offered during alternate years by the Visual and Performing Arts Department. This type of course has no prototype, so its composition is the result of general research and my own ideas. When I first began teaching this course to Fine Arts students and Psychology majors, it was quite successful. Students found its subject matter interesting, although they complained that the reading assignments and writing requirements were challenging. In the interest of increased rigor, I changed texts and some requirements when I last taught the course in Spring 2008. For the first time, student evaluations for this course were disturbingly negative. Not only did students find the reading overwhelming, but my efforts to conduct the class as a seminar were not successful. While I found the material fascinating, I could not engage the students as I had hoped. I plan to completely re-conceptualize the course content to create a more effective learning experience for students. The following are some steps I plan to take:

Talk with faculty in the Psychology Department about the needs of their students and appropriate expectations.

Survey some Psychology and Visual and Performing Arts students about course content.

Research new materials recently published on specific topics relating to the course.

Consider a more limited focus for the course, perhaps investigating just psychobiography or psychoanalytical theories or art and healing, rather than offering a broad survey.

By the conclusion of the Teaching and Learning Strategies Seminar I will have a new syllabus for the course, one I will be able to introduce when I teach the class again next spring. I will also have developed new classroom practices to enhance the fresh approach to material.

### *Benefit:*

I am confident that by participating in the Teaching and Learning Strategies Seminar I will be able to improve my teaching overall and specifically improve the course Art and Psychology. This will benefit both Psychology and Visual and Performing Arts students who typically take the course for Major or Minor credit. It will also enrich the Fine Arts curriculum in general and hopefully improve student learning outcomes. As a teacher, I will be re-energized.

### *Community Outreach Plans:*

I would be happy to share project outcomes with colleagues at a Teaching Roundtable discussion, a break-out session on Academic Development Day, and/or a submission to a publication.