



## The Faculty Luncheon Seminar Series

is a forum for sharing pedagogical insights, experiences, concerns and questions. These seminars are not workshops – no formal presentations are made. The intent is simply to promote an intellectually vibrant conversation in a relaxed, informal setting.

Seminars are held from 12:15-1:30. **A catered lunch is provided** by the Center for Teaching and Learning. Seats are limited and must be reserved in advance. R.S.V.P. via e-mail at [CTL@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:CTL@langate.gsu.edu).

This semester's schedule is as follows:

- Wed. 01/23:** Reading evaluations
- Tue. 01/29:** Academic freedom
- Thu. 02/14:** Scholarship of teaching and learning
- Thu. 02/28:** Teaching non-majors
- Tue. 03/11:** Race in the classroom
- Thu. 03/27:** The class from hell
- Wed. 04/09:** New faculty
- Tue. 04/22:** Testing

## INSIDE

- p2: Teaching Consultations Made to Order
- p3: Does Practice Make Perfect?

## When students argue about cunnilingus: Teaching as a source of interesting research topics

Mindy Stomblor, Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology

Teaching and research are often presented in opposition to one another, with teaching labeled as a perpetual distraction from research. Yet, even at the undergraduate level, teaching can actually spark ideas that develop into fruitful research agendas.

Several years ago in my Sexuality and Society class, I presented national data on typical sexual behaviors (rates of masturbation, oral sex, coitus, etc.). Upon hearing that only about half of African-American women nationwide had received oral sex, the female African-American students objected, vehemently insisting that they were "receiving a lot more than that!" I did my best to explain the discrepancy between their own experiences and the national data by reminding them that a college education is a good predictor of giving and receiving oral sex and that they were, indeed, probably receiving oral sex at a rate higher than the national average.

I thought I had ended the controversy, but before I could finish, African-American men jumped into the discussion to claim that regardless of what the data said, they did NOT give women cunnilingus. A class debate ensued, with each "side" supporting their arguments using rap, hip-hop and R & B lyrics as evidence of their position. Intrigued by what was at stake in this argument (and why each side felt it was so important to announce their practices), I began research on power relations, masculinity and the social meaning of cunnilingus.



MINDY STOMBLOR

"What I hope to glean from this analysis of lyrics ... are insights into masculinity."

CONT. ON PAGE 2

## Thoughts from the Director

### Should we require students to attend class?

Peter Lindsay, Associate Professor of Political Science and Philosophy

When I ask colleagues who require attendance why they do so, the most frequent response I get is something to the effect of, "because students need to come to class to learn the material." I confess I find this answer unsatisfactory.

First off, in many college classes it is simply false that students must come to class to learn. Where professors do little more than read aloud from the assigned texts, attendance can be a colossal waste of time, and requiring students to witness this waste of time only adds insult to injury.

CONT. ON PAGE 4

## Teaching Consultations Made to Order

Teaching consultations are shaped by the goals of the faculty member.

They may involve:

- a brief discussion, e-mail exchange or phone conversation about a particular situation in your class
- an in-depth conversation about ways to get more out of your teaching
- a class observation with feedback
- a review of your teaching evaluations

Call or e-mail Peter Lindsay at 404/413-2542 or [polpl@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:polpl@langate.gsu.edu)

## Are you doing research on teaching?

If so, would you like

- advice on which journals might be most appropriate for your work?
- feedback on your manuscript?

Call or e-mail Harry Dangel at the CTL – 404/413-2540 or [spehld@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:spehld@langate.gsu.edu)

## Teaching as a source of research

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Interestingly, the debate I observed in class is corroborated by national data. In a paper forthcoming in *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Florida State University professors Karin Brewster and Kathi Tillman found dramatic discrepancies in reporting oral sex between African-American women and men (ages 15 to 21) regarding what they gave and received, with each portraying themselves as receiving but not giving in return. Each side, in other words, conceives of sexual relations as being largely nonreciprocal. While suggestive in itself, the question that interested me was not whether – or why – this finding, mapped onto sexual reality, but whether it jibed with the evidence students were offering. Is it the case that our cultural messages reflect (and/or perpetuate) the nonreciprocal sexual relations students are reporting? Do song lyrics (like the ones my students were citing) hint at the world they see?

With assistance from my students, I have, over the past three years, collected nearly 100 songs from rap, hip-hop and R & B genres that explicitly reference cunnilingus. Students have worked hard each semester to add to the list of songs, and we've used these songs in class to both illustrate and practice content analysis. While it is a bit early to offer definitive conclusions, preliminary findings suggest that my female African-American students were more accurate about their lyrics. Rap, hip-hop and R & B lyrics overwhelmingly support men giving cunnilingus.

What I hope to glean from this analysis of lyrics about cunnilingus are insights into masculinity. Cunnilingus can be a site of sexual tension, both because it is fundamentally about pleasing women, and because its performance questions the cultural acceptability of simply "taking" sex from women. I am in the process of analyzing how male artists, for example, sing about cunnilingus and whether or not they present giving cunnilingus as something that increases their masculinity (due to sexual prowess) or diminishes it (by serving women sexually). I look forward, along with my students and a colleague from Florida State, to contributing to the literature more generally on the social meaning of cunnilingus. I have my class to thank for helping me generate the research idea, contributing to my sample, offering their analytic support and expressing excitement about this project. I have presented findings from this project at national conferences and will be submitting results for publication ("Show Me to the Subway; I'll Go Down: The social meaning of cunnilingus in rap, hip-hop and R & B.") in the near future.



## Why wait?

### Get mid-semester student feedback for your course

There are two ways to go about it:

- The Group Instructional Feedback Technique (GIFT). This nationally recognized program works as follows: A representative from the CTL visits your classroom and, in your absence, facilitates a discussion with your students about the class. The highlights of that discussion are then reported to you. It takes about 20-30 minutes.
- Download a mid-semester evaluation form from the CTL Web site (<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwctl/>). These forms can be changed as you like to fit your particular needs.

