La Antigua, Guatemala is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, renowned as the 'finest surviving example of Spanish colonial architecture.'

The cover photo shows the remains of the city's cathedral, first built in 1542 and repeatedly destroyed by earthquakes in 1583, 1600, 1717, 1773, and 1996.

This structure highlights the resilience of a determined city.
Reflections on Assessment

This year at City Tech we are engaged in two major efforts: examining general education and developing a system to assess student learning. While these may seem divergent or even antagonistic, in fact they are—or must be—closely integrated. As we talk together as a faculty about what students must know and be able to do and what values they will embrace and come to embody, we are also talking about how we will know what students know, locate where they are in the process, identify obstacles that hinder their learning, and design instruction that advances it.

Good teaching requires leaps of imagination. The professor, with expert knowledge and skills, must imagine what the novice perceives, understands, and feels. Although there may be well-defined stages or steps in learning, each novice engages the learning uniquely. Teaching is about knowing the material, knowing the students, and designing experiences to enable those students to master the material or acquire the skills. Done well, assessment can illuminate the process. Assessment is often spoken of as formative, which is done during instruction to improve the process, or summative, the final evaluation that tells us how much the student has learned and how well we have taught. Good formative assessment helps us—and in many cases, the students—to see what is happening and enables us to advance the learning. Good summative assessment points up where it might be most productive to consider making changes or improvements in our approach.

An objection that many faculty members, especially those in the humanities, raise about assessment is that the forms we have met with most frequently have often been blunt instruments—large scale tests that may rank students fairly accurately on a scale but that tell us nothing about how deep their knowledge is or how effectively they can apply their learning in practice. We can see the value of decisions that are informed by data, but we prefer not to be “data-driven.” And we regard some things, including those we value most, as unquantifiable. At an assessment conference I once attended, a strand of sessions was entitled provocatively “Assessing the Ineffable.” That remains deeply challenging.

At City Tech, we are working to learn or develop better ways to find out how and how well students are acquiring the knowledge and skills, the values and habits of mind we care most about. Assessment is a means, not an end. It is a tool, not a goal. While there are many instruments that are used to evaluate our work in other contexts—the vast CUNY testing apparatus and Performance Management Process, the licensing and certification exams our faculty and students work so hard to excel in—our own assessment of student learning looks inward. In this sense, assessment is not about numbers submitted to an outside entity, but about a process of observation and analysis that we undertake for our students and ourselves, to improve our teaching and their learning.

Bonne August, Provost
An Invitation to Explore
New Directions for Program Development

Announces a Call for PRAXIS Papers

DEADLINE
April 16, 2010

The Faculty Commons, the Grants Office, and the Ursula C. Schwerin Library are working together to expand opportunities for faculty to present their ideas for new programs, new approaches, and new thinking to address educational challenges and opportunities our community will face over the coming decade. Many path-breaking initiatives have been instituted with grant funding and the college continues to have strong grants potential. Faculty who prepare PRAXIS Papers will be well positioned to develop future grant proposals or professional fellowship applications on the theme of their papers.

INVITED TOPICS

International Education and World Languages in a Global College Community
Entrepreneurship Education in a College of Technology
English Language Learners: The 1.5 Generation
Service Learning Pedagogy and Civic Engagement
Geographic Information Systems (GIS): Implications across Disciplines

Unsolicited topics are welcome as well.

PRAXIS Papers, no more than five pages in length, are expected to include a brief problem statement, a literature search on contemporary theory and practice, an analysis of pros and cons, resource requirements, the identification of exemplary programs, a list of experts, and a bibliography.

Faculty who prepare PRAXIS Papers that are responsive to the guidelines will have an opportunity to moderate a symposium on the topic in the Faculty Commons in Fall 2010 to which they may invite identified experts and exemplary practitioners.

TIMELINE: PRAXIS Papers are due to Grants Office, April 16, 2010. Library faculty will provide limited research guidance, by appointment. A committee of deans and the provost will offer comments on the ideas presented for further development. Send papers to Barbara Burke, bburke@citytech.cuny.edu.

For more information or if you have questions, please contact bburke@citytech.cuny.edu, x5173.
Julia Jordan, Acting Director of Faculty Commons, interviews Sidi Berri, PhD, Chair of Mechanical Engineering Technology and Industrial Design Technology departments.

When Sidi Berri joined the faculty of New York City College of Technology on February 1, 2000, he envisioned the need for a baccalaureate degree in design from an engineering perspective. On February 1, 2010 his dream, shared by fellow faculty, became a reality. In Fall 2010, AAS graduates will be able to continue their education, enroll in IND courses that will lead to realizing their dream of earning a baccalaureate that matches their interest in manufacturing and design.

JJ: What is IND?

SB: For NYC subway history buffs, IND is the Independent line. But for us at City Tech, IND is the newly approved baccalaureate in Industrial Design Technology (IND). Employing a 2 + 2 structure, the BTech degree will articulate with all existing CUNY AAS programs in the following fields: mechanical engineering technology, industrial design (design drafting) technology, and civil engineering technology. CUNY students who have completed their AAS in these disciplines will benefit from the direct integration of engineering principles with industrial design concepts and advanced software capabilities.

JJ: Why is a baccalaureate degree desirable at City Tech? Why now?

SB: City Tech is the perfect home for the Industrial Design Technology baccalaureate degree. The curriculum is multidisciplinary in nature and will provide both the theory and practical application of industry-standard processes. The higher skilled industrial engineering based manufacturing jobs are in high demand. Within in the next five to ten years, much of the NYC workforce will be retiring and companies in the private and public sector will continue to look to City Tech students to provide the ‘green’ solutions to manufacturing design in the areas of robotics, construction, aero space and automotive industries. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, among others, the primary workforce problem in manufacturing is not one of shortages, but rather a skills mismatch.

JJ: What is the demand for IND baccalaureate graduates now and in the near future?
SB: Manufacturing positions that survive in an age of global competition will be fundamentally different from the low-skilled jobs of the last century. Increasingly NYC manufacturers are looking for high quality and high-end technologists. Pfizer, IBM, and places like Scott Jordan furniture at the Brooklyn Navy Yard are seeking skilled employees who are comfortable with high-tech applications. The curriculum is designed to provide students work-based opportunities to become critical thinkers and creative problem solvers.

JJ: Where else is an IND baccalaureate offered in the NYC metropolitan area?

SB: City Tech is in the unique position to corner the market’ as we are the only engineering focused baccalaureate in industrial design in the metropolitan area. The degree will provide the credentials essential to career advancement and the opportunity to enter graduate level programs in related engineering and industrial design fields.

JJ: What are the programmatic objectives?

SB: Industrial Design Technology graduates will be creative problem solvers, critical thinkers, clear and thoughtful communicators. They will be able to apply the latest technology skills related to industrial design including competencies in performing solid modeling, engineering analysis, and industrial design evaluation related to project design and manufacturing.

JJ: What would you expect of the program in five to ten years?

SB: In five to ten years City Tech will become known as the industrial design educational hub of NYC. Students who are engineering and design focused will be clamoring for a space in the program. Employers will seek out our students as interns and be so impressed that they guarantee them jobs upon graduation. Faculty will continue to support student success while exploring new ways of using project based learning that demands results that challenge old assumptions. We are positioned to guide students in finding more efficient solutions that are cost effective and use resources that conserve our environment.

JJ: Is there anything else you would like to add?

SB: My colleagues and I welcome all faculty to visit Voorhees 5th floor. Our students’ work is on display and we’d like to thank President Hotzler and Provost August for supporting the effort by providing the funds to purchase state of the art hardware and software to give our students the advantage of working in teams to creatively solve mechanical and design problems.
Traditionally, technology curricula have focused on specialization, while liberal curricula have emphasized a broad diverse education. Technology programs typically provide students with specific skills or knowledge in preparation for careers chosen in advance. Conversely, liberal education introduces students to many academic disciplines, attempting to develop an individual’s intellectual capabilities and abilities to think, communicate, and lead. This curricular bifurcation supports a society that treats technology in an instrumental fashion, and too frequently fails to discuss how the shape, organization and control of technology relate to everyday life. As our society develops new technology, it simultaneously creates new ways to mediate our relationships with people, other parts of nature, space and time, and information. We need to focus on the qualitative importance of these material changes and not simply judge technology based on technical capacities or profitability. Prioritizing liberal education in schools that focus on science and technology will enable inventors, practitioners, and consumers to better assess the significance of technological innovations.

Technology degrees tend to be the least flexible degrees. They guide their students course-by-course through a preformed curriculum focused on technical competence, with little regard for broad issues. In this way, traditional technical curricula direct student attention toward the internal operations of the technical world and not toward the context in which these technologies function. This sort of education produces students who understand how things work, but have little ability to grasp the relationship between technology and modern society. Knowing how a computer, a building, or an MRI unit operates is crucial for the people who make and manage these technologies, but cannot help them understand the larger role of these tools. To assess technology beyond its functional operations, these students need an education that addresses the social, political, cultural, and environmental settings that connect with it.

A liberal education complete with humanities, social and behavioral sciences, in addition to scientific and technical knowledge, will both give students insight into the larger issues...
that surround technology and enable students to better navigate a technical world in constant upheaval. In both practical and analytical ways, a broad education prepares students to better handle life after graduation. Liberal education provides students with problem solving and communication skills applicable to all professional situations, particularly those in a changing technological environment. More importantly, knowledge of the diverse issues surrounding technological development will enable students to become principled agents of technological change. These students will be able to recognize how new devices or techniques might alter preexisting social and cultural relationships and to judge the suitability of these changes.

In the last century two notable large-scale attempts to evaluate technology show both the importance of social critique, but also the overwhelming power that notions of progress and profitability have acquired in modern society. In the early twentieth century, engineers in the United States began to participate in progressive-era reforms meant to improve the lives of ordinary people. While most progressive reformers focused their energies on the political system, engineers tried to use technology to improve social relations. Two professional societies, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), encouraged engineers to apply scientific principles to social problems. In addition to pursuing democratic technologies and workplaces, these professional societies discussed broadening the education of engineers in order to prepare them to serve as public leaders. They self-consciously envisioned engineers as designers of both society and technology. They believed that engineering came with deep responsibilities that needed to be studied before entering the profession. Most of these reform efforts failed because they clashed with the objectives of managers who prioritized profit over social responsibility. Today, we know ASME and ASCE more for codes and technical standards that they apply to the engineering profession than for a set of core values that became a smaller part of the mission of these societies.

More recently, in the early 1970s, scientists, economists and activists joined to create the Appropriate Technology movement that questioned the impact of large-scale technological systems on community interactions. Responding to both the Cold War ethos that emphasized technological power and the energy crisis, proponents of appropriate technology encouraged small technologies that could be controlled locally and democratically. They opposed nuclear and encouraged technologies that worked in concert with natural systems. While helping to create the modern environmental movement, a host of environmental studies programs, and organizations such as the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Appropriate Technology movement ground to a halt in the early 1980s. The belief in technological progress and power all but eliminated discussions of appropriate use. In an ironic twist, environmental studies programs frequently became places where mining and lumber companies trained their employees to more effectively find and extract natural resources from the earth. Academic programs meant to improve human relationships with the rest of the natural environment helped to perpetuate the instrumental use of science and technology.

Technical specialization encourages the instrumental use of science and technology at the cost of neglecting the implications of technology for the everyday lives of the people living in modern society. As past efforts to evaluate technology in terms of social issues have shown, the notion of progress and the profit motive influence the ways most people perceive new technologies and choose to engage them. These cultural values also influence the approach to technological education that separates it from liberal education. In turn, this curricular division encourages an instrumental approach to technology that fails to question how progress, profit, and technology relate to the everyday lives of people. To educate students who can understand and critique the relationships between technology, society and nature, our schools of technology must provide students with a liberal education that helps them make sense of the political, social, and cultural ways in which technology connects with people.


Instilling a Passion for
For the past six years, Professor Tim Maldonado, Interim Dean of the School of Technology and Design and president of the NY Council of the Society of American Registered Architects, has been providing pro bono architectural design services to Medical Mission International (MMI). This Nobel Peace Prize nominated group of doctors, surgeons and volunteers has travelled yearly to El Salvador to provide medical services to those living in a remote area of the country. Since 1992, they have attended over 80,000 patients and performed approximately 2500 life-changing surgical operations. Working with MMI’s founder, Dr. Roberto Araujo and philanthropist David King, Professor Maldonado has been involved in creating a surgical center, with accompanying housing, a school, workshops, and support facilities on a 40 acre site in Jucuapa, El Salvador.

Incorporating this project into two of his design classes, Professor Maldonado inspired his students to create exciting hospital design proposals for El Salvador. This student project resulted in a CUNY/TV documentary in which City Tech student, William Valdez, and his classmates traced their experience as student designers for this extraordinary project. Six years after its inception, Professor Maldonado and City Tech architectural technology students continue their involvement with its work.
BB: What was the reason for your recent trip to La Antigua, Guatemala?

TM: MMI owns 40 acres of land surrounding the surgical center and plans to use green technology to build a complex that will include housing for visiting doctors, guest facilities, a school, and training facilities for the local population to learn new skills. Dr. Roberto Araujo, Medical Mission International’s lead physician, is guiding the expansion. Dr. Araujo witnessed the devastation of Jucuapa, his native town, and sees in his imagination a town reclaimed from natural and human devastation to become a jewel of community development and historic preservation. He envisions not only a medical facility but a means to rekindle the rebirth of Jucuapa as a region with much to offer visitors—coffee plantations that many believe produce the finest coffee in Central America, horseback riding facilities, and scenic beaches only an hour away.

To help me understand his vision, Dr. Araujo recently invited me to accompany him to La Antigua, Guatemala, a city that was devastated by volcanic eruptions but has been brought back to life in a way that retains its distinctive character while responding to contemporary needs. La Antigua is again the pride of Guatemala; it was declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO and receives thousands of tourists per year. Dr. Araujo and I toured numerous sites to find ideas and inspiration for the project in Jucuapa.

BB: Does the studio environment that prevails in most architecture programs lend itself to community engagement?

TM: It should but it doesn’t always. It takes the commitment of instructors willing to take on the challenging demands of a real-life situation. For example, some years back, I was asked by the mayor of the incorporated village of Greenwood Lake (NJ) to give suggestions as to how an abandoned four-acre parking lot could be utilized to enhance the existing waterfront. This led to a two-year involvement by our Architectural Technology students in various design and site planning classes to produce design proposals. One of them, a combination of several design ideas explored by our students, was actually built, completely revitalizing this waterfront town. It’s become quite a popular spot.
work. When MetroTech in Downtown Brooklyn was being built, a dozen students were hired by the MetroTech Business Improvement District to build a giant model to show merchants options for transforming their neighborhood. One building façade was actually built following our student’s design. As the potential for having students become involved in projects has become more widely known, numerous requests come to our department to have students participate.

Another instance—on September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center collapsed, a Greek Orthodox church adjacent to the towers was destroyed. Our students took up the challenge of redesigning a church that would replace it. The New York Times wrote a major article with photos depicting how a profound tragedy generated an opportunity for rebirth.

The example that I’m perhaps proudest of occurred in 1988 with the designation of Tudor City, across the street from the United Nations, as a historic district by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, thereby preventing the destruction of two beautiful parks that are the focal point of that community. Under my guidance, students prepared models, drawings, and photographs documenting this gem in midtown Manhattan; these depictions were an important part of the landmarking presentation at City Hall. Student involvement continues to this day as shadow studies prepared by our students resulted in a substantial 20-story height reduction of new buildings proposed adjacent to the UN and adjacent streets.

BB: Anything else you’d like to say?

TM: Ultimately, there is a connecting thread between the projects in El Salvador, Greenwood Lake, Tudor City, MetroTech, and the 9/11 memorial church. The essence of these projects generates a strong design passion which could never be duplicated in an academic exercise. The challenges can never be surpassed. Sometimes I’m asked, “What is the most exciting project you’ve worked on?” My answer—“The next one!”

BB: How important is the community engagement aspect of the curriculum of the Architectural Technology Department? Do students receive academic credit for such projects?

TM: These projects are incorporated into the curriculum whenever feasible and become one more project that students are assigned. The success of real-world applications is evident in the fact that our students have won major design awards and their work has been featured in newspapers and magazines.

BB: What can students extrapolate from their community experiences that will help them professionally later on?

TM: In the process of designing projects, students come into contact with the end users—the mayor of Greenwood Lake, Medical Mission International philanthropists, and community leaders who are involved in redesigning neighborhoods. They learn to deal with actual clients and frequently end up being hired by them to continue their work. When MetroTech in Downtown Brooklyn was being built, a dozen students were hired by the MetroTech Business Improvement District to build a giant model to show merchants options for transforming their neighborhood. One building façade was actually built following our student’s design. As the potential for having students become involved in projects has become more widely known, numerous requests come to our department to have students participate.

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Over the past decade, mounting demands on educators for accountability have increased interest in the assessment of student learning. Institutions at all educational levels, City Tech included, are required to provide evidence that students are actually learning what educators claim they are teaching. In response, regional accreditation agencies, including the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and many professional accreditation agencies, are also placing a higher priority on assessment. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), in particular, is increasingly holding its institutions accountable for achieving student learning outcomes. The ability for institutions to offer student financial aid (from federal sources) depends on their ability to remain accredited. In part, this requires that the institution demonstrates that it has an active assessment process that continuously examines the services and programs and leads to improvement. According to Middle States:

“While some on a college campus may feel that it is sufficient to say that faculty teach well and administer exams to measure how well students are learning, this is not what we (MSCHE) mean by student outcomes assessment. A useful assessment process helps faculty and staff make appropriate decisions about improving programs and services, developing goals and plans, and making resource allocations. Because institutions, their students, and their environments are continually evolving, effective assessments cannot be static; they must be reviewed periodically and adapted in order to remain useful.”

In response to the MSCHE standards, City Tech has developed strategic goals and initiatives that demand a focus on operational excellence and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). In particular, a commitment to CQI requires a shared devotion to quality that surpasses personal and short-term concerns. The goal of assessment at City Tech is improved student learning that occurs within a culture of CQI. Just as excellent businesses must carefully measure the quality of their outputs, so should excellent schools. Our “output” at City Tech is not simply teaching; it is, in fact, student learning. This trend is gaining momentum–demands for assessment are here, and are not expected to disappear any time soon.

In establishing this culture of assessment for learning, the City Tech assessment team traveled to Tempe, Arizona to participate in an assessment workshop with other assessment specialists.

**TC:** What was the most important aspect you took from the workshop that can be applied to City Tech?

**RT:** The most important aspect that I took from the workshop is that I was able to talk and discuss with other assessment specialists from other institutions about our assessment plans.
I feel it is helpful to see what other institutions are doing in their assessment plans and that we can all learn from each other.

**TC: How can you help faculty understand when/if they should use rubrics?**

**RT:** When faculty members select a paper, presentation, or project as a method to assess student learning, I would suggest they use a rubric to measure student learning. A rubric is an assessment tool which contains a set of criteria that is developed by faculty for evaluating student work. AIR will be conducting Rubric Development workshops from March 16th through 18th. These workshops will help faculty have a better understanding of rubrics and rubric development.

**TC: Is it important to have a clearly defined assessment cycle?**

**RT:** I believe it is critical to have a clearly defined assessment cycle because assessment is an ongoing process. In order to establish a culture of assessment for learning for continuous quality improvement, many departments at City Tech have outlined their assessment cycle. As indicated by Middle States, “Assessment may be characterized as the third element of a four-step planning-assessment cycle:

1. Defining clearly articulated institutional and unit-level goals;
2. Implementing strategies to achieve those goals;
3. Assessing achievement of those goals; and
4. Using the results of those assessments to improve programs and services and inform planning and resource allocation decisions.”

With that said, I believe there should be an assessment timeline as to when various assessment activities (planning, assessing, collecting data, evaluating results to improve or enhance student learning) will take place. A clearly defined assessment cycle will help promote continuous improvement which will consequently improve student learning.

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**ASSESSMENT CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

Be the first to correctly complete the puzzle and win a pizza party for your department.

**Across:**

1. Abbreviation for the regional accreditation governance for City Tech.
4. After data are collected, faculty discuss assessment results, reach conclusions about their meaning, determine implications for change, and implement action to improve student learning.
7. The office at City Tech that can support you with your assessment responsibilities.
8. Findings are summarized with a number that indicates the extent of learning.

**Down:**

2. A voluntary process involving an association of schools and colleges to encourage high standards of education.
3. Abbreviation for the movement that brings collective responsibility for learning, preference for data driven decision making, and an ethic of continuous improvement.
5. Findings that are verbal descriptions of what was discovered, rather than numerical findings.
6. Statements that specify what students should be able to do at various stages of their educational development.
9. Systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.

**CONTEST RULES:** The first correct crossword puzzle submitted to Namm 227 or via electronic email at AIR@citytech.cuny.edu, will be considered the winning entry.
Under the auspices of the Mexican Consulate in New York City and CUNY Central, an innovative pilot project has been designed to prepare Mexican nationals for careers in the hospitality industry in the metropolitan New York region. Initial discussion of the project began in a CUNY-wide taskforce intended to facilitate entry of Mexicans living in New York into CUNY programs. The inspiration for the project grew out of widespread recognition that Mexican nationals constitute a significant portion of the restaurant and hotel workers in New York but are frequently limited by lack of training and English language and math skills from moving up within the industry to better-paying jobs with a prospect of upward mobility.

To achieve these ends, Chuck Hoffman, Director of Workforce Development and Joan Manes, Director of English Language Learning of City Tech’s Division of Continuing Education have recruited, selected, and enrolled students of Mexican heritage in an intensive one-semester program to prepare them for immediate entry into the industry. Dr. Manes explained that students may then follow one of several paths: some may choose to enter associate or baccalaureate programs in hospitality management at City Tech, while all who complete the program successfully will earn Certificates of Occupational Competence from the Mexican Ministry of Education and Recreation, and all will receive a certificate of completion from City Tech.
The initial proposal generated much energy and enthusiasm, culminating in the formal agreement to create the program, signed by CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and by Alonso José Ricardo Lujambio Irazábal, Minister of Public Education of Mexico, as part of a gathering that brought together many dignitaries from the New York Mexican community and officials of CUNY. In the agreement, the Mexican government provided $100,000 in funding to launch the program.

The lead faculty member is Professor Patrick O’Halloran, who teaches Introduction to Hospitality Management. Students also receive English language instruction from Professor Doug Montgomery and mathematics instruction from Professor Anna Zetlin. The English and mathematics instruction is contextualized within the field of hospitality and supportive of the Introduction to Hospitality Management course. While the program does not carry academic credits, students who eventually enter the Hospitality Management program will earn three life credits, which will exempt them from the introductory course if they enroll.

The Mexican Consulate helped to recruit applicants through a range of community-based cultural organizations and industry groups. One hundred applications were received, 32 participants were ultimately selected, and 30 enrolled. Selection criteria included a high school diploma earned either here or in Mexico, performance on the BEST-Plus English test, a writing sample, a mathematics test, and a group interview. All participants must have had some work experience in the hospitality industry.

Joan Manes and Chuck Hoffman are gratified by participants’ enthusiastic participation. “I’ve never seen a more motivated and engaged group of students,” Mr. Hoffman says. What lies ahead for these students? The Division of Continuing Education plans to follow-up on career placement, college admission, and other indicators of program success.

Dr. Stephen Soiffer, Special Assistant to President Russell Hotzler, was instrumental in the program’s creation and is actively engaged in finding funding to sustain what is clearly a very successful initiative.
Sonja Jackson, PDAC Chair
Dean of Curriculum and Instruction

Faculty members come to City Tech with a tremendous desire to share their intellectual talents and interests with the students they teach. The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) provides funds to help our faculty attend seminars and present papers at national and international academic conferences. Abstracts of conference presentations on themes of identity and belonging by colleagues Lisa Pope Fischer and Benjamin Shepard are presented below. Our City Tech students are the benefactors of faculty engagement and professional expertise gained from these scholarly activities.

Lisa Pope Fischer, PhD
Social Science

Fragmented Publics: Identity, Time, and Spatial Locations of Mothers Left Behind

American Anthropology Association Conference 2009
The End/s of Anthropology

Abstract

As our globalized world creates elastic boundaries, as familial bonds extend across continents, Anthropology can become a liminal threshold to create textured understandings of space and time as they connect to power, memory and identity. In 1993 I began going to Hungary forming connections with people defying fragmented boundaries. I befriended a group of Hungarian immigrants in Los Angeles. Some staying illegally with long expired tourists visas feared that going home to Hungary would prevent their return to America. With each trip I made back to Hungary they would fill my suitcases with seemingly simple gifts of “American” chocolate, coffee, and handwritten notes for their parents—in most cases this meant widowed senior women. As Hungarian hospitality is key, a quick stop to drop off gifts was not possible—I had to sit, eat, and talk with these elderly women who often lived alone. I began to realize that these gifts were not simply forms of reciprocity between my US research group and me, but rather that I had become a human conduit that stretched a human bond between emigrant child and mother. On my return to the US, Hungarian mothers would ask me to bring gifts for their children—“Hungarian” chocolate, simple foods not found in the US, a Hungarian crossword magazine. This paper explores textured meanings of time and space as we engage in fieldwork communities that live in new forms of social and economic interactions. How does one understand the experience of senior women left behind in terms of gender, memory and identity?
Benjamin Shepard, PhD
Human Services

Bridging the Praxis Divide between Queer Theory, Activism, and Social Change Work

Association for Humanist Sociology 2009 Meeting
Doing Change Work: The Many Paths to Peace, Equality, and Justice

ABSTRACT
Queers have always known that pleasure is a resource. They have also helped demonstrate there are countless ways of building family and community outside of conventional patriarchal family structures. Queers have a long history of building space with alternate uses for pleasure, play, and democratic possibility.

There has to be more to life than work and necessity; hence the imperative of play explained Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*. “[P]lay must be defined as a free voluntary activity,” Roger Callois writes. “A game which one would be forced to play would at once cease being play... One plays only if and when one wishes to. In this sense, play is free activity.”

In the hands of queers play addressed a range of challenges. “ACT UP made engagement possible for many who were not comfortable with the typical protest aesthetics. They did this by queering activist heroism and machismo, with a jigger of play,” explains ACT UP veteran and queer theorist Douglas Crimp. Faced with a public health panic, play helped connect queers with a politics of freedom and pleasure. Linked with aesthetic and organizing projects, play becomes an arena in which to explore alternate social and cultural possibilities as well as engaged activist practices.

Much of the struggle for a queer public commons involves an anti-capitalist, often ludic sensibility. This sensibility is generally under-theorized. Instead, queer theory faces a praxis divide separating theory from practice. This paper explores the history of queer theory and a growing disconnect from a gay liberation activist project. As a means to connect theory and practice, the paper explores historically informed examples of current queer activist practice. The examples highlight the discursive links between anarchism with AIDS politics, environmental campaigns and global justice activism. The paper concludes with a call for a renewed engagement between social theory and queer activist social knowledge. It calls for new models of queer activist praxis that bridges the divide between theory and practice.
3/2  Developing Online Faculty Surveys
2:30pm – 4:00pm
RSVP: AIR@citytech.cuny.edu

3/3  Plagiarism Workshop (Library /WAC)
1:00pm – 2:00pm
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

3/3  Pedagogy & Practice Workshop:
Shifting from Answers to Questions
10:00am – 11:30am
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

3/4  Library Using ILLiad for InterLibrary Loan
4:00pm – 5:00pm
RSVP: Msmale@citytech.cuny.edu

3/12  4th Annual City Tech Research Conference
Questions: Dkahrobaei@citytech.cuny.edu

3/16  AIR: Developing Rubrics (Professional Studies faculty)
11:00am – 12:30pm OR 3:00pm – 4:30pm
RSVP: AIR@citytech.cuny.edu

3/17  AIR: Developing Rubrics (Arts and Sciences faculty)
11:00am – 12:30pm OR 1:30pm – 3:00pm

3/18  AIR: Developing Rubrics (Technology and Design faculty)
11:00am – 12:30pm OR 3:00pm – 4:30pm
RSVP: AIR@citytech.cuny.edu

3/22  Grants Workshop (TBA)
2:00pm – 3:30pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

3/23  WAC Workshop: Scaffolding Assignments
1:00pm – 2:00pm
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

3/22  Grants Workshop (TBA)
2:00pm – 3:30pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

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3/23  WAC Workshop: Scaffolding Assignments
1:00pm – 2:00pm
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

3/22  4th Annual City Tech Research Conference
Questions: Dkahrobaei@citytech.cuny.edu

3/23  WAC Workshop: Scaffolding Assignments
1:00pm – 2:00pm
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3/24  Grants Workshop (TBA)
2:00pm – 3:30pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

3/24  Grants Workshop (TBA)
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RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

4/7  WAC Workshop (TBA)
1:00pm -2:00pm
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

4/7  WAC Workshop (TBA)
1:00pm -2:00pm
RSVP: facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu

4/13  Grants Workshop (TBA)
2:30pm – 4:00pm
RSVP: ebergonzo@citytech.cuny.edu

5/7  6th Annual CUNY General Education Conference:
Different Disciplines, Common Goals
Register: www.kbcc.cuny.edu/CUNYGenEdConference/

Especially for New Faculty -- Summer Institute of Teaching and Learning-- A632  9:00am – 4:00pm
Dr. Estela Rojas, Summer Institute and FYLC Workshop Leader
Tuesday, May 25, Wednesday, May 26, and Thursday, May 27, 2010

Contact us at extension 5225 • facultycommons@citytech.cuny.edu • http://facultycommons.citytech.cuny.edu/