

## Creativity in the Classroom: Strategies for Engaging Undergraduates

The role of graduate students at universities is multifarious; in addition to their roles as students and researchers, graduate students also frequently serve as teaching assistants and instructors, a growing group of educators now essential to the operations of higher education. However, while they undergo rigorous academic instruction throughout graduate school, few graduate students ever receive formal pedagogical training. Moreover, if it is available, training is often offered by university organizations without departmental affiliation that—although helpful generally—cannot provide the specificity needed to conduct a course successfully. For this reason, graduate students in Classics are left to figure out on their own—or, in some cases, with the aid of a faculty mentor and/or a senior graduate student—how to structure courses, create assignments, evaluate students, and teach effectively. Shrinking enrollments in the humanities only compound the need for better-equipped graduate student teachers. As departments across the country pursue ways of increasing enrollments and growing the number of majors and minors, graduate students who have been prepared for the classroom can play an important part in this effort.

This workshop is intended to help address this need. At last year's CAMWS meeting, a workshop entitled "Intersectionality in the Classroom: Inclusive Teaching Strategies" sought to empower teachers of all experience levels to develop Classics courses that were inclusive of students from all backgrounds. The focus of this workshop will be creativity (i.e., strategies for developing Classics courses that engage and excite undergraduates).

The workshop will be led by a current graduate student and a former professor, who is known for her remarkable ability to inspire in her students—regardless of their major—a passion for the ancient world by presenting course content in inventive ways. Through a course which

incorporated popular culture, unusual projects (e.g., a chicken mummification), surprise activities (e.g., an on-campus scavenger hunt), and role-playing games (i.e., “Reacting to the Past”), this instructor was able to recruit many new Classics majors and minors at a small liberal arts institution. As the presenter, this instructor will speak of many years of experience in the classroom and the strategies employed to present the content of a Classics course in new ways.

After the presentation and a short Q&A session, the presenter will divide those in attendance into small groups where they will work through a list of provided questions and discuss the way in which they can make their current and future courses more engaging. To end the workshop, the presenter will gather everyone together again and moderate a larger discussion in which the different groups can share their thoughts with everyone else.

Ultimately, the purpose of this workshop is not to propose a simple solution to declining enrollments in the humanities, but to foster pedagogical creativity and place teachers in conversation with one another. We hope that this workshop will inspire teachers—graduate students and faculty alike—to design courses that engage undergraduates in creative ways and that spark an interest in Classics.