



# Teaching Concerns

Newsletter of the Teaching Resource Center for Faculty and Teaching Assistants

Hotel D, 24 East Range (804) 982-2815 trc-uva@virginia.edu <http://www.virginia.edu/~trc/>

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## Career and Course Development, Side by Side

The University Teaching Fellows Program centers around ongoing conversations about how faculty communicate their academic disciplines to undergraduates, the applicability of various teaching approaches to one's courses, and how research enlivens and inspires teaching. The 1999-2000 winners of University Teaching Fellowships plan to focus their conversations in the following ways:

### *Susan E. Burns, Civil Engineering:*

I will make three significant changes to the way Soil Mechanics is taught. First, I will integrate the history of the discipline through a description of the major historical personalities involved, and their motivations for research and technology development. Second, I will include failure case studies as learning assignments for the students. In engineering, especially when dealing with materials that are as variable and complicated as soils, failure can teach as much as success. Third, I will integrate into lectures a series of experimental demonstrations, using them as "change-ups" to refocus attention (see *Teaching Concerns*, Fall 1997 on "change-ups").

### *Jeffrey A. Grossman, German:*

This course will explore the transmission of literary and other texts, that is, the process by which texts move from one cultural and historical context to another. The course will consist of two parts: The first part will explore how culture, poetics, ideology, and other factors influence the *reading* of literary texts. The second part will explore the role of translations, book reviews, criticism, literary histories, anthologies, films, theater performances, and so forth, in shaping the image of particular texts for particular audiences. The course will also consider the role of the instructor in this process. In designing this course, I plan to develop a series of practical exercises that provide first-hand knowledge of and tools for analyzing this process.

### *Andrew C. Hillier, Chemical Engineering:*

My redesign of a core fourth-year engineering course in chemical process control (ChE 438) addresses student

motivation, develops practical problem-solving skills, and encourages an intuitive understanding of complex chemical processes. This traditionally math- and lecture-intensive course will be redesigned to incorporate a "simulation-based" strategy. The class will utilize instructor and student-constructed process simulators as instructional vehicles that function as virtual chemical processes. This strategy will give the students an ability to develop an intuitive understanding of process modeling and control by starting with simple "black-box" processing operations that evolve into complex process models as students' theoretical understanding of the underlying systems increases. To integrate topics with practical chemical engineering processes, the course will include the development of laboratory modules and include guest speakers from industry.

### *Angeline Lillard, Psychology:*

Operating on the assumption that culture is inextricable from the person, my course will explore the impact of cultural practices on individual development. We will examine issues of universality and cultural variation in human development through intensive examination of several cultures. Students will observe and interact with local families that represent specific cultures. Throughout the semester, students will describe and analyze how the culture they are studying handles common issues such as childrearing. Students will also attempt to devise reliable, objective measures that indicate certain cultural values or traits.

### *John O'Brien, English:*

My project is to revise and develop ENEC 313, Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature. The Teaching Fellowship will enable me to rethink this course within two contexts that have changed a lot over the last few years: first, the English Department's curriculum; and second, the embrace on the part of the whole discipline of a broader range of voices and texts, an expanded canon that makes the problem of surveying any historical period all the more vexing. My goal will be to develop a course that meets the needs both of English majors and non-majors interested in this period.