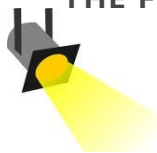




# Origins

THE FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



## Instructor Spotlight:

### Laura Durnell

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In my Focal Point class on the American confessional poet Anne Sexton, students learn about more than simile, metaphor, and rhyme scheme. They ultimately see that Sexton used those devices to reveal the shadow behind the 1950s suburban housewife. Most importantly, students learn how history, social, and cultural factors outside Sexton's control created "Anne Sexton" and how they can share their own voice with the world no matter their academic and career focus.

Throughout the ten weeks, students are required to read Diane Wood Middlebrook's *Anne Sexton: A Biography* along with Sexton's poetry and prose. They also read scholarly essays on Sexton, psychology, religion, motherhood, parenting, suicide, physical and sexual abuse, sociology, and women's history. In addition, students read a chapter from Linda Gray Sexton's memoir *Searching for Mercy Street* to learn from a primary source about the abuse Linda endured from her mother.

Along with readings on women's history and psychology, students view several hygiene films, advertisements, and the movie *Mona Lisa Smiles*. Midway through the quarter, students better understand "the



problem that has no name" that Betty Friedan addressed in *The Feminine Mystique* and how artistic expression encouraged by Sexton's Freudian psychiatrist saved her (temporarily) from suicide.

Recently, I have been requiring students use D2L's Discussion Board to complete a "JITT" (Just in Time Teaching) response based on the day's assigned readings. Here students form mini-arguments complete with

citations. In 2012, I completed DePaul's Teaching and Learning Certificate Program, and one of the most fruitful seminars I attended was led by DePaul Physics professor Jesus Pando who utilizes JITT responses for his physics classes. Since assigning JITT responses, I have found steady improvement in my students' critical thinking and writing. JITTs also guarantee that the students have completed the readings.

The class concludes with students' "Artistic and/or Scholarly Presentations." Past students have presented work that analyzes a person from world history or current events who also used personal expression to achieve his or her goals. Artist Tony Fitzpatrick and a student's own grandfather have been some subjects. And for students who have chosen the artistic route, some have shared their own poems, paintings, and videos. It is my hope that students learn and embrace that like Sexton they too have a voice and should not be afraid to share it with the world no matter the personal circumstances.

—Laura Durnell

Contingent Faculty/Part-Time Instructor  
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## From the Director

We are now at the transition between Winter and Spring Quarters, always a busy time for faculty as we grade one quarter and plan for another ... and try to find at least 15 minutes to count as "Spring Break."

It's the time of year to encourage your FYP students from the past year to enter their best written work in the 2015 First-Year Writing Showcase, which will take place from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20, in Cortelyou Commons. Student work from FYP classes in Spring Quarter 2014, Autumn Quarter 2014, and Winter Quarter 2015 is eligible, in the categories of essays (including narrative, analytical, reflective, critical, researched, etc.), Digication portfolios, digital projects, and reports and interviews from field work. I recommend adding separate emails to the students who produced the best writing in the class. They'll be honored to get your email and it's always good to see the best writing recognized.

### Important Dates!

- ◆ Friday, May 8, 10:30-noon: Spring Quarter Focal Point Seminar Faculty Chat, location TBD
- ◆ Wednesday, May 20, 6:00-8:00 p.m.: First-Year Programs Writing Showcase, Cortelyou Commons
- ◆ Friday, May 29, Chicago Quarter Best Practices, Lincoln Park Student Center

The students should register via this web page; they will be contacted about submitting their entries.

[condor.depaul.edu/writing/writers/fywshowcase.html](http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/writers/fywshowcase.html)

I encourage you to attend the Teaching Commons workshop "Exploring Chicago and the World: Bringing Course Concepts to Life with Place-Conscious Learning," which will take place April 9 (Loop Campus) and April 10 (Lincoln Park Campus). It will be led by Discover Chicago instructor Jason Martin, College of Communication, and Patrick J. Murphy, Driehaus College of Business.

From the TLA announcement: "This workshop will introduce you to approaches, tools, services, and various university resources you can use to make Chicago and even the larger world part of your classroom." This will be of special interest to Chicago Quarter faculty, but all DePaul faculty are invited to attend. It is free and lunch is included. To register, use one of these links:

[Thursday, April 9 | Loop Campus | 12-2 PM](#)

[Friday, April 10 | Lincoln Park Campus | 12-2 PM](#)

Spring Focal Point faculty: Just a reminder to include the Learning Outcomes in your syllabus and review with the students, both at the beginning and end of the quarter, how your section fulfills them and prepares them for later classes including the next step of the Liberal Studies spine: the Sophomore Seminar in Multiculturalism. Thanks.

—Doug Long