



Origins

THE FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Instructor Spotlight: Bro. Mark Elder

There is no question in my mind as to the necessity of every neighborhood having access to its own visual voice. As a muralist who makes public art for communities, I have seen first-hand how the dynamic of a community finding its “common ground,” and making art from it, is a very fulfilling prospect, especially in the minds and hearts of young people.

I very much enjoy teaching in the First Year Program. Both my Discover Chicago class (Chicago Public Art and Murals) and my Focal Point Seminar (Artistic Influences of the Great Mural Painters) explore very deeply how neighborhoods can feel very strongly about the narrative art that decorates their agenda. It is safe to say that my Discover class sees this aspect intimately. They see neighborhood murals first-hand, as well as the effect they have on the people.

What’s even more important to me, as the students in both classes see this art, is their understanding of issues behind the art, that grows as much as their appreciation of the art.



Bro. Mark Elder with Amelia Lantz, a prime mover from his Spring 2013 ART 291 class, which created this mural, Viam Sapientiae in Munroe Hall. According to Bro. Mark, the mural “is pretty much what older DePaul students want to visually say to first-year DePaul students as they come in, giving them a map of the landscape that is DePaul.”

Even more so, the understanding of the key philosophical rationales for the art we see is essential for a student to appreciate all art in all of its forms.

Knowing why Plato would detest *The Statue of Liberty*, and why Aristotle (his student) would love it, says a lot about the student’s capability of supporting all art. It is one of the things a student can build an informed opinion about, and then find resources to defend that opinion in the various assignments that I have in both classes.

So I have a great time showing students that a painting isn’t always just a painting, and a mural is a lot more than just a wall ... it’s an experience!

—Bro. Mark Elder, cm
Lecturer

Dept. of Art, Media & Design

From the Director

CHICAGO QUARTER INSTRUCTORS: The annual Chicago Quarter Best Practices conference is coming up soon: Friday, May 30, in the LPC Student Center. Arrive at 9:15 a.m. to register in Room 120. This year’s conference marks the return of break-out sessions and we’ve got some good ones, including two different approaches to reflection assignments, advice about what to expect from freshman behavior, tips on stretching your Chicago Quarter budget, demonstrations of mobile learning to use on your excursions, and a panel on “What I Learned My First Year” (teaching Chicago Quarter). Lunch is provided and we’ll even have a raffle. If you haven’t RSVP’d yet, please email Maria Hernandez (mhernand@depaul.edu) ASAP. See you there!

CHICAGO QUARTER INSTRUCTORS: Just a reminder: All CQ classes, INCLUDING EXPLORE CHICAGO, will have Staff Professionals this fall. As soon as you receive final confirmation of your team, please call a meeting with them. You’re the team leader and should initiate a discussion of your academic content and their Common Hour content and how you will collaborate on syllabus planning and Welcome Letter writing.

Special thanks to Chicago Quarter instructors Leah Bryant, Mike Edwards, Melissa Markley, Mark Pohlad, Matt Ragas, and Adam Steele, who led the discussions at DePaul’s “On the Table” event May 12 in the LPC Student Center. This was part of the city-wide program sponsored by the Chicago Community Trust to get people talking about how to improve the city. DePaul’s event was co-organized by the President’s Office and the First-Year Program. Approximately 30 students participated.

The annual First-Year Programs Writing Showcase was a grand success again. Held in Cortelyou Commons on May 21, the Showcase featured seven essays created in Focal Point Seminars. Congratulations to the faculty of these classes.

FOCAL POINT SEMINAR INSTRUCTORS: Please ask your students to complete the Online Teaching Evaluations. As you know, the response rates have been meager university-wide, but the assessment feedback is useful and should be encouraged.

—Doug Long

Important Dates!

- Friday, May 30: Chicago Quarter Best Practices, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Student Center 120. Check-in at 9:15.
- Thursday, Aug. 28: Pre-immersion Week Meeting (Discover Chicago), 10:00 a.m.-noon, SAC 154
- Immersion Week (Discover Chicago): Sept. 2-5 (Tuesday-Friday) and Sept. 8 (Monday)
- Tuesday, Sept. 9: New Student Service Day
- Tuesday, Sept. 9: Great Starts Meeting (Explore Chicago), 3:00-5:00 p.m.