

Faculty Notes



Chrysanthe Demetry

Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Chrys has been Co-Director of the Professional Writing Program since 2003, continuing our longstanding tradition of embodying the interdisciplinary character of the program by having one co-director from science or engineering and the other from writing and rhetoric. Chrys has been actively involved in strategic planning and advising Professional Writing MQPs. She was recently appointed director of the Center for Educational Development and Assessment and continues to co-direct Camp Reach, WPI's award-winning summer residential program for girls in Massachusetts who are entering 7th grade and who are interested in learning more about careers in engineering and technology. Chrys has been a frequent advisor in the Global Perspective Program and is co-director of the Bangkok Project Center. Her current research is focused on the effectiveness of technology-assisted formative assessment in the classroom, and the use of informal writing assignments to probe student conceptions of materials science fundamentals.



Lorraine Higgins

An Associate Professor of Rhetoric in the Humanities and Arts Department, Lorraine teaches rhetoric, writing, and literature. Lorraine is the most recent addition to the Professional Writing core faculty, coming to WPI in 2003 from the University of Pittsburgh. She brings a new dimension to the program from her experience directing the groundbreaking Community Literacy Center, a community/university collaborative of Pittsburgh's 80-year-old Community House and the Center for the Study of Writing at Carnegie Mellon University. Her strengths in medical communication and writing in the public interest fit well with two of the main areas of concentration the Professional Writing program has identified. Lorraine directs the Center for Communication Across the Curriculum where she oversees the work of peer writing tutors and designs workshops on writing instruction for faculty. Her scholarly interests and publications focus on the pedagogy of writing, community literacy programs, and deliberative rhetoric in the public sphere.



Scott Runstrom

An Adjunct Instructor of Writing, Scott has been teaching professional writing at WPI since 2000. Scott has over 15 years experience in the technical communications industry, and is currently employed full time as a Principal Technical Writer at Computer Associates in Framingham. Scott graduated from WPI in 1992 with a B.S. in Technical Writing, and received an M.S. in Professional Communications from Clark University. Scott has received several Society for Technical Communication (STC) awards for work he has written, including two "Awards of Excellence" in 2004 for an online help system and a technical manual he wrote at Applied Biosystems. His current research interests include information design, digital media and online communication, and usability testing.

Ruth Smith

As Associate Professor of Religious Studies in the Humanities and Arts Department, Ruth has been part of the core faculty in the Professional Writing program since the early 1990s. She teaches rhetorical theory, advises Professional Writing MQPs, and contributes to the continuing development of curriculum, especially in the area of visual rhetoric. Her participation in the Professional Writing program comes from a background in linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy of language, as well as experience teaching writing and English as a Second Language at Berea College. Her varied academic experience helps support the commitments to interdisciplinary studies that have long informed WPI and the Professional Writing program. Currently her research involves questions about cultural-philosophical assumptions implicit in modern language formations, including the emergence of English as a political-moral discourse in the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, the discourse of sacrifice in post-reformation religions, and of figurative notions of representation.

**J**ohn Trimbur

As Professor of Writing and Rhetoric in the Humanities and Arts Department, John has been Co-Director of Professional Writing since the program's inception. He teaches courses on writing about medicine and public health, print and digital literacy, and the rhetoric of visual design, as well as advising many of the Professional Writing MQPs. Over the past five years, he has been going to South Africa to do research on the politics of language and to work with community activists involved in educating local villages in the Northern Cape about asbestos and asbestos-related disease and organizing support for the compensation of asbestos sufferers and the rehabilitation of asbestos mines and dumps. He has been a visiting professor at the Centre for Rhetoric Studies and at the Centre for Higher Education Development at the University of Cape Town. John has won a number of awards for outstanding articles on writing theory, including the James L. Kinneavy Award in 2001 (for "Agency and the Death of the Author: A Partial Defense of Modernism") and the Richard Braddock Award in 2003 (for "English Only and US College Composition").

