



# Center for Teaching and Learning Newsletter

Vol. 15, No 8

April 2010

## Dates to Note!!

**Monday, May 17**  
Faculty Writing Retreat  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Library 150

**Tuesday, May 18**  
*Planning a Syllabus*  
9 a.m. to noon  
Library 110

**Tuesday, May 18**  
*Designing Assignments*  
1 to 3 p.m.  
Library 110

**Wednesday, May 19**  
*Creating a Wiki for Your Class*  
10 a.m. to noon  
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**Wednesday, May 19**  
*Using CampusGuides Software for Teaching*  
1 to 3 p.m.  
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**Thursday, May 20**  
*Creating a Website for Your Class with Google Sites*  
10 a.m. to noon  
Library 110

**Thursday, May 20**  
*Using MovieMaker Software to Edit Videos*  
1 to 3 p.m.  
Library 110

To **RSVP** phone us at ext. **1859** or email us at **CTL@stjohns.edu**.

## CTL April Newsletter

The *CTL Newsletter* is distributed electronically every month during the academic year.

Highlights from our April issue include:

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### Faculty News

If you would like to send an entry to "Faculty News," the deadline for the May issue is **May 3**. We prefer that you email the information to [CTL@stjohns.edu](mailto:CTL@stjohns.edu). Please have your entries follow the style presented in "Faculty News."

### Remember:

The best places to look for faculty-related information are the [CTL Webpage](#) and the [CTL Teaching and Learning Forum](#).

## Building Slowly

Maura C. Flannery (College of Professional Studies, [flannerm@stjohns.edu](mailto:flannerm@stjohns.edu))

The end of the semester can sometimes be a discouraging time. We're tired, and so are our students. Some activities we planned for the semester didn't go as well as we had wanted, or we just never got around to them. There are always things we would do differently. But that's the beauty of teaching—it's like baseball—there's always next year. Being a Mets fan, I am very familiar with this idea, and so in terms of teaching, I'm already thinking about the fall. I would like to do more work on case studies, use Web resources more effectively, and follow the guidelines Ken Bain presented in his talk at the University in February, that is, use approaches that grip the students' imaginations.

This is a pretty tall order and an article in the March-April 2010 issue of *Change Magazine* suggests that being too ambitious and precipitous are not ways to produce solid improvement in student learning. In "[Why Magic Bullets Don't Work](#)," David Feldon of the University of Virginia suggests that while we caution our students to be careful and thoughtful learners, we don't always follow our own advice: "In our desire to do right by our students and still invest the bulk of our efforts in teaching content, we put our faith in over-simplified generalizations that never seem to realize the full benefits that they promise" (pp. 15-16). He sees the two most fashionable teaching ideas at the moment as: move away from lectures because they are ineffective and use internet-based technologies because they help students learn.

Feldon dissects these two ideas and analyzes why neither is necessarily true. Essentially, he is simply saying that any teaching technique can be done well or poorly. This seems pretty obvious, but in our enthusiasm to find ways to do things better next time, we often forget this basic principle. Recently, I heard someone describe a faculty member as using PowerPoint "brilliantly," yet this technology has received a lot of criticism. Unfortunately we all have sat through presentations that were at the other end of the spectrum from brilliant. It's not the fault of the technology, but the human using it. So Feldon suggests that we move slowly, only change things incrementally, and at each point assess the results of the change (what a concept!).

One of the ideas Feldon focuses on is "cognitive load," basically how much we present to students at one time. There is only so much the human mind can absorb. We have to be careful to structure our presentations so students are challenged but not overwhelmed. This was also a point that Bain made. It is hard to get this right in our teaching, and the load students can bear may change with the makeup of a class. But it is definitely something we can tinker with and get better at, which is the point Feldon makes at the end of the article in a section entitled "Practice Makes Perfect." This may seem like the ultimate cliché, but it is nonetheless something we need to keep in mind as we look forward to another semester.

**Note:** This same issue of *Change* has several other interesting articles, including one that's also available on the web: "[Tracking a Global Academic Revolution](#)." It discusses major changes in higher education in Europe, China, and other parts of the world.

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## Thoughts on Teaching

The CTL subscribes to two newsletters on college teaching that often have interesting articles; you are welcome to come to Bent room 281 and borrow a copy. In case you don't have time, here are a few of the interesting items in recent issues.

The March 2010 issue of *The National Teaching and Learning Forum* had an article by Thomas B. Jones on the best teachers he had in college. Jones is now director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, so he has professional reasons for thinking back on his own education. His best teachers were those who presented big questions and theories to students right at the beginning of the semester. This inspired the students and also let them in on what the entire enterprise involved. It seems like a rather simple and straight-forward approach, but sometimes we become so focused on step one of the course that we neglect to present the big picture first. This makes it difficult for students to begin building a framework, because they aren't sure where that introductory material fits into the whole. Jones notes that "above all else, my best teachers constructed intriguing and compelling frameworks to examine a topic."

*The Teaching Professor* for March 2010 has an article by Douglas Groothuis on "Banning Laptops from the Classroom." This is a subject that has come up at many CTL workshops over the years since the laptop program began at the University. There are divergent opinions on this topic, as with most teaching issues. Some faculty have students use laptops during class—for writing assignments, to access course-specific software, to conduct web searches—so banning laptops hardly makes sense for them. But for many of us, students don't really need to have their laptops open during class. They can take notes with pen and paper, which might be a better way to solidify ideas in their minds. In addition, having laptops open creates the terrible, and almost irresistible, temptation to check email, surf the Web, do work for other classes. Wireless access to the Web makes it too easy for students to wander electronically. And it isn't just students; faculty who have laptops at CTL workshops are often guilty of the same behavior. So as Groothuis points out, there are very good reasons to ban laptops, and if you see that as the solution to an attention problem in your classroom, then by all means, follow suit.

In the same issue, there's an article by Barbara Mezeske on "The Last Five Years." As she contemplates the later stages of her teaching career, she is finding challenges to make these years exciting and memorable both for herself and her students. She comes up with three suggestions. First, "embrace the new technologies;" now is not the time to shy away from new tools that could enhance student learning. You never know how a new technology might come in handy after retirement. There was a recent article in the *Times Literary Supplement* about an author who at 80 took up blogging and was so successful that his entries are being published as a book. Mezeske's other two suggestions are to seek new assignments—don't just coast, and begin to think about your new life after retirement. Prepare now as you would for a new course, so you are ready when the big day comes.



## Faculty News

**Dr. Blase Billack** (Pharmaceutical Sciences, [billackb@stjohns.edu](mailto:billackb@stjohns.edu)) coauthored the article, "BRCA1 Protein and Nucleolin Colocalize in Breast Carcinoma Tissue and Cancer Cell Lines," in the *American Journal of Pathology* (April 2010); published the article, "Evaluation of the Antifungal and Plasma Membrane H(+)-ATPase Inhibitory Action of Ebselen and two Ebselen Analogs in *S. cerevisiae* Cultures" in the *Journal of Enzyme Inhibition and Medicinal Chemistry* (March 2010).

**Dr. Zhe-Sheng Chen** (Pharmaceutical Sciences, [chenz@stjohns.edu](mailto:chenz@stjohns.edu)) co-presented with his students three abstracts: "BCR-Abl Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor Nilotinib (Tasigna®) Reverses ABCB1/Pgp- and ABCG2/BCRP-mediated Multidrug Resistance," "Lapatinib, Erlotinib, Imatinib and Nilotinib are Potent Reversal Agents for MRP7 (ABCC10)-mediated Multidrug Resistance," and "Sunitinib Reverses ABCG2/BCRP-mediated Multidrug Resistance by Inhibiting its Efflux Activity" at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting in Washington, DC (April 2010); and was selected as an Editorial Advisory Board Member by the *World Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

**Dr. Myrna Delson-Karan** (Languages and Literatures, [delsonkm@stjohns.edu](mailto:delsonkm@stjohns.edu)) received the ACSUS Vision 20/20 Award in recognition of her extraordinary vision and contribution to the development of Canadian Studies in the US from the Association of Canadian Studies in the US; presented a paper, "L'Art de Gabrielle Roy: Cet été qui chantait," at the Biennial Conference of ACSUS; published a chapter, "Portraits of Childhood and Adolescence in the Works of Gabrielle Roy," in the book, *Francophone Women Writers Coming of Age from France, Africa, Québec and the Caribbean* (Cambridge Scholars Press).

**Dr. Maura C. Flannery** (Computer Science, Mathematics and Science, [flannerm@stjohns.edu](mailto:flannerm@stjohns.edu)) published an article, "An Eighteenth-Century Woman," in *American Biology Teacher* (March 2010).

**Dr. Flora Keshishian** (Rhetoric, Communication and Theatre, [keshishf@stjohns.edu](mailto:keshishf@stjohns.edu)) was awarded a \$5,000.00 Fulbright follow-on grant to return to Armenia and develop an intercultural communication course at Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars; coauthored along with **Joseph Brocavich** (Clinical Pharmacy Practice, [brocavij@stjohns.edu](mailto:brocavij@stjohns.edu)) and **Somnath Pal** (Pharmacy and Administrative Sciences, [pals@stjohns.edu](mailto:pals@stjohns.edu)) "Motivating Factors Influencing Choice of Major: A Comparative Survey Analysis of Pharmacy vs. Non-Pharmacy Students" in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* (2010).

**Dr. Anna D. Martin** (Economics and Finance, [martina@stjohns.edu](mailto:martina@stjohns.edu)) coauthored the article, "Capital Market Risk Implications of Governance and Disclosure for the Insurance Industry: The Case of Sarbanes-Oxley," in the *Journal of Insurance Issues* (2009); this article was recognized with the 2009 Donald Hardigree Memorial Outstanding Paper Award by anonymous vote of the journal's co-editorial board.

**Professor Lawrence Pitilli** (English and Speech, [pitillil@stjohns.edu](mailto:pitillil@stjohns.edu)) presented a paper, "Why Billy Stewart Matters," at the 2010 Joint Conference of the National Popular Culture and American Culture Associations in St. Louis, Missouri (April 2010); wrote a review of the book, *Making Music in Los Angeles: Transforming the Popular* (Catherine Parsons Smith) in *Popular Music and Society* (2009).

**Dr. Richard Stalter** (Biological Sciences, [stalterr@stjohns.edu](mailto:stalterr@stjohns.edu)) coauthored "Vascular Plant Diversity in Four Northeastern Cities" in *In Vivo* (Winter 2010).

**Dr. Ann C. Wintergerst** (Languages & Literatures, [winterga@stjohns.edu](mailto:winterga@stjohns.edu)) co-presented the workshop "Ten Techniques for Teaching Culture in the Classroom" at the International TESOL's Annual Convention in Boston, MA (March 2010); served as a manuscript reviewer for *System: An*

*International Journal of Educational Technology and Applied Linguistics*, Elsevier Science Ltd, UK (March 2010); served as an invited member of the Institute of International Education's National Screening Committee in the selection of American graduate students applying for English Language Teaching Assistantships in Germany for the U.S. Student Fulbright Program (December 2009); and co-presented "Practical Activities for Teaching Culture" at New York State TESOL's Annual Conference in White Plains, NY (November 2009).

### Faculty News

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### CTL Fellows on Research in Teaching and Technology

On April 21, the 2008-2010 CTL Fellows made presentations on their projects which deal with integrating technology into their teaching. Over the two years of their fellowship, they explored active learning strategies and technologies that you might also find useful in your teaching. Short descriptions of their projects follow:

#### Looking for More Excitement in Your Teaching? Get a SECOND LIFE

P. Charles Livermore (University Libraries, [livermop@stjohns.edu](mailto:livermop@stjohns.edu))

Second Life is an online computerized world, a virtual world, in which individuals (via alter egos called avatars) can interact with one another. These worlds (Second Life being but one) have been dubbed MUVes (Multi-User Virtual Environments). Student and instructor can "see" each other, talk to each other and have the immediacy and intimacy which approaches that of an in-person classroom.

Three years ago I built a library classroom in SL on Emgeetee Island (<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Emgeetee/131/111/24>). During these three years students from the United States and Europe have met on Emgeetee Island for library instruction. Geographic barriers don't exist in SL. To accommodate time differences classes have been held from 6am to 1am eastern time.

With an increased emphasis on distance education and the growing opportunity for students and faculty to conduct research from off-campus via online databases, new ways to communicate with students via the computer become critical. Virtual reference services such as STJ's email Ask Us service are attempts to reach these students at their convenience. Teaching tools such as Blackboard are an instructor's tool for reaching these same students. Each is a tool but lacks the face-to-face experience found in the live campus environment. According to the Gartner Group, a technology consulting firm, by 2012 approximately 80% of the American public will be involved in some kind of virtual world. While research is sketchy, there is evidence that these virtual worlds offer a classroom and instructional immediacy not found in the present means of offering distance education. This suggests, to me at least, that further exploration by educators is warranted.

Call me at ext. 5330 if you see an opportunity for Second Life in your teaching.

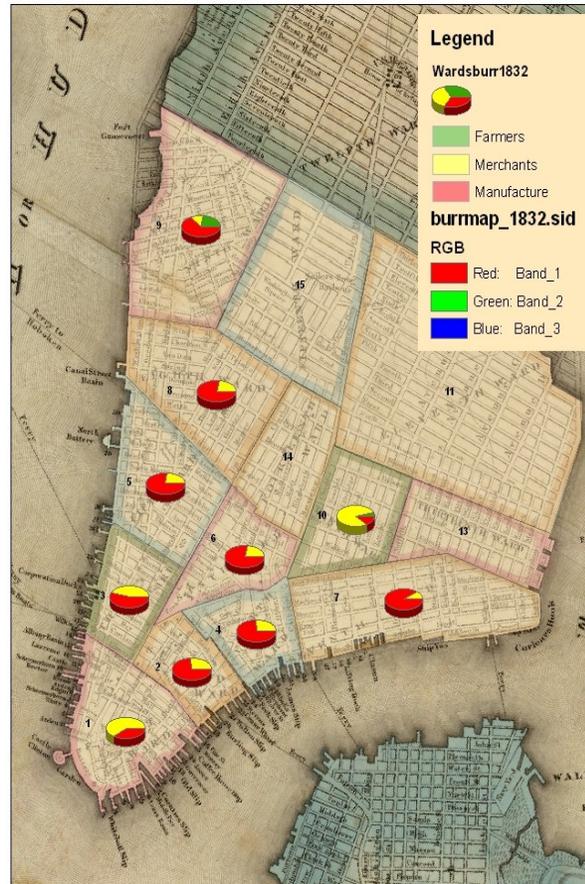
## GIS as a Springboard for Interdisciplinary Research

Paula Kay Lazrus (Institute for Core Studies, [lazrusp@stjohns.edu](mailto:lazrusp@stjohns.edu))

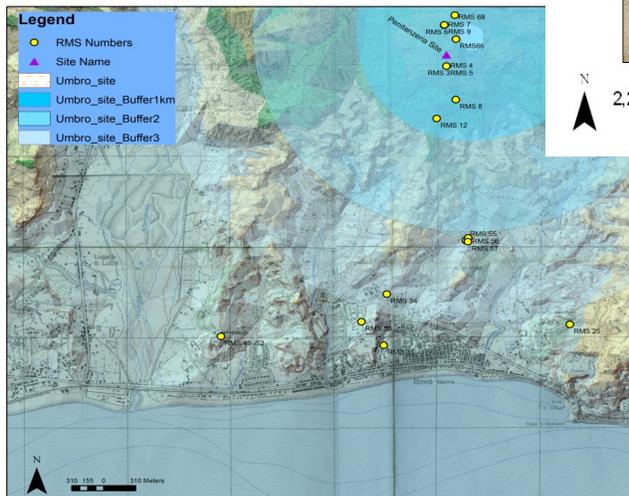
I have used my CTL Fellowship to learn how to use the Geographic Information System (GIS) software ArcGIS. This package of tools provides ways to combine a wide variety of spatial data and database information with powerful analytical tools. My goal was to see how this software, which is used across many disciplines, might help me build a visual database of historical maps and images for my DNY class. The learning curve was steep, but that was expected. The difficulty in obtaining materials at high resolution proved however more difficult than expected. In addition to learning to geographically reference 2-dimensional data and to display some data in 3D, I have also experimented with displaying census data visually and have used my new found skills to help mentor several students. I have been able to use some of the material I have developed in my DNY classes (both in class, and as print outs while walking around in historic areas).

Using ArcGIS has also enhanced my own research into the social, economic and environmental landscape of Southern Calabria in the Post Medieval period. The opportunity to present the work I have been doing at the NY State GIS Conference

Occupation Distribution in NY,



Clay Sites Pre-2008 over 1:25000 Map and Elevation Tin



this fall was illuminating and energizing, allowing me to exchange ideas with colleagues from in and out of the academy who use this software across disciplines proving a further catalyst for my research as well as for my classes.

## Creating Instructional Patient Counseling Videos for Pharmacy Students

Danielle Ezzo (College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, [ezzod@stjohns.edu](mailto:ezzod@stjohns.edu))

One of the most challenging tasks I have encountered during my teaching career has involved teaching pharmacy students the art of patient counseling. Students are taught the tools needed to conduct these patient counseling sessions, and then workshops are used for mock scenarios which are conducted in small groups in the classroom. Currently, the students have limited opportunity to review an actual patient consultation session and healthcare interactions prior to conducting their own.

I have created instructional patient counseling videos using Windows MovieMaker. I traveled to the American Association of College of Pharmacy (AACP) annual meeting in July 2009, where I attended a session *Creating Web-deliverable Patient Teaching Resources*, and first learned of Windows MovieMaker. When I returned to campus and decided I wanted to use this software to create my videos, I was told that all St. John's University computers have this software. I made an appointment with educational technology specialist, Gina Marandino from T3 (Transforming Teaching with Technology), who helped me learn more about the program. Windows MovieMaker allowed me to create and edit my movies right on my computer. I added instructional captions and was able to show a full mock patient counseling session with various instructions, with take home points I want students to note. Videos will also be created to breakdown the session even further and reiterate the importance of each step in the counseling session.

The videos will be shared with students so that they have access to them and can review and practice on their own with guidance from these instructional videos. These videos will now become a teaching resource available for pharmacy students.

## Winners of the First Annual Undergraduate Applied Social Justice Essay Competition

St. John's University Libraries and The Friends of the Library are pleased to announce the winners of the First Annual Undergraduate Applied Social Justice Essay Competition.

The first place student scholar, **Princess Ikatekit**, has written an essay entitled "[Global Warming and Climate Change: A Catholic Perspective](#)" under the mentorship of Prof. Sean Murray (Institute for Writing Studies). In her essay, Ms. Ikatekit focuses on global warming as "viewed through the lens of Catholic Social Justice." Under the supervision of Dr. Robert Delfino (Philosophy), **Kathryn Mordeno**, the second place scholar, has addressed the issue of global poverty in her essay "[Microfinance: The Path to Poverty Alleviation](#)."

In addition to exhibiting exemplary work in research, scholarship and writing, these winning essays demonstrated a keen ability to synthesize scholarly inquiry with the concepts of applied social justice.

We congratulate and applaud their work!



## May Workshop Series

The University has great resources available to help in your development as a faculty member. Evidence of this is the May Workshop Series we are planning. The **Center for Teaching and Learning** is collaborating with **University Libraries**, the **Title III Project**, and the **Writing Across the Curriculum** program to provide a week of activities to help you get off to a good start with your teaching and research work for the summer.

We start off the week of May 17 with a **Faculty Writing Retreat**, a follow-up to the retreat held in February that got rave reviews from participants. This is a day of writing, simply writing. You can organize your notes for an article you are planning to write, or get a section of a manuscript completed, or do some revisions. The Writing Institute in the Library is a quiet and comfortable place to work, and we will break for lunch and conversation—so things won't be too monastic.

The next three days offer a variety of workshops to assist you in planning your courses and assignments and in trying out new technologies you might find useful in your teaching. On Tuesday, there is a three-hour workshop on **Planning a Syllabus**. You can bring your syllabus and revise it, or start from scratch. Your work won't be over by the end of the session, but you will be well on your way to creating a document that will be useful to you and your students.

After the syllabus session you might be ready to stay for lunch and then participate in a workshop on **Designing Assignments**. This topic was suggested by those attending a Library/CTL event on Faculty/Library Collaborations. Several of the participants spoke of very positive experiences working with library faculty in creating assignments that emphasize critical thinking skills and the development of information literacy, as well as reduce the likelihood of plagiarism. While you are planning your syllabus, this might be the perfect time to work on assignments, or you may want to sleep in and just attend this session.

Now that you have your research and course development in hand, you might be ready to work on some new technology for your courses. On Wednesday morning, Heidi Upton will show you how to get started **Creating a Wiki for Your Class** with PBWorks. She made this presentation in the spring, and participants were impressed by how wikis can improve student engagement and the quality of student writing.

After lunch on Wednesday, you could stay for **Using CampusGuides Software for Teaching**. The University Libraries have a subscription for this web authoring tool that is easy to use and great for putting your syllabus and other information on the web. The CTL has a CampusGuides site if you would like to see what it looks like: <http://stjohns.campusguides.com/ctlforum>. You can start small at the workshop and then spend the summer enlarging your site. This is also software you could use to create a website to highlight your research interests.

If you are *really* ambitious, you can attend one or even two workshops on Thursday. They are being cosponsored by the University's Title III Project—Transforming Teaching with Technology. In the morning, there is a session on **Creating a Website for Your Class with Google Sites**, free software available from Google. In two hours, you can get the basic framework of a site completed—and then spend the summer developing it.

If you want to stay after lunch, you can learn about **Using MovieMaker Software to Edit Videos**. MovieMaker is easy to use and you will be surprised how simple it is to add music and titles to your "film." This is a fun way to end a busy week of learning.

One of the most important features of this series is the **Follow-Up** that's available. At the end of each

## Campus Guides: CTL Teaching and Learning Forum

The site's main aim is to highlight the great teaching strategies developed by St. John's faculty.

Please visit: <http://stjohns.edu/campusguides.com/ctlforum>.

[www.stjohns.edu/  
CTL](http://www.stjohns.edu/CTL)

*This newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the Center for Teaching and Learning.*

**Managing Editor:**  
Lisa Getman

**CTL**

program, the participants can decide if they wish to schedule a follow-up session later in the summer so they can get continuing support for their projects. We are grateful to all the presenters for agreeing to this plan.

Now that you have an idea of what's being offered, the list below gives you an easy summary to help you in planning your week. **You can sign up for any or all of these events, but please remember space is limited.**

### Faculty Writing Retreat

Cosponsored by Writing Across the Curriculum  
Monday, May 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Institute for Writing Studies, Library room 150  
Lunch 12:30 p.m.

### Planning a Syllabus

Presented by Maura C. Flannery  
Tuesday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to noon in the Title III Learning Lab, Library room 110

Lunch from noon to 1 p.m. for participants.

### Designing Assignments

Cosponsored by the University Libraries and presented by Ben Turner  
Tuesday, May 18 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Title III Learning Lab, Library room 110

### Creating a Wiki for Your Class

Presented by Heidi Upton  
Wednesday, May 19 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Title III Learning Lab, Library room 110

Lunch from noon to 1 p.m. for participants with Barry Brenton discussing mapping resources on the web.

### Using CampusGuides Software for Teaching

Cosponsored by the University Libraries and presented by Ben Turner  
Wednesday, May 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Title III Learning Lab, Library room 110

### Creating a Website for Your Class with Google Sites

Cosponsored by the Title III Project and presented by Gina Marandino  
Thursday, May 20 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Title III Learning Lab, Library room 110

Lunch from noon to 1 p.m. for participants with Charles Livermore demonstrating Second Life.

### Using MovieMaker Software to Edit Videos

Cosponsored by the Title III Project and presented by Gina Marandino  
Thursday, May 20 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Title III Learning Lab, Library room 110

**To register:** Please contact the Center for Teaching and Learning at [CTL@stjohns.edu](mailto:CTL@stjohns.edu) or ext. 1859.