

Teaching Commons

Faculty Newsletter

Teaching Commons Faculty Newsletter September 2023
To view all our upcoming offerings, [here is the link to our events calendar](#)



The Teaching Commons is a positive and safe space where faculty, graduate students, and staff from across our campuses can engage in professional development activities related to any aspect of teaching and learning. We offer a broad range of courses, certificates and other programming as well as various additional services, targeted resources, and support for scholarly teaching. Our team is ready to help you explore best practices and innovative strategies, support program renewals and course design, and offer guidance specific to York institutional priorities. We are here to help connect you to a network of colleagues, scholarly resources and evidence-based practice to explore and develop your teaching in new and unimagined ways.



New Faculty Learning Circle

The Teaching Commons is excited to offer a forum to continue the community building started at our New Faculty Orientation events in July and August 2023. A Faculty Learning Circle (FLC) is a collaborative, peer-based group that focuses on learning, connection, relationship-building, and reflective practice. A FLC is a supportive and collegial space where members support each others growth and learning, while also celebrating individual and collaborative achievements. Drawing from concepts of a Community of Practice and a Professional Learning Community, professional learning is fostered within the context of the group, and leadership within the circle is shared.

We will be hosting New Faculty Learning Circles once per month from September to November and February to April. These events will be hosted on different days of the week to account for different teaching

schedules. All New Faculty Members are welcome to join! Please suggest topics for future months by copying and pasting this link in your browser: <https://forms.office.com/r/g6UNeeDdpu>

[Here is the link to register.](#)

If you have any questions, you can contact Mandy Frake-Mistak, Educational Developer at mfmistak@yorku.ca



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Fictional Classrooms: Talking About Teaching Through Narrative (ONLINE ~ September 21, 2023-April 18, 2024)

What can we learn about our own teaching practices and identities from fictional depictions of higher education? Join us in “Fictional Classrooms” as we explore and reflect on narratives of education in films, television, short stories, and novels, whether they speak to us as learners, educators, researchers, artists, or simply as humans. Monthly meetings will alternate between text and screen, and opportunities for both and asynchronous online engagement will be provided. All our materials will be available through York University Library, Toronto Public Library, and/or other sources.

This year, we will read one longer novel alongside other shorter works/films/television. Registrants are invited to choose between Donna Tartt’s [The Secret History](#) (1992), R.F. Kuang’s [Babel](#) (2022), and Mona Awad’s [All’s Well](#) (2021) to determine which novel we will collectively read.

[Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)



Reboot Your Final: Alternative Approaches to Online Tests and Exams (ONLINE ~ Oct. 16-Nov. 10, 2023)

This course can count toward the [Certificate of Proficiency in Teaching for eLearning](#).

Looking to rethink your tests and exams for the online environment? Interested in exploring alternative assessments that might replace a traditional final? Join us for a fully online course in the practical pedagogy of alternative assessment strategies for eLearning. Participants will learn by doing as they workshop their own current assessment plans in light of best practices for online and remote teaching. This course is actively facilitated by a Teaching Commons instructor, and participants will be able to ask questions and access

further support and resources by email, in online office hours, or through the course eClass site at any point.

[Register in the course here.](#)



Engagement Strategies for Teaching Remotely (ONLINE ~ September 18-October 13, 2023)

This course can count toward the [Certificate of Proficiency in Teaching for eLearning.](#)

Student engagement is a common goal whether you are teaching in a classroom, or online. There are, however, added complexities to engaging students in the remote and online environment. In this course, we will explore the challenges and barriers to engaging students remotely. You will be introduced to the TEC-VARIETY framework, which offers evidenced-based solutions. You will explore this framework on your own, and collaboratively with a small group of your peers, to discover how you can add some TEC-VARIETY to your online or remote course(s) to make them engaging, and to motivate your learners. Join us for our final session on March 16 where we will engage in active learning activities, reflective discussions, and collaborative conversations focused on linguistically and culturally responsive teaching.

[Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)



Trauma-Informed Pedagogies Workshop Series – Fall 2023-Winter 2024 (ONLINE ~ Launches September 18th, 2023)

This 10-part workshop series will introduce participants to the topic of trauma-informed teaching and offer practical strategies for supporting students and themselves while developing a trauma-informed classroom. Through participation in active learning activities, reflective discussions, and collaborative conversations, participants will explore how to apply learned strategies in their own teaching contexts and consider their own personal parameters within their teaching.

Please visit our [registration page](#) to view the schedule, learn more, and register. Registration is limited.

This workshop series is co-organized and co-facilitated by the Teaching Commons and the Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion.



Reading for Teaching – Fall 2023 (ONLINE/HYBRID ~ Launches September 19th, 2023)

A collaborative program co-facilitated by the Teaching Commons and York University Libraries, Reading for Teaching is an informal, collegial opportunity to engage with colleagues from across campus interested in reading and talking about teaching. Participants will meet between 2-4 times over the term to discuss a common reading related to current challenges, opportunities, and conversations in teaching and learning.

This year, we are thrilled to be partnering with colleagues at the University of Guelph who will also be exploring our identified common reading in their own book club. Our colleagues from Guelph will be joining us for an asynchronous kick off activity and synchronously in our December wrap up session to encourage sharing and exploring diverse perspectives inspired by our common reading experience. More details to come closer to the respective session dates.

For more information, or to register to participate in our Reading for Teaching conversations, please review our registration form: [REGISTER HERE](#)

If you have any questions, you can contact Lisa Endersby, Educational Developer at lendersb@yorku.ca



Teaching Commons Assessment Institute (IN-PERSON ~ October 11 & 12, 2023)

This Fall reading week, the Teaching Commons is offering a two-day, in-person intensive assessment institute. During the TC Assessment Institute, participants will work closely with peer faculty members, educational developers, writing centre colleagues, and undergraduate student consultants to redesign assignments for their courses. Through themed sessions, consultations, peer feedback, and concentrated working time, participants will leave the institute with a fully developed assessment and skills/strategies to redesign other assignments in their courses. More details, including a link to register, will be shared in upcoming Teaching Commons newsletters and other promotion channels. To learn more, contact Lisa Endersby

(lendersb@yorku.ca) or Matthew Dunleavy (mdunleav@yorku.ca), Educational Developers, Teaching Commons.



Academic Integrity & Assessment: Workshop Series (ONLINE ~ Oct. 4-Nov. 1, 2023)

Join us this fall for one, two, or all three online workshops in a series focusing on the intersections between assessment practices and academic integrity, whether you teach in a face-to-face, Hy-flex, or fully online classroom. These sessions will address both established academic integrity concerns and those raised by emergent generative artificial intelligence technologies.

Wednesday, Oct. 4, 11:00-12:00: [Academic Integrity and Group Work \(Register Here\)](#)

Wednesday, Oct. 18, 11:00-12:00: [Academic Integrity and Written Assignments \(Register Here\)](#)

Wednesday, Nov. 1, 11:00-12:00: [Academic Integrity and Summative Tests and Exams \(Register Here\)](#)

This series is co-hosted by the Teaching Commons and Angela Clark, Academic Integrity Officer in the Office of the VP Academic.



AI and Education: A Hands-On Workshop for Course Transformation (ONLINE ~ Oct. 5-13, 2023)

This intensive one-week workshop can count toward the [Certificate of Proficiency in Teaching for eLearning](#).

Looking to get some hands-on time as you respond to ChatGPT and other generative AI tools in your teaching? Join us for a fully online one-week intensive in the practical pedagogy of technology-enhanced teaching in the age of artificial intelligence. We will explore a range of topics and resources to determine what this new technology will mean for your course policies, your assessments, and your teaching strategies. Participants will learn by doing as they apply their learning to their own course(s) – whether you are new to generative AI or already using it in your classroom, this course will support you in developing a robust and pedagogically informed approach to its many facets and implications.

[Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)



Academic Integrity: Learn to Stop Worrying About it

The Academic Integrity Workshop for York students for this coming academic year will be running twice during the month of September on September 12th from 12.00 - 1.30 p.m. and on September 20th from 12:00 – 1:30 pm. Consider asking your students to enroll in this workshop to ensure that they gain an awareness of academic integrity expectations at York. Additionally, this workshop will familiarize students with incorporating sources into their work and proper citation practices.

[Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)



Upcoming Workshops – Pedagogy & Experiential Education

The Teaching Commons is currently offering a two-part workshop series to support the pedagogy of Experiential Education. Additional details and links to register are below:

Critical Reflection as a Learned/Learning Activity

Students engaged in experiential education activities often benefit from opportunities for critical reflection. These reflection activities can encourage students to make meaningful connections between experiences and course material, while also developing skills in critical thinking, communicating new insights, and using new ideas to inform future actions.

In this workshop, we will engage in discussions and hands-on activities designed to explore frameworks for critical reflection that can be used to help students develop important skills to support their own reflective practice. Activities for encouraging critical reflection will also be explored as strategies to encourage meaningful learning in the classroom.

Register to attend IN PERSON:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=984063>

Register to attend ONLINE:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=983783>

Strategies for Meaningful Feedback on Student Reflection

Experiential education can be a transformative learning experience for many students. However, “just thinking or having an experience do not necessarily result in learning, but rather critical thinking and reflection support and facilitate the learning process.” (Whalen & Paez, 2019, p.56) Critical reflection can help students “integrate new understanding into [their] experiences in order to better choices or actions in the future as well to enhance [their] overall effectiveness.” (Rogers, 2001, p.41)

Students engaged in experiential learning use critical reflective activities as spaces to work through their learning. In this workshop, we will discuss strategies for providing meaningful feedback on student reflection and consider how this feedback can create space for authentic (sometimes ungraded) formative assessment.

Register to attend IN PERSON:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=984984>

Register to attend ONLINE:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=985893>



For Your New Graduate Students

If you have new graduate students, please share with them our open enrollment eClass course [Teaching Assistant Orientation and Resources](#), that offers instructional videos and other resources from across campus to support their teaching. Also, please [invite them to register for ONE of our virtual TA Orientation sessions](#), and [view our workshop and events schedule](#).



Teaching Award Applications: Dossier Intensive (ONLINE ~ 12:00-3:00 pm, September 26th, 2023)

This is a facilitated peer-feedback workshop designed to bring applications for teaching awards into the final stage. Using the Society for Teaching in Learning in Higher Education 3M National Teaching Fellow award as a guide (but you are encouraged to attend if you are applying for any internal or external award), we will focus on ensuring applications are complete, “demonstrate impact on students and institutions,” and “tell[s] a story, that jump[s] off the page.”

This session takes place on **September 26th, 2023, from 12:00pm-3:00pm** online via Zoom. A Zoom link will be shared via email closer to the session date.

[Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)

This session is part of a series of monthly events supporting faculty who wish to apply for internal or external teaching awards. For more details and dates, please [consult out internal and external teaching award support page here.](#)



York University Summit on Generative AI in Higher Education (ONLINE ~ 2:00-3:30 PM on October 18, 19, & 20, 2023)

Hosted by the [Teaching Commons](#) and the [Institute for Research on Digital Literacies](#).

Dive into the future of higher education as we explore the profound impact of generative AI at the three-day York University Summit.

- Day 1: Experience the Faculty Showcase, featuring York faculty members from across various disciplines. Learn about how they are integrating and responding to generative AI in their teaching practices.
- Day 2: Join our "Critical Perspectives on Generative AI Panel" as scholarly experts dissect the current state and prospects of generative AI research. Delve into discussions that will shape the narrative of AI's role in academia.
- Day 3: Hear directly from the primary stakeholders - the students. This panel brings together the voices of postsecondary learners, shedding light on the real-world impact, challenges, and opportunities they face with generative AI in their educational journey.

Join us as we explore the transformative role of AI in reshaping the landscape of higher education, both at York University and across the global academic community. [Click here to reserve your spot now!](#)



New Community of Practice: Generative AI Pedagogies at York (Launches ONLINE ~ 12:00-1:00 p.m. on October 3rd, 2023)

This community of practice is dedicated to uniting York University educators who share an interest in generative AI. Together, we connect, collaborate, and share resources, exploring best practices and addressing the challenges and opportunities we face in integrating this technology into postsecondary education. Beyond practical tips and strategies for adapting our teaching, we foster critical conversations about the implications of generative AI. We hold regular virtual community meetings twice per semester. Additionally, all members have access to an eClass site for asynchronous discussions and resource sharing. As generative AI continues to evolve in higher education, our community will adapt, reflecting the interests and priorities of our members.

Our community of practice accepts new members at any time, and all who teach at York are welcome. Join us for our launch event via Zoom on Tuesday, October 3rd, 12:00-1:00! More information will be shared with community members in the week preceding the event.

[Here is the link to join this community of practice.](#)



Curious About Mentoring TAs in the Classroom? Introducing the TA Mentorship Strategy Series!

This new monthly series serves as an introduction on evidence-informed mentoring strategies that course directors can incorporate to support their teaching assistants (TAs) and their development. Check out the first strategy below!

Mentorship Strategy #1: Connection, Community, and Communication

One way to support TAs is to set up regularly meetings with them regularly throughout the semester. Connecting frequently—especially during the first few weeks of a course—is beneficial for establishing a collegial relationship between course directors and TAs and sets the tone for the duration of the course. It provides opportunities for TAs to raise any challenges in their teaching and co-creates a space for course directors and TAs to brainstorm strategies of support student learning as a team.

Tips for incorporating this strategy:

- Check-in with TAs throughout the course
- Maintain open lines of communication (e.g., email, Zoom, office hours)
- Provide a virtual space for TAs to connect with each other for peer support (e.g., private WhatsApp group, Discord, Slack, email – ask them for their preference!)

Further Reading

Coyne, P. and Muir, I. (November 17, 2021). How instructors can supervise and mentor graduate assistants (GAs) and teaching assistants (TAs). *Teach & Learn Blog – University of Windsor’s Centre for Teaching and Learning*. <https://teach-learn.ca/2021/11/17/how-instructors-can-mentor-gatas/>