Critical Thinking and USA Politics

I received five unexpected boxes in the mail on Monday. They contained 80 copies of the January/February issue of The Atlantic, a left-leaning publication covering Politics, News, Culture, Technology, etc. The theme of the issue is: “If Trump Wins.” It explores a number of issues, e.g., immigration, climate, abortion, civil rights, military, etc. from the point of view of what happened in the first term of President Trump (2017-2021) and what candidate Trump says he plans to do if he is elected once again. The articles in the magazine are not all penned by Democrats, some are authored by independents or Republicans, but they are all pretty uniform in their fear of a second Trump presidency.

Earlier in the day I noticed a discussion on a Listserv for college presidents about “Boxes of the Atlantic Magazine.” Twenty presidents noted they also received the magazines. They wondered, and I wonder, what should I do with them? Maybe I could put them on the free-table, or like one college president wrote – I could send them to recycling! The question is difficult because on the one hand, at DWC, we DO want to promote critical thinking, including thinking about public policy, culture and politics. On the other hand, we DO NOT want to be distributors of one-sided political writing.

DWC’s first core competency promotes “skills necessary to explore issues, ideas, artifacts, and events, before making a decision, accepting or formulating an opinion, or reaching a conclusion.” In this election year, more than ever, the USA needs critical thinkers, especially when slogans, propaganda, and narrow-issue-appeals dominate. Political polarization in an election year makes it especially difficult to find the grains of truth in all the chaff that is thrown into the air. (I am happy the Iowa
caucus are over; we won’t be assaulted by outrageous political ads again until late summer!)

To balance the views of the writers in The Atlantic, one might look to National Review, a right leaning publication covering many of the same issues. It too is a journal of opinion, striving to root the opinions expressed in verifiable facts.

When I consider a point of view different from my own, even if I am not persuaded, I do feel challenged to root my judgments in as much factual ground as possible. Even if I do not change my mind, I do often modify my judgments to accommodate legitimate concerns expressed by a dialogue partner. If I only listen to one side of an argument, I cannot be considered a critical thinker.

So, what to do with the magazines? So far, I have them in my office if anyone wants a copy. In any case, both The Atlantic and National Review are available in the DWC library’s periodical room. Both are well-written journals; and though serious-minded, they do have a lot of funny lines! That seems to me a good partnership – education with a little humor.

**Counselor Resignation and Search Committee**

Sr. Aprilia Untarto SSps plans to resign from her position as College Counselor in May 2024, at the end of the present semester. She wrote in her letter of resignation addressed to Fr. Long Phi: “considering my passion for mission and the needs of my Province, leaving is... the best decision right now. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with you, your team, and the students.”

The College is grateful for her joyful, dedicated and enthusiastic service in the counselling office over the past two years. We are also grateful for her earlier presence on the DWC campus as vocations minister and formator for the Holy Spirit Sisters.

A search committee has been established to review the needs of the College and the job description of the Counselor. They will look for appropriate persons for the position. The members of the committee are:

- Mr. Steve Winger – Chair
- Mr. Len Uhal
- Dr. Seo-Hyun Park

I am grateful for their willingness to assist in this personnel search.
Faculty Professional Development: Annual Data Collection for Calendar Year 2023

Divine Word College encourages and facilitates ongoing professional development for instructional faculty. Indeed, ongoing professional development is necessary for faculty to maintain “a high level of subject matter knowledge and ensures that course content is current, accurate, representative, and appropriate to the position of the course within the student’s program of studies.” (DWC Policy Handbook 7.05.01) This institutional commitment is compliant with professional accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA):

- “The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.” (HLC Criterion 3.C.4)
- “Faculty have experience relevant to teaching students at the postsecondary level in their areas of assignment and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to professional development.” (CEA Faculty Standard 2)

Through the VP for Academic Affairs Office, the College provides many opportunities and generous funding for faculty ongoing professional development at the College (Faculty Institute, Faculty In-Services, web-based training) and for external professional conferences, workshops, and webinars.

In order to accurately document that all faculty are actively engaged in ongoing professional development activities, the VP for Academic Affairs Office compiles and publishes an Annual Report on Faculty Professional Development for submission to the Board of Administration and the Board of Trustees. All faculty, excluding adjuncts, are kindly requested to briefly list their professional development activities during calendar year 2023 (January 1 – December 31) using categories below. Please email your report to the Registrar, Ms. Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth, no later than noon on Monday, February 12, 2024. Thanks in advance for your collaboration.

- Professional Memberships
- Publications (Monograph/Article)
- Conference Presentations
- Conferences Attended
- Performances, Exhibitions
- Other (personal study, research, webinars, etc.)

* A listing of Vector and KnowB4 Training modules will be included for each member automatically.
Applications for Promotion in Academic Rank
SRP Submission Deadline: Thursday February 1, 2024

Eligible full-time undergraduate and ESL faculty may apply for promotion in academic rank upon completion of the stipulated minimum years of service. Faculty members applying for a promotion in rank must prepare a Service Report Portfolio (SRP) documenting achievement of promotion criteria for submission to the Chair of the Faculty Promotions & Awards Committee (Dr. Cathleen Cleary) no later than Thursday, February 1, 2024.

Timeline:
• February 1 – Service Report Portfolio submission deadline to the Chair of the Faculty Promotions & Awards Committee
• March 1 – Faculty Promotions & Awards Committee report and recommendation submission deadline to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
• March 15 – Vice President for Academic Affairs recommendation submission deadline to the College President
• April 1 – College President provides any formal recommendation in favor of promotion in rank to the Chair of the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee
• Early May – Full Board of Trustees consideration of applications for promotion in academic rank recommended by the College President at its regularly scheduled Spring meeting.

Any formally approved promotion in rank and associated pay increase granted by the Board of Trustees become effective at the beginning of the next academic year. Consult the DWC Policy Handbook 9.03 and 9.04 for further details and procedures. All eligible undergraduate and ESL faculty are highly encouraged to apply!

Assessment Bites
from Dr. Yasmin Rioux

We are one week into our faculty evaluations of signature assignments for the Fall 2023 project. Thank you for all the hard work, faculty evaluators! A draft of the new/current faculty evaluations of signature assignments schedule is also available in the “Assessment at DWC” LMS “Important Docs” folder. A draft of the upcoming Spring 2024 project is also located in Populi for planning purposes.
Ministry Practicum Resumes

As scheduled, ministries will resume on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Ministry Practicum plays a vital part of our religious life and formation. Students engaged in ministry are encouraged to use this time to serve our brothers and sisters with faith and humility. We have made some changes and additions to the ministry placements for some of our students. Please check the board this week for updates. Ministry supervisors are requested to contact their members to provide any further information. “Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves” (Philippians 2: 3).

St. Joseph Freinademetz, SVD

On Monday, January 29, 2024, Divine Word College will celebrate the Feast Day of St. Joseph Freinademetz, SVD. He was the first missionary of the Society of the Divine Word sent to China. His missions in China primarily involved educating and catechizing Chinese laymen and priests. His love for the people and the Chinese culture brought many people to faith, and his legacy continues to be honored today. He died on January 28, 1908 and was canonized a saint on October 5, 2003 along with the founder, St. Arnold Janssen, SVD. In his honor, we will observe this feast with the following events:

- 8:00AM  Eucharist
- 5:45 PM  Evening prayer
- 6:00 PM  Social in the dining room
- 6:30 PM  Dinner

Vocation Mass – St. Teresa of the Child Jesus

On Wednesday, January 31, 2024, the formation group of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus will lead and organize the Vocation Mass. During this mass, Sr. Ylette Dorce, SSpS will share her vocational journey, detailing how God called her and her path to joining the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit. Please join us in praying for the members of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus and for more vocations to the Catholic Church.

Pour House Promotion

The Pour House is offering a promotion from Monday, January 22, 2024, through Wednesday, January 31, 2024. Those who deposit money into their Pour House account will receive an additional 10%. For anyone who opens an account with the Pour House, will receive a gift card. These gift cards can be purchased for $1.00. However, for deposits of $20.00 or more, the gift card will be provided free of charge. This is a great opportunity to support the Pour House.
Welcome SVD Candidates

During Sunday Vespers, Andrew Thanh-Quang Nguyen (pictured left) and Tan Duy Trinh Nguyen (pictured right) were officially accepted into the religious formation program at Divine Word College as SVD candidates. On behalf of the Formation Team, DWC Rector Fr. Simon Hoang, SVD, received and welcomed them. Please join us in congratulating both men as they embark on their vocational journey with the Divine Word Missionaries.

Study Reading (from Study Smarter, Not Harder by Kevin Paul, MA)

Reading can take many forms. Looking over the restaurant’s menu is reading. Reading is also glancing over a Google search result page. Flipping through a magazine page while you wait for your turn to visit the doctor is called reading, too. Even if you only recall a few exchanges, looking at an entire movie trailer is also part of reading. The process we go through to comprehend, learn, and remember printed information, such as a textbook, is referred to as reading.

Though they all fall under the reading category, those activities range significantly in their goals and outcomes. One of the most important differences you can make as a good student is being aware of the many types of reading and their objectives. Even though they are only sometimes equally helpful, they are valid. If you view your textbook like a take-out menu and skim it, you won’t know anything for the exam.

Scanning is a helpful skill when examining the results of an online catalog search. You should skim through your textbook’s index if you’re looking for a specific reference. However, as a college student, your study reading will take much work.
You need to review each textbook and chapter before starting detailed reading to study the reading effectively. By doing this, you develop the practiced skill of having a clear roadmap or framework in your head.

There are steps how to “survey” a textbook chapter.

**Step 1:** read the title and think about what is going to be discussed in the chapter.

**Step 2:** look in the table of contents for the book. If there is a summary of the chapter or an outline of the main points, read it carefully and take some times to think about it and let it sink in.

**Step 3:** if there is a summary or outline at the beginning or end of the chapter, repeat Step 2.

**Step 4:** If there is a set of review of discussion questions, read them. Use them as a set of clues as to what the author feels is important in the chapter.

**Step 5:** read the introductory and concluding sections or paragraph. There are also often summaries of the content and indicators of what is important.

**Step 6:** read all the major headings. Think about how the chapter is structured and what basic division are made in the information.

**Step 7:** read all the subheadings and sub-subheadings. These indicate significant subject areas within a major heading.

**Step 8:** read the first sentence of each paragraph. This is usually the topic sentence and the best cue to the content of the paragraph.

**Step 9:** Examine all graphics, pictures, maps, and so on. Read all captions carefully. Your goal is to understand what the graphics are telling you and how they fit into the structure of the chapter.

**Step 10:** this step is vital. If you skip it, you will have wasted most of the time you spent surveying. Take some times to review and rehearse the main points of the chapter and the important material contained in it. It is best to do this in writing. Write it out as fast as you can, using key words and phrases. There are no points for neatness or complete sentence. The goal is not to create lasting notes. What you want to do is consolidate the framework before you go on to detailed reading.

The Counseling Center is open **five days a week, with appointments on weekends and holidays.** Please reach out to us at [auntarto@dwci.edu](mailto:auntarto@dwci.edu) | Room 220 | Ext. 377 for more information.

*“Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential.”* – John Maxwell

**JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION COUNCIL**

**Child Trafficking**

Child trafficking has become a major problem in many places around the world. The problem is made worse still, due to our misconceptions of the issue, as such misunderstandings can hinder efforts to raise public awareness and identify victims. To find out more information on child trafficking, please read the following article: [https://www.gao.gov/blog/misperceptions-can-make-it-harder-prevent-child-trafficking-and-help-survivors](https://www.gao.gov/blog/misperceptions-can-make-it-harder-prevent-child-trafficking-and-help-survivors)
MLK Jr. Day and Black History Month Display

Stop by the library to peruse the MLK Jr. Day and Black History Month Book Display. Black History Month has been celebrated in the United States during the month of February since 1976 and MLK Jr. Day has been celebrated since 1983, when Congress passed legislation to make the 3rd Monday of January a federal holiday to honour MLK Jr.’s life and achievements. In addition to showcasing titles that have been on the library shelves for decades, the display also includes a plethora of new books that illuminate the multifaceted perspectives and experiences of Black Americans.

The New Books Display and Thematic Display are located just inside the entrance to the library. Please feel free to check out multiple books!

Don’t Forget about Kanopy (Movie Service)!

Last March, the library purchased a subscription to Kanopy. Kanopy is a movie streaming service that includes over 10,000 title and unlimited streaming (no limits on time or titles per month). Find a new movie to watch today: https://www.kanopy.com/en.

If you need assistance with logging in to Kanopy, please check out the Kanopy resources on the Matthew Jacoby Library Help Center.