

October 2023



Message to Faculty

We have had a great start of the semester here at McGraw! At the end of August, we welcomed new colleagues at our annual New Faculty Institute (NFI). Over a day and a half, new faculty got to know the university, the Center, and each other while attending workshops, panels, and presentations.

Understandably, on the minds of many new faculty are the implications of Generative AI for our teaching. The topic has been on our minds, too. In the new [Generative AI Guidance](#) pages on our website, we consider the ethics of AI tools and offer ideas for how faculty might encourage students' engagement with course material to minimize the temptation to use them.

This semester, we will host three workshops on Generative AI, in collaboration with Princeton University Libraries. At the first session, faculty from across disciplines experimented with Chat GPT and reflected on how it might affect their assignments. (The other two workshops, on Github Copilot and DALL-E 2, are still to come. Visit our [events page](#) to register.) Some faculty came away from the session inspired to find creative ways to use AI tools in class, while others found Chat GPT's limitations made it less of a threat than they had imagined for certain types of assignments.

While it can be enormously helpful to **be in community** with other instructors sharing similar teaching challenges, sometimes course-specific support is needed. Our team is available to consult with you regarding concerns about Generative AI in your particular classroom context. Please don't hesitate to be in touch.

All my best, Jessica

Resource Reminder

We recently reviewed syllabi from our [Canvas Syllabus Library](#) to create [Syllabus Resources for Faculty](#), an online repository of important university policies and sample text that you may adapt for your own syllabus. It includes language on academic accommodations, content warnings, electronic devices in the classroom, and late work and extensions, among many other common classroom policies.

Program Highlights

Last week, we hosted a Celebration of Excellent Teaching and Mentoring in which we honored winners of the [President's Award for Distinguished Teaching](#) and the [Graduate Mentoring Award](#) (GMA). To open the program, Assistant Director of Graduate Learning Programs, Laura Murray shared some of the characteristics of good mentors, drawing on the moving testimonies of grad students in GMA nomination letters. We then heard presentations from three Distinguished Teachers, in which they shared pedagogical strategies and insight into their teaching philosophies. Neta Bahcall discussed how she focuses on the big ideas she wants her students to take away from her Astronomy courses; Jesse Gomez shared his Dungeons and Dragons- inspired approach to getting students invested in neuroscience; and Matt Weinberg connected his experience coaching taekwondo to his approach to teaching Computer Science. It was an inspirational evening!

Teaching Tip

To supplement to the standard questions about course quality, you can add up to three open ended custom questions to your student course evaluations. Responses to these questions are reported only to the instructor of record so they provide an excellent way to seek feedback on specific course elements or activities with a goal of improvement. For example, you might take the opportunity to ask about a particular approach you used, a new assignment, or any aspect of students' experience than would otherwise be left unaddressed.



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