

TEACHING ROUNDS

To provide faculty with a structured opportunity to reflect and grow as teachers, the Teaching Committee will convene a series of “**Teaching Rounds**” that will bring junior and senior faculty together to discuss specific challenges, questions, and creative ideas they have experienced in the classroom.

The Teaching Committee hopes to sponsor two Rounds this year – one in the Fall and one in the Spring. In preparation for each Rounds session, participants will be asked to write a short paragraph identifying one or two specific challenges they have experienced or would like to discuss with their colleagues. During the session, participants will work through 2 or 3 of these challenges in a facilitated discussion led by one of our experienced faculty. The facilitated discussion will involve fact gathering, problem diagnosis, problem solving, and reflection.

The Rounds may or may not focus on a particular theme. For example, in the Spring of 2016, the Teaching Committee was particularly interested in identifying ways the faculty could be more “inclusive” in engaging students in the classroom - particularly across race and ethnicity, but also across class, gender, political ideology, and LGBT status. To focus our attention on that issue, we asked all Rounds participants to submit a teaching challenge that dealt specifically with diversity and inclusion.

Here are two examples submitted from Georgetown faculty in similar discussions:

Spring 2016: I was faced with the prospect of teaching the Supreme Court’s affirmative action in education cases in front of a group of 50 students, among whom only one person was a person of color. These cases raise very tough issues (e.g., the argument that affirmative action encourages an academic mismatch for minority students), and I was concerned that the classroom environment could be stressful, to say the least. My primary concern was that the situation would be very isolating for the student of color. Not just isolating, but emotionally and psychologically burdensome. (One of the key cases, of course, even involves law school admissions.)

Fall 2015: The only African-American student in my clinic seminar was heavily affected by the events in Ferguson, MO and involved in related organizing and protests. I struggled with how to incorporate the events in Ferguson, and its impact on many people of color, into the class where none of the other students had yet mentioned the events.

Faculty who have participated in this experience consistently report that Rounds provide an extraordinary opportunity to stop and reflect on our own teaching, brainstorm strategies for handling challenges we have faced in the classroom, and learn from our colleagues who have overcome challenges in their own teaching. We hope you will join us for this opportunity.