



# The *SPC* Scholarly Guide

Saint Peter's College Office of Faculty Research and Sponsored Programs

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## James N. Loughran, S.J. Mission Fellowship Announced

A new fellowship program was announced at the faculty day presentation that took place on May 8th. The James N. Loughran, S.J. Mission Fellowship, named for the 21<sup>st</sup> President of Saint Peter's College, is used to assist members of the Full Time Faculty in study, research or development of courses, projects, professional development conferences and workshops, that advance the Jesuit mission and Catholic identity of Saint Peter's College.

The single most important criterion for evaluating a proposal is its potential for strengthening the Jesuit mission and Catholic identity of Saint Peter's College. Further details and application forms, which are the same as those for Faculty Fellowships, are available on fellowships and forms page of the Office of Faculty Research website ([click here](#)). The deadline for applications to be submitted to the department chair is September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Scholarly Activities

*Your work is important. If you present at a conference, publish a paper, or disseminate your scholarly work in some other way, please send the information by e-mail ([fbonato@spc.edu](mailto:fbonato@spc.edu)) so that it may be included in the SPC Scholarly Guide.*

**Laura Twersky and Fran Raleigh** of the Biology Department published a paper in BIOS. The citation is as follows: Twersky, L.H., Porter, S.M. and F.S. Raleigh (2007). The effects of conjugated linoleic acid on anuran early development. BIOS 78(1): 10-15.

**Jessica Epstein** of the Chemistry Department published a paper entitled, "Introduction to Weapons of Mass Destruction 101: Avoid Exposure" in *Gold Cross, the Journal of the NJ State First Aid Counsel*, volume 78, (Spring 2007), pages 22-27. The paper is a review of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons including history and medical repercussions of some specific agents.

**William Luhr** of the English Department organized and co-chaired a presentation entitled "Song in Film: Analysing Nick Cook" by Professors Claudia Gorbman (University of Washington – Tacoma) and Joshua Walden (Columbia University) on January 18, 2007 at Columbia University.

Dr. Luhr also organized and co-chaired a presentation by Professors Thomas Levin (Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Princeton University) and Thomas Keenan (Director of The Human Rights Project and the Department of Comparative Literature at Bard College) entitled "Anxious Omniscience: Surveillance as Narrative Form" at Columbia University.

Dr. Luhr gave a mini-course in the New York City Harvard Club's Lifelong Education Series which included a lecture entitled "What Happened to the Western" at the Harvard Club on March 24, 2007. He also organized and co-chaired a presentation entitled "Desire, Design, and Abjection in Nico Garcia's *Place Vendome*" by professors Adrienne Munich (S.U.N.Y.- Stony Brook) and Diana Diamond (Columbia University) at Columbia University on March 22, 2007.

The new *Schirmer Encyclopedia on Film*, edited by Barry Keith Grant (Thompson-Gale Publications, 2006), has published an essay of Dr. Luhr's defining *Film Noir* as well as two of his biographical entries (on Robert Mitchum and Anthony Mann). Dr Luhr co-authored an essay, "*Experiment in Terror: Dystopian Modernism, the Police Procedural, and the Space of Anxiety*" published in *Cinema and Modernity*, edited by Murray Pomerance (Rutgers University Press, 2006, 175-193).

Dr. Luhr also organized and co-chaired a presentation by Joseph Reidy (highly successful film Producer and Assistant Director for filmmakers like Martin Scorsese, Sidney Lumet, Francis Ford Coppola and others) entitled "Practical Realities of

Hollywood Film Production" on April 12, 2007 at Columbia University.

**Rachel Wifall** of the English Department participated as an actor and workshop participant in "Renaissance Drama in Action"—a conference that took place in November, 2006, in Toronto Canada. The conference was sponsored by *The Shakespeare Bulletin*.

**Eugenia M. Palmegiano** of the History Department, presented an invited paper, "A Rose by Another Name: Journalism in Victorian Britain," Annual Joint Conference (Northeast Region) of the American Journalism Historians Organization and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, New York, March, 2006. Also attending the Conference was Danielle Palmieri, Class of 2008, who recently completed a study of the role of newspapers in forming American identity after the French and Indian War.

Dr. Palmegiano also published a book review of *Northcliffe's Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996*, edited by Peter Catterall, Colin Seymour-Ure, and Adrian Smith, *Journalism History*, winter, 2007 and serves as a judge for the 2007 Kobre Award, given by the American Journalism Historians Association for lifetime achievement in journalism history.

**Andrea Bubka** and **Frederick Bonato** of the Psychology Department published an article in the journal *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine* (78(4), 383-386). The article, Expanding and Contracting Optical Flow Patterns and Simulator Sickness, was coauthored by Stephen Palmisano from the University of Wollongong, Australia.

**Susan Graham** of the Theology Department was recently named onto the Steering Committee of a newly-accepted American Academy of Religion Consultation on "Space, Place, and Religious Meaning." The three-year Consultation will provide a forum in which widely disparate approaches to the analysis of religious space and place can be brought together. Its first session will be held at the November 2007 Annual Meeting. Dr. Graham is also leading a Scripture series entitled, "Challenges to Discipleship," at Our Lady of Czestochowa (OLC) Church on the Jersey City Waterfront on Tuesday evenings, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., 27 February-27 March 2007.

## Grants and Appointments

### Karl Alorbi

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Dr. Karl Alorbi of the Business Administration Department has been accepted as a Scholar-in-Residence by the NYU Faculty Resource Network for Summer, 2007.

### Alky Danikas

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Dr. Alky Danikas of the Economics and Finance Department has been accepted in the "Teaching Business Ethics" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

### Kerry Falloon

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Kerry Falloon of the library has been accepted in the "Archival and Special Collections: Building, Caring for and Using the Collections" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

### Matthew Fung

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Dr. Matthew Fung of the Economics and Finance Department has been accepted in the "Teaching Business Ethics" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

### Susan Graham

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Dr. Susan Graham of the Theology Department has been accepted in the "The Voice from Sinai: The Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

### Sheila Rabin

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Dr. Sheila Rabin of the History Department has been accepted in the "The Voice from Sinai: The Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

### Raymond Rainville

#### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Dr. Raymond Rainville of the Criminal Justice Department has been accepted in the "The Voice from Sinai: The Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

## John Wrynn

### NYU Faculty Resource Network

Fr. John Wrynn of the History Department has been accepted in the "The Voice from Sinai: The Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims" seminar that will take place this summer at NYU.

## Research Tip:

### Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., Professor of Humanities

Fred has asked me to set down some things I learned about writing from my experience, particularly in my eight books, which include one edited collection on Jesuit spirituality, two collections of essays by me on classic books, a short co-written book on a JVC volunteer in Peru, *The Eagle and Brooklyn*, a history of the *Brooklyn Eagle* based on my PhD, and the recent, more scholarly *The American Journey of Eric Severeid* (1995), *Fordham: A History and Memoir* (2002), and *The American Jesuits: A History* (NYU Press, 2007), to appear in September.

So, I'll just say what works for me, knowing well that many of you have experiences and successes that work better for you.

1. Write about something you love- You will have to spend day and night with this mystery. You may drive your family and friends nuts by talking about some exciting discovery that day; but they'll have to love you enough to put up with it, and, if not, you can get some new friends.

2. Make time- Get a semester to a year of uninterrupted research and writing. I did *Severeid* in a year's sabbatical in Washington, including working in the Library of Congress. I did both *Fordham*, which I had started earlier, and the book of essays, *Dante to Dead Man Walking*, in my first year at Saint Peter's, with weekends at Cornwall.

3. Mechanics and habits- At the beginning I followed the old note-taking rules of putting each quote and bibliography entry on a separate card. In recent years I put everything on yellow pads, writ by hand. I leave space and go back and make a lot of changes and put the yellow pages in yellow folders — one each for notes, bibl, chapters, preface, intro, chronology, acknowledgements, contents, letters,

interviews, emails, etc. — stacked neatly on a big work table a few feet away from my computer. I divide the week into three main activities: library research, interviews, and weekend writing. And the day into morning writing, an afternoon of reading and writing interrupted by an hour of swimming or biking at 3:00, Mass at 5:00, drinks and dinner, then reading and correspondence, though no writing, till midnight.

I also try to emulate Francis Parkman who visited the scenes of the historic battlefields he described. For *Severeid* I explored every house where he lived — in Velva, North Dakota; Minneapolis; and three parts of DC. I printed a notice in the *New York Times Book Review* asking those who knew him to contact me, and I interviewed dozens of them either personally or on the phone. On the Jesuit history, I began by exploring the southern Maryland counties where we first established ourselves in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and, for inspiration, the New York Jesuit graveyard at Auriesville where Isaac Jogues and his companions were martyred and many of my old teachers and the Jesuits to whom I dedicate the book lie buried.

*The first step is to establish a chronology.* This forces you to research the whole story and structure it before you start telling it. NYU Press, when they invited me to do the Jesuit history, also had me develop a proposal which included the book's themes, a list of the men whose lives I would emphasize, and an explanation of how this book would relate to other books in the field. They farmed this statement out to three anonymous judges, who liked it, but stressed that I not concentrate too heavily on the East coast. Which leads to the next suggestion.

*Consult.* Most writers I know are generous, willing to share their research, send you articles not otherwise available, steer you straight when you slip off course. With respect for their time, ask for help. If you succeed, help others.

*Personal training. Rule One:* When young writers asked Hemingway and Faulkner for advice they said to *read the masters* — Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. I don't see how anyone can write well or teach writing well without reading the great writers and having one's students do the same. *Rule Two: Publish young.* If someone has not at least published in his or her school paper or some letters to the editor by the time he or she is 21, every year it will get harder. *Rule Three: Take*

*Risks.* Years ago many Jesuits didn't write because they thought they could get tenure without it or, more likely, already in their thirties, they had not been trained to take risks. They feared rejection.

Rejection is basic to the writer's life. It's a highly competitive business, now more than ever. Yet there are hundreds of editors looking for good material. I have published hundreds of articles in papers and magazines all over the country; but I have also written three more books (two journals of my teaching years and a novel) that will never be published—for one reason: publishers, who know best, told me they aren't good enough. But not a moment spent writing them was wasted. I learned a lot about myself while going through some difficult experiences and about how to structure a complex narrative.

*The rewards* are enormous. George Orwell, in "Why I Write," lists four: ego, aesthetic pleasure, contribution to history, political impact. And the knowledge you've made someone happy. Or, depending on the reason, it's good to make some unhappy too.

## **Teaching Tip:**

### **Michael Sheehy, Mathematics and Physics**

This is an idea that was just recently brought to my attention by Michael Orrison at Harvey Mudd College who wrote an article which was published in Dec. 2006 issue of FOCUS, the newsletter of the Mathematical Association of America.

At the beginning of a course, we all hand out a standard course syllabus, which at least in my case has grown over the last couple of years. It should answer many of the questions that students should have. What are the grading policies? When are office hours? How many exams will there be? And so forth. The last thing that you probably want to hear is some advice on (gulp!) making your syllabus even bigger, but that's what I am about to do.

There is one question that students never ask at the beginning of the semester, which I feel that they should. That question might go something like, "As the instructor, what advice do you have for someone who wants to be successful in this course?" I want my students to succeed so at the beginning of each course, I try to give them a handful of generic bits of advice: start your homework early, make sure to read the book, and

don't hesitate to ask questions in class. Of course, very few students pay attention to this on the first day and the advice is usually forgotten before the first week has finished.

Michael Orrison suggests that the advice could be more effective if it were coming from former students of the course instead of from me. Would they now pay attention? After all, as far as my students were concerned, the comments of former students would come with built in legitimacy. Moreover, they might have some good ideas that I haven't thought of myself. So on the last day of my Differential Equations class I asked them, "What advice would you give to a future DE student so that the student could be successful in my course?" I received some very good responses (and a couple of bad ones). Here are some examples:

I believe that in order to be successful in your course, one should do all the homework on time. This way, you get the opportunity of participating in class and the chance to correct mistakes.

Honestly I think they just have to study every section and everything new constantly and never wait until the night before to study for the test. The material is not so bad; it is just remembering all the steps. That is what I did, I kept reviewing what we were learning and that is how I understood the material a lot better.

The advice is rather simple: Do the homework. If you cannot master the material with the number of problems given, do more. ODE is mastered through repetition and becoming accustomed to the material presented.

At the end of this semester, I will ask all of my classes to provide advice for future students, and I will make sure to share what I feel are the most important tips with those future students. I will put it in writing and hand it out the first day with the syllabus. I think that they are more likely to listen to those who have preceded them than are to me. If they listen, it will lead to better results and in the long run will save me a lot of time since I won't have to deal with the consequences of students not following that advice.