

Mary Ann McLean: *Performing Science*

As all working scientists understand, science isn't just something you study—it's something you do. Dr. Mary Ann McLean, Associate Professor of Biology, certainly believes this.

St. Mary's University science students begin learning the ins and outs of experimentation in their first year, working closely with their professors to design and conduct experiments, present their findings, and adjust their process and understanding as the world surprises them.

In February 2016, Dr. McLean and colleague Krista Larson (Lab Instructor, Biology) are taking 29 students to the far west coast of Vancouver Island, to the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, where they will spend five intense days conducting a biodiversity research project. When they return, the BIOL 317 (Introduction to Marine Biology) students will have been immersed in scientific thinking and doing, including the under-appreciated but crucial art of making interesting mistakes.

On the five-day excursion, the students will learn to identify marine invertebrates and algae, collaboratively conduct a biodiversity survey at a sandy beach and at a rocky beach, and collect and enter data. They will also investigate the implications of their observations, make comparisons, test hypotheses and begin to draw conclusions about what they've observed. For Dr. McLean, the pedagogical emphasis is not on hurtling toward "right" answers, but on developing critical habits of thought and engaging deeply with the material.



Under Dr. McLean's guidance, students are encouraged not just to master the facts but to develop a complex appreciation of their own relationship to the environment. She helps people move from a purely instrumental stance ("How does this affect humans?") to a more nuanced understanding of the ethics, choices and morals that conservation compels each of us to consider. She encourages her students to consider the political, economic and social issues surrounding the environment and to ask themselves "What it is about the natural world that I love?" To Dr. McLean, guiding students toward a non-prescriptive sense of ethics is as important as any taxonomy, and students leave her classes as thoughtful and engaged citizens as well as informed scientists.

Collaborative Teaching

One of the unique aspects about teaching at St. Mary's is the opportunity not only to know every other faculty member, but also to collaborate with them. Dr. McLean recently created an interdisciplinary course with colleagues Dr. Gayle Thrift (History) and Dr. Luke Bresky (English) on the idea of wilderness in Alberta from ecological, historical and literary perspectives, something that Dr. McLean says came together with relative speed and ease thanks to the collegial nature of St. Mary's.

"In a larger institution, putting together a course like this would have taken years and a lot of patience for bureaucracy; we, on the other hand, sat down together and tossed ideas around until they gelled." The interdisciplinary course proved popular with St. Mary's students, and more like it are in the works—including a sure-to-be-popular course on the Alberta oil sands being developed by Dr. McLean, Dr. Michael MacLeod (Political Science) and Dr. Tim Harvie (Philosophy and Ethics). **Stay tuned!**

Message from the Director of Research

Greetings and welcome to the inaugural issue of the St. Mary's Teaching and Research Newsletter. In these pages you will read about the cutting-edge research, inspiring teaching, and important publications produced by St. Mary's faculty in the last year. For me, what stands out about these stories of academic excellence is the importance that faculty attach to both teaching and research. In this newsletter you will find ample evidence of how our faculty communicate their intellectual curiosity and passion, not only to their peers in the academy, but also to their students in the classroom as well as the wider community.

Among our faculty you will find a variety of teaching styles and research interests. What unites them is a commitment to providing the best learning experience possible for our students, contributing to the ongoing pursuit of knowledge, and addressing the issues that face our world so that we might better serve the welfare of humanity and the planet.

This issue highlights the latest work of a number of our faculty—and for every story you see in print here, there are many more in the offing. We look forward to sharing more success stories with you in the future. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to reach out—to me or to any of our faculty.

Best wishes,

Dr. Norman Knowles
Professor of History and
Director of Research

Cory Wright-Maley: *Simulations and Embodied Learning*

As a high school social studies teacher, Dr. Cory Wright-Maley grew weary of being asked the same question about totalitarian governments in the 20th century: Why didn't people just stand up to Hitler/Stalin/Mussolini? The standard concepts and readings weren't helping his students understand basic psychological responses to historical forces. Working with the school's principal, Dr. Wright-Maley developed a simulation that would help his students experience a



little of what it might be like to live under a totalitarian regime. The goal: to overthrow Cory and survive for four weeks. As the month passed, Cory (in the guise of "the Maestro") became more and more dissociated from his students, paranoid and erratic. The students tried to predict how to act, how to react, how to organize, and by the end of the unit, they all understood mechanisms behind why people don't stand up against oppressive regimes. They had, in fact, embodied this learning.

The experience convinced Dr. Wright-Maley of the potential of simulations in a teaching environment, and today, as Assistant Professor of Education at St. Mary's, he's at the forefront of an emergent field, with a series of recent publications that help to distinguish simulations from other related activities in his field, document effective teacher

practices with simulations—including the thorny problem of teacher control—and explore the affective impact they can have on teachers' perceptions of the challenges facing English language learners.

In 2017, Dr. Wright-Maley will be using a Teaching Innovation Grant to conduct research and develop a new course on how to teach using simulations; he will pay particular attention to "examining design flaws and facilitator roadblocks." He will be offering the class to current Education students as well as first-year graduates, and will be observing differences (if any) between practicing and preservice teachers when it comes to their successes and challenges in running educational simulations.

The real-life applications of successful simulations in Alberta's schools are manifold—for example, they can help students more completely understand the relationships between recent immigrant populations and more established Albertans, as well as the collision of aboriginal and settler cultures. Dr. Wright-Maley and other teachers at St. Mary's have adopted the approach in many ways, including using Monopoly to teach about the socio-emotional impacts of income inequality and teaching lessons in Swedish to reveal the challenges facing English language learners.

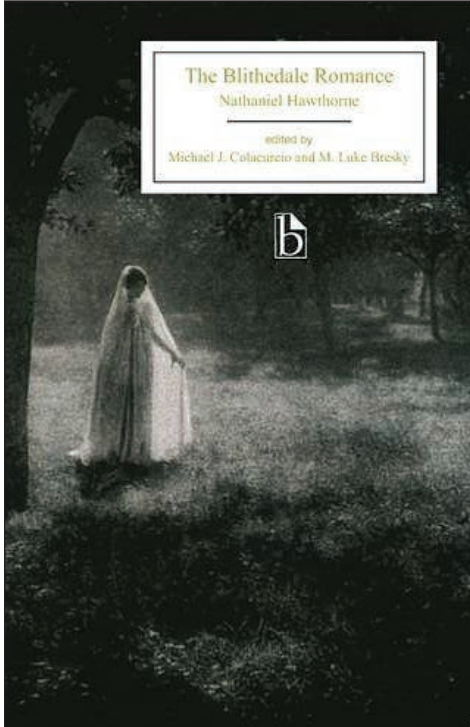
One of the takeaways of Dr. Wright-Maley's research speaks to contemporary education practices in general. Students who have participated in simulations report long-term retention, confirming the strong connection between emotion and memory and making the case for a lived education, one that fosters the connection between the physical and conceptual expressions of learning. Now that students are accustomed to more interactive content—via YouTube, performance, games, etc.—educators must, in Dr. Wright-Maley's opinion, develop more meaningful and engaged approaches to education. We must be wary of over-pathologizing children who struggle to pay attention to traditional ways of delivering knowledge, without first re-envisioning a system of schooling designed to better serve the changing needs of contemporary kids. Simulations may play a larger role in the classrooms of the future.

The **Teaching and Research Newsletter** is published by St. Mary's University and distributed to faculty, staff, alumni, friends and supporters to celebrate the accomplishments of the University's faculty and share news and information throughout the St. Mary's community.

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Dr. Luke Bresky:

Publishes New Edition of *The Blithedale Romance*



The persistence of social injustices connected specifically with race, class and gender—and the persistent hope of amending these injustices—have ensured the contemporary relevance of the American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne’s classic novel, *The Blithedale Romance* (1852).

Dr. Luke Bresky, Associate Professor of English, recently teamed up with legendary Americanist Michael Colacurcio of UCLA to produce a new edition of *The Blithedale Romance*—one that will completely change the way future generations of students and researchers read the classic text.

Written at the peak of Hawthorne’s career as a novelist, *Blithedale* concerns the founding of a socialist community by radicals whose political and personal agendas, initially imagined to be mutually sympathetic, prove no less competitive than the capitalism they repudiate.

Hailed as “an exceptional scholarly achievement” and “a major piece of literary analysis,” Bresky and Colacurcio’s new Broadview Press edition highlights the novel’s historical context, and includes primary texts concerning such radical causes as antislavery, women’s rights and labor reform. Students and teachers alike will find that this rich collection of historical documents opens many new perspectives on a perennially challenging and important novel.

Watch the St. Mary’s site for details on the official book launch, coming up in March 2016.

Open Classes

The Teaching and Learning Committee has been promoting Open Classes, an initiative that welcomes broader student and community participation into selected classes to showcase teaching and coursework and to intellectually engage participants.

- **Dr. Mary Ann McLean’s** Biology 381 Mycology class presented their work on fungi, through engaging and original videos, books, and oral presentations.
- Musician **Paul Woida** joined **Dr. Linda Henderson’s** Liberal Studies 401 class for an open session and performance that demonstrated his multi-media techniques of improvisation and looping.
- **Dr. Peter Doherty** is incorporating learnings from the 2015 Faculty Retreat into his Psychology 413 (Psychology of Trauma) class, using the Blanket Exercise (<http://kairosblanketexercise.org/about>) as a way of addressing the intergenerational trauma of indigenous peoples; **Ruth Scalp Lock**, author of *My Name is Shield Woman*, a memoir of the residential school system, will be leading the presentation. Scalp Lock is already familiar to St. Mary’s students, thanks to her recent guest lecture in the ENGL 359 Life Writing class.
- On January 27, **Dr. Michael Zekulin**, one of Canada’s leading experts on terrorism, gave a presentation entitled “Homegrown Terrorism: What We (Don’t) Know About Radicalization” for **Dr. Linda Henderson’s** Liberal Studies 403 class.
- In PSCY 465 (Language Development), **Dr. Corinne Syrnyk’s** students made their own “head-turn preference procedure” paradigm (a testing booth used in psycholinguistic labs to study speech perception). It came complete with lights, sound, parent and infant.

Forthcoming

Dr. Jennifer Garrison, Associate Professor of English, will have her new book, *Challenging Communion: The Eucharist and Middle English Literature*, published by Ohio State University Press. Dr. Garrison’s book examines literary treatments of the Eucharist, the central symbol of later medieval religious culture and the focus of increasingly dangerous political debates. Writers of Middle English often take advantage of the ways in which Eucharistic theology itself contests the boundaries between the material and the spiritual, and these writers challenge the Eucharistic ideal of union between Christ and the community of believers. By troubling the definitions of literal and figurative, they respond to and reformulate Eucharistic theology in politically challenging and poetically complex ways.

Recent Faculty Activity

Dr. Peter Baltutis (Assistant Professor, History and Catholic Studies) published "Faith that Does Justice: Jesuit Social Apostolate in English Canada, 1842-2014" in *Builders of a Nation*, ed. Jacques Monet (Novalis, 2015).

Dr. Luke Bresky (Associate Professor, English) published a critical edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* with Broadview Press (2015). He also published "Pro-Americans, Proto-Americans and Un-Americans in Melville's *Israel Potter*," in *A Passion for Getting It Right: Essays and Appreciations in Honor of Michael Colacurcio's 50 Years of Teaching*, ed. Carol Bensick (Peter Lang, 2016). Forthcoming this spring is "'A Day-dream and Yet a Fact': Universal Emancipation in *The Blithedale Romance*," in *Stories of Nation: Fictions, Politics, and the American Experience*, eds. Martin Griffin and Christopher Hebert (University of Tennessee, 2016).

Dr. Matthew Clay (Assistant Professor, Chemistry) attended the 2015 Symposium on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Banff, AB.

Dr. Trent Davis (Assistant Professor, Education) will deliver "Between the Teacher's Past and the Student's Future: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Pedagogical Presence" at a Concurrent Session at the 2016 Philosophy of Education Society annual meeting in Toronto (March 17-21, 2016). The paper will be published in *Philosophy of Education 2016*.

Dr. Peter Doherty (Associate Professor, Psychology and Family Studies) made a presentation in Standoff on the Blood Reserve as part of the reconciliation process, in response to the calls for action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (September 2015).

Dr. Timothy Harvie (Associate Professor, Philosophy and Ethics Chair, Humanities) delivered "Protest as Prayer: Paul Ricoeur's Symbolics and the Surplus of Political Meaning" at the Fifth Annual Religion and Spirituality in Society Conference, University of California at Berkeley (April 16-17, 2015).

Dr. Linda Henderson (Associate Professor, Sociology) is publishing "SGS: A Sensitizing Concept for Teaching Gender Diversity" in *Teaching Gender and Sex in Contemporary America*, eds. K. Haltinner and R. Pilgeram (Springer International Publishing, 2016).

Dr. Tara Hyland-Russell (Vice-President Academic and Dean, Associate Professor, English) and **Dr. Corinne Syrnyk (Assistant Professor, Psychology)** published "Narrative Possibilities of the Radical Humanities: Shaping Participatory and Justice-Oriented Citizens for Democracy" in *Teaching for Democracy in an Age of Economic Disparity*, eds. Cory Wright-Maley and Trent Davis (Routledge, 2016) (in press).

Alana Ireland (Lecturer, Psychology) presented "Body Image: Fact or Fiction? Leading by Example in an Appearance-Obsessed World," an invited workshop that was part of Eating Disorder Week at the University of Calgary (February 10, 2016).

Dr. Norman Knowles (Professor, History, and Director of Research) is on a six-month sabbatical beginning January 2016. With the aid of a grant from the Society of the Maple Leaf and the St. Mary's University Research Grant, he will focus on research into the Church Missionary Society and Indigenous Missionaries in Rupert's Land between 1840 and 1900 through the Church Missionary Society Archives at the University of Birmingham (U.K.). He recently led an Education for Ministry Training for the Diocese of

Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (in Halifax) and facilitated a series of workshops at the School of Theology at the University of the South (Sewanee, Tennessee) on researching and teaching church history.

Dr. Alisa McArthur (Associate Professor, Psychology) and **Dr. Corinne Syrnyk (Assistant Professor, Psychology)** have co-authored a paper entitled "Post-secondary Students' Reactions to On-campus Animal-Assisted Therapy Events" for an upcoming issue of *Society & Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Studies*.

Dr. Joseph Mills (Adjunct Assistant Professor, Sociology) attended the Loughheed Leadership Sport Initiative, a gathering of leading scholars and practitioners to develop innovative ideas and solutions for creating healthy and active communities across Canada (January 2016).

Dr. Gerry Turcotte (President, St. Mary's University) will have *Small Things: Essays on Faith and Hope* published by Novalis this spring. This collection of short essays, drawn from three years of newspaper columns on faith and the minutiae of everyday life, reflects on everything from feast days to social justice, from homelessness to the importance of philanthropy. The essays also celebrate the uniqueness of a university like St. Mary's, and the important role that small Liberal Arts and Science institutions play in the educational environment.

Dr. Cory Wright-Maley (Assistant Professor, Education) and **Dr. Trent Davis (Assistant Professor, Education)** are the editors of the forthcoming *Teaching for Democracy in an Age of Economic Disparity* (Routledge, 2016) (in press). With Eileen M. Gonzalez and Ryan Colwe, the pair have also published "Considering perspectives on transgender inclusion in Canadian Catholic elementary schools: Perspectives, challenges, and opportunities" in *The Journal of Social Studies Research* (January 2016).

Dr. Corey Wright-Maley also published "What Every Social Studies Teacher Should Know about Simulations" in *Canadian Social Studies* (December 2015), and "On 'Stepping Back and Letting Go': The Role of Control in the Success or Failure of Social Studies Simulations" in *Theory and Research in Social Education* (May 2015).

Upcoming Events

DR. MICHAEL DUGGAN TO DELIVER KEYNOTE

Michael Duggan, professor of Religious Studies and CWL Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Mary's, will deliver "How *Laudato Si'* Changes Everything: Engaging the Thought of Pope Francis and Naomi Klein" as the keynote address at a conference entitled *Beyond Silos: Prairie Views on Caring for our Common Home*. Held at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon on March 11-12, the conference will explore Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, from a prairie perspective, paying particular attention to how Pope Francis' call to care for our common home applies to the specific environmental concerns of this region. It will engage speakers from various backgrounds in a series of conversations/panels around three questions arising from the encyclical:

- 1) Can technology save us?
- 2) How do we educate to care for our common home?
- 3) What does an ecology of daily life look like?