

1. Announcing the DIG 2005-2006 theme to Carleton faculty

To the faculty:

As we are working on our plans for teaching next year, I'd like to alert you to the theme that the Diversity Initiative Group plans to use next year for several events related to identity and belonging. If you are teaching courses (or elements of courses) that fit within this theme, broadly defined, would you please let us know? These might include courses that deal with issues of community, global citizenship, nationalism, and transnationalism, among other topics. DIG will be inviting speakers to campus who may be available to speak to your classes. We'd also like to know if you have suggestions for events, speakers, and other activities. You can reply to this email or send a separate note to Carolyn Fure-Slocum (cfureslo@acs.carleton.edu) or me (msavina@carleton.edu).

If you are intrigued by the possibilities of this theme, specifically in relationship to ethical reflection, and would like some seed money to design part of a course for next year, grant funding is available through PERC (the Program on Ethical Reflection at Carleton). Deadline for applications is April 1; either Doug Mork (dmork@acs.carleton.edu) or I (msavina@carleton.edu) can answer questions and send you the full information about these proposals.

"I'm a Stranger Here Myself" "*

Most of us, at one time or another, have wondered about who we are and where we belong. Leaving home, traveling, changing jobs, or graduating from college can raise questions about who we are in relation to others and challenge us to define our identities differently. Changes in our circumstances or a sense that the people and media around us don't represent our experiences may lead us to feel unsure of where we belong. During this year-long series of events, DIG hopes to raise issues about identity recognition and development, to name the characteristics of an environment that help us feel like we belong, and to identify some of the obstacles that may interfere with a sense of belonging.

*The title of at least nine books and one Carleton course (CCST 175). One of the books is Tisdale, Robert. *I'm a Stranger Here Myself*. Northfield, MN, Black Willow Press, 1998, which contains this poem:

At Home in the Midwest

They do not see how empty it is,
the natives. Knowing all their neighbors,
not encountering the strange,
they speak a small language of familiar words
and are shy of wild gestures,
even in the hands of children.

The stubble fields and candid sky
companion them like the flattening ground,
the hardening soil on which they write
the concise declarative sentences
of their brief history.

Their dogs bark the space around them,
keeping the new at a distance.
Night arrives on time,
no sudden unknown interiors,
no vacancies they have not discussed
and put by for.

To be at home in the Midwest
is to know it all from here to horizon,
to inhabit with caution a dream
of peace through the sky fail,
to grapple life from concrete abstractions —
yield per acre, percentage of moisture.

And for satisfaction, to cast or troll
for the mystery, the unnecessary,
when the lure, the gaudy, shining,
spoon of metal, brings up from the deeps
something hitherto unpossessed —
wet, silent, vicious, alien, and demonstrably
there.

2. "What is a Generally Educated Person?" This is the title of a short essay by Jerry G. Gaff, Senior Scholar, AAC&U, which should be of broad interest in light of the discussion of the role of distribution requirements at Carleton. You can find the essay at: <http://www.aacu-edu.org/peerreview/pr-fa04/pr-fa04feature1.cfm>

March 3, 2005