

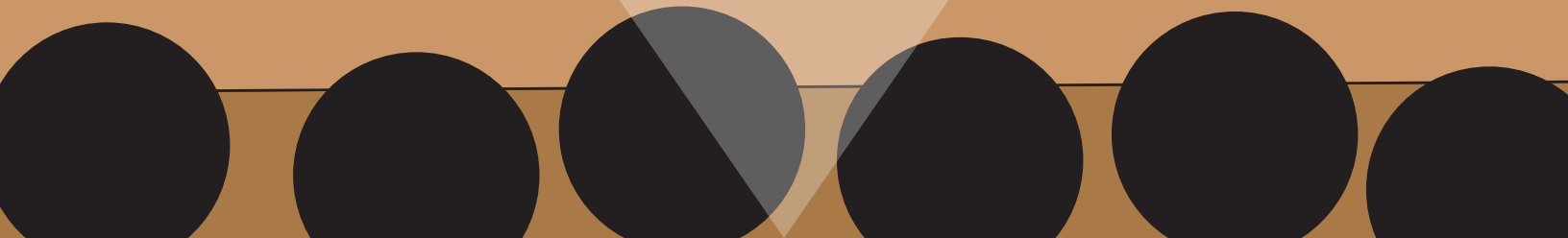
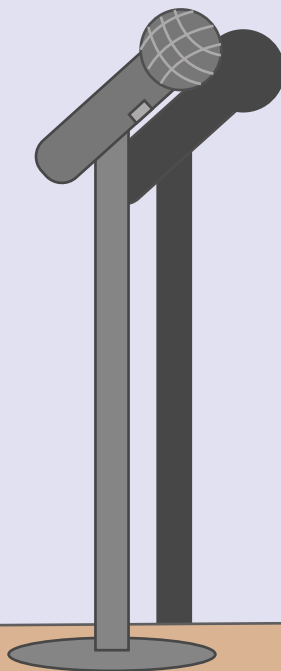


# Teaching and Learning Showcase Program



May 2nd, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Muyskens Conference Room (The Summit)



# Schedule of Events

TIME	ACTIVITY	PRESENTER
9:00 – 9:10 a.m.	Sign In/ Breakfast	
9:10 – 9:30 a.m.	Remarks by Provost Patricia Price and CETLL	
9:30 – 9:55 a.m.	Thinking of Immigrant Students	Kate Pechenkina
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Empowering Future Educators Through Research: Cultivating a "Right to Research" Beyond the Classroom	Eric Silberberg
10:15 – 10:40 a.m.	Journaling With Pre-Service Teachers: The Benefits of Critical Reflection	Lakisha Odum + Melanie Waller
10:40 – 10:55 a.m.	Bio break	
11:00 – 11:15 a.m.	Evaluating Hands-On Exercises in An Advanced Experimental Lab Course	Holly Weisberg + Yvette Alvarenga
11:15 – 11:20 a.m.	Stretch	
11:20 – 11:45 a.m.	The Power of Role-Playing for Exploring Big Questions	Meredith Katz
11:45 – 12:00 p.m.	Facilitating meaningful experiences: Insights from Teaching Research Methods in Music Education	Claudia Cali
12:00 – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch	
12:25 – 12:30 p.m.	Remarks by Associate Provost Maria DeLongoria	
12:35 – 12:55 p.m.	From Classroom to Community: Integrating Academic Concepts with Cultural Community Contexts	Kayla Cato-Piersaint
	Virtual Exchange as a Learning Tool for Undergraduates: A few tips and take-aways	Wendy Leynse

	Szymanowska Polonaise and Joplin Ragtime as Historical Composition Projects in the Theory Classroom: Active Learning and Inclusive Repertoire	Gilad Rabinovitch
12:55 – 1:00 p.m.	Stretch	
	Transforming Large Introductory Courses through Active Learning and Skill-Building Strategies	Christine Ramadhin
	Self-Aware Students: Using Exam Wrappers and Office Hour Consultations to Promote Reflection	Seth Lehman
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Preparing Undergraduate Students to Teach in Secondary Schools Through Socratic Case-Based Approaches	Alpana Bhattacharya
	Improving Analytical Reading Skills with Argument Mapping	Peter Liberman
2:00 – 2:10 p.m.	Bio break	
2:10 – 2:45 p.m.	Facilitating Engaged Student Learning Inside & Outside the Classroom	Christopher Williams + Iva Burdett
2:45 – 3:10 p.m.	The (Al)chemist: Do you like to play?	Iva Burdett
3:10 p.m.	Closing Group Activity + Feedback Survey	
3:30 p.m.	Program closes	

# Presentation Descriptions

## **Thinking of Immigrant Students, Kate Pechenkina** (Anthropology)

This workshop will address Queens College's essential mission of serving first and second-generation immigrant students. With over 30% of our student population born outside the US and the overwhelming majority speaking languages other than English as their native tongue, we have a distinctive educational environment that calls for thoughtful pedagogical approaches. Despite our commitment to this demographic, we rarely engage in deep discussions about the immigrant experience and how it shapes their academic journeys. This roundtable discussion will explore the unique challenges faced by immigrant students beyond the broader categories of underprivileged or marginalized groups. We'll examine how immigration status, cultural transitions, language acquisition, and transnational identities create specific educational needs.

Participants will discover evidence-based pedagogical strategies tailored to immigrant learners, share successful teaching practices, and develop new approaches that honor students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By enhancing our understanding of immigrant student experiences, we can better fulfill our institutional mission and create more inclusive learning environments that transform potential barriers into sources of academic strength and resilience.

## **Empowering Future Educators Through Research: Cultivating a "Right to Research" Beyond the Classroom, Eric Silberberg** (Library)

As the Education Librarian, I partner with the research courses in the School of Education, where future teachers and education professionals engaged in research around a "problem of practice" they observe at their internship and student teaching sites. This presentation is based on the pedagogical theory of a "right to research" for future educators and will show how students are empowered to conduct research not only for their courses but beyond QC as future education professionals. Students evaluate key educational research resources and critique the scholarly communication infrastructure within the education discipline. Also discussed is how current cuts to the federal department of education impacts students' ability to conduct educational research.

## **Journaling With Pre-Service Teachers: The Benefits of Critical Reflection, Lakisha Odlum** (Secondary Education & Youth Services) + **Melanie Waller** (Secondary Social Studies)

A critical component of pre-service teacher training is critical reflection (Good & Whang, 2010; Yee, Abdullah, & Mohd Nawi, 2022). It is important that pre-service teachers become "reflective practitioners" (Francis, 1995) in order for them to better understand themselves as future teachers. Moreover, critical reflection is a way for pre-service teachers to strengthen and improve their teaching skills. In this presentation, two secondary teacher educators will share the ways they integrate critical journal reflections in their student teaching seminars at Queens College. The first teacher educator will share her implementation of "practitioner-focused" journal prompts, while the other teacher educator will present her approach to "wellness/mental health-focused" journal prompts. Both teachers will highlight the benefits of this practice, share insights from pre-service teacher feedback, and offer recommendations for incorporating critical journaling into any course.

## **Evaluating Hands-On Exercises in An Advanced Experimental Lab Course, Holly Weisberg**

(Psychology) + **Yvette Alvarenga** (Queens College Student)

Students from the Behavior Analysis Master's program assisted in developing lab exercises for an undergraduate Advanced Experimental Psychology Behavior Analysis Course. We collected outcomes assessing undergraduate students' opinions about the lab exercises. The MA students reported on the outcomes of these exercises in a final research paper as part of their coursework. In this presentation I will review some of the hands-on exercises, the survey we used to evaluate student opinions, and outcomes.

## **The Power of Role-Playing for Exploring Big Questions, Meredith Katz** (Secondary Education & Youth Services)

This interactive workshop illustrates role-playing as an active learning technique. Taking on the persona of another allows students to develop an understanding of multiple perspectives around an issue by considering:

- 1) How is the perspective of the person I am representing similar to and different to my own?
- 2) How is my perspective, and my character's perspective, similar to and different from others in our group/discussion?

Students find that taking on another's persona helps free them to engage more deeply with multiple perspectives around complex questions and issues. Participants will engage in a role-playing exercise and will reflect on the experience in a debrief. They will consider their own learning and the potential for learning of their own students.

## **Facilitating Meaningful Experiences: Insights from Teaching Research Methods in Music Education, Claudia Calì** (Music)

The purpose of this presentation is to examine how adopting a constructivist approach to teaching a qualitative research method class to graduate students in music education can foster creative thinking, refine music teaching skills and provide transformative learning experiences. Introduction to research in music education is a mandatory graduate course designed to familiarize students with educational research techniques, grounding their teaching in evidence-based practices. Over six years of teaching this course, I developed a constructivist pedagogical approach that nurtures creative thinking through a learning process shaped by artistic practices such as poetry, visual arts or music. For the students enrolled in the class, the process of designing and implementing mini-research projects becomes a meaningful journey in self-understanding that often re-ignite their enthusiasm and gives new purpose to their music teaching. In this presentation, I examine the course structure, analyze assignments and class activities that students found most meaningful and reflect on the lesson I learned while implementing constructivism in the context of a highly academic, content-based class.

## **From Classroom to Community: Integrating Academic Concepts with Cultural Community Contexts, Kayla Cato-Piersaint** (Educational & Community Programs + Africana Studies)

This session explores the integration of academic concepts with community-based cultural contexts through the lens of Community-Engaged Learning (CEL). Drawing from her experience as a Fall 2024 CEL Faculty Fellow, Cato-Piersaint will share her insights gained from workshops focused on connecting classroom learning to real-world community engagement and how to integrate the needs of the community with classroom content. The

presentation will highlight the work she developed during the fellowship, showcasing effective strategies for implementing CEL pedagogy. Attendees will be guided through the course design process, including assignments, assessments, and reflective practices that promote civic engagement, social responsibility, and active citizenship. A central focus will be her partnership with the Louis Armstrong House Museum, where her students conducted artist interviews that are now part of the museum's archival collection. This collaboration exemplifies the powerful intersection between academic inquiry and meaningful community involvement. Blending research, personal narratives, and practical strategies, this session will offer actionable tools for faculty seeking to bring CEL into their own classrooms. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of CEL and concrete ideas to enhance student learning through community partnerships.

### **Virtual Exchange as a Learning Tool for Undergraduates: A Few Tips and Take-Aways, Wendy Leynse (Anthropology)**

In this lightning presentation, I will discuss virtual exchange experiences I've had with my undergraduate students and reflect on the skills gained, as well as the process. As technology changes, so do the possibilities for interacting directly with people around the globe and learning about one another. Educational programs such as virtual exchange and COIL provide interesting pedagogical tools with great formative potential to develop listening skills, critical thinking, and perspective-taking. Such programs facilitate cultural knowledge, understanding, and empathy between interlocutors. My students made thoughtful comparisons to develop an understanding of the complex cultural contexts that framed their partners' lives. As students of culture they came away with a more nuanced understanding of the human experience as one that is multiple, needing to be understood through the specificities of cultural framing.

### **Szymanowska Polonaise and Joplin Ragtime as Historical Composition Projects in the Theory Classroom: Active Learning and Inclusive Repertoire, Gilad Rabinovitch (Music)**

My lightning talk describes my experience teaching a historical composition project within the theory classroom. I used Scott Joplin ragtimes and Maria Szymanowska polonaises as models appropriate for the harmonic materials taught in Theory IV. Both composers represent diversity, which is a challenge for us in European classical music. Teaching theory is challenging due to various other motivational and academic reasons (e.g., rule-based "grammatical" logic vs. exemplar learning). The students discovered aspects of the idiolects and created their own ragtime or polonaise inspired by the models.

### **Transforming Large Introductory Courses through Active Learning and Skill-Building Strategies, Christine Ramadhin (School of Earth & Environmental Sciences)**

Large introductory science courses present unique challenges for student engagement and learning, particularly for non-majors with diverse academic backgrounds and varying interest levels. This presentation will share findings from a multi-semester study implementing active learning strategies in a large geoscience course (ENSCI99). Data collected across three semesters shows how specific interactive approaches—including structured group discussions, peer mentor review sessions, guided worksheets, skill-awareness building through reflection questions, and exit tickets—significantly improved academic performance, course satisfaction, and the development of transferable skills. The session will highlight evidence-based practices that can be adapted across disciplines to transform large enrollment courses from requirements to opportunities for meaningful

learning, with particular emphasis on how these strategies create continuous learning cycles that extend beyond the classroom.

### **Self-Aware Students: Using Exam Wrappers and Office Hour Consultations to Promote Reflection, Seth Lehman (Mathematics)**

Exams and projects should serve as opportunities for students to meaningfully engage with a course, not only to demonstrate content mastery, but also to reflect on their own metacognition. I will share how using an exam wrapper and holding one-on-one consultations in office hours has helped me productively engage students in conversations about their learning in college algebra and precalculus classes. We will discuss how to create an exam wrapper and analyze student responses. I will share my model for office hour consultations, and we will brainstorm productive questions that help to facilitate student self-awareness and metacognition.

### **Preparing Undergraduate Students to Teach in Secondary Schools Through Socratic Case-Based Approaches, Alpana Bhattacharya (Secondary Education & Youth Services)**

Socratic instructional approaches for teacher preparation have been endorsed by teacher education programs across the globe. The proposed presentation will showcase case-based teacher preparation from an undergraduate educational psychology course. Socratic educational approaches such as questioning, dialogue, and reflection, incorporated in the educational psychology course for promoting undergraduate students' critical thinking and reflective teaching practice through case-based learning, will be illustrated. First, studies related to case-based learning in teacher preparation courses will be reviewed as evidence-based findings to support Socratic case-based method for promoting undergraduate students' critical thinking and reflective teaching practice. Next, assessment of undergraduate students' performance during case-based learning in the educational psychology course will be illustrated to highlight effectiveness of collaborative dialogue and critical thinking under two conditions: face-to-face case analysis (written cases) and computer-mediated case analysis (video cases). Finally, recommendations for promoting undergraduate students' critical thinking and reflective teaching practice, based on Socratic case-based method of learning, will be discussed. Implications of case-based learning as a constructivist approach, with Socratic dialogue and questioning as foundational strategies, will also be examined as future research directions for promoting undergraduate students' critical thinking and reflective teaching practice.

### **Improving Analytical Reading Skills with Argument Mapping, Peter Liberman (Political Science)**

The ability to understand and evaluate written arguments is vital for academic success, democratic citizenship, careers, and personal decisions. Unfortunately, most students do not get enough practice analyzing arguments to substantially improve while in college. However, a scalable type of argument mapping exercise, argument map puzzles, offers a promising means of providing such practice. In a pre-/posttest quasi-experiment at Queens College, students in a very large, introductory-level class that regularly completed AMPs, individually at home and collaboratively during class time, improved their analytical ability dramatically. By enabling entirely automated individual assessment and feedback, AMPs can enable students in large classes to obtain most of the same gains in reading and thinking skills previously achieved only in small seminars.

## **Facilitating Engaged Student Learning Inside & Outside the Classroom, Christopher Williams**

(English) + **Iva Burdett** (Chemistry & Biochemistry)

A robust body of research shows that engaged students perform better, are more likely to take risks, and persist at higher rates. Such positive outcomes are even more pronounced for students from historically under-represented communities, who comprise much of our QC student body. This multidisciplinary panel will share concrete, reproducible strategies that have led to demonstrably higher and more meaningful student engagement within and outside the QC classroom. Chris Williams (English) will demonstrate how designing "real-world" assignments and adopting revision-based assessment can excite and motivate students while Iva Burdett (Chemistry) will present on how starting a discipline-focused student club in Chemistry (the Alchemist Club) gave birth to a highly engaged community of students from communities that are historically underrepresented in STEM.

We hope that participants will learn: 1) how to revise an assignment to foster active learning, 2) how revision-based assessment motivates students, and 3) how starting and mentoring a discipline-focused student club can produce highly engaged student communities.

## **The (Al)Chemist: Do you like to play?, Iva Burdett** (Chemistry & Biochemistry)

Can we interest you in playing an Alchemist game?

We designed a chemistry game simple enough for anyone to participate, regardless of their background. By playing with you, we hope to prove the point that anyone can enjoy scary chemistry if they are introduced to it in the right way. We think the best way to convince you is to involve you, and we would rather show than tell (in a true chemistry demonstration fashion).



# Faculty Presenters



## **Yvette Alvarenga, Queens College Student**

Yvette Alvarenga is a student in the Accelerated ABA program. As part of her coursework, she worked with Dr. Weisberg to help develop a hands on lab exercise for her undergraduate Advanced Experimental Behavior Analysis course and evaluated outcomes of this exercise in a research report.



## **Alpana Bhattacharya, Secondary Education & Youth Services**

Alpana Bhattacharya is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology in the Secondary Education and Youth Services department at Queens College and the Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology at the Graduate Center, the City University of New York (CUNY). Her research interests include literacy acquisition, language development, reading and writing processes, metacognitive strategy instruction, specific learning disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and teacher preparation for secondary school education. Her research contributions include journal articles, book chapters, and conference presentations in the areas of learning disabilities, literacy education, and teacher preparation. She also serves as manuscript and proposal reviewer for the American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), Learning Disabilities Worldwide (LDW), Taylor & Francis, and Elsevier. As a tenured faculty at Queens College and consortium faculty at the Graduate Center, CUNY, she teaches undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral courses in Educational Psychology. She also supervises doctoral dissertations in the areas of literacy education and language development from early childhood through adulthood.



## **Iva Burdett, Chemistry & Biochemistry**

Dr. Iva Burdett is a Lecturer in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department at Queens College. She received her PhD in Physical Chemistry from Brandeis University, where she worked on protein science and neurodegenerative diseases. Before joining CUNY, she taught at Mercy College, NYU School of Dentistry, Brandeis University and Belgrade University.

Dr. Burdett's teaching is deeply rooted in the concepts of approachability, transparency, gentle guidance, and personal attention. She is devoted to her students' and her own continuous growth and excellence, gained through play, adventure and discovery. Decades of learning, teaching, and learning how to teach have shaped her teaching philosophy: If you are going to do it, do it from the heart.



## **Claudia Cali, Music**

Claudia Cali is Assistant Professor of Music Education at Queens College, Aaron Copland School of Music. A native of Italy, Claudia holds a Degree in Piano Performance, two Master's degrees from the University of Perugia and the Catholic University of Milan and earned an Ed.D from Teachers College Columbia University. Alongside an active performing career, she researches and publishes on music in childhood, focusing on how music influences family relationships, especially within immigrant communities. Her scholarly work is grounded in years of teaching music to young children and their parents in both Italy and the US.

### **Kayla Cato-Piersaint, Educational & Community Programs + Africana Studies**



Kayla Cato-Piersaint is a first generation American, born to parents who hail from Jamaica. She has earned her B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood with a dual degree in Special Education and her M.S.Ed. in Literacy Education. Here at Queens College, Kayla is the Academic Program Coordinator in the Office of Educational and Community Programs. In this role she extends the mission of the school through program design, course advisement, curriculum organization, and field placement partnerships. She also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Africana Studies Department, the SEEK Department, and the College Now Program. Her courses focus on cultural studies, theoretical approaches of understanding race/identity formation, the identification and articulation of stereotypical tropes of African Americans within contemporary contexts, conceptual implications of discrimination, slavery coerced Americanization, colonization, and color consciousness on the social experience of people of color.



### **Meredith Katz, Secondary Education & Youth Services**

Meredith Katz is a doctoral lecturer in the Social Studies Secondary Education program in the Secondary Education and Youth Services department. She is also a Project Director for the Jewish Court of All Time online simulation program. Her research explores the teaching of controversial issues in the secondary classroom and preparation of teachers in this area.



### **Seth Lehman, Mathematics**

Seth Lehman is a lecturer within the SEEK program at Queens College and has taught mathematics for nine years. His recent projects include working with the CUNY Learning Mindset team to disseminate research and resources on learning mindsets to CUNY faculty, developing OER math curriculum for departmental use, and coordinating College Algebra at Queens College. Some of Seth's most fulfilling moments as an educator are when students tell him that they used to hate math, but they actually enjoyed being in his classroom.



### **Wendy Leynse, Anthropology**

Wendy Leynse - Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Queens College. Her research includes child socialization and food habits in France and pedagogical uses of virtual exchange. She teaches cultural anthropology, culture and learning, and ethnography of childhood. She was twice a QC virtual exchange faculty facilitator with Global Scholars Achieving Career Success, a CUNY-Stevens Initiative program. Her publications and conference papers address: virtual exchange, food and place, children's food habits, and school food. Dr. Leynse holds a PhD in Anthropology and French Studies from NYU, an MA in French Cultural Studies from Columbia, and a BA in French Linguistics from Cornell.



### **Peter Liberman, Political Science**

Peter Liberman (PhD, MIT) is Professor of Political Science at Queens College and the Graduate Center of CUNY, where he teaches courses on international politics and civics. His research has investigated resistance and collaboration under military occupation, nuclear proliferation, US foreign policy opinion, and methods to strengthen undergraduates' reading and analytical skills. He is currently completing a book on the role of retribution in U.S. foreign policy attitudes.

He is the author of *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies* (Princeton, 1996) and his research has appeared in *International Security*,

*International Organization, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Security Studies, Public Opinion Quarterly, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, and Journal of Southern African Studies.* He has also published shorter pieces in *Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, National Interest, and The New York Times.*



### **Lakisha Odlum, Secondary Education & Youth Services**

Lakisha Odlum, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor and Co-Director of English Education in Secondary Education and Youth Services. She is the recent recipient of the Early Career Educator of Color Award from the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Literacy Research Association's STAR Mentoring Award. Her research interests include racial literacy and teacher preparation, the intersection of racial and digital literacies, diversifying the teaching profession and the teaching of Black girls. Her research has been published in the *Journal of African American Women and Girls in Education* and in *Building Civic Futures in K-12 Classrooms.*



### **Kate Pechenkina, Anthropology**

Pechenkina earned a BS in biology and an MS in biology/anthropology from Moscow State University in Russia. She received a PhD in anthropology from the University of Missouri–Columbia in 2002 and shortly after joined the faculty at Queens College and the CUNY Graduate Center, where she currently has the rank of professor.

A principal emphasis in her research is on how past environmental and cultural changes have shaped human epidemiology. Her research interests include stable isotope reconstruction of past human and animal diets, gender inequality in health, and bone and dental pathology. Since 2004, she has been conducting fieldwork in Henan Province, China, where she excavates at the ancient city of Zhengnan, which served as a capital of Zheng and Han kingdoms during early dynasties. She co-edited a research anthology, *Bioarchaeology of East Asia: Movement, Contact, Health*, and has published over two dozen research articles and book chapters.



### **Gilad Rabinovitch, Music**

Gilad Rabinovitch is an associate professor of music theory at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College. He has published widely on eighteenth-century phrase schemata, historical pedagogies, and the reimagining of improvisation in the European tradition. His 2022 article on Carl Czerny and improvisation won a 2023 publication award from the Society for Music Theory. He has presented invited talks at institutions including UT Austin, Northwestern University, and the University of Montreal.



### **Christine Ramadhin, School of Earth & Environmental Sciences**

Dr. Christine Ramadhin is an environmental science educator at Queens College whose work includes active learning strategies and paleoclimate research. She serves as an undergraduate advisor and laboratory coordinator in the SEES department, where she enhances student engagement and supports instructional innovation. As co-coordinator of the Peer Mentor Program, she leads professional development workshops to foster mentorship and leadership skills. Her pedagogical research centers on inclusive, skill-based learning environments that prepare students for real-world environmental challenges. Dr. Ramadhin also serves on multiple assessment committees, contributing to programmatic improvement and student success.





### **Eric Silberberg, Library**

Eric Silberberg is the Instructional Design and Education Librarian at Queens College Library. His current research explores open access publishing in education literature and library services for teacher training programs in Mexico and the United States. See more at [eric Silberberg.com](https://eric Silberberg.com)



### **Melanie Waller, Secondary Social Studies**

Melanie Waller is a doctoral lecturer at CUNY Queens College, where she is a teacher educator in the social studies department. Her research interests are civic education, teaching with and for deliberation, and suburban schools. Her most recent article on teaching controversial topics in politically polarized communities was published in *Social Studies Research and Practice*. Dr. Waller teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on social studies methods, clinical practice and educational foundations.



### **Holly Weisberg, Psychology**

Dr. Weisberg is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and New York State Licensed Behavior Analyst. Clinically, she has worked with individuals ranging from 3-70 years old across home, school, community, and workplace settings. Dr. Weisberg's research has included applications of behavior analysis to teach social and communication skills to children with autism. She has almost a decade of experience in teaching undergraduate psychology courses at CUNY colleges.

At Queens College, Dr. Weisberg is the advisor of the accelerated undergraduate applied behavior analysis program. She also teaches various undergraduate psychology courses in learning, behavior analysis, and development.



### **Christopher Williams, English**

Educated at Yale and Columbia University, Christopher John Williams co-directs the First-Year Writing Program at Queens College, where he was also appointed as the 2023–2024 provost's faculty diversity fellow. His work focuses on ameliorating first-year-student disengagement in core courses, fostering multilingual-friendly and affirming instruction and spaces within the university, and researching the role WPAs play in facilitating or countering the adjunctification of writing programs in higher education.