



# CTL REFLECTIONS NEWSLETTER



Spring 2025 Vol. 20

# Content

3	CTL Mission
4	Co-Evolving Minds: The Role of AI in Shaping Our Future
10	Reflections on ACUE: A Journey of Self-Discovery and Teaching Transformation
14	Touchstone, Achievements
16	Kick Off Day
20	Upcoming Events
21	CTL Advisory
22	Editors & CTL Team

# CTL Mission

*“Creating better teachers to better serve our students”*

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Hostos Community College champions excellence in teaching and learning by cultivating innovative pedagogies and leveraging cutting-edge technologies. Through interdisciplinary and cross-divisional collaborations, the CTL builds a vibrant, inclusive community of educators dedicated to continuous growth and transformative learning experiences.

Goals and Objectives:

To fulfill this mission, the Center for Teaching and Learning is dedicated to:

- Empowering Faculty Excellence: Provide dynamic faculty development opportunities that foster a culture of teaching excellence, enhance instructional practices, and transform the faculty's teaching experiences in both traditional and online environments.
- Championing Best Practices: Promote and support the implementation of best practices in pedagogy, encouraging innovative and effective teaching strategies that engage and inspire students across all learning modalities.
- Advancing Faculty Growth: Offer opportunities for faculty to engage in research, scholarship, service, and leadership development. Encourage the creation and application of pedagogical innovations that elevate teaching and improve student outcomes.
- Cultivating a Collaborative Culture: Partner with the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) and other key stakeholders to build and sustain a culture of collaboration across the institution, ensuring that all efforts are aligned with our shared educational mission.
- Expanding Engagement: Develop and implement strategies to increase faculty awareness of, and participation in, all CTL activities and initiatives, ensuring broad and inclusive engagement within our academic community.

# Co-Evolving Minds: The Role of AI in Shaping Our Future



**Víctor M. Torres-Vélez**  
Assistant Professor  
Humanities Department

Hello, I am Dr. Torres-Velez from the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Unit in the Humanities Department at Hostos Community College, CUNY. As a critical medical anthropologist with a focus on environmental justice and Science and Technology Studies, I approach artificial intelligence not as a looming existential threat but as a powerful potential ally in our collective journey. To understand AI's true impact, however, we must first recognize how deeply it is intertwined with our own evolution as *Homo sapiens*—a recognition that ultimately reveals we are, and always have been, co-creating our destiny with our inventions (Mollick 2023; Benjamin 2022). This reflection brings us to our theme:

“Co-Evolving Minds: The Role of AI in Shaping Our Future.”

### Humanity's Technological Legacy

From our earliest ancestors, technology has been both a driver and a product of human development—shaping our physical capabilities, cultural practices, and intellectual horizons (Buolamwini 2021). Each innovation, whether a sharpened stone or a silicon microchip, stands as a testament to our innate drive to transcend limitations.

To ground ourselves in this sweeping history, let's consider some key milestones (National Museum of Natural History 2022; Harmand et al. 2015; Hublin et al. 2017; Crawford 2004; Bryce 2005; Eisenstein 1980; Stearns 2012; Standage 1998; Hafner and Lyon 1996; Isaacson 2011; OpenAI 2022):

Date	Actor/Location	Technology
3.3 million years ago	Australopithecus afarensis / East Africa / Kenya	Stone tools
1.7 million years ago	Homo erectus / Wonderwerk Cave, South Africa	Control of fire
300,000 years ago	Homo sapiens / Ethiopia	Origins of language
12,000 years ago	Early Agricultural Societies / Fertile Crescent (including West Bank, Palestine)	Domestication of plants & animals
7,000 years ago	Sumerians / Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq)	First writing system (Cuneiform)
5,500 years ago	Sumerians / Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq)	Invention of the wheel
3,200 years ago	Hittite Empire / Anatolia region (modern-day Turkey)	Iron Age
584 years ago	Johannes Gutenberg / Germany	Printing Press
264 years ago	J. Watt (steam engine) / Scotland; R. Arkwright (factory) / England	Industrial Revolution
180 years ago	W. Cooke & C. Wheatstone (England); S. Morse (United States)	Telegraph
55 years ago	ARPANET / DARPA (United States)	Internet
17 years ago	S. Jobs / Apple's iPhone (United States)	Smartphone
2 years ago	S. Altman / OpenAI / GPT-3.5 (United States)	ChatGPT / Artificial Intelligence



### The Threshold of Homo ars technica

As we marvel at the speed and scope of our modern era, it becomes ever clearer that what truly distinguishes humans is neither language nor the fleeting boundaries of culture, but our capacity to create and deploy technology as an evolutionary strategy. I introduce the term *Homo ars technica*—Latin for “the art of technology”—to describe this stage of our species: one in which the line between human thought and technological augmentation grows increasingly blurred, forging a new kind of adaptive synergy (Bowen 2024).

Will this stage lead us toward *Homo cyberneticus*, a moment in evolution where our biological and mechanical boundaries collapse altogether?

It’s easy to imagine a future where the human mind, extended and amplified by AI, reshapes our collective imagination. Yet, as we stand at this threshold, we also face urgent questions about inequality, resource allocation, and the ethical frameworks that will govern our technological endeavors (Benjamin 2022). Are we prepared for such rapid changes, or will we be consumed by them?

### AI as Ally or Adversary?

There is a tendency to treat AI as a monolithic force marching inexorably toward world domination. But in truth, AI is not an alien invader: it is our creation, a reflection of our values and biases, our aspirations and fears. As a critical medical anthropologist, I see AI as a potent lens through which we can re-

examine our responsibilities to one another and to the planet.

Rather than framing AI as a threat, we can consider it a co-traveler in our evolutionary journey, one that might help us address pressing global challenges—from healthcare inequities to climate adaptation. But just as AI can be wielded to amplify our higher ideals, it can also be used to deepen social divides (Royer 2022).

### We Co-Think, Therefore We Are

With AI as a catalyst, we now possess unprecedented power to analyze complex problems, innovate solutions, and share knowledge across vast networks in a fraction of a second. This emergent synergy prompts us to ask: **Do we embrace a post-Cartesian axiom “We co-think, therefore we are” where technology is no longer separate from the human mind but an extension of it?**

In this sense, humanity stands on a razor’s edge between collaborative transformation and destructive chaos. AI offers a vision of continued co-evolution—one where technological systems learn from our collective wisdom and, in turn, challenge us to evolve our thinking (Mollick 2023).

### Shaping Our Shared Destiny

As educators and students, policy makers and everyday citizens, we are not passive bystanders: **we are co-authors** of this unfolding story. How will we direct the synergy between humanity and AI? Will we permit AI to

magnify existing disparities, or will we insist it be harnessed to drive equity, empathy, and empowerment?

Therein lies our collective task:

- 1. Reflection** – Confront the ethical dimensions of AI with honesty and nuance.
- 2. Action** – Actively mold AI’s development to prioritize just outcomes.
- 3. Collaboration** – Forge interdisciplinary alliances, bringing social sciences, humanities, and STEM fields together.

### Conclusion: Embracing Co-Evolution

In the grand tapestry of our species’ history, AI is but the latest thread—albeit a transformative one. We may be hurtling toward *Homo cyberneticus*, or we may find new equilibrium in *Homo ars technica*. Whichever path emerges, it is our privilege and responsibility to guide the process.

**So I ask you:** How will you shape this co-evolution? Will you stand on the sidelines, or will you seize this moment to help direct the unfolding relationship between human and machine?

Let us move forward with curiosity and commitment, embracing the possibility of co-thinking so that, together, we can ensure our technological creations reflect our highest human values—and help us all thrive in the centuries to come.

## References

Benjamin, Ruha. 2022. *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

\*\*Bowen, José A. and C. E. Watson. 2024. *Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Buolamwini, Joy. 2021. *Unmasking AI: My Journey and the Fight for Algorithmic Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bryce, Trevor. 2005. *The Kingdom of the Hittites*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crawford, Harriet. 2004. *Sumer and the Sumerians*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. 1980. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hafner, Katie, and Matthew Lyon. 1996. *Where Wizards Stay Up Late: The Origins of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Harmand, Sonia, Jason E. Lewis, Christopher S. Feibel, et al. 2015. "3.3-million-year-old Stone Tools from Lomekwi 3, West Turkana, Kenya." *Nature* 521 (7552): 310–315.

Hublin, Jean-Jacques, Abdelouahed Ben-Ncer, Shara E. Bailey, et al. 2017. "New Fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco and the Pan-African

Origin of Homo sapiens." *Nature* 546 (7657): 289–292.

Isaacson, Walter. 2011. *Steve Jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Mollick, Ethan. 2023. *Co-Intelligence: Teaching and Learning in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

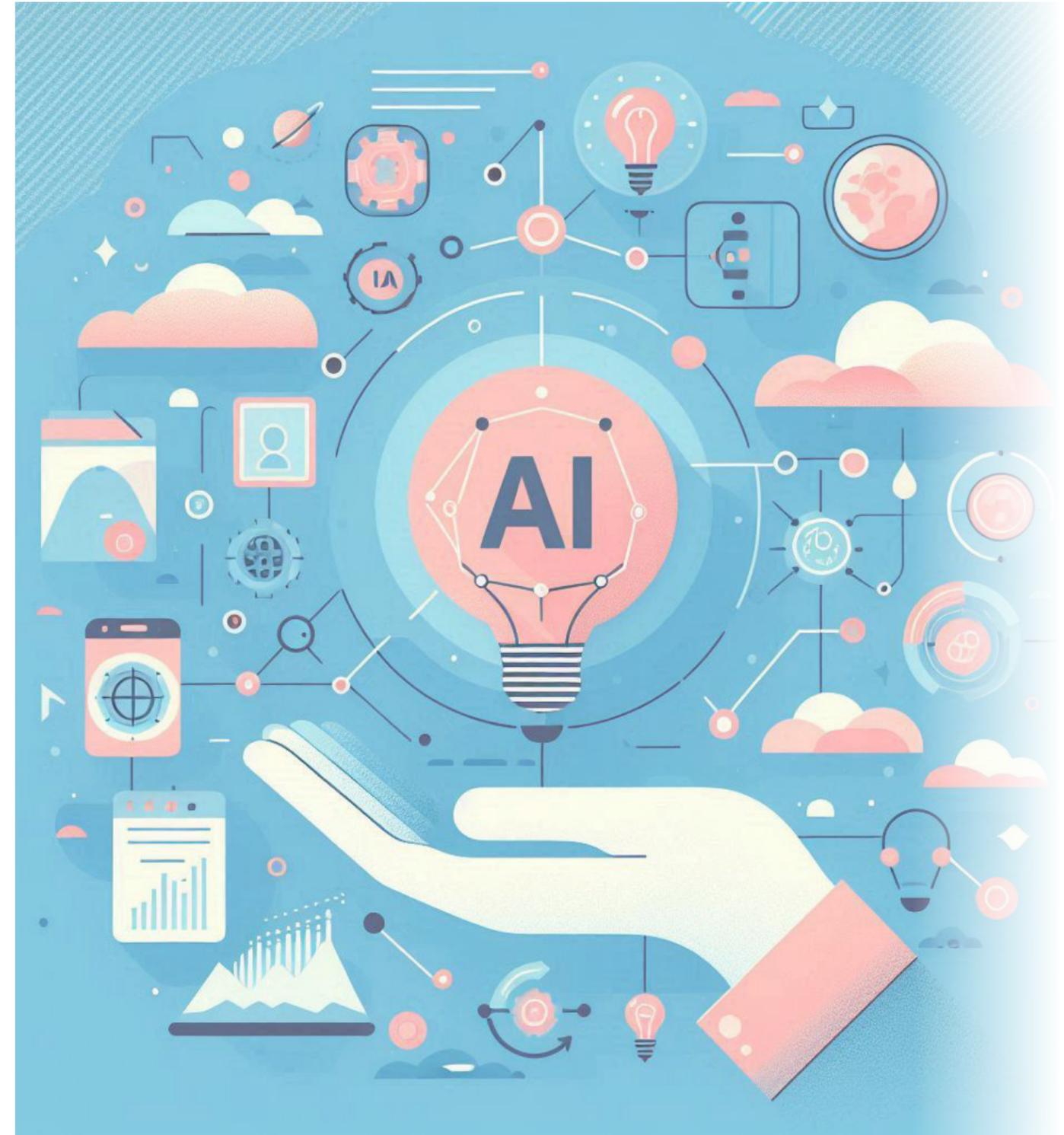
National Museum of Natural History. 2022. "Evidence of Controlled Fire by Early Humans." Accessed December 1, 2022. <https://naturalhistory.si.edu>

OpenAI. 2022. "Introducing ChatGPT." Accessed December 1, 2022. <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>

Royer, Jean. 2022. *The Short Anthropological Guide to the Study of Ethical AI*. New York: Routledge.

Standage, Tom. 1998. *The Victorian Internet*. New York: Walker & Company.

Stearns, Peter N. 2012. *The Industrial Revolution in World History*. 4th ed. Boulder,



# Reflections on ACUE: A Journey of Self-Discovery and Teaching Transformation



Anders Stachelek  
Associate Professor  
Mathematics

In 2023, I had the honor and privilege to participate in the first cohort of the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Effective Online Teaching Practices professional-development certification. This program consisted of four overarching sections that were each carefully designed to help faculty design the online-learning environment (section 1), facilitate active learning and lesson structures to enhance student engagement and learning (sections 2 and 3), and assess student achievement of learning outcomes in ways that are transparent and equitable for students (section 4). All the modules shared details about research on teaching and learning that support the best practices that were recommended in each module, through videos or podcasts from the experts themselves, demonstrations of the practices being implemented, and brief excerpts from the research itself.

As a participant in this cohort, each week throughout the fall and spring semesters, I had the opportunity to dive deep into each of the best practices proposed by ACUE. I took time to learn about the research that supported each section, provided my own reflections about case studies they shared, and I ended each

module by either implementing or planning to implement one of the many possible strategies in my own course. For me, the most impactful modules in the ACUE program were those that required a deeper amount of self-reflection on my prior practices, particularly when such self-reflection challenged me to think more about why, rather than how, I implement certain pedagogical practices to help students learn. Sometimes, these insights led to relatively minor edits to a prior practice that I implemented, which led to substantial improvements in student engagement and success. More often, being reflective and honest about my methods and beliefs forced me to rethink (and continue to rethink) my entire way of understanding and approaching teaching and learning. In this newsletter article, I am excited to share with you a few examples of my own insights during this process in the hope that you may decide to spend a substantial amount of time to be self-reflective on your own teaching and learning.



The first module I am sharing was titled “Developing Effective Modules and

Microlectures” because it related to something I was already in the process of doing. Prior to my start in ACUE, I was beginning to develop videos because I knew having access to such resources would enable students to be able to watch a lecture as often as they needed and whenever they could best focus on their learning. What I learned from this module was that the videos I was developing were, first and foremost, too long for students to really be able to process and learn from. Furthermore, I realized that I wasn’t always clear what I wanted them to get out of each of the videos, as they often covered a textbook chapter rather than a specified learning outcome. For my statistics course, I created much shorter videos that I forced myself to limit to a maximum of ten minutes, titled based on the learning goal, and uploaded to YouTube to enable access from any device students have available. The side benefit of having such videos on YouTube was that I could track the interest in these videos and gain analytics and insight around when and which videos students watched. These analytics enabled me to ask students questions around topics that they seemed to struggle with the most and really enabled me to learn more about their study habits and struggles as well. While my micro-lectures provide one success story from this professional development, I must also share those moments where it inevitably highlighted my less successful teaching and learning practices.

The two related modules that challenged me the most were “Embracing Diversity in Online Learning” and “Explain Your Grading Practices”, because the level of honesty and self-

reflection forced me to embrace discomfort. “Embracing Diversity in Online Learning” was a call to action to identify my own implicit biases and develop strategies to minimize the impact such biases inevitably have on my teaching learning practices. The module provided a link to Harvard’s set of implicit bias tests (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>), and I couldn’t resist the chance to take several of them that week. I was unprepared for what I learned and was surprised when the results were at odds with what I would have expected (which I guess is why it is called implicit bias). The test results indicated that I had (varying levels of) automatic preferences based on various demographics. What was surprising was that these preferences were different than what I had anticipated because they went against my own identity across three of these tests. Enacted in the classroom, implicit biases can show up in my classroom in a variety of subtle ways. At times, I may be privileging some voices over others (based on perceived race, gender, and/or other identities), recognizing the contribution of students who elicit behaviors I value (such as attendance, timely submission of work, vocal participation in class), and awarding attributes of success towards students (innate ability and/or hard work). To truly embrace diversity in my classroom, it is essential that I focus on the engagement and learning of students, continuously questioning what lens I am using when encouraging students to engage in the classroom and when assessing student learning.

Which brings me to the final module I want to share. “Explain Your Grading Practices”

took the idea of bias one step further, alerting me to biases inherent in my own grading practices. This module highlighted the need for transparency in grading, inevitably making the case that all columns in our gradebook should directly relate to the learning of the outcomes. At the end of a semester, I would find myself debating the boundary of grades for students. For those on the cusp of a B+ or A-, do I include how the student “really worked hard” or barely seemed to “try at all.” Could I provide them with extra credit to make up for these few points? I never realized how even these additional chances, and attempts at kindness, privilege some students over others and end up prioritizing my biased view of what a “good student” looks like based on my own experiences of being a student.

Since embracing (the discomfort of) all that ACUE had to offer, I continue to pursue further learning about the best practices through the resources that were shared in this program. The ACUE experience provided me with an amazing survey view of the wealth of knowledge available about teaching and learning. I welcome all faculty members who found what I shared in this article to be of interest, to join me as I dive deeper into these resources. The next phase of my journey begins with Joe Feldman’s book, *Grading for Equity* (2018). I can’t wait to continue to grow as an educator and hope some of you will join me.



This past year Touchstone has continued its mission of documenting and sharing the work and the ideas of the Hostos community. Touchstone accepts essays from faculty and staff on any aspect of academic life. Not only does publication in Touchstone help faculty move a project closer to publication in peer-reviewed journals, but it also helps faculty share their work with the rest of the community at Hostos. The upcoming issue, for instance, represents a range of topics, from the use of language by native speakers to a lesson plan that uses the New York Times application. Along with the help of the Center for Teaching and Learning Council, Touchstone is grateful to its editorial board whose hard work has helped the upcoming issue come together.

In linking the power of teaching to a broadening of our vision, Eugenio María de Hostos affirmed the power of education. In honor of our namesake's belief, Touchstone, a journal devoted to the scholarship produced by the community of Hostos, was created. The journal is published yearly by the Magda Vasillov Center for Teaching and Learning.

We invite you to read the current issue to find inspiration to prepare your submission. This issue showcases a range of topics, from the use of language by native speakers to a lesson plan that uses the New York Times application. This most recent version of Touchstone also includes a section that attempts to capture the impact and reinvention that we have gone through during the many processes of transition since 2020.

Touchstone accepts works in English or Spanish on any of the following:

- **Original scholarship on teaching and learning**
- **Scholarly articles from any discipline**
- **Best practices**
- **Conference Presentations or Reports**
- **Classroom-based research**
- **Teaching challenges, experiences, and lessons**
- **Personal Essays or Editorials**
- **WAC and beyond**
- **Book reviews**
- **Creative works**

In addition to the above criteria, Touchstone would be interested in receiving scholarship, essays, or pedagogical material connected to Hostos Reads. Send your articles using this form ([Submit Touchstone Article](#)) by Dec 27, 2025.

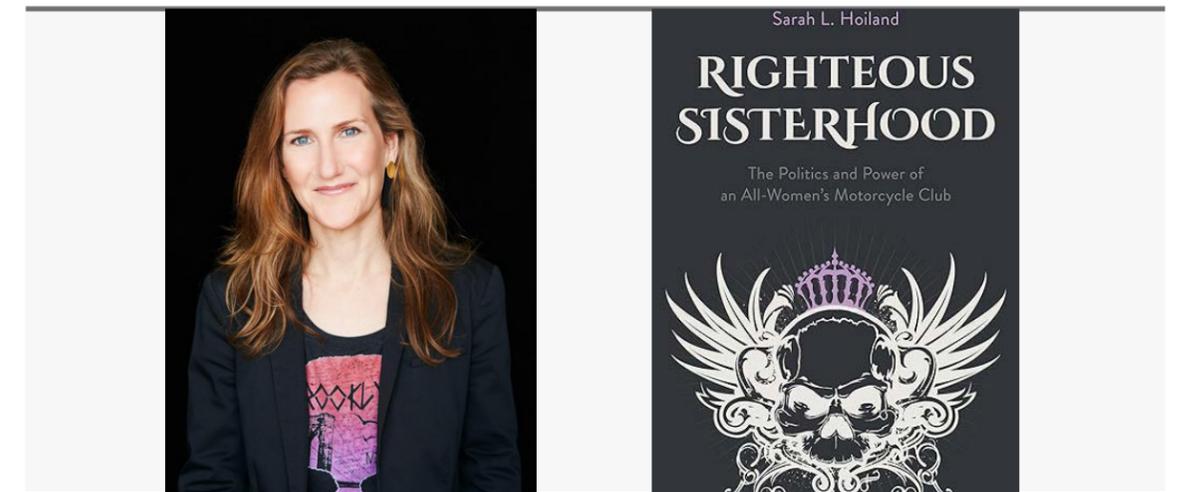
Service Opportunity: Do you want to join the TouchStone Editorial team? Contact Prof. Andrew Connolly



### Congratulations to Professor Sarah Hoiland

Hostos Community College proudly announces the release of “Righteous Sisterhood: The Politics and Power of an All-Women’s Motorcycle Club” (Temple University Press, 2025), an insightful ethnography about an all-women motorcycle club (MC) written by Sarah Hoiland, Hostos Associate Professor of Sociology. The riveting work, hitting shelves Friday, January 24, provides a fascinating look into a womanist space within a male-dominated subculture and delves into their complex gender, political and power dynamics. Shared through the unique perspective of a women’s MC, Hoiland’s investigation sheds light onto the women’s quests for sisterhood, community and immortality through the club, and looks at why some ultimately leave or, in some cases, are exiled.

Visit: [Hostos News](#)



### Three Faculty Awarded to Integrate AI into Pathways Courses

Three Faculty Awarded to Integrate AI into Pathways Courses  
Academic Affairs congratulates Professors Tanvir Prince (Math), Nelson Núñez-Rodríguez (Natural Sciences), and Christine Choi (English) for receiving funding through the “Next-Gen Learning: Integrate AI, Civic Engagement, or Sustainability into Pathways Initiative.” Their projects will enhance students’ understanding of AI and its ethical use in education.

## Kick Off Day 2025: Going the Extra Mile

On January 23, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), with support from the Office of Academic Affairs, hosted Kick Off Day 2025: Going the Extra Mile—an interactive event designed to inspire and energize faculty for the new semester. This year's theme focused on enhancing student retention through practical strategies and creative engagement. The event featured three key activities:

**Geo Quest** – Faculty explored various student support offices across campus, gathering valuable information and engaging with staff to better understand available resources. Participants collected stamps on passport cards, making the experience both interactive and informative.

**Role-Play Scenarios** – Attendees participated in realistic student challenges, discussing potential steps to resolve issues and identifying appropriate campus resources. This exercise will provide faculty and staff with strategies to guide students and direct them to the right services.

**Student Panel** – A diverse group of students shared their experiences and challenges in navigating college life, offering faculty valuable insights on how to better support student success.

This event was a total success, with more than 50 attendees, including faculty, staff, and students, actively participating in discussions and activities. It fostered collaboration, engagement, and practical learning, helping faculty develop new tools and strategies to enhance student support and retention. Thank you to all the participants and the departments that contributed to making this event a success.

More Info: <https://commons.hostos.cuny.edu/ctl/day-zero/>



### Role-Play Scenarios



**“When students and faculty come together to share experiences, real change happens. This event was a testament to the power of collaboration, fostering new insights and strategies to enhance student success. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making it a success!”**



### Student Panel



**“By stepping into students' shoes, we gain deeper understanding and stronger solutions. We Learned from our students about practical strategies to support and connect them with the right resources for success.”**





## Bronx EdTech Showcase

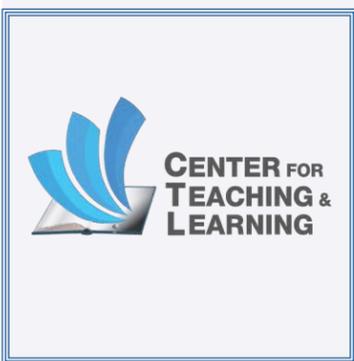
May 2

Scan to Register



## Teaching Day

May 6



## Professional Development Day

May 16

Scan to Register



- ▶ **Cynthia Jones** (Co-Chair) CTL Co-Director & Lecturer, English Department
- ▶ **Carlos Guevara** (Co-Chair) CTL Co-Director & EdTech Director, OAA
- ▶ **Victor Torres Velez** (Co-Chair) CTL Co-Director, Assistant Professor, Humanities
- ▶ **Luz Rivera** CTL Coordinator, OAA
- ▶ **Silvia Reyes** Director of Special Projects and S.E & CLIP, OAA
- ▶ **Nicole Wallenbrock** Assistant Professor, Humanities
- ▶ **Asrat Amnie** Assistant Professor, Education
- ▶ **Stacey Cooper** Assistant Professor, Behavior & Social Sciences
- ▶ **Sanjay Arya** Assistant Professor, Allied Health Sciences
- ▶ **Amina Tajbhai** Lecturer, English
- ▶ **Lauren Wolf** Associate Professor, Math
- ▶ **Rhonda Johnson** Assistant Professor, Library
- ▶ **Mayra Mojica** Lecturer, Business

For additional information visit: [CTL Advisory Council](http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/ctl) ([www.hostos.cuny.edu/ctl](http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/ctl))

Editor-in Chief:

Luz Rivera

Copy Editor:

Carlos Guevara  
Cynthia Jones

Newsletter  
Designers:

Juberth Tueros  
Itzel Ortega

Social Media

Instagram: [hostos\\_ctl](https://www.instagram.com/hostos_ctl)

Facebook: [/ctlathcc](https://www.facebook.com/ctlathcc)

Twitter: [@ctlathcc](https://twitter.com/ctlathcc)

Website: [hostos.ctl](https://www.hostos.ctl)



**Cynthia Jones**  
Co-Director of CTL  
cjones@hostos.cuny.edu



**Carlos Guevara**  
Director of EdTech &  
Co-Director of CTL  
cguevara@hostos.cuny.edu



**Victor Torres Velez**  
Co-Director of CTL  
vtorres-velez@hostos.cuny.edu



**Luz Rivera**  
Coordinator of CTL  
lrivera@hostos.cuny.edu



**Itzel Ortega Mendez**  
College Assistant  
iortegamendez@hostos.  
cuny.edu



**Victoria Pogue**  
College Assistant  
vpogue@lhostos.cuny.edu



**Juberth Tueros**  
College Assistant  
jtueros@hostos.cuny.edu



**Hostos** Community  
College