

CC FACULTY FOCUS



For CC Professor Marcia Bunge, all children are a precious gift from God. Promoting children's well-being through her scholarship, teaching, and advocacy has become both a passionate personal commitment and her academic vocation. With the support of a Lilly Endowment grant, Bunge has become one of the world's leading scholars on children, religion, and our ethical obligations to them. Her penetrating published anthologies on "The Child in Christian Thought", "The Child in the Bible", and "Children and Childhood in World Religions" have been enthusiastically received everywhere from the international conferences and churches where Bunge regularly lectures to the classrooms of Mueller Hall. In addition to providing rich insights for scholars of religions and the CC students in her popular courses, "The Child in the Bible" and "Children and Childhood in World Religions" have become resources for religious activists working on children's behalf throughout the world. "The tremendous needs of children today are prompting more people to become involved in understanding and supporting them," says Dr. Bunge. "Thinking about children and our shared obligations to them provides a creative starting point for addressing contentious moral, economic, and political issues in ways that cut across conventional or ideological positions."

Other Faculty Profiles



For CC Professor Kevin Hoffman, probing Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's views of faith and suffering, using his skills as a carpenter to help students build housing in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans, or pondering "The Perplexities of Personal Love" (the title of one of his CC seminars) are all part of the same enterprise: enabling students to think for themselves and become "whole persons."

"Given the content of what I teach, our moral and spiritual aspirations regularly emerge as topics of exploration," Hoffman says. "Some educators might find this too personal, while I think it is perfectly natural."

A CC student favorite whom they regularly encounter as coordinator of the Freshman Program, Valparaiso University alumnus ('93), Hoffman holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Fordham University. Hoffman's scholarship on Kierkegaard has drawn growing praise from leading philosophers for its fresh interdisciplinary insights.

Hoffman was recently awarded Valparaiso University's prestigious Caterpillar Award for Excellence in Teaching. Said CC students who helped nominate Hoffman for the award, "His hospitality, respect, generosity, and sense of humor will stay with students long after they no longer remember facts from books."

"I do take my teaching responsibilities as the most important part of my job," says Hoffman. "And I love it."



Professor Mark Schwehn is a scholar, an educational leader, a former CC dean, and a speaker in wide demand across the country. But when it comes to his essential vocation, there is no doubt what comes first and foremost: teaching. That Professor Schwehn is an extraordinary teacher was recognized and celebrated when he received the 2007 Distinguished Teaching Award, presented annually by the Valparaiso University Alumni Association.

Schwehn was nominated for the award by alumni from across his more than 20 years at Valpo, as well as by five CC students enrolled in his seminar, "What Makes a Life Significant?" In their letter of nomination, the students wrote, "Vital to Professor Schwehn's gift for teaching is his ability to affect every facet of his students' lives. By relating texts and discussion topics to real-life situations, he makes class an opportunity not only to develop intellectually, but also a time to develop spiritually and personally."

Mark Schwehn's influential scholarship regularly addresses issues of teaching and learning. *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* has attained wide influence by showing how the virtues of teaching and learning are central to academic life. He edited and contributed to *Everyone a Teacher* and co-edited (with his wife Dorothy Bass) *Leading Lives That Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be*—a volume that developed in part through conversations with his CC students.

Says Schwehn: "Teaching is at the very heart of what I do. Especially for those of us who regard academic life as a Christian vocation, teaching lies at the center of our work, whether it is in the classroom, or in mentoring students, or in publication and public presentation."

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