

# Teaching & Learning

To learn from and with each other



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## CREATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

Aaron D. Cobb, Project Director

The mission of the Civil Rights & Civic Virtue Society is to foster civic identity, commitment, and civic-mindedness through community-engaged learning experiences. Toward this end, we seek to support pedagogical and curricular innovation through our Faculty Fellows Community of Practice. This community is a small group of faculty who commit to work with each other over the course of an academic year to develop and implement a new pedagogical or curricular initiative related to civil rights, civic virtue, and character formation.

The culminating event of this year's work was the "Out of the Box Teaching Workshop" co-hosted with a team of faculty in the College of Sciences who have been working on a grant that aims to increase inclusive teaching practices in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. The conference featured presentations by Dr. Hyemin Han on the pedagogical uses of moral exemplars and a workshop by Dr. Aaron Richmond and Dr. Christopher Was focusing on maximizing student study skills through effective teaching strategies. Additionally, six of our faculty fellows led workshops related to their year-long projects. This booklet presents a brief snapshot of some of this exciting work!



## Highlights from 2022-2023

Creating a Culture of Learning

Clarissa Arms-Chavez & Breuna Baine

Dana Comi, Jessica Hayes, & Casey Giordano

Catherine Gooch & Elizabeth Burrows



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## DR. CLARISSA ARMS-CHAVEZ

Dr. Arms-Chavez redesigned elements of her online course on the Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination. Her goal centered around increasing the impact of empathy and helping students conceptualize a plan of action for change. The final reflection paper required students to attend either the Civil Rights Memorial or the Equal Justice Initiative's Legacy Museum and reflect on and apply the class concepts with the information gained from the museums. She encouraged students to also reflect on disturbing parallels with the current treatment, hateful legislation, and increasing murders found within the transgender community. The final course discussion invited students to develop a concrete plan to enact positive change within their community. Students were prompted to search online and identify two local organizations or volunteer opportunities where they may want to be involved in the near future. To do this, students were prompted to search online and identify two local organizations or volunteer opportunities where they may want to be involved in the near future. Students discussed this in an open class discussion and ended the class with a plan for action in their own lives.

## PROF. BREUNA BAINE

Professor Baine engaged students in an interactive exhibition design project for the future Mt. Zion AME Zion Church Memorial Annex, which will commemorate the creation of the Montgomery Improvement Association and the election of Martin Luther King, Jr. as its first chairman. Her class also focused on Peacock Tract, a historic community that was central to the freedom struggle in Montgomery in the 1950s and 1960s. Churches and spaces within this community were central to strategy meetings and to the mass meetings held during the bus boycott. Towards the culmination of the projects, a presentation and class critique from exhibition design expert L'Rai Arthur Mensah helped students revisit essential research and refine the graphic details of their exhibition design pieces.



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PHOTO CREDIT: BREUNA BAINE

The exhibit pictured to the left was created by one of Professor Baine's students. This is one of three pieces related to Peacock Tract and the land purchases connected to the construction of highways through Montgomery.



## PROF. JESSICA HAYES

Professor Jessica Hayes worked collaboratively with Dr. Keith Krawczynski (History & World Cultures) and his Oral History Class. In the context of this course, students received instruction on the importance and fundamentals of oral history collection and collected oral histories from individuals who experienced the desegregation of Montgomery (Alabama) Public Schools. Professor Hayes worked with the students and their oral histories to make them publicly available through the AUM Library's Digital Collections. An example of our work can be seen here: [https://digitalarchives.aum.edu/oralhistory\\_mitchell](https://digitalarchives.aum.edu/oralhistory_mitchell)

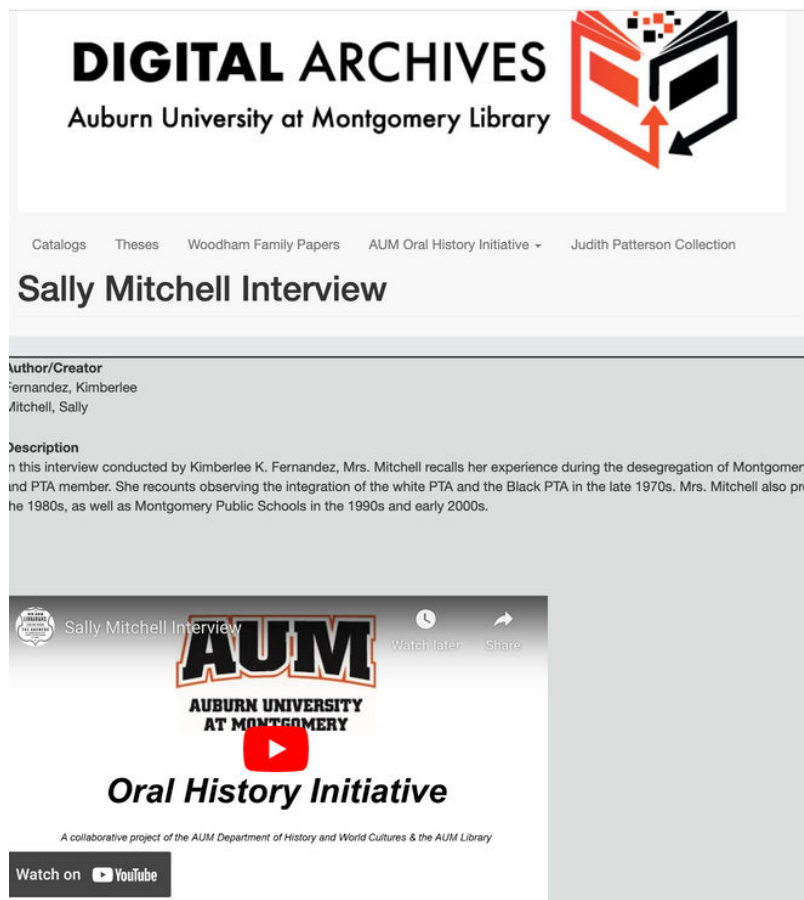


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## DR. DANA COMI

Dr. Dana Comi's goal in this project was to work toward the development of sustainable partnerships with organizations in Montgomery that could promote "students' identities as justice and equity-minded professional and technical communicators." Her workshop focused on an exercise she conducted with her students to think through the accessibility of voter registration documents in Alabama. She invited her student to think about how they might design better forms to encourage voting and voter registration.

## DR. CASEY GIORDANO

Dr. Casey Giordano embedded discussions of the Civil Rights Movement within a course on Industrial and Organizational Psychology. One of the central subjects in this course is personnel selection and staffing and the ways discrimination and biases bleed through, blocking the employment of the best candidates.

As context for this study, students discussed the impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and laid the foundations of a fair, equitable, and inclusive workforce. In learning about this act in presentations and discussions, students sought to describe the actions necessary to push our nation to adopt such strong and lasting change.

## DR. CATHERINE GOOCH

Dr. Catherine Gooch asked students in an advanced course on Women in Literature to create a documentary or a TikTok series about a woman/women/women-run organization in Montgomery with the primary goal of exposing lesser-known histories of Montgomery while illuminating the narratives of local women who have actively participated in making our community better in some way. The assignment required both secondary and primary research, and encouraged students to conduct interviews as their primary research in an effort to get them more engaged with the local community. Students took a class field trip to the Legacy Museum to gather ideas and inspiration on our trip. One of the goals of this project is to expose students to the city's rich cultural history. Another goal is to encourage students to actively engage in community-based work in the

process. About the experience, Gooch observed "The results were incredible. Students created insightful, well-researched, analytical documentaries that highlighted the narratives of lesser-known women from Alabama. Most importantly, though, students felt like they had a stake in this assignment. So many of them were invested in the project because they wanted to do their topic justice, and they wanted to ensure the audience took away specific ideas, historical information, and knowledge. This also led to significant community engagement throughout—and beyond—the projects. About 90% of students conducted an interview with a local community figure or someone on campus. About one fourth of students volunteered with a local organization and many of them committed to continued volunteer work beyond class. All of the documentaries were thought-provoking and justice driven."



## PROF. ELIZABETH BURROWS

sought to introduce freshmen to the concept of Civil Rights and Civil Virtue by engaging with the Equal Justice Initiative in both its mission and its design. After studying key concepts and doing some historical research, students visited the EJI and took notes about content and design elements. This field trip was the most significant moment for students, as they took their time delving into the museum not only as a place of history but one of intentional and conceptual design. In class, students used their experiential learning as the foundation for their major project. That assignment challenged students to expand a current museum exhibit or suggest a new one for the museum. Their choices had to include secondary sources, keep within the aesthetic of the EJI, and fit within the museum's stated mission. Many students chose exemplars to base their exhibits around, while others chose to design around mission concepts or statements. This exhibit project really pushed students to think more critically about research writing but also about the value of museums in shaping our historical moments and general lived experiences.

The exhibit pictured to the right was created by one of Professor Burrows's students. This is a proposed exhibit featuring Claudette Colvin, an exemplar of courage in the face of injustice.

