



## First-Year Writing Program:

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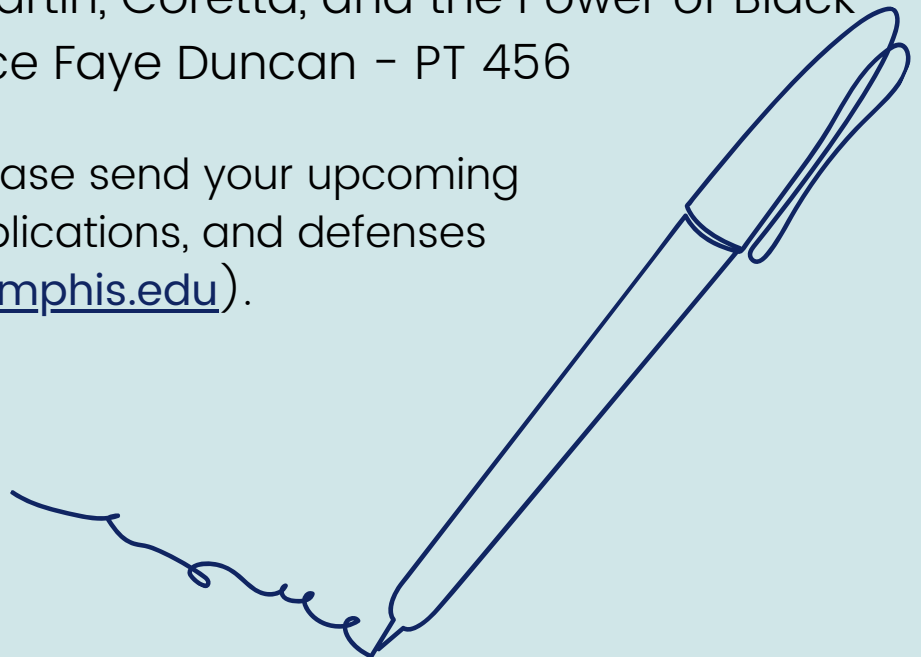
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# Happenings & Accomplishments

Mark your calendars for this and other events happening this month!

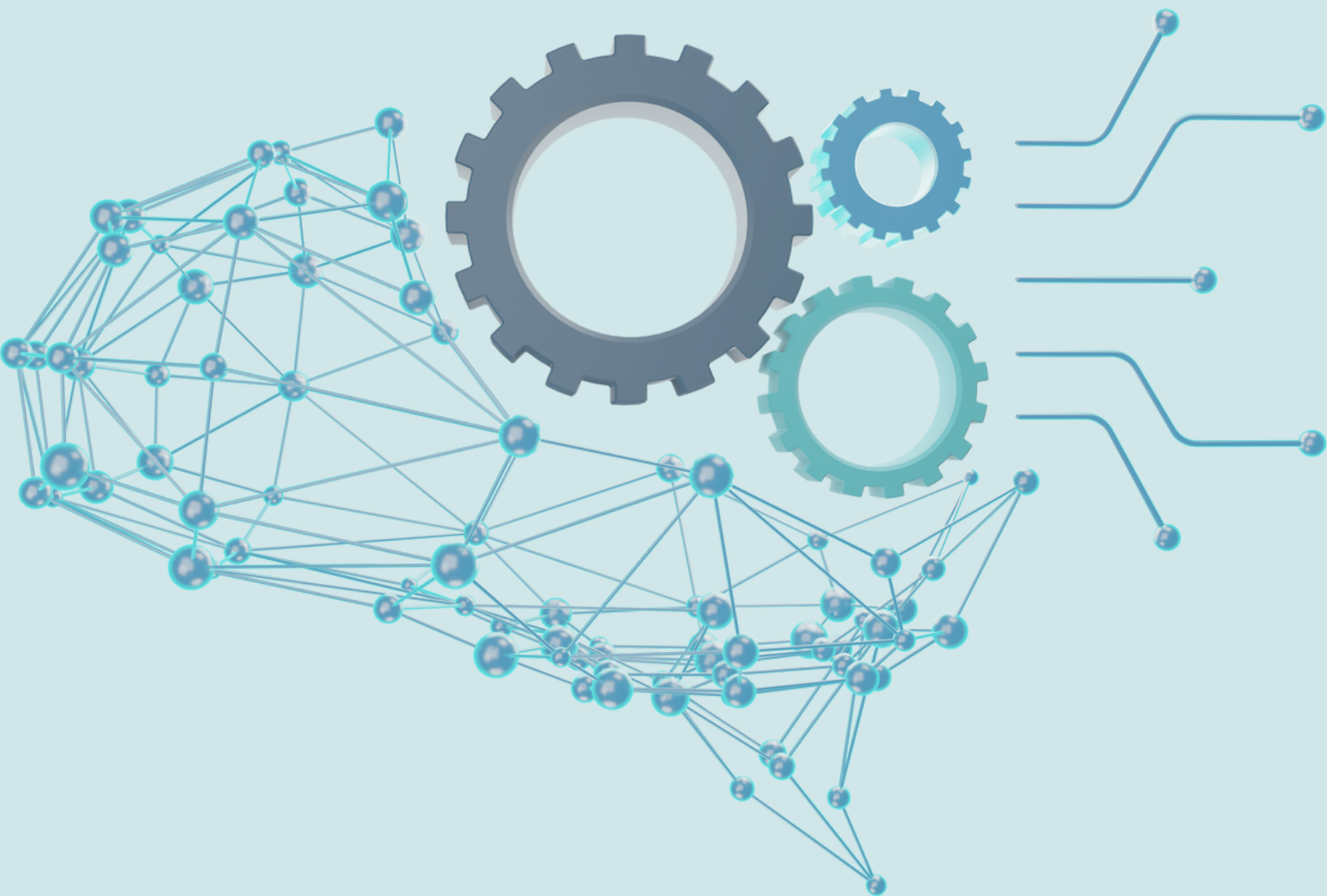
- **February 7 at 4pm:** African American Literature Candidate Roslyn Nicole Smith - PT 456
- **February 12 at 4pm:** African American Literature Candidate William Harrison Graves - PT 456
- **February 20 at 4pm:** Southern Literature Candidate Caleb Knapp - PT 456
- **February 23 at 4pm:** Southern Literature Candidate Andrew Donnelly - PT 456
- **February 25 at 1pm:** Wordsmith Writing Olympics - UC Ballroom
- **February 27 at 4pm:** Southern Literature Candidate Eric Solomon - PT 456
- **February 29 at 1pm:** "Martin, Coretta, and the Power of Black Love" Book Talk with Alice Faye Duncan - PT 456

We want to celebrate you! Please send your upcoming conference presentations, publications, and defenses to Nina Myers ([cnmyers@memphis.edu](mailto:cnmyers@memphis.edu)).



# Materials From 1.29 Meeting on the Biology of Learning

At our last All-CAP meeting, Dr. Katie Fredlund reminded us that learning takes place in a physical setting, the brain. You can find materials from that meeting [here](#).



# Ideas for Fostering Critical Thinking in Your Classroom

Getting the learners in our classrooms to think critically can be a challenge, particularly in lower division courses where part of an educator's role is to guide students out of a mindset that has served them well in their previous educational experiences. Any exercise that **fosters critical thinking** relies on trusting in the ability of students to take **ownership of their own learning**. With that in mind, here are three strategies you can implement in your classroom to foster critical thinking among your students:

## Use Language that Has Possibilities

Moving away from rigid wording is a simple way to demonstrate the spaces of possibility inherent in learners' interpretations of texts. One obvious place to incorporate this idea is in English 2201 & English 2202 in the teaching of literary theory. Since the practice of applying theory to literature produces multiple perspectives and results, saying that a Marxist reading of Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* "could suggest" that the United States' participation in a globalized economy has been a major influence on the racial factors Coates presents creates room for multiple viewpoints, particularly those that Coates himself fails to adequately address in the book. Such simple wording choices could **spur further engagement** with this literary text because it opens the possibility that there is no one way of looking at literature.

## Anticipate Readings

Before assigning a reading, generate example responses that represent multiple viewpoints of a reading and ask your students to decide whether they believe those statements are true or false. In a reading like English 1010's "A Chink in My Armor" by Julie Wan, these statements could relate to language acquisition and include ideas that are commonly held but not entirely correct, like the idea that children learn languages easier than their adult counterparts or that someone can learn a language in a few months with enough reading and a well-designed app. Statements like these lead learners to **evaluate concepts they often take for granted**, particularly if you encourage them to interrogate what is meant by words like "easier," "enough," and "well-designed."

# Ideas for Fostering Critical Thinking in Your Classroom

## Highlight Ambiguities

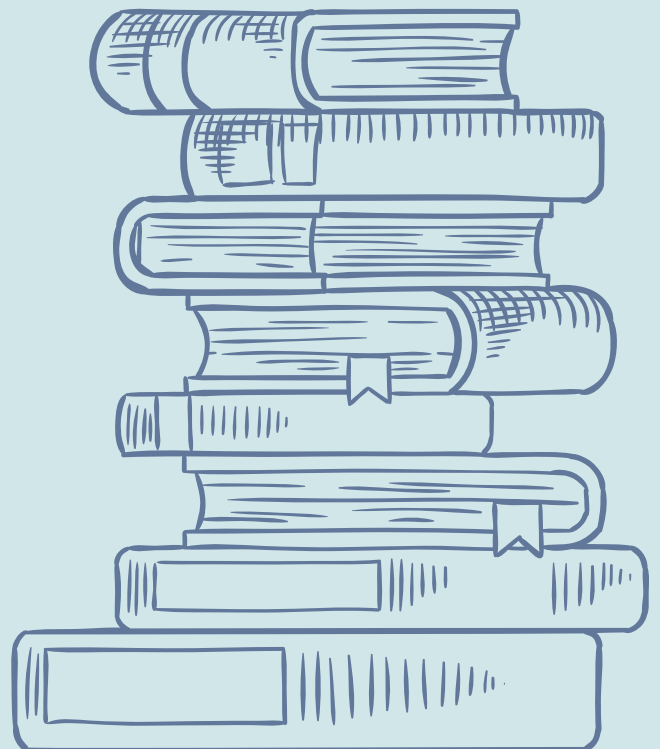
One way to get learners thinking about multiple interpretations is to explicitly ask them to develop questions based on ambiguities in the ideas they encounter. For instance, they could ask questions about Dan Conaway's last lines in the I'm a Memphian readings from English 1020. Making claims about being "funky" or "unique" have implications beyond what Conaway says in his pieces. Students could develop questions about what these more open-ended statements might suggest so they consider a world beyond the readings themselves.

You can explore these strategies and ideas further in these sources:

Goodwin, Bryan. "Getting Students Comfortable with Critical Thinking: Three Strategies for Weaving Critical Thinking into Everyday Learning." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 80, no. 7, Apr. 2023, pp. 80–81.

Phillips, Heather N. "Developing Critical Thinking in Classrooms: Teacher Responses to a Reading-for-Meaning Workshop." *Reading & Writing: Journal of the Literacy Association of South Africa*, vol. 14, no. 1, Jan. 2023.

Ryznar, Elizabeth, and Rachel B. Levine. "Twelve Tips for Mindful Teaching and Learning in Medical Education." *Medical Teacher*, vol. 44, no. 3, Mar. 2022, pp. 249–56.



# CAP Calendar

## **February 6:**

First-Year CAPs meet in cadre

## **February 13:**

CAPs meet in cadre

First Year CAPs meet in PT 456

Professional CAPs meet in PT 315

## **February 20:**

All CAP meeting in PT 456

Southern Literature Job Talk at 4pm

## **February 27:**

First-Year CAPs meet in cadre

