

# 34<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BEACON CONFERENCE

Date: June 5, 2026

Location: [www.beaconconference.org](http://www.beaconconference.org)

# PROGRAM

EVENT HOST:



## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

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8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	<b>WELCOME</b> Greetings from WCC Review of Online Participation Protocol
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM	<b>SESSION I: CONCURRENT PANELS</b> Biological and Health Sciences Communications, Media and Film Studies Interdisciplinary Studies Literature I Women's, Gender and LGBTQ+ Studies
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	<b>MORNING BREAK</b>
10:45 AM – 12:15 PM	<b>SESSION II: CONCURRENT PANELS</b> Business and Economics Environmental Studies History Literature II Psychology Sociology
12:15 PM – 1:30 PM	<b>MIDDAY BREAK</b>
1:30 PM – 3:00 PM	<b>SESSION III: CONCURRENT PANELS</b> Education International Studies and Globalization Literature III Philosophy and Religion Political Science Social Justice
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	<b>CONCURRENTLY PRESENTED:</b> <b>POSTER SESSION and COLLEGE TRANSFER FAIR</b>
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	<b>AWARDS CEREMONY</b> Congratulations from WCC Announcement of Panel Award Winners

SESSION I: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  
**BIOLOGICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

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READERS:

Prof. Laura Blinderman  
Dr. Mark Condon  
Prof. Paria Parto

Mercer County Community College  
Dutchess Community College  
Prince George's Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Ann Yezerski

King's College

MODERATOR: Prof. Amy Dicapua

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Samantha Melton

“Who Will Save the Heroes? Global Health Crises and the Worsening of  
Compassion Fatigue in U.S. Healthcare Workers”

Prof. Lauren Strawbridge  
Montgomery College

Sydney Newsome

“Saffman-Taylor Instability as a Biomimetic Model for Synaptic Pruning”

Prof. Nicole Rodstrom  
Orange County Community College

Min Tam Pham

“When More is Not Enough: Advocating for a Simplified Healthcare  
System”

Prof. Lisa Mayer  
Bergen Community College

SESSION I: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

## COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA AND FILM STUDIES

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### READERS:

Prof. Izolda Maksym

Prof. Tim Molchany

Prof. Dana Weidman

Nassau Community College

Northampton Community College

Dutchess Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Michael Cramer

Sarah Lawrence College

MODERATOR: Prof. Ellen Kreger

Westchester Community College

### PRESENTERS:

Anabella DeDuco

“Visualizing Collapse: Film Form and Dystopian Realism in  
*Children of Men*”

Prof. Bruce Campbell

Westchester Community College

Parker Madsen

“John Carpenter’s *The Thing*: An Uncanny Horror Touchstone”

Prof. Bruce Campbell

Westchester Community College

Tanisha Ullah

“Living in the Pages: BookTok’s Power in Publishing and Perceptions”

Prof. Lauren Strawbridge

Montgomery College

SESSION I: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  
**INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

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READERS:

Prof. Lynn A. Kenneally  
Dr. Trista Merrill  
Prof. Christine Pipitone

Ocean County Community College  
Finger Lakes Community College  
Raritan Valley Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Jennifer Wester

Johns Hopkins University

MODERATOR: Prof. Jennifer Jones

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Jadunda James  
“The Black Experience Through Radical Love and Self-Defense”  
Dr. Rashelle Peck  
Borough of Manhattan Community College

Afazur Rahman  
“The Existential Dangers of AI: We Need to Act Now”  
Dr. Kelly Keane  
Bergen Community College

Murilo Santos  
“Universities: The Last Hope for The Great Society”  
Prof. Seamus Gibbons  
Bergen Community College

SESSION I: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

LITERATURE I

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READERS:

Prof. Leann Cocca	Northampton Community College
Prof. Liz Hynes-Musnisky	Nassau Community College
Prof. Izabela Zieba	Raritan Valley Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Margaret Christian      Pennsylvania State University

MODERATOR: Dr. Christine Timm      Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Andrew Boga  
“Monster or Victim: The Story of Medusa and How It Relates to Us Today”  
Dr. Heather Ostman  
Westchester Community College

Viviane Lisboa  
“‘Sufficient to Have Stood’: Free Will and Its Limits in *Paradise Lost*”  
Dr. Daniel Salerno  
Bergen Community College

Ryhan McHugh  
“Epic Women: Who's to Blame?”  
Dr. Daniel Salerno  
Bergen Community College

SESSION I: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

**WOMEN'S/GENDER/LGBTQ+ STUDIES**

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READERS:

Prof. Joanna Burd

Broome Community College

Prof. Darshna Katwala

Nassau Community College

Prof. Amy Roberts Wilson

Community College of Baltimore County

JUDGE: Dr. Terri Gordon

The New School

MODERATOR: Prof. Rodeena Stephens Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Meghan Farrell

“Pure Fantasy: Contemporary Queer Fantasy Literature and Patriarchal Structures”

Prof. Brian Centrone

Westchester Community College

Katheryn Hopkins

“Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo: A Feminist Fight for Human Rights”

Dr. Felipe Muñoz

Lehigh Carbon Community College

Lenanh Pham

“The Illusion of Modern-Day Feminism: The Parallels of Princess Media to Society’s View on Femininity”

Prof. Lauren Strawbridge

Montgomery College

SESSION II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

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READERS:

Prof. Kazi Ahmed

Jefferson Community College

Prof. Susan Bielicki

Brookdale Community College

Prof. Lawrence Devan

Frederick Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Veronica Minaya Lazarte

Teachers College – Columbia University

MODERATOR: Dr. Farhad Ameen

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Saif Asam

“The Economics of Friction: A Balanced Stress-Test of Wealth and Justice”

Prof. Shinelle Espaillat

Westchester Community College

Alicia Browstein

“An In-depth Analysis of U.S. Cannabis Legalization and Post-Reform  
Business Development in New Jersey”

Prof. Lisa Mayer

Bergen Community College

Alfonso Marin

“Understanding How Financial Literacy and Economic Literacy Shape  
Financial Outcomes in Community College Students”

Dr. Christine Farias

Borough of Manhattan Community College

SESSION II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

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READERS:

Prof. Kristopher Baker  
Prof. Samuel Dillon  
Prof. Jennifer Herzog

Rockland Community College  
Orange County Community College  
Herkimer College

JUDGE: Dr. Matthew Aiello-Lammens Pace University

MODERATOR: Dr. Laurel Robinson Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Mallory Anderson  
“Harming to Heal”  
Dr. Nathan Zook  
Montgomery College

Dedan Choezom  
“Protecting Deep-Ocean Ecosystems in the Mineral Rush”  
Dr. Kelly Keane  
Bergen Community College

Pan Pwint Nyi  
“Environmental Concerns of the Presence of Antibiotics in Water Streams”  
Prof. Abel Navarro  
Borough of Manhattan Community College

SESSION II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

HISTORY

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READERS:

Prof. Eric DeAngelo  
Dr. Leonardo Falcón  
Prof. David Lucander

Lehigh Carbon Community College  
Nassau Community College  
Rockland Community College

JUDGE: LTC James R. Martin, Ph. D. US Military Academy – West Point

MODERATOR: Dr. Carla DuBose-Simmons Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Robert Cairns

“The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and the Unjust Mexican-American War”

Dr. Felipe Muñoz

Lehigh Carbon Community College

Victoria Makarevich

“The Sacred War: Religion, Morality, and Anti-Communism”

Dr. Sadeqh Foghani

Montgomery College

Vivian Nunez

“Indigenous People, Africans, and Other Races: Roles in Spanish America”

Dr. Ilan Ehrlich

Bergen Community College

SESSION II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

LITERATURE II

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READERS:

Prof. Randy Boone	Northampton Community College
Prof. Andrea Laurencell Sheridan	Orange County Community College
Prof. Mary R. Seel	Broome Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Robert McParland Felician University

MODERATOR: Prof. Nicholas Haines Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Kassandra Head  
“Alexis Zorba in Prose and Film”  
Prof. Jennifer Myskowski  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

Megan Hussey  
“Literature & Cinema in Tandem: Politics of Portrayal in *Hiroshima mon amour*”  
Prof. Rachel Corkle  
Borough of Manhattan Community College

Jaidyn Roush  
“Dystopian Fiction and Its Influence of how Society Views the Government”  
Prof. Danielle Bower  
Reading Area Community College

SESSION II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

PSYCHOLOGY

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READERS:

Prof. Michael Hall

Prof. Jenny Henriquez

Prof. Ian MacDonald

Dutchess Community College

Hudson County Community College

Jefferson Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Jordan Daley

New York University

MODERATOR: Dr. Kamil Hamaoui

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

TianaMarie Allen

“The Psychological Burdens in International Adoption”

Prof. Seamus Gibbons

Bergen Community College

Beixi Chen

“Digital Intimacy and Emotional Cultivation: Understanding Otome Games Through Confucianism, Daoism, and Psychology”

Prof. Peter Dlugos

Bergen Community College

Mariana Rodriguez

“Herd Mentality: When Does it Become Dangerous?”

Dr. Nathan Zook

Montgomery College

SESSION II: 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

**SOCIOLOGY**

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READERS

Prof. Cory Harris	Orange County Community College
Prof. Lori Tuttle	Jefferson Community College
Prof. Vondora Wilson-Corzen	Nassau Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Marie-Claude Jipguep      Howard University

MODERATOR: Prof. Heidi Baez      Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Sahara Bangura  
“Equity Theater: When DEI Becomes a Performance”  
Dr. Zachary Sunderman  
Westchester Community College

Olivia Naprstek  
“Mapping Out the Modern Man”  
Prof. Seamus Gibbons  
Bergen Community College

Bianca Rodrigues Couto  
“The Pain Gap: Gender Disparity in Western Healthcare”  
Dr. Zachary Sunderman  
Westchester Community College

## SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

### EDUCATION

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#### READERS:

Prof. Margaret Craig	Dutchess Community College
Prof. Heather Hinkle	Frederick Community College
Prof. Richelle Lawrence	Broome Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Thomas Brock Teachers College – Columbia University

MODERATOR: Prof. Genevieve Quinones Westchester Community College

#### PRESENTERS:

Rebecca Cruz  
“Through a Child’s Lens: The Effects of Political Violence on Children”  
Dr. Nathan Zook  
Montgomery College

Joey Salvatore Ribaud  
“The Real Cost of AI in Student Writing”  
Dr. Kelly Keane  
Bergen Community College

Cristian Tenempaguay  
“Understanding the Special Education Teacher Shortage: Causes,  
Challenges, and Policy Responses in the United States”  
Dr. Melissa Krieger  
Bergen Community College

SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

## INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND GLOBALIZATION

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READERS:

Prof. Cristobal Espinoza-Wulach	Middlesex Community College
Dr. George Repic	Rockland Community College
Dr. Laura Sosa	Mercer County Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Leandro Benmergui      SUNY Purchase

MODERATOR: Cynthia Haycock, Esq      Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Regina Porras Cardona  
“The Role of Caifanes and Mexican Rock in Shaping Youth Activism Across Borders”

Dr. Nathan Zook  
Montgomery College

Lucia Fernez  
“From Protection to Punishment: Feminist Shifts and Female Criminalization in a World in Flux”

Dr. Nathan Zook  
Montgomery College

Natalia Guevara  
“Robin Hood: The Greatest Hypocritical Criminal that Severely Affected Two Nations, Colombia and the United States”

Prof. Felipe Muñoz  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

LITERATURE III

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READERS:

Prof. Jessica K. Bacho  
Prof. Joshua Dickinson  
Prof. Krista Rivera

Northampton Community College  
Jefferson Community College  
SUNY Adirondack

JUDGE: Dr. Elizabeth Holt

Bard College

MODERATOR: Dr. Vickie Masséus

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Meghan Farrell

“Freedom for Some: Women in Postcolonial Society as Portrayed  
Through Literature”

Dr. Elise Martucci

Westchester Community College

Patricia Gibby

“The Futile Enforcement of Natural Forces: A Postcolonial Analysis of  
*To the Lighthouse*”

Dr. Meghan Nolan

Rockland Community College

David Kahen-Kashi

“On Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*”

Dr. Heather Ostman

Westchester Community College

SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM  
**PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION**

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READERS:

Prof. Kenneth Howarth  
Prof. Robert L. Muhlnickel  
Dr. Benjamin Nelson

Mercer County Community College  
Monroe Community College  
Community College of Baltimore County

JUDGE: Dr. Keith McPartland

Williams College

MODERATOR: Dr. Julie Linden

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Nicole Hernandez  
“Meaningfulness and Morality in Insular Epistemic Communities”  
Dr. Kevin Olbrys  
Bergen Community College

Shloimy Goldberger  
“One God, Many Forms: Complications of the Term ‘Monotheism’”  
Dr. Christina Stern  
Rockland Community College

Parker Madsen  
“Sorry Tolstoy, Some People are Inoculated”  
Dr. Dwight Goodyear  
Westchester Community College

SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

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READERS:

Prof. Paul Basinski  
Dr. Eric Schwartz  
Dr. Sarah Shurts

Orange County Community College  
Hagerstown Community College  
Bergen Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Taneisha Means Davis

Vassar College

MODERATOR: Dr. George Keteku

Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Adalia Bonilla  
“Voices in Motion: How Gen-Z is Changing the Meaning of Activism”  
Dr. Nathan Zook  
Montgomery College

Jamie Diaz  
“Third Parties in America”  
Prof. Jodi Greene  
Reading Area Community College

Sayeda Fatima  
“The Shift From Hierarchical To Grassroots Power In New York Politics”  
Prof. Nicole Porcaro  
Montgomery College

SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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READERS:

Dr. Joshua P. Canale  
Prof. Thomas Impola  
Prof. Margeaux Lippman

Jefferson Community College  
Ulster County Community College  
Dutchess Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Amiel Bize

Cornell University

MODERATOR: Dr. Carolyn Peguero-Spencer Westchester Community College

PRESENTERS:

Megan Rodriguez  
“Redefining Modern Masculinity: Examining the Impact of Educational Trends, Men’s Mental Health, and Closing Gender Gaps”  
Prof. Seamus Gibbons  
Bergen Community College

Savannah Stone  
“The Elephant in the Room: Unpacking Fatphobia”  
Dr. Kelly Keane  
Bergen Community College

Aly Vaca  
“ Parties, Policies, and Permission: The Divergence of Transphobic Rhetoric in the United States and the United Kingdom”  
Prof. Lauren Strawbridge  
Montgomery College

## POSTER SESSION

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Lydia Devlin

“The Functions and Interactions of the Appendix”

Prof. Julie Linden

Westchester Community College

Daniel Farrell

“Is the Growth of Online Gambling Beneficial for Society?”

Dr. Elise Martucci

Westchester Community College

Kassandra Flamouri Head

“Jennifer Saint’s *Hera*: A Missed Opportunity”

Prof. Amelia Fetherolf

Lehigh Carbon Community College

Vicente Hernandez

“Avoiding the Inevitable: Adapting to Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education”

Dr. Rachel Kraushaar

Rockland Community College

Aleya Khan

“From Sci-fi to Real Life: How AI Is Slowly Changing the World”

Prof. Strawbridge

Montgomery College

Odhran Lalfferty

“The American Experiment: Improving Democratic Participation in the US”

Dr. Christine Timm

Westchester Community College

Evelina Morillo

“From Dreams to Rights: Water Access and Justice for Native American Tribes”

Dr. Jodi Greene

Reading Area Community College

Emilia Portes

“Blood and Borders”

Prof. Jodi Greene

Reading Area Community College

Samantha Salvador

“*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and Its Impact”

Dr. Heather Ostman  
Westchester Community College

Paul Schultz  
“The Dangers of Ease”  
Dr. James Werner  
Westchester Community College

Kaitlin Solt  
“Self-Control and Academic Performance in Community College Students”  
Dr. Katy Long  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

Sarah Soumahoro  
“The Spectacle of Suffering: How the Entertainment Industry Commodifies Black Trauma”  
Dr. Elise Martucci  
Westchester Community College

Norah Gabrielle Tchokouani  
“Globalization and Beauty Standards”  
Prof. Deborah Taylor  
Montgomery College

Tyler Turoczy  
“Oedipus with a Hint of Freud”  
Prof. Scott Keim  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

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## TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Westchester Community College – HOST  
Rockland Community College  
Northampton Community College  
Mercer County Community College  
Bergen Community College  
Montgomery College  
Dutchess Community College  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Reading Area Community College  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

## FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

CUNY Staten Island  
Excelsior University  
Marist University  
Mercy University  
Montclair State University  
The New School  
Stony Brook University  
SUNY University at Buffalo  
Syracuse University  
University of Massachusetts Lowell

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