

34th ANNUAL BEACON CONFERENCE

Date: June 5, 2026

Location: www.beaconconference.org

PROGRAM

EVENT HOST:



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

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

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

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

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

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

PRESENTERS:

Anabella DeIDuco

“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

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

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

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

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

READERS:

Prof. Joanna Burd

Prof. Darshna Katwala

Prof. Amy Roberts Wilson

Broome Community College

Nassau Community College

Community College of Baltimore County

JUDGE: TBD

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

READERS:

Prof. Kazi Ahmed

Prof. Susan Bielicki

Prof. Lawrence Devan

Jefferson Community College

Brookdale Community College

Frederick Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Veronica Minaya Lazarte

CCRC – Columbia University

PRESENTERS:

Saif Asam

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

Prof. Shinelle Espailat

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

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

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

READERS:

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

Lehigh Carbon Community College
Nassau Community College
Rockland Community College

JUDGE: TBD

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. Sadegh 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

READERS:

Prof. Margaret Craig
Prof. Heather Hinkle
Prof. Richelle Lawrence

Dutchess Community College
Frederick Community College
Broome Community College

JUDGE: Dr. Thomas Brock

Teachers College – Columbia University

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

LITERATURE III

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

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

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

PRESENTERS:

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

Violet Ratliff
“Murder, Faith & Permission: Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky & Napoleon”
Dr. Kevin Obrys
Bergen Community College

SESSION III: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

POLITICAL SCIENCE

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

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

Sayed 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

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

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

Joy Buabeng

“Moral Ambiguity: How *Attack on Titan* Reflects Human Behavior in a World in Flux”

Prof. Lauren Strawbridge
Montgomery College.

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 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

Nicole Hernandez

“Meaningfulness and Morality in Insular Epistemic Communities”

Dr. Kevin Olbrys
Bergen 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”

Prof. 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