

**2007-2008  
Ithaca College  
Excellence in TEACHING Award**

**Elisabeth Nonas,  
Associate Professor, Department of Cinema,  
Photography, and Media Arts  
Roy H. Park School of Communications**

Ithaca College is proud to honor the Excellence in Teaching Award recipient for 2007-2008. Candidates for the award are nominated by members of the College community. The documents that accompany the nomination include statements from the candidate, two faculty colleagues and two students, as well as a curriculum vitae. The recipient is selected by the faculty members of the Ithaca College Faculty Development Committee and recipients of the Excellence Awards from the previous year.

The criteria for teaching are those given in the *Ithaca College Faculty Handbook*. Of particular importance are subject mastery, presentation, interaction with students, and dedication to teaching. The committee considered nominees who have demonstrated extraordinary accomplishments in teaching or who have sustained accomplishments in teaching while employed at Ithaca College.

Elisabeth Nonas arrived at Ithaca College in the fall of 1996 and in the intervening years developed and taught the entire curricular sequence in screenwriting. She is a prolific writer as well, with four novels, ten screen- and teleplays, four essays and short stories, five magazine articles, and one co-authored volume of nonfiction to her name. An active professional, she has led the Scriptwriting Caucus of the University Film and Video Association, which resulted in establishing guidelines for tenure and promotion of screenwriting faculty, and serves on boards and committees of the Journal of Film and Video and numerous organizations and funds. She is frequently invited as a reader, speaker, or interviewee in local and national media and venues. In one of her areas of expertise, Gay and Lesbian Writing, she is prominent in the Los Angeles area as well as New York and nationally.

Professor Steven Skopik, Chairperson of her department, calls her “an extraordinary teacher” and says she “has been central to [the] department’s development of a screenwriting concentration, and more recently, a gaming degree in the Park School.....[projects which] have involved an enormous commitment of research, coordination with other faculty, and proposal writing.” For Elisabeth Nonas, teaching links to institutional engagement, as she has been deeply involved in curricular initiatives, internship programs in Los Angeles, the Antigua program, and student recruitment. She

integrates important institutional issues into her teaching, as illustrated by this excerpt from the letter by senior Jessica Dayton:

Recently, an issue of race and its representation came up during the workshopping of a student's script. Rather than side-step the issue or chalk it up to one person being uncomfortable, Professor Nonas allowed us to take time from the workshop to discuss what is appropriate, where the line falls in terms of racial jokes or comments, and the writer's responsibility in the representation of various races and characters' responses to them. ...This one discussion took the class to a new level of understanding in terms of what a writer's words mean and how aware each writer must be of what he or she presents to the world....I'm thankful Professor Nonas took the time to help our class recognize this fully."

Elisabeth Nonas demonstrates how teaching can relate directly to scholarship, as her teaching links seamlessly to her professional identity as a writer. At her campus Colloquium readings and presentations, a number of students attended and participated. Jessica Dayton appreciates the way "Professor Nonas brings in fliers about screenwriting competitions ..... encouraging all of her students to put their work forward. ....[Her] desire to teach aspiring writers and filmmakers is amazingly inspiring and proves her dedication and hope for a continuingly great film industry."

An excellent teacher is also a fine mentor to students and colleagues, and all of the writers in her nomination packet say Elisabeth Nonas is a splendid and self-aware mentor. Her nominator, Julie Blumberg, writes,

"Professor Nonas is a natural teacher. This is apparent in everything she does including the way she has reached out to me. She has been a true mentor, helping me adjust to my first full-time position in Academia and I have learned an enormous amount from her experience, knowledge and support. Just this past Tuesday I went into her office disappointed. I had just lectured on adaptation and it didn't go as well as I had hoped. It turned out that I used material she'd taught in the past. Elisabeth reached for her copy of the screenplay, opened it up and showed me the notes she'd inserted comparing the novel and final film. She offered to give them to me and to compare our approaches whenever I had time. This is just one example of Elisabeth's generosity. Mentoring is in her DNA."

The Ithaca College community extends its congratulations and appreciation to Professor Elisabeth Nonas for her strong commitment to excellence in teaching.