Analysis and Empathy: Helping Students Gain More Fully Rounded Understandings of Controversial Issues

How can we help students both feel from the inside and see from the outside? How can we empower them grasp, at one and the same time, not just the breadth of complex social and political issues but also the subjective experiences of individuals caught up in those issues? This talk uses a simulated class exercise on the Vietnam War—involving analysis, dramatization, empathetic reconstruction, and debate—to discuss and model strategies for encouraging students to think in such differing registers.