

S.J.U. EDU 5721 Collective Bargaining in Education – Course Synthesis, Spring 2012
Prof. Jonathan Hughes and Prof. Joan Hughes Carl Semmler and Denise Smith

Collective Bargaining in Education afforded Cohort 11 the opportunity to understand the details of examining a collective bargaining agreement as well as the nuances of actual negotiations. The course text *Getting to Yes* (Fisher, Ury, and Patton) offered negotiation strategies that aim at having a better understanding of the viewpoint of persons on the other side of the table.

One of the clear advantages of this course was that it was team taught by Dr. Jonathan Hughes, an accomplished educational administrator, and Dr. Joan Hughes, an accomplished professional negotiator/mediator. This dual perspective approach became most interesting when the cohort was broken down into two groups, the administrators and the union leadership. We were asked to apply our knowledge and skills by negotiating an actual union contract taken from a public school district in Darien, CT. Among the negotiation strategies utilized were Bowley's "Point of Maximization," and Pareto's "Law of Optimization."

Our negotiations became so heated at one point that the cohort needed to take a break and remind each other that this was only a simulation and not an actual negotiation. We clearly understood the difficulties and passion involved in coming to an agreement. This course provided essential tools necessary for our role as educational leaders.