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## May Term Classes Push Boundaries of Classroom Learning

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Matt Hill '12 discusses ethics in a May Term class.

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Business is not all business in Jerry Olson's class. The professor of business administration at Illinois Wesleyan University is encouraging students in his May Term class to explore the convergence of commerce and social responsibility. The class is an example of what students experience during May Term, when they can take a single, intensive class designed to fit an entire semester of material into one month.

Olson's May Term class is based on the 18th century efforts of the activist and minister Wesley – from whom the University gets its name. Students explore the ties between business and social responsibility by creating their own not-for-profit organization. "Looking beyond John Wesley's theology and philosophy are a lot of principles that match the University's modern mission statement, emphasizing the importance of education, sustainability and social activism," said Olson, who co-teaches the class with Wesley historian the Rev. Mary-Kathryn Pearce.

Along with learning the business aspect of creating a not-for-profit, students are required to volunteer in the community once a week and learn about how Wesley's efforts transcend to modern day issues from health care and immigration to oil prices. "We draw parallels between Wesley's labors to close the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots,'" said Pearce. "His motto was 'Gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can'. It was a lesson in business ethics, in how to practice maintaining your identity as a business person."

May Term classes like Olson's are tailored to push the boundaries of the traditional classroom setting, according to May Term Coordinator and Associate Dean of the Curriculum Zahia Drici. "May Term opens up an exciting realm for students and faculty," said Drici. "Students can delve deeply into topics, examine concepts and issues that are not part of the standard curriculum, or discover new cultures through travel. The distinctiveness of May term lies in its emphasis on immersion in learning, and as such May Term is an exceptionally enriching part of the Illinois Wesleyan experience."

Students in this year's May Term classes are exploring areas as broad as human nutrition to those as specific as the plays of Italy's Luigi Pirandello. Classes are timely, such as Energy and Society, where students examine energy technology and how it fits into the changing face of society in places such as Japan. Classes are also timeless, such as Exploring Inequality in Self and Society, which examines the formation of social identity groups and the development of bias. May Term courses can also approach the classics from a new angle, such as the class Exit, Pursued by a Bear, examining the greatest stage direction in a Shakepearean play.

Travel courses will open students to a living classroom as they spend a week studying on the IWU campus before journeying to locales across the globe. Associate Professor of Business Administration Fred Hoyt is teaching students about the global economy by visiting businesses in Asia. Through his class, The Asian Economic Miracle Revisited, students are traveling to Bangkok, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Saigon, Hanoi, Hong Kong and Beijing. Students in Isaac Funk Professor of Russian Studies Marina Balina's class, Russia from Revolution to Post-Soviet, will study sites ranging from St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg to the Kremlin.

Olson and Pearce have taught the Wesley business class both as a travel course – exploring Wesley's roots in England – and on campus. "This May Term class is about encouraging the passion for giving back and taking that knowledge into the workplace," said Olson. "May Term gives us the chance to explore that idea in an in-depth way."

For additional information on May Term, contact the Associate Dean's Office at (309) 556-3760.

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