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May Term Classes Offer World of Opportunities

May 23, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— From learning first-hand about the surging Chinese economy to connecting physics and ecology through the study of sound, May Term students at Illinois Wesleyan University spend an intensive month in courses on the Bloomington campus and in locations around the world. May Term offers students the opportunity to cover a semester's worth of material in one intensive month-long course.

The following are three classes offered during May Term 2014:

Biochemistry of Food and Culture in Hawaii; Melinda Baur, assistant professor of chemistry

Baur's class is one of the many travel courses offered during May Term. The class spends 23 days on the Island of Hawaii, touring small farms and food manufacturing facilities to learn about biochemistry in the areas of food production, preparation and consumption.

Students have visited with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists at the Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center and the USDA germplasm facility, toured papaya, vanilla orchid, mushroom and avocado farms and explored several museums.

"For many students, this is their first opportunity to travel as a professional," said Baur. "Travel to Hawaii will allow students to become immersed in Hawaiian culture while exploring the roles of diverse economic and social groups to the culture and cuisine found in Hawaii."

Baur's students will give several presentations on specific food topics, the relationship between food and culture in Hawaii and reflections on personal encounters with the Hawaiian population and culture.

"I hope that students take away the spirit of aloha from this course," said Baur. "The spirit of aloha is a community effort to help one another, to actively engage and enjoy the environment around us without harming it and to relax and enjoy life."



Melinda Baur's May Term students in Hawaii

Film From Page to Screen; Amy Young, video production specialist, Office of Communications

An art class intended for beginning filmmakers, “Film from Page to Screen” teaches students the complete filmmaking process, from the initial idea to the final product. Students learn how filmmakers in the past have adapted written works into cinematic works by reading screenplays, prose, plays and novels and comparing them to related films.

“Thinking about what camera angles you want to shoot at, what lenses you will use or how you light a scene were all choices I never thought of as an audience member,” said Kathy Tun ’16, English-writing major. “But as a director you have to think about these technical aspects when presenting your narrative.”



Anna Kerr-Carpenter '17 tries out a clip-on lens for her cellphone with "Film/Video" classmate Tyler Stamper '15.

See Tun's film, <http://youtu.be/w7HIVXdXr88>

Young's class writes dialogues for films, edits sound files using movie-making software and creates storyboards of pictures and drawings that represent what the film will look like. For their final project, the students will complete their own 5-minute film.

“This class has taught me that if you have a clear idea of what story you want to tell or what emotions you want the audience to feel, then you have all the information you need to decide what to do next,” said Tun.

“Hidden” Communities; Teddy Amoloza, professor of sociology

Students in “‘Hidden’ Communities” gain insight into the lives of individuals living in unique social settings including immigrants, refugees, Amish brethren, the homeless and the elderly. The class explores how these lifestyles fit into the idea of mainstream American living through discussions and interactions with different communities.

“Through interactions with members of the community, our class gained insight into their struggles, accomplishments and reactions to life in the United States,” said Jillian Bleck ’16, biology major.



Eli Miller '17 and Satin Young '16 in Introduction to Dramatic Literature, taught by Ron Emmons.

Amoloza's students have invited two groups of immigrants for panel discussions and visited the Westminster Village and Blair House retirement communities.

"It is often hard to disregard stereotypes and judgments on a group of people, but interacting with people firsthand opens your eyes, mind and heart to the truth behind who these people are and what these people really do," said sociology major Laura Barham '15.

The students have also served food at Safe Harbor, taken a trip to the Amish community in Arthur, Ill. and will host an Evening of Indian Dances.

"The whole experience of visiting the Amish community was very grounding, and took me back to a place and pace of simplicity for a while," said Connor Hughes '15, psychology major.

"I hope this course will help students to see themselves not simply as a member of some local culture, region, group or nation, but also, and above all, as human beings bound to all others in recognition of our common concern for our humanity," said Amoloza.

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