

J-Term 2014 fixes prior glitches, exceeds expectations

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Ninety percent of you, whether it was at home relaxing and spending time with family or travelling with friends, did not take a J-Term course. Ninety percent of you missed out on what could have been the experience of a lifetime.

January Term 2014 was Guilford College's best one yet. Albeit there have only been two J-Terms, this year's three-week event worked out many of the kinks encountered last year.

Last year, four-credit J-Term courses on campus cost on average about \$1300, or over \$400 a week. Summer courses at Guilford cost about the same, but they last for five or 10 weeks. For a five-week course, the cost is about \$250 a week. Obviously, some students felt a little cheated.

This year, the cost of a four-credit on-campus J-Term course was reduced to \$500, and if you do the math, you can save up to about \$100 a week, or \$500 overall from a summer course.

"It's kind of a no-brainer, financially," said Director of Study Abroad and Professor of Theatre Studies Jack Zerbe.

One of the biggest complaints about J-Term

last year was that the courses offered didn't fulfill any education requirements.

This year, the number of IDS courses was doubled and more classes were offered that catered to specific majors, such as justice and policy studies and psychology. Courses "for fun" were still plentiful, giving students a wide range of topics to choose from.

Sophomore Noah McDonald took advantage of one of these 'for fun' courses:

"I had the opportunity to see things that I had always read about ... I feel like I had gotten more out of it than I had anticipated."

Pamela Rhyne, CCE senior

Woodworking and Furniture History, taught by Professor of English James Hood.

On top of learning about the Arts and Crafts revival movement of the mid to late twentieth century, Noah spent a lot of his time making a bookcase using the Arts and Crafts style.

"I worked for hours at a time with a saw, chisels and a mallet while listening to music on the sound system in the studio," said Noah in

an email interview. "My mind was immersed in the work I was engaged in."

Professor of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen led a study abroad program in Myanmar that focused on the practice of Theravada Buddhism in a predominantly Buddhist country.

The program also studied Buddhist extremists in Myanmar, also known as the 969 Movement, and their crusade against the

J-Term's three-week programs make it easier for them to travel. CCE senior Pamela Rhyne took advantage of this and went to Myanmar along with Mortensen.

She only had good things to say about the journey.

"I had the opportunity to see things that I had always read about, and you see how important immersing yourself in another culture is to learn," she said. "I feel like I had gotten more out of it than I had anticipated."

Despite the wide variety of J-Term programs, there was a lack of courses from the sciences, as highlighted by the failed Galapagos Islands biology study abroad program.

"It's up to the students ... to tell their faculty in the sciences 'I want to do a J-Term experience,'" said Zerbe.

J-Term has already seen huge growth, increasing its enrollment to 263 from last year's 106. It also offers a respectable number of courses with 22 on-campus opportunities, three study away programs, and 25 study abroad programs.

At this rate, J-Term is only going to get better as the faculty and students remain enthusiastic about their next adventure.

ANIMAL FARM

Performance encourages questions about sociopolitics

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attempt to caution us about the results of blindly following revolutionaries.

The story of the Bolshevik Revolution is told through the animals on Manor Farm. Every character on the farm, from the pigs to the horses, parallels key people from the socialist revolution in Russia.

"We've avoided those direct parallelisms," said sophomore Lucas Perez-Leahy, actor and dramaturge. "But (those parallels) are true."

The message that almost vibrates in each actor's words begs us to look at how politics work.

It demands we ask questions about oppression, revolutions and totalitarian governments.

"I'm interested in lots of styles of plays, but one of my favorite is sociopolitical-style plays," said Zerbe. "Certainly, George Orwell is in the foreground of socio-politics."

Perez-Leahy and CCE junior Patrick Brandt, playing Squealer and Napoleon respectively, were both able to give insight into the process itself.

"I had some initial concerns about how animal we would have to be," said Brandt. "Were we going to be wearing big masks or oinking on stage?"

"In terms of (George Orwell's) prose, he can be very dry and pedantic," said Perez-Leahy. "A lot of our lines are dry political language, and our job was to breathe life into those lines. That's what a lot of acting is, to play action."

This play is standing strong against some weaker adaptations in the past. Furthermore, the cast was able to do this in half the time of a normal Guilford production.

Last semester, the play "Rumors" ran after about seven weeks of preparation. "Animal Farm" will run for its second weekend Feb. 6, 7, and 8, open after only three weeks of preparation.

"Animal Farm's" shortened preparation time also meant that everyone was working on their lines and the lights every day. Where normally those tasks could be divided, the shortened time and smaller class size meant that tasks had to be split between the entire group.

"Every actor had a technical responsibility," said Perez-Leahy. "An actor who is also an electrician is on stage and a light bursts, and they think 'Oh I have to go and replace that,'

but they can't be thinking about that on stage. You have to separate those two ways of thinking."

Similar to last year's J-Term play, "The Trial," "Animal Farm" takes us to a bizarre parallel universe. And with gunshots

piercing the soundstage and banners waving, the new Theatre Studies department's production continues to make us question the way we think and redefines what it means to be a cog in the machine.



The enthusiastic actors of "Animal Farm" encourage the audience to participate as they begin the production with a rousing song.