

CLASS EXPERIENCES

"Think Globally, Act Locally"

The Psychology of Favoring Hispanic Literature

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Reporter

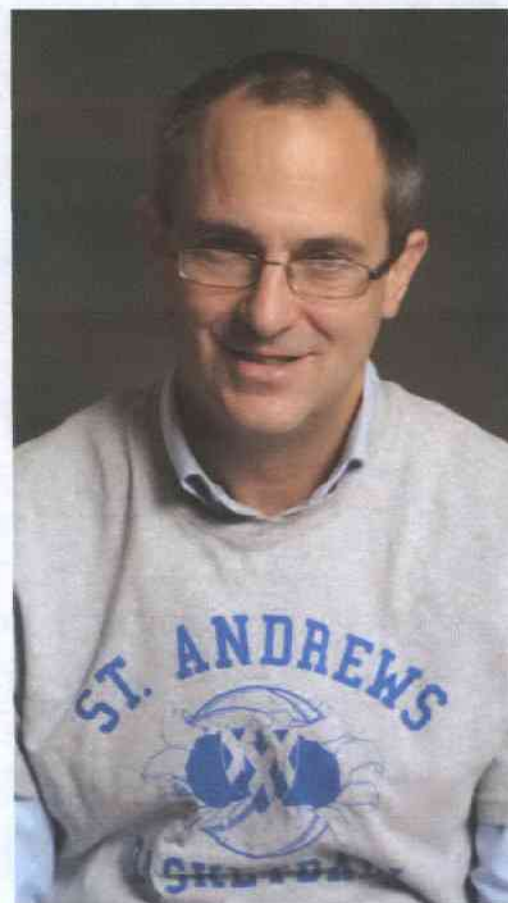
Regarding what my favorite class has been during my time at St. Andrews, that really is a hard question to answer. As a psychology major, there are so many psychology classes that I have taken here and enjoyed. Because of the fact that I have enjoyed almost all of my psychology classes and it is hard to pick just one, I think I will talk about my favorite class outside of psychology. Outside of my major, I would say that the best class I have taken at St. Andrews was Survey of Hispanic Literature during the fall 2009 semester, with Jeff Birdsong, a class that fulfills a requirement for my Spanish minor. The other three people that were in that class with me were the following students from the class of 2010: Elizabeth Bost, Heather Jackson, and Galina Podolsky. In that class, we read Spanish poetry, short stories in Spanish, and read and acted out a few scenes in a couple of plays in Spanish. A few of the Hispanic writers that we looked into were Gustavo Adolfo, San Becquer, San Juan de la Cruz, and Garcilaso de la Vega.

The first unit that we studied was poetry. I remember learning how to figure out what Spanish verses rhymed, where the accents fell on the words, and the symbolism of the poems such as hyperboles, metaphors, and similes. Every time we were assigned poetry to read and had to answer questions and write responses to the poetry, I remember how thorough my answers and responses always were. Jeff Birdsong therefore knew how enthusiastic I was about the class and how I was always eager to talk about the meanings behind the poems and what the writers' points always were.

Another memorable thing in that class was when we read the Don Quixote play and then went outside in the Grove area of the St. Andrews campus and acted out a part of the play. Jeff Birdsong filmed it. During that class period, Elizabeth, Heather, and I were there, but Galina was absent. I remember being Don Quixote and had a stick horse. Elizabeth was the prostitute. I don't remember what part Heather played, but she may have been a housekeeper. There were a couple of other Spanish plays that we read and acted out. One of them was in class and the other one was in the Morris Morgan Theater. I remember those times being fun because I thought we were really acting for a movie or practicing for a 24 Hour Theater project!

In the Advanced Spanish conversation class combined with the Spanish culture class I have taken this semester, I remember Jeff Birdsong telling this student about the Survey of Hispanic Literature class being offered. When he said that, I was really excited because I thought about that being one of the best classes I took at St. Andrews! I told that person that it is a really good class. "Enjoy it if you take it. It was the best Spanish class I ever took here."

Not only did I recently ascertain out of surprise that the Cuenca, Ecuador 2011 trip is likely to be canceled, but I also found out that even though the Survey of Hispanic Literature class is listed to be offered during the Fall 2011 semester, Jeff Birdsong said it is instead likely to be offered in the Spring of 2012. I can't remember what the reason behind that was, but it may have been because of a lack of interest. There could also be a problem with the time that it will be offered in the fall that is perhaps not convenient for a lot of people. For the sake of underclassmen



Jeff Birdsong

thinking about taking Spanish courses that go above and beyond fulfilling a language requirement at St. Andrews, I really hope that the Survey of Hispanic Literature class will be offered during the fall or spring of next year. Yes, it may be a lot of reading and writing, but I know that it helped me to improve my critical thinking skills, my writing skills, and helped me to have a greater understanding and appreciation of Latin American culture and diversity, which is a plus to know when you enter the job market today. If you are currently a student who wanted to study abroad in Cuenca, Ecuador this summer 2011 and cannot, due to the fact that the trip might be canceled, I strongly recommend signing up to take the Survey of Hispanic Literature class! You will learn a lot! And, you'll be glad you did!