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Meet Professor Wang
By Zoey Alderman–Tuttle

Daliang Wang is entering his second year as a teacher at Mercyhurst. This term he is offering an Asian Studies course, which he hopes will influence how his students think about different cultures. The course focuses on the cultures and traditions of different peoples in Asia, specifically focusing on China, India, and Japan. Dr. Wang chose to focus on these countries in particular because of the long history of both China and India. Japan was the other obvious choice, due to its modern industrial importance. His students learn through hands-on activities, and video and audio clips, as well as through lecture. He hopes to provide them with a different perspective on Asia, reduce views based on stereotypes, and ultimately promote greater understanding between the U.S. and Asia as China and India become increasingly important in the global economy.

In further hopes of promoting ties between U.S. and Chinese students, he will take a Chinese class from Mercyhurst in 2008 to be immersed in Chinese culture. A member of Erie’s Sister City Committee, he recently went to Erie’s sister city in China: Zibo. Zibo is in central China, populated by about 5-6 million people. Coincidentally, it is also Dr. Wang’s native town. There, he met with representatives from five to six of Erie’s other sister cities in order to promote economic, cultural, and educational ties. His trip to Zibo has already resulted in a visit by a Chinese educational group to Erie in October, with another planned for around February or March.

Dr. Wang will be offering an Honors version of his Asian Studies course Spring Term 2008 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

HPY Report
By Caitlin Ross

My first term at Mercyhurst went extremely well. I was happy with all of my grades, and I feel like I learned some very valuable lessons my first few months of college, not all of which were taught in a classroom. My honors class last term was very fulfilling, and I’m in two more for Winter Term: Contemporary Social Problems and English Seminar. Because of reading we did for CSP, I’ve gotten very interested in social problems in the modern world, especially the genocide in Darfur. Because of this class, I joined both Amnesty International and the Social Work Club.

One of the biggest surprises I’ve come across thus far in my college experience is how close my friends and I have become. I can’t believe I just met these people a few months ago—I feel like I’ve known them for years! The other night at dinner we all shared “remember when we met?” stories. It was so fun to divulge our initial thoughts about each other as strangers and compare them to where we are now as friends. I’m so glad I have such great friends who’re interested in the same things as I am—less partying, more Paprika! Clearly I’ve just revealed that we’re dorks, but we’re okay with that.

The Guelcher Film series at the PAC was one of my favorite things about this school. Seeing amazing movies for free—and getting Honors credit for attendance—was a wonderful opportunity provided by the school.

I am truly enjoying myself at this school and in the HPY program. Although I’m unsure if I’ll apply to the Honors Program at the end of the year, I think this preparation year has been a great experience in itself.
Student Spotlight Nadine Beres
By Sarah Heuer

At first glance, it may appear that sophomore Nadine Beres has more than 24 hours in her average day! The elementary and special education major, with a minor in art therapy, has completed more than 700 hours of service during her time at Mercyhurst, all while participating in the musical, LCP, ambassadors, and always maintaining the high grades and standards required by the honors department. She took a few minutes out of her busy day to answer a few questions for us.

What inspires you to give so much of your time to the community?

What really inspires me to volunteer so much is knowing how truly blessed I am. It is through the service I do that I am always humbled and reminded of that. Doing service reminds me to think more carefully about what I say and complain about before I do it. I always complain about being a “poor” college student; however, I should be grateful that I at least have the opportunity to go to college. I believe that it is truly my responsibility to help out those less fortunate than me, as a way of thanking God for blessing me and of letting those in need know that there are people out there who care. How I feel after seeing the smile of the face of someone I have just helped out cannot be bought at a store or online, it is something that you have to earn and it is simply irreplaceable.

What was your most memorable volunteer experience?

In New Orleans I got to meet many interesting people. I could not believe that the pile of rubble sitting there after the storm used to be a house. It was so awesome to be able to be part of the team that was going to help that family get a brand new start. The trip offered me the opportunity to experience a new culture and see another part of the United States. I was also able to build new friendships and relationships with other Mercyhurst College students. The New Orleans trip was my favorite service trip ever! I really hope we go again next year!

How would you describe your experience with the honors department?

I have loved my experience in the honors program. Although it has rules and guidelines, it is understood that sometimes things do not always fit perfectly. Dr. Morris is always willing to work out special arrangements. The professors are great; most of them are willing to help you if you need it. They also like to include us in class discussions, not to say that does not happen in regular classes, but it seems that they care more about what we have to say when it is an honors class. My advice to honors students is this: Do not be afraid to talk to Dr. Morris or ask anyone on the executive board questions, if you have any. Do not let one little detail or requirement keep you from continuing in the program; just talk to Dr. Morris about it and maybe something can be worked out.

What advice would you give students on making their time count?

If you want to make your time count while here at Mercyhurst all you have to do is go out and do something. GET INVOLVED!! There are tons of clubs on this campus; there is bound to be one that suits you. A great way to make your time count is to go on a service trip. There are weekend trips and the regular Alternative Break Trips. If you really want to make a difference do service learning just because you want to! It is alright to sign up to do service learning even if you do not need to. In the end it does not matter if anyone else feels you did something and made your time and Mercyhurst College count, as long as you know that you did something to make a difference. Make sure you are not spending $30,000 a year and simply walking away with a degree and a feeling that you could have done more to make the time you spent here valuable.
Mary Gamble Brings Art to Old Main

By Megan Cody

Art is our one true global language.

It knows no nation, it favors no race, and it acknowledges no class. It speaks to our need to reveal, heal, and transform. It transcends our ordinary lives and lets us imagine what is possible.

Richard Kamler, artist and educator

Following the inauguration of our 11th president, Dr. Thomas Gamble, Mercyhurst became the benefactor of new leadership—and with it, a fresh vision for the college. In some ways, this exciting shift to a new presidency was echoed by the refreshing transformation of Old Main’s central hallway. What was once just an ordinary walkway, lined with conventional paintings, has now become a stunning showcase of thought-provoking artwork. Surprisingly, this change has not only breathed new life into Old Main, but it is, quite possibly, bringing the Mercyhurst community closer together.

So, who is responsible for this remarkable facelift? It all began with Mrs. Mary Gamble’s passion for art and a sincere heart for the Mercyhurst community. She has been instrumental in organizing all of the shows in Old Main—from contacting artists via phone, to hanging the art, to the final “thank you” note. Last spring, Mrs. Gamble even traveled across Erie—visiting the Sisters of Mercy and St. Joseph, synagogues, churches, and even the bishop—just to borrow amazing pieces of religious artwork to share with us. And remarkably, all of her efforts are voluntary. With the help of maintenance and other Mercyhurst employees, Mrs. Gamble is beautifying Old Main, with the intent to encourage, inspire, and elicit thought.

The art show is catching on. Word is spreading, and more artists and art-lovers (including alumni and local friends of the college) are coming forward, asking to contribute to the show. This is a gift. We should treasure it.

Spring Honors Courses

Asian Cultures (D. Wang)
 – TTh – 12:10-2:05

Applied Ethics (K. Sullivan)
 – MWF – 2:00-3:20

Western Classics (J. McGurk)
 – TTh – 10:05-12:00

World Classics (B. Reed)
 – MWF – 9:30-10:50
Many Honors students at Mercyhurst aspire to go on to graduate school after receiving their undergraduate degrees. What do graduate schools look for in potential students? Good grades, of course; high GRE scores, yes; letters of recommendation, surely; internships and work experience, naturally; and, perhaps surprisingly, study abroad experiences.

This is why Honors students should get to know Dr. Heidi Hosey, Mercyhurst’s newly appointed Director of Study Abroad. As Director of Study Abroad, she holds a unique place at the College in coordinating trips that have in the past been coordinated solely by faculty members. Last year Drs. Daniel McFee, Mary Ann Owoc, and Brian Reed led a group of 11 students on a 17-day trip spanning England, Ireland, and North Ireland.

“It was a really awesome opportunity to study something, like work by [poet W.B.] Yeats, and then actually visit the place where he may have been inspired to write it,” said Renée Kiefer, one of four MCHP students to make the trip. “It makes what you’ve learned so much more real than words on a page when you get to see it in person.”

Previously, classes taken in conjunction to the trip were linked directly to the core, thus locking out a number of upperclassmen who had already fulfilled their core credits.

Now, study abroad courses are listed in the course catalog as FSAT courses. They are novel courses, designed specifically for each study abroad experience to ensure no one is locked out. Yet these courses can still count for core credit; at the very least, all can be used to fulfill the “World Perspectives” category of the core.

The new strategy is also more cost effective. The new courses are considered schedule overloads and only cost $300/course. Designed this way, going on a trip and receiving six credits (two normal three-credit courses) ends up costing approximately the same as tuition for six credits.

This year, two trips are being offered—one to Japan, one to Europe. The trip to Japan is being led by Dr. Hosey and is in conjunction with a Non-Western Perspectives class taught by Professor Keiko Miller and a Japanese Literature course taught by Dr. Joanne McGurk. Destinations include Tokyo, Kamakura, Hakone, Kyoto, Hiroshima, and Osaka over the course of eleven days. Spots are available as of the beginning of January, and information about the trip may be obtained by contacting Dr. Hosey.

Dr. Christine Colin will lead the 17-day excursion to Europe. She will be teaching a European History course. Other instructors are Dr. James Snyder, who will be teaching a course in European Philosophers, and Dr. Brian Reed, who will be teaching a course in European Literature. Destinations include Frankfurt, Heidelberg, and Munich, in Germany; Venice, Rome, and Florence, in Italy; Vatican City; Lucerne, Switzerland; Colmar and Paris, in France; and London, England. The trip is currently full, but as of the beginning of January, interested students could still be waitlisted.

Hopefully, in the years to come, there will be even more opportunities for Mercyhurst students to travel abroad. Mercyhurst still works with organizations such as Cultural Experiences Abroad and Semester at Sea, and there is the possibility of consortium exchange agreements in the future, through which Mercyhurst would receive students from such institutions as Merida, in Mexico, or the Australian Catholic University; in exchange, an equal number of Mercyhurst students would be able to study at those institutions, at Mercyhurst prices. Dr. Hosey was adamant in proclaiming the importance of cultural learning opportunities, stating, “Within five years I want half of our students to have a study abroad experience. And I think every Honors student should try to obtain one, as well.”

“I would definitely recommend traveling abroad,” Kiefer concluded. “You get to see a bit more of the world and expand the way you learn, which is a thousand times better than just sitting in a classroom.”
Student Service Spotlight: Kristin Leonard

By Rachel Sites

Kristin Leonard, a senior Forensic Science major, is one of the most service-oriented Honors students at Mercyhurst. She manages demanding major coursework, the Honors curriculum, and various extra-curriculars, all while devoting a large amount of time to Habitat for Humanity. Whereas many of us regard service as a rewarding, but necessary obligation for completing the Honors Program, Kristin sees service as a chance to help others by giving up that most precious of a college student’s commodities: time.

What exactly is Habitat for Humanity?

Habitat for Humanity is an international non-profit Christian organization that seeks to eliminate poverty housing and provide decent, affordable shelter for those in need. Habitat homeowners must make low monthly mortgage payments – which are in turn used to build other Habitat homes – and commit to several hundred hours of manual labor or “sweat equity” on other Habitat homes in order to be chosen as a partner family. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has built more than 225,000 houses around the world, providing shelter for more than one million people.

What is your role? How did you get started?

My involvement with Habitat began during my freshman year at Mercyhurst when I participated in my first alternative spring break trip to Dade City, FL. I had always wanted to be involved with Habitat, but it wasn’t until I spent that week roofing a home that I found out how fun and rewarding it could be. I then served as a student board member during my sophomore year, and have been the club President since the end of that year. In those four years, I have been able to work on over 10 homes locally in Erie, and will be participating in my fourth spring break trip in February.

Where has Habitat been?

In the four years that I have been at Mercyhurst, Habitat has been to four different states for spring break, and usually participates in at least one day of service in Erie every term, or makes a trip to Union City. I have participated in trips to Dade City, FL; Foley, AL; Valdosta, GA, and will soon be headed to Sumter, SC. Due to the popular demand every year at spring break sign-ups, this year we’re taking 32 students- more than Habitat’s ever taken before.

Has service always been important to you? Why? Do you plan on continuing service after graduation?

I would say service has been a big part of my life since high school. I was typically active with my church youth group in different service opportunities and that has carried over into my college career. In addition to Habitat, I have worked with SABAH, the Emmaus Soup Kitchen, and Mercyhurst’s Christmas on Campus. I find service to be a highly rewarding experience and it offers a chance for everybody to use their talents to give back to the community, including those who are less fortunate. After graduation, I will seek new service opportunities wherever I attend grad school, possibly consider doing a year of service, and hopefully my passion for Habitat will continue to grow throughout the rest of my life. My hope in the next five years is to go to Botswana, Africa with Habitat’s Global Village Program to work on a home in a completely different culture.

How do you balance service and all other activities?

My balance of service with school work and other commitments changes every single week. When I have big projects due, I try to organize Habitat fundraisers or events around my schedule. Sometimes it’s difficult because they cater to a certain holiday or season, which obviously can’t be changed. Luckily, I have a dedicated board of seven other students, plus the whole club who can back me up when I can’t give my time. Obviously classes get my full attention, but for extra-curriculars, I am first and foremost devoted to Habitat for a weekly meeting, any day-time fundraisers, weekend work days, and alternative breaks, and then I participate in other clubs/activities on campus almost every night of the week.

How does someone get involved in Habitat?

If people are looking to get involved with Habitat on campus, I would suggest contacting myself to be added to our email list, and then they will be notified of all work days, events, or fundraisers happening at Mercyhurst. If they would prefer to learn more about Habitat International and how they can volunteer in other locations or donate money, they should check out www.habitat.org.