

# Forum

## Core reasons provided for core class requirements

EMILY ART

Mary dreams of becoming a pediatrician while patching up her favorite teddy bear with a band aid and gauze wrap. A plastic stethoscope turns into a real one as she realizes her dream of becoming a pediatrician is turning into reality. We imagine the possibilities of what we want to be when we grow up. As we grow, we narrow the options. High school and college give the opportunity to explore different electives and find subjects they excel in or have a passion for.

Many times, teachers of core classes hear the same questions like, "why do we have to learn this? I'm not going to use this in real life." No matter what required subject a teacher teaches, some students question the reason why they are learning what they are. For students who plan to major in select

subjects, many of them do not see the necessity of learning other subjects if they don't plan to use them in their career. Knowing why we learn what we do is important. Maybe teachers should explain the importance of what they teach. Knowing how we can apply what we learn in school to the outside world gives students a better understanding.

Andy West, English teacher, has similar questioning come up in his English 12 class. A group of his students who planned to become engineers did not find the story of "Macbeth" relevant to engineering. West responded to this question by e-mailing five engineering and business professors asking for their thoughts on the question. A professor from Oregon State University responded with the explanation that engineers must understand other languages, such as

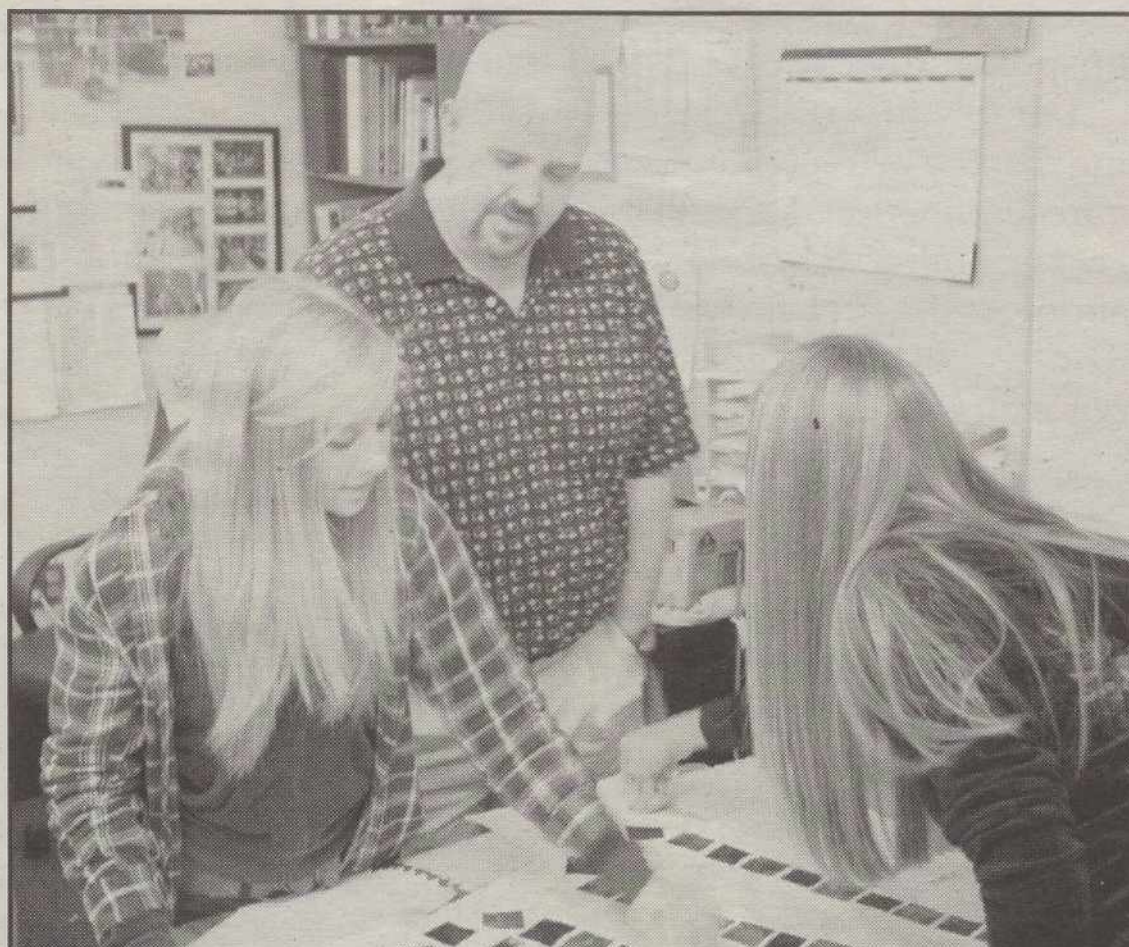


Photo by Rachael Woolley

Teddi Watson and Emily Steele, freshmen, incorporate elements and scenes from "The Odyssey" such as the cyclops, into a board game. Butch Self, English teacher, suggests ideas to enhance their game. In addition to "The Odyssey," freshman English students also read works such as "Romeo and Juliet" and "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Shakespearean language and have exposure to other subjects. He also added that critical thinking and problem solving are involved while reading "Macbeth."

"Four years of English are required because it applies to every field and in life," West said. He believes the experience in core classes can broaden horizons for students and introduces

them to new people, ideas and thoughts. As a teacher, West looks to educate his students by bringing various elements from other subjects into his teaching and by entertaining them.

"You cannot fully experience life here and now without experiencing the opposite of what you know," West said. Being open to new and different subjects will give more understanding to subjects already known.

High school provides the opportunity to experience a variety of classes such as English, math, social studies and science on a daily basis. Colleges do not look for student expertise in one class subject, but prefer well-rounded students who do well in all core subjects. For those who want to take advanced math or literature classes, grades in other classes must be high also.

Core Classes

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## ELISE'S SOAPBOX

### DADT REPEAL A GAY RIGHTS MILESTONE

It's amazing how far we have come as a nation. Less than 40 years ago, the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Seven years ago, Massachusetts became the first state to legalize gay marriages. On Dec. 22, President Barack Obama signed a law which repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." This marks one more victory in the civil rights struggle of our generation: granting equal rights to homosexual Americans.

DADT began with good

intentions, but grew into a major roadblock for LGBT soldiers. At the time, it was a considerable step forward. Before it, a soldier could be investigated to see if they were homosexual, and if they were, they were dishonorably discharged. When President Bill Clinton signed DADT in 1993, investigating a soldier's sexual orientation was prohibited ("don't ask"), but a gay or lesbian soldier could not say or do anything that proved their homosexuality ("don't tell"). Otherwise, they would be discharged.

At the time, the argument

that homosexuality disturbed unit cohesion and morale was somewhat valid. It had been 20 years since the American gay rights movement began and not everybody was on board with the idea of sexual equality. Not everyone is comfortable with it today, either, but according to Gallup the percentage of respondents who believe homosexuality is morally acceptable shot up between 2001 and 2010 from 40 percent to 50 percent.

But the policy caused many problems for the military. Over 14,000 soldiers were fired since DADT was implemented. Among these were Lieutenant Dan Choi, an Arabic linguist and Iraq veteran who was discharged after coming out on "The Rachel Maddow Show." Since his firing, he's become a very prominent gay rights activist. Several soldiers like him, who performed their patriotic duties just like any other soldier, were unfairly fired because of their sexuality. Many more have had to lie to themselves and to their fellow soldiers to avoid being discharged.

The loss of so many crucial military personnel should have been Congress's first wake-up call to repeal DADT. Their second should have been the spike in the number of people who don't think of LGBT citizens as abominations. Instead, they needed the Pentagon to tell them that a majority of

servicemembers—70 percent—have little or no qualms about serving and training alongside openly gay, lesbian or bisexual soldiers.

When the Pentagon study was made public in November of 2010, Congress and the Obama White House heard the memo: DADT had to be repealed.

Once the repeal is implemented, LGBT soldiers will no longer have to lie about who they are. They will no longer be discharged because they were born a certain way. Since our society has evolved significantly in the past 17 years, soldiers should not have to be afraid of coming out. We've gotten to the point where we are reducing the marginalization of the gay citizen in our

society. Just like African-Americans overcame segregation, the gay man and lesbian woman are overcoming intolerance.

In the past few decades, gays and lesbians have received an empowering message from society that has translated well into our laws. You are not mentally ill. You can marry each other. You can serve in the military without having to hide your identity. You are American citizens, which entitles you to having the rights of all American citizens. And anyone who says otherwise is living in the past.

As Americans, we should be incredibly grateful to our government and our military for taking that important step in moving our country forward.



Courtesy of Flickr Creative Commons

A protestor marches in opposition to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the law which dishonorably discharged openly gay military service members. The man on the sign is Lt. Dan Choi, an ousted soldier turned vocal gay rights activist. The policy was repealed on Dec. 22.

## Amplifier

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