

PSU inquiry class takes new direction

PSU inquiry class

• HUM 299/SSC 299: still offers a broad area of inquiry but with more musical content and a increased art focus.

• Emphasis on opera, perhaps Puccini's *Tosca*

• Possibility of being offered in a variety of terms during the '98-'99 school year.

MIKE GARCIA
Staff Writer

"There's plenty of good news for students who are thinking about participating in the Portland State University inquiry program at Clackamas this year, said David Mount," English instructor.

HUM 299/SSC 299, the PSU-affiliated inquiry class offered for the first time last spring, will go through several changes this year. Mount, music instructor Gary Nelson and James Dickinson, math instructor, will once again be teaching the class.

Don't expect another exploration of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, Mount warned. The new inquiry class will cover a broad area of inquiry as before, but the focus will be on a different work.

There will be more of a musical content and Nelson will have more of an active role in determining the direction of the class. Part of the requirements might include attending a specified number of arts events in Portland.

The instructors are thinking of using the Puccini opera *Tosca* as the

center of inquiry. Like a typical opera, "it ends in glorious tragedy," said Mount. The storyline is familiar as well, he added: "Boy meets girl, villain meets girl, villain tries to steal girl, girl commits suicide." *Tosca* is scheduled for performance in Portland at the time of the class.

Mount admitted that the idea of opera might scare some people away, but went on to say that it shouldn't.

"I don't think people realize that opera is the ultimate multimedia experience," he said. "Music, theater, arts...it's got everything."

Dickinson said that more extensive inquiry is what the new class is about. Students will be expected to go further outside their comfortable areas of study, to "broaden their horizons," he said.

Nelson's connections with Portland's music scene would be an asset to inquiry based on *Tosca*. Mount would contribute his knowledge of the literature of the period in which the opera was written, the Romantic Period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dickinson would touch on the mathematical and scientific ideas of the era, as well as how mathematics relate to music.

One of the ideas the instructors are excited about working with is how economics plays a role in art: for instance, whether the artistic value of an opera might suffer if there is not enough money invested in producing it.

Last spring's class had mixed reviews from students, Mount said, mostly because they were allowed to explore almost any direction of research. This freedom left some students with too much information and not enough structure.

The proposed changes will make the Clackamas program more similar to the PSU model, with even more of a focus on small-group work. Dickinson said that student "mentors" who took the 1997 class would help the instructors determine the direction of the class while keeping in touch with students' perspectives.

Individual projects chosen for the first inquiry class included: an in-depth study of Soren Kierkegaard, an early existentialist; poetry, fiction and artwork based on *Arcadia*; a comparison between the "Gothic" trends of the present day and the Gothic movement of the Romantic Period; and even a lesson in the

economics of designing a T-shirt for the class.

Mount said that students would likely be more carefully screened for prerequisites in speech, mathematics and writing at the time of registration. This would help to ensure that students are ready for the extensive research and presentation they will be doing in the class.

Students might enjoy learning from each other and sharing experiences, Mount said, but "there's no room for an attitude of 'all fun and no work'".

Dickinson attended a few conferences with the staff from the PSU inquiry program, and they agreed that the class was a success, especially for the first time around. He is optimistic about the potential for the class as long as everyone involved keeps contributing to its evolution. There are a few months of redefining to go, he said, and many ideas probably have yet to surface.

Mount anticipated the inquiry program becoming more popular as time progresses. He said that if all goes well it might be offered in additional terms, with some new instructors, for the 1998-99 school year.

Connett selected to attend Executive Leadership Institute



TIMOTHY BELL / Clackamas Print

Last August Dean of Instructional Services Dian Connett attended a seminar sponsored by the League of Innovation and was selected to attend the Executive Leadership Institute.

“Since there were only 35 people participating it was a pretty intense seminar”

Dian Connett
Dean of
Instructional
Services

CHRISTINA MUELLER
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Dian Connett, Dean of Instructional Services for Clackamas Community College, was named one of 35 community college leaders in the nation selected to attend the Executive Leadership Institute.

This past August Connett attended a seminar in Los Angeles sponsored by the League of Innovation which is an association of community colleges that sponsors many events including a recent conference on information technology.

The league's goal is to identify administrators taking steps toward presidential position in a college.

"It helps people assess what their own skills are. It also helps build leadership skills and gives a better understanding of the leadership roles we currently have, as well as possibilities for different kinds of leadership which would be in a president's position," said Connett.

The seminar was a combination of listening to different presentations and doing several assignments both written and oral.

"Since there were only 35 people partici-

pating it was a pretty intense seminar," Connett said.

Connett was the only attendee from Oregon. Other attendees came from Washington, California and the East Coast.

The selection process for the seminar consisted of a five page application which asked questions about past experience and leadership style. Connett also had to submit her resume and three letters of recommendation from people who would nominate her.

"After we were selected we had a whole other set of written materials on leadership that we had to prepare and submit," Connett explained.

The seminar is fairly prestigious. The League of Innovation takes out full page ads in the chronicle of higher education that say "Executive Leadership Institute Participants for 1997."

The League of Innovation publishes a directory of 10 years of people who have attended the seminar and what positions they're in now. One of their goals is to try to develop a professional network to help each other.

"I've called them since and we have e-mail and they'll talk about 'We're dealing with distance ed questions at the college, how did you solve that?'," Connett explained.

Peace?: Honesty can stop the killing

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"And yet, within two years a Jewish state was established in what was British Palestine."

"Taken from a perspective of 1945, there has been much accomplished to settle the national aspirations of both the Palestinians and the Israelis."

Epstein cited some of these accomplishments as being the peace accord between Egypt and Israel, the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the Palestinian recognition of Israel, "... and two subsequent conferences in Madrid (Spain) and Oslo (Norway) which led to a formal peace treaty and establishment of a Palestinian Authority."

After Epstein spoke for 30 minutes, Kheirabadi was asked to speak on the topic of the symposium.

He stated the root of the problem from the beginning.

"I think the Oslo Agreement is very clear. It says that the Israelis should leave the areas that have been occupied since the 1967 war."

Kheirabadi went on to compare religious and secular governments in Iran, Algeria and Palestine, and that the problem in the Middle East is not religious by nature.

He said that in the Middle East area of Israel, 10% of the population is Israeli, yet 80% of available for use by everyone is controlled by them.

Kheirabadi emphatically concluded his argument with heartfelt emotion.

"It is a benefit to Israel to get this problem solved, because this killing can't continue forever. We can stop the killing just by being honest."

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