

Study abroad program expensive, worthwhile

By Isaac Soper
Arts & Culture Editor

You arrive in a foreign land. The buildings are hundreds of years old; the history is everywhere; you are Indiana Jones, and cultural diversity and education is the Holy Grail to which you seek.

Clackamas Community College is part of a consortium of colleges, which includes Central Oregon Community College, Chemeketa CC, Mt. Hood CC, Portland CC, Rouge CC and Southwestern CC. This consortium, known as the Oregon International Education Consortium (OIEC), offers programs in multiple countries that span from three weeks to a full term.

"We've got good coverage for the languages we teach," said David Miller, department chair of foreign language.

CCC also sets up some trips apart from the consortium, including the upcoming spring break trip to France, led by French instructor Heidi Cropsey.

There are many opportunities on campus for foreign language study in other countries, with multiple summer programs, including a three-week trip to Guanajuato, Mexico and Barcelona, Spain.

There are two term-length programs that the OIEC offers, one being last year's trip to London, England, and next fall's trip to Florence, Italy.

"This program is great because it is going to Florence, taking classes as if you were taking the classes here, but you are really immersed in anything that you are studying," said Spanish instructor Irma Bjerre.

One of the big perks to the Florence trip is the free museum pass, which allows students to visit the various world-renowned art museums, such as the Uffizi Gallery, the oldest museum in modern Europe, dating back to 1581.

"Can you imagine studying art in Florence, what would be a greater experience than that?" said Bjerre.

The full-term programs are sponsored by the American Institute for Foreign Studies (AIFS), which is based in London. They operate a number of different programs in various parts of the world; currently CCC is just a part of the two in London and Florence.

The college also offers a program in Costa Rica, which focuses both on the Spanish language study and field biology.

"Part of the time is spent at a language school in

Costa Rica and the other part of the time is spent at

a biological field station in the rain forest. A chunk of time is spent at the beach studying beach ecology, as well as being at the beach," said anthropology instructor Robert Keeler.

The Costa Rica excursion is in the summertime; the program is approximately four weeks long.

Keeler also mentioned that occasionally students participate in abroad studies that aren't directly sponsored by the college. Other schools will often take in students from other colleges to work with their program.

"I've taken groups to Belize and the Yucatan looking at Mayan ruins and such. Irma Bjerre and I took a group to Peru a few years ago on spring break," said Keeler.

CCC also features a student transfer program to Germany, which will be held from June 19 to July 3. Unlike the other programs, the trip to Germany doesn't feature a typical school portion on the agenda.

"The Spanish programs all have a study component to them; the German doesn't have any formal classes," said Miller.

In the past, before the current financial recession, in some years the college would have quite a few students participating in the programs, according to Keeler. That amount has dropped off in the past few years, especially in the term long programs; the trip to Florence has a base price of \$7,895, excluding airline taxes and fuel charges.

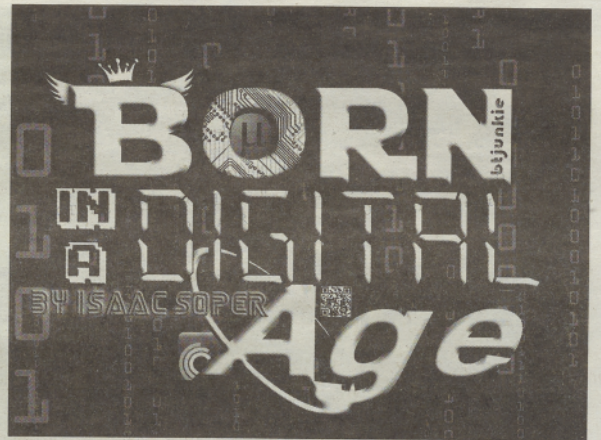
"The most common reason given for not going is not having the money. The second most common reason is 'I have to work,' which is because they don't have enough money," said Miller.

Though the study abroad programs are expensive, they are a one of a kind program that gives students culturally diverse experiences that they won't find in the United States.

"We recognize that it is expensive for students—for anybody to travel, so we look for opportunities where costs can be kept down. There are also scholarships available; there are several that are targeted specific for study abroad," said Keeler.

The majority of the study abroad scholarships are about \$500, which helps cover some costs. The general financial aid package, especially for the full-term full credit programs, can be used just as if the student was taking classes on campus.

Bjerre or Keeler are the main contacts on campus for the consortium and various study abroad trips, while Miller is the head of the program in Germany. Bjerre recommended that students get their registration in for the trip to Florence as soon



Pirates put down swords, pick up laptops

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They used to call the Internet the "Information Superhighway," for the pirates who sail the seven digital seas; it was a free trade system of almost all forms of media. That time is coming to a close.

We may not fly the jolly roger, carry cutlasses and wear eye patches. We don't have peg-legs that click on the ground while we walk; we may not look the type, but we are the digital pirates.

MegaUpload has been raided by the FBI, BTJunkie has closed down "voluntarily" out of fear. According to their blog, The Pirate Bay will be deleting all torrent files with seeds (uploaders) over 10 on Feb. 29 and replacing them with magnet links.

Where did it begin?

File-sharing has been popular throughout the '90s until today, according to a Stanford University study, an estimated 70 million people engage in online file sharing.

This started, as many people know, with programs and networks similar to Napster. These evolved into what was LimeWire (until its demise on Oct. 26, 2010, by court order nonetheless) and BitTorrent clients.

File sharing never was an issue until the uprise of digital media and the Internet. We had to throw away our VCRs and cassette decks to bring in DVDs and CDs. Most of the common forms media can be easily ripped (copied) onto a computer and bent to our will.

CDs are being phased out by iTunes and similar music purchasing software; DVDs are being phased out for Blu-ray. Looking into the future, most Blu-rays even include digital copies of the film for your computer.

All of these media types make it impossibly easy for non-violent pirates to share with their friends.

Someone told me that they had spoken with a film technician who worked on the set of "Thor" last year. They said that their wages were directly affected by pirating, that on the opening night of the film, more people saw the film at home than they saw it in theaters. If you believe that, answer me this: Would those people have seen that film in theaters if there wasn't a pirated copy on the web? Did they download the movie because they preferred to see the film taken on someone's camcorder with crap sound? Or did they download the movie because they wanted to watch it but couldn't afford it?

I would say that the man's lowered wages are due to today's economy, not because of "pirates." Blaming pirating for wage loss is just pointing fingers at someone, opposed to dealing with the real issue.

Anyone can say in this day and age that their wages are directly affected by people not coming in to their business, but how can you say that it is directly due to people downloading the media that you are producing? My restaurant is losing money due to pirates making their food at home! Blast you, Jack Sparrow!

Is a movie or music anything more than information? We have a Freedom of Information Act. How does that come into play? Most would argue that it doesn't.

If we download and watch a movie on our computer, how is it different than watching the movie on television? How is listening to "pirated" music on our mp3 players any different than listening to the radio? Don't get me started on DVR.

I don't like commercials, so I don't like listening to the radio and I hate watching TV. No matter how convincing you are, I'm not interested in your advertisements. I'm never going to buy your new car, Ron Tonkin; I'm not interested in buying Cialis or Viagra. I'm not going to go to McDonalds and spend my money on a [expletive deleted] Happy Meal for lunch. We're poor.

We're not Robin Hood, but we're not pirates either. No one is being harmed by us downloading the unreleased music by Mumford & Sons, no one is being harmed by us downloading old Humphrey Bogart films.

The transition to digital media has made the uploading and downloading of media possible. Prior to the Internet, if you wanted to copy a movie, you had to have two VCRs! The transition to digital has made everything easier, which is what we're all about, but we worship money as if it were God, so pirates send us into blind fury. All that work we've done, for what? Entertainment? I made that [expletive deleted] song to make money, not to make people's lives less miserable!