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Core Abroad! by Aaron Devine

In the orange-scented streets of Sevilla, I was attempting to buy ice cream from a vendor who spoke a slurred Andalusian Spanish. Behind me was a plaza of architectural majesty and triumph, of no particular historical relevance. People kicked futbols, smoked cigarettes, and spoke casually about the spring-warm, February sunshine. The sun felt good, as did Spain.

As I ate my chocolate chip helado, I heard a low rumble that grew steadily louder. A few people carrying signs filtered in from a side street. Then a dam burst and the plaza was flooded with thousands of strident Spaniards crying, “No a la Guerra” (No to the war) and shouting protests against the actions of America under George Bush. I stayed long enough to decipher a few signs, then — uncomfortably self-conscious — I fled the mob. Newspapers the next morning explained that the protest was one of the largest held that day in Spain, part of a worldwide demonstration of hundreds of thousands against the war in Iraq. Funny, the places you end up by accident.

Studying abroad is a must for Core students, because it’s the realization, expansion and application of a Core De Ideis

The periodical of the Core Curriculum at Boston University

CCAA: Encore Education by Rachel Sciaba

Core is a journey through civilization, guiding its students through the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Beginning with classics like Gilgamesh, Core wraps up two short years with 20th-century social science. But what about the history that is being made as we speak? Patching this gap in history, the Core Current Affairs Association (CCAA) extends the Core through to the present day.

Holly Naylor (Core ’02, CAS ’04) was a sophomore eager for a more detailed account of current events than regular news coverage offered when she laid the groundwork for what would become the CCAA. “The Core curriculum brought us from the Big Bang up through the last couple of decades,” said Holly, “I thought the CCAA would be a great way to continue our Core education into present day issues. Core was the perfect place to implement the CCAA.”

The concept was perfectly suited for the Core, which challenges its students to consider issues from every angle. In what other program are biochemistry, religion, and classics professors invited to illuminate the same topics with their respective and differing experience? The Core environment thrives on the demand for a well-rounded and well-informed perspective on world events. Holly and several students who share her intense interest in the wider world beyond campus — Andrew David, Katie Erwin, Pamela Kuck, and Jessica Myers — collaborated with Dean Johnson, Sonia Pastuhov-Pastein and Suzyn-Elayne Soler to organize in October 2002 what would be the first of a regular schedule of panel discussions. Professors Andrew Even in Andalusia Aaron Devine did not cease from exploration.

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Continued CCAA pg. 5
What Comes Up, Must Be Approved

On September 14th, professors Scott Whitaker and James Jackson — in a fit of Galilean replication — invited CC105 students to witness the release of fruit from a fifth-story window. BU's Office of Environmental Health and Safety stipulated a few precautions...

Dear Professor Scott Whitaker,

This is to confirm that the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) has reviewed your plan to emulate Galileo's famous experiment, by dropping several items large and small from an upper window in the CAS building into the back parking lot. Below I describe my understanding of the precautions you plan to take for safety and regulatory compliance purposes:

1. The experiment will occur this Sunday, September 14, 2003 at approximately 10:00am. As you know, the services at Marsh Chapel this Sunday are at 10:30-12:00, then 12:00-1:30, and 4:00 for the installation of the new Dean, and then 6-7, and finally 10:30pm. The 10am time for the drop is considered best, as it is probably the time of least traffic in the area.

2. The location of the drops will be through the parking lot side 5th floor stairwell window of 685 Commonwealth Avenue, directly over the Tsai Center entrance door on the ground level.

3. The items to be dropped will include, for example, one or more pumpkins, watermelons, etc. (not a steel ball or other highly dense object).

4. You will be responsible for cordoning off the impact area, assuring nobody enters the impact area or exits the building into the drop zone at the critical moment, and cleanup of the residue. The ground level impact area will be cordoned off by "Caution" safety tape (I hand-delivered to your office today two rolls). The area to be cordoned off will be approximately 60 feet by 60 feet, to ensure that no bouncing objects or debris will injure any bystanders.

5. You will ensure that at least three faculty will act as a "Safety Watch" to ensure that no bystanders or other personnel will enter into the impact area. One faculty member should be posted inside the building (just inside the Tsai Center entrance door on the ground level). At least two other faculty members will be posted on the outside perimeter of the safety tape cordoned off area, to ensure that bystanders do not enter the impact area.

6. Prof. James Jackson will perform the dropping of items and will be assisted by a responsible person who will hand the objects to him.

7. Caution will be taken not to put too much pressure on the window frame, where the 5th floor window is located (e.g., don’t lean on the window frame).

8. All the windows will be closed on the floors directly below the 5th floor window where the drops will occur, at the time of the experiment.

9. A ground cloth and/or poly will be used to cover the ground as well as the doorway area to facilitate cleanup and to shield the entrance door area.

10. In use of the video for this event and in class discussion, faculty will point out that you exercised appropriate safety protocols and received appropriate approvals in advance of this historic emulation.

By following the precautions as described above, the OEHS believes that the risk of injury to personnel and damage to property will be minimal.

I have communicated with the Offices of Risk Management and Physical Plant as well as the BU Police Department, about the planned emulation. BU Police Captain Robert Molloy indicated that a Police Sergeant will make a routine visit during the time of the event.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ron Slade
Assistant Director
Office of Environmental Health and Safety
Abroad, from 1

Aristotle said that education cannot be acquired in one’s sleep, and he’s right. It is experience, flat-out 5-senses-flooded engagement, which illuminates the brilliance of these texts. What, after all, do we study in the Core? Our program is designed to integrate a broad range of academic disciplines into a cohesive, comprehensive whole. The sum of these parts we call a liberal arts education—in other words, an education in Life. We study conceptual life, the principles by which—and activities through which— we live it. It naturally follows that once you’ve read the books, you must go out into the world and seek out those things of which you’ve read!

A stranger in a strange land is spurred to a new level of self-awareness—vividly present and relevant. Even the act of buying an ice cream cone or going to the movies is weighted by constant self-analysis—how do I perceive myself; how do others perceive me? These kinds of questions stayed with me all semester and came up every day. Though the cultural spotlight made me uneasy, it was amidst this scrutiny that I felt myself most strongly.

The journey through the Core texts provides this very same self-awareness. Augustine, Lao Tzu, Faust and Whitman, these wanderers of the Core are journeymen of their Selves. The Core texts put the journey in you; they study you as much as you study them. The most lasting experience of all the stories and theories is really centered and balanced in the Evolution of You.

A few weeks into my semester, I was on a bus packed with newly met Peruvian coworkers (from my internship), on a cultural excursion to the Spanish pueblo of Trujillo. The only American, only blond, only person above 5’8” on the bus—well, I stood out. They spoke so fast and so many at once that I was quickly lost and frustrated. Yet they kept pressing me, trying to involve me in their conversation and the day’s events. Staying positive and engaged was tough and it was one of those “finding out what you’re made of” experiences. Sometimes being abroad feels like slogging through Weber or Kant—everything’s so foreign and comprehension comes so slowly. But with time and resolve, the reward is that much greater.

These rewards are greatest when we challenge ourselves, as in both Core and studying abroad. Why take on such intense workloads? Why leave our native culture and customs? Not for our health, that’s for sure. Rather, to better ourselves by better knowing ourselves. Again, it’s that constant self-awareness. You become the control in a great social experiment, the standard against which all else is measured. And you’re measuring, testing yourself. Opening our eyes to the wider world, we learn that it’s bigger than where we’ve been. You have to experience it to understand it; the same goes for understanding the depths and details of the self.

Any experience that removes you from the familiar will give you all the benefits I’ve mentioned—studying abroad is just one path available. But I think foreign lands intensify the experience all the more. They’ll show you something completely new; both in the spyglass and the looking glass. Core students are uniquely tuned to appreciate the rewards of exploration. You belong out there soaking in, processing, being filled by the experiences of the world—it was made for us. Take the journey, and see what stories you’ll find and inspire.

Aaron Devine (Core ’02, CAS ’04) is a former Editor of De Ideis who spent Spring 2003 in Spain.

Dear Core:

Hiya, how have you been doing? Scotland is fantastic and the people are especially friendly here in Glasgow. The Glaswegians are infamous for their heavy Scottish dialect, but it hasn’t been too bad. Politically, things here are exciting. The Scottish Parliament has been recently reassembled (in 1999) after being disbanded in 1707 and there is a lot of excitement about it. There is much anti-Blair and anti-Bush sentiment especially since investigations have revealed that there were no articles of mass destruction found in Iraq, but luckily this feeling does not spread against the American students. I have yet to try haggis but I will. I have seen a couple of Scottish boys in kilts and I was tempted to ask whether or not they were wearing anything beneath but I managed to control myself. The Highlands are as beautiful as people say they are and as much more beautiful than any picture. I love having classes in old buildings that look like castles! Well, I’ve got to go and learn some Scottish line dancing! I’ll write more later.

Cheerful!

Jehae Kim (Core ’03), contributing writer to De Ideis, sent a postcard from Glasgow, Scotland where she is currently abroad.
If Epictetus had revised his Encheiridion for a modern undergraduate audience, he might have included the following advice for Core students as they labor to fulfill their general education requirements. Numbers correspond to the selections in his Handbook.

1. Some things are up to us and some are not up to us. Our attitudes are up to us, our attention, and attendance. The location of the lecture hall, the choice of lecturer, the topic of lecture, the temperature of the room, the ringing of cell phones, the talking people, the creaky seats and doors, the shrinking size of the chairs, and the fact that music is no longer played for the second year Core students is all not up to us.

4. When you are about to undertake some action, remind yourself what sort of action it is. If you are going to lecture, remember what can happen at lecture—there are people who talk while the speaker talks, people who come in late, people who sleep, and the occasional lecture that induces sleep.

8. Do not seek to have lectures entertain and inform you as you want them to, but instead want them to entertain and inform as they do, and your life in Core will go well.

13. If you want to make progress, let the professors think you dedicate all your time to Core, and do not desire a social life. If you do have a social life, you are not working hard enough. A person who concerns himself with one will be bound to neglect the other.

29. For each action, consider what leads up to it and what follows it, and approach it in the light of that. Otherwise you will come to Core enthusiastically at first, and do not desire a social life. If you do have a social life, you are not working hard enough. A person who concerns himself with one will be bound to neglect the other.

38. Gilgamesh did it to the bull
37. Cathedral’s clergyman
36. Not even
35. Manifestation of an Idea
34. Air-conditioning gas
33. Maryland’s neighbor
32. Hole punching tool
31. Concluded
30. Like Yahweh and Shamash
29. Paul’s former name
28. Down was
27. Executive
26. T-accident victims go here
25. Last month
24. Defeat unexpectedly
23. United States
22. Defeat unexpectedly
21. Headed
20. Iberian cheer
19. Play
18. Singer Billy
17. Invoke
16. Actor Alda
15. Molt
14. Anger
13. Follow
12. Repeat
11. Plod
8. Extremity
4. Corps students
1. Summer for Pierre

Across
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Attention Competitive Puzzlers!
The first three individuals, of any affiliation, to submit a completed and correct HardCore Crossword to Room 119 will receive a major award.

HardCore Crossword

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Down
1. adj. for the Odyssey
2. Polynesian tuber
3. Site of Dante’s first tour
4. To come about
5. Orange yellow
6. Archaic “you”
7. Boston’s favorite fish
8. Taking away
9. Lecture handout precursor
10. Speaking starling
11. Lecture handout precursor
12. Lecture handout precursor
13. Rowers needs
14. Archaic “you”
15. Orange yellow
16. To come about
17. Site of Dante’s first tour
18. Boston’s favorite fish
19. Ph.D.
20. Animal foot
21. Headed
22. United States
23. Animal foot
24. H2SO4
25. In music, sweetly
26. T-accident victims go here
27. Executive
28. Grecian & reflected upon
29. Some things are up to us and some are not up to us. Our attitudes are up to us, our attention, and attendance. The location of the lecture hall, the choice of lecturer, the topic of lecture, the temperature of the room, the ringing of cell phones, the talking people, the creaky seats and doors, the shrinking size of the chairs, and the fact that music is no longer played for the second year Core students is all not up to us.

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A Stoic’s Guide to Surviving Core by Christina Wu

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CCAA, from 1

Bacevich and Diana Wylie joined former WBUR host Christopher Lydon to weigh the consequences of the United States’ global reach at “America Abroad: Is America an Empire?”

“The CCAA’s philosophy,” explained Naylor, “is the more diversity, the better the forum.” For each event the group tries to assemble a panel of three speakers: two professors (including at least one Core professor) and a third person who brings an alternative angle on the subject.

The group was a success in its first year, hosting five forums including the final and most popular “AIDS in America,” featuring Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, former president of the Republic of Zambia. Over 400 students, faculty and guests attended, filling the Tsai Center that is so familiar to wet-behind-the-ears Core freshmen. Dr. Kaunda emphasized the need for international support for AIDS education and prevention.

According to CCAA member Pamela Kuck, “everyone, even students from other colleges who heard about it, came. Some Evergreen students also attended.”

On October 9th of this year, the CCAA held its first event of the year, “What Happens Now?: Reconstructing Iraq and Afghanistan.” BU Professor of Anthropology Thomas Barfield, Professor of Archeology Paul Zimansky, and Dr. Lynn Amowitz, Senior Medical Researcher for Physicians for Human Rights and faculty member at Harvard Medical School met to present three different perspectives on this important topic.

Panel members represented their particular field of inquiry without blindly advocating its priority, touching on the preservation of antiquities, the investment needed to sustain effective infrastructure, and the obstacles to incorporating gender and religious equality in governments making the transition to so-called “modern” democracy.

The discussion was later broadcast on WBUR, and is archived on video in the Core library.

The student founders, joined by new members Ariel Alberti, Jon Goren and Julie Onufra, are currently planning the next CCAA event.

Quick Wit © 2003 Zachary Bos

Stoic, from 4

Anu, etc.), since that is a fine, if impossible, thing. But consider what leads up to it and what follows it, and undertake the action in light of that. You must be disciplined, keep a strict study schedule, stay away from non-Core students, attend lecture, abandon your beverage before entering the lecture hall and in general you must dedicate yourself.

Just you consider, as a Core student, what sort of thing Core is; then inspect your own nature and whether you can bear it. Do you want to do well? Look at your studying habits. To do well, you must go without sleep, put up with hardship, be away from your friends, be looked down upon and laughed at by Philistines, get the worst of it in everything, in social life, sleep, health, wisdom, every little thing. Think about whether you want to exchange these things for tranquility, knowledge, and a one-up on Divisional Studies students.

30. Appropriate duties are in general measured by relationships. They are professors: that entails listening to them, yielding to their knowledge, putting up with them when they give you bad grades. Professors will not do you harm unless you deserve it.

31. The most important aspect of piety towards the professors is certainly to have correct beliefs about them, as beings that arrange the universe well and justly, and set yourself to listen to them and go to office hours. For in this you will never blame the professors or accuse them of targeting you. And this piety is impossible unless you detach the good and bad from what is not up to us, because if you think that any of what is not up to us is good or bad, then when you fail to get the good grade you want, you will be bound to blame and hate your professor instead of seeing the true cause of your mistake and favoring greater effort over anger.

47. You will have to become adapted to living as cheaply as far as your body is concerned, because of the prices of the Core books at the bookstore...

53. On every occasion you must have these thoughts ready:

Lead me, Gilgamesh, and all the books that follow,
Whenever I am assigned to you;
I’ll follow and not hesitate,
But even if I do not wish to,
Because I want to fulfill the general education requirements,
I’ll do it anyway.

Whoever has compiled these books well with necessity is cursed by us, and does not understand the meaning of sleep.

Quantum mechanics, Mozart and Marx may kill me, but in the end it’ll be worth it.
On October 4, twenty-nine first-year Core students visited Dartmouth College’s Hood Museum to see the exhibition “Coming of Age in Ancient Greece: Images of Childhood from the Classical Past.” Katherine Hart, a curator at the museum, guided the students through the exhibition, which is premised upon the thesis that artistic representations of children — on vases and in statuary — give us much more information about the lives of children in ancient Greece than do literary texts. The exhibition remains at Dartmouth through December 14, traveling from there to the Onassis Cultural Center in New York, the Cincinnati Art Museum, and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

After the tour, the students dispersed through the town and campus. Some shopped in Hanover; some stayed in the museum and played in the “Friends’ House,” a model of an ancient Greek home stocked with ancient toys; others (pictured) hiked and along the way marveled at the contemporary representation of a child.