IDENTITY AND THE CORE OF EXISTENCE by Mike Zisser

You probably recall, as I do your first day of college classes. For many of you, Core Humanities lecture was your first large lecture-hall experience. Perhaps you were nervous, perhaps you were anxious and eager to learn, perhaps you were annoyed at having to wake up at 9 AM. Perhaps you were experiencing all of these intangible emotions simultaneously. I distinctly remember Prof. Eckel introducing himself in his elegant manner as The Insider’s Guide to Room 119 (2)
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Indeed, from the get-go, I was not only trying to figure out who everyone else around me was, but I was searching to find myself as well. In the midst of an alien crowd, I had to maintain an image that reflected all aspects of who I was. Now, you may be asking, what exactly does this have to do with Core specifically? I’ll tell you. From the Ancient World to Modernity, we have experienced and lived vicariously through characters that have struggled and come to terms with their identities, whether social, political, personal, or religious. We have traveled the course of history seeking truth through both absurdly comic and tragic adventures. We have seen man as foolish, man as mad, man as confused, man as ignorant, man as selfish, man as...

Continued IDENTITY page 2

Sources, a multinational trade media company that promotes trading goods from Asia, primarily from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. Even though he lives half-way around the world, George still remembers the important life lessons of the Core, and reminisces fondly about his experience in the program.

WHY WERE YOU BROWSING THE CORE WEBSITE?
I wanted to thank the professors of the Core program for my education at BU. Without Core, my learning experience would be less memorable.

DO YOU CHECK IT OFTEN? IF SO, WHY?
I check it once a while for various needs. Sometimes I visit to get certain information, such as the books I read when I was in the program. Other times I just want to see what had changed.

Continued CORE-RESPONDENCE page 6
THE INSIDER’S GUIDE
TO ROOM 119 by Mandy Luk

If there’s something I can rely on in the Core office, it’s a healthy supply of unhealthy snacks. Whether by butter mints or cheese and crackers, I am usually greeted by a delectable treat as I settle into my post at the beginning of a work day. But besides eating, there is plenty of real work taking place in the Core office. overseen by Dean Johnson, program administratorSONIA Pastuhov-Pastein [now Liberty Davis – Ed.], and administrative secretaryZak Bos, Room 119 is home to all things Core, e.g. extra handouts, professor mailboxes, and tickets for the latest Core in the City event, etc.

Having served as a work-study employee for two years, I have been involved in the administrative side of numerous Core events. For every play or concert available for Core students, there are the work-studies advertising the event, handling the purchasing of tickets, and compiling student information. Fellow worker Seth Allen has even been sent out in a cab for last-minute theater tickets. With work-studiesNashila Somani and Emilie Heilig [and new this semester, Emily Hill –Ed.], Seth and I have peppered the campus with flyers, taped dozens of lectures, and tallied thousands of course evaluations.

Despite the paperwork that we routinely slog through, there are numerous perks for being puppeteers in the fabulous production that is Core. I have already mentioned the food; additionally, work-studies love the Core Curriculum that we.

Identity from 1

curious and defiant, and man as irrational and bestial. But the one constant throughout the journey has been this: what we have been experiencing all along, portrayed in a plethora of philosophical and literary forms, is man as man. We may all possess different identities at different times, but we will never fail to be human. To be rational, to seek truth, to be virtuous and wise – this is the essence of our humanity, and these qualities form the identity toward which we all strive, which we come to share as a collective whole.

It begins with Gilgamesh and his tripartite identity as man, hero, and king. Through folly and experience he learns of mortality; indeed an appropriate stepping stone for anyone is a conscious recognition of his or her inevitable death. We move quickly on to the Bible, where God’s destruction of mankind reflects human disobedience, corruption, and lost innocence. As we travel with Odysseus we see his unprecedented loyalty to nationalism and love. His god-induced clairvoyance becomes a true symbol of human faith and hope.

The Middle Ages allows us to see man’s struggle with God, authority, and suffering. We journey through the depths of Dante’s Hell and learn that human beings must possess many of the virtues Aristotle describes in order to achieve eternal happiness and godly acceptance. We see man as a spiritual creature and sage with Lao Tzu and are enlightened about piety and wisdom through Confucius. Epicetus guides us on coming to terms with aspects of life beyond our control and Aeneas teaches us about fate and hopeful anticipation.

As we break from tradition during the Renaissance and look back to the ideas of first semester antiquity, we see man as beautiful and progressive. The humanistic sentiments of the age enable us to question God and religion, and focus on our individual being. Petrarch and Donne sing to us about love and its recondite, controlling nature, while Lear shows us truth through madness and how the one identity we all share is our naked, suffering humanity. Don Quixote portrays the infinite nature of man’s imagination and the troubles we face when attempting to joust with reality. Milton lulls us with mellifluous lyric about our loss of innocence, while Descartes perpetually looms above us, reminding us to remain skeptical about our perception of the world, because human senses are inherently fallible.

As we wrap things up with the Enlightenment, we come to see that the most important aspect of being human is the power of reason. Without it, we fail to be human. Without it, we will forever remain a bunch of hopeless Yahoos. The Enlightenment teaches us to question everything we have so far willingly accepted: religion, politics, authority, and so on. We learn to move beyond good and evil into the realm of independent self-imposed morality and unprecedented independence of thought. Man’s emotional experiences will not suffice, and the one-despondent subservience of the Middle Ages is replaced by obstreperous rebellion against traditionalism. The precious individuality of the Renaissance becomes even more radically secular, for man’s identity can only be truly fulfilled through maturity, intellect, and reason. With these qualities, we liberate ourselves from our cognitive gulags and become a free and progressive species.

This necessarily laconic overview of the odyssey we have all taken has hopefully provided evidence for my initial point. For those of you in first-year Core, stick with it; you still have a ways to go in coming to terms with human identity. Indeed, these themes and insights may at times seem belittling and depressingly austere, but they make us who we are and shape us as people. Your final steps out of Core lecture might feel Lilliputian, but your acquired wisdom and keen sense of identity will bring you Pantagruelian-sized happiness and a greater sense of who you are.

Quick Wit by Zachary Bus

How about a cold Corona?

That would be awesome.

What every solar physicist thirsts for.
Despite her busy schedule on a December afternoon, with her first semester in the Core about to come to a close, Professor Rama Bansil took some time to talk about her background and her experience in the Core this year. Immediately, her enthusiasm for her life as a scientist and professor became clear. Not only is she passionate about her own research, but she has a strong appreciation for the other sciences, which is why Bansil is glad to have found the Core.

“It’s really great to teach as a whole group of colleagues,” she explains. But CC 105 has not been merely a teaching experience for Bansil; she has relished the opportunity to learn about areas such as astronomy and Earth science, which she had never been able to study in-depth. “It’s really wonderful to learn all that,” she says, “and you have to learn better when you have to teach it. I also like the fact that somehow a picture emerges of how the universe evolved and of our current understanding of it.”

Bansil knew early on that she would pursue science. She cites a biography of Marie Curie as an influential book for her, as she was impressed by Curie’s perseverance and devotion to the cause of science. Bansil earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees at the University of Delhi in India and then came to the U.S. to receive a PhD in physics from the University of Rochester. At first she focused on theoretical research in biophysics, but, she explains, “I realized I wanted to take my own data, and that’s when I made the decision to become an experimental scientist.” She has been at Boston University since 1976, focusing her research on the fundamental properties and physics of gels.

Bansil understands that it is easier for her to teach an advanced specialized course than the more wide-ranging Core Natural Sciences, but she also recognizes the importance of the Core in instilling students with an appreciation of science, especially its application to social issues. Most importantly, she wants students to come away with ‘the big lessons’. “You’re not going to remember the details of the equations... A lot of people have this phobia of science. I hope that this kind of course will lead them to believe it’s not a negative enterprise. The goal is to understand nature, not control it.”

Q: For how long have you been boxing and giving lessons?
I have been boxing for about 15 years and giving lessons since January.

Q: Who is your favorite boxer and why?
Muhammad Ali because he had charisma. Also, he was a heavy-weight who moved like a middle-weight.

Q: Why did you choose to take up boxing?
I have been in love with the sport for as long as I can remember—even since I was 8 years old and my father woke me up at 4am to watch the live match between Ali and Foreman in Zaire: “The Rumble in the Jungle.” Later, when I was in graduate school, I met and started training with Mikhail Gregorian who was the former boxing coach of the Soviet Olympic team. We became very close and before I knew it, I was fighting in competitions.

Q: Have you ever been seriously injured?
Nothing more than a black eye, bloody nose and bruised ribs.

Q: What is your most memorable boxing experience?
When I was competing in the amateurs, I had a match in Dorchester that was televised back in Ireland. The crowd, 98% of whom supported my opponent, jeered and yelled at me the whole fight. I ended up winning the fight but did not get the decision from the referee. That same crowd that was yelling for my blood, boomed the decision, showing that they were an educated boxing crowd. After the fight even my opponent came over to tell me that he thought I won the match.

Q: What is it that attracts you to boxing as a sport?
To me, boxing is the distilled, highly-concentrated essence of sport. It is pure competition, without the accouterments of other sports—there are no balls, no racquets, no hoops, no goals, no net—it is just man against man in natural competition, using nothing but fists.

Q: If you could compare one boxer with a Core character, which would it be?
I would compare George Foreman with Odysseus. Foreman’s successful return to boxing in his 40’s reminds me of Odysseus defeating the young Phalakians in their games, when he is returning home from Troy. Both Foreman and Odysseus were able defeat younger opponents because of their experience.

Be Published!
The editorial board of The Journal of the Core Curriculum is now reviewing submissions for Vol. XIV. Submit artwork, essays, reflections, cartoons, poetry, photo essays, memories, confessions, and academic papers to core@bu.edu for consideration.

Deadline for submissions: March 31st, 2005

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Would you like to see your ideas in Ideis?
E-mail deideis@bu.edu for information on how to become a contributor, photographer, or member of the editorial staff.
THE CORE CONTINUED IN EUROPE  by Alexa Dooseman

A year ago, I was in the midst of making an important decision – what to do with my life once Core ended. I started looking towards junior year and I panicked; how was I going to fill a schedule without my two pre-determined Core classes? What should my major be? What were my real passions in life? Who was I as an individual? What was my place in the world? Determined to answer these questions, I walked to Bay State Road and picked up a Study Abroad application. I decided that I was going to leave America and find myself in France.

Months later, I bid a tearful farewell to my parents, friends, and boyfriend, and marched through LAX armed with two gargantuan suitcases, a trusty French-English dictionary, and a mind determined to leave it all behind me – Boston, Core, the Red Sox, CAS, all of it. I didn’t know at the time that it is impossible to leave it all behind – especially Core.

Core haunted me in Europe. It began the first day in France when I met the woman who was to be “my family” for the next three months. She asked me what French writers I had read, but being very jet-lagged, I couldn’t think of any immediately. Suddenly they rolled off my tongue: Montaigne, Voltaire, Descartes, Rousseau . . . She stared at me with a look of obvious surprise. That was the first day! Core then followed me to Paris. At the Louvre, I saw a David painting of two lovers who looked as if they were stuck in a hurricane – yes, without even looking at the title, I knew that they were Dante’s Francesca and Paolo. At the Bastille, at Versailles, seeing David’s painting of the Coronation of Napoleon, I heard echoes of ProfessorJohnson’s lecture on the French Revolution. It got worse; in Florence, I forced my friend to take a picture of me with a statue of Machiavelli. In Madrid, I wondered, “Why aren’t there statues of Cervantes?” Core even stalked me in the bar scene. Each time I met anyone who was British, I demanded to know whether they lived near anywhere that resembled Pemberely and, if they did, did a Mr. Darcy live in it?

Going abroad was like a Core field trip – it deepened and added to my pre-existing base of Core knowledge. By diving into a new culture, family, and language, I gained a better respect and understanding for my own life in the United States. It was a challenging, exciting, exhausting, and rewarding process of examination of both my self and my life.

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

Updates on and accomplishments of students, alumni, staff, and faculty. Compiled by DI editors.

Michael Dickerson (Core ’00, CAS ’02) finished a Masters in Modern European History from Notre Dame in 2003. “I had the wonderful fortune during my summers at ND to visit Prof. Nelson in all of her bucolic glory on ‘the farm’ in Ireland. Upon completion of my courses, I embarked on a 7-week odyssey across the US with my BU roommate, William Childress. We battled the heat of Texas, the glaciers of Montana, and the green-chili sauce of a small town outside Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.” Mike currently teaches high school history in Troy, New York, a place which he says has little in common with its classical namesake. There, he developed an elective called ‘The American Century,’ which is in his words very Core-like in spirit and method. Within a year or two, he plans to move to Spain to teach English.

Prof. Christopher Ricks (Humanities) gave his inaugural lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry in November 2004. An edited excerpt appears in the Feb. 25th, issue of The Times Literary Supplement.

Stephanie Dreyer (CAS ’07) successfully completed the readings in both her Core Social Science book and Core Humanities book on time! [Congratulations. –Eds.]

Dana Truhe (CAS ’07) ran a 5:15 mile. Prof. John Finnerty (Natural Sciences) and his wife Nancy added another plate at the table when their new son was born on January 15th. Matthew Emmett tipped the scales at 8 lbs, 12 oz. an addition to their family. [photo above, left]

Prof. Johann Gutlerner (Natural Sciences) and her husband Orin also welcomed a new addition to their research team on February 4th. Their daughter Lilah Sue Gutlerner weighed 7 lbs 2 oz at birth and was 20” long. [photo above, right]

Bethany Gumper (Core ’00, CAS ’02) is an editor at SHAPE magazine and has written everything from a health column on new frontiers in fertility to recipes for heart-healthy brunch dishes. She backpacked through Europe after earning her English degree, and is a contributing writer in the upcoming travel anthology The Risks of Sunbathing Topless and Other Funny Stories from the Road. Currently living in Los Angeles, she’s getting sick of the smog and visits her adorable 2-year-old niece in Boston whenever she can.

Liz Jones (Core ’00, CAS ’02, former Core Office employee, lecture videographer, Core Journal editor, and Writing Tutor) is a PhD candidate in the department of English at the University of Texas in Austin. Her Master’s thesis is titled Sounding Black: New Formations of Whiteness in Slam Poetry and incorporated ethnographic research on the Austin Poetry Slam. She formerly ran a BU reading series called the Poetry Fanatics in the former Core Library [CAS 130, now the Office of Development and Alumni Relations].

Emma Hawes (Core ’04, CAS ’05) was interrupted during a nap on her spring break vacation by a phone call from former Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky. Prof. Pinsky was calling to let her know that she has been accepted into the Boston University Graduate Creative Writing Program. Emma was formerly an editor of The Journal of the Core Curriculum.

E-mail deideis@bu.edu if you would like to share news of a recent event with our readers in the Core community.
ON CORE-AHOLISM by Coco Balinski and Catherine Riede

After spending our formative years in the palatial Tsai Auditorium, and serving our time in the ostentatious halls of the School of Management, we soon-to-be Core Graduates have now taken up residence in the charming and not-easily-found CAS B-50. It might appear to the casual eye that each of these moves has furthered our descent into still lower educational environments. But no . . . Plato taught us differently:

‘The Way’ we have traveled in the Core recalls Plato’s Allegory of the Cave. In Tsai, we were bound against a wall, staring straight ahead at the shadows onstage. Released for relocation one stop east on the B-Line, we were freed from our chains and able to exit the cave. As we entered SMG, we turned our heads toward the enormous and gleaming sculpture in the lobby. Staring up at that golden sun we found truth, we found enlightenment, and we became the philosopher kings. With the end of the Core Curriculum in sight, we became the philosopher kings. With found truth, we found enlightenment, and the time came to travel down to the lobby. Staring up at that golden sun we entered SMG, we turned our heads toward chains and able to exit the cave. As we

It’s called Core-aholism, and it is not caused by too many late nights in the dugout, nor is it transmitted by mosquitoes or cured with a pill. You may not know you are a Core-aholic; you may have buried the knowledge of your condition deep in your subconscious. However, symptoms will manifest in papers for other classes as well as De Ideis articles. The stigma of Core-aholism is a reality. It’s time to stop living in a cave and time to start asking yourself the tough question:

AM I A CORE-AHOLIC? A Rubric for Diagnosis

- Is Zak Bos on a first-name basis with you?
- Are you in it for more than the T-shirt?
- Do you wonder why Core isn’t a major, and sort of wish it was?
- Do you know the full name, address, and preferred sock color of your professors?
- When you hear the words “hardcore,” “apple core,” and heck, even “corkscrew,” do you get wisfut for the good ol’ days in Tsai?
- Is the Writing Center on your speed dial?
- Do you sit in the “Splash Zone” (the first 5 rows) at Core lectures?
- Did you bookmark the Core website?
- Do you crave Danish butter cookies?
- Do you have a fervent belief that “Take Core” should be a categorical imperative?
- Is this your personal credo: “Man is born free, but in Divisional he is in chains”?
- Do you reject dreams of Never-never Land, in favor of a Kingdom of Ends?

Consult the GitA if symptoms persist. Warning: Core-aholism can lead to inflation of the mind, causing increased open-mindedness and a reverence for the Great Books Approach to learning. Di

A TOUR OF THE CORE FLOOR by Andrew Shapira

A dinner with Dean Johnson. A trip to see Polar Express at the IMAX. Group study sessions for Core Natural Sciences. Late-night discussions of Homer and Aristotle.

These are a few of the shared experiences of those living on one of the two Core Floors, floor 11B in Warren Towers. Throughout the year, the residents of 11B have lived, studied, and most importantly, formed friendships with each other through the common bond that is the Core Curriculum.

The floor comprises mostly freshmen with a few sophomores. Some of the residents are only enrolled in the Humanities portion of the Core, while others aren’t even in the Core at all, but even those who will not get to experience the joys of Gilgamesh, Aristotle, and the cosmic-themed music of Professor Marscher have enjoyed their time on the floor.

The Core Floor is unique in fostering an environment in which residents can study and learn about topics in literature and science as a group. “I enjoyed living on the Core Floor because it was very easy to study for a midterm,” said Sanu Dev, a freshman on the floor who is enrolled in both sections of first-year Core.

“It makes studying productive,” added freshman Chris Rennie.

Like any other floor, 11B has formed its own community and one that many find is very special. “I like it because we can go to class together and sit together . . . I like the community of it,” said Sonia Essaibi, a freshman in both sections of the Core.

Danny Chacon, a freshman in CGS, put it well when he said (regarding his strong friendships with others on the floor) that though he is not in the Core Curriculum, “I think that these people are going to be with me for a long time.” Di

CORE SPRING CALENDAR

Upcoming Cultural & Academic Events

March 22nd: Core Science Forum discusses The Question of Animal Rights. 5 PM, 191 Bay State Road (the Harriet Richards Mansion). http://bu.edu/core/csf.

March 26th: CCAA presents Eve Lyman of Boston Mobilization for a talk titled Grassroots on Comm. Ave. 6:30 PM, SAR 102.


March 31st: Core in the City screens Dead Poets’ Society. Refreshments will be served. 7 PM, CAS B-12.

Deadline for Core Journal. Drop off submissions in CAS 119, or e-mail to core@bu.edu.

April 1st: Core Concerts by Candlelight presents A Night of Flamenco. 10 PM, BU Central in the Student Union.

April 13th: CCAA presents Why Radio Matters with Red Sox announcers Joe Castiglione & Jerry Trupiano. 2 PM. Location to be announced.

April 14th: Poetry Seminar with George Kalogeris. Student work will be discussed. Readings available in CAS 119. 6 PM, GSU Academy Room.

April 14th: Core Concerts by Candlelight presents A Musical Evening with Dana Whiteside. 7 PM, the Castle, 225 Bay State Road.

April 16th: Core Concerts presents Andy Kingston and Jazz Band. 10 PM, BU Central in the Student Union.

April 19th: Core Science Forum discusses Assisted Suicide. 5 PM, 191 Bay State Road (the Harriet Richards Mansion). http://bu.edu/core/csf.

April 28th: Poetry Seminar with George Kalogeris. Student work will be discussed. Readings available in CAS 119. 6 PM, GSU Academy Room.

May 4th: The Annual Core Banquet. Invitations will be sent to current second-year Core students, faculty and staff. 6 PM, Photonics Building Ninth Floor Colloquium Room, 8 St. Mary’s Street.
Greek Tragedy
Holds a
GRUDGE
by Seth Allen

Dean Samons’ trireme lecture

is a Core fan favorite, but I was more intrigued by the family dynamics in the Oresteia. The family provides the backdrop against which the tragedy unfolds, beginning with Atreus, Agamemnon’s father, boiling his brother’s children, and ending with Orestes’ trial for murdering his mother. As I was watching Takashi Shimizu’s The Grudge this semester, I couldn’t help but draw comparisons to Aeschylus’ trilogy. The Grudge (Ju-On) is about a curse that is created if one dies in a fit of extreme rage or sadness. The curse stays in one place and exacts revenge on all that enter. There have been a few different versions of this story, and they all possess parallels to the Oresteia. But in particular, the Japanese version boldly underscores and develops these parallels further.

Both The Grudge and the Oresteia have back stories which actively influence present events. The choruses in the Oresteia provide background information and commentary, and foreshadow forthcoming events. In The Libation Bearers, the chorus of female slaves convinces Orestes’ nurse to change Clytaemnestra’s message to Aegisthus so that he does not protect himself. This decision alters the course of the play, as Clytaemnestra’s message to Aegisthus so convinces Orestes’ nurse to change and the identities of those whose fates are sealed after encountering it. One such flashpoint explains to the female protagonist, Karen Davis (Sara Michelle Gellar), how a married woman’s obsession with another man initiated the chain of events. Upon this revelation, Karen decides to fight to break the cycle. These storytelling techniques create a sense of urgency and suspense while supplying information relevant to the story.

The death of innocent children is another theme that plays across both works early on and has implications for the story. Agamemnon’s sacrifice of his daughter Iphigeneia to the gods motivates Clytaemnestra to conspire with Aegisthus against her husband. In The Grudge, Takeo drowns his son, Toshio, in a bathtub after murdering his wife, Kyoko (upon discovering that she has become infatuated with another man). Takeo also murders the unborn baby of Hirohashi, Tosh’s professor and the object of Kyoko’s wandering eye. After the death of their innocent children, the fathers are themselves killed – appropriately enough, at the hands of their wives. Kyoko claws her way through a sealed plastic bag in a darkened alley to kill her treacherous husband in one of the movie’s most horrific scenes.

‘Individuals with the gift of prophecy’ is yet another similarity between The Grudge and Oresteia. These people are able to perceive the curse, but are tragically powerless to escape it. Cassandra of Troy, enslaved as Agamemnon’s concubine, sees Atreus’ crime against his brother and how it has manifested itself through the family line. She even foresees her own death and that of Agamemnon at the hands of Clytaemnestra, but is unable to convince anyone to assist her. In The Grudge, Kyoko Suzuki warns her brother, a realtor, not to show the house in which the curse is confined. Unfortunately, he does not heed her warning, and, as a result, their entire family suffers a similar fate from the curse. The most compelling aspect of both works is that the characters eventually become aware of the curse and can only feebly struggle against it, succumbing to it in the end.

The incessant cycle of bloodshed is a statement that the act of murder transgresses the natural order of the world. Both curses show that murder is self-perpetuating, only provoking more killing. Curiously enough, the deaths of two women, Clytaemnestra and Kyoko, are the result of aspirations to free themselves from the confinements of their daily lives: Clytaemnestra is ambitious enough to assume her husband’s position in his absence and to acquire a new lover to plot revenge, whereas Kyoko attempts to escape from her routine by becoming involved with another, less controlling man. While the curse in Oresteia originates further back in time, it effectively ends with Orestes’ trial, when the supernatural forces of the gods intervene. Conversely, the curse in The Grudge remains in its physical house. However, with Takashi Shimizu’s announcement that he plans for The Grudge to be a trilogy, it’s possible that external forces will one day break the cycle, as they did for the house of Atreus. DI

Core-respondence from 1 regarding the program or its website. I miss the program very much; it made a life-long impression on me. Personally, I don’t think only BU students should participate in such a program; I also think students of other universities could greatly benefit from similar programs. That includes great schools such as Harvard and MIT.

In retrospect, do you think the Core program had a positive impact on your academic experience at BU?

Yes, it did. While it did not totally change my life, it did help improve it and made me a better person. After learning about the depth and complexity of this world via the Core, I am better equipped to live a simpler life, knowing what things are really important, thus enabling me to enjoy it even during the most difficult times.

Has it since had any influence over your post-graduate studies/employment?

It helped me to see the world through different perspectives. While I was familiar with Western culture before Core, the program helped me gain more insight into it. The professors were also smart in including the Eastern and the Middle Eastern culture into the program. This way, we could cross-examine the cultures side by side, finding similarities as well as the differences among them.

What did you enjoy most about the Core program?

The people actually: the faculty, staff and my classmates. The professors were good role models. Today, I use them as my standards, which are not easy to meet, for dealing with both my work and my family.

What did you find to be the most challenging thing about the program?

Comprehension, since students had to deal with many serious classic readings and new concepts. This is why I think it is good to re-read the books I read, since our views change in time. Age gives us different perspectives. Challenging personal beliefs is the second-most challenging, I think. Many of my classmates had their beliefs challenged when they took Core.

Would you recommend it to prospective BU students?

I highly recommend it to those who welcome challenges as well as those who wish to better understand the world and enjoy a richer life. DI
For the past fifteen years, the Core has presented each class of sophomores who complete the two-year program with a Core shirt, the vestments of academic achievement and lasting memento. Prof. Jorgensen gave the De Ideis staff access to his complete collection of the fashions of years past. Four appear here; the full set will be printed in this spring’s The Journal of the Core Curriculum.

Each year, the shirt’s design nods to the three components of the Core – natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities – and is usually complemented with a quote from one of the Core authors. If you are interested in helping to design the shirt that will be presented to this year’s outgoing class of second-year Core students, please keep an ear out for announcements of the first meeting of the design committee, or e-mail core@bu.edu.

Libyan Sibyl and Plato (pocket art) 2003-2005


Eros, White Horse & Black Horse 1995-1997

Athena & Vase Bearers 1993-1995

Muse under Second Sun (Heteron Helion) 1998-2000

In addition to helping you catalog and categorize your friends, The Facebook (www.thefacebook.com) also enables you to make new ones very easily. I think I'm friends with at least a dozen people I don't really know. When a request for friendship hits your e-mail inbox, it is simple to extend your social circle to include one more stranger. As a member of "The Family Guy Lovers" group*, I get a message at least three times a week with a quote from the show. There are groups organized around other TV shows, greek life, music, and more esoteric interests, e.g., "Cows: It's Not Just About the Grass," "BU Student Alchemists," and "Save the Kittens."

Core students are not immune to the time-killing allure of The Facebook. "Prusak Changed My Life" is a Facebook group with over forty members. "I Heart Sassan" is a group for students who “acknowledge the greatness of Professor Sassan Tabatabai.” Perks of membership include a regular e-mail bulletin of Prof. Tabatabai’s most memorable and moving quotes, called “Sassan Says.” In these groups, members discuss their run-ins with their preferred professors; as in all cases of people being passionate about their professors and heroes, one finds powerful rivalry. On the "I Heart Sassan" message board, one poster wrote: "I just joined this group to let everyone know that Prusak OWNS this guy's soul . . . the best professor in all of Core . . . and he could definitely take Tabatabai in a fight." A third group for those who love the Core with an enthusiasm approaching fanaticism, is called "Core Whores." Their credo: “The Core is the only class that you sort-of-hate every semester, yet register for again, TWICE, each subsequent semester.” The 58 members of the group profess to “hate, on principle, The Temple of Greed.”

* Check the profile of Stewart Gilligan Griffin, PhD, just for fun.

I'll find something to put down here.
“It was magical,” one member of the audience said. Others were speechless, for the play itself had said all that needed to be spoken. I personally was astounded. I wanted to laugh, cry, sing, feast, and hug as many loved ones as I could. An enormous thank you should be given to the Core Curriculum for having acquired student tickets for The American Repertory Theater’s staging of Yves Jacques’s The Far Side of the Moon.

After returning to my dorm room after the performance, all I can think about is how much I want to share it with the world. It’s a little hard to summarize, because it works on many levels. But mostly, it’s a story about seeing.

The Far Side of the Moon is a one-man play, where Yves Jacques plays the middle-aged cosmo-nut Philippe, his brother Andrew, his doctor, his own mother – about the only part he doesn’t play is the pet fish. Philippe is troubled by a number of things in his life and is trying to reconcile his dreams and hopes with fears for his family, for humanity, and for himself. Philippe has a passion for space and cosmology, which the play reveals to us by incorporating into the play old footage from the space race and Neil Armstrong walking on the moon, sound bites from shuttle launches, and the formation of S.E.T.I. (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence). Ordinary items like food cans, dolls, mirrors, and a washing machine door are transformed from Everyday Use to the Galactic Frontier. And it’s through Philippe’s fantasies about space that he and the audience come to see things about ourselves. As Yves Jacques said, “We’re all made of the same cosmic dust,” A sentiment that would have made Professor Jackson proud.

Yves Jacques worked with ten other prop-people who are dubbed Ex Machina. The group used a small number of props to animate this truly grand tale. After all, the story had to travel from a mother watching her baby Philippe learn to walk, to mother Earth watching her baby humans learn to fly. A humongous tool used in the telling was a wall of sliding doors. On one side they were mirrors, on the other side they were a solid black that could be a chalk board in one scene, a projection screen the next, a door, a closet, an elevator, an apartment room, a backdrop of space . . . The walls were always changing, and the uses really cradled the imagination. Everything felt real. All the projected images were either actual NASA footage or live simulcasts of Yves Jacques onstage taken by spy cameras within the props. In an interview after the play, Jacques admitted that “the only thing that wasn’t real was the death of the fish.”

In the interview Mr. Jacques discussed the technique, inspiration, and production of this play. The play was actually written and first performed by Robert Lepage, who then trained Yves Jacques how to take over the central role. But the play’s teaching is to see things for ourselves, to do things for ourselves, to use our imaginations and not simply imitate our surroundings. When Lepage handed over the role to him, Jacques attempted to mimic the master, but he learned that the last step in playing this role was to let go and do it his own way. Jacques experimented with different scenes, making the character(s) unique and alive. In fact, the last view of Phillip in the play is him letting go, floating as if in space, without any wires or strings, reconciled with his view on reality and purpose. And indeed, the view from here is magical.

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