

Winter 2010



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

The Independent A Newsletter for Liberal Studies

We Need Your Feedback!

Please, if you haven't yet completed a Student Opinion Survey, please do so asap! Completed surveys from ALL Liberal Studies majors are crucial for our program. This is your annual opportunity and responsibility to provide feedback to the university, the college, and the program.

Please call me at 852-2249 to arrange a time to receive yours. I'll be available until Wednesday, December 16th.

Thank you. Maggie, AC, Sr.

Michael Sandel's *What's the Right Thing To Do?*

Harvard professor **Michael Sandel** lectured here December 1st. Listening to him reminded me of what I most love about being on a college campus: a riveting conversation of multiple perspectives targeting what we most value and why. Now Dr. Sandel's *Justice* course may be viewed online at <http://www.justiceharvard.org/>

I encourage you to visit this site and view the 4 minute overview of the course; full length videos of all twelve topics, discussion guides, public forums, and suggested readings are available also.

If you were in looking for a way to stay sharp this winter, this may be it!

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Out of Office

After Wednesday, December 16th, Maggie will be out of the office until Monday, January 4th.

Please Note! The online degree application for May 2010 is up now; deadline to apply is January 28th.

SPRING CLEANING FOR THE GREATER GOOD

The Honors Student Council is collecting books and other media to benefit the Kosair Children's Hospital Neonatal Unit. If you would like to donate books (not older textbooks, please), CDs, DVDs, LPs, video games, etc, they will be collected at Honors until April 2nd.

Student travel opportunity to Botswana, Africa

The application for the newest International Service Learning travel program to Botswana, Africa is available. The trip is scheduled for April 28, 2010, through May 7, 2010. Students and faculty will travel to Botswana to work with local schools as well as governmental and community agencies. To learn more about the International Service Learning program and to fill out an application for the Botswana trip go to <http://louisville.edu/student/isl/africa.html> Space will be limited. Application deadline is TBA.

The Crow's Nest

John R. Hale

A few weeks ago, I had an encounter with a Nobel Prize winner whose approach to life embodies the ideals of Liberal Studies. Dr. Harold Varmus won the Nobel for his work on the genetic aspects of cancer, and has recently written a book with the extremely interdisciplinary title, *The Art and Politics of Science*. He directs the Sloan-Kettering cancer center in New York, and formerly served as director of the National Institute of Health in Washington.

At one point during his visit to Louisville, Harold Varmus gave a frank but surprising answer to a question about politics and medical research. When asked about the way that research can be politicized, and that legislators can steer funds towards projects of personal concern to themselves or their families, Varmus observed, "This may sound like a bad thing, but the fact is, we never know where a medical breakthrough may happen. I was steered into research on cancer of the retina, which really affects extremely few Americans, yet that type of rare cancer proved to hold the key to understanding the genetic origins of *all* cancers."

Dr. Varmus also spoke about the importance of using metaphors from a familiar field to illustrate or clarify concepts in a more difficult field, such as genetics. At the ceremony in Stockholm where he accepted the Nobel Prize, his speech referred to the fact that before he settled on medicine, his field of study in college had been English Literature. And he used a figure from the Old English epic *Beowulf*, namely the monster known as Grendel, to make the point that cancer was the most fearsome and dangerous of medical mysteries, because when we look at cancer, we are (in genetic terms) looking at ourselves.

I was intrigued to learn that Dr. Varmus and his son, who is a trumpet-player, sometimes put on a show called "Genes and Jazz". The medical genius talks about how the genetic code for cancer is modified or altered each time it is replicated. And to illustrate that concept musically, the trumpeter plays jazz riffs of increasing complexity on a familiar tune. Someday, I hope we can bring Harold Varmus back to Louisville, along with his son and their traveling road show. It should be an inspiring and enlightening experience.

If you would like to travel somewhere as an undergraduate, you shouldn't consider yourself limited to the "study abroad" programs offered through the international center. There are other things you could do, which cost less, and which you might find more fulfilling.

Many non-profit and non-governmental organizations, based all over the place, hire summer interns. Water purification projects, orphanages, refugee camps, and hundreds of other services for the underprivileged are always in need of labor and ideas. This is also one of the best ways to learn about possibilities for after graduation, particularly if you want to eventually work outside the country.

There also exist thousands of farms, growing food on a small scale, throughout the world. Many of these farms rely on volunteer labor, and offer room and board in exchange. I lived and worked with a middle-aged French couple for four months, and I learned enough to at least demystify the small-scale farming life to a point where it exists as a real possibility, should I choose to try it out later.

If you want to learn some other language, I can tell you that a daily job in which you interact with native speakers, whether they be total strangers or a host family, is the only way to do so. I was amazed at how quickly I learned French while living in France, although I did forget most of it as soon as I left.

The university system can often make it appear as though classrooms are the only place for "learning". Although many of us would say that this is obviously untrue, factors such as the need for "credit" might reduce us to such options when we think about traveling as students. Here is my advice to you: decide what you *want* to do, whatever it is, and then figure out what you'll learn from doing it. Propose the work as an internship, even if it's not traditionally conducted as such, and approach it as a way to relate your degree plan to the real world. Liberal Studies is all about interrelation, about dissolving many of the boundaries which we think exist between different disciplines. If you find something you enjoy doing, and which ties together the elements of your degree plan, then what better learning experience could you ask for?



RUSSIA AND EURASIA (POLS 345-WR)

Charles Ziegler, Professor and University Scholar



Spring 2010, MWF 1:00-1:50 pm

Russia and Eurasia is an especially timely course. As President Obama moves to increase U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan, the surrounding countries of Eurasia will be critical in his strategy to contain the Taliban and make progress in the war on terrorism. With America's military supply routes through Pakistan threatened by militants operating in the Northeast Frontier Provinces, the northern supply route through Russia and former Soviet Central Asia is now vitally important in our war effort. Beyond negotiating with Russia and the Central Asian states on the Afghan security issue, Washington is also seeking to negotiate an extension of the Strategic Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia, and is becoming increasingly dependent on Russian oil. Europe is already heavily dependent on Russian oil and natural gas, and these dependencies create a new dynamic as an increasingly authoritarian Russia adopts a more assertive posture toward its neighbors in the South (as during the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008) and the West (the gas wars with Ukraine). Russia and the Eurasian states have taken different political paths, with some democratizing and others becoming increasingly repressive, leading to political tensions regionally and posing problems for U.S. democracy promotion efforts.

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BIG EAST Diversity e-Fair

November 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009

In this challenging job market, UofL and the Big East Conference Colleges and Universities have launched a unique career fair website <http://bigeast.efairpro.com> for all students and alumni who are interested in pursuing entry-level or experienced career opportunities and internships with organizations who place a high priority on promoting a diverse culture in their workplace.

The following industries have already posted jobs and internships to this E-Career Fair site: communications, pharmaceutical, financial, health care related, non-profit, technology, engineering, fitness, computers, education, business, research, and more! Students/alumni are invited to logon to the site, create a profile, upload a resume, begin applying for jobs and internships, and check back weekly to monitor new employers who will register and post jobs through December 31st.

For student/alumni registration:

<http://bigeast.efairpro.com>

Contact your Career Development Center at 502-852-6701 or louisville.edu/career for additional information.

Keeping One's Perspective, Economics-Wise

“The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable.”

Ezra Solomon

“If all economists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion.”

George Bernard Shaw

“An economist is an expert who will know tomorrow why the things he predicted yesterday didn't happen today.”

Laurence J. Peter