

STUDENT LIFE

Dr. Archie Loss explains the meaning of a cultural classic

By Tiffany Mak
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Archie Loss, professor of English and American Studies at Behrend, gave a talk about the song "American Pie" to the freshmen in Senat Hall on October 4 from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Loss was successful in explaining the American culture and music of the '60s and '70s to the attending students via the song "American Pie."

In order to give the students an awesome opening, Loss played the song "American Pie," which is sung by Don McLean. This song has long been the hallmark of the fusion of rock n' roll music and folk music in the counterculture era. It achieved the number one status on the charts in the U.S. in 1972, but the album containing this song was not released until later.

The reason that "American Pie" is so popular among Americans even today is not because of the popularity of

McLean, but because of the lyrics and the time when the song came out.

"It was only the '70s when the people started to look back of their fifties and their complexity," said Loss. "After the Broadway [musical] came out in the seventies, people investigated beneath the surface to get what the song is really about."

The entire song was McLean's tribute to three prominent rock stars, Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and The Big Bopper, who died in the same plane crash in February of 1959. The plane, "Miss American Pie" which took the lives of the rock stars at the time, February 3, 1959, signified "the day the music died".

Since rhythm and blues began to intrude into American music culture in the '60s, the counter culture era was hard for rock n' roll music. While lamenting the death of the three rock stars "he admired the most", McLean also lamented the swift death of the

rock music "that used to make him smile".

Other than his view on music, McLean also included his religious and political views in his song. However, some interpretations of his lyrics are still unclear, such as the vague image of "rollin' stone" and "queen in a coat."

Most of the audience thought that "American Pie" was an interesting song, and Dr. Loss focused well on the details.

"We are going to enroll [in] his American Studies class next semester," said Pat Sharbaugh, a first semester chemistry student, and Ryan Mocniak, who is in his first semester in the Department of Undergraduate Studies.

"It is meaningful to learn about the American culture and Dr. Loss did a pretty good job," said Chad Bosko, CE 01, another audience.

Grant Reschenthaler, the Student Academic Leader, expressed his satisfaction towards the program. He was



Tiffany Mak/BEHREND BEACON
"The three men I admire most: the father, son and holy ghost," Dr. Loss recants a favorite line.

happy to see that "American Pie" interested a lot of the students.

"We hope we can organize a program which is not that academic, but at the same time the students can learn something from it," said Reschenthaler, Biology, 03. "It works really well."

Reschenthaler expects a similar talk for his Senat freshmen a few weeks later. Jill Forsman, the Coordinator of Housing, will be invited to talk about the "Mid-term Expectation." It will be held in the lobby of Senat Hall and is open to all of the residents.

Study Abroad: The European experience from a first hand view

By Allison Gray
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This past summer, I took part in a five-week study abroad program from July 8 to August 15, 2005. I took a History of Renaissance Art course at the University College of Northampton in England, located about an hour and a half north of London. The program, available to students every summer, provides an opportunity to visit not only remarkable and historical sites in England, but



Contributed Photo
Students enjoying a day at Warwick Castle while studying abroad in Europe.

all over Europe.

During the five week program, classes take place Monday through Thursday, leaving Friday open. On four of the five available Fridays, optional day-trip excursions to places such as Althorp, Oxford, Stonehenge, Bath, Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon. The third week of the program is devoted to a trip to one of three cities: London, England, Dublin, Ireland or Florence, Italy.

I spent the majority of the third week in Florence with my class and instructor. While, I had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view some of the most astonishing artwork in the world. Every day, for five days, I visited a new museum. I got to see Michelangelo's David, Donatello's David and Botticelli's Birth of Venus, among other amazing works of art. I ate authentic Italian food and drank authentic Italian wine. The streets of Florence were full of vendors selling leather goods, silk scarves, marble chess sets and souvenirs of all kinds. A group of about five students spent the fifth day in Venice and on the sixth day, we all visited Pisa.

Students were encouraged to travel outside of the program's planned trips as well. I spent my second weekend with a group of nine other students in London. Over the course of a day and a half, I visited the London Tower, London Bridge, Big Ben, St. Paul's Cathedral, The British Museum, Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery. During the same weekend, another group of students took the train to Paris where they visited the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre.

During the fourth weekend abroad, five students (myself included) visited Brussels, Belgium for a weekend. We stayed in a great hotel within walking distance of the town center. We bought Belgian chocolate and indulged in Belgian waffles. I had mussels in Brussels and bought Belgian lace. The trip was amazing.

During the week, when we were in classes, we had local options for entertainment. Across the street from the school is the Sunnyside Pub. Mondays are quiz nights, Wednesdays are karaoke and on Sundays, they serve roasts. Down the road from the town center is the cinema, Sol Central, where a few friends and I watched "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." For students who wanted to stay close to the dorm, there is an on-campus library and computer lab.

The program is open to students from all over the world and, while I was there, I befriended students from not only the United States, but also Hungary, Russia and Italy. Of course, I also got to know some of the locals quite well and I still keep in touch with all of them via e-mail.

I can't recommend this program enough, as it was the most memorable experience of my life and one that I'll cherish for as long as I live. If you're interested in this program and want more information, contact Dr. Dean Baldwin at dxb11@psu.edu or Dr. Ruth Pflueger at repl@psu.edu.

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