

English 111: Literature

As a required class for freshman year, I didn't expect to enjoy English 111, but by the end of the quarter I found my expectation thoroughly incorrect. I entered the class, vaguely titled "Literature," expecting to read some acclaimed classics like *The Iliad* and works of that ilk, but I soon found out that we were focusing on modern/contemporary poetry and short-stories. Initially disappointed, I was later content with the material as the theme of the class was 'bad behavior.' Basically, it revolved around questioning behavior conventionally considered sinful. We looked at both sides of scenarios that from a distance appear black and white, but are actually more complex. I would attribute my enjoyment largely to my outstanding instructor Claire Barwise, who was incessantly engaging and expressed genuine interest in the opinions I expressed in essays and class discussions. However, my expectation was also misguided because I had forgotten how much I love writing in general, whether it's an argumentative piece or poetry. I find it difficult to describe, but I passionately enjoy language and find great pleasure in using a vast, uncommon vocabulary to formulate elegant sentences to express my thoughts. There's nothing like remembering the perfect word for a unique literary scenario.

By the end of the quarter, I had produced a portfolio of works that I'm truly proud of, and gladly display on my Honors Portfolio.

Honors Physics 122: Electromagnetism

Electromagnetism was by far the class I was most looking forward to for winter quarter 2017. Since I had already learned the material covered in Physics 121 in high school, this was truly my first college physics class that covered new material. Moreover, the topics of electricity and magnetism are simply incredible to me, and I began the quarter seeing them as completely abstract. And abstract it was for many weeks until it finally began clicking in my head, and I could visualize physical anomalies that initially had made no sense to me. Nevertheless, this class was difficult. Class averages were, comparably to all classes I've taken in my life, abysmal. But in retrospect, the challenges I faced in that class were completely worth the fundamental knowledge about the physical world I obtained.

My professor (and textbook, in tandem) would subtly blow my mind. For example, we learned about Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity, and I was suddenly told that this little thing called time wasn't as simple as I'd thought all my life. Turns out, if you're moving (especially really fast), time slows down for you, but not for the others staying still in relation to you. And that is really just skimming the surface. I learned about the forces that create electricity and thus, basically define modern civilization. I learned why the sun's unrelenting radiation doesn't kill us thanks to the Earth's magnetic field. Man, I could go on and on, but based on the reactions I get from my non-STEM major friends when I rant to them about physics, I'll cut myself off there.

Despite its difficulty, Physics 122 galvanized my passion for physical science and reassured me that I belong in STEM.

Math 126: Multivariable Calculus

Math 126, the third class in the calculus series, was the first class that fit my expectations for what a large, first-year math class would feel like at UW. Lectures were given in a large hall in Mary Gates where I would sit with over two hundred other students, unlike in my first math class (307) which had around thirty classmates and took place in a small, cramped classroom. In high school, I thrived in my calculus studies with guidance from an incredibly talented teacher, so I felt confident in the basis I had for calculus. I felt reassured of this basis after I received my first exam back to find, to my extreme delight, that I had aced it. However, as the topics ventured further from what I was familiar with, the confidence I felt initially perhaps hurt me, as I felt overly comfortable with new material that I probably should have studied more diligently. However, I am satisfied with my final grade, especially after a final exam that I found particularly challenging.

Although it seemed most of my classmates expressed indifference or perhaps disdain to the material covered, I was quite thrilled when I realized how the enhancements to my previous, less practical calculus knowledge that I learned in 126. For example, we begin using three variables rather than two, which lets us model objects, projectiles, and many other realistic scenarios in 3-D Space. It blew me away when I realized a single equation can represent any object in three-dimensional space, and that in some scenarios common shapes relate to very simple equations. Although somewhat strenuous and intimidating at times, I certainly strengthened my calculus skills and I feel very satisfied to have completed the course with a decent mark.