New English class analyzes LGBT media, literature

Cassie Gaeto
MUSTANG DAILY

Next quarter, the English department will be offering a new class to count for general education area C4 upper-division credit. The class to count for general education department will be offering a new class for upper-division credit. The class is called ENGL X382, entitled "Literature and Diversity." The class will be taught by Dr. Cassandra Hennessey, an English professor at Cal Poly.

The class will focus specifically on the issue of homosexuality and how it is presented in media such as television, film, and other forms of popular culture. The class will cover a wide range of topics, including the representation of LGBT individuals in media, the impact of media on public perception of LGBT individuals, and the role of media in promoting or stigmatizing LGBT identities.

The class will also examine the works of writers and filmmakers who are LGBT themselves, such as screenwriter Dustin Lance Black, who wrote the Academy Award-winning film "Milk," and author Andrew Sean Greer, who wrote the novel "Less." The class will also read works by non-LGBT writers who have written about LGBT individuals, such as James Baldwin, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf.

The class will meet twice a week, with each session lasting two hours. The class will begin on January 29 and end on April 5. The class will be limited to 20 students, and the final exam will be a research paper in which students will analyze a piece of media about LGBT issues.

The class is open to all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. Hennessey encourages students to come to the class with an open mind and to be willing to challenge their own assumptions about LGBT individuals and issues.

Religion's reach

Emilly Rancer
MUSTANG DAILY

Beyond getting an education, many Cal Poly students seek more than academic goals. They are searching for their own spiritual direction. The question of what values they should hold is not a new one, but it is a timeless question.

Does religion actually influence students' drinking and smoking habits? How often do they attend religious services on campus? And how big a factor does religion play in controversial issues like abortion and stem cell research?

Despite the publicity for religious organizations on campus, the Mustang Daily was stunned to find in a survey it conducted of nearly 300 students that 72 percent aren't involved in all religious clubs at Cal Poly. Moreover, only 3 percent attend religious services on campus.

The Mustang Daily wanted to find out more than just statistics from surveys and decided to interview students of different religious backgrounds as well. In this issue, you'll see what it's really like for students who are Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and more. On the flip side, we check in with students who are atheist and agnostic to see what values they stick by without a religious direction.

All statistics in this issue were based off a Mustang Daily survey that was handed out randomly to 287 students, and had roughly a 6 percent margin of error. In addition, because not all students were surveyed or interviewed, it was impossible to quantify all the religious present on campus.

If you want to share more about your own religious experiences, please comment on our open forum at www.mustangdaily.net or send us a letter to the editor (see page 12 for details).

RELIGION BREAKDOWN

- Christian
- Catholic
- Non-Religious
- Agnostic
- Other (including Buddhist, Hindu, Greek Orthodox, Nihilist, Shinto, Satanist, Unitarian, etc.)
- Atheist
- Jewish

Note: This survey had a margin of error of +/- 6% overall

Monica Yamasoto, Mustang Daily

Get more
Check out mustangdaily.net for a flash animation of the statistics.

2 Calif. cities reportedly threatened with losing anti-terror grants

Devlin Barrett
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

WASHINGTON — Homeland Security officials threatened to drop Sacramento and San Diego off an anti-terror funding list last year after they decided to devote more attention and resources to the nation's suburbs, congressional investigators said Wednesday.

The Government Accountability Office sent California lawmakers a 49-page analysis of the decision-making at the Homeland Security Department that led to those threatened cuts as well as to a 40 percent cut to funding for New York and Washington, the two U.S. cities hit in the 2001 terror attacks.

Many lawmakers criticized the agency last year for funding decisions made under the Urban Area Security Initiative, which is designed specifically to help cities at the greatest risk.

The GAO's investigative arm of Congress, examined the funding decisions at the request of Democrats including Rep. Doris Matsui of Sacramento and Sen. Barbara Boxer.

The GAO reported zeroed in on a key change the agency made in handing out dollars last year — for the first time, the agency widened the "footprint" of eligible cities to include suburbs. The GAO said inclusion of a suburban area with, for example, a nuclear power plant, may affect the agency's risk calculations.

At the same time, investigators said DHS officials sometimes could offer more rationale for funding choices. At Thursday, February 8, 2007

www.mustangdaily.net

CPTV gears up for broadcast in new studio

Christina Casci
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

CPTV has been working out of two offices for a long time. Finally, the recording studio has been expanded and the production room has moved in right next to it. The first live broadcast from the new setup will happen tonight.

"It is very disjointed when the studio and production is downstairs," said journalism senior Pieter Neethling. "It is going to allow for greater communication."

Though the move is not revolutionary, it is adding convenience to the once frustrating situation.

"The room is bigger and a lot nicer," said Jordan Herson, a journalism junior. "It's easy to get claustrophobic in such a little room."

On top of convenience there is also a capability to practice professionalism, said journalism junior Christina Natale.

"The new setup is much closer to an actual layout. We are given a chance to practice in a professional atmosphere," she said.

Before, there was no capability to do a newscast shot, Neethling said. See CPTV, page 2

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Class continued from page 1

experiences or classes at Poly until now have been able to do that," said Pfau.

The course will also touch on the emotional effects of AIDS on the individual and communities. The current debates of same-sex marriage and adoption, voting on the emotional effects of AIDS on the individual and communities, the course topics will be studied through mediums as modern as the issues, like television shows. "Having this class offered will make Poly look more educated, friendly and welcoming to diversity. You are not forced to take it, but for someone who identifies with these issues its good they have a place to discuss them," said Jessica Adams, a child development sophomore.

Along with general education credit, the class can count for an English major elective, a women's studies minor course and a general writing requirement course. Prerequisites include completion of GE area A and the C1 credits. The course will be held next quarter Monday through Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m.

"My goal with this class is for my students to have a good overall academic experience. I want them to learn about the issues but not forced to take it, but for someone who identifies with these issues its good they have a place to discuss them," said Pfau. "It's continued from page 1

CPTV

continued from page 1
newscast is when the anchor tosses something to a reporter just a few feet away and it is a common occurrence in most television stations, he said. "The move isn't even the most exciting part for us," Natale said. "We got a lot of new equipment which will benefit us as far as technology goes." The construction started just before winter break and is mostly completed, Iseron said.

"There are still some finishing touches, but it is fully functional now," he said. Though the move isn't gigantic for CPTV, KCPR, the Cal Poly radio station, will be moving upstairs as well. "Their equipment is almost 25 years old," Neethling said. "KCPR is more revolution- ary." Another convenient addition to the new room is live CNN feed. said. "We can use live video from CNN if something major happens." The step is an important one for CPTV: "Now we can spread out and enjoy our time up there, especially since so many of us are there for hours and hours," Iseron said. "It's a big step.

"There is still a lot to be done," Natale said. "It will take awhile to get everything into place, but it's exciting to have it."
Bills would provide more than $1.2 billion to freeze victims

Olivia Munoz
ASSOCIATE PRESS

FRESNO, Calif. — Federal lawmakers announced bills Wednesday to provide more than $1.2 billion in grants, low-interest loans and assistance to growers and workers affected by a recent crop freeze, last year’s heat wave and flooding.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., introduced a bill Wednesday that would speed help to communities that lost an estimated $1.2 billion last month in oranges, tangerines, avocados and other crops nipped by the cold. Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, and Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare, planned to introduce a similar bill by Friday.

“We have communities that are now experiencing, as a result of the freeze, in excess of 50, 60, 70 percent unemployment,” Costa said.

The bills would help growers and workers in 22 counties declared disaster areas by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, said Bob Sanders, a Costa spokesman.

State officials have urged President Bush to declare a disaster in several counties and extend federal money to help workers with unemployment assistance and food stamps.

The bills propose raising disaster payouts to farmers to $12,500. Typically, disaster aid bills limit farmers to $80,000 each.

Lawmakers also proposed providing food coupons, housing assistance and grants to farmworkers, Costa said.

Schwarzenegger called the Boxer bill a “giant step” toward helping the agricultural industry and those left hungry and jobless by the freeze.

“It will provide much-needed assistance to help Californians recover from this disaster,” he said in a statement Wednesday.

More than 20,000 field and packing house workers lost their jobs and rural communities in the San Joaquin Valley’s citrus belt have struggled to keep their food banks stocked, according to the United Farm Workers union.

A third of the more than 3,400 unemployment insurance claims the state has gotten related to the freeze have come from Tulare County, said Victoria Bradshaw, the governor’s labor secretary.

“This is an economic disaster for California,” Bradshaw said. “It’s important that there be a federal component because the state and the communities don’t have the resources to handle it.”

Though the state aims to reach out to all affected workers regardless of their immigration status, there are some programs that require documentation, she said.

Growers may not discover the freeze’s long-term effects on their crops until next season, said Kerry Whitson, a Tulare County farmer.

“Some of the lemon and grapefruit trees look as though they’ve gone through a fire. Those will take two years to recover,” he said.

Last summer’s heat wave caused at least $30 million in losses to the dairy industry when cows produced less milk.

Floods earlier in the year and in late 2005 hooded some farmers’ fields, destroying crops.

“Combined with this freeze, California has really taken a kick from the increment weather,” said A.G. Kawamura, the state agriculture secretary. “We recognize that our food supply is not dependable. In fact, it is vulnerable.”
Lebanese, Israeli troops exchange fire across border, first time since war

Sam F. Ghattas
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

BEIRUT — Lebanese troops exchanged fire with Israeli forces across the border late Wednesday, for the first time since the summer war between Hezbollah and Israel, Lebanese and Israeli officials said.

The nighttime incident — sparked by an Israeli bulldozer crossing a fence — showed how tense the boundary remains nearly six months after a U.N.-brokered cease-fire ended 34 days of fighting. But the incident was not expected to undermine the overall truce.

Lebanese officials said their troops opened fire on an Israeli army bulldozer that had crossed the frontier near the border village of Maroun el-Ras, scene of heavy fighting in the summer.

The vehicle crossed the so-called Blue Line — the U.N.-demarcated boundary — and entered about 20 yards into Lebanon, Lebanese military officials said.

Theofficials, speaking on condition of anonymity pending the release of a formal army statement, said the army fired machine guns toward an Israeli army bulldozer that had crossed the frontier near the border village of Maroun el-Ras, scene of heavy fighting in the summer.

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Lebanese officials said their troops opened fire on an Israeli army bulldozer that had crossed the border fence.

The Israeli troops crossed the heavily guarded border fence, the Israeli army said, but remained south of the international border and within Israeli territory which stretches beyond the route of the fence.

The incident was cleared by the Israeli military, which said that a late Wednesday exchange was "initiated by the Lebanese army" and that the Israeli bulldozer crossed the "technical fence" to clear mines. His statement did not clearly define whether the Israelis were still on their side when the shooting erupted.

The shooting lasted for a few minutes, military officials said. McDowell said the clash ended before midnight.

In New York, U.N. associate spokesman Farhan Haq said the U.N. peacekeepers in south Lebanon, or UNIFIL, said Wednesday's exchange was "initiated by the Lebanese army" and that the Israeli bulldozer crossed the "technical fence" to clear mines. His statement did not clearly define whether the Israelis were still on their side when the shooting erupted.

"The latest news is that things seem to have calmed down," Haq said.

Shortly after the incident, the Israeli army said its forces had withdrawn south of the border fence.

About 15,000 Lebanese troops deployed to south Lebanon under the U.N. resolution that included the cease-fire which ended the fighting. More than 1,000 people have died in Lebanon and about 150 in Israel in the 34-day war. Also, 34 Lebanese soldiers were killed, many in Israeli airstrikes against army positions and radar installations. Israel has accused the Lebanese army of aiding the Hezbollah.

Hezbollah officials had no immediate comment on the incident.

Israel has sent warplanes repeatedly over Lebanon on reconnaissance flights which the UNIFIL termed as a violation of the cease-fire resolution. Also, another demand from the U.N. cease-fire resolution — the release of two Israeli soldiers whose capture by Hezbollah in a cross-border raid July 12 had sparked the summer war — remains unfulfilled. Hezbollah has said it will not release them except in exchange for Lebanon prisoners held by Israel. The United Nations has been quietly mediating since the cease-fire.

Brady for an appointment!
Traveling pants conclude magical journey in ‘Sisterhood’s’ last hoorah

Agatha Lutoborski
Daily Buccaneer (Tallahassee)

Only the truly dedicated readers can make time to consume books in addition to reading about heavy subjects like accounting or Erasmus. So chances are when a student does find a couple of spare hours to read something, they don’t want to be bogged down with philosophical meanings that cause stress; they just want a nice story with a comfortable plot. 

Ladies (since this book is really not for men), Bindings has found the answer to this reading conundrum. Ann Brashares’ fourth book, “Forever in Blue: The Fourth Summer of the Sisterhood,” is a fun story to zip through because it is entertaining in its predictability and fulfilling in its eventually resolved young adult angst.

Though it is the last book in the series, “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants,” “Forever in Blue” is easy enough to jump into after having watched the movie, which is based on the first book in the series. The movie, in two cheesy hours, introduces all the major characters, all of whom reoccur with great importance in the fourth book.

The basic premise of all the books in the series is that four girls, Lena, Tibby, Bridget and Carmen, who have been linked together since birth as friends, are kept together by a pair of pants as they go their separate ways in life as college students. These mysterious pants fit all of them, and become the energy that keeps the girls together through fights, heartache and long separations.

Originally intended for teens and tweens, “Forever in Blue” resonates even with college students. The situations the girls face — backstabbing friends, a pregnancy scare and long-term separation with boyfriends — are life experiences that many girls, especially in college, can relate to. Brashares poses many questions through the girls’ inner turmoil in these circumstances, but does little to answer them. That is the beauty of the book: The simplicity of relating to the situations and feelings that occur, but not necessarily finding the deep answer to life’s questions in their conclusions.

During a few extra hours of separation from that arduous economics textbook, pick this book up — just be sure to watch the movie if the premise of the series still remains a mystery. With its friendly plot, colloquial vocabulary and satisfyingly happy ending, “Forever in Blue” is a good way to while away some extra time.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS EXPERIMENT.
Fables and Reflections: The world of graphic novels

If you've ever spent copious amounts of time wandering aimlessly down the aisles of Borders or Barnes and Noble waiting for the perfect book to jump out and psychologically manhandle you, let me pilot your hopeless quest and steer you in the direction of some enchanting literary delights. Discreetly smashed between the comic and anime sections of your friendly, neighborhood bookstore, a small collection of books is waiting to be recognized by mainstream audiences.

If you've read "Maus: A Survivor's Tale," watched the movie "Sin City," or know what "codename V" is actually code for, you may be able to assist your uninformed cohorts hiding out on the dark side of the moon by directing them toward a magical place where picture meets prose. Enter the complex world of the graphic novel, a land full of artistic virtuosity and masterful visual storytelling; the ultimate display of modern visual communication. So, for those of you still flirting with the idea of diving headfirst into complete Comic-Con hysteria, let me take this opportunity to push you now.

The graphic novel, by all means, is the ultimate storytelling medium; one of the oldest forms of socio-cultural expression. But with such an ambiguous title, it's safe to assume most people are scratching their heads over its confusing definition rather than Googling names like Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman, two of the most prolific graphic novelists of our time. So, to avert any more confusion, let us break the graphic novel down to its constituents: "graphic," suggesting a visual component, or pictures, if you will; and "novel" for the book, or textual aspect. A logical conjecture, really.

Now, for all you wily characters out there eager to point out that a graphic novel sounds curiously related to a comic book, you wouldn't be too far off. In fact, a graphic novel is a bound work in comic form. But with lengthy storylines and mature themes, the modern graphic novel is very uncharacteristic of its comic predecessors in that it also includes short stories. Nevertheless, there is much debate in the comic book world as to the smoke and mirrors nature of this evolving medium.

Speaking of the comic book world, no self-respecting connoisseur of graphic novels could claim to know anything at all about the elite sub-culture of comic book enthusiasts without dropping the A-bomb trump card: "A," for Alan Moore that is. With wondrous works such as "From Hell," "Watchmen" and "V for Vendetta," Moore has emerged as the Vito Corleone of the modern graphic novel, the godfather of graphic prose.

Following in close step, another giant has proved himself to be a major kingpin of the industry. Neil Gaiman, of "American Gods," "The Sandman," and "Good Omens" fame, has single-handedly reinvented the prototypical novel, making modern-day storytelling not just a pastime, but a work of art. Gaiman's "The Sandman" is the most highly acclaimed comic series of the '90s. Combining a rich blend of ancient myths and dark fantasy with historical drama and contemporary fiction, Gaiman tells a brilliantly smart epic that is distinctly unique in graphic literature today.

So, the next time you find yourself strolling down aisles of unpromising book after repetitive book, direct your path elsewhere. You know where to go. The world of the graphic novel awaits.

Alexandra Bezdkian is a journalism senior with a minor in religious studies. E-mail questions or comments to alexandrabezdkian@gmail.com.
Thursday, February 8, 2007

**POLY stats class wants to ‘hold your hand’**

Samantha Freitas  
**MUSTANG DAILY**

Who said statistics had to be boring? Four Cal Poly students took a creative approach to their Statistics 217 final by playing the “hold my hand” game in downtown San Luis Obispo last quarter.

The class was assigned to come up with a question and statistically find an answer. This group chose a randomly approach strangers on a busy intersection and ask them to hold their hand while crossing the street.

To ensure consistency of their data analysis, the group had to ask each stranger the exact same question: “Excuse me; will you please hold my hand while I cross the street?”

Psychology sophomore Ashleigh Droz volunteered to brave the intimidating, she said.

The group filmed their downtown antics and posted the video on YouTube, the popular self-broadcasting Web site. Their group wasn't the only creative one in the class — another group smoked inside public buildings to see how long it would take for people to ask them to stop. They dressed up as three different social classes to see if that had any difference between males and females, Carroll said.

The strangers reacted in a variety of ways; some willingly took Droz by the hand and walked her across the street, while others looked at her as if she was completely crazy and walked away.

“My favorite response was from a guy who completely looked Ashleigh up and down after she asked him. He got a smile on his face and was like, ‘Are you serious? Sweet!’” said political science freshman Jamal Saqqa, a fellow group member.

Some people were hesitant to hold Droz's hand across the street. “One guy said, ‘do you want people to think we’re dating?’ Then he ended up turning her down,” Carroll said.

Apparently, concern over significant others was somewhat of a trend. “One man asked me to act nonchalant in case his wife drove by,” Droz said.

Another common concern was that they were being framed on a “Candid Camera” inspired show.

The information from the project turned out to be statistically insignificant. “About half of the people agreed and half didn't. There wasn't a significant difference between males and females,” Carroll said.

The group, which also included communication studies freshman Alison Kendall, only focused on gender, ignoring age and other factors.

They got their idea with a little bit of help from a book. “Our teacher wanted us to do something that wasn’t boring, and this was a dare from a book at Urban Outfitters, so we decided to do it,” Carroll said.

Their group wasn't the only creative one in the class — another group smoked inside public buildings to see how long it would take for people to ask them to stop. They dressed up as three different social classes to see if that had any impact on the amount of time it took.

Check out the video on YouTube.com titled “Wanna Hold my Hand?”

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**Mustang Daily Spotlight**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**www.mustangdaily.net**

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Check out the video on YouTube.com titled “Wanna Hold my Hand?”
Outlets for Christian faith abundant on campus

Amanda Retzer
MUSTANG DAILY

The morning started off with coffee all over her new white shirt. Then she ended up late to school, missing the extra credit issued at the first second of class. A less than average grade turned up in her chemistry class and her car stalled at the light in front of her house. And when all seemed to be turned upside down, she knew that a couple of deep breaths and a thought in one single person would make a world of difference. And that person was Jesus Christ.

Looking to Jesus Christ for reassurance is just one of the many diverse beliefs held by those who practice Christianity, a major religious viewpoint of many Cal Poly students. With at least ten registered clubs on campus and many other off-campus outlets, San Luis Obispo offers a huge range of ways for students to invite Christianity into their lives. This in turn offers religion a large role in the daily lives of students.

"It is my faith in God that actually gets me through my week," psychology junior Dale Parker said. "My Bible study keeps me accountable to my walk with Christ." "Without Jesus in my life I would be such a mess. He helps me get through school and eases my time," liberal studies junior Carolyn Gurdella said.

The daily Bible studies in friends' homes to 1,000-person services with Campus Crusade for Christian in Chumash Auditorium, there are many extensive and diverse ways to enrich one's self in the religion.

"Campus Crusade is like a show. There's a buzz that comes with the live band, the loud music. It gives them energy," said Stephen Lloyd-Moffett, program advisor for religious studies and assistant professor. "But I think groups like Campus Crusade also realize that they need to have more personalized small events." This is one of the main issues of Christianity: catering to the different styles of worship. Some revolve their world around "What would Jesus do?" whereas others think "when things are rough, I pray," Lloyd-Moffett said. This is the area in which San Luis Obispo is specialized.

"There is somewhere to plug in no matter what strike of Christianity you grew up in," he said. This is shown by the incredible amount of programs, services and outlets available for practicing one's Christianity. Mercy Church holds three services over the weekend to accommodate junior high schools, high schools, kids and the general community, as well as 5:30 to 7:30 a.m. prayers Monday through Saturday. Campus Crusade for Christ is promoting spring break trips to Los Angeles, New Orleans and Mexico City to help out those communities physically and spiritually.

There are also special groups that cater to specific types of people such as the Newman Center, which features a strong group of Catholics, and the Asian American Christian Fellowship. Plus there is an abundance of simple weekly Bible studies that involve readings from the Bible and peer-to-peer discussions. Parker holds a weekly Sunday night bible study where a small group is able to comfortably and intimately discuss their faith, a stark difference from massive church gatherings.

"I go to Campus Crusade and First Baptist Church, but my Bible study is amazing and the highlight of my week," Parker said.

Not only do these Bible studies offer ways to directly look at Christianity, but it also provides a social network that wouldn't necessarily connect otherwise. "Religion provides a place where people like myself come together and have a reason to talk about common questions about life now and for eternity," kinesiology senior Jamie Rauch said.

"I heard that about 60 percent of Cal Poly students are actively involved in their Christian faith. Part of that is Christianity and culture becoming intertwined," Lloyd-Moffett said. Students utilize their religious gatherings as a way to see their friends, and from there, elaborate social systems are developed.

Ande from social and religious gatherings, Christianity also shows face in the classroom. Cal Poly offers a religious studies minor through the philosophy department that consists of classes concerning Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and more.

"As a discipline, we have no agenda. We are a neutral dispenser of knowledge," Lloyd-Moffett said. "It could strengthen your belief or strengthen your disbelief, but we just focus on giving as much information as we can." The minor program started in 2003 and in the past year and a half has grown from less than five students, to 40 minors now. Lloyd-Moffett said that about half of the 40 are Christian minors, which closely mirrors the proportion of Christians on campus.

"My challenge is to take Christian students in class and try to one, give them evidence on both sides without a pro-Christian or anti-Christian stance. And two, provide a forum where they can ask questions in a non-agenda environment," Lloyd-Moffett said.

Spreading the opportunity to learn about and practice one's faith has even kept up with technology. Grace Church features an iTunes podcast on their Web site, as well as promotion for "interactive Christian talk" on the radio at 990 AM on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings.

With so many styles of worship and types of gatherings, misconceptions about Christianity are inevitable.

Sometimes even within the faith, stereotypes are thought of differently. Some criticize the Christian population because so many call themselves "Christians" but don't necessarily practice.

"Being a 'Christian' is to be a follower of Christ," Rauch said. "Christ's life always pointed to relying on the one true God, loving people who no one else cared about and calling out religious leaders of the day that were blabbering righteouos words but not living them!"

Lloyd-Moffett offered a slightly different point of view. "Even those who proclaim a strong faith have questions within them. Some say, 'I grew up a Christian but I'm not quite sure what that means.' It is all part of the maturation process, learning how to live and it's perfectly fine and natural. I appreciate those people who are honest enough to say 'I think Christianity is right, but I'm not quite sure where I am.' It shows a bit of humility because they're at a state where they're trying to figure out what being Christian exactly means, what it means to believe in God."
Jewish community at Cal Poly rapidly growing

Jackie Pugh

"I've definitely had people label me as the 'Jewish girl,'" said Shaina Fox, an agribusiness junior and vice president of Hillel, the Jewish cultural club.

Hillel is a national organization that brings Jews together at college campuses across the country. Hillel chapters range in size and can be as large as the one at UCLA, which boasts 2,500 members, or as few as a dozen members at smaller colleges. Hillel of San Luis Obispo currently has about 200 active members according to Ari Dekosky, president of Hillel. She also mentioned four years ago, when the club first started and her brother Micah was involved, there were only 40 active members.

No matter how big or small, Hillel offers Jewish students a chance to get together for social events and religious holidays.

"Everyone knew about (Hillel) in high school, but I got involved and stayed involved to hold on to the traditions," Fox said.

Many holidays, according to the Jewish calendar, fall midweek and often times will be during finals or midterms, which makes it hard for students to go home to be with their families. "It's a completely different experience," Fox added. "Your friends are your family here."

And if students wanted to be involved in organizations other than Hillel, there are several options. "Hillel does a good job of bringing Jews together, but we do have a Jewish fraternity, Alpha Epsilon Pi, and then we just got a new synagogue, Congregation Beth David that's reformed," said agribusiness junior Seth Khosla.

Kweller recently participated in what is known as birthright, a program that allows Jews between the age of 18 and 26 to go on a free 10-day trip to Israel.

"Birthright is to find your roots," Kweller said. "They have different levels so you can go with an orthodox trip or a conservative trip, and there's even trips where there's no orientation."

Several organizations, including Hillel International, sponsor the free trips with the help of private funding and the Israeli government.

At Cal Poly, Hillel has sent seven people over the past two years on birthright trips. All that is needed is an application and an interview process to prove Jewish roots.

However, for students who have not gone on birthright or have yet to go, the only two major programs at Cal Poly are Hillel and the Jewish fraternity. Brian Hubbs, a liberal studies junior, gave more insight on what it's like to be a part of the fraternity, which got re-chartered in 2003, and how it has kept faith in his life.

"For me, the fraternity and Hillel have helped me to not feel alone or discriminated," Hubbs said.

Within the fraternity, he has participated in activities like carrying the Torah from the old Congregation Beth David to the new one, a six-mile trek, or planting trees this upcoming weekend at the temple for the Jewish holiday Tu B'Shvat.

Hillel is activities like these that keep Hubbs practicing his religion at Cal Poly. "We try to do a lot of good stuff for people," Hubbs said. "The cultural aspect of Judaism is really rewarding and enriching.

25% of students will stay abstinent until marriage

51% of Christian students will stay abstinent**

13% of non-religious students will stay abstinent**

Muslim minority small but present

Jackie Pugh

Nayerah Kolakah, a biology senior and president of the Muslim Student Association (MSA), is no different than any other student on campus. While she wears the traditional Islamic dress every day, she feels comfortable practicing her faith at Cal Poly.

"I've been dressing like this since I was 10 years old," Kolakah said. This is one way that she makes Islam a way of life and said that if people are going to make personal attacks against her it doesn't make her want to assimilate or stop practicing her faith.

"It gives me strength," Kolakah said. "You tend to become resilient."

Luckily, Kolakah said that after five years at Cal Poly, she is accepting of people's curiosity and only rarely experiences discrimination.

In part, her involvement with MSA is one way to counter the effects of ignorance in and around the community. MSA is one of the few organizations that Muslims and those interested can go to meet other students of the faith and increase awareness about the true Islam around campus.

"MSA has 10 to 15 members and there's probably a lot more that we just don't know about," Kolakah said.

Architecture senior Saleem Azad is currently involved with the Persian, Indian and Muslim clubs. He believes these activities to be a great opportunity to meet people of different cultures and faiths, but still feels that there could be more avenues for Muslims at Cal Poly.

"I'm really involved with other ethnic clubs, but it's what I have to do so I don't go crazy," Azad said. For him, these clubs are his only means of practicing his culture and faith in San Luis Obispo. After coming from San Jose's diverse population, Azad gets involved as much as he can.

The minority enrollment at Cal Poly is horrific, Azad said, and believes the university has a responsibility to increase campus diversity.

"I love Cal Poly, but on this one issue, it's not their strong suit," he said. Azad said he noticed the lack of Muslim presence on campus four years ago, when the club first started and his brother Micah was involved, there were only 40 active members.

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"For me, the fraternity and Hillel have helped me to not feel alone or discriminated," Hubbs said. "The cultural aspect of Judaism is really rewarding and enriching."
Beliefs vary among Poly students

Janelle Eastridge

Baha'i

As one of five Baha'i believers at Cal Poly (out of a total of 15 in the community), Maijan Albert must act as her own source of support. A native of South Africa who moved to Los Angeles County as a young teen, her faith has been a constant influence in her life. "Like any religion it’s a crutch to help you up. So every time I’ve been down, whether it’s for personal reasons, because of school, or because of my state of being, religion has been there to help me up," Albert said.

"It's a religion," said history junior Victor Gebhardt. "It’s my own source of support. A native of South Africa who moved to Los Angeles County as a young teen, her faith has been a constant influence in her life.

Buddhism

In many ways similar (yet also completely separate) from Hinduism, Buddhism with its stress on suffering and the breaking of this cycle, as set forth in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, is a "religion" of eliminating suffering and ultimately reaching nirvana.

"It's faith, but not in what most people label as "faith," said history junior Victor Gebhardt. "My faith is that my positive causes are linked to positive effects," he said.

"It is both very positive and very self-empowering. It’s all about empowering yourself and making positive change in the world. The idea that I can do this and that world peace is available with one-on-one connections (in what appealed to me)," said Gebhardt, who practices in the Nichiren-Shoshu sect (also known as the Lotus-Sutra school).

For Gebhardt, Buddhism has essentially affected his life in two ways. First, it has taught him to live in the present and ask, "What can I do right now? What action can I take right now?" Secondly, it has helped with warding off depression. "Buddhism has provided me with a tool set to which I can battle negativity in the moment and not overindulge in pessimism," he said.

On campus, finding a practicing Buddhist is a scarcity - six years ago, students approached Andrew Schaffner, a statistics professor and Karnu Kagyu practitioner, with the idea of starting a Dharma club on campus. But with enough charter members, the club never came to fruition — though that could all change if students were to form the club, he said. But students, like all Buddhists, "would have to reach this point on their own," and approach Schaffner once again.

"I've always hoped that there would be students inclined to this," he said. Schaffner explained that the club would be a place in which more experienced practitioners could guide and mentor-like figures for newbies while providing its members — Buddhists from all traditions, and those merely looking into the belief system — time for meditation and a place of tranquility.

Agnosticism

For some, the question is not which deity to believe in, but whether or not to believe in one (or more) at all. Agnosticism (literally "without knowledge," or "unknowable") is the concept that the truth-value of a particular theological view is unknown. "I would label myself an agnostic not because I don't believe in a god, but because I don't understand what I believe in," said Leah Combs, an English junior. "I feel like it's unfair to label myself as a part of a religion, whatever that religion may be, if I don't really believe what's it all about.”

For others like Servesh Deswal, a construction management senior, a self-described "not a full believer of Hinduism, but more of an agnostic," who practices certain aspects of the faith, such as vegetarianism and daily prayers — religion plays more of a cultural role than a religious one.

"I didn't have a choice (growing up)," Deswal said. "There might be something out there, but he hasn't really shown himself. That's how my friends were, so I kind of went along with it.”

Questions concerning the role and origins of authority and morality are some issues agnostics are skeptical towards.

"I think that for a lot of people, spirituality is finding out what's right and what's wrong, how to live that out, and why to believe it," Combs said. "For me, I think I have an internal sense of what's right and what is wrong."

"I need to decide how to live my life. I may make some wrong decisions, but I learn from them. It's really important for myself to figure out what's right and what's wrong on my own."
Hinduism

Three pictures hang in Suneeti Chauhan's room: one of Lord Krishna, the god of love; one of Lord Ganesha, the "elephant-headed" god who is removing all obstacles, especially at "the start of anything good" (new jobs, big vacations, etc.); and Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge. Every so often the business senior will light incense, play village songs, and pray to these gods "at (her) leisure."

More of a personal religion than anything else (opposed to prayer in San Luis Obispo where the nearest temple is hours away), Hinduism, considered by many to be the world's oldest religion and to third largest, is comprised of a diversity of beliefs and traditions.

It is "a title that the white man gave us," Chauhan said. Chauhan adheres to the same belief. For her, Hinduism is a monothestic religion. Ultimately, she said, at the end there had to be some starting point (i.e. one god). But, really, all it comes down to is faith, she said. "I like it because it's so open. There's no one way you have to believe in it."

There is no official Hindu club on campus, many Hindu students are a part of the Indian Student Association. For the most part, however, Hindus, at least at Cal Poly, seems to be more of a personal endeavor.

"My religion tells me how to live a good life, how to help others, and how to be a good person all around," Chauhan said. "It teaches me to be more free — it keeps me from being in a box where I go around and judge others."

Muslims

continued from page 9

at my actions, manners and morals and they learn from that," he said.

Yet, Ahmed said he didn't realize the Muslim student population was so small when he entered as a freshman.

"I honestly don't know any other Muslims at this school and I don't talk to one in my social circle," Ahmed said. Ahmed had tried visiting a MSA meeting but found another older crowd of mostly juniors and seniors that were already friends.

What made Ahmed's situation even harder was the fact that he just came back from a 12 day stay in the Middle East over winter break. "I really wish I would have considered going to the Middle East to go to school, because I was comfortable in my religion there," he said.

Life was simple, Ahmed commented; in the Middle East one can walk to a mosque to pray and others would be doing the same.

In San Luis Obispo, there is a mosque located on Santa Rosa Street in which students may go to pray on Fridays. However, during the week, a practicing Muslim would have to find places around campus to pray five times a day.

In the future, MSA and other active Muslim members in the community are looking to move to another mosque and build a school to be more of an Islamic center.

But for now, life at Cal Poly just can't provide the same opportunities that Ahmed found in the Middle East.

"I'm just some outside guy trying to find some culture, some Islam," Ahmed said.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nonprofits should express freedoms of religion too

On the side of the road on Tuesday, I was approached by a man who was warning tourists about the dangers of staying in side roads. He said that he was a proposal to maintain the separate status of religion and state. I was interested in his talk, but I didn't want to be distracted by his personal views.

Why should nonprofits be un­
grounded for such restrictions? Primarily (as the text seemed to assume), because the bulk of nonprofits are in fact religious organizations and as such should not be permitted to function in the public sphere.

But why not? Donating to politicians in no way violates the First Amendment's establishment clause (as interpreted by the Supreme Court). Congress already loses their tax-exempt status if they endorse candidates. Religious groups have as much right as any­
on else to exercise Freedom of Speech. Religion, while intensely per­
sonal, is by no mean private. One's deepest belief about the nature of reality necessarily informs one's every action; why should nonprofits be expected to divorce what they think, say, and do? Morality is relevant to all aspects of social life; why should nonprofits be barred from the marketplace of ideas?

Eric Baldwin
Electrical engineering junior

Democrats ignoring good candidates

Zach Austin, I know you may have had to fill in for Mr. Molnar on short notice, but you could at least start things off with less dodging and more facts. You completely neglected Rudy

Gianuli a Republican candidate.

Is he because a more lib­
er Republican and looked upon us as the great New York mayor that was able to handle the mayhem of Sept. 11? Does his centrism pose a threat to the more
cornered?

Perhaps you'll see someone putting something a nice bottle of wine for a surprise dinner rendez­
vous. You'll be entertained to see the beads of sweat forming on his brow, as he nervously checks off his list— he's never made dinner before.

Perhaps you'll pass a quiet old man browsing the greeting cards, trying to sneak a nice, simple one with a flower on it into the basket without his wife looking. "She comes around the aile, looks at it, and puts it back.

Perhaps you'll see someone putting something a little different, a little bit of a heartache. For centuries; one that may pit

Under the auspices of the quirky arts, no single person who either makes the

authoritative for us to exert some decision on these matters and as such should not be permitted to function in the public sphere.

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GUEST COMMENTARY

Spread real love; boycott traditional Valentine's Day

St. Valentine's Day, typically associated with chocolates and Cupid's ill-aimed arrows, originated circa A.D. 270 when a Christian priest by the name of Valentine defied the current Roman emperor's anti-marriage edict by marrying lovers in secret. Valentine was caught, imprisoned, and sentenced to death. Valentine's message of true love has been somewhat warped today by commercialism, which suggests that love is best expressed via materialistic means: gifts, flowers, candy. Instead of buying into a Hallmark approach of Valentine's Day this year, I have another suggestion for you: Don't!

Instead, I propose that we launch a SPREAD THE LOVE campaign. There is no formal organization behind this idea — just a spark of goodwill. There are terrible things going on in the world: poverty, starvation and warfare to name a few. But we can do something about them, if we move our focus from local to a global one on Valentine's Day and all others. Let's try it!

Let me make it clear that I am not denouncing the exchange of gifts between friends and loved ones to observe Valentine's Day. I think that it's important to nurture the relationships we have with people we know and foster ties with a few. But we can do something about them, if we move our focus from local to a global one on Valentine's Day and all others. Let's try it!

If you want to buy something for your friends or significant other, do it! The Invisible Children Store sells bracelets, T-shirts, and the eye-opening documentary itself; proceeds benefit children in Uganda. If you'd like to give your girlfriend or boyfriend something beautiful to wear, Blue for Life sells extraordinary and exotic handmade jewelry — purchases help to eradicate poverty in Africa. Gap's current project, (PRODUCT)RED, is a great way to fight AIDS—plus, red is classically recognized as the color of passion.

If roses mean romance to you, Organic Bouquet is an eco-friendly, online florist certified by Veriflora as sustainably grown (it also sells "charitable bouquets" which support organizations such as the American Red Cross). Should your sugar prefer some sweet treats for Valentine's Day, make sure they're fair trade certified. Theo Chocolate offers chocolatey goodness and a clear conscience.

For my part, I'm thinking of spreading the love by sending a llama to Darfur, with a note that reads, "From Your Valentine."

Inness Pryor
English Journalism

NBA commissioner concerned more with nice suits than talent

Note: If you are the commissioner of a major pro sports league, your job is to not screw things up. Need an example? See Paul Tagliabue. People tune in to watch players — there is nothing dynamic about a well-spoken, bespectacled old man, unless he is warning of the coming apocalypse, or just popped his pants in a public area.

NBA commissioner David Stern did not get the aforementioned memo. I'm willing to bet that most Americans don't know who Tagliabue is. However, Tagliabue is responsible for ushering the NFL into its rightful position as the lotus of the American sports landscape.

Don't get me wrong — Stern is a brilliant man, and has done great things for basketball for the most part. He rescued the league from the tape-delayed, coke-induced doldrums of the late '70s through strict discipline and hard work. He cleaned up a league that was awash in drug deals and oriented toward the trailer park of obscenity, and led it to the beach house called the Dream Team.

However, let's not forget that Stern had a little help. Assistance first arrived in the form of Larry Bird and Magic Johnson. Some years later a guy name Mike arrived and a funny thing happened: people watched. Stern made the smart move and hitched the NBA to these horses (and a couple of others).

The new technical foul rule, for example, is to prominence and in turn, prosperity, via TV. I don't know anyone over the age of 20 who can't recite the NBA on NBC theme song. If they say they can't, they are lying.

NBA players are notorious for doing things like retiring after 15 years or so. So, when his "Arrows" left, there was nobody left to fill the void. Many have tried, from Grant Hill to Kobe Bryant, to Stern's dismay, all have failed to carry the league for various reasons.

Whether that is a result of Jordan's greatness (which it probably is), injuries or off the court troubles remains to be seen...changes balls in the first place, much less switches them back midseason? Is this a carnival? This is the same kind of guy at the court's fair that pulls the old switcharoo at balloon docs. You pop your three balloons. You think you are getting a free prize. You are not.

People do come to watch Steve Jordan or Jordanesque performances. Trust me, the fans will put up with a little whining if it means great players can avoid ejection because of a shoulder shrug. Stern is like Brooks from "Shawshank Redemption," he's been in his bubble for so long that things have passed him by.

I don't have a problem with keeping Melo out of the All-Star game, although I think he should play. I do have a problem with the fact that Stern even gets to pick injury replacements. The All-Star game is for fans, not for the Cornish to establish his control over the game.

I don't know if the league's hip-hop image is good or bad for the game, and I don't care. I do know that it is the prevailing climate in the game.

So, short of banning everyone with 22's and bling, let's let Stern do his job. Or the Cornish to establish his control over the game.

Does anyone care if Allen Iverson wears a throwback and a platinum chain to a press conference? "Come on, we talking about a press conference, not a game, not a game..." I digress.

It seems Stern has lost control of his toy and wants to regain control of it by any means necessary.

It seems Stern has lost control of his toy and wants to regain control of it by any means necessary. I say embrace what you have, and do what you did 20 years ago — sit back and enjoy the ride.

Devin McClaine is a journalism junior and Mustang Daily staff writer.

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JAMES GLENN

STAFF COMMENTARY

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Thursday, February 8, 2007

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**Basketball continued from page 16**

Stockalper said, "My teammates found me when I was open. It was just going in for me that night." The 30 points was one of five career highs set or tied that night for Stockalper, including six 3-pointers. "When you're hot, you've got to keep shooting," Bromley said.

"Sometimes (Stockalper) is unfish to a fault and doesn't try to take over a basketball game, and he's got the capability to do that. He kept being aggressive — that's how he wound up with 30." A big part of the Mustangs' 24-point win was a 23-for-27 showing at the free-throw line, an area in which they had struggled much of the season. With a clip of 411 at the foul line on the season, Cal Poly is still last in the Big West by 36 percentage points.

"Judging by the rest of our games," Stockalper said, "I think we're going to continue to need to work on it in practice constantly. It was good for us to get that confidence up at the line and we need to keep shooting the ball like we did against Davis."

Stockalper said the team's play at point guard has given it a huge lift. Starter Trac Clark and sixth man Chad Thomas have combined to average 15.5 points, 5.2 assists and 2.2 steals per game this season. They're huge for us," Stockalper said of Clark and Thomas. "I've seen a lot of development from the beginning of this year and this point. They've really flourished the last two games. They're big for us. Their confidence is getting better and better as the season goes along, which is nice to see. We need them to play well to win."

Cal Poly is 7-1 at home this season and plays four of its final six regular-season games in Mont Gynn.

"We've obviously played pretty well at home this year," Stockalper said. "We've got a good chance to get a lot of wins here in the second half. The other guys coming into our place are going to have a really tough time with us here and they're going to have to play really well to beat us at home. I don't think that's going to happen. I think we're going to take care of business."

Tonight's game appears to be a battle of strong offense versus strong defense. Cal Poly is second in the Big West in blocked shots per game (3.65) and third in field-goal percentage defense (.423); Long Beach State is second in the Big West in points per game (78.0) and led the nation in that category with an average of 83.3 last season.

The 49ers, however, are still looking for their first Big West win on the road, a department in which they are 0-2 this season. All those factors could come into play tonight, which only makes Saturday's 4 p.m. home game against UC Irvine more important in the race for conference tournament seeding.

"Big game Thursday," Bromley said. "Not looking toward Saturday at all."
Johnny continued from page 16

The Mustangs have beaten UC Davis twice this season — including their first win over the Aggies since 1993.

UC Davis won the national championship. So what if it was at the Divison II level in 1998?

Some say it was a sign from the heavens. Cal Poly may struggle in the loaded Big West Conference at times, but I think it could make some serious noise if it played in the ACC.

Earlier in the season, the Mustangs beat St. Mary's, which just recently beat then-ranked Gonzaga. The Gonzaga team beat No. 5 North Carolina by eight points earlier in the season.

So it's pretty simple, Cal Poly's better than UNCG.

That's the line that that called the West Coast bias! I mean, come on!

I hear all these Duke-North Carolina hopes for this week's rivalry game, but what about us? Did they forget that Cal Poly essentially beat North Carolina and is the superior team?

I mean, Cal Poly plays Long Beach State tonight and I haven't seen them lose this season. Del Mar, Del Mar.

The Mustangs will fly under the radar until March Madness arrives, then they will make their mark. Everyone will think it's a big fluke when Cal Poly makes it to the Sweet 16, except those who believe in destiny today. Then when Cal Poly takes out North Carolina, the entire world will begin to believe. Sad that it took that long.

Though football may be over and the skies may be gray outside, there are brighter days ahead. Especially come March.

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final two innings with a lively fastball topping out at 96 mph.

Lee attributed the Mustangs' recent success to team chemistry and being able to slow the game down.

"We have a good, positive environment right now, and that's very important," he said. "Anyone you have a young team, they have a hard time slowing the game down at this level. They've been able to just relax and let the game come to them the past three games."

 compiled by John Middlekauff

Last weekend the eighth-ranked Cal Poly rugby club team defeated both Arizona State and Arizona. Wing Trenton Yackzan and inside center Luke Col led the way, combining for six tries. The Mustangs outscored their opponents by a combined total of 97-32.

Cal Poly currently sits atop the Southern California Rugby League.

The Mustangs play No. 6 BYU at 3 p.m. today at the Rec Fields. Cal Poly will be looking for a little redemption after last year's playoff loss to BYU, which eventually lost to Cal in the national championship.
After dropping its first five games, the Cal Poly baseball team has reeled off three straight victories after defeating Fresno State 6-3 Tuesday night in front of 1,009 at Baggett Stadium.

The Mustangs took advantage of four runs in the bottom of the third inning. After giving up a 2-1 lead in the top of the third, the Mustangs (3-5) pelted Bulldog starter Tanner Scheppers for four hits, including a two-run single by left fielder Bryan Kepner, scoring designated hitter Wes Darrell and third baseman Brent Moore.

"My approach was line drives all night, and it worked tonight," Kepner said.

The Mustangs received a solid performance from starter Steve Fischbach (1-2). The true freshman right-hander pitched five innings, allowing two earned runs with one strikeout for his first victory of the season.

After a scoreless first inning, Fischbach allowed back-to-back runs in the second and third frames. He then settled down, allowing just one hit over his last two innings behind a host of sure-handed Cal Poly defenders.

"Our pitching has been much better (over the three games we won)," Moore said. "We won games on pitching and defense and we've been solid in both areas the last three games," Cal Poly head coach Larry Lee said.

Fresno State struck first in the top of the second inning. Fresno State right fielder Ozrie Lewis singled up the middle. After a Fischbach balk and wild pitch advanced Lewis to third, a sacrifice fly by third baseman Henry Fischback (1-2) scored Lewis. After a scoreless first inning, Fischbach allowed back-to-back runs in the second and third frames.

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