

## Comet Awards - Fall 2011

### **Carol Cirulli Lanham**

Dr. Lanham is the kindest professor I've ever had. She is concerned with making sure her students reach their full potential and is always willing to lend a helping hand. Her ability to take subjects like Classical Social Theory and make them interesting and fun is no easy task. It makes me look forward to going to class especially since she is always excited and passionate, not only about the course but also her students. It makes all the difference that she takes extra effort to ensure we comprehend the material. Thank you Dr. Lanham.

### **Yuki Watanabe**

Professor Watanabe is an awesome teacher. She goes above and beyond necessary means to help students. She is enthusiastic while teaching and causes the classroom experience to be enjoyable. Thanks for all you do.

### **Brian Buckles**

While I love Economics, I've found that at times the field can be very dry. Mr. Buckles has sloughed off the rigid thinking I expected in Mathematical Economics. He poses philosophical questions for brief dialogue which make for stimulating asides. The material is covered through an inquisitive approach with a small dose of healthy criticism and thanks are due to this lecturer for his refreshing liberal-arts thinking.

### **Brian Berry**

Dr. Berry approached me about my dissertation focus – suggesting that he would be happy to serve as my chair. He has guided me through successful proposal defense and I am currently pursuing my PhD. Many who have been lucky enough to have Dr. Berry as a chair experienced him 'literally' cutting the draft into tiny slips of paper selecting only one sentence that he deemed acceptable! Thanks Dr. Berry for all your help and commitment to students' success.

### **Timothy Bray**

I was a normal, well-adjusted graduate student until I took Intro to Quantitative Methods with Dr. Bray. His passion and knowledge for teaching inspired me to take more statistics classes. Now I spend my weekends in the labs trying to make data sets make sense. Thanks Dr. Bray!

### **Anthony Champagne**

Dr. Champagne is always friendly. It has been a privilege to work with the Innocence Project and studying how to help those wrongfully accused. I appreciated him taking time to recommend me to seek doing an internship at The Center for American and International Law.

### **Linda Keith**

I thoroughly enjoyed Dr. Keith in her Law & Gender course. While in her class, I interviewed for an internship at a women's rights non-governmental organization. Terrified that I'd done horrible on my midterm, I asked for my grade and a recommendation from her. I ended up doing well on the midterm and she has been a great mentor to me ever since.

### **Stuart Murchison**

Dr. Murchison is an amazing teacher. He is a funny and extremely dedicated professor. I enrolled in his class without any previous GIS knowledge and was scared. He has been wonderful and has helped any time I've needed him. He truly is my favorite professor. Thank you so much!

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### **Richard Scotch**

As a prospective student, upon reviewing my transcript Dr. Scotch said I essentially had a Masters in Sociology and encouraged me to pursue a PhD degree. I didn't think I wanted to but took a course and ended up changing my mind. Dr. Scotch has demonstrated an unwavering amount of support. He has been so kind, humble and has inspired me to keep moving forward in spite of all my personal challenges. I am so thankful for his guidance, leadership, dedication and hard work. He really cares about his students and I am grateful for such a beautiful spirit at UTD.

### **Sheryl Skaggs**

Dr. Skaggs is such a great professor. While taking her class, Status and Power class I was inspired to pursue and further my education in Sociology. Her teachings in research methods are top notch and I have learned more in her field work assignment than I ever would have in lecture alone. Thank you Dr. Skaggs.

### **Robert Taylor**

I have learned more from Dr. Taylor than any other professor at UTD. He makes each class exciting by telling funny stories or his hilarious "wild west" ringtone going off. He brings life to every lecture and shows both sides of the story with our controversial topics. Thanks for making each class one to look forward to attending.

### **Gregory Thielemann**

I would have never seen the assortment of great films had it not been for Professor Thielemann's Film and Politics class. He is very passionate about what he teaches and it comes through in his lectures. Thank you for such an enlightening class.

### **Denise Boots**

Dr. Boots has been the best professor I have ever had. I took her Intro class and have taken all her others because she was so motivating. She respects students and values our opinions. Although she is tough, she is very fair and teaches in a way that ensures we get the fullest experience from class. She has caused me to hold other professors to a higher standard and I will never forget her.

### **Euel Elliott**

Dr. Elliott is very passionate. In his class you do not need to worry about there being a lack of good examples. During a meeting scheduled to review my PhD degree plan he noticed my tendency to only take one class per semester. He encouraged me to take more than one class if I ever planned to graduate. Naturally, I followed his advice. Thanks Dr. Elliott for pushing me to do more!

### **Irina Vakulenko**

Dr. Vakulenko is extremely intelligent and has many experiences she shares with the class of her world travels and risks. This makes for enthusiastic lectures which help us, as students, define the simple yet great powers we possess to change the world. Her passion for Geography is inspiring, motivating and it encourages me to learn more about how the world functions. I appreciate that she cares about the students and wants them to learn!

### **Robert Whelan**

Dr. Whelan is extremely animated and we love it. The class loves when he gets riled up describing or reading out loud unethical activities performed by public administrators. Thank you for keeping the energy up and the class interesting.

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### **Elmer Polk**

Dr. Polk is very easy to talk to and it is evident he cares about students doing well in school. I have been inspired in his class by the dynamics of his teaching. He often has many stories to make what we are learning feel more real. I enjoy that our lessons can both serious and fun.

### **Clint Peinhardt**

When I came to UTD, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. Dr. Peinhardt's classes have put me a step closer to discovering my purpose in life and I have decided to become an IPE major. I have learned so much about practical topics like solving world problems. He truly is the most challenging, interesting and caring professor I have seen at UTD. He has the ability to make topics, which would typically seem dull, interesting and relevant. It's no wonder that everyone I have spoken to, even students who have near failed his class, love Dr. Peinhardt!

### **Douglas Dow**

Dr. Dow confirmed the value of academically pursuing the intertwining of Politics and Socio-political Movements expressed in art. I saw his involvement and dedication to the punk-rock culture to be the equivalent of my involvement in restoring the merits of the Electronic Dance Music scene in mainstream U.S. perception. His Radio UTD lectures on the intricacies of proto-punk and punk revealed the tremendous difference in responsiveness the audience displays when presented with a popular subject. It was the right connection I needed with academia to solidify my decision to seriously pursue my goal of developing alternative educational models using mainstream music genres. So, thank you wholeheartedly Dr. Dow, from the U.S. Department of Education in D.C., where I work with scholastic art!

### **Sarah Maxwell**

Some people just have the ability to walk in here day in and day out just going through the motions and sail on without much effort. Fortunately that's not me, and I say that because I don't believe I would be here now, or learned what I have, without the discipline that I have in-order-to succeed and, the efforts put forth. You have helped me stay positive, helped me understand myself and my potential. And though I still struggle with my academic confidence you've helped keep my head up. There's a relatively small number of people who have made an enormous impact on me and, unquestionably, you are one. For all that you've done to help me, I truly thank you.