

11/19/2009

To Whom it May Concern,

This is Cen Cheng, an international master student of American Studies program in Michigan State University. I have enrolled in Prof. Jason Friedman's seminar HST480 Section4 – The Culture and Politics of 1970s America during the fall semester of 2009 here at MSU. And I am writing to express my appreciation of Prof. Friedman's capacity both in teaching and in being a great source of encouragement and support for his students.

As a new master student in the American Studies program, I am required to take courses in both English Department and History Department which relates to the American context. The history seminar "The Culture and Politics of 1970s America" soon popped up with good potential. At the beginning of the fall semester, Prof. Friedman responded to my inquiry email in the shortest time possible, which was the first distinction he displayed in comparison to other teachers and which I would continue to recognize in the course of the semester. His timely response and his arrangement of an appointment which enabled discussion on the course content and on the extra requirement for graduate student all prove to be the ready and thoughtful support he never hesitates to provide to his students.

His seminar possesses the quality of neat structuring and clear scheduling. His syllabus acted as a powerful guide not only to inform the students of what resources or reference books to look for, but also to display a clear picture of all the topics to be covered and the diversity of discussion. The choices of reading for his seminar always lead me to an enlightening discovery, the two collections of articles on the 1970s of America that he recommends turn out to be a great spectrum of perspectives from which the 70s can be magnified and analyzed specifically and vividly. Prof. Friedman has also included many a presidential speeches and Supreme Court cases into the reading list, which I find illuminating and helpful to understand the importance of the primary historic sources in addition to the secondary sources. The seminar has been the most vital and vigorous arena in terms of facilitating thoughts, questions, criticism and understanding from the students among all three courses that I've enrolled in the semester. The leadership positions of all the discussions are equally distributed among class members, and each discussion leader is responsible for warming up the article, posing constructive questions based on the article and directing the discussion. Personally, I feel the practicing in the classroom greatly improves my presenting, strategic questioning and overall communicating skills. However, we the students often fall short of satisfactory presentation or investigation of the article, and Prof. Friedman will always concludes each article with the questions on his list yet not covered in discussion. He can be counted for a keen observation of the dynamics of discussions, his receptiveness to the students' speech is manifest in his quick comment and his follow-up questions, which ensured the depth of our discussion and the quality of the course in general.

In classroom, Prof. Friedman proves himself an encouraging instructor who always recognizes the students' ideas and points in speech and scholarly improvement. And as an international student, I

am especially grateful to Prof. Friedman for his generous encouragement and fair treatment to his students. During the first semester of overseas study, I experienced a certain degree of anxiety over my language ability both in speech and in writing. But every time I consulted Prof. Friedman, he recognized my achievement and every improvement which acted as tremendous support and motivated my progress further. Furthermore, his equal attention to his students in the classroom and his credit to students based on strict scholarly standard contribute to a healthy and fair environment in the classroom, and I feel an organic integral part in the classroom as an international student.

With all the above, I see Prof. Friedman as a great instructor and mentor in Michigan State University. His devotion to his profession is evident in his adequate preparation for the seminar and in his generous attitude to his students, his sense of justice is manifest in all his conducts and his capacities in both teaching and supporting the scholarly development of his students are noticeable. Therefore, I believe any institution in search of young, energetic and devoted assistant professors should place Prof. Friedman on top of their list. He is a teacher that betters the students' overall judgment on their institution.

Sincerely,

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