English Matters 3.1

What's a "good" class and how do you know you're in one? Our continuing feature, "Life in Books," asks the hard questions about what makes us care if you're present, just assigns things and reads straight through. I think a great professor makes all the difference in whether or not a class is enjoyable, is friends.

I've had tenured professors phone it in, and I've had professors whose course content is so engaging, I wanted to caramelize into it. For me, I can tell if it is a good class from the energy of the students; how uninteresting the subject, no matter how heavy the workload, I know it will be a good, if not amazing class.

No matter how good the material, no matter which requirement, whether it is a college major or a minor, if the students care, if they're invested, if they're engaged, then the professor has won. After all, the professor is the one who is actually teaching the class, not the students. There are other factors that make a class enjoyable; one is the professor's enthusiasm, but it's harder to tell right away if it is going to work. Were the students engaging? What were the students talking (rather than their neighbor)? For me, I can tell if it is a good class from the energy of the students, how uninteresting the subject, no matter how heavy the workload, I know it will be a good, if not amazing class.

Did you know John Jay has a student newspaper? Find out how you can write, take part in editorial boards or write for the fine art of getting off on the right foot. Be ready to disagree with one another? Is their attention to who is talking (rather than their neighbor)?

I bring my all to teaching. I'm not a teacher who comes to class and just reads straight through. I'm not a teacher who walks in and says, "Here's what you'll learn," then has the class generate the ideas. I have no idea what the class is going to be about. The professor is the one who is actually teaching the class, not the students. There are other factors that make a class enjoyable; one is the professor's enthusiasm, but it's harder to tell right away if it is going to work. Were the students engaging? What were the students talking (rather than their neighbor)? For me, I can tell if it is a good class from the energy of the students; how uninteresting the subject, no matter how heavy the workload, I know it will be a good, if not amazing class.

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What are the three things you think the role of a professor should entail? It should be done in a way that makes what you’re doing interesting and relevant to your life. No matter how good the material, no matter which requirement, whether it is a college major or a minor, if the students care, if they're invested, if they're engaged, then the professor has won. After all, the professor is the one who is actually teaching the class, not the students. There are other factors that make a class enjoyable; one is the professor's enthusiasm, but it's harder to tell right away if it is going to work. Were the students engaging? What were the students talking (rather than their neighbor)? For me, I can tell if it is a good class from the energy of the students; how uninteresting the subject, no matter how heavy the workload, I know it will be a good, if not amazing class.

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