

A-State Art + Design is "Mugg'n It Up"

CAROLINE AVERITT

LIFE EDITOR

"Mugg'n It Up," an art education special topics class, is conducting a study to research if working with clay can decrease anxiety levels.

Research participants create mugs and other clay creations and evaluate if they experienced decreased stress.

Susan Whiteland, Ph.D., a professor of art education, leads this research study. She said the research measures stress levels using qualitative and quantitative data.

"We are doing some self-reporting where they're going to complete these different forms. We're also using an oximeter to see about blood pressure and oxygen level to see if that changes as well. We actually have a cortisol test that we'll do later on in the semester," Whiteland said.

The study began in the fall semester through a Faculty Research Grant. After this semester, the class hopes to report their findings.

"We have had small numbers, so statistically, there hasn't been anything conclusive at this point," Whiteland said. "But we are seeing trends when it comes to doing something that's on a daily basis. We have a daily check-in and check-out that is tending to show us that, yes, what the literature

says is correct and that it is making a difference on their stress and anxiety levels."

Lauren Skaggs, a sophomore social work major from Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, is taking the class.

Skaggs and Whiteland have been going to The Learning Center (TLC), a children's therapy center, on Friday mornings to teach kids how to work with clay. The class is working on involving ceramic students from Jonesboro High School with their work at TLC.

Skaggs said she hopes to use what she learns with this class in her future career as a social worker but has also learned ways to manage her stress.

"We've learned four or five different breathing techniques, and so that has been something that has really helped," Skaggs said. "(I have learned) not to let my anxiety and stress go into making clay. When I'm stressed, I like to use too much pressure and that messes up the clay. So just learning to breathe and calm down, that really helps."

Mary Smith, who works at Textbook Brokers, is participating in the study to help release her stress.

"(My stress) decreases when I come to class and then when I'm leaving class, but in the middle of it I kind of get a little bit tense, I kind of stress out whenever things aren't going the way I think



Photo by Caroline Averitt | Life Editor

Lauren Skaggs, a sophomore social work major from Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, making a pinch pot.

they should go," Smith said.

Smith attends the class with her friends Dionne Haag, who works with her at Textbook Brokers, and Christie Goldsmith, who works as a realtor with Century 21.

Goldsmith said she has experienced decreased stress

levels as a result of the class.

"When we test our vitals, it's always a little lower after class," Goldsmith said. "It's a nice little breather for me to check out and come here and do something for myself."

Whiteland said on the last day of the study, the class



Photo by Caroline Averitt | Life Editor

(From left) Yuqi Liang, a junior global supply chain management major from Guangzhou, China, helping Esther Canales, a Master of Business Administration from Mexico City, Mexico, use the pottery wheel.

will drink out of their mugs.

"In the past, what we have done is the last day that we've been together, we have a celebration and they actually put something in the cup for them to drink out of to

make sure it works. So, that's really fun," Whiteland said.

The class is still open to new participants. It is held from 2-3:20 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in Room 105 in the Fine Arts Center.

The stars align for "Bright Star"

COLUMN BY
RACHEL RUDD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Bright Star" is a powerful and fun bluegrass musical guaranteed to take the audience on a journey of love, redemption and perseverance.

The opening song, "If You Knew My Story," performed by Allie Jones, playing Alice Murphy, knocked away any initial doubt. Throughout the production, Jones's vocal prowess shines through every song. Even though she's an absolute showstopper, Jones never overpowers anyone she duets with.

The most stand-out performance is Gavin Wilson, who plays Jimmy Ray, in "Heartbreaker." This is one of the lowest moments in the musical and Wilson's weeping and voice catching on every word is deeply moving.

Not every song quite hits the mark, with "She's Gone" featuring some harmonies that don't quite mesh together. However, these moments are few and far between and will quickly transition into another toe-tapping, catchy song.

However, the story does fall victim to predictability. The musical's plot twist becomes relatively obvious about halfway through Act 1, so when it finally comes time for the big reveal, it doesn't leave



Photo by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief

(From left) Gavin Wilson, who plays Jimmy Ray, and Allie Jones, who plays Alice Murphy in a dress rehearsal for "Bright Star."

the audience in shock and awe.

Even though the musical jumps between the 1920s and the 1940s, it's immediately clear through lighting which period the audience is in.

During the 1920s, color floods the stage, reminiscent of a weathered photograph. Considering most of the musical's heaviest moments occur in the past, it makes sense to do this to add extra drama and tension to a scene.

Conversely, during the 1940s, the stage is mostly lit with white and tends to spotlight the actors, only using color to highlight dramatic moments.

While the main characters go about their lives, so too does the ensemble, adding fun "blink and you'll miss it

moments" to the background. This makes the various towns seem all the more alive. This is most obvious in "Another Round," where other patrons of the bar drunkenly stumble across the stage, wonderfully adding to the craziness of an already hectic scene.

Adding extra depth to the performances was the presence of a live bluegrass band on stage. It was a deliberate decision to have them on stage, as opposed to in the orchestra pit, adding even more life to the stage.

"Bright Star" was well worth a trip to the Fowler Center and deserved its standing ovation. I eagerly await the next A-State Theatre production.

Final Score: 8/10

Give foreign language films a chance

COLUMN BY
JACK DOUGLAS

PHOTO EDITOR

Each year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presents the Oscar for Best International Feature Film to a deserving foreign film. Usually, they are in other languages but subtitled into English. Unfortunately, this turns many viewers off from seeing great films, just because they require the use of subtitles.

This shouldn't be the case; subtitles exist to make films more accessible to audiences, not less. Learning to appreciate subtitles opens the door to a whole new world of great films that otherwise would be left on the opposite side of the language barrier.

Filmmaking is an incredibly complicated task. Even creating a short film takes the combined work of dozens of people across multiple disciplines. Dubbing a film into another language adds another layer of complexity to an already complicated process.

Not only is it selfish for audiences to demand foreign films be translated and re-recorded into their own language but it's unnecessary when subtitles exist to do virtually the same thing.

Subtitling allows for the preservation of the original



PHOTO COURTESY OF READING SOUNDS

A frame from the Russian film "Night Watch," which utilized subtitles to draw the viewer's eye across the screen.

dialogue. English-speaking viewers may not be able to understand the spoken dialogue in a Japanese film but they will be able to get a sense of the emotion behind the words, which is just as important. Dubbing risks changing the emotion or delivery of the dialogue for the sake of convenience, which poses a risk to the integrity of a film as a whole.

While a good English dub can boost the viewing experience for the audience, a bad dub risks ruining the experience entirely.

Some viewers see subtitles as intrusive and distracting, taking the eye away from the film itself, but this isn't really the case. Most subtitles are

designed in such a way that reading them is quick and does not detract from the scene itself. In fact, "Night Watch," a Russian horror film from the early 2000s, uses subtitles to guide the viewer's eye around the scene with the text.

Subtitles in foreign language films are simply the easiest, truest and most cost-effective way to translate a film into another language. Dubbing is not always possible, especially for lower budget films, and can often ruin an otherwise great film. Don't be deterred from great art just because it requires a little more effort than normal; give subtitles a chance and maybe you'll find your next favorite movie.

INSIDE THE A-STATE EQUINE CENTER

SHAILEY WOOLDRIDGE

COPY EDITOR

The Equine Center does everything from educating students on horse riding, care and more. Home to the equestrian team, the center is also a place for the community to participate in equine events.

“Our mission is education first,” said Leah Ballin, Equine Center manager. “That’s the whole reason why we’re here is to educate animal scientists and equine management students.”

Ballin said the students who study in the Equine Center are usually agriculture or pre-vet students looking to gain experience with large animals, but they are open to all majors. Students can also volunteer at the center.

Sadey Bowen, a first-year plant and soil science major from Weiner, Arkansas, volunteers every day at the Equine Center.

“What I love the most about out here is the fact that nobody cares what past you came from or being a little bit different,” Bowen said. “They want to step in to help and do whatever you need and teach you and just be there when you need them.”

Bowen, who uses a wheelchair, said she connected with a horse named Rosie because she was the first horse who wasn’t scared of her wheelchair.

“That pretty much made me know I wanted to work with her and ride her. She’s taught me pretty much everything I know about horses at this point. I just kind of fell in love with her,” Bowen said.

Equestrian Team and Riding Classes

Bowen is a member of the equestrian team, which is coached by Cassie Burdett, instructor of animal science. Burdett created the team last year. Burdett said the equestrian team does both Hunter seat and Western riding styles and competes at different schools. Riders get sorted into categories based on their experience level.

“In the riding program we focus on ‘anyone can ride,’



Sadey Bowen, a first-year plant and soil science major from Weiner, Arkansas, walking Rosie.

Photo by Shailey Wooldridge | Copy Editor

said Alexa Daly, one of the assistant coaches. “Whether they’ve had the experience or not, we give them the opportunity to learn the sport.”

Burdett teaches classes from the beginner to the advanced level.

The cost for taking a riding class is the same as three hours of tuition plus an extra \$50 fee that goes to help take care of the horse being ridden.

Students don’t need any prerequisites or previous experience with horses to take a riding class. Beginner classes are offered in both fall and spring semesters.

“We’ll start with everything from learning how to halter a horse, to groom a horse, how to tack up, which would be either the western saddle or the English saddle, and then we’ll put them on a lunge

line,” Burdett said. “They get to practice working on their seat and getting comfortable before we ever give them reins.”

Burdett said her favorite students to teach are the ones new to riding, because she can teach the correct way to ride.

“If you teach them from the ground up, then it’s more than just going on a trail ride. It’s actually riding and that takes a million different pieces to do it right,” Burdett said. “It’s understanding horse psychology. What is the horse telling you?”

Breeding Program

The center also has a breeding program to teach students the process of equine breeding.

Ballin said there are three horses in the barn that were bred, born and raised in the Equine Center as part of the program.

Braums, a two-time participant in the Breeder’s Cup

World Championship races, an invitation-only annual series of thoroughbred horse races, was donated to A-State as a senior. Braums died spring 2022.

Two of Braums’s offspring, Cheese and Brennan, were born in the breeding program and are university-owned.

“Not only did we breed the horses here, then the following year, the class got to foal them out and then we weaned them,” Burdett said. “We halter broke them and now Cheese is in training to ride, Brennan’s been training to ride. It’s just kind of cool that you can still see the imprint of a full circle program.”

Brennan’s mom, Cami, is the only broodmare left in the breeding program. Burdett said Cami is an off-the-track racehorse mare and won a little under \$130,000 on the track.

Burdett said their hope for Brennan is that she

will also go on to race.

Last year Cami was artificially inseminated in partnership with Kavanaugh Quarter Horses in an attempt to breed an appendix, which is a cross between an American quarter horse and a thoroughbred.

“Even though Brahms is no longer here, it’s exciting to see the horses that we bred and foaled,” Burdett said. “A couple of his babies are running in Oaklawn right now, including the university’s very first foal, named Howl Yeah.”

Burdett said the program no longer has breeding stallions, but they are still breeding and foaling.

“We’re actually going to foal out one of the farm’s female donkeys. We’ve never done that before. The class is going to help her deliver her baby donkey safely,” Burdett said.

Hippotherapy Program

The Equine Center also uses horses to teach hippotherapy in the physical therapy program.

Director of clinical education and assistant professor of physical therapy, Rachel Wilkins, said hippotherapy is using the movement of being on horseback to improve posture, balance and walking abilities of patients that have neuromuscular conditions.

Wilkins said for physical therapy students hippotherapy is a three semester process. In the first semester students learn horse behavior and basic principles of hippotherapy, the second they work with actual patients and in the third they do case studies on one patient.

“In the fall semester where the students are just getting introduced to horses and horse skills, the Equine Center is a big part of that because we usually go to the Equine Center for the first few weeks of class and they learn all about horse safety, tacking and grooming,” Wilkins said.

Community Events

Additionally, the Equine Center hosts a range of events each year.

Ballin said they host everything from student-led events up to large series barrel races. Every year they host the Northeast Arkansas Horse Show, which has 10 events in its lineup.

Ballin said the Northeast Arkansas Horse Show Association does open breed shows, shows that offer classes to all horse breeds, for Western and English pleasure and speed events from peewee to leadline classes.

Regardless of what students do at the center, Burdett said students will benefit from working with the animals.

“I think a lot of students benefit underneath them (horses). I see competence. I see students switching majors or maybe they’re adding to their double concentration because they found something that spoke to them,” Burdett said. “That’s the whole reason why we do it.”



Photo by Shailey Wooldridge | Copy Editor

McKenzie Masters, a first-year agribusiness major from Memphis, petting Ziva.



Photo by Shailey Wooldridge | Copy Editor

Tristan Smithee, a junior biology major from Jonesboro, giving Cheese a bath.