Fulbright scholar enjoys teaching assignment in Poland

Sacramento State professors are working hard to extend the University’s global reach by teaching abroad. A recent example is Psychology Professor Emeritus George L. Parrott, who taught at Sac State from 1969 to 2011. He’s spending the spring term in Warsaw, Poland, courtesy of a Fulbright Scholarship. Parrott is presenting a special sub-program in “Psychology in English” at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Parrott is teaching a core course in the second-year program, similar to Psychology 101. He’s also presenting two electives: History of Psychology in America, which offers guidance to potential U.S. doctoral candidates; and Personality Theory Through Hollywood Movies, for fun and insights into American life and culture.

“Our first movie, When Harry Met Sally, a wonderful example of Freudian theory, prompted students to select their own films to review,” Parrott says. “The Color Purple illustrates negative American aspects of race and gender issues, and my students were rightfully disturbed by them. I recently showed Running Brave, the dramatic biography of a local Sacramentan, Billy Mills, an American Sioux, who won a gold medal in the 10K track race at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. My students were impressed with his drive to succeed as a university student at Kansas, where he encountered continued prejudice even as an Olympic aspiring athlete.”

This is Parrott’s second stint teaching in Poland, having been hosted by the private university for three months last year. His previous international teaching assignments were in Australia and Britain.

Fulbright Scholar fringe benefits include expanding collegial contacts, enjoying cross-cultural experiences and being invited to a variety of State Department social events. Parrott recently was among guests of the U.S. ambassador to Poland at a private showing of the Academy Award-winning film Argo.

He also has heeded dining recommendations from his students. “We had a marvelous dinner at a ‘famous Polish’ restaurant in Warsaw that we would never have known about, but was suggested to us by one of the local students,” he says. “My
Chinese students have provided me with great suggestions for more ‘authentic’ Chinese restaurants in the area."

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