Ethics Bowl team triumphs with thoughts

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IIT's Ethics Bowl team kicked off the season with their first scrimmage of the season. Hosted by Loyola University, teams from Triton College, Northeastern Illinois University, Loyola University, and IIT clashed in an ethics battle for the ages.

In Ethics Bowl competitions, undergraduate student teams from universities around the state compete against one another to test their ethical knowledge and reasoning in an uncomplicated debate structure. Teams receive 12 cases, often about interesting life situations, far in advance of competition and usually do not contain a question. At the start of the round a question pertaining to the current case is given out to the presenting team who has two minutes to deliberate their stance, and then seven minutes to present their case. The opposing team then has a minute to prepare a five-minute commentary on the strengths and short falls of the competing team's arguments. The presenting team then has five minutes for response, quickly followed by ten minutes for judges' questions.

This grueling challenge is then repeated for the opposing team with a different case, completing one round. Each team participates in three rounds challenging different ethical arenas. Of the 12 cases available for regional competition six were on the docket for the struggle on Sunday October 20. Cases are wide ranging and comprehensive, this year including the ethics of self-driving cars, working more than 60 hours a week, paid donation of bone marrow, HIV criminalization and more.

IIT's ethical gladiators performed admirably, especially considering the inexperience of the team. Of those competing on Saturday October 19, none had competed previously, and three of the four were first year engineering students.

Loyola's team of three seasoned third year philosophy majors defeated IIT by six points, with the final scores of 93-99.

IIT's team has extensively studied many different ethical schools of thought, including Kantianism, Aristotelian, and Utilitarianism. Only more great things can happen as the team enters the remaining half of the season to prepare for regionals in November, where the rules will be stricter, and other teams more refined.

If anything you've read peaks your interest, Ethics Bowl always looks forward to seeing new faces and hearing new opinions at its Tuesday lunchtime meetings in the library study rooms.

Trier, Germany filled with classical heritage

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One of the greatest advantage of travelling through the Autobahn is that you can halt anywhere you find interesting to explore. People say that the best experience happen when they are not planned, and something like that happened to us this past summer, enroute Luxembourg. We stopped to explore the historically rich city of Trier also called Treves in English. It is a city on the banks of the Moselle, and is the oldest city in Germany founded before 16th century, which explains the beautiful remains of the Holy Roman Empire. It is said that Trier was inhabited 1300 years before the Romans arrived. Trier is a look at a very architecturally and historically filled place with Germany's oldest Christian church, best Roman ruins, and touch of Marxism.

Any city that is so rich and vibrant should be explored by foot so that one get to connect with the place. For me the more I get connected the more I appreciate it. Trier is architecturally rich city, the city accommodates the oldest Church in Germany, the St. Peter's cathedral (dom) near the Hauptmarkt (marketplace). The 11th century cathedral is very ornate and powerful piece of architecture expressing a long history. With beautiful wooden carvings and huge dome the church demonstrated the combination of deep history and beauty with Romanesque structure with baroque decoration, Gothic vaulting and archways. Another deeply impressive piece of architecture is the Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) which was constructed in 1260, is the first gothic church of Germany. The interesting thing about this structure is that it resembles the Greek cross, with central high altar and 12 circular columns supporting the structure.

An interesting thing about visiting Trier is that you can get a glimpse of Rome in Germany! Porta Nigra (Black Gate) is one of the significant remains of the Roman Empire. The gate consist of two four -storied towers each connected by a narrow courtyard. One must take advantage of going up the gate not just to get a bird's eye view but also to experience what it feels like being inside a structure at that time. An interesting fact that I came to know when I visited this monument is that it was built without motor by Romans. I can tell, roman architecture never fails to amaze me. As we pass through Porta Nigra, we enter the Hauptmarkt that is the main marketplace which is most in love with life market place I have seen because of the liveliness of the place. Flower, food, bakery, spices stalls and shops on street sides filled with people from different backgrounds excited about the things that were sold, really energetic but blissful place to be at.

The next place I am going to talk about is the one that took me to Rome mentally (I am yet to visit it physically!) and that is the Roman baths. This place is a must see, it is confusing at first but as you enter and explore both the ground and underground levels you start connecting all the traces of this incredible place. The Roman Bridge that is still the part of the main road into the city show how much people there appreciate the history the city has gone through. I was surprised that the ruins still remain there after 2000 years. The city has multiple places where one can see monuments inspired by Roman architecture. Basilica of Constantine is another historically significant monument with long, high ceiling. The brick structure which is 200 feet long and 100 feet high is the largest intact roman structure outside Rome, quite an impressive view.

Trier exhibits world class architectural monuments many of which had UNESCO world heritage status and art treasures that have been preserved to tell us about the history that has gone past. One can very much experience Trier's extensive classical heritage. Trier's closeness to the French neighbor is visible throughout the city especially when it comes to eating and drinking. If you are a wine person this is a place you don't want to miss during Wien Kultur Zeit, a month long event with series of wine gourmet and cultural events. Apart from this event one can get excellent wine from the Moselle anytime of the year.

The last thing I did before departing was to see something really cool! I had studied about German thinker and philosopher Karl Marx to a good extent, but I got to visit his house and let me tell you it is worth a visit.

By the end of my visit to this rich city I was convinced that Trier is young and vibrant city that one should visit especially if one is interested in history of architecture of this incredible place.

Credit by exam bureaucracy burdensome

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STAFF WRITER

I came to college expecting academic freedom at least as liberal as that of my high school. This was not the case. Instead my experience at Illinois Tech included putting me through frustrating paces resulting from what appears to be a lack of student-centered critically developed policies.

My story begins with me, signing-up for CHEM 124 and PHYS 123, which I immediately found to be a review of material I aced in high School. Boredom was something frowned upon at Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, where subjects were taught at an accelerated college level. Upon speaking with my professors and advisors about this, it was concluded that I pass out of the classes through testing.

First trying to pass out of my CHEM 124 class, I arranged a test time with my professor. With a bit of chemistry review, I took the test and aced it. Seemingly, one hurdle passed. But no that's just what I thought. Unknown to me at the time, this test did not actually make it possible for me to take the next class on my Aerospace Engineering flowchart, Materials Science 201. Instead I was told that I could only take the CHEM 125 class instead, despite it not being a required class for my major. Proficiency out of a course should be straightforward, so why these roadblocks? I explained my situation to other school administrators and the consensus advice given: "Just stay in the class and take the easy A." With this advice, the bloom is off the rose as far as actually applying myself.

A very similar situation happened for my physics class, but I tried to approach it from a different angle. Due to policy, I would not take the placement test because that would just allow me to skip PHYS 123 and move onto the harder version of it without getting credit for my knowledge. I instead approached the issue by applying for a credit by exam test, the nearly $1000 credit by exam test! However, this path presented a roadblock, too. By policy, one cannot actually be registered for the class in order to take a credit by exam. Luckily, add/drop phase of the semester had not passed so I dropped the class before it went on my transcript yet had time to take the test. Let's take a step back. A student, desiring no more than to be efficiently placed in a curriculum should not be viewed with such skepticism let alone annoyance. Not trying to scam my way out of classes, or cheat the system by getting a degree in less than 4 years, all I wanted to do was get credit for a subjects that I was proficient in order to learn. Time is a precious commodity. One wanting to spend it wisely, say to pursue a minor degree, should not be suspect.

My experience in how the Administration deals with the undergraduate students, especially freshmen, is onerous. Individual attention, while not always possible, cannot be substituted with a push through a circuital system of winding and twisting rules. Especially when a student is working toward a more educationally rigorous path, the system must have a way to accommodate with effective solutions. While my case may be on the extreme end of those experienced by Illinois Tech students, many have similar experiences that could be solved if administration would consider the rules from the perspective of the students, or just employ some critical thinking before making decisions. President Anderson told me that at Illinois Tech only 8% of alums give back to the school, as compared to 20% from similar institutions. Maybe this is partly the result of the memories of the accumulated foul experiences that students like me have endured.