

DAVID YAMANE

“SECONDARY” TEACHING

Although neither of my parents have a university education, I always knew I would. It never occurred to me, though, that I could attend graduate school, much less be a professor. Although everyone seems to have some idea of what college is about, postgraduate education was much more remote for me. Even now, my family doesn't really understand what I do as a scholar. Lacking a plausibility structure in my own family to support this career option, I could easily have taken an entirely different path in life. I might have been a government bureaucrat or an accountant or a lawyer. But a fateful encounter with one of my professors changed that entirely.

I vividly recall one day running into my political sociology professor, Basil Kardaras, in the library. It was 1988 and I was a sophomore in college. I was leaving and he was entering and I thought we would just acknowledge each other and be on our respective ways. But he stopped, so I stopped. And we proceeded to talk—about me, my background, my interests, my classes. Finally, we got around to talking about the political sociology course I was taking with him. In the course we were reading works like Antonio Gramsci's *The Prison Notebooks*, Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Nicos Poulantzas's *State, Power, Socialism*, and Lucio Colletti's *Marxism and Hegel*. Not exactly easy reading, so I was nervous when he started talking to me about the class and the readings. But the next thing I knew, it was almost an hour later and we were still standing there in the lobby of the library talking about being "interpellated by the state." I knew at that moment I wanted to be a professor. Kardaras didn't say to me, "Hey, you should be a professor." He didn't have to say it. The time and energy he committed to me that day said everything and meant everything to me.

Knowing the difference a simple conversation made in my life, "secondary" teaching — advising and supervising student projects and student groups, being involved with students more informally, and the like — has a pride of place in my work.

I have, of course, served as a major and lower division advisor. But I have also gone beyond that. In the summer of 2006 I was the faculty mentor for Adam Blincoe's Wake Forest Research Fellowship to study fundamentalism and politics, and in the summer of 2007 I was the faculty advisor for Kayla Landers's Pro Humanitate and Richter Scholarships to study in Ghana. I am currently the main advisor for Landers as she turns her work in Ghana into a sociology department honors thesis. I am also the main advisor for Teresa Blake's sociology honors project, a committee member for Erin Weeks's MALS thesis, and an advisor on two Divinity School "third year projects."

Beyond formal advising, I am not only open to informal exchanges with students, I reach out to them whenever I can. I especially try to meet students “on their own terms” when possible and appropriate – through sports, clubs, the “Sociology Challenge Cup” I run (challenge.davidyamane.com), and even Facebook. I was previously the faculty advisor for the XPRESS Step Dance Team and am currently the faculty advisor for the Women’s Club Rugby Team. I have also served as a judge for the Kappa Delta “Mr. Wake Forest” Competition and have been the faculty guest coach seven times for six different Wake Forest varsity teams.

Just as twenty years ago my political sociology professor had no idea that his conversation with me would be so consequential, I never know if and when my “secondary” teaching will make a difference in a student’s life. I just know it is possible, and so try to commit as much time and energy as I can to being involved in student life.

Because this is such an important part of my vocation as a faculty member, I have never been more proud than when I was selected by students to receive the *Kulynych Family Omicron Delta Kappa Award for Contribution to Student Life* at the Spring 2007 Founders’ Day Convocation.*

* In the next section (Tab M), I include copies of various notes I have received from Wake Forest students commenting on my influence on them and, I hope, some more formal letters that selected students may be sending directly to Ian Taplin.