

Semester at Sea

Study while you sail

by Allison Annesley

A 100-day cruise around the world, complete with four transferrable university credits probably sounds appealing, but you had best check your budget first.

Such an experience as part of the "Semester at Sea" program will cost you \$10,000 plus three months spending money.

Every term, 550 students leave from either Florida or California to cruise completely around the world with outstanding faculty from American colleges and universities. The sixty courses available range from anthropology to theatre arts.

Why are the faculty necessarily outstanding? Professors cruise for free, with their families and subsequently, there is a very long waiting list of well-qualified academics.

The University of Pittsburgh appoints the Academic Dean for each voyage, who is responsible for the planning and implementation of the program.

Many courses are designed to study various aspects of the countries visited and a student taking marketing may find himself doing a comparison paper between Hong Kong marketing techniques and those of the United States.

In order to qualify for the program, students must have completed one full semester at another college or university and be in good standing with that institution. All grades given on the voyage are letter grades and are creditable at the U of A, though no mark will appear on your transcript: only credit for having passed the courses.

Because of the time spent visiting various cultures, students are advised to take only four courses during their term.

Voyagers spend 55 days at sea and 45 days on land, and classes are held every day except Sunday when at sea.

The ship docks in each port for approximately four days and students are free to explore each culture on their own, though educational tours are available through professors free of charge. Ports of call include Spain, Greece, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, and Japan.

Though the parties never end (dances, talent shows, Neptune Day, musical programs, art shows, sports tournaments, movies,

casinos, plays, and even a dating game), students who let their studies slide are immediately sent home...no refund.

Each port has guest lecturers that include university professors or representatives of government and business, who board at an earlier port to provide introductions to their country's history and culture.

The S.S. Universe, complete with classrooms, hospital, and swimming pool, was donated by a wealthy Taiwanese ship-owner at the time of the program's inception in 1971. The non-profit Institute for Shipboard Education administers the twice-yearly cruises, and the University of Pittsburgh acts as its academic sponsor. Owned by the Seawise Foundation, the program is American-based and Canadians are thus considered foreign students.

There is alternative financing available for those who fall into the less than wealthy category. Students who choose to work for

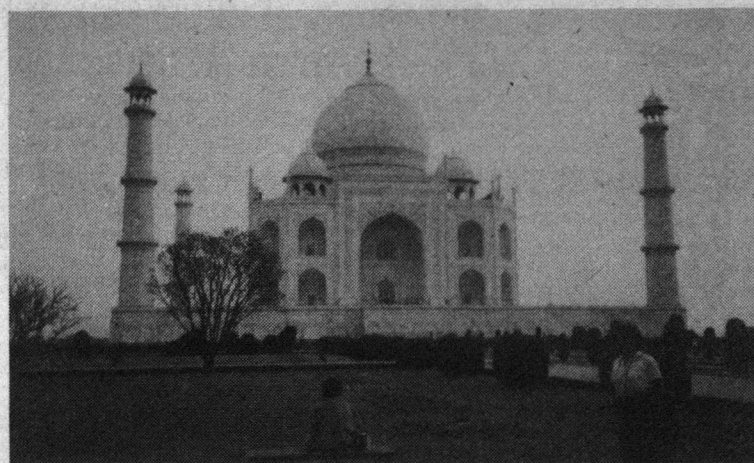
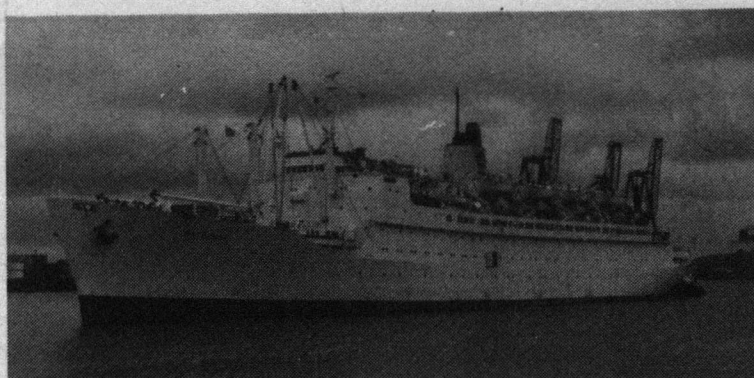
two hours a day on the ship doing everything from library filing to greeting guest lecturers can sail for half the price. But working applications go fast, so these students are advised to apply early. Voyages leave in January and September.

There are 200 faculty and staff on board. The captain and crew are all Taiwanese and students are given a brief list of simple Taiwanese words and phrases to communicate with during their voyage.

Recreational activities include swimming, calisthenics, weight lifting, volleyball, basketball, and table tennis.

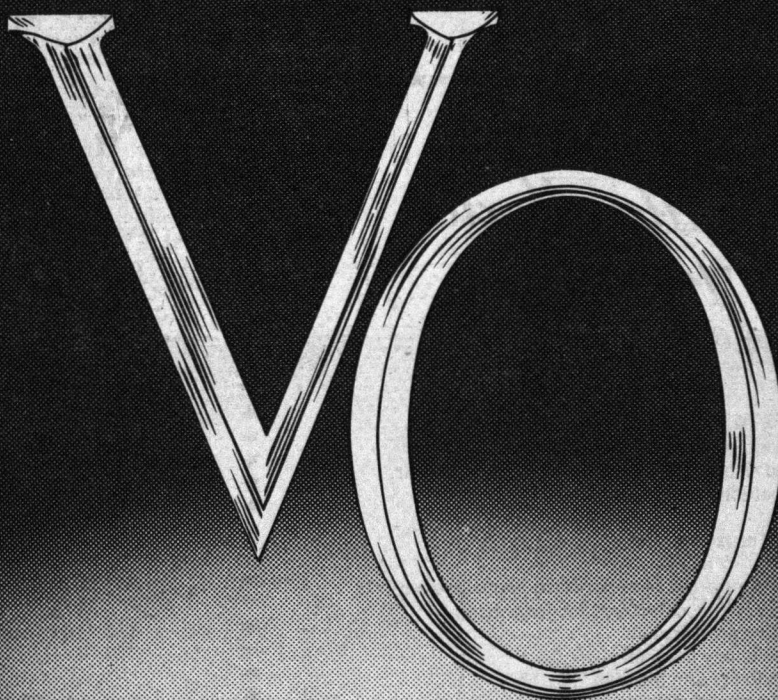
Any qualified students who yearn for travel as education can contact ex-voyager Paula Maughan, a commerce student at the U of A. Paula can be reached at 439-5493, or write:

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photos by Paula Maughan

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