

# Prisoners ponder Socratic philosophy

By Drake Vittitow  
Staff reporter



28 students discuss Socrates being sentenced to death for a crime he was wrongly accused of. They respond enthusiastically to the questions their professor asks.

The class takes place at Winfield Correctional Facility, just 1.2 miles away from campus on top of a hill. The students are inmates, and some of them have immense knowledge and understanding of the readings. Jacob Goodson, assistant professor of philosophy, leads the class.

This class was an anomaly in the usual rotation of classes offered at the facility, which were mainly religion-based classes. The prisoners had the privilege to pick a class outside of religion, and they chose philosophy.

"Dr. Goodson's name was the first I thought of when considering who should teach the course at the facility," said Jackson Lashier, associate professor of religion. "I thought he would be the perfect person for the job."

"The warden said that she had requests for non-religious-based course that were at least college level," said Goodson. "The program coordinator reached out to the college and asked if any professor would be willing to teach an intro level class to philosophy at the facility. After an hour and a half of talking to the director, I had my first four weeks planned and had been given a tour of the correctional facility."

The five-week class was titled "The Death of Socrates and the Birth of Philosophy." The book the prisoners studied was written by Plato.

"As I was talking to the director, I had the feeling that she wanted me to teach some-

thing that pertained to life at the prison," said Goodson. "Since I begin my intro class at the college with the trial and death of Socrates, I knew that the director would want me to teach that lesson."

Crito, a wealthy man, had the funds to break Socrates out of jail. Even though he was wrongly accused, Socrates would not escape prison with Crito. Crito explained to Socrates that many of people wanted him free, but Socrates would not budge.

Socrates explained to Crito that, while the majority of people thought he should be free, he believed that he should still serve his sentence to death, despite being wrongly accused.

Socrates believed it is our duty as citizens to serve a higher power, because if we did not, the world would be ridden with chaos. Even though the prison looks harmless during the day, it is somewhat foreboding at night. The prison was deemed as a minimal security facility, but it still had the characteristics of a madhouse.

Despite being a minimal security facility, it still has the characteristics of a prison one would expect to see on television. The inmates, dressed in white t-shirts and jeans, were visiting as they stood around tables by the bunkhouse.

Phones or cameras were not to be brought in the facility, and visitors were to be checked in and verified before they could enter.

"I was never apprehensive of the prisoners at any point," said Goodson. "I was excited and intrigued to teach a group of people that were different than the students at the college."

The prisoners seemed to care about the questions Goodson asked.

"I expected the prisoners to be more responsive to the readings," Goodson said. "Because the inmates are at different stages of their life than undergraduates, I expected they would have more to say about the text and life in general."

"There were a couple of inmates that could have taught the class themselves," said Goodson. "There are some extremely intelligent and thoughtful people in this prison."

With so many thoughtful and intelligent prisoners, one may begin to wonder what they did in the first place to be put there. If the prisoners had a chance to switch places with the students, would they?

"After teaching this class, I hope that there is a place for philosophy outside of the classroom," said Goodson. "I would love to keep teaching in this space because I truly believes it helps these people."

When class ended, many inmates stayed, asking Goodson about the different types of philosophy they would be learning next. Another class is in the works.

"Nobody wants to be judged because of one wrong they committed," Goodson said. "I see them as human beings, just as I see anyone else."

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# E-cigs cause epidemic of electric smoke

By Taylor Rodriguez  
Staff reporter

It's a killer. It takes the lives of more than 1,400 people daily. However, it's a conscious choice people make. What is it? Smoking.

Smoking kills more than 480,000 people yearly and has affected the health of nearly 16 million Americans (cdc.org). Smoking is known to cause cancer, heart disease, strokes, lung diseases, diabetes and other cardiovascular and respiratory issues. Many people have combated these issues by switching to vapes and other e-cigarettes. However, these are not risk-free alternatives.

Various companies have hinted these alternatives are safer than using chemical-ridden tobacco products, but there is no scientific evidence to back that claim. A larger pool of research has indicated e-cigarettes, and other synthetic smoke devices, are mimicking the symptoms cigarettes already produce. These symptoms include severe damage to the brain, heart and lungs, cancerous tumor development, preterm deliveries and stillbirths in pregnant women (cdc.org). Despite the serious health risks, these alternatives are just as addictive as their natural counterparts. E-cigarettes, vapes and JUULs all contain nicotine. Many vape companies offer 0 mg nicotine juice alternatives for those wanting to quit. According to JUUL, one JUUL pod contains roughly 5 percent nicotine (they-erge.com). That is roughly one pack of cigarettes' worth of nicotine. Considering the effects these devices can cause, it is disturbing to see so many young people constantly using them. In 2009, a federal law outlawed the use of flavorings other than menthol in

cigarettes (pennstatehealth.org). The law, however, did not cover e-cigarettes, JUULs or vapes. This allowed various companies in the market to tailor their products to a younger audience in a legal manner. To purchase cigarettes, JUULs or any other smoking device, one must be at least 18 years or older, or 21 in California, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Oregon, Hawaii and Minnesota.

In September 2018, the Food and Drug Administration sent more than 1,300 letters to retailers warning they have illegally sold e-cigarette products to teens (fairwarning.org). Scott Gottlieb, FDA commissioner, has called underage selling "an epidemic of addiction" among teens. High school students have been caught using these devices in bathrooms and between classes. While illegal, most students will have their device confiscated with only a warning. Any other punishment will follow their administration's guidelines. Punishments can include detention, and in extreme circumstances, suspension.

Some smoke because the flavors are addictive, while others smoke to fit in. Speaking to those who smoke e-cigs is the only way to understand why it's so popular. Chadrick Gilmore, computer science sophomore, has smoked both e-cigs and regular cigarettes. "I prefer the real smoke over vaping. It hits harder, even though it is less healthy," said Gilmore. "I don't really care about the risks, because at the end of the day, it's gonna (sic) get me anyways."

Although he knows the risks, Gilmore leans more toward smoking anything that has a

See E-Cigs, Page 7

# More reports filed with sexual assault awareness

By Cale Eirich & Tessa Castor  
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With attention being garnered in the media, an important societal issue has been brought to the light and openly discussed in a way it had never been before. The prevalence of sexual assault in our country has been undeniable, and with that the instances of sexual assault on college campuses can no longer be ignored.

For women on college campuses, the risk of being sexually assaulted is highest within the first two semesters, and one in five are victimized while attending college. Southwestern is not immune to the national epidemic of sexual assault and harassment, as there have been two reports of sexual assault this fall semester, according to campus security reports.

The first report, placed Sept. 7, was referred to the SC Judicial system. Residence Life declined to comment on this report. The other report, placed Sept. 24, was referred to the Winfield Police Department.

"It's (the Sept. 24 incident) an ongoing investigation, so I cannot comment," said Shawn Love, Winfield Police Department detective.

For many students, campus is a place they feel safe, but the statistics of sexual assault make any sign of harassment notable. Situations like stalking play a key role in the culture of sexual assault and harassment on campus, explained Claren McCormick, athletic training junior from Ponca City, Okla.

"It's a spectrum. Sexual assault and sexual harassment vary verbally as well as physically," said McCormick.

In her first semester as a student trainer, McCormick received attention and comments from male athletes that made her feel uncomfortable, a feeling shared by many of her female peers.

"If you go to a game or in the cafeteria, you walk in and you physically can feel people's eyes go on you, as I've experienced so many times — people turning around and staring or people saying things to me and my friends as they walk by," said Kaela Massey, music theatre performance and education junior from Winfield.

On-campus comments have become more noticeable for Massey, saying she's noticed they have become more frequent and less discreet. The openness of the comments partly stems from what Massey and McCormick believe to be the assumption that attention is wanted by women.

"Some people enjoy that attention, and

so it's just a generalized thing like, 'Oh this works with this person, everyone's going to be acceptable of this behavior,' and that's not the case," said McCormick.

While harassment can be perceptual, there are ways to deal with comments that borderline harassment by communication, respect and setting boundaries, explained McCormick. Both McCormick and Massey had to adjust to being on a college campus, whether it be demanding respect from the men around them or being careful about the clothes they wear.

The reality of sexual assault on campuses, including our own, make these precautions necessary. Even with taking precautions to not be harassed, it can still be difficult to voice when you are uncomfortable in a campus setting.

"It's hard whenever you don't know the people who are doing it to you," said Massey. "If I walk by and I hear a comment, and I have no idea who it is, I don't want to say anything to them because I don't know who that is."

It's important to understand that, if you are uncomfortable confronting someone you do not know, there are confidential resources on campus to make it easier for victims to come forward. Students can report to any staff member, whether it be a coach or professor.

Everyone on campus, even students, have a shared responsibility to pass information along as confidentially as possible, said Dan Falk, dean of students. Southwestern College's Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures state the college's staff, coaches, faculty and residence assistance are required to inform the Title IX director of incidents. The campus minister and wellness coordinator are allowed to keep reports confidential.

"There are two confidential resources on campus, Mary Ann (Smith) and Ben Hanne," said Falk. "They can take the report and keep it confidential if the student wishes, but if the student doesn't wish to keep it confidential it usually makes it up to me, Sarah (Hallinan) and Lonnie Boyd, the Title IX coordinator."

When students report, they have the option to keep information confidential or contact the proper authorities. At this point last fall, there were no sexual assault reports, compared to the two this year. It isn't easy to know, however, if an uptick in reported incidents of sexual assault means that Southwestern's campus is dangerous or if victims more openly reporting assaults.

"It's almost good to have an uptick, because you're thinking maybe more is being

## If You Are Assaulted:

- Go where you feel safe: Go to a friend's place, RA's room, family residence or a public place.

- Consider calling someone: Call a friend, family member, RA or a coach.

- Consider receiving medical attention: Our closest hospital is William Newton Hospital and they have a sexual assault nurse examiner. The address is 1305 East 5th Avenue and the contact information is 620-222-6231 and sane@wnmh.org.

- Consider filing a police report: Call Winfield Police Department at 620-221-555.

- Consider filing a report with Southwestern College. While the school and police department are separate, one can still file a report for the incident to go through the student conduct process. Please call Student Life at 620-229-6391.

- Consider seeking support: Talking with a friend, relative, RA or counselor could help dealing with the emotions and trauma of the assault.

Source: *The Southwestern College Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures.*

reported," said Sarah Hallinan, assistant dean of students. "But, you're not sure. Does that mean because there's more incidents, or is there more being reported?"

Perhaps the most frightening figure attached to sexual assault is the number of sexual assaults which go unreported. According to criminal justice system statistics, only three of ten sexual assaults are reported to the police, up from a 2004 estimate of 24 percent.

"I think perps look at a culture that can camouflage their activity," said Falk. "These guys are very smart and hunt their victims. They do a lot of damage."

Here on campus, and nationally, reports of sexual assault are up, due hopefully to victims feeling more comfortable to come forward. Falk said, with only 2 percent of sexual assault cases being considered false reports, the school does its best to believe victims.

"Southwestern College prohibits sexual misconduct, stalking, dating violence and domestic violence," says Southwestern College's Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures. "Southwestern College can

provide a great deal of emotional support to a victim of sexual assault."

"We have a report on one, but does that mean there's fifty that haven't been reported?" said Falk. "That's what keeps me and Sarah up at night. We worry about what is the culture, are students reporting? The key is culture."

Reporting sexual assault is a good sign of a culture shift of openness with sexual assault and working to make the campus a safer place. When a college campus has no reports of sexual assault, then you have a culture of no reports — not a lack of sexual assaults, Hallinan said.

"No campus will go without this happening. Statistically, it just means it's not being reported or it's not being handled, and that's not good," said Hallinan.

To create a better culture of sexual assault, Southwestern's Residence Life tries to set the tone at Builder Camp with consent courses. September is also National Campus Safety Awareness Month, giving the students another chance to learn about the importance of consent and bystander intervention.

Falk and Hallinan understand the reality of sexual assaults on college campuses, specifically the frequency and the stigma that comes with reporting them. They say an increase of reported sexual assaults is a positive trend towards the culture of sexual assault on campus.

"We would like to see more reported, because I bet you more has happened than we know about," said Falk. "When a friend reports, we need the good guys to help. They need to say, 'I believe you. I hear you.'"

Those who believe they have been assaulted may call Southwestern's Student Life at 620-229-6391, email Falk at dan.falk@sckans.edu or Mary Ann Smith, wellness coordinator, at maryann.smith@sckans.edu or call or text Smith at 620-222-4311. Smith's office is located in room 301 of Sutton Residence Hall.

Southwestern College also encourages victims to complete a sexual assault medical examination, and victims can complete the exam anonymously. To access a confidential examination, victims can call William Newton Hospital at 620-222-6231. Students can visit sckans.edu/safety for more information.

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