



In true ESOL spirit, we wish you a joyous holiday season!



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ESOL COVID HUMOR



What's the best gift you've ever given someone?

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It's the season for giving! Tell us the best gifts you've ever given, and we'll share your answers on social media. You might help someone with last-minute gift ideas!



Message to Students

Hello, I'm Matthew Daude Laurents, dean of humanities and communications. I teach philosophy and religion, but that wasn't my first experience with teaching. I've had a love of tutoring English to nonspeakers since



A Christmas Interview

Gerhardt: We have been told to restrict ourselves at Christmas time. They want us to stay home, and limit our contact with other people. So, in light of that, can you think back to your best Christmas, or at least the Christmas that you remember the most? Do you have

I was in elementary school. I grew up in Killeen, near Ft. Hood, Texas, at a time when kids from places like Korea, Laotia, Cambodia, and Vietnam were relocated to Texas and started school, often speaking very little English. I fell in with many of these kids, mainly because -- as the grandson of a German Oma with a working farm -- we ate many of the same animal parts that other kids in our school found, let's say, "unfamiliar." But it was more than just a shared love of certain unusual animal parts for lunch; the cultures and experiences and perspectives they shared were endlessly fascinating, and, if I'm honest, I started tutoring English mainly as a way of spending more time with them and their families. And their food, since I'm being honest ;).

I remember those families as welcoming and generous and kind, but as an adult, I have a much deeper appreciation of them and their situation. After all, they had left behind everything they knew, and had come to this strange place called Texas with its peculiar customs and language(s). I will be eternally grateful for what they gave me -- not just those animal parts, but their traditions and language, their passions, and their world. I'm so much richer for their generosity, and that brings me to . . . the holiday season.

We associate this holiday with *giving*, and I'd like to ask each of you to pause during your break to remember the gifts you give through your presence at ACC and in your families and communities. Thinking of the good we can do in the world is especially important in these times of conflict and constraints, particularly as we miss our usual activities and associations. I will think of you and your gifts this holiday season, and I can assure you that it will brighten the holidays to know that we are making the world better, one essay, or sentence, or oral presentation at a time. Don't let yourself forget why we do this: The Liberal Arts *can* save the world.

Have a happy holiday and a restorative winter break!

Be well and stay safe.

strong memories about Christmas?

Lorena: I can remember Christmas 2005. All my family was celebrating together. My sister lived in Mexico, and my brother lived in another city in Mexico. It was hard to get together at that time. So in 2005, my sister came from France, with all her family. I remember that Christmas because we were all together: my parents, and all my brothers and sisters, my nephews, everyone in my family. And it was really a nice Christmas for these reasons. It was also a sad Christmas, because it was the last Christmas that we spent with my mother. So I have mixed feelings about that Christmas. We were really happy because all of my family was together, but it was the last time we could share.

Gerhardt: Wow, I could tell that you got very emotional thinking about that.

Lorena: It was hard because my mother died of cancer January 14. It was very hard that year. But I told my son, who is only two years old at that time, to remember that time as a beautiful day. And I'm so proud of that because today, my son is 17 years old, and he loves Christmas. He loves to put up the tree, string the lights. For him, Christmas is a really enjoyable time. There are only three people in my family: my son, my husband, and myself. This last Christmas we were alone, but we were very grateful for what we have. We don't think about what we don't have. We are healthy, we are together, and we are in a new country together. So, we are fine. I'm so proud about that because my son enjoys all of our Christmases together, and we have beautiful memories about the Christmases in the past

Gerhardt: Thanks so much for telling your story -- that's wonderful. Daniela, can you tell us about a special Christmas that you remember?

Daniela: Christmas was special because I was with my family. I remember that year because my brother and I were studying abroad, and my parents and my other sister were in another country, so we were all separated. Finally, that Christmas we were together! We had dinner, and we talked about how thankful we were. That was so special because I realized everyone is an individual, but independent, right? But we gel, as a mass, when we are together. That's why it's very hard for me at this time because we can't spend Christmas together physically. But we are learning that we can be spiritually together even when we're not physically together. Like, we know that we have each other, not physically, but later we will.

Gerhardt: Beautifully stated Daniela. You both moved me. Thank you.

Burbara Recipe

[Find the recipe here](#)



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