



Deb Ochsner

Faculty Focus

Debbie Ochsner, Social Sciences Instructor, is the Faculty Focus for October 2017. She teaches sociology, social work, and psychology classes. She believes “Psychology and sociology are fascinating subjects and they offer very helpful theories and scientific studies which help all of us make sense of our lives in a shared world.” In the classroom, Debbie hopes students will, of course, learn and remember the facts and concepts, but she also wants them to use what they learn to engage in the world in a “healthy and humanistic manner.”

In addition to teaching in the Social Sciences discipline for EWC, Debbie maintains her licensure to provide mental health services within the state of Wyoming, and she provides counseling in a small private practice. Working in her field keeps her involved in the reality of what she teaches, and it challenges her to continue improving in her profession. She notes that she is “deeply inspired by all of the challenged, determined, sincere people and students I have worked with throughout my life as a social worker.”

Debbie enjoys biking with her family, hiking, camping, gardening, and playing with her grandson. She is also in the final phases of her doctoral program in Higher Education Administration. Her education is one of the accomplishments she is most proud of, along with her 34-year marriage to her husband Rodney, their children, Jeremy (Angela), Vanessa (Chris), and grandson, Caden. She says her husband inspires her “first of all. He is the most relentless human being I know. He has battled cancer, a life threatening accident, and our ranch being destroyed by a prairie fire. Every day, you guessed it, he gets back in the game!”

This analogy comes from what Debbie says is the best advice she’s ever received. Her dad told her, “Play your game with the team; shoot it straight and put some arch on that ball; referees never lose the game for you.” The analogy has continued to be applicable in many areas of her life, allowing her to stay determined and focused while cooperating and working respectfully. Because of this advice, she feels strongly about integrity while perfecting one’s work and taking responsibility for one’s self.

This summer, Debbie’s family opened their land to free camping for the total solar eclipse. She demonstrates her love of people and community when she explains, “We experienced not only the most amazing act of the universe that we have ever witnessed, but we absolutely had the best time making friends with people from all over the world (Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Pennsylvania, Texas, California, Montana, Rhode Island, Florida...) This experience resulted in two of the happiest days of our lives!”

Of the three people she would invite to dinner, she says, “I would answer this differently at different moments in my life. Tonight it would be Mother Theresa, Prime Minister Trudeau, and my great grandma, Nellie O’Leary. I sure miss her candor and love. I’d have to include our grandson for inspiration and comic relief from these soulful, dedicated and wise humanists.”

Debbie can claim being a cheerleader, first clarinet in the pep band, and a free throw contest champion in the past, and EWC Faculty Senate can confirm that these and other past experiences and roles have led her to be a successful instructor, a team player on the faculty, and an all-around believer in human goodness.



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