

## 'The Odd Couple': It Takes Two to Tangle



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On Nov. 12, our Thespians Honors Society exhibited the culmination of months of hard work and preparation on the opening night of its fall production "The Odd Couple."

The play, directed by Thespian adviser and drama teacher Rachel Snow-Fornari, focused on neat freak Felix Unger and messy slob Olive Madison, an unlikely pair of roommates who struggle to live with each other after Felix's wife throws him out of the house. Outspoken and hedonistic, Olive spends the play pushing Felix to loosen up, urging him to express his emotions and even go on a blind date. Meanwhile, Felix tries to straighten out Olive's mess of a life, helping her save money to follow through with her alimony payments and keeping her house clean and tidy. The two constantly butt heads, but over the course of the play, they realize that they have much to learn from each other. Despite their bickering, they develop an unspoken bond and the audience wants them to finally admit that they are friends.

Lead actors Jamie Rirsch and William Martinez commanded attention with powerful and humorous depictions of their characters, Olive and Felix. With her confident spirit, Rirsch was a clear star from her very first appearance: claiming a spot at the girls' poker table, before casually opening a Coke and not bothering to look at her cards. ("What for? I'm gonna bluff anyway.") Likewise, Martinez wins over viewers' hearts with Felix's nuanced character: a bit of a control freak, but only because his broken self longs for the reassurance that he will be alright after his divorce.

Along with the dynamic between the main duo, the dynamics among the supporting characters also livened up the performance. The play would not be complete without Olive's ragtag group of poker-playing friends: sharp-tongued Speed, played by Elaizza Salazar; anxious Minnie, played by Samantha Mendez; rational Roxy, played by Samantha Gonzalez; and hopelessly henpecked Vinnie, played by Mayra Aguilar. Additionally, Asha Lew and Thomas Keenan shined in their roles

of English double-dates Gwendolyn and Cecil, hilarious fishes-out-of-water in the boisterous home of Olive and Felix. In particular, Lew's simpering giggles and passive-aggressive delivery of lines always stole the scene.

In terms of the stage design, the set direction was effective in portraying the quirky tone of the play. The clothes strewn over the floor and the off-center photo frames created a comfortable vibe of perfect chaos. The only minor issue was that it could be difficult to see all of the actors at once when they were sitting at the cramped poker table. Also, more variety in the stage lighting would have helped to indicate the time of day, as well as enhance the mood of the scene.

Overall, the production was well-done, blending appropriate amounts of humor and drama. It presented a message so simple, yet so often forgotten: friendships can form between the most unlikely couples, if they just made the effort to accept each other's differences.

**MOOR** photo by AAQIL KHAN



**ELIAS ALMAREZ-HERRERA**  
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For over three decades, China has implemented the one-child policy, meaning that only one child could be born per family or the parents would face tremendous consequences such as harassment or fines. On Oct. 28, the Chinese government revised this policy so that any parent that was born into a one-child family can have a second child. The child limit has increased by only one but it has the possibility to change China's economy for the better.

According to British Broadcasting Company (BBC), most of China's population is made up of elderly people aged 65 and older, statistics that have not shown much signs of changing. Now that China has changed this policy, birth rates will go up. There will be more children born that will soon build up the working class as the elderly class diminishes.

Making this change will cause a large decrease in the infanticide, or the act of killing a child within a year of his or her birth, in China. The Huffington Post reports that over 4 million births were contracepted and this revision can reduce this number by at least half.

This change shows the world a major contrast in China's government from 1980 to the present day. China is progressing and realizing how much wrong was being done with the one-child policy. China's economy surely won't skyrocket overnight but by simply allowing this change to occur, China's government has given hope for the economy and well-being of their country and they have just taken the first step to fixing the deep wounds they've inflicted in their citizens.



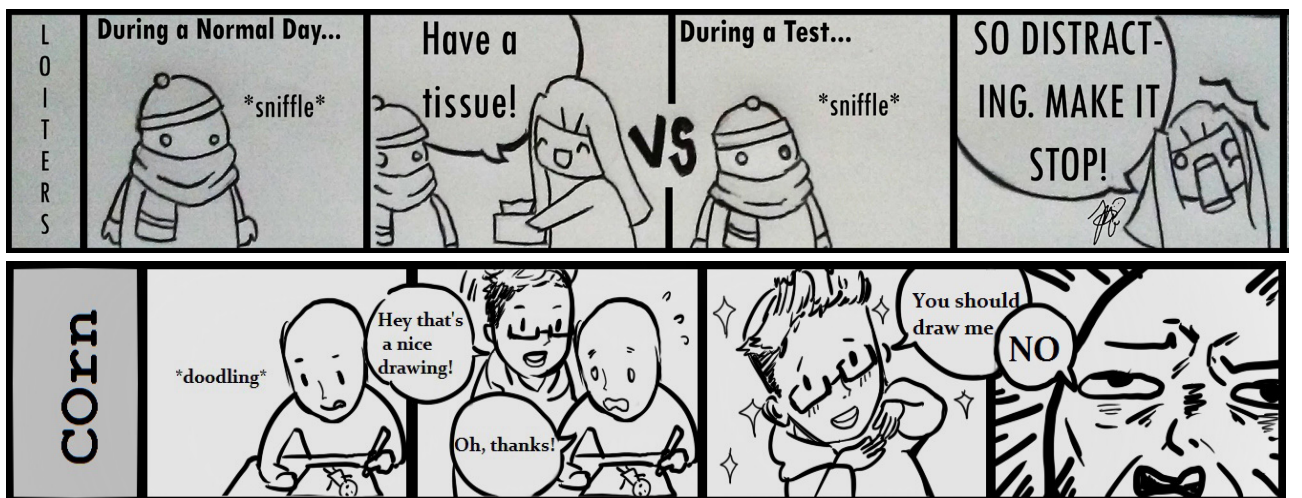
### Paris: City of Change

**ANGELA YANG**  
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It's often easy to get lost in another world in a museum. During my visit to the Broad Museum on Nov. 13, I had expected to return to the same world I left behind for just a few brief hours. But when I stepped back out, the world I left behind no longer existed. Instead, it was replaced by one devastated by tragedy and loss and I felt absolutely wretched as I heard the news of the Paris terrorist attacks.

As the holiday season approaches, it's important to remember that there is no better time than the present for togetherness and solidarity. In the Nov. 14 edition of Saturday Night Live, the usual opening skit was replaced by a message of support for the city of Paris in both English and French. Monuments around the world replaced their traditional flashy lights with the colors of the French flag, from the London Eye Ferris wheel to the Sydney Opera House and even Taiwan's Taipei 101. Even something as simple as filtered Facebook profile pictures is an act of support.

The continuous tragedy the world has continued to suffer at the hands of ISIL should have been stopped long ago, before it could blow up to such huge proportions. Unfortunately, it wasn't. From here on out, governments around the world need to cooperate and work together to prevent even more tragedy. It's saddening that we didn't learn from the initial atrocities ISIL committed, but now a responsibility lies on world governments to eliminate this threat. The Paris attacks, though tragic, should serve as a catalyst to invite change. Even though it may seem hopeless, it's important to keep in mind that part of the human condition is recovering from tragedy. As French author Victor Hugo once wrote, "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise."



## UCLA's New Admission Policy: Unfair for Potential Applicants

**KENNETH HOU**  
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Passing an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exam makes all of the rigorous work, difficult test preparations and grueling review sessions students go through completely worthwhile. However, a recent decision by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) seems to challenge this sentiment. According to the Daily Bruin, enrollment priority is no longer given to undergraduate students who have AP and IB credit. Instead, the priority shifts to students who have existing college units, whether from UCLA or other colleges. This move by UCLA, while attempting to grant more course priority to upperclassmen, unfairly downplays the efforts of hardworking high school students.

The large amount of studying and hard work that is done by AP and IB students should not be overlooked.

AP and IB courses effectively prepare students for college courses and it is unfair to deny these competitive students the right to turn their efforts into an advantage at UCLA. Students of these rigorous courses see little to no incentive, other than a weighted GPA, for taking on the challenge of a college level curriculum. This change in UCLA policy diminishes the appeal and incentive for potential UCLA applicants to take AP and IB courses.

Denying AP students admissions priority, while granting this priority to students with existing college credit, communicates the idea that an AP students' effort and hard work went to waste. Ideally, admission advantages should be either given to both parties or denied to both parties, as these students all work tirelessly towards a common goal.

Despite UCLA's decision, students should still recognize the merit of AP and IB courses. These classes provide a higher quality of learning and allow students to strengthen their work ethic and improve their study habits. Students should continue to take AP and IB courses even without their added college advantage, as they are essential in building one's academic ability, and ultimately, one's professional ability.

MOOR graphics by LESLIE HWANG

