FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Jason L. Wilde
Assistant Professor of Family Studies and Human Development

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Dr. Jason L. Wilde is an Assistant Professor of Family Studies and Human Development at Dixie State University and has been for five years. Dr. Wilde specializes in family life education, particularly marriage and parent education. He teaches courses in marriage preparation and enhancement, family relationships, and human development. Students are the focus of his teaching—Dr. Wilde says he “teaches students, not material.” For fun, other than teaching which Jason thoroughly enjoys, he spends time playing with his family, doing long-distance trail runs, and playing games like chess with the DSU chess club, for which he is the faculty mentor.

INNOVATION IN TEACHING

Teaching People, Not a Subject

Dr. Wilde’s teaching philosophy is that you’re teaching people, not a subject matter. He likes to get to know his students and connect with them, especially since his class is one that requires participation from one’s personal life. Dr. Wilde’s classes include self-analysis and labs with the students’ own families. In the family relationship class, students apply the lessons that they learn in the class to their own family, as a test of how viable and applicable the methods are in real-life situations. The class does ask a lot of the students, but it makes the lessons way more applicable and meaningful to the students.

Another of Dr. Wilde’s more unique methods of teaching has been his use of love songs in his marriage classes. As a class, the students listen to a song, and begin by breaking apart some of the love philosophies taught within it. They then discuss how the relationship described would look in a real-life situation, how it would work, and some of the pros and cons to the portrayed relationship. Prof. Wilde also does a similar activity with movie clips, where the class analyzes different character relationships and breaks down the mechanics of what is shown.

A Need for Adaptation

In his in-person classes, Dr. Wilde tries to do a lot of in-class discussion through the flipped classroom model. Students do their readings outside of the classroom and come prepared to discuss in class. However, Dr. Wilde, like so many others, had to adapt his teaching methods during 2020. During quarantine, Dr. Wilde didn’t want to lose this active learning participation. After much experimentation, he created a similar remote class setup. The online class included videos and readings for the students to do at the beginning of each week and had them interact through the canvas discussion board modules in place of the in-class discussions. Students kept a reading journal that they updated weekly as
well, so that Prof. Wilde could understand where each student was at in their studies, as well as if they had any questions or feedback. While it was a crazy time to teach, Dr. Wilde is appreciative of the things he learned during this time.

by his efforts in his field and classroom, he is helping. Family is the backbone of so many things in our society, and it is important to focus on those relationships in an academic setting.

GET TO KNOW ME BETTER

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COME TO DSU?

Dr. Wilde grew up in northern Idaho, just north of Coeur d'Alene, but had been living in Minnesota for 14 years when he moved to St. George. Dr. Wilde's wanted to work at a university where teaching was the emphasis, and he also wanted to have creative control over his lessons, both of which were prominent at DSU. He loves the small, hometown feel, and smaller class sizes as well where he has a lot more time to interact with students one on one. He's glad to be at a university that values teaching and experimentation, and that he has the chance to try new things and focus on what he loves. He's been able to accomplish a lot here, including helping with the creation of the Family Studies and Human Development Minor and Emphasis.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST CHALLENGING TEACHING EXPERIENCE?

One of the hardest parts of teaching for Dr. Wilde is when students refuse to engage deeply. Every semester there are students that do this, and it can be frustrating. While at the end of the day, it is up to them to participate, he still tries to make an extra effort to reach out to them in any way that he can and make sure they are doing okay.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TEACHING EXPERIENCE?

Dr. Wilde's best experiences have been when students tell him that what he is teaching has actually helped them in their lives. In his field, Dr. Wilde gets to hear this often, especially when the class subjects are so readily applicable, and it is something that he is extremely grateful for.

WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE CLASSES TO TEACH, AND WHY?

Dr. Wilde shies away from using the word favorite, but he enjoys classes where he gets to dig deep in interpersonal family relationships. The Marriage Preparation and Enhancement class, as well as the Family Relationships class, are two of these. As well as this, he is trying to get a parenting class going, which he is particularly excited about and believes would be a great benefit for students. Dr. Wilde has recently started a class titled Current Issues in Human Development and Family Studies. It has been fascinating, both to him and his students, because the class looks into the more

WHAT IS YOUR BEST TEACHING RESOURCE (PROGRAMS, COURSES, WEBSITES, ETC)? ARE THERE ANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN A TEACHING RESOURCE TO YOU?

Dr. Wilde places a lot of value in literature on his subject, and on teaching in general. He likes to be able to learn about different teaching techniques and resources. As a result, one of his best teaching resources is the library on campus. CTL has also been a great resource to him. The events they host are a great way to learn about teaching methods, so he participates and helps with them often. Another group, which he has organized and helped to build himself, is the teaching and learning communities. To gather with colleagues and talk about new techniques they have been having, to bounce ideas off others, or anything of the sort has just been a
modern issues and events in the field, and in turn, has helped Dr. Wilde to stay up to date on developments in the field.

very inspiring resource, and he’s been happy to see how they have grown and developed over the years.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FACULTY TEACHING AT DSU?

Prof. Wilde's advice would be to ask for advice if you need it. He doesn't really believe in giving unsolicited advice, so he just encourages faculty to know they aren't alone, and that there are a lot of resources available on campus to help them.

STUDENT REVIEWS:

“Dr. Wilde is a great instructor of this course. He provides very great examples and shares bits of his own life and family relationships. He is a very good listener and wants students to do the best that they can. He also wants his students to get to the true meaning of the concepts and apply them to our own lives.”

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“He made class extremely interesting and really seems to care (and helped us care more) about the subject.”

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“I am taking this class [Family Relationships] because my roommate had it from you and she said it was her favorite class in three years at DSU.”

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“This course has changed my views on my family relationships. This course provided me with the opportunity to explore my relationships and gave me ways to fix or maintain them. This class was very insightful and meaningful to me.”

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