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Return to Sundance

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Return to Sundance

By Emma Dennis

March 10, 2023

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

Every other spring, Dr. Rebecca Jones, professor of communications at Ouachita, takes a group of students from the OBU at Sundance class to Park City, Utah, to experience the Sundance Film Festival. This was the first year for the trip since the COVID-19 pandemic. Jones and 12 students – some of whom experienced Sundance virtually in 2021 – spent Jan. 22-27 in Utah participating in the festival.

Some of the year's favorite movies are shown for the first time at Sundance; many are later picked up by larger companies for widespread release. Getting to see any of these films is a privilege that students don't take lightly.

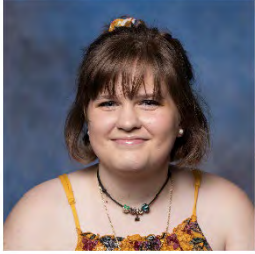
Jones helped create this opportunity with her connections to the Windrider Forum at Sundance – a gathering of students, faculty, filmmakers, theologians and leaders in business and non-profit engaging in conversations about the intersection of film, faith and culture. In 2013, Jones and Dr. Doug Sonheim, Ouachita professor emeritus of English, applied for and received a Ouachita Strategic Initiative Grant to seed the OBU at Sundance course. The class launched in 2014.

Since Sonheim's 2022 retirement, the course has been co-taught by Dr. Stan Poole, professor of English and holder of the Clarence and Bennie Sue Anthony Chair of Bible and Humanities at Ouachita.

The class was able to see the winner of the U.S. Dramatic Award, "A Thousand and One"; the Audience Award of U.S. Dramatic, "The Persian Version"; and the Audience Award in World Cinema Dramatic, "Shayda." Other films screened at the festival include the features "Fancy Dance," "A Little Prayer,"

“Radical” and “Scrapper,” as well as documentaries “Victim/Suspect,” “A Still Small Voice,” “The Eternal Memory,” “20 Days in Mariupol,” “Murder in Big Horn” and “The Deepest Breath.”

Students will spend the rest of the semester unpacking and discussing the films they watched and how those films impacted their lives, deepening their connection to the art and to one another.



Emma Dennis is a senior communications & media/visual media & film major from Garland, Texas.