Dear Prelude students,

Welcome to the University of Puget Sound.

Prepare to be destroyed.

Yes, destroyed. College is a destructive process. At the end of your four years here, you will not be the same person you are today. If you walk off of this campus thinking and believing the same things you do now, we will have failed you, and, more importantly, you will have failed yourself.

But college is also constructive; the things you learn at Puget Sound will transform you into a smarter, better, and more thoughtful person. The Prelude Workshop on Sunday, August 23rd, for which I will be your professor, will be your first introduction to the process of creative destruction that we call the University of Puget Sound.

Prelude is the academic component of Orientation Week and will provide you your first experience with the intellectual demands and expectations of college. Over the course of the day, you will challenge your beliefs, critically assess the ideas of scholars and your peers alike, receive critiques, collaborate with other students, and be exposed to the tools of different disciplinary approaches to learning. I ask that you come to Prelude eager, open-minded, and willing to engage some difficult ideas. If you do that, I can assure you that we will have an experience unlike any other in your academic past – your first real taste of higher learning. If you don’t, you’ll be bored… not a great way to start your college experience.

In order to make our time together more productive, I ask that you take the time to read a short article to prepare for our discussion: “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” by Clifford Geertz. Please read the whole article except for the “Odds and Money” section (pp. 425-32). Also, please look up Bali on a map and be able to identify it!

I very much look forward to meeting you at Prelude. Please do not hesitate to contact me (my email address is below) if you have any questions about Prelude, the University of Puget Sound, college, or anything else.

Sincerely,

Greta Austin
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