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Office of University
Communications

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Dr. Elizabeth Amato Teaches Students How to Navigate Social Situations

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—From gruyere to gorgonzola and office parties to dinner meetings, navigating through social situations begins with confidence. To prepare her students for situations like these, Dr. Elizabeth Amato, assistant professor of political science, held a cheese tasting recently in her Intro to Political Science class. Getting the job is no longer based on a polished resume. Often, it's about who you know and how well you can shine when participating in a networking opportunity.

The cheese tasting was the culmination of a series of classes that focused on life skills. “There are so many incidents where they need to negotiate the world in social ways,” Amato shared. “As a professional, you need to know topics professionals know. Knowing about fresh, soft, semi-firm or firm cheese—and how to slice it—gives them something to talk about.”

The students in the class are majoring in either political science or global studies. In addition to the cheese tasting, Amato included lessons on making small talk, exiting a conversation, budgeting, paying off student loans and other things they need to know about being an adult. Tremayne Booker, a junior political science major from Gastonia, N.C., valued the lessons on budgeting. “Most of the time you're thrown out in the world and people say, ‘Figure it out,’” he observed.

While sampling the cheese and crackers, John O'Connell, a global studies major from Georgia, said learning what to do in social situations had been helpful. Ending the class with a cheese tasting was definitely a great idea. “I would pretty much try any cheese or



food you put in front of me,” he shared.

[Learn more about the GWU Department of Social Sciences.](#)

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.