

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LEE'S STUDENT ARJUN SHARMA



How Professor Lee's class has supported my learning.

We Q Team members have observed that after the shift from in-person to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been very difficult for 2nd-year and 3rd-year students who are planning to take seminars to choose their seminar professor and for professors to connect with their students. This project focuses on both the seminar professor and student point of view to relay the elements and dynamics of seminars. Our interview articles on seminars introduce two professors at APU (one APS professor and one APM professor) and their seminars, alongside a spotlight on one of their seminar students. Through the student point-of-view focus, we hope that in addition to conveying successful seminar methods to other APU professors that they can incorporate into their own seminars, we can have them discover successful teaching methods through the student perspective as well.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Please introduce your name, country, college, and major.

My name is Arjun Sharma. I was born in India and raised in Japan. I am majoring in Marketing in the College of International Management (APM).

2. How long have you been taking seminars?

I have been taking Professor Lee's seminars for three semesters now.

II. BEFORE ENTERING THE SEMINAR

3. How did you choose Professor Lee as your seminar professor?

During the covid pandemic, I took a bunch of Professor Lee's classes and his energy always got to me and made my day a little better, so it was almost a "no-brainer" for me to take his seminar. Plus, the fact that my interest always lied in marketing made it an easy decision for me.

4. What is one thing students should prepare for their interview with a seminar professor?

As Professor Lee allows his senior seminar students to be actively involved in the selection process of third year students, I noticed through my experience that he prioritizes motivation first and foremost. Students do not need to be "smart," but willing to work hard. When helping Professor Lee to conduct interviews and select new seminar students, I look for the student's energy to take initiative and their ability to organize, focus, and take part in teamwork, including their communication and information delivery skills.

5. What are the sources you usually use to find recommendations about seminars?

I consulted my senpais about which seminar I should join and they gave me a pretty good idea about the seminar landscape of APU. Other than that, I also looked at the syllabus posted online for the seminar.



Professor Lee and his seminar students in SP2022

III. SEMINAR CONTENT

6. What has been the most interesting aspect of Professor Lee's seminar so far?

I would have to say that the most interesting aspect was the company collaboration. In our case, we work with the beverage company Sanwa Shuri. They asked us how we think they should market their products. We then created marketing strategies and gave presentations as a group to the company every two weeks. That experience of actually working with a company was something I had not done before and I was able to see what it looked like inside a real company. In other words, the experience went beyond the classroom and taught me what kinds of problems company workers actually struggle with.

7. What do you think about the seminar workload?

The workload is okay: a lot of it is group work, but rather than being intimidating, it is engaging and enjoyable as the seminar's content allows us to use our marketing knowledge in a practical context. To break it down, the three main assignments in this seminar are the mini-project

which involves launching a social media channel through YouTube, Facebook, or TikTok to promote something, recommending marketing strategies to an actual company where we are collaborating with, and finally, the thesis for those who are writing one.

8. How do you decide on a research topic?

I always kind of knew what I wanted to write about, so it was not really a tough choice for me. In our seminar, everyone generally has a topic of interest and knows what they want to do. Professor Lee is always available for help, but he encourages us to go with our preferences. This style is also something I really respect about our professor.

9. What are the three benefits of taking a seminar class in single-word answers?

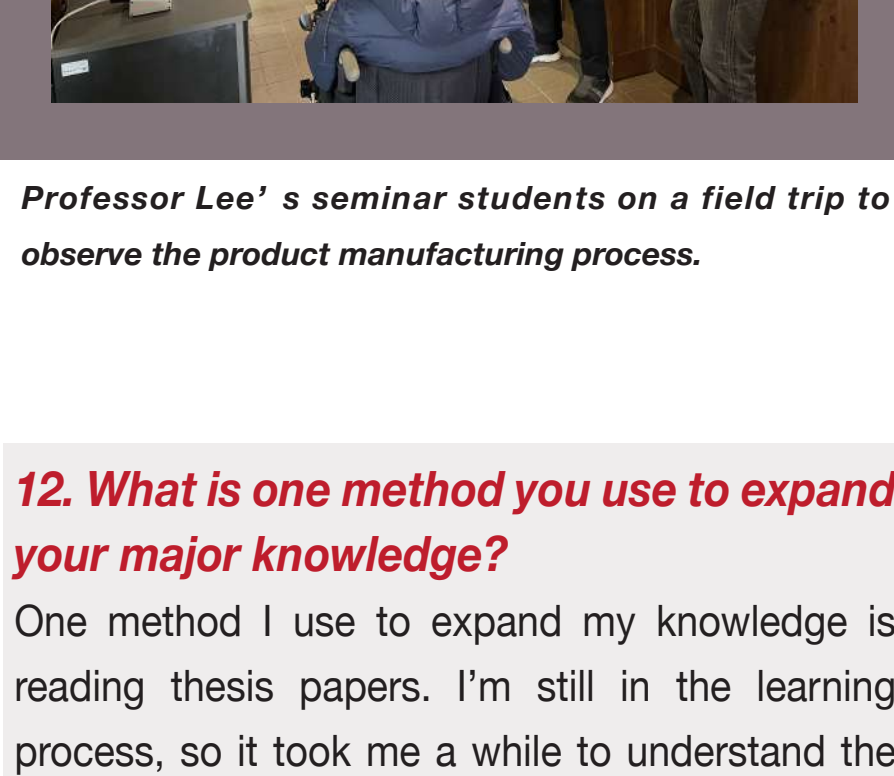
The benefits of my seminar are: (1) the hands-on experience working with an actual company, (2) the engaging environment as Professor Lee always encourages us to participate in the discussions, and (3) the sense of independence I can develop through the work.

10. Complete this sentence: I choose my seminar because ...

I love Professor Lee's teaching style of approachability, active learning assignments, and energy.

11. What do you do in your daily life that relates to your seminar research?

As my thesis topic is about cryptocurrency, which is a new and quite niche topic, I started to listen to podcasts about cryptocurrency every morning. I also run a small company in Oita which involves a lot of advertising work. Studying in Professor Lee's seminar really helped me in terms of working and communicating with people, as well as building the basic foundation for professional work, especially in Marketing.



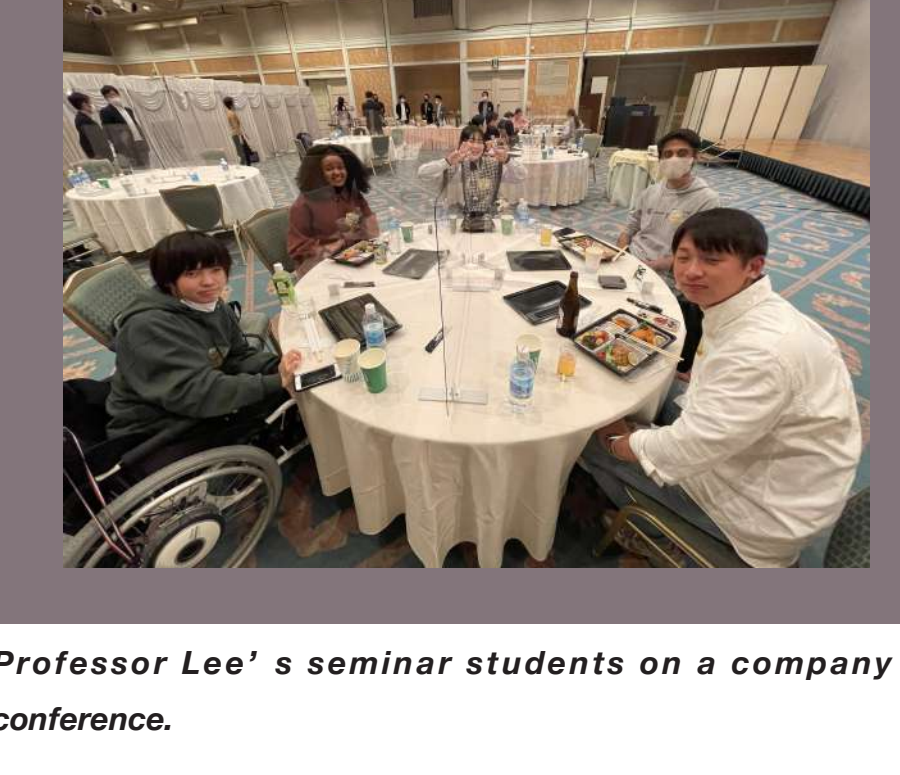
Professor Lee's seminar students on a field trip to observe the product manufacturing process.

12. What is one method you use to expand your major knowledge?

One method I use to expand my knowledge is reading thesis papers. I'm still in the learning process, so it took me a while to understand the structure of a thesis paper and the way the author tries to convince their audience. I tend to use Google Scholar a lot and the books in the APU Library as well.

13. What is the most memorable experience that you have gained from studying in seminars?

The most memorable experience that I have gained from this seminar was when we worked with Sanwa Shuri. We created marketing strategies for them by listening to their problems, went to their factories to better understand the company, and drank their alcohol. It was fun, and it helped us understand what we were working with. Through this experience, I was able to learn how to effectively communicate and how to understand problems which cannot be found on a service level.



Professor Lee's seminar students at a company conference.

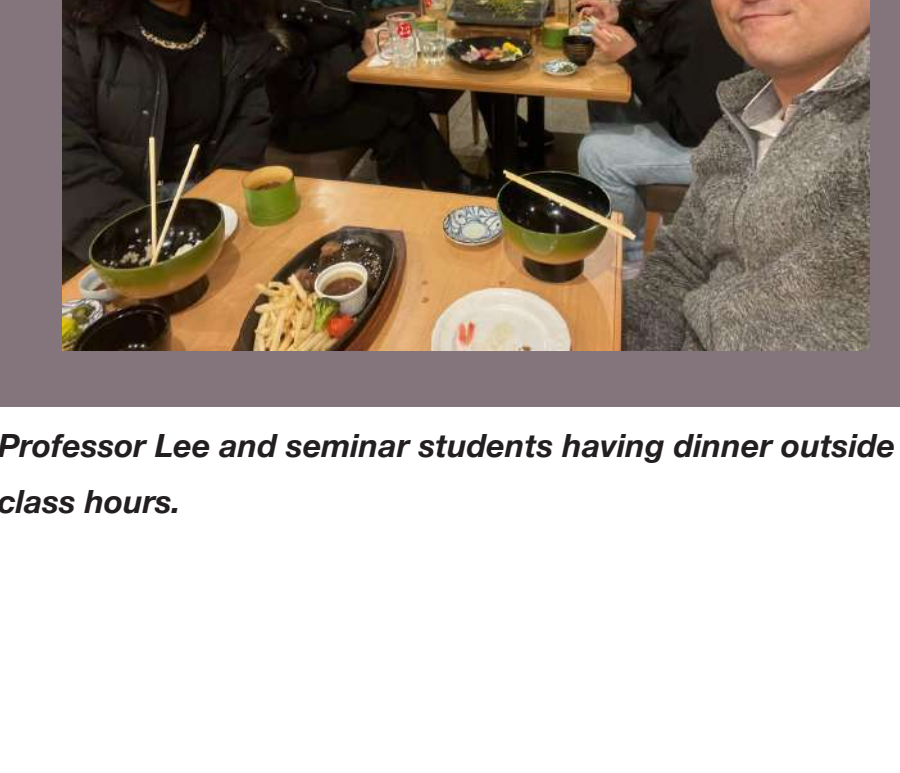
IV. INTERACTION IN THE SEMINAR

14. During your seminar, do you work individually or as a group?

In the third-year seminar we worked as a group, had discussions, and had the final decisions summarized by a leader, while in the fourth-year seminar, individuals started working on their thesis papers individually.

15. How would you describe the atmosphere of your seminar in one sentence?

The atmosphere of the seminar feels structured in terms of work and the seminar is a psychologically safe space where people can share their opinions and ideas.



Professor Lee and seminar students having dinner outside class hours.

V. ADVICE TO PROSPECT STUDENTS

16. What is your advice for students who intend to take a seminar class this semester?

I recommend taking Professor Lee's class beforehand based on all the reasons I provided above - you will not regret making this decision!

17. Do you recommend joining a seminar in third or fourth year?

I recommend joining in third year. The earlier students start a seminar, the better the experience will be. In the third year there is more time to enjoy the seminar content such as studying viral marketing.

18. What are some common misconceptions about seminars?

The most common misconception that students usually have is that in seminar classes they will be expected to do a lot of work given by the Professor. In fact, students are encouraged to choose the work that we want to do, such as our mini-project in third year or our thesis topic. In Professor Lee's class, students are always encouraged to raise their voice, involve themselves in the discussions, and figure out what they want to study, so students themselves play a major role in designing their seminar experience.

19. Using some keywords, how would you describe your overall seminar experience?

The keywords that describe my experience are: Environment (engaging and interactive), Freedom and Individuality (we are always encouraged to put ourselves in our work), Energy (through Professor Lee), Personal Growth, and Management (learning to be organized).



AUTHOR'S IMPRESSION

Through the interview with Arjun, I became impressed by Professor's Lee support toward his seminar students. Not only does he create an active learning environment for students to strive in, but he also gives students a great network and resources for them to develop to their fullest. I also like his teaching style in which he allows students the flexibility to choose what they want to learn and shows his utmost support for the students' decisions. There is no doubt that his seminar should be highly recommended to any Marketing student.

INTERVIEWER and AUTHOR



Name: MUROMBA Pascal Simbarashe
College: APM (International Management)
Country: Zimbabwe
Message: I love reading books. Two of my favorite books are Educated by Tara Westover and The End of History and the Last Man by Francis Fukuyama. Politics and sustainability are some of my favorite topics. I am currently learning martial arts and I find it very interesting.

Name: NGUYEN Kieu Chi
College: APM, Accounting & Finance
Country: Vietnam
Message: Greetings! I'm Chi, an APM second-year student majoring in Accounting and Finance. I'm thrilled to have fruitful discussions with Professors and like-minded peers at APU. I hope someone somewhere can get inspired by my writing and make a positive change in their life. Through Project Q, I'm eager to make APU a better academic environment where students are free to express themselves and reach their full potential.



What is [Q]?

At APU there are many professors who put together wonderful classes, and if we could get to know how these classes are planned, it would contribute to the improvement of other professors' classes. For that purpose, we have begun doing interviews in order to learn about class planning. These articles have been entitled [Q], comprising a variety of meanings such as: increasing the [Q]uality of classes, answering [Q]uestions to increase quality, and forming a [Q]ueue, or line, of class improvements. We would be very happy if these articles could contribute to the [Q]uest of APU professors' class quality improvement.