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Olympic Athlete Comes to Campus

Summary: Triple jumper Amanda Smock spoke to students in the Olympics and Social Change course.

(November 5, 2013)-American track and field athlete [Amanda Smock](#) visited the University of Minnesota, Morris on Wednesday, October 30. Smock came to speak with students in the [Olympics and Social Change course](#) taught by Jeremy Karger-Gatzow, cross country/track and field head coach.

The aim of the course is to provide “a broad overview of the history of the Olympics and its social implications.” According to Karger-Gatzow, the focus of the class has been on the progression and acceptance of women and minorities in the Olympics. He thought a visit from Smock could provide a meaningful comparison of a current female athlete’s experience and the earlier Games the class has explored through books and movies.

“Women’s participation in the Olympics has changed dramatically from being barred from competition to near equality in sports,” says Karger-Gatzow. “A professional athlete like [Smock] offers the class further insight into the Olympic experience.”

Smock spoke to the class about her participation in the London 2012 Summer Olympics. Sharing photos and memories from her trip, she hoped to offer “an insider’s perspective on the Games.”

Alanna Henry ’17, Foley, was particularly moved by the visit. While she was thrilled by the prospect of meeting an Olympic athlete, Henry was even more excited to meet a fellow triple jumper.

“When she was showing her pictures from the Olympics, I was in awe,” Henry says. “I especially loved seeing the shots of her actually jumping. It is cool to see her form and how strong of a jumper she really is.”

Henry even had the chance to speak with her role model after class, making the experience all the more meaningful.

“It was like I was talking to a teammate,” she says. “[Smock] has so much great advice to give and is such a good role model to young athletes. It was amazing to meet her and hear what she had to say about working hard and not giving up. She truly inspired me to be the greatest I can be and to reach the goals I have made for myself.”

Smock was a member of the 2012 United States Olympic team. She is a two-time USA Outdoor champion (2011 and 2012) and a 2012 USA Indoor champion as well as a 2013 USA Outdoor bronze medalist and a 2011 USA Indoor runner-up. She is also a three-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II champion. Smock is a member of the New York Athletic Club and is sponsored by Asics.

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