

College of Letters & Science

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Up Close with Ang Lee and James Schamus



Berkeley students had a rare opportunity this spring to explore the film-making process with celebrated film director Ang Lee and his longtime producing partner and screenwriter James Schamus — the latter a Berkeley Ph.D. in English.

On March 16 Lee and Schamus, who have collaborated on 11 films, appeared in conversation with Professor Jeffrey Knapp at Zellerbach Hall, where they discussed two of their most popular films: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *The Ice Storm*. The event was organized as part of the College of Letters and Science's "On the Same Page" program, which gives new students a chance to discuss influential works. Last fall, all incoming freshman and transfer students received DVDs of the two films to prepare for the visit and discuss the films in various classroom settings.



The program at Zellerbach, cosponsored by Cal Performances, also included a sneak peek of footage from the team's new movie, this summer's *Taking Woodstock*.

Eight lucky undergraduate students won a drawing to have lunch with the two special guests on March 17 at the Faculty Club. "It's a lot more complicated to get a movie made than you would think — especially if you want it to make money," said Michael Lyons, a freshman

majoring in physics.

Launched in 2006, "On the Same Page" encourages student engagement in rich intellectual dialogues through a variety of activities planned around a central work of art, science or literature, with the author or artist making related presentations on campus.

UC Berkeley students have been exploring Lee and Schamus's work since last fall. Freshman and Sophomore Seminars about the films were offered in both Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. Faculty members led one-time discussions about the films during the fall semester and others incorporated the films into their regular courses.



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