

Space for Notes



The Two Universities of Texas

How can any self-respecting liberal countenance academic programs in which there is only one side presented to the most controversial issues of the day?

David Horowitz

Posted: 2/19/07

There are two universities operating under the name the University of Texas.

One is a world-class academic institution. Its faculty is professional and dedicated to disinterested scholarly inquiry. Its courses observe the principles of scientific method, and its students are taught to respect evidence and to demand more than one perspective on matters that are controversial.

But there is a second university, which is quite different in its methods and goals. This university's faculty regard themselves as activists, not scholars, and their method is that of authority, not science. Their curriculum is designed not to teach students how to conduct a disinterested inquiry, but to convert them to a sectarian ideology and recruit them to its causes.

Students in this university are taught to respect dogma rather than evidence. They are offered a curriculum that is relentlessly one-sided, one that denies legitimacy to dissenting points of view. Students are being given an indoctrination, not an education.

Among the departments and programs at UT that are parties to this scam are the Communications Studies Department, the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and the Division of Rhetoric and Writing. Space only permits a glimpse of the problem.

The stated mission of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies does not propose a disinterested inquiry into the history and condition of women or the nature of gender and its place in different societies. Instead, its stated mission is "to advance knowledge and understanding about ... the role that gender plays in structuring society."

The idea that gender structures society is an ideological claim, not a program for scholarly investigation. This claim is the organizing principle of gender feminism, a radical sect of the broader movement. Not surprisingly, the reading lists for courses in the department are almost exclusively drawn from radical feminist texts.

Graduate students in an Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies course, for example, are provided with a reading list that includes scores of texts written from a radical viewpoint. Only one text blatantly criticizes the radical feminist perspective. This is a book written by two founders of women's studies who subsequently left the field, because they felt it had become totally devoted to a political ideology to the point that its practitioners regularly denied scientific findings that conflicted with their political agendas.

This is the way the course syllabus for the introductory class refers to the book: "Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge, professing feminism, *passim* (note that this represents anti-women's studies - prepare to refute it)." This is the instruction of a political ideologue, not an academic scholar.

This is one example, but a glance at other curricular offerings in this and related programs reveals similarly unprofessional agendas. Many of the professors who teach these courses are neither trained historians nor sociologists nor economists, yet the

subject matter they teach will often be, such as courses on the history of radical movements, globalization, race or all three.

Communications and Social Change, taught by a professor of communications studies, is such a course. It has no academic rationale except to recruit students to the causes favored by its Marxist instructor: "After the historical survey of social movements, the second part of the course asks you to become involved as an observer and/or as a participant in a local social movement."

The course requires only two texts, naturally by two Marxists (Howard Zinn and UT's own Robert Jensen), both situated on the far left of the political spectrum. There's no harm in reading Zinn or Jensen, but a properly academic course would include their critics on the right and left.

There are enough such courses at the University of Texas that students can enroll in a degree-granting curriculum which has no academic component, but is a comprehensive training program in the theory and practice of radical politics.

What is the rationale for lending the prestige of this university, which is the prestige of science, to ideological causes?

What is the justification for deceiving students that they are getting an education, when in reality what they are getting is a political indoctrination?

And how can any self-respecting liberal countenance academic programs in which there is only one side presented to the most controversial issues of the day?

Horowitz is the author of the "Academic Bill of Rights." His latest book is "Indoctrination U: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom."

Responses published in the Daily Texan

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Looking for bias in business?

David Horowitz is shocked, just shocked, by courses that allegedly promote particular ideologies without presenting "the other side." Does he propose that every person in the McCombs School of Business devote at least half of her energy and time to critiques of capitalism? I'm interested.

*Virginia Raymond
English doctoral candidate
February 19, 2007*

Why Horowitz is full of it

David Horowitz complains of a "joint academic" "degree-granting curriculum" pioneered by Women and Gender Studies, Communication Studies and Rhetoric and Writing, but no such interdisciplinary degree exists ("The two Universities of Texas," Feb. 19). He furiously proclaims that courses in rhetoric don't address their proclaimed subject, neglecting to notice that these same courses cover staples of classical rhetorical theory, such as Hermagoras's theory of argumentative stasis and Aristotle's treatment of argumentative proofs.

His research doesn't venture past a cursory review of a few online syllabi, even though

anyone who has taken a college class knows that a syllabus represents the barest possibility for what may happen during a semester. Horowitz didn't bother to talk to students, faculty, to attend any lectures or to read any papers. In short, he doesn't carefully investigate the classes or the people that he maligns. And he would never believe arguments similar to his own if they were leveled against him, yet he expects us to accept such ludicrousities. If we were to point out, for instance, that, lacking a degree in education, Horowitz has no authority to evaluate UT, he would scoff, yet he wants us to discredit professors who teach courses outside of the narrow topics on which they wrote their dissertations.

This is how Horowitz makes his money - he sells books and recruits donors by posting inflammatory notes in popular venues. At the bottom of his full report online on UT's curriculum the reader is confronted with a suggestion that like-minded souls open their wallets. It seems that he cares less about UT than he does about his own bank account.

Though there are responsible conservative critics of higher education, David Horowitz is not among them. If he were to submit this argument in one of my courses, I'd give him an F. You should too.

*Mark Garrett Longaker
Assistant professor of rhetoric and writing
February 19, 2007*

YCT reviving 'Watch List'

David Horowitz is absolutely correct in his assertion that "there are two universities operating under the name of the University of Texas." Too many professors on this campus use the classroom as a tool of indoctrination. Students pay tuition to be educated, not indoctrinated. They have the right to demand impartial classroom environments, where they may openly engage in debates that deliberate all viewpoints of controversial issues. Students should feel free to respectfully challenge professors and other students without fear of chastisement. All professors should strive for intellectual honesty in their classrooms by presenting objective, unprejudiced information and allowing students to choose a position on their own terms. Education should always be the main goal of instructors. University classrooms are not the place for activists to convert and recruit people for an ideological cause.

Professor bias is a problem that must be confronted directly and vigorously if it is to be eliminated on the UT campus. For this reason, the Young Conservatives of Texas are reviving the Professor Watch List. Professors who use their authority to indoctrinate rather than to educate will be added. However, YCT also wants to recognize professors who create unbiased learning atmospheres by placing them on the Professor Watch List Honor Roll. This nonpartisan list is meant to be a resource for students of all ideological backgrounds that wish to acquire information about specific professors before enrolling in a particular course.

YCT is currently accepting submission forms from students who want a professor considered for addition to either the Watch List or the Honor Roll. Submission forms can be found at www.yct-ut.org, and all students are encouraged to join the Facebook group "UT Professor Watch List" for further information, links and updates.

*Elizabeth Young
Government sophomore
YCT Director of Academic Freedom
February 19, 2007*

Horowitz an attack dog for right

I am writing in response to the opinion column by David Horowitz in Monday's Daily Texan arguing that there are "two universities" here at Texas, one of which is allegedly engaged in left-wing indoctrination of our students. I am one of the faculty members targeted in the latest of Horowitz's attacks, a "new" book (full of rehashed information from his discoverthenetwork.org and prior book "The Professors") called "Interrogation U."

Let's get one thing straight: Horowitz is a cynical opportunist who whips up fears among legislators, parents and students about radical faculty allegedly engaged in some sort of mind control. His purpose is to shut down one of the few spaces we have in our society for critical thinking and the expression of diverse points of view from conservatism to the left. While some departments house one or maybe even two faculty of liberal or progressive bent, the University as a whole is not overrun with leftists. (In the whole country, he could only find 101 left-wing enough for him to consider "dangerous.") And I don't see Horowitz calling on the McCombs School of Business to hire a labor leader or the economics department to hire enough Marxist economists to balance out the curriculum. I don't see him calling for critics of the petroleum industry to be welcomed in the geology department.

So, you see, his attempts to police freedom of thought are aimed at only one small part of the ideological spectrum. He is an attack dog for the right; he would like nothing more than to see the few critical progressive faculty teaching at universities around the country lose their jobs - not because we advocate orthodoxy, but because we question his orthodoxy.

Curricula in communication, women's and gender studies, social movements and in fields across the humanities and social sciences are developed by experts. Horowitz knows little to nothing about the state of modern academic knowledge in these areas. For example, the idea that gender structures our society is not an ideological position (as he claims), but a fact recognized by many different disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, government, psychology and communication. Next he'll be denying that racism is a problem - wait, he already does that, claiming that Oprah Winfrey, "a fat Black woman" (his words, during a lecture I attended), has made it to the top of society proves that racism is no longer a barrier to success for most black Americans.

Many people regard Horowitz as a trivial crackpot, but the truth is that his activities and circulation of his grossly misnamed "Academic Bill of Rights" has led to the disciplining and even firing of excellent faculty members at universities across this country. Horowitz represents a new McCarthyism, and he is witch-hunting scholars and programs crucial to the enterprise of higher education.

The irony for my own part in this latest round is that my teaching evaluations have never been higher, and I just won one of our college's teaching awards on the basis, in part, of my openness to controversy in the classroom. Yes, I am an activist (but not in the classroom). And yes, I teach political subjects because that is the subject matter of my discipline - communication, political discourse, social movements, critical theory and political rhetoric. No one forces students to take my classes, and I encourage students to bring readings and questions from many perspectives to discuss in class.

Horowitz thinks that students can't think for themselves. I hope students here will tell him where to get off. Critical thinking is not indoctrination; when the entire political landscape is dominated by one point of view, there are few spaces in society where students may be exposed to points of view not available in many mainstream outlets. Teaching critical thinking and alternative points of view is a good thing. I have found

that my students can hold their own.

I've had a large number of conservative students. Most of them do well, and some of them are fans of mine.

I hope this clears up what Horowitz is about and what genuine, open education is about: they are opposites.

Dana L. Cloud

Associate professor of communication studies

February 19, 2007

Horowitz most dangerous academic in America

First of all, I'm trying very hard to compose myself and keep a civil tongue, but it's hard to do when it comes to talking about David Horowitz. According to Mr. H., certain faculties are simply activists trying to deceive, convert and recruit students to their ideological causes.

For one thing, he's insulting these students' intelligence and maturation. They are not little school children, but young adults who are developing their own minds. And why does he feel threatened by people who speak the truth? Not only does he speak ill of insightful and courageous UT faculty such as Robert Jensen and Dana Cloud, but he also condemns one of the most truthful and wise individuals in the world - Howard Zinn.

As a privileged white male, he has absolutely no right to criticize cultural and women's studies. And, not only has he made derogatory remarks about the cultures of "minorities," but has also insinuated that racism no longer exists.

I believe this despicable person is the most dangerous academic in America. He is a direct threat to our civil liberties and the positive progress this country desperately needs. He's also a very scary person. Even though he acts like God, it seems he's on the side of the devil.

Considering the inequalities and social problems this country has, it's obvious that the system is broken and that the status quo has got to go. People of good conscience simply want ordinary working folk to have the respect, dignity and justice they deserve. It is very good and admirable of liberal, progressive people to feel the need to criticize, dissent and take some action. As Molly Ivins used to tell us, "don't just sit there on your haunches!"

Anita Quintanilla

February 19, 2007

Isn't UT just being democratic?

I don't understand. Isn't David Horowitz just as guilty of whatever he is charging the "liberals" or "radicals" with?

If all Mr. Horowitz can do is produce two thin examples of this "other" university that supposedly exists like a cancer feeding on the legitimate body of the "real" university, then that hardly merits representing this shadowy alternate universe in the paranoid and threatening way he does. Let's see two courses out of how many course being taught each year at the University? Employing the scientific method, that comes to a

statistically insignificant percentage out of all the university courses offered annually.

Um, and supposing, I mean just supposing, we actually do live in a "free and democratic" society and that maybe, just maybe, the University's role in that society is to promote dialogue and discussion of even unpopular points of view - well, it's a big leap, but I'm going to go way out on a limb here and say that actually the University, by hosting and supporting these classes, is doing what it should be doing.

And suppose you are that unfortunate trust-fund frat boy who enrolls in one of these sinister classes only to be rewarded for bravely expressing your free-market views with a big fat "F"? I suppose all of those myriad University policies and procedures which give you recourse to making and filing complaints against an instructor or professor or requesting a hearing to contest your unjust grade - I suppose all of those "rules" which are meant to protect your rights at a public institution are simply another radical plot to undermine the conservative agenda?

As some wag online has already pointed out, does this mean that students in the business school will be forced to take courses in Marxist economics to balance out their "education"?

*Jon Pearson
UT alum
February 19, 2007*

Posted: 2/21/07

Faith-based computer science

Perhaps you read the opinion piece by David Horowitz, "The two Universities of Texas," in Tuesday's Daily Texan. I am certain that other computer science professors found his arguments as persuasive as I did, and thus we will be seeking atonement for the biased fashion in which we have presented our courses. These courses have been driven either by axioms or experimentation - each followed by rational analysis. This "bowing at the alter of evidence" is simply one way of approaching our discipline and totally rejects other, equally valid attitudes.

Thus, may I suggest that we consider a new approach: Faith-based computer science. I offer two examples of its application. First, recall how much time you have devoted to having students produce correct software. You discuss verification, proper design, debugging, testing and such, but how much time have you devoted to the equally acceptable technique of praying that the code is correct?

With respect to more theoretical topics, how often have you found yourself declaring that the Halting Problem is provably unsolvable? Yes, in your own smug, "everything must be based upon logic" world that may be true, but that simply makes your biases blatant. A student might come from a family background where the Halting Problem is considered solvable, and the student should not be belittled for such a deeply held belief.

*Alan Kaylor Cline
Professor of computer sciences and mathematics
February 20, 2007*

Letters prove Horowitz's point

Tuesday's critical Firing Lines of David Horowitz's Monday column go a long way to

prove his chief argument. The first response strived to change the subject by pointing an errant and accusatory finger at the McCombs School of Business, while another response attempted to defame Horowitz's character and method, and would give him an "F" if he took his class. Thanks for stifling any real debate - your responses proved Horowitz's point perfectly.

Students should take hopelessly biased and ideologically-driven professors in the correct context. Some academics lack the courage and ability to present knowledge in an unbiased and objective environment. Instead, they opt to profess their narrow-minded beliefs to a room full of easily impressionable young students who lack the knowledge (or desire) to argue back. Listen to what they have to say, seek outside objective information and work hard so that you don't end up like one of them.

*John Oberg
Business honors and finance senior
February 20, 2007*

Horowitz violates own Academic Bill of Rights

David Horowitz is dangerous. He's Rush Limbaugh with an education. Not that he learned what an education is. He seems to think it's a disinterested inquiry. This definition obviates the meaning implicit in the word "student," such as "one who zealously strives for knowledge." It also demonstrates that Horowitz views students as mindless automatons falling under the sway of potentially evil overlords. Lord help us if students are actually interested in whatever it is they're studying. They may be indoctrinated into believing in evolution or other evils.

As for indoctrination techniques, Horowitz learned from a master, Black Panthers leader Huey P. Newton. Horowitz is the worst form of ideologue, one who has decided his original faith was false and has converted to the one true religion. His parents were communists, and so was he, until he flip-flopped to the higher paying perspective. Reading his works, you can't help but feel he is engaging in indoctrination rather than education. And in this instance, he apparently is trying to indoctrinate people into thinking that having educators with their own opinions and teaching based on these principles is incompatible with higher education. He is effectively waging the Right's (or Limbaugh's) war against academic freedom.

In doing so, Horowitz actively violates his own Academic Bill of Rights, the first tenet of which states "No faculty shall be hired or fired or denied promotion or tenure on the basis of his or her political or religious beliefs." However, Horowitz actively campaigns to have professors fired or denied promotion or tenure on the basis of their political or religious beliefs, as well as their fields of study. This is easily demonstrated by his list of the 101 most dangerous professors and his recent article in *The Daily Texan*. Whatever Dana Cloud's or Robert Jensen's faults may be, Horowitz's attacks on them are politically and ideologically motivated - he has no academic grounds for attempting to silence them or cost them their jobs.

For the sake of accuracy, there are not two, but 15 institutions under the name the University of Texas, and The University of Texas at Austin, although the greatest, is but one of them. In addition, there are 17 different schools, colleges and divisions and a variety of academic units and multifarious student, professional, religious and academic organizations at UT Austin. To say that there are only "two universities" at The University of Texas at Austin is a gross simplification and misrepresentation of clearly demonstrable subjective reality.

Charles Tolliver

*UT alum
February 20, 2007*

Horowitz should look at current professor of CMS 340K

I was greatly disturbed by David Horowitz's column "The two Universities of Texas" on Feb. 19, in which Horowitz makes unfounded claims against well-established and devoted professors who did nothing to deserve Horowitz's malicious attacks. In some cases, they didn't even teach the course he criticizes them for. Horowitz harshly condemns CMS 340K: Communications and Social Change; he goes as far as to say that the course "has no academic rationale except to recruit students to the causes favored by its Marxist instructor." Dana Cloud, who taught the course last September (when FrontPageMagazine.com published a Horowitz article very similar to his Monday column), is typically classified as a Marxist, however, Joel Rollins, who currently teaches the course, is not. Had Mr. Horowitz spoken to Dr. Rollins for even five minutes, he would have come to the realization that the professor is not a Marxist, and that he is extremely dedicated to his teaching and his students.

Horowitz also criticizes the idea of engaging in or observing a local social movement through a University class. Horowitz fails to realize that there are a plethora of social movements on both sides of the political spectrum. The fact that Cloud is a Marxist does not mean that the only movements out there are Marxist ones. I doubt that Horowitz would be amenable to the idea of a disengaged citizenry. Instead of blasting the professor for her political views and making baseless assertions about her class (Has he ever sat in on it?), we should be thanking professors for encouraging youth participation in political and social movements.

Before writing this column, Horowitz would have served himself well by making sure the facts he found five months ago were still true; not doing so fatally undermines the integrity of his arguments.

*Kristin Pearson
Plan II freshman
February 19, 2007*

Faux-objectivity in academic criticism

I am offended by David Horowitz's condemnation of an entire department based on the reading list of a single class. Thankfully, one thing my "indoctrination" in communication studies has taught me is critical thinking. And therefore, I doubt that Horowitz, who recently wrote a book defaming more than 100 professors across the country for their liberal bias, has attended a single class taught by Bob Jensen or any member of the UT communication faculty, let alone completed an entire course. Perhaps then he ought to leave the judgment to actual students of this University.

My professors have always been up-front about their biases, unlike Horowitz, who fails to call to attention his own history of right-wing activism. Considering that he is railing against bias and indoctrination, his failure to fairly portray his own agenda reveals that his faux-objectivity is far more dangerous than any professor's left-wing politics.

*Merry Regan
Communication studies sophomore
February 19, 2007*