

# UNIVERSITY REVIEW *of Texas*

*An Independent Journal of Student Opinion*

Volume 1, Number 1

Texas Review Society P.O. Box 8440 Austin, Texas 78713

September 1990

*The Rise and Fall of English 306*

## Readin', Writin', & Racism

**Brian D. Willats**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

Imagine that you are an incoming freshman at the University of Texas.

Now imagine that, unless you test out of it, you are required to take a writing course. And imagine that the only topic to be used the entire semester in the course is "racism and sexism". The only textbook to be used tells you that if you are white, male, or both, you are responsible for most of the problems faced by women and "people of color". And the instructors are, for the most part, graduate students with no formal training in this topic, and are most likely sympathetic to the views of the book.

Imagine that, in order to graduate from the University of Texas, you must take this course, with this topic. No choices; no options.

Now stop imagining. You've just hit reality.

### *Revolt of the Messes*

Fortunately, "reality" has been postponed for a year. The course, English 306, a required introductory writing course for all freshmen, was to be the latest victim of the academic onslaught known as "multiculturalism". In the name of "diversity and tolerance", radical reforms were implemented to educate students "toward a better understanding and respect for people of different race, sex, ability, cultural heritage, national origin, and religion."

What these reforms amount to, critics charge, is nothing more than "ideological indoctrination." And they are willing to fight their implementation tooth and nail. So when an attempt was made this summer at the University of Texas by Dean of Liberal Arts Standish Meacham and others to revise English 306 under the multicultural umbrella, the opponents fought back.

The attempt failed. On July 23, after a summer of squabbling and moral posturing amongst the University community, Meacham postponed the implementation for one year. So this battle is over. But the war has just begun.

Supporters of the cause mourned the loss of their child. Barbara Harlow, associate professor of English at UT, warned, "The army hasn't been called in to UT, and the University hasn't been closed. But we need to recognize that there are academic death squads operating on our campus." Kim Emory, an assistant instructor in English, was equally vexed. "I am bewildered by (English Professor Alan) Gribben and company's hyperbolic and hypocritical attacks on an important but actually innocuous attempt to reorganize English 306."

But some obvious questions still beg for an-

swers. Namely, how can a course be a beacon for diversity and tolerance when its originally proposed text defined racism as something capable only of whites and sexism capable only of males, and second, what is a topic such as "racism and sexism" doing in a required freshman writing course in the first place?

### *Rhetorical Racism*

English 306, *Rhetoric and Composition*, is defined in the College of Liberal Arts catalog as "a composition course that provides basic instruction in the writing and analysis of expository prose; includes an introduction to logic and the principles of rhetoric." It usually, though not always, included a textbook on rhetoric, which is the substance of the course and an anthology that covered numerous topics. Single topic writing courses are usually reserved for English 309K, *Topics in Writing*. Never has English 306 used only one topic, or one textbook. Until now.

The course, revised under the title "Writing about Difference", was to use, as its sole "content" textbook, an introductory sociology reader entitled

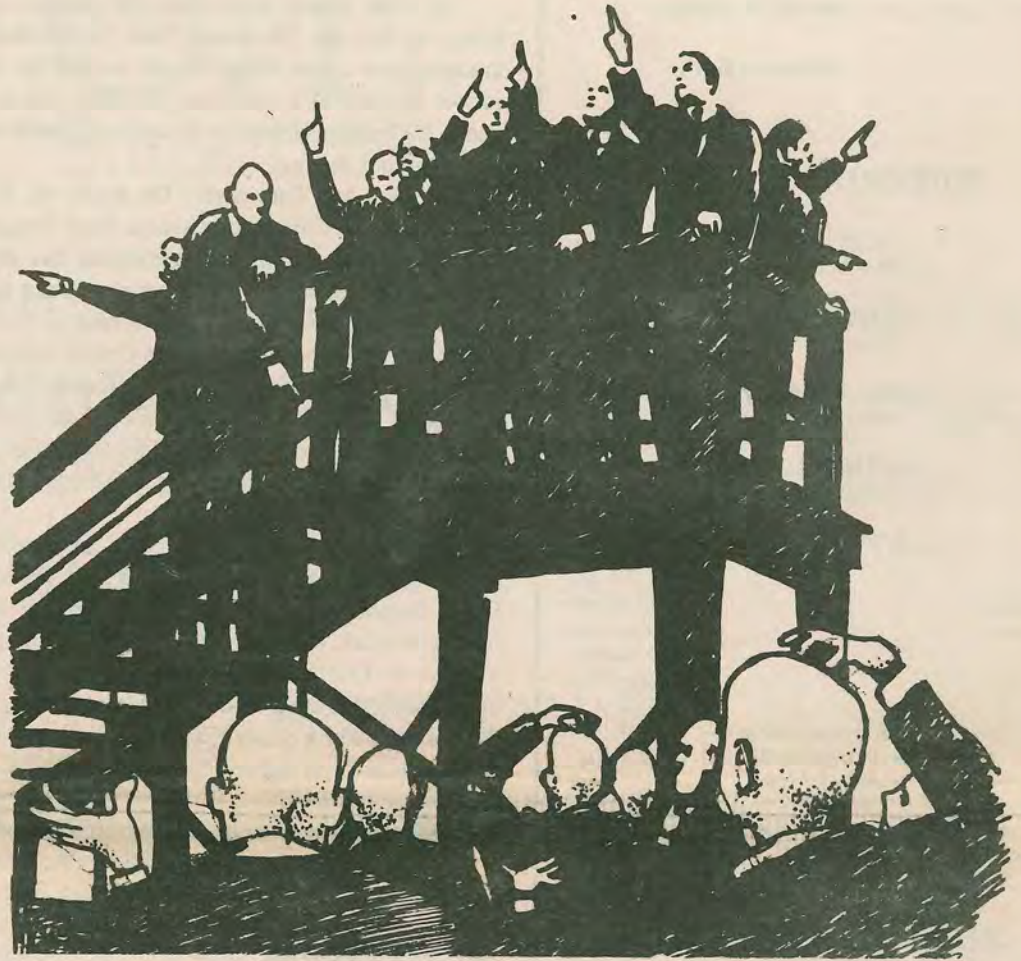
*Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study*, edited by Paula Rothenberg, an associate professor of philosophy at The William Paterson College in New Jersey. The book, as the title suggests, is a series of essays and studies designed to enlighten the reader about racism and sexism as they manifest themselves in today's society.

The book, however, is a hard-line feminist critique. In the introductory chapter, Rothenberg outlines these working definitions for the rest of the book: 1. Racism involves the subordination of people of color by white people; 2. Sexism involves the subordination of women by men; and 3. Racism and sexism can be either conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional. Though people of color may be prejudiced and women may be downright nasty, Rothenberg maintains, they cannot be guilty of the "isms".

Why this assertion? Because, as Rothenberg explains, women and people of color are not in positions of power, the implications being that, because women and minorities are lower on the power spectrum, their prejudiced behavior is somehow more justifiable. And the rest of the book bears that perspective out.

Because racism and sexism can be either hidden or seen, the counterattack must be ubiquitous. As she writes, "One assumption this book makes is that both racism and sexism pervade American culture, that they are learned at an early age and reinforced throughout life by a variety of institutions and experiences that are part of growing up and living in the United States." And, while "good people with good intentions can do racist and sexist things, the difference between nice people who inadvertently perpetuate racism and sexism and out-and-out racist is that the former generally apologize for their behavior and try to change it, and the latter do not."

See RACISM page 6



### **This Issue**

*Steven Mays Exposes:*

**The Subversion of UT English.....page 8**

Plus...

*Resurging Ethnic Rivalries in Europe.....Steve Gaut 11*

*What is TV Marti?.....Joseph Manero 12*

*Who are These People?.....David Edwards 14*

## Racism

from page 1

The book spawns from this basic thesis to include such articles as "The Wage Gap: Myths and Facts", "Being Black is Dangerous to Your Health", "He Defies You Still: The Memoirs of a Sissy", "Real Men Don't Cry .... and Other 'Uncool' Myths", and "Pricks and Chicks: A Plea for 'Persons'." And the solutions to these dilemmas are just as consistent: "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference", "Androgyny As an Ideal for Human Development", "Changing the Situation: Steps Toward an Egalitarian Family Policy", and "Toward Economic Justice for Women".

Nowhere does the book provide even a moderate view on the issues of race and gender. The section of court cases, which proponents of the book have hailed as providing opposing views, is prefaced with the title "How It Happened: The Legal Status of Women and People of Color in the United States". Only four cases are presented from the twentieth century, none of which provide an alternative view to the issues offered in the book.

The course itself is taught, for the most part, by graduate students, known as assistant instructors (AI's). While they do have training in teaching the writing component of the course, they have no training in the sociological underpinnings that a book like *Racism and Sexism* would demand.

The course changes and the textbook proposal are the brainchild of Linda Brodkey, associate professor of English and chairperson of the Lower Division English Policy Committee (LDEPC). In a March 20th memo to members of the committee outlining her plans, she stressed "the need to educate students on diversity and related topics." Noting that Dean Meacham had recently formed a Committee on Multicultural Education to look into the same "need", she wrote that "we can make a substantial contribution to the university's efforts by making "Writing about Difference" the topic in all E 306 courses."

The proposal actually came before the much-publicized fraternity racial incidents occurred in April. These incidents, though, produced an even greater sense within not only Brodkey, but the multicultural community as a whole, that these curricular changes were necessary. Brodkey, in an April 15th memo sent to the LDEPC, wrote:

"That the University owes students many such "conversations" as the one we plan to initiate with this course is underscored by recent events on campus, though I would hope that we do not require overt acts of racism to justify a course in which students would think, read, and write about civil rights, civil rights law, and civil rights cases. They are bound by laws about which they know very little, and many labor under the illusion that such laws have effectively mooted even the possibility of discrimination.

The book and the class concept were approved

at an April 3rd meeting of the LDEPC. The meeting itself lasted a span of no more than 45 minutes, in which, by a 4-0 vote, with one abstention and one absentee, the committee approved the most sweeping changes the course has seen in recent history. The book itself was lauded by members of the committee for its strong section on definitions and distinctions, and the thrust toward "diversity" was underway.

Opposition, however, also mounted immediately. The one abstention came from committee member Jim Duban, who, in a letter to the committee dated April 4, expressed "serious reservations. . . about the potential undermining of pluralism entailed in such a single-text policy." In fact, he wrote, "I must now express a sense of regret for having failed to vote directly against the motion to adopt one text for every section of freshman English. Even a 'pilot' course sets precedents, and I believe that this precedent would be an unfortunate one in its disregard for alternatives."

The one absentee was John Ruskiewicz, associate professor of English and a former director of the freshman English writing program. In a letter to the LDEPC dated April 6th, he also expressed his reservations about such an undertaking and outlined several propositions to be considered at subsequent meetings on April 10th and 17th. He recommended a pilot-course before implementing a full-scale curriculum and a more balanced anthology addressing "a broader spectrum of political and social opinions and . . . a wider range of issues than *Racism and Sexism*."



Yet each of his proposals was shot down, and each time by a 4 - 2 vote (Duban and himself voting for the proposals). Brodkey herself went on the offensive two days before the April 17th meeting, drafting a letter to the LDEPC defending the course idea against each of Ruskiewicz's proposals. In particular, she defended the book, writing that "the book introduces students to some of the ways social science research defines and analyzes racism and sexism." Furthermore, she wrote:

"I am not compelled by the argument that there are opinions and arguments that would provide a balance to the author's or that other books would provide 'a wider and more challenging range of opinions.' That's true but moot. I didn't suggest this text as an example of all the possible positions one might take (which is impossible), but as a way to focus students and teachers on work that has been done on 'difference,' and to give them some time to think about how those who work on and/or live with inequity define, describe, and analyze the problems they see."

So that was the end of that. Or was it?

Soon those opposing the implemented changes went public. Alan Gribben sent several letters out to the press, including the *Austin American-Statesman* and the *Houston Chronicle*, claiming that the course had "now fallen prey to the current mania for converting every academic subject into a politicized study of race, class and gender." Others followed suit, and the battle began.

On June 25th, the English Department cancelled the use of the textbook, citing the controversy that had arisen within the department. Instead, they decided to copy off portions of the book and include them in a reading packet, which would not be made available to either the LDEPC or the public until the first day of class. This drew the ire of both Duban and Ruskiewicz, who resigned in July from the LDEPC, citing the "secrecy" surrounding the packet and the syllabus.

On July 18, 56 professors signed "A Statement of Academic Concern" that appeared in the Daily Texan outlining their concerns with the course and a call for reconsideration. That appeared to be the last straw. On July 24, Dean Meacham, an ardent supporter of the course, announced that the course would be postponed for one year to "ensure the best course possible." Brodkey herself considered resigning as head of the LDEPC as a result of the demise of English 306.

The debate, however, is far from over. The next year should provide an interesting setting of not so civil discussion. Meacham, for one, is still ardent in his plans to bring multiculturalism to the University of Texas.

"I will continue to support strongly, as I have during the past months, the concept of English 306 as a writing and rhetoric course with a unified curriculum centered on the themes of diversity and difference - an idea which I believe to be imaginative and exciting."

Others, however, find the whole scenario rather appalling. Robert King, the Dean of Liberal Arts before Meacham took over this past year, told the Review, "It is intellectually absurd, and morally reprehensible; it is totally contrary to every belief I have about what should go on in the classroom. They want to turn English 306 into a forum of indoctrination in which the main reason for the existence of that course - teaching people who don't write very well to write better - becomes subordinated to other considerations."

Ruskiewicz, in an editorial in the Daily Texan, wrote:

"The director of Lower Division English reported in a departmental meeting in May that student evaluations of E306 classes have been dropping precipitously for two or three years. If that is the case, then the course undoubtedly needs to be modified to restore its effectiveness. But, ironically, the E306 "Difference" curriculum pushes the class in precisely the direction that has occasioned its decline - toward displacing writing instruction with topical discussions of social issues."

Chester E. Finn, Jr., a professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University, has written that "what is commonly sought in these required courses, and the non-credit counterparts that abound on campuses where they have not yet entered the formal curriculum, is not open inquiry but, rather, a form of attitude adjustment, even ideological indoctrination." And indeed they've been exactly that., appearing on campuses such as the University of Wisconsin, the state colleges of Massachusetts, and the University of California at Berkeley.

Whether they nest themselves within the curriculum at UT will be up to debate that is now brewing on campus. Yet, for all the sanctimony and glowing rhetoric, this debate won't be nice, and it won't be pretty.

*Willats is a graduate student in journalism and editor-in-chief of the Review.*

## PROBE CENTER

Austin

RESOURCES FOR CLEAR THINKING FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

- \* SCRIPTURE AND SCIENCE \*
- \* ACADEMIC FREEDOM OR FREEDOM FROM RELIGION \*
- \* ETHICS AND ABSOLUTES IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY \*
- \* CHRISTIANITY AND CAPITALISM \*
- \* RELIGION, REASON AND REVELATION \*

\*DOES CHRISTIANITY HAVE RATIONAL AND RELEVANT ANSWERS TO THE TOUGH ISSUES CONFRONTING US?

\*CAN YOUR IDENTITY, DIGNITY AND PURPOSE BE PRESERVED IN THE MIDST OF THIS MEGA-UNIVERSITY?

We provide resources for individual and group study, academic assistance, counseling, and discussion in a relaxed setting to help you think through and respond to the challenges of university life. We're here for you!

John A. Ratliff, Director

Hours: 9:00 - 5:30 Monday - Friday; 7:00 - 10:00 Evenings

36 Dobie Mall \* 2021 Guadalupe \* Austin, Texas 78705 \* 469-5651

# English as a Second Language

*Made famous by the Texas Monthly, the English department at the University of Texas has become notorious for implementing radical academic programs through coercive means. As a result, traditional English studies have fallen by the wayside. If teaching English were a crime, the department at UT wouldn't even get a subpoena.*

Steven Mays  
Contributor

For the last decade there has been a burgeoning number of professors in the UT Department of English who have no interest in traditional English studies, and are often actually hostile to traditional works, such as Shakespeare or Chaucer. This trend is occurring in most English departments across the nation, at both public and private universities. These professors belong to various literary groups, but are united in one desire: to reject traditional works from the curriculum.

As the UT English department hires more and more non-traditional professors, the number of non-traditional (feminist, multicultural, etc.) classes grows. Conversely the selection of traditional classes continues to diminish. As at most other universities, however, many non-traditionalists are not content to merely add their favoured authors to the curriculum; many non-traditionalists wish also to banish traditional studies and to use the classroom for political indoctrination. The non-traditionalists in the UT English department controlled, for example, the recent redesign of the Freshman Composition class, English 306.

As radical non-traditionalists become increasingly influential in the English department, they become increasingly intolerant of traditional scholars. Traditional professors who oppose changes in the curriculum are often harassed and branded as 'racists' and 'sexists'; graduate students who show interest in traditional classes are warned off. The non-traditionalists virtually control the hiring process in the English department; they continually add to their own numbers by preventing, during some years, the hiring of any new traditional professors at all.

## No Help Wanted

Until about six years ago the department's hiring record had been balanced; candidates were selected on the basis of their scholarly performance and potential. In the hiring committees, traditionalists and non-traditionalists alike generally ignored a candidate's affiliation to any particular literary philosophy and instead focused on the candidate's scholarship. By about 1984, however, more extreme non-traditionalists, intolerant of traditional studies, came to dominate the hiring committees. Once in control, they started to select only candidates who shared their own philosophy. According to Associate Professor John Ruskiewicz,

We have had hiring committees dominated by... Marxist literary theorists and deconstructionists [types of non-traditionalists]. There has been a tendency for that group to hire... people like themselves... There has been, on the Executive Committee, resistance to those hirings, but it is a majority vote and quite often there were enough [votes] to hire those people.

According to Professor Alan Gribben, "the political ideology of the candidate was [often] paramount over all other criteria in our making that appointment -- including over scholarship."

By 1987, worried traditionalists in the English department had told the then-Dean of Liberal Arts, Robert King, about the bias against traditionalists in the hiring process. The dean has little direct power over the English department other than his veto of new candidates. Dean King investigated and found, as he told the *Review*, that "the kind of people being hired in the English department had all pretty much the same shape and size: politically engaged [and] left wing." Dean King then urged the Chairman of English to restore department objectivity to the hiring process. The English department ignored King's warning,

however, and continued to hire only non-traditionalists. By 1989 Dean King was frustrated and took the highly unusual step of vetoing two candidates approved by the English department. The two candidates were, according to King, "simply of the same size and shape as most of the people they had been hiring for years"; in a letter to the Chairman of English, King noted that "traditionalists had little if any chance of being hired as new faculty members of the Department."

Many non-traditional English professors were livid at King's veto and aggressively attacked him in the press. Later in 1989 King resigned; he was replaced by Standish Meacham, who has shown no sign of standing up against radicalization of the English department.

The other obsessive concern of hiring committees in the English department is the attempt to recruit minority professors. The department is under pressure from minority "leaders", the local press, and parts of the state legislature to increase its number of minority professors. Like all other English departments, however, it faces an extreme shortage of supply. Only about 30 minority English Ph.D.'s graduate every year, and thousands of university English departments want to hire them.

In its relentless attempts to hire more minority professors, the UT English department makes much higher salary offers to minority applicants than it does to white applicants. There is, in fact a bidding war for minority candidates between various English departments; according to Ruskiewicz "the marketplace is driving up their salaries to an unprecedented degree." In a recent attempt, for example, to hire an experienced black professor from another university, the UT English department made

**Although the shortage of minority professors is clearly due to the tiny supply available, extreme non-traditionalists instead blame it on the supposed "institutionalized racism" of the university**

an offer of about \$85,000. The English department will, according to Professor Gribben, happily make similarly large offers to other experienced minority professors; such offers are about \$30,000 more than the current salary of the highest-paid professor in the department. At the moment the English department's one black professor, Wahneema Lubiano, earns, according to state records, more than any other similarly ranked professor in the department; she also earns more than many professors ranked above her. Despite generous salary offers and promises of tenure, however, the UT English department still does not have many minority professors -- due to the tiny number of available candidates nationwide.

Regardless of the department's great difficulty in hiring minority faculty, some of the more extreme non-traditionalists do nonetheless criticize the department, in the local press, for having an insufficient number of minority professors. Both Lubiano and Professor Ramon Saldivar have repeatedly attacked the department on this issue in the *Austin American Statesman*, in *The Daily Texan*, in *Alcalde* and elsewhere. Although the shortage of minority professors is clearly due to the tiny supply available, extreme non-traditionalists instead cast blame on the supposed "institutionalized racism" of the university.

In fact, extreme non-traditionalists in the department are obsessed with the supposed "institutionalized racism and sexism" of the university and of the country as a whole. Consequently, the extreme non-traditionalists do not just want more minorities and women in the department -- they want *only those women and minorities who have the "correct" politi-*

*cal viewpoint.* According to Gribben,

[There] is a tendency by our department to bypass numerous candidates who are traditional in their inclinations but happen to be female or happen to be minorities... You can not simply hire a woman -- so this reasoning goes -- you must hire a radical feminist. You can not simply hire a minority candidate who happens to be very good at teaching a certain period of literature, you must hire a person who is a student of the oppression of that group. This is so terrifically unfair to the more traditionally-inclined people of minority extraction and to the more traditionally-inclined women. Our department ... demands that these [minorities] be radical in their thought [and] be mainly interested in what the United States and white males have done to people of color and women in the past, rather than simply being capable of an inquisitive intellectual spirit.

In a similar vein those English courses which focus on "ethnic issues", and the courses offered by Women's Studies, are virtually all politically left wing. The professors for these courses select those minority and women authors who are anti-Western, anti-American, or anti-capitalist. These courses usually exclude any dissenting or dissenting minority authors. "Women's issues" courses, for example, are mainly based on the premise that "women are oppressed by men" and that "capitalism is an exploitative system." Women authors who dispute these premises, such as the influential philosopher Ayn Rand, are simply not studied. According to Ruskiewicz "there are those [in the department] who want these courses not to expand what students know, or not to allow students to make better choices about their world, but rather to instruct students politically."

## Piled higher and Deeper

In the past, most English professors simply taught their period of literature, the historical background to that literature, and the underlying philosophies of the period. They were not interested in using their classes as political vehicles. The politicization of literature courses by non-traditionalists is a recent and revolutionary departure from old practices.

According to Professor Gribben, the politicization of literature courses started in the English graduate department. The graduate department has about 200 graduate students who study either for a Masters degree or for a PhD. Most professors in the English department teach both graduate (MA and PhD level) and undergraduate (BA level) courses. Currently, a large proportion of the courses offered by the graduate department focus on "ethnic literature", "third world literature", "feminist literature", "Marxist literary analysis", etc.

In the graduate department, professors offer courses to the graduate students before the start of each new semester. Graduate students have leeway in which courses they choose to take. If an insufficient number of students selects a graduate course, then that course is cancelled. According to Professors Gribben and Ruskiewicz, graduate students have, for the past few years, been warned away from English courses offered by traditional professors. Apparently, graduate student advisors and some senior members of the English department have steered graduate students away from traditional courses. As Gribben has noted,

It is very difficult today to offer a traditional course in Shakespeare of American literature... I have had personal experience with this: the students say that they are counseled away from such courses... I have had students slip into my office and say, 'I'm very sorry Professor Gribben, I'd really liked to study with you and some of the traditionalists in your department -- but we just are told that this is not going to help us at all in getting our degree.'

By contrast the number of "multicultural" and "feminist" graduate courses continue to flourish. In 1987 the English department greatly strengthened

the position of such non-traditional classes by allowing graduate students to specialize in "ethnic and third world literature." Some of this "ethnic and third world literature" is not even written in English; most of it has nothing to do with what most people would call English literature. Much of this literature should properly be studied in the Division of Afro-American Studies, in the Division of Latin American Studies, or in the Division of Mexican American Studies. English graduate students can now earn their Masters or their PhD by specializing in works which have little relationship at all to English literature.

The politicization of courses has spread, according to Professor Gribben, from graduate courses to the upper division undergraduate English courses. A typical example is from the course description of English 321K taught by Associate Professor Barbara Harlow:

[Conrad's Heart of Darkness] will provide the parameters for an inquiry into the critical challenges to the dominant western tradition posed by peoples and parties systematically denied access to a canonized literacy. Readings [will be] around issues of gender, race and class...

There remains, however, a wide range of traditional upper division courses from which undergraduates can choose. Upper division English courses are the only part of the English department where there remains a healthy balance between non-traditional and traditional courses.

During the last year there has been a rapid and rigorous politicization, mainly under the guise of "multiculturalism", of the lower division courses. The two most important are English 306, "Rhetoric and Composition" (required of all freshmen) and English 316K "Masterworks of Literature" (required of all sophomores). The nearly successful attempt to turn all 100 sections of E306 into political indoctrination would have affected about 3,000 freshman.

Non-traditionalists have already successfully politicized some sections of English 316K -- usually under the guise of "feminism" or "multiculturalism". Thousands of sophomores choose every year from between three variants of E316K: one focusing on American Literature, one on British Literature, one on World Literature. In each of these three variants of E 316K, professors are expected to teach the relevant "great authors". In the last few years, however, non-traditional teachers have increasingly forsaken this task. According to the May 1990 *Texas Monthly*, for example, one English professor "tossed the standard anthology aside and announced that in her class they would read only the work of women from developing countries". For many students E316K is their only literature course and is, as *Texas Monthly* notes, their "only opportunity to study in a classroom the work of those who for generations have been regarded as our greatest writers." When non-traditionalists subvert E316K they are depriving, for their own political goals, thousands of students of the exposure to the greats of literature.

So far the politicization of E316K has been patchy. Some teachers have politicized their particular section; many others teach the traditional works in a traditional way. E316K may, however, become considerably more politicized because Chairman of English, Joe Kruppa and other high-ranking faculty intend to reform the course along "multicultural lines." As we have seen, "multicultural reforms" usually entail radicalization of the curriculum. Two E316 reform proposals exist. The less drastic is to add a fourth variant -- "ethnic and third world literature" -- to the three variants already offered. "A 316K course in third world literature", according to Ruskiewicz, "will likely be...a political diatribe against Western culture." Under this proposal, however, students could at least choose between four variants of E316K and could avoid the politicized one.

The other reform proposal, apparently favored by Chairman of English Kruppa, is to force all sections of E316K to become "multicultural" in nature. All three variants of E316K (British literature, American literature, World literature) would have to forsake some of the great authors and replace them with previously obscure minority and women authors. Again, these new authors would most likely be chosen by their political views rather than by the inherent quality of their work. Furthermore, says Ruskiewicz, "one could easily imagine a student taking [the] British literature [variant] and not reading Chaucer or...Milton. [Other students] could take

the American literature [variant] and not read Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Hemingway, Faulkner and so on."

Within two years the English department will probably have reformed both E306 and E316K along "multicultural" lines. Most students at the University of Texas are not in the College of Liberal Arts and most will take no English courses beyond the required E306 and E316K. In the future, then, the only English classes that most students will take will probably be bereft of many of the great authors and could consist mainly of radical political classroom indoctrination. With near-domination of both graduate English and lower division undergraduate courses, non-traditionalists will have revolutionized the teaching of English at the university.

**The Obsession with Power**

How have radical non-traditionalists gained such power in the English department? They have not done it by having a numerical majority. According to Gribben, the 80-member faculty has only about 25 extreme non-traditionalists and about 15 strong traditionalists. The remaining forty professors are not strongly committed in either direction, but most of them can be swung by the prevailing forces in the department. The department as a whole is politically left-of-center; according to Ruskiewicz, "the majority of people are traditional liberal or left wing rather than hard left [wing]."

Part of the radicals' success is due to their organizing abilities. They often pack hiring committees and curriculum committees. They attend all departmental meetings and are vociferous. The radical non-traditionalists frequently have the support, in particular on "multicultural" issues, of Dean of Liberal Arts Meacham and English chairman Kruppa. But, unfortunately, much of their success is due to their bullying behavior inside the department.

**According to the May 1990 Texas Monthly, for example, one English professor "tossed the standard anthology aside and announce that in her class they would read only the work of women from developing countries."**

The extreme non-traditionalists employ a number of techniques for intimidating the rest of the department into acquiescence. One technique is to imply that any opponent of the latest "multicultural" reform is, by definition, a bigot; in this branding they are joined by allies at *The Daily Texan*, at *The Austin American Statesman*, and amongst the student body. For example, according to Professor Gribben, opponents of the radicalization of E 306 kept quiet because "they are so terribly afraid of being labelled racist or sexist. People are afraid because these days on campus to have that slur made against you is the kiss of death. You can forget your academic career on the campus if you are labelled -

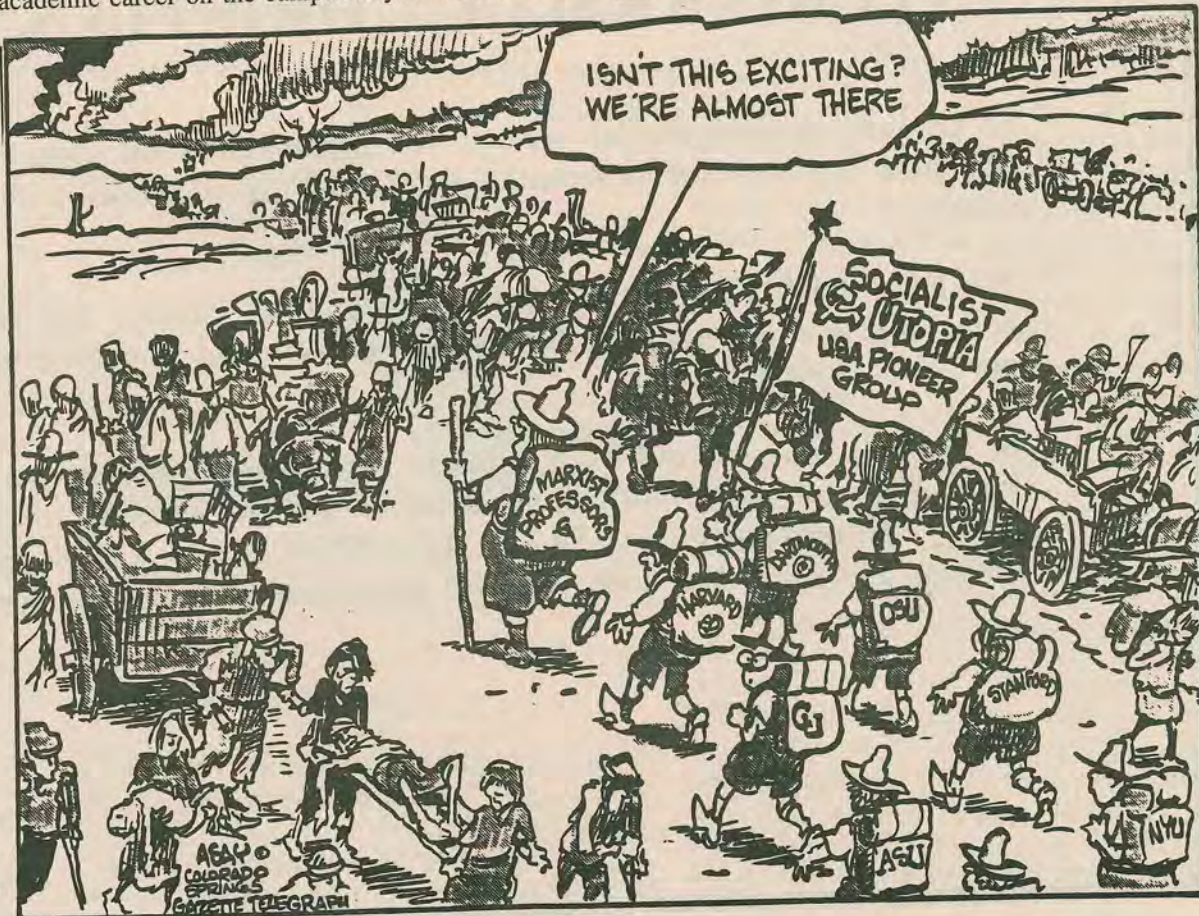
- fairly or unfairly -- a racist or sexist." The radicals in the department have helped to create a climate in which one side of the debate over "multiculturalism" is simply frightened into silence.

More sinister and more secretive is the radicals' use of administrative actions to punish dissenters as a warning to others in the department. Ruskiewicz notes:

[The department] has a tradition of punishing, one way or another, dissenters...one has to tow the departmental line or pay the price. There are all sorts of ways of punishing people -- you can do it by salary, do it by appointments, you can deny them promotions...you can shun them...you can hurt them professionally [by] talking about them. You can just make their daily lives unpleasant.

The department has probably employed one or more of these punishments against dissenting traditionalists in the past. Often it is difficult to detect the punishment because it may come subtly, a year or two after the traditionalist's impropriety. In May of this year, however, *Texas Monthly* and *The Dallas Morning News* unearthed a case in which the department had openly used every punishment available against a dissident traditionalist. William Murchison, writing in the May 19th *Dallas Morning News*, noted that Professor Alan Gribben, a traditionalist Mark Twain scholar, had first upset non-traditionalists in 1987. In the vote to allow MA candidates to specialize in "ethnic and third world literature" Gribben had been the sole "no" vote in an astonishing 44 to 1 vote in favor. Gribben later annoyed non-traditionalists by publicly defending then-Dean Robert King -- at the time that King had vetoed the hiring of even more radicals. Recently Gribben has infuriated the non-traditionalists by writing to newspapers to warn of the radicalization of E306. This last act prompted English chairman Joe Kruppa to openly insult Gribben, one of his own colleagues, in the *Houston Chronicle* (June 27th) -- a most unusual event.

Gribben has been the most openly implacable traditionalist in the department. Consequently, non-traditionalists chose him to make an example of, so as to warn others of the injudiciousness of pro-traditional dissent. During the past two years Gribben has had the lowest pay raises in the department -- including a 0% raise this year. Other faculty members have placed hate mail in his faculty mail box. Non-traditional graduate students have sent foul letters to his home. Some professors in the department brand him as a racist and a sexist. When an out-of-state university showed an interest in hiring Gribben, some faculty members warned that university of Gribben's "racist and sexist" personality. Professors shun Gribben, some because they are afraid of even being seen talking to the department's dissident traditionalist. Gribben told the *Review* that some colleagues privately explain to him that they "could not afford to be seen trafficking with [Gribben] in any way in the [English department] hallways -- the social and political consequences could be too grave to their departmental careers." Gribben was removed from the chairmanship of graduate studies and has never since been elected to any departmental committees. Non-traditionalists have warned graduate students not to study under Gribben. When Gribben protested these treatments to



Chairman Kruppa and Assistant Chairman Wayne Lesser, he received no help at all.

Partly by their harassment of Gribben, the radical non-traditionalists have created in the department a climate in which even minor dissent is dangerous. Uncommitted moderates, and even most traditionalists, do not dare to question each new radical proposal. Moderates and traditionalists are frightened of having their careers hurt or of being branded as bigots. This fear was clearly demonstrated by the near-absence of resistance to the radicalization of E306 and E316K. When, for example, the entire English department debated the obviously hasty and propagandistic reform of E306, only *one* faculty member dared to criticize the proposal. The majority of professors, who in any case share many of the radical's philosophical beliefs, tend to fall in unprotestingly behind each of the radicals' new projects. Scholar Roger Kimball, in his recent book *Tenured Radicals*, notes that this frightened capitulation to extreme non-traditionalists by the more moderate, centrist faculty has occurred in departments across the nation.

### ***Burning Something Texan***

As *Texas Monthly* pointed out, the radicals in the department are feeling increasingly dominant, and are celebrating this dominance with frank symbolic acts. For example, one radical professor, Ramon Saldivar, nominated his own sister for a faculty position -- in direct contravention of departmental policy. On another occasion an assistant professor held a party at which radical professors celebrated burning various Texas-related items. According to *Texas Monthly*:

About midnight a fire was built in the street outside the professor's apartment, and various Texas things were thrown into the fire. Some of the graduate students threw in papers graded by professors they didn't like. Possibly some road maps were burned, and ...[perhaps] a book by J. Frank Dobie... Finally in went a Texas flag...

In addition, of course, the radicals' unashamed choice of a book like *Racism and Sexism* for E306 displays the great confidence they have in their own

power in the department. Their confidence is justified because more professors who do not agree with them have been cowed into silence. The radical non-traditionalists continue to win places in, and chairmanships of, curriculum and hiring committees. Dean of Liberal Arts Meacham and Chairman of English Kruppa, while perhaps not quite as radical, clearly sympathize with many of the radicals' goals.

**Uncommitted moderates, and even most traditionalists, do not dare to question each new radical proposal. Moderates and traditionalists are frightened of having their careers hurt or of being branded as bigots.**

The radicalization of the curriculum is not confined to the English department. According to former Dean of Liberal Arts Robert King non-traditionalists are now attempting to radicalize the two required History courses (HIS315K and HIS315L) and the two required Government courses (GOV310 and GOV312).

Outside the College of Liberal Arts the radicals' rise to power, and subsequent abuses of power, have gone unnoticed. Traditionalists inside the department have remained quiet. The local press is wholly in league with the non-traditionalists. Local reports on academic affairs, especially in *The Austin American Statesman*, reflect an unjournalistic, uncritical acceptance of the non-traditionalists' views. A lead editorial in *The Statesman* actually endorsed the radicalization of E306; a recent lead editorial in *The Daily Texan* was an unusually wicked and unfair personal attack on an E306 opponent. The other side of the story would never have been told if it had not been for two journalists far removed from the campus: Paul Burka at *Texas Monthly* and William Murchison at *The Dallas Morning News*.

The victory over E306 is a welcome, but small one. Hopefully it will embolden traditional professors in the UT College of Liberal Arts. The conflict over E306 was, however, one small battle in a war over the curriculum occurring at Liberal Arts depart-

ments across the nation. In this war the odds are heavily against the traditionalists. As Roger Kimball notes in *Tenured Radicals*:

[Radical professors] are precisely the people helping to shape the future by making faculty appointments, overseeing promotions, and devising the educational program in the humanities - efforts at self-propagation that virtually ensure their continued dominance for another generation. The truth is that when the children of the sixties received their professorships and deanships they did not abandon the dream of radical cultural transformation; they set out to implement it. Now, instead of disrupting classes, they are teaching them; instead of attempting to destroy our educational institutions physically, they are subverting them from within... Far from being the work of a besieged minority, these voices represent the new academic establishment of tenured radicals.

*Mays is a recent graduate of UT.*

## ***Help Wanted!***

*UR is a growing publication with numerous opportunities for involvement. If you are interested in writing, editing, layout, cartooning, advertising, photography, or all that other stuff that makes a newspaper go, be in attendance at our recruitment meeting at:*

*The Probe Center  
Dobie Mall  
September 5  
7:00 PM*