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NEWSPAPER**

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COMMENT AND OPINION



MARSHALL RAMSEY, THE DAILY BEACON, U. OF TENNESSEE

Preaching and teaching: Unethical for classrooms

By Stephen Clark
■ The Daily Beacon
U. of Tennessee

Imagine a university where the professors promote a particular religious or ideological belief in the course of their classroom instruction. Imagine professors who inject subtle, almost subliminal, messages into course material. I am not describing Moscow or Beijing universities; I am describing U. of Tennessee.

Many Americans believe that a strict separation of church and state prevents such abuses of the educational system. However, I witnessed such abuses firsthand. A full-time professor, in whose class I had enrolled, consistently and without qualification espoused the doctrines of Catholicism in his class. A professor simply should not attempt to convert students to his/her own religious or ideological opinions.

On several occasions the professor used substantial class time to deliver anecdotes — laced with personal religious sentiments — that at best were only vaguely tangential to the course material. In one instance, the day after the death of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, the professor stated flatly, "Well, he is in hell because that's where you go if you

worship a pagan god." For a professor to make unequivocal judgments is inexcusably unethical and insensitive.

Not once did I hear the words "I believe" or "In my opinion" preface such statements. Classroom discussion and individual interpretations of materials were stifled. In just four days of class, the professor taught me the true nature of hell, what it takes to get there and who is currently burning for eternity — that's a bit more than I anticipated when I filled out my registration form.

Professors must promote an unbiased discussion and mediate the debate between differing student opinions. This does not mean that professors cannot express their own opinions, but instructors must make certain that students can distinguish between when professors are teaching and when they are preaching.

Students who find themselves in such an uncomfortable position should do something about it. Seriously consider dropping the course, but if you do, tell the professor why. My professor's response was that he/she made no attempt to hide religious convictions.

You also may choose to stay in the class and discuss the problem with the professor. If the discussion is ineffective, you may choose to pursue your case further.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Blacks can't be racist'

To The Editor:
In making his assertion that blacks are not taken to task for their racist comments ("Behind the racist comments," December 1989), Thom Borland assumes this to be a fair and equal society in which we live, but it is not, especially for those of us whose ancestors were stolen from their homeland to build this so-called "great" nation. Perhaps Mr. Borland should take a course in "Reality 101" if they offer such a course at good ole North Texas U.

I wish to clear up another misconception whites all across America hold. Contrary to popular belief, including that of our misguided Supreme Court, only those in a position of power can be

racist. Blacks, therefore, who in this country hold no real power, cannot be racist. The bottom line is a green line, and since there are no black CEOs, nevermind owners of the Fortune 500 elite, we have remained powerless within the mainstream. Even our political gains remain hollow without economic empowerment.

If U. really expects to be "The National College Newspaper" it attempts to pass itself off as, I suggest it broaden its editorial staff by hiring a representative from a historically black college. Perhaps then it will be able to enhance the quality of the national student body better than it now supposedly does.

Maynard Clark, senior
Howard U.

Prof accuses 'A' student of cheating

By Jennifer Rampey
■ The Red and Black
U. of Georgia

For the first time in my life, I felt totally humiliated.

Our teacher returned graded tests to the class, but no papers were handed to my neighbor and I.

After class, the teacher presented us with our tests. I had made an "A" and my neighbor had made a "B." The teacher pointed out one section of the test, and remarked how strange it was that the eight answers were almost exactly alike.

My mouth dropped open and tears filled my eyes. I was being accused of cheating. My integrity was stripped from me and I was very offended.

I had no reason to cheat. I have never cheated, and my average was high enough that I could afford a bad grade.

My neighbor was abrasive and said she definitely did not cheat. I related the same sentiments. Nevertheless, the teacher asked us to retake the disputed section of the test.

The next morning, I saw my neighbor. I had decided to give her the benefit of the doubt, but when she told me she had studied for three hours to fill in eight spaces, the pieces began to fit together. She said she wanted to make sure the teacher knew the cheater wasn't her and was planning to demand an apology.

I had no problem with the retest. Afterward, my teacher reassured me that she knew what had happened and was sorry she had upset me. She asked me to put myself in her shoes.

I felt relieved and put myself in her shoes. She really didn't know either one of us so how could she know whether I was a slimeball who cheated in all my classes?

But did she put herself in my shoes? My academic career was on the line. This other student may have cheated and it appeared that she wouldn't be reprimanded. All the work I had done in the class had been momentarily reduced to nothing.

I'm not completely bitter about this experience. At least I know the "A" I got in the class was something I earned.



**STUDENT
OPINION POLL**
1-800-662-5511

What would you do if a college teacher mixed his opinions in classroom lectures without qualifying the statements?

- a) discuss it with the professor
- b) drop the course
- c) nothing
- d) complain to the teacher's superior

Responses to November U. Poll

In November, we asked readers if residence hall staff should have the authority to search a student's dorm room if there is reasonable suspicion that the resident possesses illegal drugs. Most students (77%) thought that residence hall staff should not have this authority.