ACADEMIC QUESTIONS

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Editorial Purpose and Policy: American higher education has been profoundly compromised in the past two decades. Standards have been eroded, the curriculum has been debased, and research has been trivialized or distorted by ideology. Yet the established voices of the academy often speak in tones that are self-congratulatory rather than self-critical. *Academic Questions* utilizes the best of scholarly analysis to explore the conspicuous vices, as well as the virtues, of the contemporary university. A critique of the academy by academics themselves, *Academic Questions* will uphold the traditions of humanism and intellectual freedom.

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A Tale of Two Frauds

Justus Reid Weiner

For academics, whose vocation is the pursuit of the truth, what justification, if any, can excuse their lying? And what action will a university take when it is exposed publicly that one of their professors has perpetrated a wide-ranging fraud?

These are not hypothetical questions at Columbia University. In two strikingly similar cases, both involving members of the English Department, this prestigious institution has had to face devastatingly embarrassing disclosures about popular members of its faculty who had brought recognition to the university. These cases, though separated by forty years, involved public dishonesty that impaired their teaching capacity. One instance was made into a feature film. The other, which recently became public knowledge, has already prompted 150 newspaper and magazine articles around the world.

The first affair centered on a junior faculty member in the English Department at Columbia University and his involvement in the sensational television "quiz show" deception. Charles Van Doren made a name for himself as a high-profile intellectual, a national hero of intellect, through the adroit use of television. Van Doren's medium was the highly popular late-1950s NBC television program *Twenty-One,* watched by fifty million viewers. For a comparison, the current top rated TV show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* has almost thirty million viewers who tune in to any of the three weekly programs. And of course the population of the United States has grown dramatically during the four decades that separated these two quiz shows.

The story of *Twenty-One* was retold a few years ago in the successful feature movie *Quiz Show* that garnered four Oscar nominations. Actor Ralph Fiennes starred as the handsome, telegenic, highly educated, blue-blood quiz show contestant Charles Van Doren. *Twenty-One* featured questions ostensibly kept in a bank vault, supposedly to keep the contest fair.

As the reigning champion for fourteen weeks, Van Doren's demonstrable mastery of arcane and esoteric facts put him on the cover of *Time, Life,* and *TV Guide* magazines and enabled him to take home $129,000, the largest sum "won" by any contestant on the show. His popularity was such that following

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his defeat NBC hired him, at a handsome salary of $50,000 a year, to add a few minutes of cultural seasoning to the daily morning *Today* show. Then a couple years later Van Doren's world began to collapse when a defeated contestant alleged that *Twenty-One* was rigged.

Van Doren initially denied he was given the answers, but after lying to the media and perjuring himself before a grand jury, he came clean before the congressional subcommittee investigating the quiz programs. Facing one of the largest crowds ever to attend a congressional hearing, Van Doren described how he was furnished with questions, and often the answers as well, prior to each live broadcast of the show. Van Doren explained how he had suppressed his guilty feelings by rationalizing that as an academic, his success served to popularize respect for education. Referring to himself as "foolish" and "incredibly naïve," Van Doren movingly testified that he became caught up in something dishonest that he did not know how to stop. A headline in the *New York Times* captured these sentiments: "Teacher Fears He has Done Disservice to All in Education."

Although Van Doren offered his resignation to Columbia as a matter of courtesy, his earnest desire was to continue to teach. The university's reaction, however, was swift and unforgiving. The evening after Van Doren made his admissions to the congressional subcommittee, Columbia University president Grayson Kirk issued the following statement:

> The Trustees of the University examined the testimony of Charles Van Doren . . . [and] determined to accept the offer of resignation submitted by Mr. Van Doren effective immediately.

Dean John G. Palfrey released a statement which said that:

> The issue is the moral one of honesty and integrity of teaching. Appearing as a teacher, Mr. Van Doren engaged in an act of deception. ...This behavior seems to me to have been contrary to the principles that a teacher stands for and undertakes to instill in his students. If these principles are to continue to have meaning at Columbia, Mr. Van Doren's ultimate offer to resign had to be accepted.

The decision to accept Charles Van Doren's resignation must not have been an easy one as his father, Mark Van Doren, had been a highly respected professor in Columbia's English Department for thirty-nine years. The senior Van Doren, a Pulitzer prize winning poet and literary critic, was renowned for his dedication to teaching. Indeed, since 1962 Columbia has annually recognized excellence in teaching with the Mark Van Doren Award.

Comparing himself to Oedipus, the tragic figure of Greek mythology who plucked out his own eyes in order to see, Van Doren attempted to rededicate himself to "the academic life" which he described as "what I've always wanted to do." Van Doren's students held a rally on campus at which 800 of them signed a petition urging his reinstatement, which was presented to President

Kirk. Despite sympathy from members of the House Subcommittee and widespread public support, and although he was quoted as saying, "I would like to spend the rest of my life here [at Columbia]," Van Doren lost both his teaching job and his more lucrative position with NBC. Though he has since written a number of acclaimed books, Van Doren never taught again.

Editorial analysis and commentary on Van Doren's role in the fraud was decidedly judgmental. *New York Times* columnist Arthur Krock expressed disgust with public willingness to accept Van Doren's expressions of contrition:

> What passes for contrition is frequently accepted as the real thing if the penitent has a dramatic talent which includes skilled employment of the choked-up voice, a pleasing personality, a fine family background and other incitements of a compassion unmerited by the circumstance that he is confessing only because he was at last found out.

The French newspaper *France-Soir* likened Van Doren's testimony to Richard Nixon's "Checkers" speech and commented, "In America, more than anywhere, contrition is a form of redemption. A sinner who confesses is a sinner pardoned." The noted professor of political science Hans J. Morgenthau identified the real issue as "the scholar's special commitment to the truth" and criticized the students and Congressmen who opposed accepting Van Doren's letter of resignation. Morgenthau stated, "the Van Doren case is a great event in the history of America" because "it poses a moral issue that goes to the very heart of American society." Morgenthau observed, "in what America says about Van Doren, the moral fiber of America itself stands revealed. By judging Van Doren, America bears judgment upon itself." Distinguishing this scandal from cases of political or commercial corruption, Morgenthau reasoned:

> The Van Doren case poses a different, more profound issue. It arose in a sphere whose ultimate value is neither power nor wealth but truth. The professor is a man who has devoted his life to "profess," and what he is pledged to profess is the truth as he sees it. Mendacity in a professor is a moral fault which denies the very core of the professor's calling. A mendacious professor is not like a politician who subordinates the public good to private gain, nor like a businessman who cheats. Rather, he is like the physician who, pledged to heal, maims and kills.

Reminiscent of the Van Doren scandal, a new deceit perpetrated by a professor in the Columbia English Department, Edward W. Said, recently became public knowledge. Its revelation is subsequent to research I conducted over a period of more than three years on four continents—visiting archives, libraries, and public record offices—together with more than eighty-five interviews. Edward Said, whom the BBC referred to as "the best known Palestinian intellectual in the world" emerged as a refugee, not from Palestine, but from the truth. Said's oft-recited parable of his idyllic childhood in Jerusalem, of being driven from his school, dispossessed of his beautiful house and his father's

successful business, was revealed as a fabrication constructed out of one or two circumstances and a raft of inventions. My article in *Commentary* magazine,[1] which ran in a condensed version in the *Wall Street Journal*,[2] and the subsequent exchange of letters[3] exhaustively document the nature and extent of the deception[4] perpetrated in part in Said's book *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, which Columbia University Press published in 1986.[5]

In brief, Said crafted his autobiographical narrative as a compelling metaphor for the larger Palestinian condition, convincing many in academia and elsewhere that he was the genuine article—a dispossessed Palestinian refugee deserving of what he referred to as "reparations." Aside from the venue of Said's birth, which his parents timed for a visit to Jerusalem because they doubted the hygiene in Cairo hospitals, the city (Jerusalem) to which he claimed "nearly everything in my early life could be traced" was actually the home of relatives whom Said visited now and then. This would-be Palestinian refugee spent virtually his entire childhood in Cairo, the son of a wealthy businessman with American citizenship, in luxurious apartments staffed by maids and a butler, enrolled in private English and American schools and playing tennis (as the son of a member) at the exclusive Gazira Sporting Club. And far from being driven out of Jerusalem by a Zionist sound truck as he told an interviewer in the *Christian Science Monitor*, Edward Said was driven around Cairo by his father's chauffeurs in his large black American cars. It was in Cairo that Edward Said learned secondhand about the 1948 Arab-Israeli war from Palestinian refugees, including some relatives, who ended up in Egypt. It was also in Cairo that his father suffered financial havoc at the hands—not of Israel—but first of rioting revolutionary mobs who burned his Cairo stores in 1952 and, after he rebuilt them, the anti-foreigner nationalization policies of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The intellectual dishonesty that my research revealed is even more deplorable given Said's book *Representations of the Intellectual* which formulates, *alta voce*, the duty of the intellectual "to speak the truth; as plainly, directly and as honestly as possible."

Like the Van Doren scandal, Professor Said's deceit was perpetrated outside the scope of his classroom teaching responsibilities at Columbia. Although Van Doren's deceit was viewed by a much larger audience, only Said's scholarship is directly implicated in the fraud, as for example, when he wrote in his book *The Politics of Dispossession*, "I was born, in November 1935, in Talbiya, then a mostly new and prosperous Arab quarter of Jerusalem. By the end of 1947, just months before Talbiya fell to Jewish forces, I'd left with my family for Cairo." Likewise Said embellished his parable of a childhood in Jerusalem in *The Pen and the Sword*, where he described his childhood memories as "recollections of my early days in Palestine, my youth, the first twelve or thirteen years of my life before I left Palestine."

Said's fraud clearly embodies far-reaching implications for the integrity of Columbia University. Like Van Doren, Said misled the public. This time the

public included millions of people who saw the documentary film "In Search of Palestine" which Said wrote and narrated for the BBC4 and which was broadcast around the globe by the BBC World Service. Millions of others have seen and heard Said interviewed in the electronic media on BBC, NPR, PBS, CBC, Australian radio, the Charlie Rose Show, and the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour. The recipient of several honorary Ph.D.s, Professor Said has published a number of highly influential books, including *Orientalism,* that are widely assigned as college texts. A smaller, but still important audience has heard his lectures on some 200 campuses.

Said's fabrications are highly significant, all the more so because of his elevated status. He is a tenured, full professor in the English department at Columbia where he serves as chair of comparative literature. Moreover, Said is one of just a handful of superstars who have been awarded the title "University Professor" out of a faculty totaling more than 7,500. In addition, Professor Said was the president of the Modern Language Association (the largest professional association in America) during 1999. Said serves or has served as a member of the PEN executive board, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and as a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He is probably best known for his years of service to the PLO, during the decades that its principle *modus operandi* was terrorism. More recently, Said received media attention for his acrimonious break with Yasser Arafat over the latter's negotiation of interim peace agreements with Israel, which Said condemns as a sell-out of the claims of the refugees. In all, it would be difficult to imagine a more public, higher-profile academic.

Rather than express contrition like Van Doren, Said remains utterly unrepentant. He has not expressed a hint of a *mea culpa* as regards his fabrications which, incidentally, earned him many Palestinian and Western admirers who considered him the avatar of the Palestinian cause. None of his public statements, interviews, or articles expressed any anguish or even regret over the professional implications of his misconduct. And to the extent public records reveal, Professor Said has not offered Columbia University, his employer since 1963, even the courtesy of an explanation. More important, he lacks the good taste to tender his resignation as did Van Doren when he realized his off-campus conduct had placed the good name of the university and his effectiveness as a scholar and teacher in doubt.

And amazingly, Professor Said was not sanctioned or reprimanded by the current Columbia president, George Rupp. Nor has the dean, the board of trustees, or the university senate publicly addressed Said's dissimulation. Instead Virgil Renzulli, the associate vice president for public affairs has taken the point position in defending the inaction of the institution and the deafening silence of the powers that be. Interviewed by the student newspaper, the *Daily Spectator,* Renzulli assumed the posture of damage control, denying that

the Said controversy "pertain[ed] to his status as a Columbia University faculty member, where his position is as a literary scholar and critic." This was not a mitigating factor when Van Doren's career was on the line, although he, too, was a literary scholar and critic. Attempting to evade the essence of the controversy, Renzulli asserted, "It is a dispute that has to do with political positions he has taken over a period of time, not his scholarship." Renzulli's distinction is utterly artificial. Even Columbia's website claims "Middle East politics" is one of Said's academic specialties. Moreover my critique focuses on Said's intellectual integrity and moral authority, not his politics. I wonder if Renzulli ever saw *Quiz Show,* because there seems to be a double standard: no one in the Columbia administration offered Van Doren an out.

The nature of these frauds poses hard questions to the university. At the campus rally urging Van Doren's reinstatement, one student shouted, "Charlie's going to be in the quad tomorrow to give out the answers to the Comparative Lit exam." This hints at the dilemma which springs from keeping an admitted liar and cheat on the faculty. Might Van Doren have given examination answers to favored students? Would he have lacked the moral stature, after he had cheated on the quiz show, to begin the disciplinary process for students caught sharing answers on tests? Indeed, how could Van Doren have maintained academic standards against cheating when he had chosen that very path to fame and fortune?

Doubts about Van Doren's suitability to teach at Columbia apply *a fortiori* to Said. Said is influential in determining the future of some of the best and brightest of America's youth. All Columbia College applicants are required to write a "Personal Essay" that addresses "experiences which have shaped your life, the circumstances of your upbringing." Every applicant must sign his or her application to attest to its truthfulness. What kind of example is Edward Said for these new hopefuls, who may be tempted to embellish their affluent suburban upbringing, moving it to another country to cast themselves as victims of political strife? Might they wonder if dishonesty could assist them in securing acceptance to one of the country's finest universities? Could Said, or the university for that matter, discipline a student who was discovered to have falsified his or her personal essay? And could Said differentiate between autobiography and fiction for his students of literature?

What message does Said's fraud, committed while he served as the chair of the doctoral program in comparative literature, send to Ph.D. students and young faculty members who often model their lives and careers on those of their mentors? Should they embellish their résumés? And what about junior faculty that face stiff competition climbing the rungs of the ladder to tenure? How will the Said case influence their scholarship and their off-campus involvements? And if caught spinning a yarn, should a 17-year-old college applicant or a 23-year-old Ph.D. applicant be held to a higher standard of truth than a 64-year-old tenured member of the faculty?

The magnitude of the double standard is highlighted by Columbia's recent handling of the case of Puneet Bhandari, a 19-year-old pre-med student, who was discovered to have told a series of lies to one of his professors. Claiming to be the victim of a car crash in which a drunk driver injured him and killed his brother, Bhandari secured additional time to complete an assignment. When eighteen months later the student's lies became known to the university, it rescinded its endorsement of his medical school applications, a prerequisite for acceptance, and initiated the dean's discipline procedure. In the procedure Bhandari was forthright in acknowledging that he had lied. He was ordered expelled although, on appeal, the dean of Columbia College reduced the punishment to a two-year suspension. On 20 April 2000, shortly after his appeal to the Southern District Court for an injunction to block the suspension was rejected, Bhandari committed suicide by stepping in front of an Amtrak train. Bhandari's lawyer told the Columbia *Daily Spectator* that his client's lies were caused by psychological problems and severe stress, and that the case should have been handled as a psychological plea for help rather than a disciplinary proceeding. Whatever the reason for Bhandari's lies, it is difficult not to be startled by Columbia's comparative disinterest in investigating, let alone punishing, University Professor Edward Said's far more elaborate, and public, invented tale of victimization.

There is also the Columbia University *Faculty Handbook* to consider, which states, "long-standing, often irreversible damage can result from a breach of academic commitment to truth in investigative activities." The Handbook also states that dismissal can be effected when there is "clear manifestation" of "professional unfitness." Van Doren, the junior untenured faculty member was perfunctorily dismissed while Said, the tenured superstar, got off scot-free. The former was publicly banished from the academy and the latter continues, as if nothing happened, as a university professor and chair of comparative literature.[6]

And how does Said's deceit measure up under the principles of professional conduct for academics? Here the relevant authority is the American Association of University Professors' 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Paragraph (c), under the heading "Academic Freedom," provides that professors speaking as citizens (i.e., outside their university role) shall, "at all times be accurate." Because of his position, a professor is deemed to hold a fiduciary position of public trust that must not be abused. Furthermore, with respect to scholarship it is a cardinal sin for an academic knowingly to state or present a falsehood. This includes misrepresenting the strength of one's findings or credentials.

Differences also deserve to be mentioned when comparing the Said and Van Doren episodes. First, while Van Doren had to be coaxed by the producers of the program to compete dishonestly, Said initiated and carried out his deceit by himself. Second, Said was hardly a green newcomer to the academy

when he perpetrated his fraud. Van Doren, by contrast, had only a master's degree and had just begun teaching as an Instructor at Columbia when he first appeared as contestant on the quiz show *Twenty-One* in 1957. Third, Van Doren suffered grievous professional and financial reverses in the wake of his public confession, while Said continues to enjoy his privileged academic position. Furthermore, it appears that Said will continue to enjoy the benefits, in money and prestige, of what can only be described as the pinnacle of academia. Just one example: despite the scandal, Said was invited to give still another keynote address, this one entitled "Dispossession as Distortion and Dislocation" at a conference on the Palestinian refugees held at Boston University on 8 April 2000. Did the sponsor of this gathering, the Trans-Arab Research Institute, even care that by honoring Said they placed in doubt the veracity of genuine refugees?

And double standards are not limited to Columbia University. The media, which ruminated at length on the meaning and significance of Van Doren's fraud, gave Said a pass. Despite the many articles that have appeared in various publications around the world addressing various aspects of the Said controversy,[7] the media has all but ignored the implications of Said's fraud for Columbia. The university's dilemma was addressed by Jeff Jacoby in the *Boston Globe*,[8] Marc Berley in the *New York Post*,[9] and one non-committal, "he-said, she-said," article in the *Columbia Daily Spectator*.[10] Conversely, during the Van Doren scandal the *Spectator* ran seventeen articles and nine letters to the editor. Interestingly, one of its editorials addressed the defense that quiz shows were, after all, just entertainment by pointing out that "entertainment depended, as does so much in our life in society, upon a trust we have in the fair dealing and honesty of the proceedings." Cover up, anyone?

During the Van Doren period, the *Nation* ran a piece that reveals a striking inconsistency. In the Van Doren scandal, this bastion of political and literary liberalism ran an editorial defending Columbia University's Board of Trustees' prompt acceptance of Van Doren's resignation. It reasoned that "the trustees are running a university to educate youth, not a soap-opera factory, and had no alternative but to do what they did." Professor Said's fraud was treated far differently by this publication. Perhaps this turnabout is not coincidental. The *Nation's* masthead on the Internet features none other than a certain Columbia University professor as its "contributing writer and music critic." His thumbnail biography on their website continues to claim that "In 1948, Said and his family were dispossessed from Palestine and settled in Cairo." Even Said himself has now backed away from this in his memoir *Out of Place*, which was published a month after my article in *Commentary*. And, not surprisingly, the *Nation* completely ignored the overwhelming evidence I presented—running instead rabid columns by Said defenders Christopher Hitchens and Alexander Cockburn, ostensibly addressing the controversy. In its better days, the magazine would have insisted upon the university's

duty to secure the resignation of a faculty member who had intentionally violated his function—to "educate youth."

What has changed? Van Doren was an academic who lied not in the classroom but to the public. Why is Professor Said, who should know better and who, unlike Van Doren, is an unrepentant perpetrator of a fraud, treated differently? The implications of having such a person on the faculty ought to force Columbia to reassess its failure to act in this case, and not only because of its impact on the University's public image. Why, in the Said case, has the university overlooked its own *Faculty Handbook* and the long-established standards of the Association of American University Professors? Why does it delegate to a public relations officer a burden that should be substantively addressed, as it was in Van Doren's case, by the president and the dean? Why doesn't Columbia insist on honesty as a foundation for education as its dean did in the Van Doren case forty years ago? Should not Hans Morgenthau's comment that "mendacity in a professor is a moral fault which denies the very core of the professor's calling" be even more relevant to a mature professor of Said's stature? In sum, it is hard not to be cynical about Columbia's real-life adherence to its vaunted academic principles in the wake of the Said cover-up.

Notes

1. Justus Reid Weiner, "My Beautiful Old House," *Commentary*, September 1999, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/9909/weiner.html. Note that only the Web version contains full documentation.
2. Justus Reid Weiner, "The False Prophet of Palestine," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 August 1999, 18A, http://www.wsj.com.
3. Letters to the Editor. "Edward Said's Fabrications: An Exchange—Justus Reid Weiner and Critics," *Commentary*, January 2000, 3, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/0001/letters.html#ESF.
4. I have discussed related issues elsewhere. Justus Reid Weiner "Palestinian Exile Reinvented," *Jerusalem Post*, 19 November 1999, B12, http://search.jpost.com; Justus Reid Weiner, letter to the editor "Exile's Return," *New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2000, 49, http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/WWWarchdisplay.cgi?20000224049L1; Justus Weiner, "The False Prophet of Palestine," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints* (Newsletter of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs), 16 January 2000, http://www.jcpa.org/jl-list.htm; Justus Reid Weiner, "A Palestinian Intellectual Unacquainted with Truth," *Houston Chronicle*, 10 February 2000, 35A, http://www.chron.com.
5. According to the PR blurb of the publisher, which can be read on the Barnes & Nobles website, *After the Last Sky* is "A searing portrait in words and photographs of Palestinian life and identity that is at once an exploration of Edward Said's own dislocated past and a testimony to the lives of those living in exile."
6. See Jaime Sneider, "Edward Said: Questions of Truth," *Campus*, vol. 11, no. 2, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Spring-Summer 2000, 16.
7. Among the many interesting articles the following deserve special mention: Premen Addy, "Another Icon Bites the Dust," *The Hindu*, 2 September 1999, http://www.the-hindu.com; David Bar-Ilan, "The Said Fabrications and the Media," *Jerusalem Post*, 12 November 1999, http://www.jpost.com; Mark Goldblatt, "The Lying Left: Said's True Home," *New York Post*, 1 September 1999, http://www.nypost.com; Hillel Halkin,"Self-Made Man: Looking for the Real Edward Said," *Forward*, 22 October 1999, 1, http://www.forward.com/BACK/1999/99.10.22/arts.html; David Horowitz, "Three Political Romancers," *salon.com*, 27 September 1999, http://www.salon.com/news/col/horo/1999/09/27/said/index2.html; Daniel Johnson, "The Deconstruction of Said," *Daily Telegraph*, 21 August 1999; Dan Kennedy, "He Said, He Said," *Boston Phoenix*, 23–30 September 1999, http://www.bostonphoenix.com; Charles Krauthammer, "The Case of the Suspect Bios," *Time Magazine*, 4 October 1999, 91, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/articles/0,3266,31519,00.html; Keith Windschuttle, "Edward Said's Orientalism Revisited," *Quadrant* (Sydney, Australia), January-February 2000.
8. Jeff Jacoby, "Professor Said's Untrue Stories," *Boston Globe*, 30 August 1999, A14, http://www.boston.com.
9. Marc Berley, "Is Columbia Covering For Said?" *New York Post*, 21 September 1999 http://www.nypost.com.
10. Benjamin Lowe, "Columbia U. Prof Accused of Falsifying His Past," *Daily Spectator*, 7 September 1999, 1, http://www.columbiaspectator.com/archives/archives.htm. The *Daily Spectator's* only additional coverage of this conversation was an op-ed (Benjamin Wheeler, "The Love Song of J. Reid Weiner," *Daily Spectator*, 13 September 1999, 5) and an insightful letter to the editor (Ron Lewenberg, "Spinning over Falsification," *Daily Spector*, 7 September 1999, 5).

The Fall 1999 issue of *Inside Academe*, the newsletter of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, carried on page 6 under the caption, "Activist Credit," the following paragraphs:

It used to be students went to college to explore the verities and ponder the "larger questions." Bradford College in Haverhill, Massachusetts, has a different idea. That's why it has created a new degree program, Studies for Social Justice. According to a local newspaper article reprinted in *Academic Features*, a semi-annual publication of the College, the new program offers "activism as a major." Bradford "sees a marketing niche for itself in training 'socially concerned' students to become advocates and activists."

And what exactly does that mean? Well, students must take philosophy, history, sociology, and other humanities classes along with such courses as "Activism for a Just Society," "Nonviolent Social Action," "Social Problems," and "Discourse on Power." Other classes focus on gender, race, and social work.

The course culminates with a six-credit "activist experience" and a two-semester senior research project.

Want to enroll? Beware. The Bradford magazine advises that "Conscience is a prerequisite."

The activism program was apparently a last-ditch marketing ploy that failed to attract the necessary applicants to this 1998-year-old institution. On 19 November 1999, avowing that they "had never compromised the value and integrity of a Bradford degree," the chair of the board of trustees announced that Bradford College would be closed after the May 2000 graduation.