

31 January

From: R.G. Schmitt

To: David Hood, et al.

Re: A Course Critique Continued

1. In order to confirm my thought that a great number of students have serious misgivings about the American Decision Making Institutions course, I surveyed the second year class to determine how many agreed with my personal opinions of this particular course.
2. The enclosed "questionnaire" was not intended to be unbiased; I further admit to having no particular competence at conducting such surveys.
3. It is, however, the most complete critique in that it represents quite a few members of our class.
4. Since the original critiques were anonymous, it was specified on this critique that identifying signatures were not necessary; each entry, however, is genuine.
5. For a variety of reasons, a number of students felt "chilled" about participating in this survey. Other students, for another variety of reasons, don't participate in my ventures.
6. At least thirty (30) students indicated to me they have not handed in a course critique on this course. My projection for the entire class leads me to believe there cannot be more than 15 valid course critiques yet handed in. If actions or decisions are being made on a greater number of course critiques, I would question the validity of those decisions. (In other words, the "ballot box has been stuffed.") If decisions are being made on less than a full survey of our class, I would again at least question the prudence of such decisions for the simple reason that our class believes their opinions are not being sought.
7. I am under the impression that it is a policy of the University that all students will critique all their courses. My experience in graduate courses has been that a critique was done in each class on the last day; I cannot say what use has been made of these critiques on the "upper campus", but I do know at least the administrators on the upper campus have been serious about conducting such critiques.

8. It has been my impression, and I have no reason not to believe other students have the same thoughts, that the critique of courses at the Law school has been very disorganized. I can specifically recall, as a former member of the Curriculum Committee, not getting any response on the much bally-hooped "McIntyre" critique of the first semester and I further recall a grand mix-up during the summer of the second-semester critique.

9. I have never seen any summary of any of these alleged critiques; I do, however recall a promise of such a summary over a year ago.

10. I am not aware of any direct influence that these critiques have had, other than general assurances that we are "listened to."

11. It is my feeling (and again, this is a representative opinion), that lines of communication between faculty and students are seriously distorted. I would therefore suggest, as a first step, the faculty begin surveying the students on a continuing basis on a number of topics. I have serious doubts about the validity of whatever "method" the faculty currently uses to gauge student opinion.

*Ry Schmitt*

Explanation:

Only a relatively small number of course critiques were handed in by our class, and surprisingly (in my opinion) about 1/3 of them were favorable to Becker's course. I feel this is a gross distortion of the true "mood" of our class. The faculty is split on the future of Becker and his course at this school, and the purpose of this "joint critique" is to give some ammunition to the faction against Becker. So if you so desire, please read the facing page and if you agree with any of the points, please reserve a line with your name (or signature) or identifying pseudonym or number or whatever and check off the boxes that correspond to the points you agree with.

I apologize if the points seem unclear, non-logical, too didactic, etc., but this topic brings out my emotions and not my logic. Find the ones you like best and I'll make sure your thoughts on this matter will do some "good".

Some comments concerning Prof. Becker and his last course:

1. I have not yet handed in a critique on his course.
2. All things considered, I was very unhappy with Prof. Becker and his course.
3. Basic issues of constitutional law were largely ignored in this course.
4. I feel I have had a very inadequate exposure to vital issues of constitutional law.
5. Reading material for the course was too voluminous.
6. I cannot see the value of a significant amount of the reading material.
7. A significant amount of the reading material was superficial.
8. Case analysis by the professor was weak and not up to the general level I have seen in a number of other courses.
9. Some students apparently analyzed cases on a level beyond that usually demonstrated by the professor.
10. Definition of basic terms and the logic used by the professor was questioned by students on occasion and such questions were not satisfied by the professor.
11. The theme of the course rested heavily on a few basic hypotheses (ie., the "original ideology"). These hypotheses were inadequately demonstrated.
12. The professor attempted constantly to impose his political philosophy on the class material (ie., through several hypotheses). These political views appear irrelevant to an understanding of constitutional law or American decision-making institutions.
13. The professor's attitude in class was one of arrogance. On the balance, this arrogance was detrimental to the learning process.
14. The class discussion was poorly conducted and I gained very little from it.
15. On the whole, there seemed to be little reason for attending class.
16. I do not feel the final exam reflected an understanding of constitutional law or American decision-making institutions.
17. I do not feel my grade received in this course reflects my knowledge of constitutional law or American decision-making institutions.
18. I do not feel Prof. Becker can be a positive asset to this Law School.



		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18								
26	RICK	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
27	WAYSON	✓	✓					✓		✓							✓										
27	Velowatz	✓	Not a fair questionnaire																								
28	LINCOLN ABE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓					✓								
29	Allen K	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
30	Howard Lubushin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
31	Dotty Eads	✓	Not a fair questionnaire																								
32	(see sep. critique) KING (questionnaire is biased)		✓																✓	Course was mixed bag: both strengths & weaknesses							
33	Ed Doernberger	✓	Not a fair questionnaire.																								
34	Wayne M.																			Course was mixed bag: both strengths & weaknesses							
35	Ron S.	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	As announced at the start of the year, the course was conducted as expected - however, the worth was questionable.																
36	LYNNE		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
37	Jim S.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
38	Jones	✓	FORTHCOMING																								