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RESPONSE TO TEMPLE “INDOCTRINATION U” STUDY

On October 25, 2006 David Horowitz and Laksin published “[Intellectual Indoctrination and Academic Fraud at Temple University](#)” on his website [FrontPageMag](#). The full text is part of a series called *Indoctrination U* and was published on [Discover the Networks](#). What follows is a sampling of the type of shoddy research Horowitz and Laksin employ to grossly misrepresent courses, programs, and faculty at Temple University. Horowitz and Laksin’s assertions appear first in bold, followed by Free Exchange’s research into each assertion.

“Temple provides a ‘writing-intensive two course sequence’ called ‘Intellectual Heritage’ which is required of all Temple students and which includes a focus on Enlightenment, Romantic and Revolutionary Thinkers. The Revolutionary Thinkers include Darwin, Marx and Freud, but not Adam Smith.”

It is true that Adam Smith is not listed under the [Revolutionary Thinkers](#) section, but Horowitz and Laksin neglect to point out that Smith appears earlier in the course under the [Enlightenment Thinkers](#) section. The Intellectual Heritage Site includes an [indexed edition](#) of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* and a Historical Context page with an essay on Smith that begins [as follows](#):

As with the thoughts of all the other thinkers we use in Intellectual Heritage, discussion of Adam Smith's idea could easily consume an entire three credit course. Indeed, one could devote a lifetime to the study of Smith, his ideas, and the wall of books critics and devotees of Smith have already written. As none of us have anything approaching that kind of time, this essay will focus on the relevance of the Source Book excerpts of *Wealth of Nations* to the teaching of Intellectual Heritage. In other words, this short piece will try to explain how Smith's thought can be related to the larger themes of I.H. 52.

“In all, there are about 30 sample exam and study questions provided which relate to Marx. Every one, without exception, prompts students to explain what Marx said in the way you would expect students to explain the theories of Isaac Newton, whose hypotheses were confirmed by real world experiments.”

The “Paper Topics and Examination Questions on Marx” are *not* phrased in such a way as to treat Marx’s theories as facts. The questions are stated to assess students’ understanding of the

material presented on Marx, and they all begin with some variation of “Why did Marx think...,” “What, according to Marx...,” or “What is Marx’s vision of...”

Examples of the questions [include](#):

What, according to Marx, determines the aims and purposes of government in a capitalist society? How accurate is Marx’s analysis?

Why does Marx hold that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle"? How is a communist revolution supposed to bring class struggle to an end?

“The faculty treatments of Marx on the Intellectual Heritage Department website lack the basic apparatus of academic inquiry. No critical literature on Marx and Marxism is offered.”

Professor Istvan Varkonyi, Director of the Intellectual Heritage Program, writes that “I can also attest to the fact that the lecturers in the Intellectual Heritage Program discuss the strengths and weakness of Marx as well as those of all the other great thinkers we read in the course.”

The Temple Intellectual Heritage Program website provides students with online resources which are useful for academic inquiry. For example Professor Mark Stier has his own [webpage](#) on Marx which summarizes class discussions. Prof. Stier writes, “In the main notes you will find some links to specialized and advanced discussion of some issues that have come up in one or more of the courses. These notes are meant to give those of you especially interested in a subject, more ideas to think about. So they go beyond what we talked about in class.”

Other professors provide [secondary sources](#) for analysis of the material presented on Marx.

Furthermore, David Horowitz and Jacob Laksin’s piece on Temple would have one believe the majority of the semester is spent indoctrinating students with the ideology of Marx. This is also not true, and as Prof. Varkony writes, “We don’t spend a lot of time on Marx or others because it is firstly not our job to be engaging ideological debate (which belongs in a political philosophy or theory course) and secondly we need to cover many other texts in the course of the semester.”

“Another university-wide program administered by Temple, which fails to meet the most basic test of intellectual diversity and academic professionalism, is the Temple University summer reading program for all incoming freshmen. Freshman are assigned a text to read over the summer which is then discussed in class in the fall semester, often with the author being invited to campus.”

From Professor Jodi Levine-Laufgraben, Associate Vice Provost and Chair of the Summer Reading Committee:

“Not true - Participation is not required. There is no penalty for non-participation nor do we really know who reads the book and who does not. Students are encouraged to read the book but are not assigned the text.”

“The Department [of African American Studies] is devoted to promulgating Afrocentric theory, its mythologies, falsehoods and racist ideas, and credentialing the next generation of professors to spread its cult to other schools.”

The [mission](#) of the Department of African American Studies is to provide an intellectual arena in which students learn to critically examine, analyze, interpret and affect the experiences, traditions, and dynamics of people of African descent and by extension, develop a fuller understanding of humankind.

“The Department of African American Studies at Temple has long been notorious for its ideological narrowness, its racism, and its lack of credible scholarship – all present from the moment it was conceived as a department.”

Horowitz and Laksin provide no evidence for his assertion. To the contrary, as African American Studies professor Nathaniel Norment, Jr. writes, “Temple’s Department of African American studies has received international and national acclaim, partly from being the world’s first university to offer a terminal degree in African American Studies. Since then, the Department awarded hundreds of Master’s degrees and over 140 doctorates, the recipients whom have gone on to become faculty members at notable institutions of higher learning across the world.”

Furthermore, “the Department’s Core/Introductory course (AAS W051: ‘Introduction to African American Studies’) has long been a national model for other programs and departments, one which does not ‘emphasize the conceptualization of ‘Afrikan American Studies within an Afrikan conceptual framework (ie. the Afrikan worldview) via the paradigm of Afrocentricity.’”

“The study of history, in the classroom of Professor Ralph Young” has become “a left-wing political project.” “Young uses his classes to espouse his interest in what he calls political ‘dissent.’ As his course ‘Dissent in America,’ (History 184) shows, this is not a study of dissent so much as it is an immersion in radical politics with the idea of becoming a radical oneself. For instance, students learn about the anti-war movement in its opposition to various American military engagements, the feminist movement in its opposition to American patriarchy,” etc....

Horowitz and Laksin are confusing subject matter with methodology. He has cherry-picked themes such as the “feminist movement in its opposition to American patriarchy” from Professor Young’s book, *Dissent in America*, to misrepresent Professor Young’s History 184 class as “a

left-wing political project.” As Nick Gillespie pointed out in a *New York Post* [book review](#) of Professor Young’s *Dissent in America*, “Young represents virtually all points of view, from the far left to the far right. Hence, the Weather Underground shares space with The Michigan Militia, and birth control activist Margaret Sanger resides just a few pages away from Depression-era radio personality Father Charles Coughlin.”

Furthermore, Dr. Young’s *History of the United States since 1877* has been recognized as one of the top examples of the best practices in a national study of US History courses by CEPR on behalf of the College Board.

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