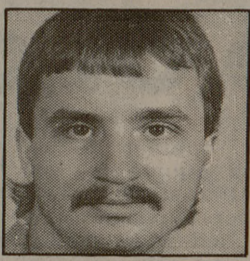


# Opinion

## It's the little things that interfere with future plans

I hate it when I put myself in the position where one tiny thing — in this case a test I took Friday — determines my future. If I failed the test I don't graduate — what an unpleasant thought.



Craig Renfro

For nine semesters I have toiled at this world-class university in hopes of someday reaching the stage to shake President Frank Vandiver's hand and have my picture taken by the graduation picture man.

For four of those semesters I was in the College of Business — that dull, drab excuse for a career, where all of the people act, look and dress alike. I didn't achieve academic success in my first choice of majors, mainly because I couldn't reach my academic potential when crammed into a room with about 300 other people.

I hate to admit it, but I am what you might call a "looker," and I found it extremely hard to pay attention to the professor's lecture, especially when I found it so painfully boring. So, come test time, I would trudge up to the prof's office in an attempt to gain some last-minute insight.

Of course my professors never recognized me from class, but then how could I blame them. I would tell them my name, rank and serial number, and they would look at their class roster and realize that I was one of their students.

One semester, after I realized that the business world was not for me, and the business college decided that I wasn't for it, I decided to change my major to journalism. I think the reason I chose journalism was because I like to write, and I wouldn't have to take another business analysis, accounting or finance class ever again.

After one semester and a summer I worked my way onto *The Battalion* staff. Of course, that isn't of any great social significance, but it does help pay for some living expenses, and the people are nice.

Now, after three semesters on staff and a summer internship, I am confronted with this unfortunate situation I now find myself in.

Back in the spring when I pre-registered for the final time, I signed up for 15 hours, thinking that was all I needed to graduate. However, early this semester, after the fateful degree check, I found out that I needed an additional three hours before the dean of admissions and records would give me the seal of approval for graduation exercises.

Needless to say I was somewhat upset, but there was nothing I could do about it. Fortunately, the class could be an elective, so that meant I didn't really have to strain my mental faculties any more than they already had been.

I thought about taking a psychology class, but I remember how difficult the first one I took was and decided to try something less demanding. Not that I would be interested anyway, but that automatically ruled out any science, math, engineering or medical class.

I then began looking at the philosophy department. I had never taken a philosophy class, and I realized that I could be committing a drastic mistake by not doing so.

As I thumbed through the undergraduate catalog, I noticed a number of classes that seemed interesting — courses in contemporary moral issues, religion, political philosophy and a wide array of others.

There was even a philosophy of the visual media and professional ethics class. But as we all know, journalists have no ethics or morals so why would I try to learn any this late in the game?

What I wanted was something that would make me think but not to the point of having to stay up all night before the test doing so. What I wanted was to explore the nature of reality, universals and individuals, space and time and the existence of God.

What I wanted was metaphysics.

So far the class has met all of my expectations. We have discussed space and time and we have talked about the existence of God. We have talked about so many different things from so many different points of view that at times it is difficult to determine which is which.

Of course that confusing problem always surfaces at test time. Somehow I manage to take a seemingly straightforward question and turn it into the most tangled answer a philosophy professor ever tried to grade.

As a result, my grade in the class is suffering, the point of failure. Since I am supposed to graduate, I don't have any finals, so my last test in the class was Friday.

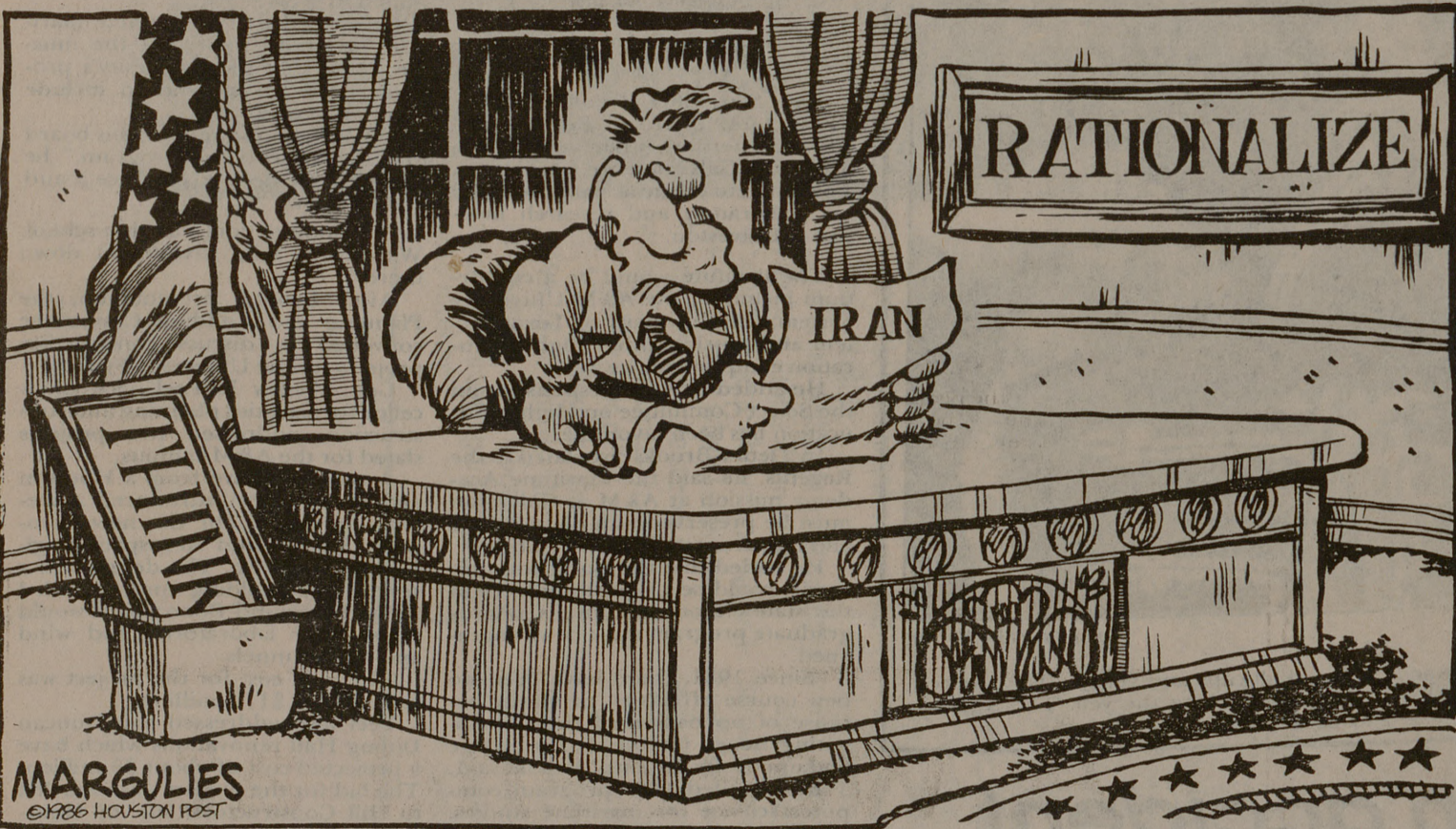
I stayed up most of the night studying, hoping that Descartes, Hume, Berkeley and a host of others would somehow see my struggle and send the knowledge from where ever they may be now, prove that I was really serious, I drank about the cups of coffee, which is a desperate measure because I hate the stuff.

Come test time I was wired. I had so much caffeine in me that I was bouncing off the walls. Had to calm down and tell myself that this is only a test. But when I thought about the importance of the test I started zoning again.

I did manage to calm down enough to at least answer all the questions. I think I answered most of them correctly, at least I hope I did.

By the time anyone reads this I will already know my fate. If you see me smiling and jumping up and down in virtual ecstasy, you know I passed. If you see me with this look of doom in my eyes and hear me mumble something about suicide, you probably will see my ugly mug in this space in the spring.

Craig Renfro is a senior journalism major and columnist for *The Battalion*.



## Despite speak-and-deny tactics, Meese's message painfully clear

On Oct. 21, Attorney General Edwin Meese III delivered a speech at Tulane University in which he said that the Constitution, not the Supreme Court, was the "supreme law of the land." So seemingly unremarkable was that observation, that the *Washington Post* expressed itself mystified and asked editorially, "Why give that speech?" In an op-ed column, Meese responded. The result was 2,000 words of mush.



Richard Cohen

For Meese, that was a characteristic performance. First he seems to say something outrageous and then denies that he said anything extraordinary in the first place. For instance, he would have us believe that he went all the way to New Orleans to tell a university audience what every school kid is taught around the third grade: the Constitution is supreme. Thank you — and George Washington was the first president.

Even for Meese, this is sophistry. We know, just as surely as he does, what he was saying at Tulane. The attorney general, after all, is a conservative and his speech had a definite political context. He was improvising on a theme dear to the heart of most conservatives; Supreme Court decisions are not binding on those who are not parties to the case and who happen to disagree.

Now Meese takes it all back. He had cited the 1954 Supreme Court decision striking down public-school segregation

as unconstitutional. It is the law of the land, he now concedes, even though only a few school boards were parties to the case and it was the ruling of a mere court.

Meese was silent about his earlier defense of his ideological soul mate, Daniel A. Manion. As an Indiana state senator, Manion had introduced a bill to allow public schools to post the Ten Commandments just two months after the Supreme Court had ruled such practices unconstitutional. Manion was Meese's choice for a federal judgeship.

School prayer, not school desegregation, is a contemporary issue and, as opposed to school segregation, there is a political constituency for it. Along with Supreme Court decisions on abortion, mandatory busing, affirmative action and the rights of the criminally accused, school prayer is on the strict constructionists' enemies list — one of the areas where liberal judges have allegedly strayed from the precepts of, among others, James Madison. Meese knew the relevance of his Tulane remarks and so did his constituency. It cheered what it knew he was saying even though, stack of Bibles, he now says he was saying nothing of the sort.

Meese is adept at this sort of thing. He recently advised business leaders to read an article advocating that employers spy on workers to ensure they are not taking drugs. The article recommended that employers follow workers to bars to observe them there. Later, when criticized, Meese turned naive: He was not advocating spying; he had merely mentioned an article that advocated it.

Still earlier, Meese told U.S. News & World Report that, "If a person is inno-

cent of a crime, then he is not a suspect." Such statements are downright bracing to those who see the courts and all their silly rules of evidence as an obstacle to the fight against crime. And it was precisely in that context that Meese made his remarks. For not the first time, he denounced the Miranda rule — and not for the first time misrepresented it. Ignoring that U.S. News had a transcript, Meese said he was misquoted.

Meese's remarks are contained in carefully written speeches and are not the product of a wandering tongue. He clearly means what he says or, as the case may be, what he seems to be saying. His remarks amount to a statement of intent — the way Meese would like things to be.

For all the references to the founding fathers, there is no real philosophy of law here, merely an expression of personal whim. For instance, if one case outlawed school segregation throughout the land, then why does another prohibiting the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools not have the same reach? Must the Supreme Court rule 50 times on school prayer but only once on school segregation?

It is these whopping contradictions that preclude Meese from explaining what he means. The reason he cannot come right out and say what he means is because what he means amounts to nothing more than what he wants — laws with which he is in agreement. That is what we all want and the reason we can't have it is older even than the Constitution and, if possible, more basic:

We are a government of laws and not men. Men like Meese remind us from time to time what a good idea that is.

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## Mail Call

### Sarcasm refreshing

EDITOR:

This is not a hate letter — just the opposite. I just wanted to commend Karl Pallmeyer on a well written and terribly funny article about bonfire on Thursday. I love this school and its traditions as much as the next Aggie, but somewhere along the line you've got to find a sense of humor about the whole thing. It's nice to read something so refreshingly sarcastic. Pallmeyer made my economics class considerably more bearable!

Stephanie Moll

### Breaking away

EDITOR:

More than 200 years ago some people deemed religious freedom valuable enough to break away from a state church that made religion a matter of law. They believed in and established a nation in which the right to live according to the dictates of one's conscience was guaranteed. As if to confirm their respect for other beliefs, their first president is said to have been a Rosicrucian.

Despite disclaimers by the disheartened, that nation is today a bastion of freedom for the world. How wonderful to have inherited such a legacy. But how sad it is to see what those same freedoms have brought. Except for the ostrich, we must daily confront problems ranging from a proliferation of drugs and crime, to an increase in rape, incest and other sex-related crimes, to a breakdown in the family unit and schools in large metropolises that are not safe and are of questionable educational value.

I agree with those who say that what we have lost along the way is God. There is a big difference between respecting another's beliefs and denying all religion. We need God, in every way. We need him in our families, we need him in our organizations, we need him in our government and we need him in our personal lives. Moslem, Jew, Hindu, Christian, Rosicrucian, Scientist or Moonie, we need Him.

A recent campaign solicits signatures in support of a return to a God-centered morality and education about the dangers of atheistic communism. Three cheers to those CAUSA USA persons willing to spend time focusing our attention on these important issues. Surely those who collect signatures in support of these things cannot expect all the signees to become members of their own religion. Some people have objected to this campaign on that very ground. May I remind those persons they run the risk of becoming the narrow-minded establishment that it is necessary to break away from in order to be free.

Sara Horsfall

### Reagan's 'secret plan'

EDITOR:

In response to Bill Emshoff's letter about bipartisan criticism of the Reagan administration, I must say this: I have always been a staunch supporter of President Reagan, and this arms scandal disappointed me to the least. But perhaps there is a silver lining in this dark cloud, and maybe that's what Reagan has been after all along.

Iran's present political situation is very tense. Although it would appear to us Westerners that the Ayatollah Khomeini is sitting pretty atop the revolutionary government, there will be a fierce struggle for power. Reagan is trying to set someone who favors U.S. relations in a position to take control of Iran's government. This is the most effective means of combatting terrorism yet available to us — cut it off at the source.

Also, there are these things to consider.

1. Iran is an oil-rich nation.
2. Iran is strategically close to the Soviet Union.
3. In early 1985 I watched a documentary on red communism on PBS. In this documentary a retired American general stated that the Soviet Union currently has 26,000 divisions of their army stationed on the border with Iran. The entire American Army has perhaps 20 divisions.

Perhaps our president has foresight that, sadly, many of us lack?

Roy Sikes '90

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

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