

Opinion

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The Battalion

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The Battalion Editorial Board

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The following opinions are a consensus of The Battalion opinion staff and senior editors.

Thought police

Young Conservatives cross line of authority

Texas A&M is in the midst of a backlash against the ideology of the politically correct movement. While many of the criticisms and actions against the PC movement have rightly kept the academic community from becoming a platform for anti-western demagoguery, other attacks have bordered on fascism.

The Young Conservatives of Texas have gone too far in moving to place student monitors in liberal arts classes, not to mention their actions are a direct violation of university policy, which states that guests must have permission from the professor before attending a class.

YCT has given itself a mission to seek out personal bias in lectures and grading on campus.

The group has stated that political bias is a threat to education. Unfortunately, the group seems to be contradicting itself. The Young Conservatives of Texas are politically biased themselves, only towards the right side of the political spectrum instead of the left. We have difficulty believing that a conservative group such as YCT will be willing to look at its findings honestly, objectively and without its own conservative bias.

Political bias is inherent to some degree in almost every teacher and every student at A&M. Such personal inclination is the result of years of thinking, learning, and just living. YCT seems to believe that political leanings, specifically those on the left, automatically makes for a bad professor. Students should be able to distinguish between fact and opinion in a lecture, and they should always be

open-minded enough to listen to an opposing viewpoint.

The student monitoring plan does not seem quite fair to teachers. The monitors can only be present during a few hours of a semester-long class. The monitors may show up on a day when a lecturer gets off the given subject and onto his own opinions. The professor may normally be unbiased in his lectures, and a bad rating would unfairly and undeservedly taint his methods.

A more proper means of determining just who is using a lecture as a blatant political forum is a resource already in existence. Student evaluations have been in use for years. By adding a question or two about bias, the university and the student population could gain more accurate information about a teacher from his or her own students than from a haphazard walk-in evaluation.

But the most disturbing aspect of the group's actions is that it has appointed itself the judge and jury on the subject of political bias without the student body giving it that right. The group's members presume to protect A&M students from bias, although A&M students have given them no authority to do so.

Extreme political bias may well be a problem in some classes, and such problems should be addressed. But using student monitors from a conservative student organization does little for the university but point out teachers who are not ultra-conservative reactionaries. Students should be wary of the results.

Participate

Voting remains foundation of democracy

It is Super Tuesday, and the Texas Primary is underway.

Every student has the responsibility and privilege to vote, a responsibility and privilege that was fought for by the founding forefathers of this great country.

Yet most students consider it a pain in the derriere, but if Aggies want changes in domestic policy, then Aggies need to act and act now.

If Aggies want an improved economy, a better health care system or a stronger emphasis on higher education, voting is the best way to go about it. Every A&M student has the ability to choose or pick the candidate who best addresses these problems.

Even though choosing a candidate may seem like choosing the lesser of two evils, it is not an excuse to not vote. There will never be a perfect candidate. There is no candidate that can ensure every American's wants and needs. Students need to concentrate on the candidate that best, not most perfectly, address their needs. Student's need to listen, learn

and understand about each candidate's position on issues they consider vital to the future of this country.

Although some people feel America's current leaders are the worst in its history, the founding forefathers gave Americans the ability to change them. The American people have the power to change and control our government's policy, something most people cannot.

If an elected official is considered to be doing a poor job or not to be truly representing the interests of the people, then Americans can vote him or her out of office. This is what makes the United States such a great country.

Go out and vote for the best Republican or Democratic candidate. All students living on-campus can vote at the Memorial Student Center. Students living off campus who are not sure of where to vote can contact the Brazos County Registrar Buddy Winn at 361-4490.



Mail Call

Young Conservatives of Texas should mind their own business

I was quite shocked to hear about the student group that was planning on making a "political bias" list of professors. Is it just me, or does this smack of McCarthyism? Is this not a fear tactic to attempt to get professors to walk on eggshells while lecturing?

The fact that this "survey" is being done by a conservative group shows that it is going to be biased (the same is true if it were being done by a liberal group.) Why do I have the feeling that this "survey" is targeted toward those professors who aren't conservative?

Is this group also going to publish a list of professors who "preach ideology" with a conservative slant (of which there are plenty)? Though I doubt that they have any intention of doing this, I also question their ability to find the conservative professors since those who would "monitor" them also have a conservative slant and cannot perceive it.

Believe it or not, in the real world you are going to have to interact with people who have differing biases than you. You may even have a boss who had different political ideas than you do, and now is the time to learn how to deal with that.

You have to learn how to interact with different people, even different people who are your "superiors", and you won't learn this valuable lesson by avoiding professors who are biased differently than you are.

Kenneth Brobst
Class of '93

The Young Conservatives of Texas need to wake up and realize why they are in college. The whole purpose of an education is to learn how to think. Exposure to different ideas and being constantly challenged from all points of view is the only way to learn to analyze and decide for yourself what is the correct ideology.

A&M is a world class university, and as such the faculty must be prepared to present different points of view. I am not saying that to present a purely Marxist, or politically correct view is right, but the student must learn these views or they will not be recognizable in the future.

YCT is on a witch hunt for professors who do not follow their line of thinking

(shades of Lenin)? By his own admission, Mr. Keetch's group does not have a clearly defined idea of what they are looking for. We are supposed to believe that they will know bias when they see it?

In reference to the comment that no opposition from students or professors is necessary, that is a standard taken from any repressive authoritarian regime. Is that how you want your group to be thought of Mr. Keetch? Give me a break people, it sure sounds like you are trying to vindicate a poor grade that was earned in a particular class.

Wade Burton
Class of '93

I really got a laugh out of the article about the Young Conservative student monitors in the Friday issue. First, if anyone has the right to monitor for professor bias it is certainly not the Young Conservatives. By the name alone, we can already tell how biased they are. Sure they will uncover bias in the classroom, but you can be certain it will only be if the professor has liberal tendencies. Do you think students so far on the right are going to complain about conservative bias? No way.

Secondly, every college student knows that professors have their own political views. We don't need this group to tell us that. Everybody has preferences, and those are going to show in teaching. There is nothing wrong with that.

The Young Conservative obviously have their own political vies that they bring into the classroom. That is the only reason they notice professors whose views don't coincide with their own.

Thirdly, you might as well not complain about subjectivity in grading. In classes like English and political science, student participation and essay exams are an essential part of testing students. Those things are from their viewpoint when grading. If the Young Conservatives don't like this kind of unavoidable subjectivity, they should take those classes at a junior college where you get a boring lecture and multiple-guess tests.

Dolores M. Sarli
Class of '94

Why is that your group, the Young Texas Conservatives, are so self-centered as to believe that what you take as truth should determine what the rest of society should take as truth.

I quote "Education should be a search for truth, not a search for political bias" and "All that we are doing is looking for honesty in the curriculum." You are absolutely right that education is the search for truth, but that truth should be determined by the individuals themselves, not some self-appointed "watch-dog" group that will determine the truth for the rest of the student body.

It seems to me that a few of your group has had their precious beliefs called into question. Maybe even a few received poor grades, not because of their political inclination, but because they failed to support their political inclinations with reason. I have taken classes where the professor and I have been diametrically opposed in ideology. I supported my beliefs reasonably and logically. The grades I received reflected my ability to do so. Wake-up and smell the coffee! You might have to try a little harder if the person you are attempting to convince is not sympathetic to your ideology (that is truth). You can't just claim that Reagan was the greatest man that ever lived without some support of that claim.

Leland B. Franke '87
Graduate student
Political Science

In five years here at Texas A&M I have never been more shocked by the actions taken by a campus organization such as those of YCT. I have attended classes taught by professors from all points on the ideological spectrum, and I have never once had my grade affected by agreeing

or disagreeing with a professor's point of view.

This reeks of fascism! The thought that police from YCT will sit in the designated classroom, unannounced, and monitor the lecture given by that professor. Monitor it for what? Answer: "political bias." But what is "political bias?" Mr. Keetch claims his organization's "standards for measuring classroom bias have not yet been explicitly defined." This is the classic "I can't define it, but I know it when I see it" defense.

Let's clarify those standards. Since this is a Republican organization, anything not politically favorable to white Conservative Christians will probably be deemed biased. Joseph Goebbels would be proud.

Mr. Keetch intends to compile and publish his group's results in order that they may be "used during the add/drop period for the Fall of 1992." Used! How? And by whom? Will students receive a list that states this professor has socialist, libertarian, homosexual, atheistic or feminist views? Why should it matter? I always thought the "search for truth" involved examining every side of an issue and not blindly accepting dogma of any kind.

Apparently Mr. McCarthy (oops! Mr. Keetch) and his group have the one true objective interpretation of these very subjective courses. If you want to avoid "indoctrination" take some time and examine your own indoctrinated values. As Ayn Rand advised, let Atlas shrug, think for yourself.

Anthony Cutola
Class of '91

Have an opinion? Express it!

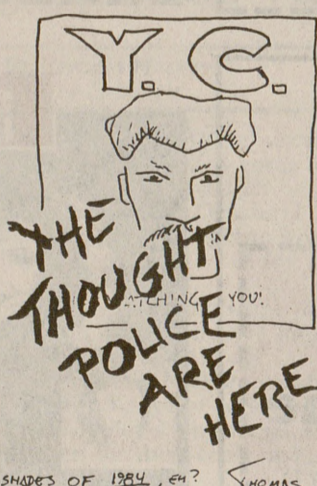
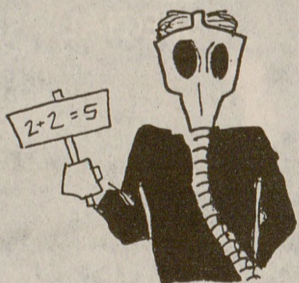
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Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. They should be 250 words or less. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee the letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-2647.

OUR ACTIONS ARE IN
YOUR BEST INTEREST,
WHAT WE DO IS
DOUBLEPLUS GOOD.

WE ARE
AT WAR
WITH
EASTASIA



SHADES OF 1984, eh? THOMAS