

Same old song and dance

Professors who lecture from textbooks alone do disservice to themselves, their students



DAVID LEE

For those students reading this edition of *The Battalion* in the half-empty classrooms all across campus, congratulations are in order. At least they have the gumption to show up to class. Skipping class at Texas A&M is as popular a tradition as mugging with a stranger at Midnight Yell shouting obscenities at Bonesteck.

The scenario is a familiar one: the day of an exam, the lecture hall is jam packed with focused students. The next time class convenes, however, there are empty seats galore. Yes, poor discipline and blatant laziness of students are among the culprits. After all, Aggie students are at the age where they should have the discipline and maturity to attend class on a regular basis.

However, having professors who teach strictly out of the textbook, instead of presenting more interesting information, does not help the situation. It allows students to become complacent and lazy, in addition to wasting valuable lecture time that could be used more resourcefully. Consider the following:

- **Students have no incentive to attend lecture.** Why should they? If students know that everything is going to be taken straight out of the book, lecture periods will prove to be pointless. Why sit in a lecture hall for an hour listening to something that is already in the textbook? Students will rationalize that they can make up missing lectures by reading the textbook a few more times. They run the risk of missing out on in-class discussions as well as pointers that the professor may make on possible exam questions. This procrastination eventually culminates in an all-nighter the night before an exam. The only incentive students have for attending lecture periods is obtaining information that is not mentioned in the textbook. By not presenting this information, professors will welcome students to think they have nothing to lose if they miss lecture.
- **Relying on a textbook reflects laziness on the professor's part.** Granted, the majority of the faculty here at A&M works very hard to create comprehensive course work for their respective

classes. Many rely heavily on their own research and information, using a textbook sparingly. These professors should be commended for their diligence and hard work. However, for a professor to completely rely on a single textbook and refrain from using other sources to educate his or her students is irresponsible and downright lazy. Instead of using lecture periods to rehash material the student should have read outside of class, why not take advantage of the time to present more information?

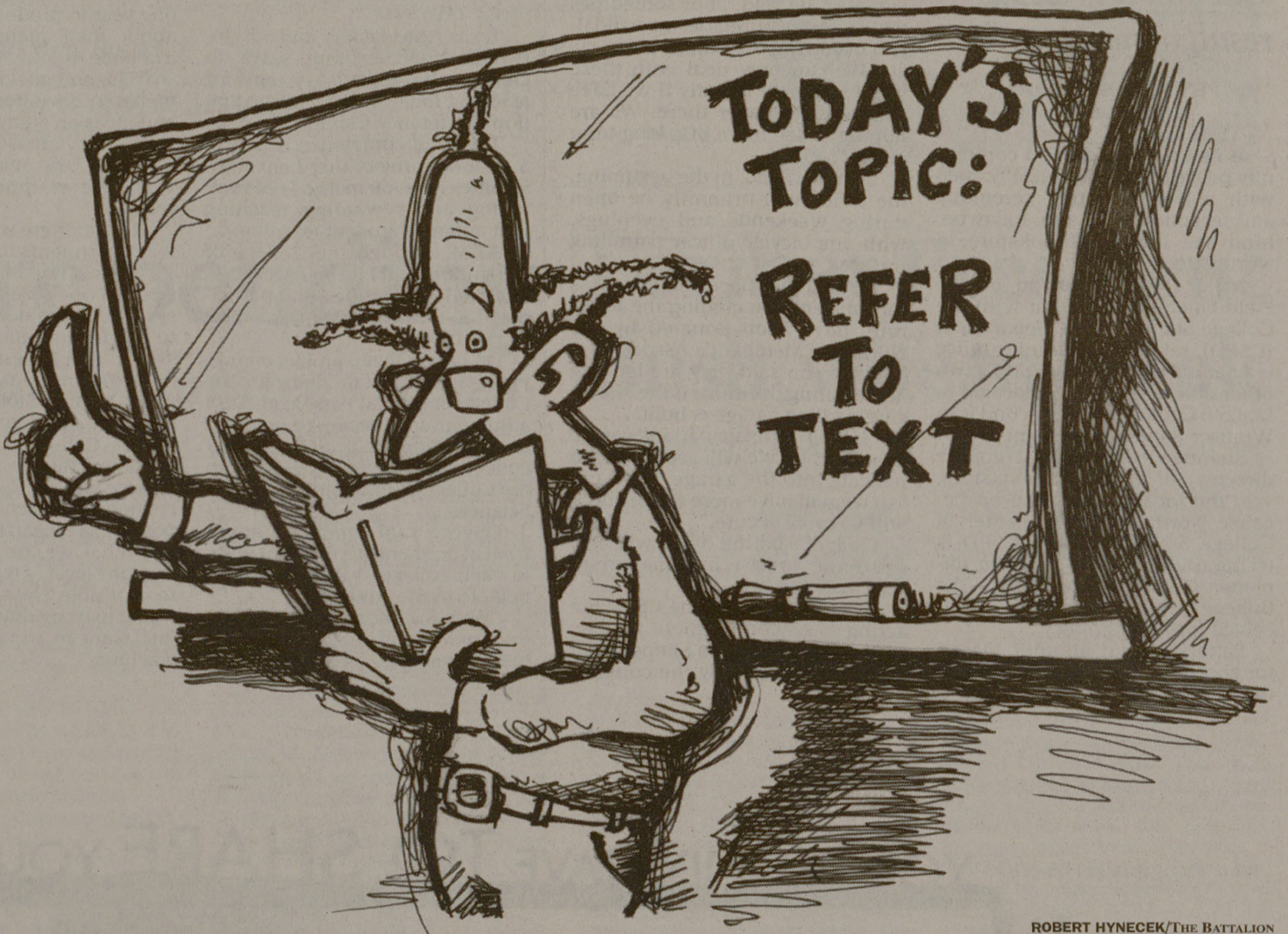
By taking the easy way out, professors are robbing students of valuable time, time that could be better spent on something else. They are, in essence, reducing the class to the level of a high school course. Heck, why not just show a videotape? Or assign mere busywork like a crossword puzzle?

• **The system is unfair to students who do not skip.** These are the students who suffer the most. They possess the drive to consistently attend class, eager to work hard for their grade.

These students are more likely to actually read the textbook than those students who skip. This proves to be an interesting paradox since these hard-working students are the ones forced to sit through lectures re-accounting information they already have read.

Sleeping, reading and socializing become popular activities during the lecture period. Meanwhile, the students who need this information the most are out and about town, laughing at the poor chumps who actually showed up to class.

No, truancy will not grind to a screeching halt if



ROBERT HYNCECK/THE BATTALION

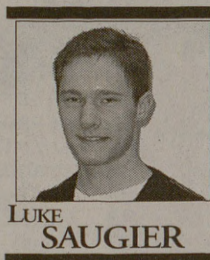
all professors were more responsible. Skipping class will always be a popular activity in college. However, by diversifying the sources and types of information presented in lecture, more students will force themselves to attend class in order to get all the information necessary to get a good grade.

By limiting themselves to a textbook, professors are inviting truancy. Until more professors make the change, take heart. Finding an empty seat in class will be the last of a students' worries.

David Lee is a sophomore general studies major.

Kosovo situation requires American intervention

America's threatened intervention in Kosovo begs the question, "Does America have any right or obligation to go around trying to solve the problems of other nations?"



LUKE SAUGIER

The answer — absolutely. America is by far the most powerful nation on Earth, and no other country can enter Kosovo. However, this raises the question, "What will be the cost of intervening in this way, and does the government have the right to order citizens to go fight and die in another country for a cause which in no way affects them?"

Definitely not. Fortunately, this is not a problem. According to Richard Marcinko, a former Navy Seal, there are hundreds, even thousands of American soldiers who would relish the chance to volunteer to go to another country and put their military training into action.

Marines should know they enlisted to kill people and break things, and right now, they are getting to do precious little of either.

"Peacekeeping" missions, such as this one, should be entirely composed of active-duty personnel since they entered the military by choice, knowing what their service might entail.

It should be made abundantly clear to all volunteers that they are there to protect women, children and innocents by hunting down and eradicating the people who engage in genocide.

As for the cost, there are so many benefits to this kind of voluntary warfare that the cost would be virtually nil. Casualties would be fairly light, as our troops would be fighting forces Newsweek described as "untrained, armed thugs."

Our troops and commanders would gain combat experience, which would be invaluable in case of a real war. These experiences would provide our military the opportunity to refine its training and operational procedures in a real combat environment.

The next question that must be answered is should America intervene

on behalf of people in other nations? Ideally America could simply sit back and let all the people of the Earth do their own thing.

Unfortunately, the "thing" for some people is to kill members of another tribe, religion or ethnic group. Even this would be OK if everyone in the region was involved in the killing, because then there would be no innocent bystanders because everyone

"Thus, innocent people are suffering, and something needs to be done."

would be equally involved.

In actuality, the people with guns do not want to shoot at other armed people; they might shoot back. Instead, the thugs kill women and children who want nothing to do with the whole conflict.

Thus innocent people are suffering, and something needs to be done. The Kosovo situation is not like Vietnam where Americans felt their ideology was at stake. The fighting in Kosovo is mostly about who is allowed to occupy certain areas.

America's success as a nation proves that the American way of life is the best. It is therefore America's right to force other cultures to abandon those aspects of their way of life which lead to the suffering of innocents.

Ethnic groups that continue to engage in such violent and destructive activities should be dispersed to facilitate the loss of their culture of hate.

America's intervention in situations where innocent people are being hurt is necessary and just. Managed correctly it provides valuable learning opportunities for our military, as well as a steady supply of combat veterans.

Cultures which engage in genocide should be forced to conform to a more constructive lifestyle, namely ours. America carries the biggest stick, so we can speak as loudly as we want.

Luke Saugier is a sophomore petroleum engineering major.



MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

Students respond to creation debate

In response to Christina Barrows' and Brendan Guy's Mar. 3 columns.

In his column, Guy proceeded to make inaccurate blanket statements such as, "there is no evidence to support creationism" and "it is a belief that can only be justified by faith, because it is not justifiable by evidence."

On the contrary, more and more evidence is being discovered every day that points to the existence of the almighty Creator, the author of the universe as we know it. He did not even bother to extract quotes from more educated professionals on the subject... kind of arrogant to make such bold statements and back them up.

I agree with what Barrows said, "Evolution appears to be a belief system held together by as much faith as any other creed."

Statistics alone denote the high improbability and impossibility of a random collection of hydrogen and helium molecules somehow evolving into the consciousness of man.

Common sense alone says that one cannot put chicken soup to a fan and get a coherent sentence.

I would also like to point out the conference held earlier in February on the meaning of evil and suffering in life.

It was a very good program, presenting the answer to this question from the view of Secular, Naturalism, Christianity and Eastern beliefs.

In his presentation, Dr. Ravi Zachariah makes this statement: "If the universe did come into existence by totally random means, then we would have no sense of the difference between good and evil, for Chance is 'amoral,' in that it does not care whether things are good or bad.

"It happens just the same... so how can we as humans draw a moral line between good and

evil, if Chance is the only thing ruling the universe? Chance does not care. Chance does not have a moral code that says one thing is good and the other is evil. Only an almighty, good and benevolent creator could give men the consciousness in their hearts to know the difference."

One last thing. Darwin himself said in his book when talking about the complexity of the human eyeball that it is highly unlikely that such a complex and intricate biological machine could just "happen" without the direction of a Supreme and Intelligent Master Architect.

Christina Virgilio
Class of '00

Taking earlier biblical texts as fact is as close-minded as taking them as fiction.

In my opinion, the main point behind the book of Genesis is to give the impression that God was in control of cre-

ation, not to give the vehicle of creation.

Taking into account that sections of the Bible were written as interpretations of visions, not first hand accounts, shows the metaphor that exists without disputing the power of God.

If a fast-paced vision of universal creation (the big bang) and evolution were given to you, how would you put them into words?

Brian Murray
Class of '99

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