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The Fulcrum

Letters: Sheep don't wear clothes

Written by various authors

U of O

student paper

Sheep don't wear clothes

< The following letters are in response to Maureen Robinson's column entitled "Rancourt's activism course—an arts class in sheep's clothing?", which appeared in the April 6 edition of the Fulcrum.

2006

MAUREEN ROBINSON'S PIECE on the activism course is conclusive evidence for the need for SCI 1984 in the Faculty of Science. Robinson, a biopharmaceutical-sciences student, echoes the mantra of some professors in the faculty "that this is not a science course", thereby using disciplinary boundaries to attack an interdisciplinary project. This argument has rightly been foiled (e.g., the SFUO official endorsement published in *La Rotonde*; not to mention the Science Faculty Curriculum Committee's original recommendation) and most expect that the course will pass at the next Faculty Council meeting. Sorry features editor, the SCI code can be used for more than corporate service and "pure" science-content courses. Course codes are primarily administrative tools to design programs, allocate resources, and, occasionally, satisfy student wishes. Take a pill.

Denis Rancourt
Activism course professor

I JUST WANTED to say what a pleasure it was to read your column this week on the "arts class in sheep's clothing". I am very happy to see that there are students out there who realize that the proposed "SCI 1984" is not a science course for science students. Thank you for presenting your opinion, as the student newspapers have generally portrayed the administration as somehow evil, and it is refreshing to see such an objective and informed commentary from yourself. You are certainly not an "asshole" for "[siding] with the administration" and for presenting this story to uOttawa students.

Dave Bryce
Assistant Professor of Chemistry

I APPLAUD MAUREEN Robinson for braving against popular student support for SCI 1984, and indeed being "the asshole who sides on the administration's side". Unfortunately, her arguments are uninformed and misleading. First of all, when Rancourt told *Xpress* that "It was never intended to be a science course; it's a Faculty of Arts class open to every one", he was in fact referring to PHY 1703. And let us be very clear on this; PHY 1703 and SCI 1984, although based on similar approaches, are two clearly distinct classes.

Also, I was not aware that the concept of lobbying for science courses was incongruous; as if scientists could never be activists. I wonder at what point in a science degree one is led to believe such a thing. The instructional approaches and testing methods are indeed foreign to the Faculty of Science, yet they are so for all faculties. In what way would suggesting this proposal with a POL or SOC code be any less of a

"wrong battle with the wrong faculty"? It's called a cross-disciplinary approach, something the university claims to embrace.

My apologies for being "irate" and "incensed", but I choose to be in the face of complacency. And boy, did it really take a science education to learn that the process of scientific discovery inevitably involves avenues, be it animal experimentation, genetic modification or ecological destruction, that aren't always morally copasetic? Wow, this course really is in dire need.

Nate Lessnick

Third-year environmental studies student