

Dear Harold;

I have survived the semester! This perhaps doesn't strike you as anything remarkable, but this curious half year had characteristics that made it so.

Much of my energies have gone into pressing issues connected with Indian affairs (to use the terminology of the system). We mounted a major exhibition on Indians and the U.S. Constitution over in Green Bay wherein I was the major figure in developing the script and the argument with a few Oneida Indians pitching in to give logistical and administrative support. Unfortunately I had to work with some Green Bay faculty members which made the project a Heller, they, the experts, did not know the least thing about the Constitution milieu and Indian affairs while the Oneida only knew they had an argument that was solid. They believe the U.S.C. was modeled on the Iroquois Confederacy of which they are one of the six constituent nations. They develop this with reference to one or two fragments from one of Franklin's speeches and a passing reference or two in other founding fathers' writings and base much else on parallelism between the two systems. The differences they relegate to non-importance. But at least they know the Constitution and teach it in their schools to their children as they draw the parallels--they must be the most informed body of Americans on the document anywhere. The project required much travel and writing to draw up a museum display over in the Bay--it was a smashing success, but left me on the ropes for a while.

At the same time there is a terrific anti-Indianism growing in the state over a number of issues connected with the enforcement of the nineteenth century treaties. Some of these concern hunting and fishing rights to the northern half of the state, territorial rights to enforcement of tribal laws in lands that they lost to the nineteenth century allotment process, sovereignty questions, education, and so on. In October I spoke fifteen times to various groups on the Indian question, including some overtly hostile organizations. My tactics included a head on confrontation on the facts as well as a suggestion that there are really things wrong in Wisconsin jobs, education, housing, and so forth, that the white groups ought to be agitating to correct. This coming spring I shall teach a weekend course on the treaties addressing the issues in legal, academic terms, with much attention to the factual issues. This course will draw numerous high school and citizenry interested in the subject and I will multiply the serious and responsible spokespersons for justice many fold through this method. I will employ some Indian lawyers and non-Indian lawyers on certain issues connected with a public law. It will be a CrackerJacks. Already five persons who have heard about the course have personally requested to be enrolled. The tribes will send Indians to it also. Much work is involved of course. Unfortunately I also have a battle to put the course over. I need funding for the course. Each student pays 310\$ for it and receives three units of college credit. I estimate 100 will attempt to take the course. That gives me 30,000\$ to use for my salary, the lawyers salary, for supplies (I must generate the textbook) and sundry items such as assistants to handle the review sessions, for I shall teach it much like Marine boot camp. Every one will know the subject when they finish and some will be extremely well prepared and really social tigers for justice when the course is over. The bad part is the state seizes the fees and takes them to Madison to put into a general pot for the administrators to toy with. I get nothing. So I have been engaged in a series of meetings trying to get our administrators to come up with the minimum funding, but with much bureaucratic delay and procrastination at the art form level. Through a secondary level black administrator I have jumped Stevens Point and gone directly to the Madison bureaucracy, through a black administrator who works there, to see if this 30M can be used to address the question properly. My god it is a mess - covered up by incompetencies, turf protection, orgulus remarks, and the problem I am doing this through the back channels. The administrators here would have kittens to learn what I have done. I even had the audacity to request our Chancellor go personally to the regents. We bust out laughing.

In the end if the system fails to sustain the course I must go to the Indians and ask them to make waves in a sustained and proper manner to attempt to get funding. If that fails I shall go to the University of Minnesota and ask that they offer the course on our campus and make the money off of it. Then I will advertise it roundly.

I have also been involved with the Menominee tribe a bit. They have been beaten down over the years and have an interesting world view of non-Indians. I have delivered two lectures on their military history--which is quite remarkable and rarely referred to--as well as other contacts this semester. But the big Menominee news was that I was successful in getting the University to back the Menominee 34 clans project that I have had previous telephone conversations with you about its construction and philosophy and importance. The most recent information that you had was the University cancelled the "damn thing" in the rudest manner possible.

While the Indian was ^{silently} preparing to sue and sue hard to regain the monies already invested in the project and for artistic and other damages suddenly at a special meeting between me and Frechette (the artist) the UWSP board president and secretary and two administrators agreed to give 23M to the project and thought it was a "fine thing." We --a committee of a decent dean here, myself, and two Menominee--must come up with the other thousands ^{over} a period of several months, (approximately 30). It will be a fine thing and ultimately when completed capture the traditional clan and culture system of the Menominee in an utterly unique manner that will give us a spot in the world's sun for that surviving culture. The Menominee are enthralled; the artist is quiet but happy. Much more ^{energy} must be expended to make this thing work, for in the end I will be the one who writes the grants, gives the lectures around the state, promotes the subject among the students and the public and the rest. But the prize is noble and the work will be fun.

Much of October I spent on the fourth annual invitational Wisconsin Indian art show held here on campus. This requires putting the system in place and arranging to have it staffed and judged and the objects sold when possible and getting the funds for it. As a spin off I developed a student Indian art club--which is actually non-Indian students who have a penchant for Indian art. They meet every week--seven of them. They are really turned on to the issues and have decided that they will "buy" one of the Menominee clan figures for the UWSP through fund raising projects of all sorts, including snow baseball which up here the kids play on snowshoes with a ^{large soft} bright orange ball and have one Dickens of a time doing it. They will have to hold it off campus because of the damndest regulations on fund raising, but they have a field already picked out and so forth. Where they get the energy beats me. They will be bringing in bead workers and jewelry makers too from time to time to educate them on the subject of Indian art.

I have done a few other things along the above lines this semester, but I am constantly reminded of an underlying theme in all of this--the almost complete ignorance ^{among faculty and administrators} of the larger world on the substance and the implications of their actions to the larger life we all share. The almost total absence of speculative imagination is a serious defect. I am working with the black students for Martin Luther King, Jr, celebration. They are bringing in Carl Stokes from Cleveland. I have suggested that they have some of their better voices sing a civil rights song or two at the meeting, that they have a birthday cake for the memory of King, and that they treat it all as a hopeful occasion to erase memories of bitterness and think of the future. they agreed--although I had to convince their black advisors before it could jell.

Along that line I have also suggested to the young people that they ought to hold a press conference for Stokes and thus give wide distribution of information on race questions and on black leaders in this community of largely white people with little experience with a high order black. I of course would have appreciated a black person other than Stokes to work with, but this is what they wanted. So I will direct the conference with the media, radio, tv, print, and special feature personnel, et al. Two black students will work with me and I shall teach them how to hold a conference and obtain maximum exposure for the issues. I and they will assemble handsome press packages replete with Stokes photograph, biographical sketch, some things on MLK and the like. Then I will work with them to develop some questions for them to ask of Stokes to facilitate the flow of information, etc. This will be fun and quite meaningful. Unfortunately it is Stokes who, although with many good points, definitely passive and quite unimaginative on key issues. Maybe you have a question or two?

My classes were regretfully packed with students and I was pushed to the limit of my energies to keep up with them and to give responsible lectures and grading. In three subjects--U.S. history before 1865, JFK assassination, and American Indian history I had 185 students, about 60 students beyond the ^{maximum} expected load requirements and about 100 beyond sanity. So many of the Sophomore students would shirk assignments, attempt to cut classes, and in general avoid hard work. When I gave popular--that is their term--lectures they really liked it, jokes, anecdotes, ^{the} unusual and the exotica, and all the rest, ^{they} apparently mirrored their damn rock and roll minds. There were always a handful of excellent ones, but I flunked many. At the upper level I found that I had to flunk several graduating seniors in the Indian history course. They were education majors. Without exception they and the "D" students followed avidly the lectures and I did a good straight forward job in that course, but ^{they} would not read the text book or assigned reading. I have never in all my years been able to understand why students would not read the text; this year it was so pronounced a fault I believe it must be accorded the status of a syndrome. JFK was a horse of a different color however. I re-thought ^{my} approach to the course this summer, re-ordered my style and analysis perfected certain points and suggestions and treated the students as peers engaged in a quest for justice. Here is the reading and viewing order I required them all to follow (~~others~~ ^{they} did additional reading based on projects).

1. Harold Weisberg, Whitewash I, all.
2. CA FOIA, the reprint volume from UWSP
3. Howard Roffman, Presumed Guilty, tv video cassettes from 1975 conference here.
4. Zapruder film
5. Document handouts during the course, est. 70 pages.

This class had a great mixture of the student body--theater majors, dance majors, communications, natural resources, physical education, wrestling, football, basketball players both girls and boys (these ~~incidentally~~ the sports people were the best students in the class, really outstanding young people), but no history majors (the other professors, their advisors, will not recommend the course or sign their cards for enrollment without a hell of a fuss being made).

I had no problem at all with cuts, nor with students not doing ^{their} homework, with the exception of two married students who simply admitted their duties and other science classes left them without the time to prepare for the final. But they were ashamed and told me. Two "A"s who fell to "B"s. Now Harold, I am telling you this was a class and a half. An esprit de corps developed beyond my wildest expectations and around the question of justice and morality, if you can believe that after all the rotten things I have told you about the other (Sophomore) class and the inadequacies of the lower quarter of the Indian course.