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Department Business

Anwar Shaikh PhD

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Dept Business
1981-1982

Dept. Business 1981-82

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Inter-office Memorandum

To: Economics Faculty

Date: August 30, 1981

From: Economics Society

Re: T.A.s, discussion sections, labs, study groups

The Economics Society is committed to making a serious effort to upgrade the level of instruction in all the M.A. core courses, with the goal of increasing first year student's mastery of course material. The experience of first year students for at least the past several years has not been a good one. The large amount of confusion and bewilderment among first year students is most clearly manifested in even higher than "normal" percentage of incompletes, particularly in courses such as 112 and 105, but also 106-107 and the courses in the standard track. The Economics Society continues to maintain that these results are not due to "natural" inabilities among students, but primarily due to deficiencies in the department's instructional program. The Economics Society's ad hoc committee on the introductory curriculum has discussed many issues surrounding the introductory courses. Some of these issues involve substantial changes in the curriculum, which will require further discussion. However, several issues involve improving the current M.A. courses. These changes, involving: T.A.s, discussion sections, labs, and study groups, are discussed below. We believe that a small increase in attention paid to these aspects of the introductory curriculum will pay large dividends, both to individual students and to the department as a whole.

T.A.s

Based both on personal communications with first year students and on the course evaluations, it is clear to the Economic Society student reps. that the past performance of teaching assistants and the role assigned to them have been deficient in some cases. Assuming that the purpose of having T.A.s is to help students master course material, these deficiencies break down into two main areas: First, some T.A.s do not appear to be sufficiently versed in course material to genuinely be of assistance to students taking the course. Second, in some courses T.A.s are not given significant responsibilities.

T.A. Selection

In the past T.A. selection has primarily been the responsibility of individual faculty members. The result of this practice has been uneven. Faculty-student patronage relationships, use of T.A. positions as financial aid for needy students, and a genuine lack of qualified applicants have all contributed to this problem. Last year a successful effort was mounted to raise the salary of T.A.s—in part to make these positions more attractive to advanced students. The salary for T.A.s is now \$600 and 6 tuition credits. (This still needs to be improved; to really attract advanced students the salary should be roughly equivalent to that of an undergraduate adjunct position—i.e. more emphasis on money and less on

tuition credits.) However, it seems reasonable to assume that a larger number of students will apply this year, particularly if the existence of the positions and corresponding job description are well publicized. The student reps. will be working to see that the T.A. selection process and the selection process for any research assistantships that materialize are as well publicized and as open a process as possible. Student dissatisfaction with the performance of T.A.s in some courses was very high last year. If individual faculty cannot do a better job of making sure that T.A.S are qualified and actually help students in courses, the Economics Society will demand control over the T.A. selection process.

T.A. Responsibilities

In some courses T.A.s have been given no significant responsibilities and function merely as faculty "go-fors". This situation must be remedied. In the past T.A.s have had two main responsibilities: to give labs and to oversee study groups. These duties should be systematized. Where T.A.s are responsible for teaching labs, faculty and T.A.s should work out a schedule of topics to be covered in the labs. Faculty should insure that T.A.s prepare seeing study groups, T.A.s should work actively to organize study groups during the first week of class. T.A.s should also continue to meet with study groups every 2 or 3 weeks for the length of the course. These continuing meetings have proven useful in helping students to resolve difficult issues and to prevent study groups from getting side tracked and floundering.

Discussion Sections

During the 1978-79 academic year faculty agreed to hold biweekly seminars in all M.A. core courses—in the standard track as well as the political economy track. Except for a couple of professors, faculty have generally ignored this agreement. The Economics Society considers it still to be in force and will encourage incoming students to pressure faculty to live up to this commitment. The rationale for these discussion sections is well known and was thoroughly discussed at the time the agreement was originally made.

Labs

In the past, with a few exceptions, labs in political economy courses have been offered only once or twice a semester, focusing on particular discussions such as the falling rate of profit debate or the transformation problem. The importance of problem oriented lab sessions for reinforcing the material studied in micro and macro is generally recognized. Labs should also serve this function in P.E. courses. Therefore, labs should be extended to all M.A. courses and be offered more frequently, preferably weekly or bi-weekly. As was mentioned in the discussion of T.A. duties, a specific schedule of lab topics should be worked out by the professor and the T.A. The T.A. and/or professor should also draw up a set of problem oriented study questions to be dealt with in the lab. These study questions could also be of use in study groups.

Study Groups

The New School tradition of study groups appears to be in jeopardy, based on the experience of student's in last year's introductory courses. Last year's experience was disastrous in this regard; most study groups floundered within the first month and only a couple survived the entire year. There are probably a number of reasons for this, but not least of these is the fact that beginning students need continuing guidance when dealing with the difficult subject matter of Capital as well as other aspects of Marxist theory and orthodox economics. Improved T.A. selection and clarification of T.A. duties regarding study group oversight can help insure this guidance exists. As part of the overall effort to improve the introductory courses and increase student's understanding of the material, faculty should emphasize the importance of study groups by making participation in a study group a course requirement. This requirement could be waived after student consultation with the professor or T.A. Many first year students have suggested that study groups be organized according to students' previous academic backgrounds—to insure that the level of discussion within a study group is close to the level of the individual student. However, groups based on language, sex, or other common interest could continue to serve as a basis for organizing study groups.

The Economics Society believes that significant progress towards improving the effectiveness of the current introductory curriculum is possible. Given the current student/faculty ratio and the state of New School finances, the lecture format will probably remain the norm for the indefinite future. But faculty should be sensitive to the fact that, particularly for beginning students, lectures make for poor pedagogy. Other additional forms of instruction are necessary, if students are to have enough exposure to basic concepts—through review and repetition—to make further progress possible. Complex analyses that seem hopelessly confusing to beginners are considerably simpler when the mediating links in the argument have been grasped and internalized. This process takes time—time, for repeated exposure, that lectures cannot provide. Particularly when the catalog and other admissions literature clearly state that the M.A. program is accessible to students without an economics background, we believe it is the responsibility of each faculty member teaching M.A. core courses to see that the supplemental activities necessary to make this claim a reality are provided.

The student reps. consider these and similar reforms in the conduct of introductory courses to be priority issues, which should be dealt with in time to effect this fall's courses. This means faculty should deal with these issues before the first week of class. Further, we will press for a progress report on each course during the first departmental meeting. If necessary a student-faculty committee should be set up to deal with these issues on an ongoing basis.

INTERNATIONAL BLACK STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

TO: FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

RE: THE PROPOSED Ph.D ELECTIVE FIELD IN RACE AND CLASS

At the outset, IBSO should like to point out that efforts to constitute Race and Class as a doctoral elective field are by no means new. In fact, in the late 70's three courses were offered at IBSO's behest. These were Eco. 175: The Political Economy of Racism, Eco. 118: The Political Economy of Newly Independent African States, Eco. 397S: Race and Class in the World Economy. These course offerings represented a compromise short of a doctoral elective field. At that time the Department's explicit promise was that IBSO's needs would be addressed in the next round of Faculty hirings. This is that next time.

IBSO's current proposal calls for a three-course field consisting of a two-course sequence and one seminar. The field is designed to develop an understanding of the conjuncture of race and social production with a view toward emphasizing race as a social category from a historical materialist perspective. While essentially retaining its present character, Eco. 175 has been upgraded to Ph.D. level status and has been renamed Eco. 275: Racism and the Accumulation of Capital. Eco. 118 would no longer be offered — the feeling here is that this is a development course which has no place in a concentration field in Racism. However, IBSO calls for the broadening of the scope of the Social Formation series so that issues formerly dealt with in Eco. 118 can be addressed. In lieu of Eco. 118, IBSO calls for a new course Eco. 274: History and Method in the Study of Racism. This course will develop the methodological and conceptual framework necessary for the Study of race in social production. Finally, as is the case with all seminars, Eco. 397S: Race and Class in the World Economy will develop and explore at some length the major themes addressed in the two-course sequence.

INTERNATIONAL BLACK STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

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In closing, IBSO should like to point out that these proposals represent a preliminary outline. IBSO encourages all forms of constructive criticism which would contribute to the development of a rigorous and comprehensive doctoral field.

Patrick Loman
for
IBSO Steering Committee

This course is designed to develop the methodological and conceptual framework necessary for the study of race as a social category. As such it will explore the conjuncture of race and social production throughout history. Concepts such as race, racism and nation are explored with a view toward understanding the relationship of racial oppression to the process of capital accumulation and the role of racial oppression during periods of capitalist crises. Finally, this course will explore the limits placed on class struggle by racism.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

PART 1: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE ANALYSIS OF RACIAL OPPRESSION

- a) Definitions of race and racism.
- b) The roots of Black poverty: the economic legacy of slavery and the plantation economy.
- c) The emergence and development of race and racism as socially relevant categories within the superstructure.
- d) The validity and usefulness of contemporary categories.

PART 2: HISTORY OF THE CHANGING FORMS OF BLACK OPPRESSION

- a) The peculiar historical conjuncture of Africa with European mercantile capitalism: primitive accumulation, slavery and race in the economic organisation of society.
- b) Comparative analysis of slavery and slave formations: implications for the study of racism.
- c) The dialectical interrelationship of race, racism and class in the process of capital accumulation.
- d) Capitalist crisis and racism: the experience of Nazi Germany and implications for the U.S., Britain and Europe.
- e) Eugenics and sociobiology: the relationship of racist ideology to capitalist material reality.

PART 3: HISTORY OF BLACK SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

- a) James Forten, Fredrick Douglass, Edward Blyden, Martin Delaney, W.E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey through George Padmore's Pan Africanism through Frantz Fanon, Leopold Senghor, Negritude, C.L.R. James and Amilcar Cabral.
- b) The Black Panther Party and Black Nationalism: Marxist and Radical debates in the definition of Nation — The Black nation debate in the U.S.

PART 4: ISSUES IN PRAXIS

- a) Racism and the white worker: false consciousness or material foundation.
- b) Black workers and organised labour.
- c) The comparative study of Black and White lower classes.
- d) Necessary and Contingent forms of class consciousness among Black and White lower classes.
- e) The implications of racial antagonism for class consciousness and class struggle: the U.S., Britain and Europe.

The second course in the sequence is designed to explore the specific conjuncture of racism in capitalist accumulation. It will discuss such issues as the roots of Black poverty, neo-classical and radical theories of racial discrimination, dual labour markets, the role of Black labour in business cycles and class differentiation among Blacks.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

PART I: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic Status of Black Folk: The Roots of Black Poverty in the Economic Legacy of Slavery and the Plantation Economy.

B. ECONOMIC THEORIES OF DISCRIMINATION

1. Neo-classical Theories.
2. Radical Theories.

C. DUAL INDUSTRIAL AND LABOR MARKET STRUCTURES AND BLACK OPPRESSION

1. Dual Industrial Structures, Technology and Factor Substitution.
2. Theory of the Dual Labor Market.
3. Black Labor in a Dualistic Economy.
4. A Structural Theory of Discrimination and Its Empirical Basis.

PART II: EMPIRICAL STUDIES AND ISSUES

- ##### D.
1. Wage and Job Discrimination.
 2. Black Labor-Force Participation: extra market theories, job search theories,
 3. Comparative Studies of Income Inequalities and Job Discrimination: Black/White differentials, Black male/White male differentials, Black female/White female differentials, Black/Chicano/Puerto Rican/Other immigrant differentials, Black/White working-class differentials, America/South Africa, etc.,
 4. Critique of Quantitative Approaches.

E. THE ROLE AND STATUS OF BLACK LABOR IN BUSINESS CYCLES

1. Accumulation, Disaccumulation and Black Labor.
2. Stagflation and Black Living Standards.
3. Race and Class in the Social Allocation and Reproduction of Labor.

F.

SPATIAL DISCRIMINATION AND BLACK OPPRESSION

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1. Residential Segregation: Neo-classical and Radical Theories, and Empirical Findings.
2. Residential Patterns, Transportation Patterns, Job Location, and Job Discrimination.

G.

EDUCATION, RETURNS TO EDUCATION, AND EXTRA-MARKET DISCRIMINATION

1. Education in Capitalist America.
2. Education and Comparative Returns by race, sex and class.
3. Education and the Reification of Relations of Domination and Subjugation: The Reproduction of the culture of Discrimination and Oppression.
4. The functions of racism and the reserve army: racism as a social barrier between productive powers and subsistence needs of Blacks. Non-price aspects of the transformation problem.

PART III: ISSUES IN PRAXIS

H.

THE CLASS DIFFERENTIATION OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

1. Assessing the nature of Black communal self-identity, homogeneity and class differentiation.
2. The limits of Black Community Development Strategies.

PART IV: CONCLUSION

I.

THE FUTURE FUNCTION OF RACISM IN THE CHANGING DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CAPITALIST ECONOMY

1. Extrapolations and Speculations: Class Struggle and the limits placed on it by racism.
2. CAPITALIST CRISIS AND RACISM: the experience Nazi German, implications for the U.S.: Racism, monopoly capital in light of supply side economics.

As is the case with all seminars, IBSO expects this course to develop and explore in depth many of the themes touched on in the two-course sequence. The underlying theme of the seminar is envisaged to be the Political Economy of Racism in Praxis on the world scene.

Probable themes include the following:

1. Comparative studies in the field of racism: South Africa, the Caribbean, the U.S. and Latin America.
2. Immigration, the reserve army, racial oppression and capital accumulation: the U.S., Britain, Europe.
3. Analyses of socialist approaches aimed at combating institutional racism: the cases of Cuba, China and the Soviet Union: implications for social transformation in the U.S. the Caribbean, South Africa and Latin America.

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Inter-office Memorandum

To: ECONOMICS FACULTY

Date: NOVEMBER 4, 1981

From: STUDENT ADVISOR

Re: SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS SERVICES

The following suggestions are to be discussed in the faculty meetings. The basic intention of presenting these suggestions is to increase students services and facilities in our department. I have tried to be as concrete and specific as possible. Furthermore, to make them more than personal proposals and to get some feed back from students, I have raised them in the Economics Society.

1. MA EXAM.

A. The policy: As it is now, students who fail the exam twice have no chance to retake it. Students feel that there is some arbitrariness involved in this policy. Giving the students more chances to take the exam does not violate the academic standards of the program. In fact, there is not that much basis on which to argue that a student who passes the exam the third time is less knowledgeable than the one who has passed it the second time.

B. A summer M.A. Exam: In many cases, students have to spend a whole semester preparing for the exam. Offering a third exam during the summer will help students to spend less time and money for that purpose. It will be also helpful for the students who want to transfer to another university for their Ph.D. studies and who usually prefer to do it in the fall semester.

C. Standardization of the exam: There is a need to clarify both the number and level of questions for the exam. A minimum of three questions for each area may be proposed to solve the first problem. (In some areas which include a couple of courses, there should be more questions). As far as the second issue, i.e., the level of questions is concerned, there can be a process through which it is made sure that there is a fair combination of questions for each exam.

D. Sample answers: As Prof. Deyrup has indicated in several occasions, it would be useful to provide students with some samples of the last exams blue-books so that they get an idea of what the faculty considers a good or excellent answer.

2. PH.D. EXAM

A. A suggested standard reading list: During the past summer, the library was closed for the whole month of August. It created difficulties for many students, particularly those who were preparing themselves for the Ph.D. exams. If the department provides a standard reading list for the Ph.D. exams, then the required material for the exam can be simply transferred to the reserve section of the N.Y. U. Library for the whole period in which our own library is closed.

B. Sample answers for the Ph.D. exams: See above for M.A.

3. ORAL EXAMS

A. The procedure: students have complained about the delays and inconveniences involved in the process of applying for, and taking oral exams. It would be useful to clarify the whole procedure and inform students.

B. Attending the exam: In order that students get a clear idea as to the level of questions and faculty expectation in the oral exams, students should be allowed to sit in the exams. Of course, such an arrangement is based upon

the agreement of the student who is taking the exam.

4. DISSERTATION

A. Clarification of the procedure: Providing a guideline which clarifies the dissertation procedure will certainly help to reduce the confusion as to the role of the dissertation proposal review committee, the specific dissertation committee that the student works with, etc.

B. Making samples of dissertation proposals available to students

C. Ph.D. Dissertation and outside supervision: Given the small number of faculty available for Ph.D. dissertation, and the fact that they are either overloaded or unable to provide enough help to students in some specific fields, getting outside supervision should be explored.

5. COMPUTER FACILITIES AND COURSE ON RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

6. DEPARTMENT POLICY ON FINANCIAL AID:

In the last faculty meeting (October 27th) it was announced that students who have more than half of their courses incomplete are not eligible for getting financial aid. As far as I know, the majority of our new students are not aware of the criteria for getting financial aid. Moreover, since incompletes are partially the result of financial constraints, such a policy will not be a productive one. Secondly, there is a real need for increasing the amount of financial aid and students support, such as getting more research assistantships and scholarship grants and support.

7. OUTSIDE LECTURERS: Having more outside lecturers on a regular basis requires getting more funds available for that purpose.

8. GRADUATE FACULTY IN GENERAL:

A. Admissions policy and transfer of credits. As it is now, it is only the Admissions Office which decides on accepting the new students. In some cases it fails to clarify the transfer policy to the new students who have already obtained their M.A. degree from another university. Sending letters from the department to these students will certainly be useful to clarify that it is the department and not the Admissions Office, which makes the final decision in this respect. There are students who have never applied to transfer, relying on Steerman's statements that they have been already granted 30 credits for advanced standing. For this matter, the department should inform the Admissions office that their admission letters and statements are misleading.

B. Deferment Policy. In the past, students who had some financial problems were able to delay the payment of their tuition for a few months. This policy does not exist anymore. Ironically, the elimination of this policy has been implemented with higher tuition rates, more expensive late registration fee and a less flexible policy concerning the late registrations. Our objection to the new policy of administration should be raised.

C. Library and copy making facilities: The photocopy machines available in the library are expensive and of a terrible quality. I don't see why we cannot get better and cheaper xerox machines, as it is the case in all the other universities.

D. Locker for students. Since we do not have enough carrels, providing some lockers to students is the minimum the administration can do.

Finally, I hope that once we agree in principle on the content of these proposals, we will start thinking about some concrete measures to implement them.

Thank you,

Masoud Faraji

Field Coverage at Ph.D. Level

This tableau has been constructed on the basis of projected course offerings for the academic years beginning with 1982-83. It assumes, in other words, Eatwell for one-half, Shaikh for one-half, and Deyrup retired.

Given these assumptions, it assigns faculty to primary field position only if they are free to teach a minimum of two Ph.D. elective courses each year and a seminar every other year in those fields (except when on sabbatical). It assigns faculty to secondary field position if they have enough competence in those fields to be able to teach the elective courses when the primary person is on sabbatical and if they could provide adequate dissertation help for students working in those areas. A further limit was imposed---that no single faculty person could be listed for more than three Ph.D. elective fields (in primary and secondary positions taken together).

N.B.: This exercise refers only to our ability to cover Ph.D. elective fields. It does not focus on M.A. course coverage, for example, or kinds of orientation or competency we might expect among the candidates we consider.

Ph.D. Core Requirements

Micro Foundations	Eatwell	Vietorisz
Macro Foundations	Eatwell	Nell
Marxian Foundations	Shaikh	Semmler
Econometrics	Gordon	(need sabbatical replacement)

Ph.D. Electives

History of Thought	Heilbroner	Thomson	Nell
Post-Keynesian	Nell	Eatwell	
Marxian Theory	Shaikh	Semmler	
1. Money & Banking		Nell	
2. Public Finance	Semmler	Gordon	
3. Industrial Organization	Schwartzman	Semmler	
4. International Trade		(Shaikh)	
5. Economic History	Thomson	(Gordon)	
6. Labor Economics	Gordon	(Thomson)	
7. Class & Gender		Sen	
8. Quantitative Methods			
9. Economic Development	Sen		
10. Urban & Regional		Vietorisz	
11. Economic Planning	Vietorisz		
12. Race and Class			

Notes: We think it does not make sense to have one faculty person responsible for more than one elective field as the primary person; this explains our positioning of Sen and Vietorisz halfway between first and second position in Class & Gender and Urban & Regional respectively. Where parentheses appear around names in the second position, this indicates that, while those people have competence to provide secondary opinions for dissertations and qualifying exams, it is somewhat doubtful that they would have room in their teaching schedules to fill in when the primary person is on sabbatical.

The Simple Arithmetic of a "Balanced Budget" Curriculum

This is a revised version of some arithmetic we have discussed before. It presents some illustrative calculations to highlight the limits on the number of Ph.D. elective fields and other courses we can offer with a full-time faculty of 13 and with the rules we have proposed to the State.

A. Teaching Supply

Assuming that each faculty member chooses to take advantage of the sabbatical option, we get 17 courses from each over 3.5 years, or 4.85 courses per year.

Our total potential supply is therefore $13 \times 4.85 = 63$. Plus we can continue to count on 3 courses from Cappy. Although our deal with the administration is supposed to point toward reducing our adjunct needs (besides Cappy) essentially to zero, I think we could continue to count on 2 adjunct courses when and where it seemed essential. We subtract one course, finally, because the chair gets one course credit for the chair's tasks.

Thus, total potential teaching supply =	regular faculty	63
	Cappy	3
	misc. adjuncts	2
	chair	(1)
		<u>67</u>

B. Teaching Demand

	<u>Plan A</u>	<u>Plan B</u>
1. M.A. Requirements		
100, 103, 105, 106, 107, 120		
110, 111, 113, 115, 117		
180, 181	13	13
2. M.A. Electives		
084, 189, plus N electives per year (including the possibility of double offerings of some core courses)	7	10
3. Ph.D. Core Requirements		
200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 281	7	7
4. Ph.D. Elective Fields		
3 political economy fields @ 2 per year	6	6
10 or 11 elective fields @ 2.5 per year	27.5	25
misc. seminars and electives	6	6
	<u>66.5</u>	<u>67</u>