

## Examination etiquette or surviving the end

Jay Blaff

With pressures mounting, exams rapidly approaching, and no professors' strike in sight, I fear that exams will proceed with the cocksure punctuality of a loyal dog. Therefore I thought it practical if not profitable to design the following syllabus to be used as a guide to alleviate some of the tension or at least channel it to areas where it might be better spent; for instance, worrying how you're going to pay for next year's tuition.

### Methods of Study

**Mnemonic devices** — Don't get excited, it's not a respiratory disease. Mnemonic devices are devices that can be purchased at any stationery store at a minimal cost, and when strapped to the head will increase powers of retention tenfold. In addition, when not being used for retention purposes, it can also be reversed and worn as an undergarment.

**Hedging** — This is a very exacting process which involved the use of a thin rope and a pair of pruning shears, or, if not readily available, a two-hour glimpse of the exam beforehand will suffice.

**Inculcation** — It is common knowledge that the mind, in its unconscious state, is most receptive. What I propose then is an oral tape recording to be played repetitiously every night for a fortnight before exams. You will be amazed how quickly the information is transferred and diffused into your brain. Don't, however, make the same mistake I did. For the fortnight prior to exams I unwittingly played the flip side of the cartridge; thus, when exams rolled around I wrote out the lyrics to "American Pie"...

complete with all five verses... used six booklets... managed a C plus. My friend did nine booklets... "Stairway to Heaven"... got a B plus and a recording contract.

### Tips for Writing Certain Exams

**Hegel's Dialectic** — Otherwise referred to as sophisticated reasoning, fallacious reasoning and syllogistic reasoning, but what plainly boils down to bullshit, for want of a better word. For this particular exam it is better to understudy than overstudy or better yet, not to study at all. Come exam day,

proceed to toss about vague and obscure terms such as "negation of the negation", antithesis, and synthesis. After all, that how Hegel himself arrived at the dialectical approach.

**Integral Calculus** — A difficult exam to write, for even the most astute individuals. This difficulty might be compounded, especially if the individual has never passed a mathematics course since Grade Three. In a subject like this the difference between scoring an A or an A plus will depend on how satisfactorily and how prudently one studies the material. If the student wants that little extra, he must not only practise Integral Calculus, but also apply it and incorporate it into his daily life. He must eat, sleep and breathe Integral Calculus, which can be extremely hazardous, especially if you're on one of those low calorie diets.

**Philosophy** — Here I would like



to relate the following parable, told to me by that learned exegete, Hyman Blaff:

Descartes, having been the target of a startling revelation, turned to his brother, Ala Carte, in the middle of their weekly chess match and proclaimed, "I think, therefore I am", upon which his brother replied, "Your move."

There's a valuable lesson to be learned here. Namely, anyone who spouts philosophical remarks in the midst of mundane conversations not only deserves to be ignored and ridiculed, but also deserves to have his ears boxed.

### The Different Types of Students

1) First, there's the student who walks into every exam extremely collected and self-possessed while brazenly affirming, "It's gonna be a cinch". The next scene is that of the brazen affirmer being wheeled out, flanked by I.V. bags and resuscitation units while clutching a Gideon Bible.

2) Then there's the very studious individual who attends classes on a regular basis (a rarity these days). The sycophant, flatterer, boot licker, and ass kisser, all rolled into one obnoxious individual. Volunteers to do research for the professor outside of the school curriculum (another rarity). Can easily be spotted by the tremendous arsenal of pens and pencils. The target of scathing remarks (justifiably so), and the one voted "Most Likely To Be Lynched".

Finally, there are the panicky individuals — this is the category that most students fall into. Walks into the room, sits down at desk, lays out writing utensils, blows on hands (and offers words of reassurance in an attempt to calm himself (words to the effect of "My life hinges on this exam"). Finally, he inhales deeply and the exams are distributed.

Panic and unadulterated terror soon set in. The eyes start darting around the silent room, trying to locate other students in the same fix (misery loves company). Unable to find any, he begins to sweat profusely and his final words before expiring are, "I knew I should have registered in a trade school". With that he passes out and is not revived until someone waves the answers under his nose.

## Trio discovers ways to keep faculty satisfied

PJ Todd

Nell Young probably wasn't thinking about university professors when he sang, "It's better to burn out than to fade away," but his words are apparently valid for academe too. The same potential exists for everyone: the brilliant can burn out and the bored can fade away.

Three York representatives—Chairman of Atkinson's English Department Robert Fothergill, Dean of Atkinson Ron Bordessa, and Bill Farr, Vice-President of Employee and Student Relations, went to New York recently to discuss the 'burn-out syndrome': professors performing below their capabilities because of job dissatisfaction. The conference, sponsored by The City University of New York and called *Faculty Burn-Out: Faculty Renewal* provided an educational forum for those interested in improving faculty working conditions and maintaining intellectual energy in universities.

Professor Fothergill offered a definition of the buzz word 'burn-out': "There are two kinds of faculty burn-out. The rare form, and the one we did not discuss at the conference, involves the extremely productive and motivated individual whose dynamo overloads and clicks off. This is not a common problem, the majority of the burn-outs are faculty members who just fizzle out after 15 or 20 years. They get bored and cannot come on fresh or exciting. They've been teaching the same material for years."

Faculty burn-out is attributable to a number of other factors. "Opportunities for variety and mobility diminish. People thought they could change jobs, but they find there are no new openings," explained Fothergill. Or faculty members suffer from feelings of 'inconsequentiality'; believing there is little relationship between how hard they work and the rewards they receive.

Bill Farr prefers a more succinct definition: "It's boredom. I do not like the word 'burn-out'. It suggests incapacity. The symptoms are more like depression or mid-life crisis."

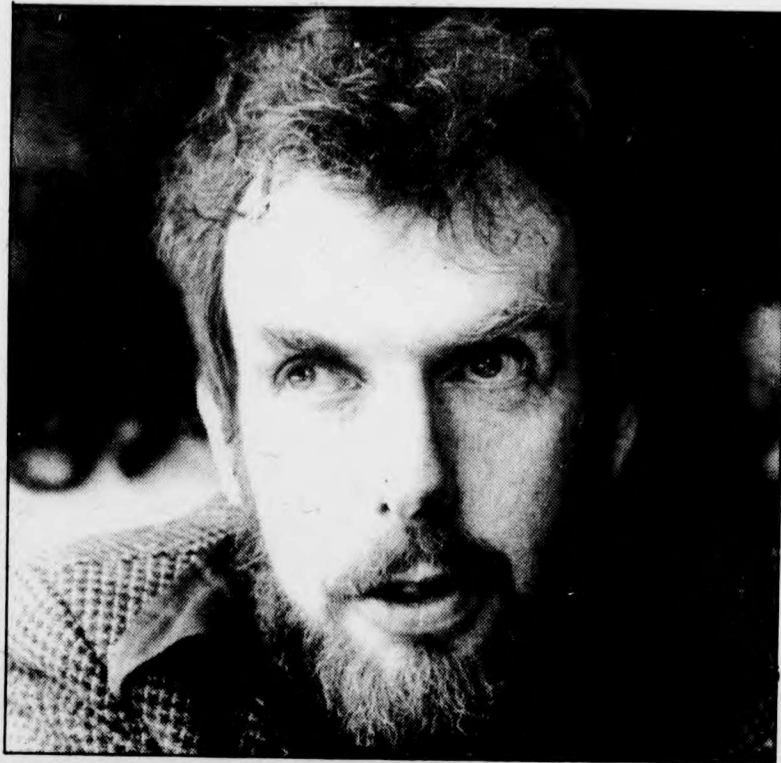
Professor Fothergill emphasized the nature of York's involvement in the conference. "We are looking for preventative measures that we can take now, before the problem gets as serious as it is in some colleges in the United States. In his opinion the syndrome has yet to seriously affect York. "Compared to other universities York is still fortunate - an ideal place. The situation is worse in the U.S. In English departments some professors are teaching enormous sections of remedial English; vast classes of bored and disinterested students."

Participants at the conference suggested numerous ways to alleviate burn-out. Career counselling is one because encouraging professors to seek new jobs or expand the scope of their present positions would allow them to escape the confines of their jobs. Those in attendance also advocated that faculty members ignore the stigma associated with "professors staying in school", because continued exposure to new material can prevent intellectual stagnation.

The conference also encouraged the development of counselling services to support faculty members, suffering such effects of burn-out as depression, fatigue, headaches, back pains, and hypertension.

York University has a Counselling and Development Centre that does offer help to faculty members, but as Lucie Cantrell, a Centre employee, said, "Our first priority is to counsel students." She believes the problem is "not as neat or as easily categorized as the term 'burn-out' suggests" and said, "these days most people are concerned with problems related to the economy. People are trying to make ends meet and they are not as concerned with personal growth and exploration."

While Farr, an administrator constantly involved with contract negotiations, was enthusiastic about the conference, he will not incorporate conference suggestions in York contracts. "I do not think that steps taken through the administration would work. This is not a contractual matter." Farr, however, has arranged for cassette recordings of the conference seminars to be made available to the York faculty and wants "to share my enthusiasm with my fellow deans and colleagues."



Robert Fothergill, head of the Atkinson English Department.

### Chowdown:

## If you are in the area check out The Mug

E.P. Cureau

There's a little Indian restaurant to the west of Highway 2... and alas, there it remained, unreviewed, while a snow-weary traveller sought refuge under a neon "Genesee" sign.

Pouring into "The Mug" at 500 Bloor Street West were customers looking for some basic delicatessen-style fare. They couldn't have gone wrong if they chose a Submarine Delight. Packed with pastrami, salami, swiss cheese and garnished with hot and sweet peppers, all on a French stick, it would have fed the Canadian downhill ski team. And all for \$3.80. For \$2.90 there's roast brisket of beef on a kaiser or a reuben sandwich with sauerkraut, melted cheese, french fries and cole slaw for \$3.90. For a nickel less, try a veal sub with hot or sweet peppers and cole slaw. Each is large enough to stave off the wintry rigors of the Great White North.

Elsewhere on the menu are burgers costing from \$2.05 and on up. Roast beef on a French Stick is a rather pricy \$4.25. A better bet would be one of the "Spaghetti Specials". Spaghetti, with fresh fried mushrooms and a mug of draft costs \$4.38; spaghetti with meat balls and a mug of draft is \$4.04.

Aviators, and anyone who flies a snowplow, might want to try a 747 Hot Dog for \$1.45. Homesick Norwegians could try The Mug's herring with sour cream for \$2.30.

A helpful but nervous waitress informed *Excalibur* that an appeal for dessert was futile. The selection of French pastries was "all gone". So \$1.10 of their \$1.25 cost was spent on a plate of vanilla ice cream. Chocolate flavour is available too. A piece of strawberry shortcake is an outrageous \$1.95.

Tea and coffee at The Mug is 40¢. 14 oz. of draft beer is \$1.10 and 12 oz. of the bottled domestic stuff is \$1.30.

A special trip down to Bloor Street West just to eat at The Mug seems a bit unnecessary; there are lots of beer 'n' sandwich places all over Toronto. But if you're in the area, and the thought of another Big Mac, fries and coke is too much, check out The Mug.