

Modes 171

Modify Modes

Excalibur has become concerned about the fact that over 1800 students are taking a compulsory modes course they claim is being badly taught and will serve little practical purpose in furthering their education.

In an effort to expose every view on the problem Excalibur has devoted this page to the ideas of the students and faculty involved in the course, as well as presenting Excalibur's editorial assessment and comment on the conflict.

When we approached Mr. Jack, a lecturer in Modes of Reasoning 171, he refused to comment for the paper, because he was not in a position to state departmental policy on the course. He referred us to the course director, Mr. McFarland, who was unavailable for comment until before press time.

Next week: the official faculty reply on Modes 171.

Since September, over 1800 students have been subjected to in-course boredom labelled as Modes of Reasoning 171.

As a compulsory course Modes is an example of gross disregard of the student's freedom to choose his courses so that they will fulfill his educational ideals.

Justification of the compulsion to study modes possibly may be found in the fact that a study of logic will aid the student in approaching his other courses, BUT the student is not a mindless animal who is incapable of deciding what is good for him or what isn't. Rather the student should be credited with the intelligence to discriminate what courses he will benefit from.

The irresponsibility of the faculty decision to make modes compulsory is equalled by the attitude of the lecturers to the course. They seem to consider it a dull but necessary introductory course to philosophy which could be compared to a course in basic arithmetic or an introduction to a foreign language.

"I shall be boring again on Thursday," typifies the faculty's attitudes to the course.

Possibly replacement of the lectures on formal logic by workshop style classes would make a more exciting and viable learning experience. York has innumerable resources in the field of audio-visual facilities. Surely the professors could co-ordinate a more interesting series of lectures with the help of these resources.

Most important, they should forget their complacent idea that the course is necessarily boring and start working to make the lectures interesting.

The accusation of irresponsibility can also be directed to some students in Modes. A small group are trying to organize the students into an effective body that can work to reform the course but they are bogged down by poor organization and the chronic problem of apathy.

The students could improve the present quality of the course if they would co-operate with the active movements to improve the course.

Modes 171 has been a massive fiasco. Action must be taken to improve this year's course as well as radically revamp the role modes will play next year.

Powers pan modes petition

by Paul Plotkin and Aviva Burke

"Would the swine in the back please control himself, or leave".

"Boy, shut up."

These are but two of the typical remarks to be heard from the current lecturer in Modes 171. He has scolded, degraded, bored, and antagonized more students in less time and with the least amount of effort than any other lecturer at York.

Is it any wonder that many people become alienated and try to strike back? But it is unfortunate that the method they used was similar to Prof. Jack's. It is indeed sad that they resorted to screaming and insulting rather than to rational arguments.

They must understand that there exist proper channels and established methods of registering a complaint. It is only when all else fails that radical solutions must be attempted.

The first step in the established method of presenting a grievance is to present a petition.

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photo by Scott McMaster

Students in this class have a great deal of respect and patience not to hyperventilate the EXIT door.

Modes protest screwed

by Rob't. G. Williams

Do you remember the petition that circulated in the Modes 171 class about two weeks ago? Do you know what has become of this first incident and its sponsors?

There exist about 20 stalwart supporters of the first movement who are trying to extend their efforts to include as many students of Modes 171 as possible. On Nov. 6 this group had a meeting to decide on their aims, policies, and to organize themselves.

These few remaining protesters freely admit that they were very ineffective in their efforts concerning the petition. However they also feel very cheated in this regard. After presentation of their petition to Prof. McFarland he said most definitely that he could not possibly take a lecture hour from the course to discuss the discontent as this was a senate decision.

The next day the students were completely outmanoeuvred. Taking a whole lecture hour, Prof. Jack expounded the virtues of the course and its relevance to just about anything. Unfortunately the people behind the petition could not rally themselves quickly enough to state their views and have these ideas thusly pre-

sented to all students in the course.

In a feeble counter attack on Prof. Jack one student, not a member of the petition group, stood up to publicly denounce the course and Jack. Jack very logically stated that since the course was difficult we would be all the better for it.

He then saw fit to debase himself to catcalling to which the students applauded.

However, it should be pointed out to those who have resigned themselves to Modes and to those who think that all protest is dead, that bigger things are in the planning stage. For one thing, the soliloquy by Jack was not the type of meeting requested in the petition (the idea was to hold a forum where both sides could learn of the issues of the opposition).

Since the militant group feel that they cannot have a chance to vent their views during a lecture hour, they feel that more drastic measures are required to bring their cause more strongly to the Modes faculty.

The protesters describe themselves as "radical but liberal". The small concession of one representative from each tutorial leader to attend a conference in which there would be 20 students and 6 faculty is sufficient. Those

strong supporters think that most people are apathetic in regards to action as they feel the course is just a bitter pill to be swallowed obediently.

One reason for the relative ineffectiveness of the protesters is their glaring lack of organization. This has partially defeated them before they started. Dissension among these few is also a problem. Some members think that they will avoid any organization as this will be the most productive means of action while others think that as a highly organized group they will be more effective. Most of them desire not a complete abolition of the course but rather a change in format, a more student oriented programme, and the course to be non-compulsory.

The meeting of the radicals on Wednesday should determine whether the group will turn reactionary or remain peaceful and should set a definite policy and something for the group to build on. In this respect it should be crucial, both for the group and for all students in Modes, apathetic or not. It might even lead to a split amongst the protesters. Even if it does, their memory and courage will live on as a testimonial to a dedicated group of students who actually lacked apathy.

Jack is really a good guy

by Adam Schneid

After last week's lecture by Mr. Jack in Modes 171 lecture, I changed my mind completely about him. I loved him and I think everybody else did. At last, he was human. If from this course we learn to argue the way he does . . .

Then these people took over the mike system. After Jack's integrity, they really came on the wrong way. Their argument was not rational. It was pseudo-hatred and put-on hostility (with one or two exceptions).

I'd like to ask these people (here, because I didn't think of it at the lecture) who they were shouting at. Prof. Jack? I think Jack became the York faculty establishment symbol. There was too much noise for this to be about modes. They were yelling about student revolution.

And for this reason, nothing Jack could have said would have changed their minds. For they had ego-involvement in the thing. They got the petition going, so they have made up their minds, closed them and that's that. What was the petition over? Talk. Debate. Exchange of views. But they closed their minds to begin with — how can there be any rational judgement of any argument? It's much easier to grab the mike and yell what they yelled. Oh, that's cool.

I think it's significant that few of the would-be radicals had any rational substantiation of their arguments. So this gets you to question their integrity and their motives. If they are true revolutionaries, they should know why they're revolutionaries. What are we fighting for, baby? I don't know, baby, but it's a gas.

Is revolution really their philosophy? Are they student power advocates because they believe it? or are they being niggers by licking the boots of the revolutionaries hoping to get a pat on the back.

It's easy to appeal to human pride. To call you nigger if you're non-violent. People that are swayed by such appeals can be swayed by any fascist. They are the true, character-less, opinion-less niggers.

Bad show that day, bad show. Revolutionaries don't revolt against any thing. Jack is one of the nicest profs we have.

Adam Schneid is a student in Modes 171 who is disgusted with the actions of both faculty and students. This is his opinion of Modes of Reasoning 171.



photo by Scott McMaster

Mr. P. Jack