

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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Assembly of the Academic Senate, Academic Council
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April 24, 2003

RICHARD C. ATKINSON, PRESIDENT

Dear Dick:

Last fall, at your request, the Academic Senate empanelled a task force to address several questions concerning responsibility for the description of courses offered at the University of California. The first charge of this task force was to prepare a report on English R1A (“The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance”), which was taught during fall semester on the Berkeley campus. That report was forwarded to you in January 2003. The task force has now completed its full charge including a review of the adequacy of campus procedures for review of course descriptions and an analysis of faculty responsibility for the content of these materials.

Attached is the final report of this task force, including 3 appendices

Cordially,

Gayle Binion, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Academic Council

Members, Task Force on Course Descriptions
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REPORT OF THE COURSE DESCRIPTION TASK FORCE

April 18, 2003

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

On September 10, 2002, President Richard Atkinson requested that Academic Council Chair Gayle Binion convene a task force to “conduct an assessment of the procedures by which course descriptions are created and reviewed at the University of California” and to provide a “thoughtful review and discussion of our standards for course descriptions....” A well-publicized controversy involving a politically sensitive course description produced by a graduate student instructor had prompted this request. Nonetheless, President Atkinson asked for a task force that would reach beyond the particular case to clarify “for the broader UC community the process and principles by which faculty decisions on course descriptions are made.”

In response to President Atkinson’s request, Chair Binion established this Task Force on Course Descriptions [hereafter Task Force]. The Task Force has met twice, and has carefully examined documents and reports from all of the UC campuses regarding procedures and criteria for approval of courses, including course descriptions (see Course Descriptions Task Force Report on Divisional Policies and Procedures for Course Approvals and Graduate Student Instructor Oversight and Training, attached as Appendix A). Our careful review and summary of these documents satisfies us that all of the campuses have thorough-going, even exhaustive processes for the review of course descriptions. In addition, we have taken account of the following materials:

- the Faculty Code of Conduct;
- relevant Standing Orders of the UC Regents and Regulations of the Academic Senate regarding responsibility for course content and conduct;
- the letter of August 12, 2002 from Professor Robert Post, UCB School of Law, to President Richard Atkinson, regarding academic freedom and responsibility (see Appendix B); and
- UC policies regarding electronic communications and web pages.

We wish to thank Kimberly Peterson, Committee Analyst, for her outstanding work in compiling and organizing the diverse materials from the campuses as well as other information necessary for our undertaking.

While engaged in its broader inquiry, this Task Force also produced a report on the above mentioned class, a Section of English R1A at UC Berkeley (see Appendix C). On January 8, 2003, Chair Binion transmitted that report to President Atkinson.

ISSUES

This Task Force has considered four questions:

- 1) What constitutes a course description?
- 2) What are the minimum procedures that should exist for review and approval of course descriptions in general, and for courses with multiple offerings in particular?
- 3) What are the faculty's responsibilities regarding the mentoring and oversight of graduate students who produce course descriptions?
- 4) What standards and criteria should apply to the production and review of course descriptions?

Our inquiry has focused on undergraduate courses, as issues of graduate student instruction do not arise in the context of graduate courses. Nonetheless, our discussion of standards and criteria for course descriptions (Question 4)) applies alike to undergraduate and graduate courses.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Framing our responses to the four questions listed above are two fundamental sets of principles found in the UC Faculty Code of Conduct, one concerned with faculty rights, the other with faculty responsibilities. First, the Code identifies as among the "Professional Rights" of faculty the right of "free inquiry" and the right "to present controversial material relevant to a course of instruction." As Professor Post explains in his letter, this portion of the Code means that faculty must be free to initiate "a robust scholarly dialogue [that] can be fierce, consequential and hurtful to those who care intensely about their ideals." Furthermore, faculty must be free to communicate "definite viewpoints about important and controversial questions" in their teaching, so long as they abide by professional norms requiring an open mind. These faculty rights mean that individual faculty need not be concerned about presenting their courses from a particular perspective, be it free market capitalism, realism, feminism, postmodernism, or any other. Programs of study should present a wide range of perspectives, but individual faculty are free to pursue particular modes of inquiry in their scholarship and their teaching, again, so long as professional norms are met. These freedoms are necessary, as Professor Post observes, "if the University is to fulfill its function of promoting the advancement of knowledge." We note that as a feature of the Code and of the collective bargaining agreement reached with graduate teaching personnel, these rights of academic freedom are not afforded to graduate student instructors.

Second, the Code indicates that among the "Professional Responsibilities" of faculty are obligations to "encourage the free pursuit of learning of their students," and "to assure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit." This second set of principles means that faculty may not evaluate or discriminate against students on political grounds, nor may they use their courses as platforms for introducing irrelevant material or to "coerce the judgment or conscience of a student...." Furthermore, faculty

may not use University resources “on a significant scale” for personal or political purposes, nor may they intentionally misrepresent their personal views as the position of the University. These obligations inform not only faculty members’ teaching responsibilities but also their supervision and mentoring of graduate student instructors.

DISCUSSION

With these framing principles in mind, we turn to the four issues listed above. Our aim is to apply these principles to the particular problems associated with producing and reviewing course descriptions.

1) What constitutes a course description?

The common understanding of a course description within the University has been that it is the general descriptive material appearing in the publicly available campus course catalog, advertising the courses that constitute the official, approved curriculum of the campus. Course descriptions have functioned largely to inform students and the general public about the formal curriculum and to establish the framework for course content. As communications between the faculty and students, they partake of the faculty’s rights of academic freedom. But because they represent communications on behalf of the University and are officially sanctioned by the University, they have required special approval procedures. Although the publication of a course description does not reflect University endorsement or agreement with the contents, it has conveyed the University’s approval of the material as a proper course description.

Like a course description, a syllabus provides students with notification about course content. Its notice function goes much further than a course description, however, because a syllabus typically presents a more elaborate account of the course material, as well as daily assignments, workload expectation, grading percentages, paper submission guidelines, and reading lists. Moreover, a syllabus differs from a course description in that it represents a personal communication from a particular faculty member to the students, not a formal statement from the faculty as a whole and the University. As such, a syllabus serves to alert students to the professor’s approach to the material, to attract enrollments by conveying the professor’s enthusiasm for the subject, and to ensure that students undertake the class with appropriate expectations about the nature and timing of course work. Before the internet, syllabi were typically distributed only to enrolled students, and everyone understood that they represented the particular professor’s perspective on the subject matter, not an official statement from the University. For that reason, and also because it would place an impossible burden on both faculty and the University, syllabi typically have not been subjected to prior University review.¹

¹ On virtually all the campuses, the duly-authorized Academic Senate body requires submission of a syllabus when any new or substantially revised course is proposed for permanent listing in the catalog, to provide an exemplary model of how the proposed course matter may be taught, but with expected

In sum, although course descriptions and syllabi both perform a notice function and both are protected by the faculty's rights of academic freedom, course descriptions serve an official University role in relation to the curriculum, while syllabi, in contrast, have the personal and spontaneous qualities more associated with individual faculty members' classroom teaching. That difference likely explains why course descriptions historically have received prior University review, and syllabi have not. For the vast run of classes, what we will label "conventional courses," this distinction between course descriptions and syllabi holds.

For nonstandard types of courses, those formally labeled "special topics" and "variable topics," and others informally termed "umbrella" courses, course descriptions in the catalog have been so general that they provide little, if any, of the specific information about course content usually delineated in a conventional course description.² We will refer to these categories of courses collectively as "multiform courses," because they allow for flexibility, adaptability, variability, and distinction.

A "special topics" course is one that is experimental or temporary, offered irregularly, and usually varying in content with each specific offering. It may be offered by a visiting professor, constitute part of a special seminar series designed to attract professional school or other faculty to one-time undergraduate teaching, or be part of a curriculum innovation initiative. The course catalog may contain language such as "Special Topics in Political Science," or may indicate the overall objectives of a seminar series, but it affords no further guidance to particular course content. A separate course description posting or syllabus must supply that information, often provided through an on-line or supplemental schedule of courses.

"Variable topics" courses normally cover material falling within a more defined subject area. The topics vary with the instructor; but unlike "special topics" courses, they have a permanent place in the regular curriculum. The catalog course description typically indicates general topics, scope, types of sections, and whether the course may be repeated for credit. Necessarily, the syllabus or some other more specific posting must perform more of the work of informing students than in a regular course. Thus, for example, if the course catalog refers to "Variable Topics in American Indian History," the syllabus or some supplemental posting must explain whether the course for that year will address "History of the Native Peoples of California," "The Indian New Deal," or some other particular topic. Sometimes, however, the variable topics courses have rather defined subtitles or alpha sequences, designating the materials as one might find in other course offerings. On at least one campus, a brief course description must be

variability among different instructors. That process differs substantially, however, from a requirement of prior review of each syllabus for each offering of a duly approved course.

² Sometimes these descriptions may focus more on the skill sets that the course will impart rather than on the substantive material that will be used to impart those skills.

included for each topic course within the “variable topics” rubric. As with “special topics,” often an on-line or supplemental schedule of courses is used to disseminate these temporary course descriptions to the students.

“Umbrella courses” does not refer to a formal category within the University; however, the term is typically used for courses that address large-scale curriculum requirements or needs, that are organized with numerous separately taught sections, and that are designed to impart particular skills, such as rhetorical techniques, critical reading and writing, or proficiency in a foreign language. Such courses are often taught by advanced graduate students under faculty supervision. The course description in the catalog will normally indicate the skills emphasized in the course, and some other posting -- the syllabus or other descriptor -- must inform students of the contents and approach emphasized in each of the different sections. Often the sections for these courses are not announced far in advance of the start of a quarter or semester, so that the syllabi themselves represent the only sources of more specific information about the sections.

Whether for conventional offerings or these multiform courses, it is clear that the catalog listing is a communication by the University to its students and to the general public regarding the curriculum. With the advent of the internet, however, it is becoming far more common for faculty to post their syllabi for conventional courses, or at least the course descriptions from their syllabi, on official departmental sites that are open to the general public or to anyone in the University community. On some of these sites, user-friendly programs enable the faculty member to do so directly, without the intervention of departmental staff. Departmental sites on the web, as well as more general campus sites for curricular information, have become indispensable tools for informing students about the special, variable, and umbrella offerings. Given the format for their dissemination, should all of these postings count as formal course descriptions presented on behalf of the University, with attendant expectations of prior University review? An affirmative answer would introduce a major shift in University policy regarding the different treatment of formal course descriptions and individual faculty members' syllabi.

This Task Force considered making widespread dissemination, as opposed to faculty-student communication, the touchstone for distinguishing formal course descriptions from syllabi, and rejected that approach. We did so because we believe the historically different treatment of catalog course descriptions and syllabi rests, however implicitly, on a theory of education that rejects reliance on content pre-approved by the University and prefers to see learning grow from interactions between a faculty member and student that cannot be anticipated or known in advance. In these more personal and spontaneous interactions, the faculty member is speaking as an individual scholar, and thus it makes more sense to subject that individual to general professional and ethical injunctions in the name of the University, enforceable through the Faculty Code of Conduct, rather

than to insist upon prior University approval of particular course content, including the class syllabus. Because we want syllabi to be assimilated to that kind of interaction -- which is necessarily *not* in the voice of the University -- it would be imprudent as a general matter to count such course-related materials as formal course descriptions warranting prior review. Treating all publicly disseminated syllabi as course descriptions would also place enormous burdens on the University and chill faculty members' freedom to adopt controversial points of view. If we would not want the University exercising prior review of everything said in the classroom, and if we deem syllabi comparable to classroom teaching in terms of faculty-student interaction, then counting all publicly-disseminated syllabi (or the publicly-disseminated course descriptions taken from those syllabi) as formal course descriptions is undesirable as well.

We thus conclude that so long as syllabi for conventional courses are so designated, they should not count as formal course descriptions on behalf of the University, even though they obviously describe courses. For the multiform courses, where course catalogs are less informative, the question is more difficult. Taking account of the concerns articulated above, we are inclined to draw the line at some kind of minimum notice function about the content of the course. The University has an interest in approving that communication, but not in being a panopticon for professors. For some of these multiform courses, the temporary course description, syllabus, or other posting is the only formal statement of course content, and therefore takes on more official standing and University concern. We suggest the following guidelines for drawing distinctions in this foggier realm. First, regardless of the label of the course, if the subtitled or other material in the course catalog is rather well defined, then the course and its syllabus should be treated as a conventional course. Second, if there is a temporary course description for a multiform course that appears outside the formal course catalog, it should function in the same way as the catalog description, leaving the professor's publicly posted syllabus as a particular academic expression, outside the scope of prior review. Third, for "umbrella courses" or other multiform courses taught by graduate students, the distinction between a course description and a syllabus may be less important because graduate student instructors cannot claim the faculty's full range of academic freedom. Especially where such a syllabus is the only real notice or information that prospective students receive regarding course content, then that syllabus should be treated as a course description offered by the University.

- 2) What are the minimum procedures that should exist for review and approval of course descriptions in general, and for multiform courses particular?

Regents' Standing Order 105.b provides that "The Academic Senate shall authorize and supervise all courses and curricula...." This delegation to the faculty is reinforced by the Faculty Code of Conduct, which includes among the rights of faculty "participation in the governance of the University," including "approval of course content and manner of instruction...." Systemwide Academic Senate

Bylaw 312.A.1 states in turn that “Each Division shall approve and supervise courses of instruction and curricula...” On each of the campuses, this responsibility is directed to a standing committee of the divisional Academic Senate, which in some instances has further delegated review authority to other Senate bodies (e.g., Faculty Executive Committees) for particular schools or colleges. We take these provisions regarding the Senate’s authority to include review³ and approval of course descriptions as defined above.

As Professor Post points out, “Course descriptions are properly characterized as an aspect of teaching, because they initiate the pedagogical relationship between individual faculty and their students.” Hence they partake of the faculty’s academic freedom. They also, per our discussion above, may offer an official statement of the University’s curriculum. In order for the Senate’s authority to steer clear of faculty rights, Senate review of course descriptions should confine itself to determining whether these descriptions satisfy relevant professional standards, discussed in response to Question 4), below. Political disagreements or aversion to controversy should not enter into the review process.

For conventional courses, the Senate’s review authority should be exercised by a Senate entity designated at the campus level, which should review the course description material for the campus catalog. As discussed above, even if a particular faculty member’s syllabus is publicly posted in whole or in part, it should not be subject to review so long as the publicly available source distinguishes between catalog descriptions and the individual professor’s account of the course. We strongly encourage departments and schools to emphasize this distinction as part of their web design, in order to avoid misapprehensions about the University’s official approval. Our inquiry satisfies us that at every campus, an adequate procedure exists for Senate review of conventional course descriptions before they are entered into a campus catalog.

For the multiform courses described above, a temporary course description, publicly disseminated outside the permanent catalog, may serve the same purpose as a formal catalog description, and if so, should also be subject to review. Such will normally be the case where the permanent catalog offers an extremely brief and general account of the multiple offerings permitted under a particular rubric. Under such circumstances, only the publicly-disseminated description for the particular offering, not the class syllabus, should be subject to review. Finally, in those circumstances where the individual instructor's syllabus functions as the only effective communication of course content (as in the case of “umbrella” courses taught under the supervision of a lecturer by advanced graduate student instructors), there is a far greater likelihood that this syllabus may appear to be a University-approved document. Hence, review of such syllabi performing the function of course descriptions is warranted.

³ Review can consist of a post-audit, as in the case of periodic departmental reviews conducted by the Academic Senate. For purposes of our report, however, we use “review” to refer to prior examination and approval before a course description may be published or posted.

In any situation where a multiform course requires prior review, the appropriate Academic Senate body on each campus should determine whether that review is to be carried out at a departmental, school, or campus-wide level. Where review is at the departmental level, the Chair should be allowed to entrust that responsibility to a designated Senate faculty member. Electronic formats should make such review easier to accomplish and to monitor.

The approval process for course descriptions connected to “special topics” courses, “variable topics” offerings, and individual sections of “umbrella” courses varies considerably among the campuses. Some campuses have Senate committees that review each of the sections and other campuses have charged the departmental chairs with this responsibility. This review may focus on a specially prepared, brief, temporary course description, or on a syllabus itself. Especially for some “variable topics” classes, instructors at some campuses are allowed to submit particular course or section information directly to the Registrar without the prior review and approval of a committee, department chair, or chair’s designate, such as a Vice Chair of Undergraduate Studies. We repeat that where the formal catalog provides very little detail and the individual professor’s account of a multiform course is the only effective communication about course content, review should be provided at the departmental, school, or campus-wide level.

- 3) What are the faculty’s responsibilities regarding the mentoring and oversight of graduate students who produce course descriptions?

Under Academic Senate Regulation 750A, “Only regularly appointed officers of instruction holding appropriate instructional titles may have substantial responsibility for the content and conduct of courses which are approved by the Academic Senate.” Thus graduate students assigned to teach individual sections must be overseen by a faculty member, department chair, or faculty advisory group. This oversight should include approval of course descriptions, including syllabi. As noted above, graduate student instructors do not benefit from the faculty’s rights of academic freedom. Furthermore, if the University’s obligations to mentor and guide future professors are to be fulfilled, faculty attention to their earliest pedagogical efforts is imperative. Review provisions of this type are in place at all of the campuses. Indeed, it is acknowledged that the graduate student course description which triggered establishment of this Task Force resulted from a lapse in application of the review procedures, not from their absence.

To minimize or avert situations where graduate students submit unprofessional course descriptions, it is advisable for campuses to mount training and assistance programs for graduate student instructors. With effective programs of this type, there will be fewer improper course descriptions developed for faculty review. Training and mentoring programs vary tremendously across the campuses, ranging from multi-course sequences to extended orientation sessions. Indeed nationally-recognized training and supervision programs already exist at some UC

campuses, such as UCLA, where legislative requirements for professional training courses, the contractual obligations pursuant to union agreements, and the faculty responsibility for supervision and mentoring are reflected in well-established programs, documents, and support units, such as the Office of Instructional Development. Without prescribing specific measures, we note with approval the recent recommendations of UC Berkeley's GSI Training and Mentoring Task Force, especially its proposals that all first-time graduate student instructors complete a pedagogy seminar offered departmentally or by a campus entity, that such instructors complete training in professional responsibilities involved in teaching, and that all should be observed by faculty in the classroom and receive feedback and guidance on their teaching. These proposals, which are designed to strengthen Berkeley's already widely recognized program, offer valuable ideas for all the campuses.

- 4) What standards and criteria should apply to the production and review of course descriptions?

Faculty responsibilities associated with course descriptions should apply to the production as well as to the review of such materials, where appropriate. The two sets of principles found in the Faculty Code of Conduct suggest the following guidelines for creating and judging course descriptions:

- Course descriptions must comply with relevant professional standards, which means they must be educationally justified and not violate pertinent academic norms. As Professor Post explains, disclosure of strongly held or inflammatory points of view may be educationally justified in order to afford students notice of the instructor's perspective. In accordance with the discussion above, academic norms do not require that every course expose students to every side of relevant debates.
- Closely associated with the requirement of "educational justification," course descriptions should not be used to advance the instructor's own political agenda, and therefore should not contain educationally unnecessary material inserted solely for purposes of indoctrination or political preaching. Here Professor Post wisely observes that drawing the line between educationally justified disclosure of strongly held views and political preaching is a difficult matter of educational judgment. We agree with his point that the instructor ought to receive the benefit of the doubt in such matters, especially if the course subject is controversial, "because in such circumstances there will be a strong and natural temptation to dampen the rhetoric of a course description for reasons that have nothing to do with professional standards."
- Course descriptions should not include material that qualifies as a vituperative epithet or hate speech, for those kinds of words, as Professor Post puts it, "violate basic norms of civility which underwrite the practice of rational deliberation." The Faculty Code prohibits intimidation or discrimination

against students through harassment in course descriptions or otherwise. As the immediately preceding discussion explains, however, disagreements about strongly held views should not normally form the predicate for a claim of intimidation or discrimination.

- Course descriptions should not indicate or signal to students that they will be evaluated on the basis of their agreement with the professor's strongly held views rather than on the quality of their ideas and written presentations. Just as faculty members enjoy academic freedom, so students must be free to think independently and to exercise their own judgment. A course description should not express views in such extreme fashion as to convey to students that independent student views will not be tolerated or respected. As with the other standards discussed above, however, this one must be applied with sensitivity in order to avoid curtailing the robust intellectual environment that is the hallmark of a first-class research university.

The professional standards we set forth above should govern course descriptions, as well as any other descriptive material produced in connection with the teaching of a course, whether or not it is subject to prior approval. Thus, for example, those standards should apply when a faculty member develops her or his own syllabus for a conventional or multiform course. Furthermore, faculty members engaged in supervising and mentoring graduate student instructors should instill in them respect for those responsibilities along with the values of academic freedom.

The dearth of cases in which there is an evident failure to meet these standards suggests that the faculty of the University of California adhere to them faithfully in the vast majority of cases. While it is always important to remind ourselves of their value and to understand how they apply to particular circumstances, we have no reason to believe they are under-appreciated or disregarded. What this Task Force reaffirms is that within the University of California there exists a deeply rooted culture of education that values free enquiry, open debate, the critical examination of ideas, a multiplicity of approaches, and academic freedom as well as responsibility. With particular attention to the nature of course descriptions, their approval and review, and to the mentoring of graduate students who will join the professoriate, this Report, we trust, serves to clarify and renew those commitments.

Respectfully submitted,

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Course Descriptions Task Force Report on Divisional Policies and Procedures for Course Approvals and Graduate Student Instructor Oversight and Training

Summary

Members of the Course Descriptions Task Force have worked over the past few months to gather and review documentation and information from the Divisions regarding the policies and procedures for course description approvals and graduate student instructor oversight and training. (See Appendix for a complete list of the documents reviewed by the Task Force for this report). Examination of the information collected indicates that each Division has extensive and appropriate policies and procedures in place for the approval of course descriptions for conventional courses. The Task Force then turned its focus to investigating the following four questions:

1. *What procedures (department, senate, administrative) are in place to review course descriptions for variable topics, special topics, and “umbrella” courses?*

While all the divisions have functioning procedures in place for the approval of the general descriptions of variable topics, special topics, and “umbrella” courses, the approval process for the specific sections of these types of courses varies from campus to campus. Some campuses have Senate committees that review each of the sections and other campuses have charged the departmental chairs with this responsibility. On some campuses, there are types of courses where the departmental chair may be delegating her or his responsibility for reviewing individual offerings to departmental staff. Whether this practice should be revisited depends on whether the material involved constitutes a formal course description or is more in the nature of a syllabus. These definitional questions are addressed in our Task Force Report.

2. *What procedures are in place to deal with “problem cases?”*

Every campus has a Senate committee in place that has been given the authority over courses of instruction and which may revoke or withdraw approval of a course.

3. *What are the operative questions that are asked by “reviewers” about course descriptions?*

The reviewers of course descriptions are charged with a number of administrative duties when considering course descriptions for approval. Reviewers are often asked to examine items such as whether a course is numbered correctly, prerequisites are clearly stated, the format and credit units are appropriate, or whether its description fits the length requirements for the course catalog. However, reviewers primarily examine the subject matter and pedagogical methods (*e.g.*, lecture/discussion, seminar) outlined in the course descriptions. The substantive focus of the review is on the description as a coherent statement of a unified body of knowledge, as well as on compliance with relevant professional responsibilities.

4. *What policies and programs are in place for graduate student instructor oversight and training?*

Graduate student instructors at each of the Divisions are required to be overseen by a faculty member, department chair, or faculty advisory group. The different Divisions offer a variety of training programs and assistance to graduate student instructors. Training programs are often required and are offered at either the departmental or campuswide level or both.

It should be noted that several of the Divisions are currently in the process of reviewing and making changes to their course approval procedures and graduate student instructor training programs.

Question 1: What procedures (department, senate, administrative) are in place to review course descriptions for variable topics, special topics, and “umbrella” courses?

Berkeley

The procedure for the review and approval of variable topics, special topics, and “umbrella” courses, including course descriptions, is the same as the procedure for other courses. The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) approves the general course and its description (i.e., the description that appears in the catalog). The sponsoring department is responsible for the review of sections of individual variable subject, umbrella and special subject courses, including the descriptions, offered each semester. Each department establishes procedures for the review of these course offerings.

Of note, each section of a special studies course must receive approval by the chair of the sponsoring department based on a written proposal submitted by the instructor who is to supervise the course. The proposal must describe the matter to be studied, the methods of instruction, the number of units to be credited and the methods of evaluation of student performance. A copy of the approved proposal must be submitted to the Committee on Courses of Instruction for information (Regulation A230).

Davis

The Davis Divisional process of monitoring the quality of non-standard courses pushes well beyond the minimum required by Senate legislation. With respect to special study courses, Senate Regulations require that all special studies courses for undergraduates must be supervised by a Senate member (ASR 750.C) and approved by the appropriate departmental chair (ASR 546). However, ASR 740.B limits the definition of “special study courses” to courses numbered 199. Davis Division legislation expands the scrutiny of non-standard courses by including all variable unit courses, and by expanding the definition of “special study courses” to include 99 and 194H (Honors) courses, as well as courses numbered 199. DDR 531 requires that Senate members must supervise any variable unit course for undergraduates, and DDR 534 requires the chair to approve any offering of a variable unit undergraduate course. With regard to “umbrella” courses that are offered for a fixed number of units, the Divisional Committee on Courses of Instruction reviews the course descriptions, but does not review individual offerings. That review is the responsibility of departmental chairs – who appear to be meeting that responsibility conscientiously.

Irvine

Special Study. For individually arranged field study (courses numbered 97 & 197), directed group study on special topics (courses numbered 98 & 198), and special study courses for individuals (courses numbered 99 & 199) the individual program of study for these courses, as proposed by a student or faculty member for a specific quarter, must be submitted in writing and approved by the chair of the department or program prior to being offered.

Special Topics. The common title for courses which cover a broad general subject area but have different sections is “Topics in _____.” A letter suffix is often used. This type of course is usually a one-time-only offering (e.g., to accommodate visiting lecturers or facilitate pilot course offerings), is not usually repeatable for credit unless the topic changes, is not cross-listed with

other permanently offered courses, and is not sequential in nature. Committee on Courses (CoC) approval is not needed for each individual section but the major course description must be reviewed and approved by CoC. Note: Departments are encouraged to establish and maintain guidelines and a review process in order to monitor and maintain academic standards for these courses.

Topics Vary. The title for these courses might also be “Topics in _____” and a letter suffix is sometimes used. However, the department has in mind a list of variable topics which are known and set, but are offered intermittently, based on faculty availability or interest, or student interest or need. The department uses the primary course number as an “umbrella” for a variety of sub-topics or titles (e.g., Drama 135 - “Master Classes in Acting: Auditions” or “Master Classes in Acting: Kabuki and Modern Japanese Theatre”). Individual CoC approval for each offering is not needed, but the CoC approves the major course description, which serves as an “umbrella” for the varying topics. The original course description should outline the topics and potential titles which the department plans to offer under this major heading.

Los Angeles

97 & 197 – Variable Topics Courses. Variable topics courses have a general umbrella description. The umbrella description should indicate the general topics, scope, and types of sections, and whether the course may be repeated for credit. The description should begin with “A variable topics course...” A department may offer more than one section of a variable topics course per quarter. They can be distinguished by alpha suffixes if desired. After a variable topics course has been approved, specific details of sections for each term can be submitted by the department directly to the Registrar’s Office Scheduling Unit on a “Sections of Variable Topics Courses” email form. The email form can be obtained from the Registrar’s Office Scheduling Unit. A brief course description must be included for each topic course. These forms are used to record official course information in the Student Records System for the specific topics offered that quarter and instructor(s) for each term. Once the data has been entered, it is available for the *Schedule of Classes* and can be used for student transcripts, Degree Progress Reports, Study Lists, and faculty FTE reports.

88 Courses – Freshman Seminars. Course number “88” is reserved for departmentally sponsored lower-division seminars. These courses restrict enrollment to freshman and/or sophomore students. The seminars are designed to provide lower-division students the opportunity to study in a small classroom setting in order to enhance writing, verbal, and analytical skills. Course requests should be accompanied by a lower-division seminar proposal. Once approved at the departmental level and signed off by the Chair, these courses are approved for general education credit by the General Education Governance Committee, then by the Faculty Executive Committee and Undergraduate Council.

98 Courses – Professional Schools Seminar Program or Lower-Division Special Studies. Course number “98” is reserved for Professional Schools Seminar Program (PSSP) courses and for lower-division Special Studies courses. PSSP courses are designed by the faculty of the professional schools specifically for small groups of freshman and sophomore students. They are reviewed initially by a designated faculty member who serves as an Associate Dean, are reviewed by GE Governance if submitted as part of that curriculum, and are approved by

appropriate Academic Senate committees. Outside of the professional schools, courses numbered “98” are lower-division equivalents of Special Studies 198 courses. They are temporary or experimental in nature and are approved for one year only. A specific discontinue date must be stated in the “Reasons for Action” section so the course can be properly maintained in the Student Records System. All elements of 198 courses apply to 98 courses (see “198 Courses” below). If a department or program wishes to continue a 98 course beyond one year and include the course as part of its permanent curriculum, a new number must be assigned and a new course approval request must be submitted. The request must be accompanied by a course outline, reading list, examples of student work, and course evaluations. Precisely because the 98 is a one-year approval number, all departmentally-sponsored experimental offerings are sent forward, complete with syllabi and documentation, for the Faculty Executive Committee review and approval, then re-reviewed at the time the Course Approval Form is submitted, should the course become a regular and permanent part of the curriculum.

198 Courses – Special Studies. Course number “198” is reserved for upper-division Special Studies courses. Special Studies courses are designed for group study, rather than individual study, of a particular topic. They are generally approved for one year only. They are departmentally sponsored experimental or temporary courses, such as courses taught by a visiting professor. Because of their temporary nature and because they vary in content and are offered irregularly, these courses are not listed in the general catalog. Their course descriptions do, however, appear in the online *Schedule of Classes*. A department or program may offer several 198 courses each term, provided that each is approved individually and each has a separate title designated by an alpha suffix (e.g., 198A, 198B). The instructor for each 198 course must be specifically named on the “Request for Action” form. A specific discontinue date must be stated in the “Reason for Action” section so the courses can be maintained in the Student Records System. If a department or program wishes to continue a 198 course beyond one year and include the course as part of its permanent curriculum, a new number must be assigned and a course approval request must be submitted. The request must be accompanied by a course outline, reading list, examples of student work, and course evaluations. As noted above, all of them are submitted for vetting by the Faculty Executive Committee.

Riverside

E-Z Courses. The E-Z course format provides a mechanism whereby several subtopics may be presented within one broad, umbrella topic. The course title covers the broad topic, with individual lettered segments (E through Z) identifying more specific subject areas. E-Z umbrella courses may be developed both within the undergraduate and graduate curricula. These offerings may be used to take advantage of the expertise of visiting professors (“one-time only” offerings) and/or to test acceptance of a course topic with an eye to possible formalization of the more popular segments into regularly scheduled courses. Lettered segments within the E-Z umbrella course may be offered at regular or irregular intervals, based upon student and curricular needs. Submission of an E-Z umbrella course request must follow the same routing procedure as for any permanent undergraduate or graduate course. The Committee on Courses recommends that the segment subtopics to be offered under an E-Z series be identified at the time of submission of the E-Z umbrella course request. The Committee on Courses also encourages the listing of segment letters and subtitles as part of the “Catalog Description” of the E-Z umbrella. Descriptions and course outlines for new segment subtopics must be provided.

Special Studies Courses (90 & 190). The sole purpose of undergraduate Special Studies courses (90 & 190) is to provide students with a means for meeting special curricular requirements or problems on an individual basis and for variable units. Registration in all special studies courses must be approved by the chairman of the department/program concerned, based upon a written proposal submitted to the chairman.

Directed Studies Courses (290). The sole purpose of graduate Directed Studies courses (290) is to provide students with a means of conducting individual, supervised research or for studying special topics on an individual basis and for variable units. Registration in all directed studies courses must be approved, in the form of a written petition, by the instructor and the department chairman or graduate advisor. The petition must be filed with the office of the Dean of the Graduate Division.

“One-Time Only” Courses. Special courses to be taught by visiting instructors or courses that are planned as a single offering should be submitted as “one-time only.”

San Diego

Once the Committee on Educational Policy approves the umbrella or variable subject course, the faculty members submit the specific topics for those courses to the registrar through the Department.

San Francisco

The UCSF Academic Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction applies the same careful level of review to Course Descriptions as it does to course content and other information provided on the course forms. The current criterion for course descriptions is to “[ensure that] course description(s) clearly and appropriately describe(s) the course.”

Santa Barbara

In the case of courses of varying topical focus, it has been the department chair and faculty who have exercised responsibility for review and approval of each version or section of the courses.

Question 2: What procedures are in place to deal with “problem cases?”*Berkeley*

The Senate and administration are working together to ensure the academic quality of courses. Indeed, it’s important to note that considering the large volume of courses at Berkeley, there are few problem cases. When needed, the Senate and administration have acted jointly and swiftly. Most often course issues are addressed and resolved at the departmental level by the chair in consultation with the instructor of record. The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) is available to the department for consultation. When necessary, COCI may review a course in question for compliance with regulations, policies and guidelines. Matters concerning the actions of individual faculty members are governed by *The Faculty Code of Conduct*.

Davis

The principal sanction that could be invoked is the authority – provided by Divisional Bylaw – to recommend withdrawal of any course to the Divisional Assembly. The Divisional Committee on Courses of Instruction has clear authority to monitor the quality of courses and in the past has acted to correct problems brought to its attention.

Irvine

The Committee on Courses would be expected to deal with all problem cases, once informed. It is the duty of this Committee to establish appropriate procedures for the approval of courses, to take final action on the approval, disapproval, modification, withdrawal, conduct, credit valuation and classification of courses. Committee disapproval of a course may be appealed to the Divisional Senate Assembly of the Division by the academic unit proposing the course. The Committee is instructed to make decisions consistent with established educational policy and to give full consideration to the views of appropriate schools, departments, and other academic units in matters relating to their courses of instruction, and to act promptly on requests for course approval.

Los Angeles

The Undergraduate Council may suspend or withdraw approval of undergraduate courses subject to appeal to the Legislative Assembly.

Riverside

The Committee on Courses has authority for final approval of all courses of the Riverside Division, except those courses in University Extension above the 200 series, giving due consideration to the findings of the Graduate Council, the Committee on University Extension, Executive Committees of the colleges and schools, and officers at Riverside. The committee will report its actions to the next regular meeting of the Division. By a petition signed by any five voting members of the Division, all matters concerning the approval or disapproval of courses may be referred to the Division for final action. The petition shall then be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Division. Pending consideration by the Division, the filing of a petition shall not affect the status of any approved course. Nor shall the disapproval of any course by the Division affect the status of any approved course in which instruction is currently being offered.

San Diego

In the case that the Subcommittee on Undergraduate Courses can not resolve issues regarding a course approval request, consideration is taken up by the full Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). The CEP may suspend or withdraw approval of undergraduate courses and Extension courses which carry UCSD undergraduate degree credit.

San Francisco

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) is responsible for the formal and final approval of new courses of instruction, desirable modifications in courses already approved, approval of special prerequisites of major subjects, the withdrawal or retention of courses, the credit valuation of courses, the classification of courses, and any other matters germane to courses of instruction. In instances of courses giving credit for a degree bestowed under the aegis of the Graduate Council, concurrence of approval for such courses is to be obtained from said Council. When Course Forms are submitted and lack all required information or additional information is needed, COCI requests additional information from the Department or Individual Faculty member responsible for submitting the Course. UCSF is in the process of developing a procedure to track these requests and to ensure their timely response to the Committee/Registrar. This is especially critical when a course is submitted last minute, creating a "rush."

Santa Barbara

The Undergraduate Council exercises plenary power and issues policy rulings regarding undergraduate courses and may suspend or withdraw approval of undergraduate courses and curricula subject to appeal to the Faculty Legislature.

Santa Cruz

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has plenary powers regarding: the approval of new undergraduate courses; the numbering and catalog description of courses; and the appropriateness of the assignment of a particular instructor to a particular course. On occasion the Committee may ask an instructor for full information as to the content of a course, or a proposed course. The Committee consults with and advises Faculties of colleges, departments, and individual faculty members with regard to undergraduate courses. It gives full consideration to the views and findings of Faculties of colleges and departments, and of faculty members, when matters relating to their courses are before the Committee.

Question 3: What are the operative questions that are asked by “reviewers” about course descriptions?

Berkeley

Courses are reviewed for compliance with Senate regulations governing curricula, courses, instructors in charge, examinations and grades. Resource documents include:

- *Regulations of the Academic Senate*
- *Regulations of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate*, including the regulations of the colleges and schools
- *Committee on Courses of Instruction Handbook* (covers implementing procedures for course approval, unit valuation, format, numbering, descriptions, cross-listing, summer session courses, intercampus courses, technology enriched instruction, final examinations and graduate student instructor requests)
- Course approval forms

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) reviews course proposals for compliance with Senate regulations and the highest standards of teaching and scholarship. Proposals for new courses must include the following components:

- Number
- Title
- Description as it will appear in the catalog
- Detailed syllabus (e.g., statement of academic purpose, outline of topics to be covered, listing of assignments, reading list, grading method)
- Unit value
- Instructional format (e.g., lecture, seminar, discussion section)
- Instructor of record
- Prerequisites for enrollment

Each department or school establishes internal procedures for the review of course proposals to be submitted to COCI. In some cases, the executive committee of the college may also review course proposals, following departmental or school review and preceding COCI’s review (e.g., College of Engineering, College of Natural Resources).

Course proposals received by COCI are first reviewed in detail by a faculty subcommittee of COCI. The faculty subcommittees are organized by disciplines with broad expertise and knowledge in a given area (e.g., social sciences, humanities, sciences). Faculty reviewers consider all aspects of the course proposal and may raise questions concerning pedagogy, instructional format, methods of evaluation, relationship of student work to unit value, appropriateness in a given department, possible duplication of courses, and proper coding.

The subcommittee forwards its recommendation for the proposed course to the full committee. The subcommittee may recommend approving, denying or tabling the proposal. The full committee considers the subcommittee’s recommendation and takes final action on the proposed

course. COCI may ask the department or school to provide additional information, revise the proposed course or coordinate with other departments as needed.

Davis

With regard to review criteria, the respective Committees on Courses of Instruction (COCI) review courses for their academic merit. To do that, they review the course description, the required expanded course outline, the unit value, the learning activities (lecture, discussion, laboratory work, etc.), and grading policy. The Davis Divisional COCI has made public its policy that any course or course proposal that restricts, encourages, or discourages enrollment on the basis of political view, race, religion, culture, or sex will not be tolerated.

Irvine

Course descriptions are expected to be detailed enough to tell the student the subject matter and pedagogical methods that will be used, so the committee asks about the syllabus, grading schemes, assigned texts, lectures, tutorials, etc.

Los Angeles

Without seeking to set school or College general educational policy or to infringe on departmental or program judgment as to content of courses, the Undergraduate Council recommends the following criteria when evaluating a course request:

1. The course should have a clear and essential place in the overall offering of the department or program, either filling a gap in the existing course structure, or strengthening that structure without duplication or needless overlapping. As a rule, duplication of courses normally offered by another department or program and held to lie within its range, is not approved. In those instances, the respective departmental units may wish to consider multiple listing the course.
2. The course should not split up a body of knowledge or a field of study into parts too small to warrant separate treatment in themselves.
3. The content of the course should represent a unified and integrated body of subject matter and not a collection of incongruous elements brought together under a specious and superficial heading.

Courses reviewed at the Faculty Executive Committee level are screened on the basis of criteria and guidelines set forth in the “Guide to Undergraduate Course and Program Approval” (Undergraduate Council, approved October 1, 1998). Courses are reviewed for multiple listing or concurrent scheduling; appropriate numbering; course title; units and credit value; repetition; grading basis; class type and hours (format); course requisites and enrollment restrictions; course description and title; course instructors; and required signatures (Department/Program Chair; Chair of the FEC; and in some cases, the Undergraduate Council Curriculum Committee representative). In some Colleges and Schools, the Deans also review all new course proposals to take account of any resource needs for successfully mounting the course. All “new course” proposals or those with “substantive changes” must be submitted together with a full syllabus or course outline, complete with all pertinent information about course objectives and substance, grading basis and percentages, assignments, weekly outline of topics, reading and/or laboratory assignments, texts, examinations, etc. All such submissions (and for changes as well) must

indicate the “Reasons for Action,” including justifications for the role of the proposed course in the overall department’s or program’s offerings and for the course design (fieldwork, service, lecture, GE, seminar).

Riverside

In approving, disapproving, or recommending changes in course proposals, the Committee is guided by the following general policies:

1. Level and Emphasis of Courses: The primary emphasis in the course should be academic and not vocational, stressing the acquiring of a body of knowledge and the understanding of principles and theories rather than the development of skills and techniques for immediate practical application in a vocational sense. The skills and techniques should be taught as means to learning, analyzing, and criticizing theories and principles, not for vocational ends themselves.
2. Scope and Organization of Courses: Although the Committee does not decide general educational policy nor does it intend to infringe upon departmental judgment as to course content, it will use the following criteria for evaluating a course proposal:
 - a. The Course should have a clear and essential place in the overall offering of the department, division, or school; either filling a gap in the existing course structure, or strengthening that structure without duplication or excessive overlapping.
 - b. Basic courses should not constitute proliferation, i.e., the splitting up of a body of knowledge or a field of study into parts too small to warrant separate treatment in themselves. Seminars offer such a specialized approach.
 - c. Courses should be organized realistically with respect to quality of understanding versus quantity of material a student is expected to master in the time allotted. The catalog description should make clear the special nature of a particular course.
3. Course Duplication or Overlap: The Committee on Courses is watchful of duplication or overlap of courses offered by other academic units. It is the responsibility of the department/program to ensure that any new course it proposes does not duplicate nor overlap existing courses offered by other units on campus. It is imperative that the originating unit provide adequate explanation and/or written concurrence from the department(s) where duplication or overlap would exist.

San Diego

The Subcommittee on Undergraduate Courses evaluates course descriptions for the number of words and the suitability of content.

San Francisco

The UCSF Academic Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction applies the same careful level of review to Course Descriptions as it does to course content and other information provided on the course forms. The current criterion for course descriptions is to "[ensure that] course description(s) clearly and appropriately describe(s) the course." UCSF does not have strict guidelines for course descriptions. Committee members review to ensure appropriate description, as well as conformance to the size requirement since the program that publishes the

campus online catalog limits course descriptions' length. The Committee also requires that "Behavioral Objectives," which must be clearly framed in terms of what the student will be able to do after completing the course, be submitted for all courses.

Santa Barbara

According to the "Guidelines for Reviewing Undergraduate Course Approval Requests," course approval forms are checked to see:

1. That no other course is listed in the catalogue using that number;
2. That the title seems reasonably descriptive/communicative of the content of the course;
3. That the effective date is reasonable in regard to publication of the information in the catalogue and/or quarterly schedule of courses;
4. That the units and hours/week in lecture, seminar, discussion, lab, tutorial, or field are reasonable;
5. That a grading option is checked;
6. How the course request is different from the original published in the catalogue (if there is a previous version);
7. That all upper division courses have a prerequisite stated;
8. That a check mark indicates whether the course can be repeated and, if so, how many times and how many units can count for the major; and make sure the course seems "repeatable" and that the number of repeats allowed and the number of hours counted in the major seems reasonable;
9. Whether content of "comments" section should appear in the course description or prerequisites section;
10. That comments, when present, are reasonable; don't hesitate to request explanations that aren't given, i.e., for discontinuances, etc.

Question 4: What policies and programs are in place for graduate student instructor oversight and training?

Berkeley

Berkeley faculty are responsible for and take an active role in the mentorship and training of graduate student instructors (GSIs). Each department establishes procedures for the oversight of GSIs, which must be in accordance with the Graduate Council's Policy on GSI Appointments and Mentoring, adopted in December 1996. The Graduate Council policy, revised in 1997, requires all departments to offer a pedagogy course, and requires all first time GSIs to enroll in such a course.

Recognizing the importance of GSI development, the GSI Training and Mentoring Task Force was formed in fall 2002 to review the current policy and departmental procedures. The Task Force was asked to recommend changes to reinforce the values and improve the effectiveness of the policy in practice. An assessment of departmental procedures revealed wide variations in approval, observation and evaluation of courses taught by GSIs. The findings and recommendations of the Task Force were presented in a report to the executive vice chancellor and provost.

The Task Force's recommendations for GSI oversight included:

- All graduate students who teach require faculty supervision. Senate faculty must oversee and approve course descriptions and reading lists for GSIs with primary responsibility for curriculum, textbook selection, and student evaluation; Senate faculty must oversee and approve all course descriptions and representative reading lists before requesting appointment for a graduate student as an Acting Instructor-Graduate Student.
- First-time GSIs must complete a 300-level semester-long pedagogy seminar on teaching in the discipline offered by the department. In those departments in which a low number of GSIs makes it infeasible to offer such a course, the pedagogy seminar should be taken in another department or through the GSI Teaching and Resource Center.
- Every first-time GSI must successfully complete, no later than the end of the third week of classes, Teaching and Resource instruction on the professional responsibilities involved in teaching. Developed and administered by the GSI Teaching and Resource Center, instruction will include information on academic freedom, political speech, confidentiality, plagiarism, sexual harassment, Title VI, Title IX, and other issues delineated in the Academic Code of Conduct.
- Every first-time GSI should attend the Orientation Conference sponsored by the GSI Teaching and Resource Center held each semester; first-time international GSIs should also attend the International Orientation Conference, scheduled prior to the Fall Orientation Conference for all GSIs.
- GSIs should be observed in the classroom, particularly first-time instructors, and receive feedback and guidance on their teaching.
- Faculty should review end-of-semester evaluations of GSIs and meet with those who were assessed as below average to provide remediation.

These recommendations will be added to the Graduate Council's campuswide Policy on Appointments and Mentoring of Graduate Student Instructors. The Policy also covers recruitment and appointment, levels of instructional responsibility, principles for determining workload, preparation for teaching, and assessment by faculty.

The Task Force directed particular attention to the needs of preparing GSIs assigned to reading and composition courses, noting the following:

- The dean of arts and humanities should take responsibility for oversight and appointment of an external committee to review the reading and composition courses.
- Supervision of reading and composition GSI preparation should be vested in a campuswide reading and composition committee appointed by the dean of arts and humanities, who has overall responsibility for reading and composition courses.
- As charged by the dean of arts and humanities, and in consultation with the GSI Teaching and Resource Center, the reading and composition committee should:
 1. convene, at least once each semester, a meeting of all reading and composition instructors of record, in order to provide GSIs appropriate uniform standards, guidelines, and supervision, and
 2. convene, at least once each semester, a meeting of all instructors of 300-level courses designed for training reading and composition instructors, in order to foster appropriate oversight and coordination.

A budget request is under consideration to assist with the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations.

Davis

All GSI's work under the authority of faculty members specifically assigned to supervise them. All GSI's are required to attend training sessions that are conducted by the Teaching Resources Center and by individual departments. Course preparation, course syllabi, and instructional responsibility are given prominent attention in those sessions.

Irvine

GSIs are reviewed by the Graduate Council and a subcommittee of the Committee on Courses before they are allowed to teach. The Instructional Resource Center (IRC) at UCI provides a two-day training seminar for all units that either do not offer their own program or who wish to have their TAs participate. Currently, the majority of academic units require their TAs to attend the training. For more information, see the "Teaching Resources Guide" at <http://www.irc.uci.edu/trg/trgtoc.html>. The IRC has also proposed a course in advanced pedagogy, for TAs who have taught at least 3 quarters. This proposal is under review by the Graduate Council.

Los Angeles

The faculty member of record for the class oversees the work of the Teaching Assistant. The Graduate Council/Division sets policies and procedures for the appointment and employment of Teaching Assistants, subject to the negotiated union contracts. The Graduate Council/Division also issued in 1982 "Guidelines for the Approval of Courses for Training Teaching Assistants,"

the “495 courses” required in each department, along with the “375 courses” for the Teaching Apprentice Practicum. In addition, the Office of Instructional Development, now housed within the College of Letters and Science, but overseeing instructional support for all schools and colleges, sets guidelines for “TA Training and TA Consultants at UCLA.” These guidelines map out the training processes and services available, as well as the responsibilities and expectations for all Departments for hiring, supervision, and evaluation of TAs and their own training programs/courses. See also their extensive publication, “The TA Handbook 2002-2003,” which all Departments as well as prospective and employed Teaching Assistants receive annually. Instructional titles for graduate students [SR 750B] include Teaching Associate, Teaching Fellow, and Teaching Assistant, and special approval must be sought and granted by the Undergraduate Council in order for instructors carrying these titles to teach upper-division courses.

Riverside

Any student in a teaching title must attend the Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP) Fall Quarter Orientation program. If their department does not have their own TA training program, the student must also participate in the TADP’s training program. The TADP sponsors activities designed to help TAs develop their teaching skills and to prepare them to be successful professors. Activities include a fall orientation program, pre-quarter and in-quarter workshops for new TAs, videotaping of classroom presentations and expert feedback, end-of-term student evaluations, annual awards for outstanding TAs, and a mentor TA program, in which TAs of proven ability have the opportunity to mentor their less experienced colleagues.

San Diego

There is a “UCSD Policy on Training, Supervision, and Evaluation of Teaching Assistants” available on the website of the Center for Teaching Development (<http://www-ctd.ucsd.edu/resources/policy.htm>). This policy requires that the campus provide both campus-wide and departmental training for its teaching assistants (TAs) in basic content and skill areas. Elements of a comprehensive training program include:

- An orientation before classes begin that introduces TAs to their instructional role, basic teaching skills and concepts, policies affecting TAs, and resources available to instructors;
- Individual mentoring and feedback by faculty, advanced TAs, and instructional improvement professionals, based on observation, student evaluations and/or videotaping; and
- Ongoing seminars and workshops on teaching, as well as access to materials from which TAs can learn independently.

Responsibility for the training, supervision, and evaluation of teaching assistants rests jointly with the administration, academic departments, and individual faculty members.

Office of Graduate Studies and Research (OGSR). OGSR has responsibility for development of policy relating to TA matters and overseeing implementation of these policies. The director of the campus-wide Center for Teaching Development reports to the Dean. The Dean, upon recommendation of the Director of the Center for Teaching Development and the TA

Development Advisory Committee, approves grant funding to departments for TA training activities.

Teaching Assistant Development Advisory Committee (TADAC). The Teaching Assistant Development Advisory Committee, made up of faculty and students representing the various campus disciplines, advises the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research on the full array of programs and activities designed to train, supervise, and evaluate teaching assistants. The committee oversees policy implementation, recommends improvements in programs, reviews and evaluates departmental and CTD reports, and makes recommendations on budget and funding allocations to OGSR, departments, and the CTD. The committee also interacts with departmental faculty advisers on TA training matters. Meetings of the committee are held quarterly.

Center for Teaching Development (CTD). Although the training of TAs is primarily the responsibility of academic departments and programs, the Center for Teaching Development works closely with the academic departments to enhance the effectiveness of undergraduate education. The Center conducts training aimed primarily at new TAs. The Center's TA Development Program includes workshops, classroom visits, and one-on-one consultations with TAs. In most departments, new TAs participate in both departmental activities and the training activities provided by the Center. Each year CTD provides grants to be used for the improvement of departmental-based training programs. Grants have been awarded to fund senior teaching assistants, TA excellence awards, TA mentor stipends, and training workshop expenses. The professional staff of the Center includes a director, learning skills counselors, and consultant TAs.

Academic Departments and Programs. Departments and programs assume primary responsibility for training their teaching assistants and are expected to ensure that new TAs receive training in either the TA Development Program, an equivalent departmental program, or both. The training of new TAs, at a minimum, should:

- introduce teaching concepts in a workshop or conference
- provide observation and consultation to refine teaching skills
- provide feedback on teaching effectiveness

Departments should make available to faculty and students a policy statement that defines and outlines the duties and responsibilities of both the TA and the faculty supervisor. This should include realistic, specific guidelines or job descriptions that identify the TA's professional responsibilities, including outlines of appropriate assignments and limits of a reasonable and appropriate workload.

Also, departments should specify TA appointment and reappointment procedures in writing. Further, once appointments are made, departments should strive to assign TAs to their course and faculty supervisor as soon as possible, in order that they may have adequate time to prepare for their responsibilities. (It is, however, understood that the vicissitudes of over enrollment and consequent late allocations of additional FTEs for extra course sections might necessitate some late assignments.)

In view of the adverse effect teaching overloads can have on a graduate student's ability to complete his or her degree in a timely fashion, Academic Personnel Manual policies limiting the average working hours of TAs to no more than the percentage of their appointment should be enforced.

Departments, in consultation with TAs should develop procedures for formative and summative evaluation of TAs. Evaluation of TA training programs should be included in the regularly scheduled graduate program review conducted by the Academic Senate.

Department and Program TA Faculty Advisers. Each department and program is asked to appoint a faculty adviser who assumes responsibility for TA matters. The TA Faculty Adviser oversees training activities, develops a plan for the systematic training and evaluation of teaching assistants (see above), supervises the Senior TA (if applicable), and collaborates with the Director of the Center for Teaching Development on training plans. TA Faculty Advisers are appointed for a two-year term and meet twice annually as a group to discuss TA matters.

Responsibilities of Instructors Regarding TAs. The instructor retains ultimate responsibility for the course and assignment of grades. Prior to the beginning of the course, TAs should be provided with a clear concept of what their duties and time commitments will be. To this end, instructors are expected to discuss and review with their TAs the following:

- the TA's role
- the instructor's role
- course objectives and goals
- communication between TA and instructor
- communication between TA and students
- required texts
- attendance in course lectures
- applicable pedagogical techniques
- office hours
- guidelines for the grading of exams, problem sets, and papers
- guidelines for dealing with academic dishonesty

During the course, instructors should provide TAs with feedback on their performance and should assist TAs in dealing with difficulties or issues that may arise.

Duties and Responsibilities of TAs. The TA's primary responsibility is that of assisting the instructor who teaches the course. TAs holding a 50% appointment are expected to work no more than 20 hours per week on average during the term. It is the responsibility of the TA to:

- conduct discussion, laboratory, or problem-solving sections utilizing techniques and strategies appropriate for the students
- hold office hours
- grade exams, problem sets, and papers
- be prepared in the subject

- attend lectures
- maintain good records
- facilitate student learning
- exercise fairness and sound judgment
- keep communication lines open with the professor and with students
- respect the confidential nature of the student/teacher relationship
- be knowledgeable about rules and regulations (including sexual harassment policy) governing the TA appointment
- report suspected incidents of dishonesty or cheating to the course instructor

San Francisco

Postdoctoral research fellows and trainees teach in courses in the basic sciences and in the various school (particularly medical school) curricula. All courses are taught by faculty, and all GSI's are directly supervised by the faculty.

Santa Barbara

For graduate students teaching as Assistants, there is extensive training and oversight, including a mandatory campuswide orientation & training program directed by Instructional Development; 500 level pedagogy courses directed by the supervising faculty of each TA during quarters they are teaching; direct faculty oversight through section visitation, review and comment on of TA evaluations; and supplemental departmental training seminars specific to each department, supported in part by annually reviewed requests for funding to Instructional Development.

For Teaching Associates, oversight is rigorous at the point of individual appointment and course description review. Both are overseen by the Senate's Undergraduate Council Committee on Undergraduate Programs and Policies. Further instructor training at this level occurs through Instructional Development's Office of Instructional Consultation Summer Teaching Institute for Associates. Oversight of Associates' teaching, once in progress, is delegated to the chair of the department; thus, there is no campus-wide policies or programs for graduate student instructor oversight (at the Associate level) at this time. The forms of oversight vary from department to department.

Santa Cruz

Among the several academic titles that University of California graduate students may hold, the only teaching titles used at UCSC are Teaching Assistant, Teaching Fellow and Associate. There is no automatic progression from one title to another.

Associate. The title Associate may be assigned to qualified graduate student teachers employed temporarily to teach a lower-division course. Graduate students appointed as Associates must meet the following criteria in addition to the qualifications for Teaching Assistant appointment: the possession of a Master's degree or equivalent training; at least one year of teaching experience (such as that of a Teaching Assistant) in or outside the University. An Associate may assist in the instruction of any course, assist in the instruction of any group of students in lower-division courses, or may be assigned to conduct the entire instruction of a lower-division course. Associates may not give an upper-division course section except with the approval of the campus

Committee on Educational Policy. Whereas Teaching Assistants may not under any condition be given primary responsibility for a course, an Associate may, under the conditions described above, be given such responsibility. In all cases, however, the instructional activities of graduate student Associates are to be supervised by faculty members. An Associate who has had extensive teaching experience may be presumed to require less direct supervision than a less experienced Associate. The appointment must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies prior to beginning the position.

Teaching Assistant. Teaching assistants (TAs) are fully-enrolled graduate students (paying full registration fees rather than just a dissertation filing fee) who lead discussion, laboratory, and quiz sections under the active tutelage and supervision of a regular faculty member. As a TA you must register for two or three upper division or graduate level full-credit courses (depending on the requirements of your department) plus the 301 noncredit course, Supervised Teaching Experience. If you are advanced to candidacy, you must take at least one upper division or graduate level full-credit course in addition to the 301 course. Instructions for enrolling in the 301 course should be obtained from the sponsoring department. A TA is not responsible for the instructional content of a course, for selection of student assignments, for planning of examinations, or for determining the term grade for students or for preparing final narrative evaluations. The TA is responsible only for the conduct of recitation, laboratory, or quiz sections under the active direction and supervision of a regular member of the faculty to whom the final responsibility for the course's entire instruction has been assigned. It is appropriate for a faculty member to ask a TA to assist in the clerical aspects of preparation of examinations and assignments. Likewise, an instructor may ask a TA to suggest possible questions for assignments or examination. Discussion of the formulation of questions and the pedagogical considerations in making up examinations or assignments can help prepare the TA for an academic career. However, the full responsibility for the content of the exam or assignment rests with the faculty member, and it cannot be delegated to the TA.

Teaching Fellow. A Teaching Fellow is a registered graduate student in full-time residence who has advanced to candidacy for the doctorate, has at least two years of teaching experience (including that of a teaching assistant in or outside the University) or otherwise has achieved appropriate professional maturity, and who has been chosen because of competence to conduct the entire instruction of a group of students in a lower division course under the general supervision of a regular faculty member. Subject to the general supervision of a faculty member designated in catalogues and published schedules as "in charge" of the course, a teaching fellow should be competent to provide the entire instruction of a lower division course to a group of students, and normally should be given such assignments. Assignment to instruction in an upper division or graduate course or course section may not be made except with the approval of the Committee on Educational Policy.

Appendix – List of Documents Reviewed by the Course Descriptions Task Force

1. Regents Standing Order 105.2 – Duties, Powers, and Privileges of the Academic Senate
2. Academic Senate Bylaws 310-312 (Authority of Divisions)
3. Academic Senate Regulation 750 – Persons in Charge of Courses
4. UCB 2/6/03 “Procedures for Course Review and Approval”
5. UCB 5/1/98 *Committee on Courses of Instruction Handbook* (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/cocihandbook.html>)
6. UCB 4/99 “Committee on Courses of Instruction Procedures and Tips” (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/coci/COCItipsApr99.html>)
7. UCB course approval forms (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/resources/CAF.pdf>, <http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/resources/CLCF.pdf>)
8. UCB 1/22/03 “Final Report of the Special Studies Working Group”
9. UCB 5/22/02 “Final Report of the Special Study Courses Task Force”
10. UCB “English Department Reading and Composition Program Policies for Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs)”
11. UCB 1/03 “Executive Summary: GSI Training and Mentoring Task Force”
12. UCB 1/22/03 “Policy on Appointments and Mentoring of Graduate Student Instructors”
13. UCB 9/9/02 “GSI Syllabus Oversight/Approval Policy”
14. UCB Senate Bylaw 33 – Courses of Instruction
15. UCB Senate Regulation A230 – Special Studies
16. UCD web-based course approval system form
17. UCD Senate Bylaws 56 – Courses of Instruction
18. UCD Divisional Regulations (on courses) 531, 534, and 537
19. UCI Draft “Policies and Procedures for Undergraduate Course Review and Approval”
20. UCI “Cross-Listing Guidelines” (http://www.senate.uci.edu/4_SenCom/EducPolicy/CEP%20Docs/Cross_Listing_Guidelines.html)
21. UCI “Guidelines for the Conduct of Special Studies Courses,” Appendix VII of the *Manual of the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate* (http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAppendices/Appendix07.html)
22. UCI “Instructions for the Request for Course Action/Breadth Forms” (http://www.senate.uci.edu/4_SenCom/EducPolicy/CEP%20Docs/InstructCrsAction_BrdthFrm.html)
23. UCI “Guidelines for Course Syllabus Summary that Accompanies Course Action Forms” (http://www.senate.uci.edu/4_SenCom/EducPolicy/CEP%20Docs/Course_Syllabus_Guidelines.html)
24. UCI “Procedures for Graduate Course Approval at UCI”
25. UCI “Resources for Graduate Student Instructors at UCI”
26. UCI Instructional Resource Center’s *Teaching Resources Guide* (<http://www.irc.uci.edu/trg/trgtoc.html>)
27. UCI draft request for course action/breadth form
28. UCI Senate Bylaw 75 – Action Committee on Courses
29. UCLA 10/02 *Guide to Undergraduate Course and Program Approval* (<ftp://www.senate.ucla.edu/UGC/UGCCG.pdf>)
30. UCLA request for action on a course form

31. UCLA undergraduate variable topics course section request form
32. UCLA “TA Training and TA Consultants at UCLA: Some Guidelines”
33. UCLA Office of Instructional Development’s *The TA Handbook 2002-2003*
34. UCLA Senate Bylaws 65.1 – Undergraduate Council; 65.2 – Graduate Council
35. UCR 9/02 “General Rules and Policies Governing Courses of Instruction”
36. UCR course approval form
37. UCR Senate Bylaw 8.10 – Courses
38. UCSD “Course Approvals, Changes, and Numbering,” *Policy and Procedures Manual*, Section 120-6
39. UCSD “Special Studies Course Enrollments,” *Policy and Procedures Manual*, Section 120-7
40. UCSD request for course approval form
41. UCSD application for special studies course enrollment
42. UCSD “Policy on Training, Supervision and Evaluation of Teaching Assistants” (<http://www-ctd.ucsd.edu/resources/policy.htm>)
43. UCSD Senate Bylaws 200 – Educational Policy and Courses; 210 – CEP Subcommittee on Undergraduate Courses
44. UCSF course evaluation form for the Committee on Courses of Instruction
45. UCSF Senate Bylaw 145 – Committee on Courses of Instruction
46. UCSB “Guidelines for Reviewing Undergraduate Course Approval Requests”
47. UCSB 5/19/86 “Policy on Cross Listing of Courses”
48. UCSB “Policy on Course Hibernation”
49. UCSB “Online Undergraduate Course Request Workflow”
50. UCSB “Instructions for How to Fill Out Undergraduate Course Request Forms”
51. UCSB undergraduate course request form
52. UCSB new master course approval form (online)
53. UCSB “Student Associate,” *Red Binder: Campus Policies and Procedures on Academic Personnel*, Section IV-3 (<http://www.acadpers.ucsb.edu/RedBinder/RedBinder.pdf>)
54. UCSB Senate Bylaws 75 – Graduate Council; 80 – Undergraduate Council
55. UCSC “Policy on the Use of Graduate Students as Instructors” (<http://senate.ucsc.edu/cep/gradinsp.html>)
56. UCSC Senate Bylaw 13.17 – Committee on Educational Policy



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12 August 2002

Richard C. Atkinson
 President, University of California
 1111 Franklin St.
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Dear President Atkinson:

You have asked me to discuss the issues of academic freedom and responsibility raised by the controversy surrounding “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance,” a section of English R1A to be taught in the Fall of 2002 at the University of California at Berkeley. These issues are multiple, novel and complex. Because time is short, I can at best offer a preliminary evaluation that seeks to identify the most prominent of these issues and to suggest how they might be analyzed and resolved.

English R1A is a course that instructs undergraduates in basic skills of reading and writing. The course is offered in approximately 60 sections, each designed and taught by a Graduate Student Instructor (“GSI”). The section entitled “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” became controversial because of its initial course description, which read:

Course Description: Since the inception of the Intifada in September of 2000, Palestinians have been fighting for their right to exist. The brutal Israeli military occupation of Palestine, an occupation that has been ongoing since 1948, has systematically displaced, killed, and maimed millions of Palestinian people. And yet, from under the brutal weight of the occupation, Palestinians have produced their own culture and poetry of resistance. This class will examine the history of the Palestinian resistance and the way that it is narrated by Palestinians in order to produce an understanding of the Intifada and to develop a coherent political analysis of the situation. This class takes as its starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination. Conservative thinkers are encouraged to seek other sections.

This course description was plainly unacceptable. After much discussion and many drafts, the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance,” which is posted on the website of the Berkeley English Department,¹ was altered to read:

This is a course on Palestinian resistance poetry. It takes as its point of departure the Palestinian literature that has developed since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, which has displaced, maimed, and killed many Palestinian people. The Israeli military occupation of historic Palestine has caused unspeakable suffering. Since the occupation, Palestinians have been fighting for their right to exist. And yet, from under the weight of this occupation, Palestinians have produced their own culture and poetry of resistance. This class will examine the history of the Palestinian resistance and the way that it is narrated by Palestinians. This class takes as its conceptual starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination. Discussions about the literature will focus on several intersecting themes: how are Palestinian artists able to imagine art under the occupation; what consequences does resistance have on the character of the art that is produced (i.e. why are there so few Palestinian epics and plays and comedies); can one represent the Israeli occupation in art; what is the difference between political art and propaganda and how do the debates about those terms inflect the production of literature; how do poems represent the desire to escape and the longing for home simultaneously (alternatively, how do poems represent the nation without a state); what consequence do political debates have on formal innovations and their reproduction; and what are the obligations of artists in representing the occupation. This 1A course offers students frequent practice in a variety of forms of discourse leading toward exposition and argumentation in common standard English. The course aims at continuing to develop the students' practical fluency with sentence, paragraph and thesis-development skills but with increasingly complex applications. Students will be assigned a number of short essays (2-4 written pages) and several revisions.

This version of the course description was subsequently approved by the Academic Senate of the Berkeley Division.

At least three distinct questions may be asked of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance”:

- (1) Is it proper for a course to use the literature of the Palestinian people in order to teach basic skills in reading and writing?
- (2) Was it proper for the Berkeley Senate to approve the final version of the course description?

¹ The course descriptions of all sections of English R1A are posted on the English Department website.

- (3) Will the actual teaching of the course be consistent with academic standards?

The first question is easily answered. The general design of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” is clearly acceptable. Basic reading and writing skills are now commonly taught in the context of close textual study. Most major universities believe that any reasonably sophisticated set of texts can be used for this purpose, and the literature of the Palestinian people certainly meets this test. The only question is whether the political debate that surrounds the Israeli-Palestinian controversy is so distracting as to render this literature an inappropriate vehicle for the study of basic skills in reading and writing.² The University of California offers instruction in such skills, however, precisely so that our students can learn to think and write about issues that are of importance to them, and these issues are frequently contentious. We seek to inculcate skills that are relevant to a world of engaged and sometimes tempestuous citizenship, and in that context the controversial nature of the reading list of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” can actually be seen as an asset rather than a liability.

The second question, by contrast, is difficult and uncertain. The exact status of course catalogues is an unresolved question.³ The Regents have allocated supervision over the contents of course catalogues to the Academic Senate. Standing Order 105.2 of the Regents delegates to the Senate the power to “authorize and supervise all courses and curricula” offered in the University of California. “In practice” this power is exercised by the “Committees on Courses” that operate on each campus. APM § 005. It is pursuant to this practice that the Berkeley division of the Academic Senate has approved the reading list and the final version of the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance.”

Standing Order 105.2 represents the Regents’ commitment to a principle of academic freedom that is historically and theoretically fundamental: University scholarship, and the teaching which expresses and transmits that scholarship, is to be understood as a matter of professional knowledge. It follows from this principle that evaluation of scholarship and teaching is to be entrusted to the judgment of competent

² The tentative reading list for the course is as follows: *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*, Ghassan Kanafani; *Born Black*, Suheir Hammad; *Drops of This Story*, Suheir Hammad; *Enemy of the Sun*, Naseer Hasan Aruri; *The Adam of Two Edens : Selected Poems*, Mahmud Darwish; *Memory for Forgetfulness : August, Beirut, 1982*, Mahmud Darwish; *Victims of a Map : A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry*, Mahmud Darwish; *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, Norman G. Finkelstein; *The Question of Palestine*, Edward W. Said; *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*, Edward W. Said; *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994*, Edward W. Said; *Intifada*, Phil Marshall.

³ The description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” does not actually appear in the course catalogue of the University of California at Berkeley. Instead it appears on the official website of the Berkeley English Department. For purposes of this letter, however, I shall treat publication of the course description on the website as equivalent to publication of the course description in the course catalogue.

professionals, in the form of the corporate body of the faculty.⁴ This principle underlies the academic freedom of the entire University, because it distinguishes the enterprise of scholarship from the political governance of the state. The maintenance of this distinction is one of the great achievements of public higher education in the United States. Modern scholarship is built on a foundation that requires the professional autonomy of the professoriate.

If Standing Order 105.2 expresses a norm of professional autonomy, the Academic Senate in exercising that autonomy must be guided by a second fundamental principle of academic freedom: Individual faculty are to be accorded broad freedoms independently to think, write and engage in research. These freedoms are necessary if the University is to fulfill its function of promoting the advancement of knowledge.⁵ Analogous freedoms extend to teaching, where faculty report and explore the results of their scholarly endeavors.⁶ Course descriptions are properly characterized as an aspect of teaching, because they initiate the pedagogical relationship between individual faculty and their students.

Senate review of course descriptions, therefore, must both ensure that professional standards have been satisfied and also accord individual faculty substantial freedom to pursue their own pedagogical agendas. These potentially conflicting imperatives can be reconciled if the Senate approves course descriptions whenever relevant professional standards have been satisfied.⁷ Put another way, the Senate should not seek to regulate course descriptions for reasons that are unrelated to pertinent professional standards. This implies that it would be improper for the Berkeley Senate to disapprove the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” because it might anger state politicians, who might punish the University. It would be equally improper for the Berkeley Senate to disapprove the course description because it might outrage alumni,

⁴ For an illuminating discussion of the origins and nature of this principle, see Thomas L. Haskell, “Justifying the Rights of Academic Freedom in the Era of Power/Knowledge,” in Louis Menand, ed., *The Future of Academic Freedom* (University of Chicago Press 1996).

⁵ “Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth.” “1940 Joint Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” in William W. Van Alstyne, ed., “Freedom and Tenure in the Academy: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the 1940 Statement of Principles,” *53 Law and Contemporary Problems* 407, 407 (1990) (“*Freedom and Tenure*”). See, e.g., *Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234, 250 (1957) (Opinion of Warren, C.J.) (“The essentiality of freedom in the community of American universities is almost self-evident. . . . Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study, and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die.”). Because of its substantial overlap with First Amendment considerations, this second principle of academic freedom is far more familiar than the historically more fundamental norm that postulates the professional autonomy of the faculty.

⁶ “The claim to freedom of teaching is made in the interest of the integrity and of the progress of scientific inquiry.” “General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (1915),” in *Freedom and Tenure*, supra note 5, at 401.

⁷ I am omitting consideration of neutral “time, place and manner” restrictions, such length and formatting requirements, and the like.

who might reduce their annual contributions to the University. The authority of the Senate to regulate course descriptions extends only to the application of standards inherent in the professional enterprise of scholarship and teaching.

This threshold test excludes two common objections to the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance.” It is argued, first, that permitting the description to remain on the English Department website will place the University in the unacceptable position of endorsing its inflammatory ideas. This objection rests on the premise that the University endorses the scholarship and teaching of its professors. The premise is fundamentally incompatible with the academic mission of the University. The University employs thousands of faculty, who hold a myriad different standpoints. The resulting diversity is a great strength of the University. This diversity would vanish, and scholarship and teaching would grind to a halt, were faculty to be prohibited from expressing ideas that the University could not itself endorse. It is therefore a basic postulate that the University no more endorses the diverse ideas of its faculty than it endorses the contents of the millions of books in its libraries. Whether faculty ideas are expressed in scholarly publications or in course descriptions, professional standards require that they be regarded as the viewpoint of individual professors, not those of the University.

Second, it has been argued that the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” should be regulated because it is offensive. A robust scholarly dialogue, however, can be fierce, consequential and hurtful to those who care intensely about their ideals. It can produce the kind of offense experienced by persons when their most precious beliefs and convictions are ruthlessly attacked.⁸ The University cannot eliminate this form of offense without also strangling scholarly debate. This form of offense should be distinguished from that experienced by persons who are assaulted by vicious language that violates the basic norms of civility which underwrite the practice of rational deliberation.⁹ Although university regulation of such language poses complex and difficult questions,¹⁰ it is sufficient for present purposes to note that the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” is not offensive in this way. It does not use vituperative epithets or hate speech. If the course description gives offense, it is because of the substance of its speech, rather than its manner. This kind of offense cannot be prevented without simultaneously suppressing the very academic exchange the University exists to promote. Professional standards therefore prohibit using such offense as a reason for regulating teaching or scholarship.

The proper principle that the Berkeley Senate should apply in reviewing the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” is whether the

⁸ See Jeremy Waldron, “Mill and the Value of Moral Distress,” 35 *Political Studies* 410 (1987).

⁹ On the relationship between norms of civility and rational inquiry, see Robert Post, “Reconciling Theory and Doctrine in First Amendment Jurisprudence,” 88 *California Law Review* 2352, 2365-2366 (2000).

¹⁰ See Robert Post, “The Racist Speech Problem” in *Constitutional Domains: Democracy, Community, Management* 323-329 (Harvard University Press 1995).

course description complies with relevant professional standards. We can summarize these standards in two requirements: course descriptions must be educationally justified, and they must not violate pertinent academic norms.¹¹ Considering, first, the question of pedagogical justification, it may be argued that there is no good educational reason for the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” to include so vivid and forceful a statement of opposition to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians. There are exceptional circumstances, however, when the political viewpoint of faculty can be relevant to how the material of a course will be engaged. When this happens, faculty disclosure of their viewpoint in a course description is justified because it enables students to make more informed choices in selecting their classes. It is thus not uncommon to see course descriptions that explicitly announce that a given class will be taught “from the perspective” of free market principles, or human rights, or feminism. The pedagogical reasons for this kind of disclosure do not disappear merely because the perspective disclosed happens to be highly controversial or inflammatory.

Applying this analysis to the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance,” it is correct to observe that the description exposes the depth of the instructor’s political opposition to Israel. This disclosure may be justified, however, because students can select among many sections of English R1A, and in deciding whether to enroll in “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” they may well want to know the nature and passion of the political perspective of the GSI offering the course. It is certain that this perspective will inform his approach to the Palestinian literature that will be studied. There are good pedagogical reasons, therefore, for the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” to disclose the intense political views of its instructor.

We must distinguish, however, between using a course description to provide students with pedagogically justified notice, and using a course description as a platform for political preaching. It is possible that the rhetoric of a course description can become so excessive or overreaching as to become a political tract that bears little or no relationship to the pedagogical justification of disclosure. Faculty have no business using course descriptions for the mere purpose of disseminating their political views. Determining exactly when a course description outruns the justification of disclosure and becomes instead an example of political preaching involves difficult questions of educational judgment. My own view is that in making such determinations the instructor ought to receive the benefit of the doubt, especially if a course description involves controversial matters, because in such circumstances there will be a strong and natural temptation to dampen the rhetoric of a course description for reasons that have nothing to do with professional standards. On this view, the course description of “The Politics and

¹¹ Speech within universities is typically regulated so as to render it compatible with the educational mission of the institution. For a discussion, see Robert Post, “Constitutionally Interpreting the FSM Controversy,” in *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s* 401-421 (Robert Cohen and Reginald E. Zelnik eds., UC Press 2002) (forthcoming); Robert Post, “Subsidized Speech,” 106 *Yale Law Journal* 151 (1996).

Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” would be deemed justified if its rhetoric was arguably necessary in order to provide a pedagogically appropriate disclosure.

Course descriptions must not only be pedagogically justified, they must also comply with relevant academic standards. It might be said that the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” violates two such standards. The first concerns norms of academic inquiry. It might be argued that the rhetoric of the course description is so militant and one-sided that it is inconsistent with the requirement that scholarship and teaching proceed from an open mind and employ disinterested reason.¹² Those who press this argument urge that the course description be modified so as to reflect both sides of the current debate, as for example by recognizing Israel’s right to exist.

This objection, however, misunderstands norms of academic inquiry. Scholarship requires an open mind, but this does not mean that faculty are unprofessional if they reach definite conclusions. It means rather that faculty must always stand ready to revise their conclusions in the light of new evidence or further discussion. Scholarship also requires the exercise of disinterested reason, but this does not mean that faculty are unprofessional if they are urgently committed to definite point of view. It means rather that faculty must form their point of view by applying professional standards of inquiry rather than by succumbing to external and illegitimate incentives such as monetary gain or political coercion. There is no academic norm that prohibits scholarship from communicating definite viewpoints about important and controversial questions, like democracy or human rights or the welfare state. Faculty must be free to communicate these viewpoints in their pedagogy. Political passion is in fact the engine that drives some of the best scholarship and teaching at the University of California, and this is particularly true in the humanities and social sciences.

The second academic standard implicated by the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” involves the academic freedom of students. The political values which faculty inevitably bring to a course, and which they may properly disclose in a course description, can sometimes be expressed in so harsh and excessive a way as to signal students that differing views will neither be respected nor tolerated. A fundamental principle of university governance, however, requires that students be accorded the right to think freely and to exercise independent judgment. This principle follows from the educational mission of the modern university, which is to encourage students to enrich and deepen their own values and commitments. The principle requires that we evaluate our students solely on the merits of their work.¹³ We guarantee that students will not suffer merely because their political perspectives happen to differ from those of their instructor.

¹² For references to this norm, see “General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (1915),” in *Freedom and Tenure*, supra note 5, at 398-99.

¹³ “Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.” “Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students (1967),” in *Freedom and Tenure*, supra note 5, at 412.

If a faculty member harshly expresses very strong political views, however, students may doubt this guarantee. There is thus tension between the necessary freedom of faculty to express their political perspectives, and the essential freedom of students to express differing views. Skillful faculty members can sometimes defuse this tension by acknowledging their own political commitments in the classroom. The disclosure can not only encourage students to perceive and discount the implicit bias of their instructor, but if properly done can serve explicitly to authorize students to express different perspectives. Unfortunately the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” displays no such pedagogical subtlety. What made the original draft of the course description so coarse and unacceptable was its nearly explicit suggestion that the GSI would not tolerate student perspectives that differed from his own.¹⁴ In approving the final version of the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance,” therefore, a relevant issue before the Berkeley Senate was whether the language of the course description, even as modified, was so excessive as to convey the message that independent student views would not be respected.

The resolution of this issue is in part connected to the third question that I initially posed, which is whether the teaching of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” will be consistent with academic standards. One can legitimately ask whether the GSI who wrote the highly improper first draft of the course description can be trusted to nurture the academic freedom of his students. It might be argued that modification of the course description is especially important because of the real possibility that he will subject his students to improper intimidation.

At the time the Berkeley Senate approved the course description of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance,” the Berkeley campus had already taken numerous steps to assure that the class would be taught in a manner that complied with relevant academic norms. Berkeley faculty had spoken at length with the instructor, and they reported that he had become thoroughly aware of his obligations and responsibilities as an instructor at the University of California. The Berkeley English Department undertook explicitly to advise students enrolled in the course that they would have the right to express themselves freely and to have their work evaluated without discrimination or harassment. The Department made its Chair available to hear complaints about the conduct of the course. And the Department took the extraordinary step of requiring that a full tenured member of the faculty observe the class to ensure that it would be taught in a way that was entirely consistent with applicable academic standards. Since the class is likely to cause controversy in the Fall,¹⁵ the presence of this observer will serve to protect both the GSI and his students. The presence of such an observer is certainly an extraordinary event. It is not clear that an analogous requirement

¹⁴ Recall that the original draft of the course description said: “Conservative thinkers are encouraged to seek other sections.”

¹⁵ The class is now fully subscribed. We have reason to believe that several students were provoked into signing up for the class precisely in virtue of their disagreement with the political views of the GSI.

could be imposed upon a class taught by a full member of the faculty. It may well be permissible in this case, however, because the instructor is a GSI who is in my judgment a kind of apprentice under the tutelage of the faculty.

In light of these several unusual precautions, we can have some confidence that “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” will actually be taught in a manner that is consistent with academic standards. This conclusion is relevant to evaluating the propriety of the course description, because a major objection to that description is its possible intimation that students will be judged on their politics rather than on the merits of their work. Because we can be reasonably confident that students in the class will in fact have their academic freedom respected, the force of this objection is somewhat diminished. Regulating the course description in order to protect students from intimidation thus becomes a less pressing concern.

At the outset of this letter I identified three questions that may be asked of “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance.” We have concluded in answer to these questions that “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” is a properly designed course that will in all likelihood be taught in a manner that is consistent with academic standards. There are, however, possible deficiencies in its course description, which turn on whether its inflammatory language is so overwrought as to be intimidating, or so obstreperous as to be pedagogically unjustified. The Berkeley Senate has decided that the course description is acceptable, that it is neither intimidating nor without educational justification. This decision is no doubt disputable, because it involves hard and close matters of educational judgment about which reasonable persons can sometimes disagree. It is nevertheless a defensible decision, because good reasons can be articulated in its support. To use legal terminology, the decision does not constitute an abuse of discretion. As I have discussed, weighty reasons of academic freedom counsel that decisions within the professional expertise of the faculty that do not constitute an abuse of discretion be respected by the administration of the University, even if members of the administration would have reached a different judgment had they had been called upon to make an initial determination. The professional autonomy of the faculty inheres in such deference.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if I can be of any further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Robert Post

Report of the Academic Senate Course Descriptions Task Force on the UC Berkeley English R1A Course Section, “The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance”

I. Facts about UC Berkeley English R1A Courses

Reading and Composition is a required course at UC Berkeley. Each semester, students may meet this course requirement by choosing from approximately 30 sections of English R1A offered in the English Department or from equivalent courses (about 30 additional sections) offered by other departments. The current general description for the English R1A course was approved by the UC Berkeley Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction in 1999. This general description appears in the official campus course catalogue, whereas the individual section descriptions only appear on departmental websites. These sections tend to be offered only once and are not permanent course offerings.

Graduate student instructors teach these courses and must have previous teaching experience in addition to having taken a 300-level instructional pedagogy course. Prior to this incident, the English Department had been in the practice of vetting the qualifications of the graduate student instructors teaching the course; however, the Department had not been in the practice of reviewing the course section descriptions. In the other departments in which Reading and Composition is taught, the course section descriptions are vetted on a regular basis.

II. Timeline of Events and Actions Taken by the Department, University, and Academic Senate

On May 9, 2002 an op-ed piece by Roger Kimball was published in the Wall Street Journal entitled, “The Intifada Curriculum.” This article commented on the description that was posted on the Berkeley English Department’s website of the English R1A “Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance” course section (for original description, see appendix 1).

On that same day, Chancellor Robert Berdahl met with members of the UC Berkeley leadership, including the English Department Chair, to consider what steps and actions should be taken regarding the course and the course description. It was determined that the last sentence of the course description, “conservative thinkers are encouraged to seek other sections,” was in violation of the Faculty Code of Conduct and needed to be eliminated immediately. This change to the course section description was completed within 48 hours. The graduate student instructor was also asked to amend the description to clarify what would be taught and the methodology for achieving the instructional purposes of the course. The Department Chair immediately assumed a direct mentoring role with the graduate student instructor.

On May 10th Chancellor Berdahl issued a public statement (appendix 2) that reported the steps that were being taken to revise the description and ensure that the class was conducted in accordance to the Faculty Code of Conduct. The Department Chair took responsibility for the lack of oversight of the course description and stated that the

Department had failed to execute the responsibility that had been delegated to it by the Academic Senate.

On May 17, 2002 a letter from Chancellor Berdahl was published in the Wall Street Journal which detailed the actions being taken by the University to make changes to the section description and ensure that the course would allow for open and free discourse.

By May 20th the following steps and actions had occurred:

- The graduate student instructor had amended the description to clarify what would be taught and the methodology for achieving the instructional purposes of the course.
- The Department Chair was scheduled to attend the first meeting of the class in order to advise the students of the right to express themselves openly and to have their work evaluated free of discrimination or harassment. Students would be informed that if they felt their rights were being violated, they should contact the Chair immediately. Moreover, students would write confidential evaluations of the class twice during the semester as well as at the end of the semester. These evaluations would go to the chair and to the instructor.
- A senior member of the English Department faculty would be assigned to attend the class for the entire semester as an observer in order to ensure that an open environment for discussion, free of intimidation or indoctrination by the instructor or students, would be maintained.
- A joint faculty-administrative task force was formed to review the principles and practices of mentoring and overseeing graduate student instructors.

On May 21st Chancellor Berdahl issued a statement updating the public on the steps that had been and were being taken by the University regarding the course description and conduct of the course (appendix 3).

Over the course of the summer, the instructor of record met with each of the graduate student instructors scheduled to teach sections of English R1A to clarify procedures and review each of their course descriptions and syllabi.

On July 15th the Humanities Subcommittee of the UC Berkeley Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction met and reviewed the revised course section description and determined that it was consistent with the rubric of the course. The steps that the English Department had taken reassured the Subcommittee that the course would be conducted in a way that would not compromise the educational experience of the students.

On July 24th Academic Council reviewed the situation and determined that this was a campus issue and voted unanimously to support the Berkeley Academic Senate in whatever determination they would make concerning the matter.

On August 7th the Committee on Courses of Instruction met and reviewed the revised version of the section description. The committee unanimously agreed that the revised section description fit the rubric of the course and reaffirmed the decision of the Humanities Subcommittee.

On August 8th the UC Berkeley Divisional Council met and reaffirmed the authority of the Committee on Courses of Instruction to be the final arbiter on courses in accordance to senate bylaws.

Additional steps and actions that have been taken include:

- In her mentoring role to the graduate student instructor, the Department Chair has continually worked with the graduate student to revise and rework his course section description. The graduate student instructor has been willing and receptive to working with the Chair, and has made numerous revisions to the description (for final course description, see appendix 4).
- Students were asked to evaluate the course and instructor before the semester midpoint so that modifications could be made if necessary.
- The English Department has developed and implemented new oversight structures to ensure that all current and future course descriptions are in accordance with the Faculty Code of Conduct, and with the educational mission of the Reading and Composition courses, and specifically that courses and descriptions do not exclude or discourage qualified students from enrolling.
- The Committee on Courses of Instruction has assigned a subcommittee to review the divisional senate bylaws.

III. Outcomes

The course proceeded smoothly throughout the entire semester. Prof. Steve Goldsmith attended every class, and Chair Professor Adelman met with all students, and reviewed the periodic evaluations. The course began with the maximum R&C enrollment of 17, and dropped shortly to 15 (typical of these courses). At the end of the 8th week, one student dropped the class. Although that student had attended regularly, he had not completed any of the written work assigned to that date. All three sets of evaluations indicated a very high level of student engagement with the materials of the course and praise for Snehal Shingavi's handling of discussion and of all other aspects of the course. Comments from the students included the following:

- 1.) "I believe the readings and assignments were excellent and definitely helped my ability to concentrate on hard to read texts!...The instructor was well prepared to lead the discussions
- 2.) "He makes us want to learn and come to class. I loved it. I wish there was a second part to it. Honestly, it was my favorite class this semester!"
- 3.) "This class was nothing like how some critics tried to say about this course. We remained on topics about the literature, writing, reading poetry, analyzing deeper meaning, and formulating our ideas. Although the subject matter was a controversial topic, we focused on the literary aspects of the poetry."

Several additional comments from students are included in Chair Adelman's letter to UC Berkeley Division Senate Chair Koshland that is included as an appendix (appendix 5). In addition, the appendices include Prof. Steve Goldsmith's report on the class (appendix 6).

In addition to the positive outcome for the class, several other developments of occurred.

- Executive Vice-Chancellor and Provost Paul Gray appointed a task force on GSI mentoring; that task force met to consider changes in the GSI mentoring policy, in mentoring and training specifically for Reading and Composition courses, and in GSI preparation for teaching. The task force recommended several changes to policy, and its final report will be available at the beginning of the spring semester. The Graduate Council of the Academic Senate is working closely with the task force to approve the new policies and will work with the administration on their implementation.
- The English department instituted new policies for review and approval of the Reading and Composition courses.
- The Committee on Courses of Instruction of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate initiated in September a review of its procedures.

Appendix 1 – Original Course Description

The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance

Course Number: English R1A LEC 4 Units

Semester and Year: Fall 2002

Location and Time: 204 Wheeler TuTh 2:00-3:30

Instructor: Shingavi, Snehal

Course Control Number: 28448

Final Exam Number: TBA

Booklist: (tentative) Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories, Ghassan Kanafani; Born Black, Suheir Hammad; Drops of This Story, Suheir Hammad; Enemy of the Sun, Naseer Hasan Aruri; The Adam of Two Edens : Selected Poems, Mahmud Darwish; Memory for Forgetfulness : August, Beirut, 1982, Mahmud Darwish; Victims of a Map : A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry, Mahmud Darwish; Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict, Norman G. Finkelstein; The Question of Palestine, Edward W. Said; Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question, Edward W. Said; The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994, Edward W. Said; Intifada, Phil Marshall.

Course Description: Since the inception of the Intifada in September of 2000, Palestinians have been fighting for their right to exist. The brutal Israeli military occupation of Palestine, an occupation that has been ongoing since 1948, has systematically displaced, killed, and maimed millions of Palestinian people. And yet, from under the brutal weight of the occupation, Palestinians have produced their own culture and poetry of resistance. This class will examine the history of the Palestinian resistance and the way that it is narrated by Palestinians in order to produce an understanding of the Intifada and to develop a coherent political analysis of the situation. This class takes as its starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination. Conservative thinkers are encouraged to seek other sections.

Appendix 2 – Public Statement from Chancellor Berdahl, May 10, 2002**University Statement Regarding Scheduled Fall 2002 Class Titled "The Politics and Poetics of Palestine Resistance"**

10 May 2002

Editor's note: Also see May 21, 2002 update

The following is a statement addressing questions raised about a course scheduled for the fall 2002 semester titled, "The Politics and Poetics of Palestine Resistance."

There was a failure of oversight on the part of the English Department in reviewing course proposal descriptions for the reading and composition sections. This failure is in the process of being addressed. Structures will be put in place to ensure all course descriptions will be developed in accord with the Faculty Code of Conduct, specifically that courses not exclude or discourage qualified students on grounds other than lack of preparation.

In this particular case, the English Department will immediately revise the course description to ensure open access. In addition, the department chair will provide oversight for this class to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with the Faculty Code of Conduct. Among the code's requirements is that there be no "discrimination, including harassment, against a student on political grounds, or for the reasons of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, national origin...."

Chancellor Robert M. Berdahl stated: "I am concerned that this failure of oversight has occurred and I am pleased that the English Department is acting immediately to remedy it. Universities should not avoid presenting controversial material, and we do not. It is imperative that our classrooms be free of indoctrination - indoctrination is not education. Classrooms must be places in which an open environment prevails and where students are free to express their views."

http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2002/05/10_class.html

Appendix 3 – Public Statement from Chancellor Berdahl, May 21, 2002

Update on the fall 2002 course "The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance."

21 May 2002

In close consultation with the English Department, the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate, and the graduate student instructor of the course, University of California, Berkeley administrators announced the following:

- The English Department has acknowledged a lapse in oversight of its reading and composition courses. When the course description in question was called to the attention of the department chair, and particularly the final sentence that implied exclusion based on one's political persuasion, the chair and the graduate student instructor removed the sentence. In addition, the graduate student instructor amended the course description to clarify what will be taught and the methodology for achieving the instructional purposes of the course, consistent with the requirements of English 1A.
- Students in any course have the right to express themselves openly and to have their work evaluated free of discrimination or harassment. In this case, the English Department chair will explicitly advise students enrolled in the class of this right. If students believe that these rights are compromised, they are to contact the department chair immediately. The English Department is committed to guaranteeing students that their evaluations are based solely on their academic performance, not their political viewpoint.
- Faculty observation and mentoring of graduate student instructors in all departments and instructional programs are important to their training as teachers and to ensuring that the educational goals of the course are met. Because of the controversy aroused by this course and the potential in-class conflict that could ensue, the English Department - to assure fairness to all parties in the class - will assume responsibility for regular observation of the class and mentoring of the instructor.
- A joint Academic Senate/administrative committee will review the principles and practices of mentoring and overseeing all courses led by graduate student instructors.

BACKGROUND: The course in question is an English 1A class, the first semester of a year-long sequence in reading and composition required of undergraduates at UC Berkeley. A wide variety of such courses are available and spread across 20 academic departments. These courses are taught by lecturers or graduate student instructors. Graduate student instructors act as apprentice teachers and are mentored by Academic Senate faculty.

http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2002/05/21_palest-class.html

Appendix 4 – Final Course Description

The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance

Course Number: English R1A LEC 4 Units

Semester and Year: fall 2002

Location and Time: 204 Wheeler TuTh 2:00-3:30

Instructor: Shingavi, Snehal

Course Control Number: 28448

Final Exam Number: TBA

Booklist: (tentative) Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories, Ghassan Kanafani; Born Black, Suheir Hammad; Drops of This Story, Suheir Hammad; Enemy of the Sun, Naseer Hasan Aruri; The Adam of Two Edens : Selected Poems, Mahmud Darwish; Memory for Forgetfulness : August, Beirut, 1982, Mahmud Darwish; Victims of a Map : A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry, Mahmud Darwish; Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict, Norman G. Finkelstein; The Question of Palestine, Edward W. Said; Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question, Edward W. Said; The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969-1994, Edward W. Said; Intifada, Phil Marshall.

Course Description: This is a course on Palestinian resistance poetry. It takes as its point of departure the Palestinian literature that has developed since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, which has displaced, maimed, and killed many Palestinian people. The Israeli military occupation of historic Palestine has caused unspeakable suffering. Since the occupation, Palestinians have been fighting for their right to exist. And yet, from under the weight of this occupation, Palestinians have produced their own culture and poetry of resistance. This class will examine the history of the Palestinian resistance and the way that it is narrated by Palestinians. The instructor takes as his starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination.

Discussions about the literature will focus on several intersecting themes: how are Palestinian artists able to imagine art under the occupation; what consequences does resistance have on the character of the art that is produced (i.e. why are there so few Palestinian epics and plays and comedies); can one represent the Israeli occupation in art; what is the difference between political art and propaganda and how do the debates about those terms inflect the production of literature; how do poems represent the desire to escape and the longing for home simultaneously (alternatively, how do poems represent the nation without a state); what consequence do political debates have on formal innovations and their reproduction; and what are the obligations of artists in representing the occupation.

This 1A course offers students frequent practice in a variety of forms of discourse, leading toward exposition and argumentation in common standard English. The course aims at continuing to develop the students' practical fluency with sentence, paragraph and thesis-development skills but with increasingly complex applications. Students will be assigned a number of short essays (2-4 written pages) and several revisions.

Appendix 5 – Chair Adelman’s December 19, 2002 Report to Chair Koshland

December 19, 2002

Catherine P. Koshland
Chair, Berkeley Division of the UC Academic Senate
320 Stephens Hall

Dear Chair Koshland:

I am writing to report on the English 1A section on "The Politics and Poetics of Palestinian Resistance." I am happy to report that, despite its controversial beginning, the course went very smoothly.

The Department put several measures in place to insure that the course would maintain an open educational environment and that student work would be graded on academic grounds only. I attended the first meeting of the course and invited students to come directly to me if they felt that open discussion of the issues was not welcome in the classroom or that their papers had been graded on political rather than academic grounds. In addition, Professor Steven Goldsmith attended every class meeting as an impartial observer in order to insure that an open atmosphere conducive to discussion was maintained. Finally, in addition to the official departmental evaluation forms distributed at the end of the semester, I distributed and read confidential evaluation forms twice in the course of the semester.

As it turned out, none of these measures proved to be necessary, though their presence may have played a role in insuring that the course was taught professionally. No student from this course came to me to report problems either with grading or with the way in which discussion was conducted. Professor Goldsmith repeatedly reported to me that the course went very well and that the instructor did not in any way attempt to prohibit the expression of points of view that he did not share, though he did on occasion exercise his obligation to keep the discussion to the subject matter at hand. (I append his final report to me below.) All three sets of evaluations indicated a very high level of student engagement with the materials of the course and praise for Snehal Shingavi's handling of discussion and of all other aspects of the course. (These are in fact among the most impressive set of evaluations for a Graduate Student Instructor that I have ever seen.)

Let me say a little more about enrollment in the class and also about the evaluations. The class started with 17 enrolled students, which is the limit in our Reading and Composition courses. That number dropped to 15 almost immediately, which is also characteristic of these courses (though they are required, students often under-estimate the amount of work they will entail). That number held steady until the eighth week, when one additional student dropped the course. This student had refused to participate in the discussions of the poetry and had completed none of the many written assignments for the course at that time that he dropped it. Judging from the evaluations, the remaining 14 students were delighted with the course. 11 of the 14 enrolled

filled out the final evaluation forms. Every one of the 11 forms is strongly positive. I include a sample comment from each of the 11 students:

- 1.) "I believe the readings and assignments were excellent and definitely helped my ability to concentrate on hard to read texts!...The instructor was well prepared to lead the discussions, When people had questions he compassionately and clearly answered them...The effectiveness of class discussions, to propel learning in new vistas and encourage our confidence, were superb. Controversies were handled smoothly. The [paper] comments were appropriate, insightful, and kind. I have become a better writer."
- 2.) "He makes us want to learn and come to class. I loved it. I wish there was a second part to it. Honestly, it was my favorite class this semester!"
- 3.) "This class was nothing like how some critics tried to say about this course. We remained on topics about the literature, writing, reading poetry, analyzing deeper meaning, and formulating our ideas. Although the subject matter was a controversial topic, we focused on the literary aspects of the poetry."
- 4.) "The instructor does a good job of making it clear that it is not necessary to take a pro-Palestinian view.... gets all the students to think and analyze...great class."
- 5.) "This class has focused on poetry....I feel as though I have greatly improved. Snehal was excellent in the discussion arena, he gave the class lots of opportunity for success ('What might/could this mean?') and gave inspiring prompts."
- 6.) "Prof. Shingavi is a great leader of discussion & whenever there are times of silence, he knows what questions/suggestions to make to open the discussion back up."
- 7.) "It helped me improve my writing and critical reading skill."
- 8.) "Instructor was near flawless. This class is one of the few classes at Berkeley that has inspired me to think and work hard. I also feel that he improved my ability to analyze literature and write about it. The professor was always available and always helpful." [This comment is from a senior Economics major.]
- 9.) "Instructor was nothing less than awesome. He dealt with such a controversial topic very well and the class atmosphere was always very comforting and voicing my opinion and participating in discussion was very easy."
- 10.) "He lead all discussions effectively by asking questions to make us think....This class was great!"
- 11.) "This was one of my favorite classes. This is unusual as I tend not to like English classes.... I learned how to analyze different aspects of poems and to recognize what is important in a poem and a piece of literature."

I hope that these comments make it clear just how successful the course was in fulfilling the educational mission of the Reading and Composition courses.

Sincerely,

Janet Adelman
Chair

cc: Ronelle Alexander, Chair
Academic Senate Committee on Courses

Attachment: Report from Steven Goldsmith

Appendix 6 – Prof. Goldsmith’s December 18, 2002 Report to Chair Adelman

December 18, 2002

Dear Chair Adelman,

I am pleased to report that Snehal Shingavi's section of English 1A, on the Poetics and Politics of Palestinian Resistance, could not have proceeded more smoothly. As the faculty observer, I attended every class meeting, ready to intervene if the environment of free discussion and open inquiry were ever threatened. In fact, the occasion for such intervention never arose, and the students never heard my voice beyond my opening day introduction. Mr. Shingavi conducted class in a wholly professional manner, welcoming all students' views, regardless of their political positions. Whenever controversial historical or political issues arose ("Why did the Palestinians leave their homes in 1948?"), he was quick to recognize the disputes and to sketch for his students a range of possible interpretations. One student, who dropped the class in the eighth week and seems to have attended solely for the purpose of challenging the political positions represented in Mr. Shingavi's original course description, spoke often and freely. Occasionally, Mr. Shingavi exercised his right as instructor to steer the class away from general political controversy and back to the literary material at hand, but he always did so with respect and fairness. The strength of the class was the literature itself, which Mr. Shingavi always made the focus of discussion. By presenting Palestinian poetry as a living, continuously developing cultural phenomenon, and by presenting such a variety of Palestinian voices, he raised complex questions about literature's many relations to politics, questions that always resisted the reductive answer of propaganda. Students learned, and were surprised to learn, that Palestinian poetry critiques existing Palestinian politics with a passion that often rivals the poetry's desire to advance and imagine the terms of Palestinian nationalism. Sophisticated, open-minded, student-oriented, Mr. Shingavi created a challenging but comfortable environment for his students, and, given the quality of their eager participation, they seem to have thrived under his tutelage. Their warm regard for their instructor was also evident. Mr. Shingavi weathered the initial storm of controversy with admirable composure, and almost immediately, his class settled into the routine of another successful English 1A section. His students, glad to have enrolled, never understood all the fuss.

Steven Goldsmith
Associate Professor
Department of English