

S.73-148

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES -

Subject COURSE PROPOSAL - GS 427-5 -

ALTERNATIVE FUTURE

Date NOVEMBER 20, 1973

MOTION 1: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-148,
the new course proposal for General Studies 427-5 -
Alternative Future."

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FACULTY OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES -

Subject NEW COURSE PROPOSAL - GS 427-5 -

ALTERNATIVE FUTURE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Date NOVEMBER 20, 1973

On the recommendation of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies has approved, as set forth in SCUS 73-47, the new course proposal for General Studies 427-5 - Alternative Future, and recommends approval to Senate.

[Handwritten signature]

SCUS 73-47

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To Mr. H. Evans, Registrar and
Secretary of SCUS.

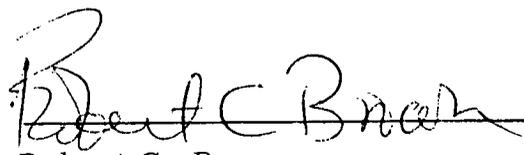
From Dr. R. C. Brown, Dean,
Interdisciplinary Studies.

Subject Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies
New Course Proposal.

Date 14th November, 1973.

The attached new course proposal - GS 427 is forwarded to you for consideration by SCUS. Would you please place this on the agenda.

RCB/et


Robert C. Brown

SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

NEW COURSE PROPOSAL FORM

1. Calendar Information

Department: Interdisciplinary Studies.

Abbreviation Code: G.S. Course Number: 427 Credit Hours: 5 Vector: 1-2-2

Title of Course: ALTERNATIVE FUTURE.

Calendar Description of Course:

This course is designed to analyze the important questions and problems facing the future of man and to assess the role of the Behavioural Sciences in planning for tomorrow.

Nature of Course (See Attachment)

Prerequisites (or special instructions):

At least 60 semester hours credit.

Students with credit for BSF 427 may not take this course for further credit.

What course (courses), if any, is being dropped from the calendar if this course is approved: None.

2. Scheduling

How frequently will the course be offered? Twice yearly.

Semester in which the course will first be offered? 75-1

Which of your present faculty would be available to make the proposed offering possible?

Dr. McDermott, Dr. Harper

3. Objectives of the Course

(See Attachment)

4. Budgetary and Space Requirements (for information only)

What additional resources will be required in the following areas:

Faculty none

Staff none

Library none

Audio Visual none

Space normal seminar room scheduling

Equipment none

5. Approval

Date: Nov. 14/73

Robert C. Brown

Department Chairman

Nov 28 1973

Dean

Chairman, SCUS

THE BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES AND THE STUDY OF THE FUTURE

Behavioural Science Foundations 427
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby 2, British Columbia, Canada

W. Basil McDermott
Office CB 6325
Phone: 291-3763

Spring, 1973

INTRODUCTION

"I have very bad news for you. Are you man enough to take it?" "God no!" screamed Yossarian. "I'll go right to pieces."

Joseph Heller, Catch-22

What do we need to know and to do in order to make our small planet earth safe and decent for our children and grandchildren? The first thing is to identify and evaluate the major problems facing our world in order to have some sense of priorities for survival. Not all problems are of equal importance and the sooner we are able to separate the major problems from the lesser ones the more likely we are to concentrate knowledge and action on these larger issues. The second thing is to think more seriously about the kind of future society we would like to create. This is an exercise in personal values and social forecasting. There may be a number of good reasons why we cannot maximize all our 'wants' for the future but it is still an excellent place to start our thinking. The third thing is to consider alternative routes to solve both the priority problems and to create a world more to our liking.

This course is an introduction to the study of the future and begins to deal with the above three perspectives. Such a study leads to many other questions but our major emphasis will concern the type of control systems that now operate in our world and how these current control systems make it difficult for us to consider seriously the three perspectives above. Quite frankly, we are now at a point in human history where we must devise new kinds of control systems to handle the major problems facing mankind. It is important to understand that the real issue is not whether we ought to control human behaviour or leave it uncontrolled. Controls now exist. We need a better understanding of how we might create alternative control systems for survival.

When I examine the major problems and processes of our world system it is fairly clear why some people despair of our ability to gain adequate control of the processes that seem to be leading us to disaster. Yet I am convinced that we best increase the probabilities for creating a better world through a more accurate understanding of our problems than through any other means. Understanding, of course, is only a necessary condition; it is not sufficient to guarantee survival. There must be methods to put

new knowledge into social practice. This involves the uses of imagination and relies on our ability to learn. Fundamentally the issue of survival is one of social learning. This course is an attempt to further and to stimulate that learning process upon which so much depends.

TEXTS

Arthur Clarke. Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.

Aldous Huxley. Island. New York: Harper & Row (Bantam Edition), 1962.

Dennis L. Meadows. The Limits to Growth: A report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind. London: Earth Island Ltd., 1972.

Charles A. Reich. The Greening of America. New York: Random House, 1970.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The learning process involves continual development. One rarely 'learns' something once and for all. Learning involves reconsideration, repetition, questioning, qualifying of old ideas in light of new information, selective forgetting of old ideas, and a willingness to consider fresh perspectives. It also involves an integration of knowledge from various sources. I expect you to integrate what you learn from the lectures and readings through careful note-taking and study. I expect you to have studied the appropriate reading material for each week prior to the lecture and seminar.

The demonstration of such an integration will result in your development of ideas in three essays during the semester. Each essay is to be 2-3 pages in length, typewritten and single-spaced. You are to turn in two copies of each essay and I shall return one copy to you with detailed comments. The essays are due on the specified dates.

- I. The first essay is due on January 17th at the beginning of the lecture. Discuss the following questions in as organized a manner as you can:

"In what kind of society would you like to live twenty years from the present? What means, methods, or routes would you like to use in order to move from the present society to this future society? What would you anticipate the major problems of your desired society to be? What kinds of alternative controls do you think you would find acceptable to deal with these major problems?"

- II. The second essay is due on Feb. 28th at the beginning of the lecture.

"The first seven weeks of the course provide a framework for identifying and evaluating the major problems threatening the survival of mankind. Rewrite your first essay in light of the analysis provided in the lectures and readings during this time, including your own evaluation of the arguments put forth."

III. The third essay is due on March 28 at the beginning of the lecture.

"What major objections would Clarke, Reich, & Huxley raise to your second essay? Discuss and evaluate these objections."

Your grade for the course will be largely based on your written work. Seminar performance will count to a lesser degree and will be evaluated on the basis of how well prepared you are to discuss the issues each week, the questions you raise for yourself and others, and the extent to which you are searching for ways to solve problems. Curiosity, liveliness, and humor are parts of such a search.

CONCERNING THE SEMINARS

What does it mean to be adequately prepared for a seminar? Basically I have in mind that a person has studied (not simply read and underlined) the appropriate reading material for the week. You should be able to give the major argument of each article; you should be able to relate the various articles to one another for that week. As your collection of notes becomes more sophisticated during the semester you should start relating ideas from both the lectures and different weeks of readings to one another. The point is to keep developing and reconsidering the old ideas. This necessarily involves periodic review of what you have previously studied.

Sometimes it helps to get a seminar going if there is a central idea or question to start the discussion. It is not necessary to end the discussion where we begin or even to stick to the subject in some rigid manner. The point is to select some important issues to open the discussion. Let me suggest some questions that we might consider for each of the Seminars during the course. As time passes I would anticipate that you would develop your own questions.

I. WHAT CAN WE KNOW ABOUT THE FUTURE?

(There will be no seminar the first week in order to give you more time to write your first essay which is due on January 17th.)

II. WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN?

How did you go about writing your essay on this topic? What major problems did you run into as you considered the question? What sorts of things did you discuss in your essay?

How many times did you have to read Fred C. Ikle's article in order to begin to understand his major ideas? What were these ideas? What do you think about them?

III. GROWTH SYSTEMS AND SURVIVAL

What is the thesis of the Meadows study? What kind of evidence is provided? Is the case convincing to your mind? What are the implications of the study? What is Mishan saying in his article? How do you evaluate his position? How does it relate to the Meadows study?

IV. AGGREGATION PROCESSES AND SURVIVAL

What is the thesis of each article? If you accept the validity of each position, then what controls would you be willing to accept in order to 'solve' the problems involved? How do aggregation processes relate to growth processes?

V. CONFLICT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

According to Platt, Forrester, and Fischer...what must we do in our attempts to study the future? How do you evaluate the significance of each article? What are the implications for political and social planning if Forrester's thesis is accurate for other classes of social problems? What assumptions are Platt and Fischer making about reward systems and the creation of new kinds of knowledge in order to solve problems? Evaluate their positions. What is the lecturer's model of conflict processes? What are the problems with his point of view?

VI. ANXIETY PROCESSES AND THE INDIVIDUAL

What is the lecturer's view of 'the nature of man'? What is the relevancy of his model of anxiety processes to questions of social planning for survival?

If you find yourself agreeing with Reich's book, ask yourself about the reasons for this agreement. What are the problems with his classification scheme of Consciousness I and II? What are the advantages? What are the relationships between the conditions in a given society and the vulnerability of the individual to anxiety?

VII. CONTROL SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL INVENTIONS

What is the major argument of each article? Suppose there was a round-table discussion of the various authors and the lecturer on the issues raised in the lecture and readings, what would the various people say to one another on the nature and need for different kinds of controls?

VIII. ALTERNATIVE VISION I: CHARLES REICH'S CONSCIOUSNESS III

Where does Consciousness III come from? What is it good for? Is it subject to a development process? Are there special conditions necessary for it to be maintained? What are the problems with Reich's approach to social change? How does his 'vision' fit in with the lecturer's obsession with 'control systems'?

IX. ALTERNATIVE VISION II: ARTHUR CLARKE'S 'TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM'

What would Dennis Meadows say about Clarke's model of the future? What kinds of problems is Clarke concerned with? Why? What, in your opinion, are the most profitable ways to evaluate Clarke's position? What conditions must minimally be met for Clarke's 'control system' to work?

X. ALTERNATIVE VISION III: THE BIOCHEMICAL REVOLUTION

How important do you think the research in these areas are to the development of new kinds of social controls for the future? How does this topic relate to the Meadows study? To Reich's vision? To Clarke? How does it relate to population control? Anxiety processes? Conflict Processes? Under what conditions will new knowledge be used in this area?

XI. ALTERNATIVE VISION IV: ALDOUS HUXLEY'S CONTROL SYSTEM

What is Huxley's view of 'the learning process'? What is the relationship of genetic endowment to social structures in Huxley's model of society? What would Clarke think of Pala? Why? What would Meadows think? What is the significance of the ending of the book? What are the important ideas that might be extracted from Huxley's book and applied to the solving of some of the problems covered in the course? Discuss.

XII. TOO LATE, MY BROTHER?

What was the relationship of the three essays to the lectures and readings? What were the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to the study of the future?

LECTURES AND SEMINARS

I. WHAT CAN WE KNOW ABOUT THE FUTURE?

"The question is not whether it is possible to predict all events in the future with perfect certainty but what kinds of events we can predict and with what degree of certainty."

Reference

Robert L. Heilbroner. The Future as History (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959).

Kenneth E. Boulding. The Meaning of the Twentieth Century (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

Bertrand de Jouvenel. The Art of Conjecture (New York: Basic Books, 1967).

II. WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN?

"To what degree does our future society depend on what we want it to be and what we attempt to create?"

Required

*Fred C. Iklé, "Can Social Predictions be Evaluated?" Daedalus (Summer, 1967), 733-758.

Reference

Herman Kahn & Anthony J. Wiener. The Year 2000: A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

III. GROWTH SYSTEMS AND SURVIVAL

"It will be in the nature, understanding, and control of growth processes in different areas of life that we will increase the probability that our grandchildren will think well of their grandparents."

Required

Dennis L. Meadows, et.al. The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind (London: Earth Island Limited, 1972). Read entire book.

*E. J. Mishan, "On Making the Future Safe for Mankind," The Public Interest, #24 (Summer, 1971), 33-61.

Reference

- Barry Commoner. The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972.
- Jay W. Forrester. World Dynamics (Cambridge, Mass: Wright-Allen
Press, 1971).

IV. AGGREGATION PROCESSES AND SURVIVAL

"There is a class of problems in society that can be called 'aggregation problems'. They are closely connected to problems of growth and competition. The control systems that now influence how these aggregation processes operate are becoming increasingly inadequate. The search is underway for better ways to handle these problems".

Required

- *Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," Science (13 December 1968), 1243-1248.
- *Paul & Anne Ehrlich, "Optimum Population and Human Biology", Chapter 8, pp. 199-209, in Population, Resources, Environment: Issues in Human Ecology (San Francisco W. H. Freeman, 1970).
- *K. Davis, "Population Policy: Will Current Programs Succeed?" Science (10 November 1967), 730-739.

Reference

- Gordon R. Taylor. The Doomsday Book (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970).
- Paul & Anne Ehrlich. Population Resources, Environment: Issues In Human Ecology (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1970).

V. CONFLICT PROCESSES AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

"If we are to be serious about survival we must not only be concerned with growth processes and aggregation processes but we must also come to a better understanding of the nature and consequences of various types of conflict situations. The idea is not to abolish all conflict from life but to manage conflict in more constructive ways. This basically involves a social learning process."

Required

- *John Platt, "What We Must Do," Science (28 November 1969), 1115-1121. Also reprinted in Current (February, 1970), 3-17.
- *Jay Forrester, "Counter-Intuitive Nature of Social Systems," Simulation, Vol. 16:2 (1971) 61-76.
- *John Fischer, "Survival U: Prospectus for a Really Relevant University," Harper's (September 1969), 12, 14, 17, 20, 22.

Reference

Kenneth E. Boulding. Conflict and Defense. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Thomas C. Schelling. The Strategy of Conflict. Cambridge: Harvard, 1960.

The Journal of Conflict Resolution.

VI. ANXIETY PROCESSES AND THE INDIVIDUAL

"Is it possible for a person to take the problems facing our world seriously without going crackers?"

Required

Charles A. Reich. The Greening of America. New York: Random House, 1970. Chapters I-VIII.

Reference

Kahlil Gibran. The Prophet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958). (copyright, 1923).

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The Little Prince. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943.

VII. CONTROL SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL INVENTIONS

"The issue is not whether one can or cannot control all the problems facing our world overnight but what kinds of controls can be developed for which problems and with what costs and consequences. The idea is not to try harder but to try differently in light of the basic processes of growth, aggregation, conflict, and anxiety that are in need of new types of control systems."

Required

- *Anthony Downs, "Up and Down with Ecology---the Issue Attention Cycle," The Public Interest, #28 (Summer, 1972), 38-50.
- *Herman Kahn & Anthony J. Winer, "Policy Research and Social Change," from: The Year 2000 (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 386-413.
- *Amitai Etzioni, "Shortcuts to Social Change?" The Public Interest, #12 (Summer, 1968), 40-51.
- *James Q. Wilson, "The Bureaucracy Problem," The Public Interest, #6 (Winter, 1967), 3-9.
- *George A. Miller, "Some Psychological Perspectives on the Year 2000", Daedalus (Summer, 1967), 883-896.

Reference

- John Platt, The Step to Man, New York: John Wiley, 1966.
- Dennis Gabor, Innovations: Scientific, Technological, & Social Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970.

VIII. ALTERNATIVE VISION I: CHARLES REICH'S CONSCIOUSNESS III

"How can we evaluate the nature and uses of Consciousness III as part of any attempt to create new control systems for survival?"

Required

- Charles A. Reich. The Greening of America (New York: Random, 1970), Chapters IX-XII.

Reference

- William Irwin Thompson, At the Edge of History: Speculations on the Transformation of Culture, New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1969.

IX. ALTERNATIVE VISION II: ARTHUR CLARKE'S "TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM"

"Under what conditions is Arthur Clarke's vision of the future probable?"

Required

Arthur Clarke, Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry Into the Limits of the Possible. New York: Harper & Row, 1958. Entire Book.

Reference

Issac Asimov, Is Anyone There? (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967.)

Walter Sullivan, We are Not Alone: The Search for Intelligent Life on Other Worlds (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

Burnham P. Beckwith, The Next 500 Years: Scientific Predictions of Major Social Trends (New York: Exposition Press, 1967).

X. ALTERNATIVE VISION III: THE BIOCHEMICAL REVOLUTION

"The price of immortality is a childless world."

Required

*R. Michael Davidson, "And Now: The Evolution Revolution", Avant-Garde (January-February, 1969) as reprinted in Current (March, 1969), 4-10.

*Donald Fleming, "On Living in Biological Revolution", The Atlantic Monthly (February, 1969), as reprinted in Current (March, 1969), 10-19

*David Krech, "Psychoneurobiochemedication", California Monthly, (June-July, 1959), as reprinted in Current (September, 1969), 55. 64.

Reference

Gordon R. Taylor, The Biological Time Bomb, New York: World Publishing Co., 1968.

Gordon Wolstenhome (ed.) Man and His Future, Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1963.

XI. ALTERNATIVE VISION IV: ALDOUS HUXLEY'S CONTROL SYSTEM

"To what an extent is the Earth an Island?
What are the implications of your answer
in creating control systems for survival?"

Required

Aldous Huxley, Island, New York: Harper & Row (Bantam edition), 1962.

Reference

Alvin Toffler, Future Shock, New York: Random House, 1970.

John K. Galbraith, The New Industrial State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967).

Peter F. Drucker, The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society, New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

XII. TOO LATE, MY BROTHER?

"It is precisely because the time is short that we dare not do just 'anything', hoping somehow that our good intentions, commitment, and intense action will be sufficient to solve our problems. We are more likely to increase the probability of survival when we concentrate on alternative controls that focus on the basic processes that largely account for the crises of our age."

Reference

B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971.

Robert A. Dahl, After the Revolution? New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.