

# The Core Course in Political Science: Yak

(AN EDITORIAL)

Naturally, students of social science need not know how to write. Nor must even philosophy students be required to think.

But students in sociology learn that society has depth, and in economics how to deduce the behavior of too few and unempirical variables beautifully to the  $n$ th (or  $n_1 . . . n$ th) degree; psychology students can test anything at all, and even nothing at all, for significance. Anthropologists are taught to observe with the passion and memory of the *royeur*. And, we may assert proudly, no students except those of political science learn to Yak.

The noun, Yak, refers to the field of learning in which non-systematic and irrelevant oral expression is devoted to serious topics superficially defined.

Now it must not be thought that Yak provides material only for a freshman course. The political science student must take Yak 1, Yak 2, and Yak 3 to Yak  $n$ , depending upon the university attended and the final degree achieved. It is the core course, equivalent to six years of mathematics for the mathematics student, six years of French for the French scholar, and six years of piano instruction for the would-be concert pianist.

There is an obvious difference, however. Yak is called by various course titles to oblige the several professors specializing in its different forms. Thus, in the freshman year Yak is usually called American Government 1-2; as the years pass it typically progresses through courses with heavy concentrations in citizenship, civics, current problems of politics, civil liberties, and international relations.

The candidate for the Ph.D. in Yak is a pleasure to observe at his oral examinations; he has by this time managed not only to get straight "A" grades in all the courses in Yak, but he has been guest speaker at numerous youth councils, businessmen's lunches, local political party groups, and coffee hours. He has lent his effervescent presence to model U.N.'s, mock parliaments, and student governments, and has also been a fellow of the Foundation to Provide Capital Punishment for Non-Voters. He is superb on such subjects as, "If Democracy were Alive Today," "The South and the Negro," "Everyone Should Belong to a Party," and "Politicians are Not as Bad as You Think." It is a shame that on these oral examining occasions he must digress for a moment to defend an abstract, exacting thesis, with a title such as, "Soviet and American Ideas in the March Debates over Guatemala as Reported in the Swiss Press."

No wonder, then, that our students should be in such great demand afterwards. They can be placed wherever job-descriptions cannot be agreed upon, and in an emergency a position can always be found for them in Yak 1-2.