

THE INDIVIDUAL IN AMERICA

Program Description

The overall focus of the program was the identity crisis among post-adolescent American youth. An attempt was made to understand a sampling of its many facets and to explore ways of working through this difficult period to gain a position of greater self-confidence and personal stability. Particular emphasis was placed on the self-discipline required for successful group action in pursuit of a mutual goal.

Aspects of the identity crisis which received particular attention during the program included situations involving both physical and emotional stress, the problems of transitory personal and group relationships, societal problems (including race, poverty, and sex), changing sex roles, and how to cope with changing value systems.

Background readings were assigned and discussed in the fields of anthropology, religion, philosophy, literature, sociology, psychology, and social criticism. An outline of these readings would include:

- I. The Nature and Origins of Man
- II. Individual Psychology
- III. Current Social Problems in America

Program activities in addition to the regular book seminars and the many special interest seminars included: (1) a two-week Wilderness Experience spend working as trail crew for the U. S. Forest Service, an excellent exposure to the dynamics of group functioning under stress and the growth of group solidarity; (2) a one-week Creativity Workshop during which many students experimented in expressing themselves through various media with which they had previously been unfamiliar; (3) internships in a variety of fields were carried on by individuals throughout the year. These ranged from elementary school teaching to voter registration.

Seven weeks of the Spring Quarter were devoted to Group and Individual Projects designed to broaden student experience of the social forces characteristic of American society. The primary group projects included an Urban Survival group which hitched to San Francisco, a community study group analyzing the power structure of Chehalis, Washington, a Wilderness Project working on preserving Mt. St. Helens as a national monument, a correctional institutions group, and an educational projects group. Individual projects gave even wider scope.

Credit Equivalencies (in quarter credit hours):

FALL

6 Social Sciences
6 Humanities
3 Outdoor Recreation

WINTER

9 Social Sciences
3 Humanities
3 General Electives

SPRING

12 Special Projects
3 Social Sciences

Individual specialties for each student are recorded in their portfolios.

Hope this opus answers all possible questions. Know it wont so don't hesitate to call (206-753-3955) or write or drop in and ask our new secretary--Mrs. Janice Brand-- who comes on duty 15 Sept. Can't wait for her arrival so I can stop mashing out these stencils.

In the meantime ----- Hang loose.

Individually yours,

Willi

Bill

William F. Unsoeld

Bill Aldridge

Program Coordinators

Faculty Team Members:

Bill Aldridge -- Social Psychology and Education
Peggy Dickinson -- Art
Earle McNeil -- Sociology
Carol Olexa -- Sociology
Pete Sinclair -- Literature
Roy Smith -- Psychology
Willi Unsoeld -- Philosophy and Religion

Food is \$32.50
It is possible to borrow or rent cheap required
equipment

THE INDIVIDUAL IN AMERICA

FILM LIST 1971-72

Fall

Nov. 2-4

Help! My Snowman's Burning Down

Adventures of *

Nov. 9-11

Assembly Line

*The Gorky Trilogy (Nov. 10, 11, 12)

Summerhill

Nov. 16-18

21-87

Leo Beuerman

*The Bicycle Thief

Nov. 23-25

Run

Nov. 30-Dec. 2

The Game

*Shadows

Dec. 7-9

Antonio

*Nun's Story

Dec. 14-16

The Inheritance

*High School

~~Dec. 21-23~~ ↑

Christmas in Appalachia

hascaux: Cradle of Man's Art
Prehistoric Images

Winter

Jan. 4-6

Cities in Crisis

*Circle of the Sun

*Exiles

Jan. 11-13

~~Nothing But a Man~~

Tenement

Jan. 18-20

Cool World

*Hunger

Jan. 25-27

Hunger in America

*Loves of a Blonde

Feb. 1-3

*Apu Trilogy (Feb. 2, 3, 4)

Feb. 8-10

How the West Was Won

Feb. 15-17

The Inheritance

*Ikiru

Mar. 1-3

Living

The Magician

Individual in America
Film List 1971-72
Page 3

Spring

Apr. 4-6

Night and Fog

Apr. 11-13

*The Roundup

Apr. 25-27

Automania 2000

Flavio

May 2-4

*Galia

May 9-11

*Forbidden Games

May 23-25

The Inheritance

* Feature Films

MID-MONTH SUPPLEMENT
Individual In America

Week Of January 10

16

Tentative reading list :

17

I Never Promised You A Rose Garden and One flew over the Cuckoo's

Nest

18

Film: Tenement Wednesday 1:00 Lecture Hall #1

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with accompanying lecture by Smith

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PLEASE USE ABOVE BLANKS TO UPDATE CALENDAR FOR THE BALANCE OF THE MONTH AND

RETURN QUICKLY TO DICK WILSON FOR FULFILLMENT OF A SUBSCRIPTION.

Calendar-Newsletter

MID-MONTH SUPPLEMENT

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PLEASE USE ABOVE BLANKS TO UPDATE CALENDAR FOR THE BALANCE OF THE MONTH AND
RETURN QUICKLY TO DICK NICHOLS FOR PUBLICATION OF A SUPPLEMENT.

Program Evaluation
INDIVIDUAL IN AMERICA

1. We have stayed remarkably close to the original catalogue description of our program. All the various aspects of the program described there have been performed according to schedule, although several of them have fallen somewhat short of our anticipated execution. In particular, the "human relations workshop" fell short of our design expectations. This was partially due to the fact that we lacked the necessary funding to provide a longer period of time with outside consultants and partly due to the fact that the heavy snowstorm knocked out a major part of the programmed week.
2. Seminars: Scheduling of seminars varies considerably from one group to another. Some are meeting in groups of ten three times a week with a meeting of twenty once a week while others meet only twice a week total, some divided into ten while others remain in their group of twenty. Attendance also varies widely. In some groups it seems that there are segments of the group that fail to show up at all. In others, everyone shows up eventually during the week, but never on the same day. Still other groups show only two or three students absent on any one occasion.

It is still quite difficult to assess what is being "learned, accomplished, improved" in the seminars. Much of the time is still devoted to discussing and wrestling with what it means to operate as a group. The students are still highly individualized and have little notion of what sorts of self-discipline are required to function together in seminar. There are occasional glimpses of what it means to follow a topic with corporate concentration, but, in most cases, their discussion is still pretty fragmented. A great deal of time has been spent concentrating on how to listen to one another and some progress is being shown in this respect. Efforts are also being made to draw out the quiet members of the groups, and there are only occasional individuals who have not yet responded at least in some measure.

Discussions have been held concerning the usefulness of written work, essays, papers, etc. Performance in this area has been improving slightly, but, in the absence of required assignments, many students have found it difficult to produce written material on their own initiative.

Only two or three seminar periods have been videotaped and little use has been made of the tapes after they have been filmed.

3. With some few exceptions, the books chosen for seminar discussions have been satisfactory. For Fall Quarter the books were selected by the faculty team. For Winter Quarter, the faculty team proposed a list of books which was then reviewed by the students of one of the Book Seminars. The students presented their list of selections (including several which were not on the original faculty list) and the final selection was made by the student group in consultation with the faculty team.

The basic theoretical question concerning book selection raised by members of the faculty team concerns whether the particular book selected makes any difference. One argument runs that the book is simply an occasion for initiating

a particular topic and that it is what flows from this occasion which is important. The other view has it that, unless the material dealt with by the book is basic, comprehensive, and appropriate to the topic, the ensuing discussion will never get off the ground. This issue has not yet been resolved.

4. There have been some problems with reading speed in the various seminars and some attempt has been made at using the Learning Resources Group to remedy this problem. However, after an initial show of enthusiasm on the part of the students for speed reading training, interest rapidly dropped off, and the effort has largely collapsed.

We have several special interest seminars going on in creative writing handled by Pete Sinclair. Interest in them seems to be well-sustained. Our major and continuing problem in this area seems to be in getting the students to motivate themselves to tackle reading and writing projects which are not specifically assigned to them by faculty members. This point will be referred to further below.

5. Our faculty seminars have been sometime things. At times they have been real high points when the entire group has kept its eye on the ball and the discussion has been vivid and searching. Other times have been characterized by long dry spells when we have had great difficulty in focusing at all. Attendance has been occasionally spotty and tardiness a real problem. The perennial lateness of arrival might have been contributed to by the fact that we often have gotten housekeeping details mixed up in the book discussions. For this reason, desultory talk has preceded the start of the book discussion at many sessions, so members of the team have been encouraged in counting on coming in late since they felt that nothing of great significance would have been happening during this period anyway.

Faculty seminars have helped us to come together as a working group, but such assistance has been moderate. We have not been videotaping the seminars, and it is possible that this device might have improved our performance.

We average about three hours of book discussion each Monday morning. However, this time has been encroached upon occasionally by housekeeping details until we made a resolution to stick strictly to the topic at hand and reschedule housekeeping details for a period from 8:00 to 9:00 Wednesday mornings. We are still not satisfied with this arrangement since we feel hopelessly pressed on Wednesday morning (and since many members simply fail to show up at that hour in the morning), so we have finally rescheduled the Wednesday meeting for 9:00 Friday morning. This session will be open-ended and can run the entire day if necessary. The feeling now is that we should have made this move much earlier in the year, but we look forward to it restoring the group cohesiveness which has been gradually dissipated under the pressures of the school year.

6. Teaching methods other than seminars include: films, tapes, workshops in creativity and human relations, lectures, interviews with townspeople, all-night marathons, field trips to Seattle and surrounding communities, recreational outings, Saturday soccer games, individual projects, internships, and probably several others which I have overlooked. Opinions differ on how effective these various methods have been. Some faculty members have made excellent use of our extensive film series; others have used them less effectively. In general, the creativity workshop was quite well-received by students and faculty, while the interpersonal

relations session (basically a half-day only) was not. Lectures have ranged from moderately effective to outright boring. Extra-mural activities have been extremely useful in bringing seminar groups closer together. One of the most effective methods so far attempted has been the staging of a faculty book seminar in a fishbowl situation involving the entire program. More of these are planned in the future.

7. The evaluation of students has been carried out by asking for a self-evaluation, a seminar moderator evaluation, and an evaluation of the program. These written evaluations have been called for at the end of each quarter and placed in the students' portfolios. Response has been quite good, and a large percentage have complied with the request. In addition, each faculty member has written an evaluation of each member of his book seminar at the end of each quarter.

Faculty evaluations have been contributed by students (as indicated above) and placed in the pendaflex folder which constitutes each faculty member's portfolio. In addition, the faculty members have undertaken the task of writing up evaluations of each other. This task has not yet been completed, but several such statements have already been exchanged.

Evaluation of the total program has, of course, been dealt with by the individual student as they see it. Considerable discussion has been carried out in the book seminar and several papers have been submitted to the faculty by individual students on this particular topic. We have also scheduled a faculty seminar to be conducted on the topic in a fishbowl arrangement involving all the students. (This was a shining success which occasioned much favorable comment from students, faculty, and chance passers-by who happened to be in the lounge.)

8. Each student has a separate pendaflex folder which constitutes his traveling portfolio. These are open to the students, and they are invited to place completed materials in them as they wish. We were somewhat apprehensive at the risk of having material disappear from the folders when leaving them open to student access in this manner, but so far there have been no confirmed incidents. If pilferage should occur, we would be forced to go to a greater security emphasis.

Several discussion sessions have been held with the entire program in an effort to clarify the role and makeup of the portfolio system of evaluation. Some students are still unclear as to just what is expected of them, but on the whole, it seems as if most of them are quite well informed (at least as well informed as the faculty).

9. Individual morale is very difficult to measure. We hear tales of complete collapse, and I expect it is natural that such stories tend to outweigh the happy tales. However, in leafing through the individual program evaluations, there is a heartening number of descriptions of individual victories. An appreciable proportion of the students seem to be finding in the program exactly the kind of catalyst they felt the need for when they entered TESC. At least five students reached the conclusion this term (Winter Quarter) that Evergreen State is not the place for them. In each of these cases, it appears that they feel no hard feelings toward the college, but simply feel that they are better suited for a different sort of academic climate. These are the students we are glad to see go.

Seminar morale varies greatly from group to group. Since our changeover at the end of Fall Quarter, there is only one seminar group about which we really feel gravely concerned. The reason for the unhappiness expressed by this group seems to rest on the fact that they were a self-selected collection of psychologically fragile individuals who have had great difficulty getting it together as a group.

Program morale is again a pretty vague thing. It varies greatly from week to week. The faculty assessment of it varies even more greatly, and I seriously doubt the degree of correlation between the two. My own impression is that we have been through a very low spell during the middle of Winter Quarter--judging mostly from the fall-off in attendance to large group meetings. However, attendance was excellent at the faculty seminar held in the midst of the large group meeting last week, and the general feel within the group at that time was warm and supportive. We seem to have no serious immediate problem in this regard.

10. Major student concerns of the program include:

- a. lack of structure. Many of the students are still unaccustomed to the program format and would prefer to see greater direction given them by the seminar leaders.
- b. objection to the book-centered emphasis of the program. The major concern of many is the lack of an experiential basis upon which to conduct the academic effort. They feel they have spent two-thirds of their lives with their noses in books and that the time has come for them to travel, to see, hear, smell, and react with other human beings. The prospect of spending further weeks together rapping about books does not appeal to them. We are fortunate that the program design called for concentration on project work during Spring Quarter.
- c. concrete objectives. Several complaints have been heard concerning the vagueness of the overall objective of the program. They would like to see a tighter focus and a direction in which progress could be more easily measured.
- d. superficiality. Frequent references are made to the fact that they never seem to really "get into" the books. Some of the discussions are extremely stimulating, but they feel a lack of "solid content." The dearth of collateral written work and outside input into the subject matter of the book is frequently deplored. Then, too, the necessity of moving on to another book before a particularly meaty one has been adequately dealt with is occasionally objected to. It is felt that some of the books cannot possibly be dealt with satisfactorily in the time allotted, and, at such times, the whole program schedule becomes burdensome.
- e. The choice of books is also occasionally a matter for concern. They wish they were more free to concentrate on the books which have attracted them personally. However, on the whole, we have been remarkably free of this complaint.
- f. There is a small group of students who are concerned about teacher certification. They feel uneasy that there is very little definite information available to them on this topic.

11. Perhaps our most notable flop was the human relations workshop referenced above. We had anticipated bringing in a consultant-facilitator for an entire week, but finally decided to settle for seven graduate students coming in for one day. This did not really give them time enough to have much effect on the formation of the new groups. Perhaps the original plan would have worked out better. Some of the book seminars and some of the special interest seminars can be said to have worked exceptionally well. The reason has usually been a happy combination of faculty member and particular group temper. If anything, it seems that it may require more than the regular three month quarter to get a book seminar group really into gear on successful seminar procedure. At least, we have come up with several indications that the initial stages are slow, laborious, and fairly agonizing. We had hoped that the second term would have allowed us to shortcut some of these development pains, but such has been the case to only a limited degree. This raises some basic questions about the viability of the entire book seminar format.

Some of the individual projects have also been working exceptionally well. In several instances the students have come up with internships which have completely turned them on with a brand new attitude towards education in general. Such cases seem to depend upon a rare combination of individual characteristics, job description, and sympathetic faculty sponsor.

12. This question has got to be a put on. In no way could the total program be declared "a cohesive, coherent and progressive teaching-learning-working experience." Our faculty team is of at least two minds (and probably several more) as to what needs to be done to improve the situation. One group feels that more structure and direction is needed for the benefit of the students. The other school feels that less structure and direction would turn the trick. Our goals turn out to be very similar (i.e., a strongly self-motivated, creative, imaginative, dedicated, industrious, warm, and supportive human being who spends a great deal of his time in the process of learning), but the means of attaining this goal remain in doubt. The basic arguments seem to run like this: "Every time we make an assignment or in any other way apply an external motivating factor, to that degree we deny the student the privilege of coping with his own freedom and to that degree we fail in our overall effort." On the other hand, it is held with equal vigor that "The student coming right out of high school simply does not have the necessary background and know-how to put together a successfully working seminar situation. It therefore become incumbent upon the faculty member to analyze questions, clarify issues, and outline alternative lines of action--while carefully leaving final decisions up to the students." Actual practice by individual faculty falls somewhere between these two extremes with no one attaining either pure permissiveness nor pure authoritarian stance. The single greatest need which I feel for the program is for greater time to be spent together by the faculty team. We have all felt this lack, but have simply been unable to come up with a solution to it. During the second term we have been more jealous of our own needs in terms of preparation time and just plain freedom from the eternal demands made by needy students upon anyone available. We are therefore counting on spending more time together in order to focus not only upon our own group interrelationships, but also upon addressing ourselves more seriously to helping one another progress in this peculiarly fascinating and continually frustrating game which we all know teaching to be.

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March, 1972