



Read in this issue:

- **Confessions of a Tenuous Track Professor**
- **Seasons Greetings! Modest Gift ideas and Many more Goodies**

Confessions of a Tenuous Track Professor

As one of many “hidden academics” at York University, I _____ confess to the following academic crimes and misdemeanors:

Whereas "The principal criterion for appointment to positions at York University is academic and professional excellence" (<http://www.yorku.ca/acadjobs/index.htm>),

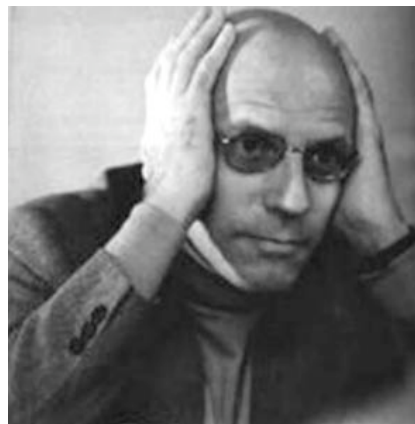
I CONFESS that I have committed various acts of excellence in teaching, research and service including, but not limited to:

1. designing and delivering eight undergraduate courses in my chosen field
2. designing and leading three graduate seminar courses in my chosen field
3. being awarded a competitive, peer-reviewed 3-year SSHRC standard research grant for my program of research
4. researching, writing and publishing several book chapters in edited books and scholarly articles in established national and new international peer-reviewed scholarly journals
5. regularly writing and presenting papers at national and international conferences.
6. assisting with the management and promotion of a scholarly journal

I CONFESS that having an Associate-Professor level record of performance in teaching, research and service has given me an

unjustified, inflated, and selfish sense of entitlement to a full-time, tenure-track position that is commensurate with my qualifications.

Whereas to go further than the sanitized academic discourse means not only living up to the “vocation of intellectuals” (Said 1994) and the “scholarship of commitment” (Bourdieu 2003),



I CONFESS, that as an unemployed, unembedded “machinic intellectual” (Bratich 2007), I have claimed the academic freedom that I recklessly believe ought to be granted by the modern university. Moreover, by filing a grievance in response to anti-affirmative action taken against my conversion application, I have also invoked the “freedom of speech, which so much discussed during and after May 1968, is always freedom from the speech of others, or rather control of their silence...” (Bourdieu 1988:192).

I CONFESS that I have spoken to a former student of mine who is now working for a local newspaper, and she has propagated, with my consent, my personal story and troubles as public news and

opinion in such a way as to make visible the cheap teaching conditions and contingent inequity that constitutes the higher learning environment of many post-secondary students.

In humble recognition that the University of Expediency must be the foundation of the University of Excellence, I PLEAD GUILTY to these academic crimes and misdemeanors, not for reason of any defect of my general intellect, but due to the extenuating circumstances of academic precarity.

To atone for my deviance by referencing Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Life* allusion to the masked philosopher Michel Foucault (1979), any struggle within the neoliberal university to prevent one's assets from being turned into liabilities and one's abilities into disabilities must be disciplined and punished as it pleases the docile faculty body this 44th day of the 2008 strike.

References

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 Bratich, J. (2007). Fragments on machinic intellectuals. In S. Shukaitis, D. Graeber & E. Biddle (Eds.), *Constituent imagination: Militant investigations, collective theorization* (pp. 137-154). Oakland, CA: AK Press.
 Bourdieu, P. (2003). *Firing back: Against the tyranny of the market 2*. New York: New Press.
 Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books
 Rajagopal, I. (2002). *Hidden Academics: Contract Faculty in Canadian Universities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Seasons Greetings! Modest Gift Ideas and Many More Goodies

Feeling bored from lack of activity? Missing the picket line? Or just looking for the perfect gift to reward the Employer's hard working Bargaining Team, the great uninterested contribution of the York BOG and the York Foundation? Don't worry! We have a list of fantastic goodies JUST for you!!

Introducing York Is Us New YIU50 Licensed Merchandise

Just in time for the coming holiday shopping season!

What's the occasion? Are you looking for a special holiday present for a shut out undergraduate student, or a strikebreaking faculty member from Osgoode Law School, the Schulich School of Business or Nursing? Perhaps you have a current graduate student in mind whose research or teaching support funding has been cut, or perhaps, you are thinking of special something to say thank you to your unit 2 colleagues?

To help you with your shopping, York Is Us is now offering an exclusive sneak preview of its YIU50 signature products. If you order our featured YIU50 merchandise by Dec. 18, your order will be shipped to you just in time for the holidays. More products will be added in January in preparation for our university's official birthday on March 26, 2009. So, stay tuned!

Featured products:

1. Cuff links

There are two designs for the cufflink connoisseurs in your life. Add a little striking flair to your shirts with one of our special York Is Us images. Choose from "No Ratification" (pictured here) in white on a red background or "York Works Because We Do" in white on a grey background." Handmade in Toronto. Price: **TBA**



2. Clothing

York Is Us has created its own signature TTP (Tenuous Track Professor) and TTP In Waiting collection. The line is design-oriented, strike-friendly and affordable. The aim is to offer a stylish line of picket-necessary items such as scarves, mittens, long johns, underwear, thermal vests and hats. Items priced individually.



3. Boxed set Striking Videos

This brilliant edition comes with a DVD compilation of 8 of your favourite award winning Video Strike Committee YouTube postings. In addition to the DVD, the set includes exquisite print reproductions of 5 handpicked Unit 2 curriculum vitae, as well as the complete text of York Federation of Students' "Solutions to end the York University

Strike: 50,000 students more important than 50th Anniversary." (Available at http://www.yfs.ca/?section_id=194&content_id=358)

The 8 Award Winning videos include:

- 1) A Letter to President Sohukri
- 2) HAPPY BIRTHDAY YORK!
- 3) Strike Puppet Show: A Modest Proposal
- 4) Canadian Federation of Students Support - Thursday Dec 4th (Part 1/2)
- 5) CUPE 3903 Thriller
- 6) York U - Where Did Our Love Go?
- 7) CUPE 3903 AD 1 - Press
- 8) CUPE 3903 AD 8 - Podium



above: CUPE 3903 AD 1- Press

The Video Strike Committee is a sub-committee of the CUPE 3903 Communications Committee. New members, new videos always welcome! Contact them directly at cupestrikevideo@gmail.com. All videos included in this boxed set and many, many more are available at Cupe 3903 Strike Video: Live and Direct from the Front Lines! <http://cupestrikevideo.wordpress.com/> Price \$24.99. Set + bonus DVD with complete CUPE3903 Ads 1—8 \$10 extra.



above: CUPE 3903AD 8—Podium

A Reading List

Côté, J. E., & Allahar, A. L. (2007). *Ivory Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ephemer, University, Failed: <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/index.htm>

Iacobucci, F., & Tuohy, C. J. (2005). *Taking Public Universities Seriously*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Jones, G. A., McCarney, P. L., & Skolnik, M. L. (2005). *Creating Knowledge, Strengthening*

Nations: The Changing Role of Higher Education. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

Mathur, A. Towards a Post-Colonial University; the anti-racism revolution <http://www.eciad.bc.ca/~amathur/postcolonial-uni.pdf>.

Mathur, A. & R. Wong (2004) *Employing Equity in Post-Secondary Art Institutes*. Fuse Magazine, vol 30, #2.

Nelson, C. (2004). *Office Hours: Activism and Change in Academy*. New York : Routledge.

New Formations, Intellectual Work <http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/newformations/archiv/e/editorial53.html>

Rajagopal, I. (2002). *Hidden academics: Contract faculty in Canadian universities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Readings, B. (1996). *The university in ruins*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tudiver, N., & Canadian Association of University Teachers. (1999). *Universities for sale: Resisting corporate control over Canadian higher education*. Toronto: J. Lorimer.

YorkisUs Singalong

It's been a few days now and, aside from a generic letter hinting to some vague "frustration" generated by the strike, our beloved President, Dr. Mamdouh Shoukri, has not graced us with his presence. As Christmas is coming, let's dedicate him some heartwarming tunes, which will certainly cheer him up and will prepare him to join his admirers and followers.

I'm Dreaming of a Just Workplace

(to the tune of I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas)
 I'm dreaming of a just workplace
 Where every worker's organized
 Where the law protects us
 The boss respects us
 And no jobs have been downsized
 I'm dreaming of a just workplace
 Where every worker gets their share
 Where the company's profits
 Will reach our pockets
 And we're all treated fair and square
 I'm dreaming of a just workplace

Where we don't bow to corporate greed
 Where teachers are earning
 And students are learning
 And workers rights are guaranteed.

Jingle Bells

Dashing through the halls
 Of a corporate institution
 Making students pay
 York's laughing all the way (ha ha ha)
 No need for bargaining
 To make their spirits bright
 What fun it is to laugh and sing
 While ignoring CUPE's plight
 Ignore CUPE, ignore CUPE

Ignore them all the way
 O what fun it is to run
 A corporate institution

Jingle Bells (Version 2)

We're asking for better pay
 For funding and job security
 And on strike we'll stay
 We're the future of this university
 We want this strike to end
 Our demands are fair and just
 To our students we want to tend
 Bargaining is a must
 Bargain now, bargain now
 Bargaining's the only way
 We'll stay strong until we win
 On that you can depend.

Help Us Send a Special Gift to Our Favourite YUFA Colleagues

We request your assistance in showing our special appreciation to 154 YUFA members who signed the petition below to Professor Hilliker, President of York University Faculty Association. To see the full list of the petition's signees and find out how you can send them your own special gift certificate, please visit <http://yorkisus.org/research/yufa-anti-cupe.html>

We, the undersigned members of YUFA, oppose the efforts of the YUFA Ad Hoc CUPE Support & Communications Committee to support the CUPE strike. We believe that the efforts of this committee are counterproductive and that they will prolong the strike. Pressure needs to be brought to bear on CUPE, not just on the administration, to bargain responsibly. We cannot support a method of bargaining based on unrealistic demands. Supporting it is a disservice to the tens of thousands of students whose studies have been disrupted by the strike. We call on YUFA to return to its stance of dignified neutrality of the first few weeks of the strike and to cease providing financial support to CUPE.

A Gift from York Is Us
In Recognition of Your Dignified Neutrality



Your Gift If you are a **Full Professor** 🍷 You get to teach four 6-credit courses and earn half of your current salary **AND** you get to apply for your job every year **AND** you get a shared office in a broom closet.

If you are an **Associate Professor** 🍷 You get to teach two 6-credit courses and earn one-third of your current salary **AND** you get to apply for your job every year **AND** you get a shared office in a broom closet.

If you are an **Assistant Professor** 🍷 You get two tutorial assignments and earn one-tenth of your current salary **AND** you get to work unpaid overtime **AND** you get to pay full tuition.

Special to ex-CUPE members converted to YUFA 🍷 In addition to the above, you get to develop two new courses that your YUFA colleagues will take over as soon as the courses are established **AND** you get to grieve twice and be asked to settle for less than you are entitled to **AND** you get to see your conversion file shredded.

🍷 To redeem your gift, simply present this certificate to any Tenuous Track Professor or Tenuous Track Professor in Training at the Main Gate Picket.

🍷 In addition to the above, this certificate also entitles you to: Unpaid prep time for courses that change every year **AND** finding out in mid-August what courses you teach in September.

York Is Us endeavours to redefine York University's identity for the university community and the outside world.

We accept submissions of texts, graphics and ideas for inclusion in XFiles and on our website. Visit us on the internet or find us on the picket lines. We're with you all the way.

This issue of XFile archived at http://yorkisus.org/xfile/pdf/XFile6_22dec2008.pdf
Be our friend on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1631242187>

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