

PETER F DRUCKER

19 Bayberry Street
Bronxville, N.Y.

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Miss Marjorie Beebe
Bennington College
Bennington, Vermont

Dear Miss Beebe,

thank you for your letter of June 3rd regarding my next year's courses. On the whole I am in full agreement with the way they have been written up. I have only minor queries.

As to my course in POLITICAL ECONOMY (page 3/4) your description presents precisely what I have in mind. My only suggestion would be to correct the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 4 where you describe the texts to be used. As it is the only examples you give are in the field of political and social theory whereas the course is to be as much concerned with factual knowledge as with ideas. I would suggest that this sentence be rewritten to read: "..... and will range from factual material on the organisation of the banking system to Turner's The Frontier in American History, from Plato and the Federalist Papers to the decisions of Mr. Justice Frankfurter in the Supreme Court".

As regards my course in AMERICAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY (page 7) I fully agree with the way you put the course. But I do not quite understand for whom this course is to be intended. The division in which you put it is headed: Basic Courses: Junior Division. Apparently there is a difference in the courses I to VIXI which have no prerequisites, and the courses XI to XIII which have prerequisites. But both groups are in the same category; and from the heading I would infer that they are intended for Freshmen and Sophomores.

As I visualised the course it was not to be open to Freshmen or Sophomores - except to an exceptional Sophomore now and then. I saw it exclusively as a course for Juniors or Seniors who had at least one year, preferably two years of Social Science before they joined the course.

Of course, this is entirely outside my jurisdiction but as I saw the course, it was to be required, or at least strongly recommended for majors in Politics, History, perhaps even Economics - though there it might be better for the student to take Mr. Mendershausen's two courses which give much more and give it more thoroughly.

This does not mean that I see this course as a specialising course. My hope is that it will attract students who intend to major in another field but who like to get a more than superficial knowledge of the Social Sciences. It is meant as one possible basis for specialisation but as useful beyond and outside of that. But certainly it is not meant as a beginners' course. I personally would advise any Sophomore who has taken III or IV in her Freshman year to take one more general course in the field before taking X. I would only make an exception for a Sophomore who either has time over although she takes one of the general courses, or who works at the same time with Mr. McCamy, Mr. Brockway or Mr. Mendershausen. I do not believe in too much specialisation in the second year anyhow - though I expect students to choose their major subjects by the end of the Sophomore year.

Probably this question of mine is based only on a misunderstanding of your terms. But I thought it advisable to clarify what I had in mind lest there be a misunderstanding.

As far as I am concerned things are therefore more or less settled. But I have one question after reading the list of courses. It is not my business - except indirectly - to raise it. And I certainly do not arrogate to myself the right to question the decisions of the Educational Policy Committee. But I am rather perturbed by the pointed omission of History - both American and European - from the Curriculum. True, there are a great many courses which touch upon it and which deal with phases and facets. But there is no central course in history at all.

The result of this will be that all of us in the Social Sciences will spend a great deal of our time teaching elementary historical facts. This is as it should be in Basic Courses III and IV; but it will make work rather difficult in Basic Course X, and in the courses 2, 3 and 4 in GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMICS. As for my Basic Course X, I had it designed as an intermediary course for economics, politics and history students; and I was hoping that all members of this course would have had a basic course in American history. Certainly you cannot focus on several institutions and develop them historically unless your students have at least some general idea of the Civil War or of the Populist Movement. Is it entirely impossible to do something about it?

I feel rather badly about our tardiness in deciding on the McCullough house since I appreciate Mrs. McCullough's kindness very much. We are very interested in the house. Indeed I would have decided to try to get it when I was up in Bennington last month but for my policy to leave such decisions to my wife. Mrs. Drucker, unfortunately, is just now tied to the house - the usual maid problem. As soon as she can free herself which should certainly be before July 1st, she intends to come up to Bennington and look around. Of course I cannot hold Mrs. McCullough to keeping the house for us till then - especially as she never in any way offered it to us officially. But I would appreciate it greatly if Mrs. McCullough could wait if by doing so she does not give up a chance to rent the house elsewhere. Under no circumstances would I want the McCulloughs to inconvenience themselves to suit our convenience. Will you be good enough to explain the situation to her. As you know I am spending most of my time in Washington these days; I am therefore very bad at administrative duties which I must leave entirely to my wife. And she can't move just now.

Sincerely yours



Peter F. Drucker