

Tutorials: The Essence of A Bennington Education

In many ways the essence of a Bennington education can be seen in the tutorial system. Tutorials carry course credit, meet at regularly scheduled times and in other ways resemble familiar course arrangements. The differences, however, outweigh the similarities.

Traces of the tutorial system can be seen in the Socratic method practiced by ancient Greek philosophers, in the apprentice system of the Middle Ages, and in the practices of the earliest European universities where teachers were paid directly by their students. Tutorials at Bennington grew out of one of the College's founding philosophies that "the idea and the desire for a course must come from the student."

Because tutorials are scheduled by private arrangement with faculty members, they are not listed in the catalogue as regularly scheduled courses. And, although only juniors and seniors are generally advanced enough to take tutorials, all students can expect that by the time they graduate, between one quarter and one half of all their credits will be through tutorials. Indeed, of the 262 courses offered in the fall 1986 semester, 65 were conducted as tutorials.

It is not unusual, however, for an enterprising sophomore to schedule tutorials. Sophomore Geoff Bender is currently taking a tutorial in Homeric Greek with literature professor Claude Fredericks, who granted permission after Bender took beginning Greek at Harvard's University Extension Program over the summer. The rule of thumb is that once you have established to the satisfaction of a faculty member that you are capable of disciplined and advanced work, tutorials are possible and to many Bennington students, indispensable.

Tutorials can either be arranged by a group of students with similar interests, or as is more often the case, by individual students. Because freshman and sophomore level courses are generally conducted in a seminar format, most students by their junior year have the necessary confidence and skill to

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Biologist John Fahey and Nafsika Kronidou '86

A Sampling Of Tutorials: Fall 1986

LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES

The Poems and Plays of W.B. Yeats
Expatriots and the Modernist Movement
Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf
The Spanish American Short Novel
Germany in the 1920s
Tutorials in Fiction Writing,
Playwriting, the Essay, and Verse
Writing
Chinese

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Teaching Dance to Children
Video Editing
Metalworking
Shakespeare for the Actor
Concert Piano in the 20th Century
Tutorials in Double Bass, Improvisation, Composition, Flute, Cello, Clarinet, Voice, Saxophone, Trombone, etc.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Astrophysics
Selected Topics in Data Acquisition
Methods of Mathematical Physics
Physiological Ecology of Animals
Differential Equations
Classical Dynamics
Classical Mechanics

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Studies in Urban History
Readings in Ethnomedicine
Logic
History of Economic Analysis
Political Economy of Health
Communities and the State
Visual Anthropology
John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx
Political Economy of US-Latin
American Relations
Experimental Psychology

Ninth President To Take Office

On July 1, 1987 Dr. Elizabeth Coleman will take office as the ninth president of Bennington College, succeeding Dr. Michael Hooker, now Chancellor of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Dr. Coleman, 49, comes to Bennington from The New School for Social Research where she has taught since 1965. Currently a professor of literature, Dr. Coleman was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1978 to 1984.

Born in New York City, Dr. Coleman holds a B.A. in philosophy and literature from the University of Chicago, a M.A. in English and American literature from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in English and comparative literature from Columbia University. Her academic specialties include Henry James and Shakespeare.

In a recent interview with a student, Dr. Coleman shared her thoughts on both Bennington and education.

"I think people can be divided into two groups. There are those who love that moment of discovery, when, in casual conversation, or listening to a lecture, or reading a book, one says, 'Yes, that's true! I never thought of it that way before!' There are those who hunger for this moment and those who avoid it. My sense of the College is that it is a place where the goal is to encourage that hunger and to satisfy it."

Dr. Coleman is married to Dr. Aaron Coleman, a psychotherapist, and has two sons, Daniel, 19, attending the University of Chicago and David, 16, in high school.

Tutorials (cont.)

engage faculty on a level usually reserved for graduate level work. Tutorials done in the junior year also serve to prepare students for the kind of independent and sustained thought necessary to fulfill the senior thesis or project requirement.

Made possible by the extraordinarily low student faculty ratio, nine to one, tutorials provide the Bennington student with thorough and individualized coverage of course material. The combination of tutorials and course offerings also provides for a wide range of studies normally unavailable at a small college. As a result, students are able to specialize beyond the limits of the published curriculum.



Kim Pitt-Foster

Kelly Clark '89 and Dr. Coleman enjoy a light moment.

ERA and SDI Debated

by Tobey Diller '89

The theory behind Bennington's lectures and seminars is "to help students deal with the unknown," says Gail Russell, a political science professor at the College. Through a weekly stream of guest speakers the community is confronted with political, scientific and world affairs.

One of the most fascinating lecture series of the fall semester covered the Vermont Equal Rights Amendment, defeated by a narrow margin in the November 4th election. Eleanor Smeal, President of the National Organization for Women and Elaine Donnelly, a representative of the Eagle Forum, presented the case for and against the proposal, respectively. While their presentations reflected political vantage points, the legal issues of the amendment were debated by Jonathan Chase, Dean of the Vermont Law School, and William O'Brien, an attorney from Burlington. The entire series not only enriched the Bennington community, but directly presented students with thorough arguments for both sides of the issue.

The Strategic Defense Initiative, another controversial issue, was discussed during the fall semester. In a lecture sponsored by the Science Division, Dr. Robert Bowman, a retired Air Force Lieutenant-Colonel, contended that the program is primarily offensive rather than defensive. His lecture was followed by a lengthy discussion of nuclear policy.

One of the more unusual and entertaining lectures of the fall was given by Dr. Robert Thompson, professor of art history at Yale University. Entitled, "Indelibly Black: Kongo Influence on American Civilization," the lecture was accompanied by beating drums and, due to a chance power outage, flickering lights.

In addition to these local, national and world issues, other lectures of the fall included "Science and Christianity" given by Dr. Bryce Babcock and Dr. William Wooters, both physics professors at Williams College, and "Dilemmas of U.S. Policy in the Middle East," delivered by Henry Precht, Diplomat in Residence at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University.

More Jobs Than Ever

Field Work Term, 1987, features over 1300 positions from which students may choose to fulfill their annual field work requirement. Of this total, 710, a record number, are paid positions, according to Nola White, Director of the Placement Office.

Numerous fields are represented, many of them directly related to the programs of the College. Although students are not required to do an internship related to their major, many do, finding the experience not only complements their course work, but also provides the savvy and contacts necessary for getting a job upon graduation.

A Sampling Of Positions For FWT, 1987

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Fred Nathan Company, New York
Ruder, Finn & Rotman, Chicago
Attisno Levine, Inc., New York
Cameron Mackintosh, Limited, New York

LAW, GOVERNMENT AND LOBBY GROUPS

Spengler, Carlson, Gubar & Frischling,
New York
Public Defender Service, Washington,
DC
Bread for the World, Washington, DC
Food and Drug Administration,
Washington, DC
Kicking Horse Job Corps Center,
Ronan, MT
International Trade Administration,
Washington, DC
US Congressman Gilman,
Washington, DC
Union of Concerned Scientists,
Washington, DC
Common Cause, Washington, DC

EDUCATION

Princeton University Library
Yale University Psychology Department
Horace Mann School for Nursery
Years, New York
Edmund Burke School, Washington,
DC
Shipley School, Bryn Mawr, PA
Early Childhood Center, Bennington
College

COMMUNICATIONS/ PERFORMING ARTS

Voice of America, Washington, DC
Denver Magazine
Actor's Studio, New York
Anthology Film Archives, New York
Fortune Magazine, New York
MacNeil, Lehrer Newshour, New York
Philadelphia Inquirer
Alvin Ailey American Dance Center,
New York
Dance Theatre Workshop, New York
Fox Television, WNYC Channel 5,
New York
Poetry Magazine, Chicago

FINE ARTS

Benjamin Thompson & Associates (Ar-
chitecture) Cambridge, MA
Arquitectonica (Architecture), Coral
Gables, FL
Christies, New York
Getty Center for the History of Art and
the Humanities, Santa Monica, CA
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Sotheby's, New York
Whitney Museum of American Art,
New York

The Decatur Studio (Photography),
New Orleans, LA
American Numismatic Society, New
York

SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND TECHNOLOGY

Tufts University School of Medicine,
Boston
Columbia University College of Physi-
cians and Surgeons, New York
Johns Hopkins School of Public
Health, Baltimore
Frontier Nursing Service, Kentucky
Audobon Naturalist Society, Chevy
Chase, MD
New York Botanical Garden
Appalachian Mountain Club,
Gorham, NH
Avitar (high tech firm), Canton, MA
Maria Mitchell Observatory, Nan-
tucket, MA
Mt. Sinai Medical Center, New York
Massachusetts General Hospital,
Boston
Bermuda Biological Station for
Research
Ebenezer Animal Clinic, Rock Hill, SC



Ralph Alswang

"Midnight Breakfast," a traditional respite from the rigors of the final week of classes.

International Students at Bennington

International students comprise a significant portion (9 percent) of the student body at Bennington. In addition to the usual reasons of quality and accessibility for attending an American college, international students are attracted to Bennington for other, more specific reasons.

Pedro Mendez, a senior from Mexico, was struck by Bennington's understanding of both his background and his ambitions. Echoing Mendez, senior David Burgess from England, felt that when he entered as a freshman, "Bennington knew exactly what I was about." Other reasons for choosing Bennington noted by international students include the flexible curriculum, small class size and the field work opportunities.

These reasons, however, do not differ greatly from those expressed by American students. The difference, it seems, lies in the sacrifice international students often make to attend Bennington. David Burgess turned down a free university education and a \$140 per month stipend in his native England where only three percent of the college age population attends college. "Bennington," he says, "gave me the chance to start over, to develop a new focus."

The chance to start over at Bennington also appealed to Lili Liang, a 39-year old sophomore from the People's Republic of China. She had to wait three years after her acceptance, however, for sufficient funding to be secured. Liang left behind her ten-year old daughter, a brand new apartment and a secure job as a reporter and critic

for *The China Daily*, China's only English daily. While attending Bennington full-time, Liang continues to support her daughter through part-time work.

If international students have sometimes made difficult decisions to leave home, they do not normally experience difficulty adjusting to Bennington. Zaraawar Mistry, a junior drama and political science major from India, observed, "I am special enough to be different, but not so special that I am an outsider." Tom Schwerk, a junior physics major, is a German citizen, was born in India, and grew up in Kenya. "Sometimes," he says, "American students have a hard time appreciating my patchwork background, but I still spend more time with them than with other international students." Pedro Mendez

remembers that he was able to form friendships rather quickly as a freshman and that "almost automatically, I became a part of the community."

Facilitating such rapid acceptance into the Bennington community is the interest many American students take in the various cultures represented by international students. Philip Loh, from Ghana, has found that cultural differences often provide a link, rather than a barrier, to other students who come to him with questions about African art, music and literature. This interest combined with the small class size, creates what Loh calls "a brother/sister atmosphere" at the College. "Bennington," he concludes, "allows me to retain my cultural identity without facing the stigma of being a foreign student."



Ralph Alswang

Zaraawar Mistry
from Secunderabad, India



Pedro Mendez
from Chiapas, Mexico

Student Participates in Televised International Debate

by Hannah Tulley '88

Bennington student Scott Morrison '88 participated in an international debate in September that took place in Montreal, Canada, and was organized by independent television producer Larry Shapiro through the McGill University Debating Union.

Shapiro contacted social science faculty member Andy Pienkos and asked him to suggest a student who could debate a team of Europeans on an issue of international importance. Pienkos recommended Morrison, a junior majoring in economics and politics. Although school was not in session when the arrangements were made, Morrison, a house chairperson, was on campus early and accepted the invitation.

The debate, called DIALOGUE, was actually a series of 13 debates, and each debate was judged by a separate

panel of three celebrity judges. Twenty-six two-member teams participated, 13 from North America and 13 from Europe. The participants were all graduate and undergraduate students, most of whom were seasoned debaters.

"But not me," said Morrison. "This was my first experience with public speaking." For his match, Morrison and his teammate, a social science student at Concordia University in Montreal, debated two students from Denmark on the resolution that Western democracies should impose strict economic sanctions on South Africa. The North American team argued against the resolution.

Although his team lost the debate by a vote of two to one, Morrison said, "it was more of an intellectual/educational exercise than a contest. The most interesting part of the whole thing was meeting people from other countries and discovering their views on U.S. policies and their idea of the role of Europe in world politics."

DIALOGUE was filmed for public television and will be broadcast across North America and Europe this year.



Kim Pitt-Foster

Debater Scott Morrison '88

Faculty Notes

JOEL CHADABE (electronic music) released an album entitled "Settings for Spirituals" in the fall. Starting with a recording of Irene Oliver singing spirituals such as "A City Called Heaven," Chadabe sought to intensify their expression without changing them. According to *The Christian Science Monitor*, he has "largely succeeded."

KERRY WOODS (ecology and botany) continues to work as part of a research team of scientists at NASA looking at the usefulness of satellite remote sensing for determining the biomass of the earth and the environmental effects of deforestation.

Visiting faculty member, EDWARD HOAGLAND (literature) published two books in 1986: *Seven Rivers West*, a novel, and *City Tales*, a collection of

short stories. An excerpt from *Seven Rivers West* appeared in the September issue of *Esquire* magazine. Celebrated for his essays on a wide range of topics, Hoagland has been called "one of the best writers of his generation" by Saul Bellow. John Leonard, cultural critic for *The New York Times*, once remarked that Hoagland could make him read about subjects in which he was completely uninterested.

SIDNEY TILLIM (visual arts) recently published two essays in *Art in America* magazine: "High Styles at the Whitney" and "Abstract Art Revisited." Tillim also showed his paintings from almost four decades of work at the College's Usdan Gallery in October.

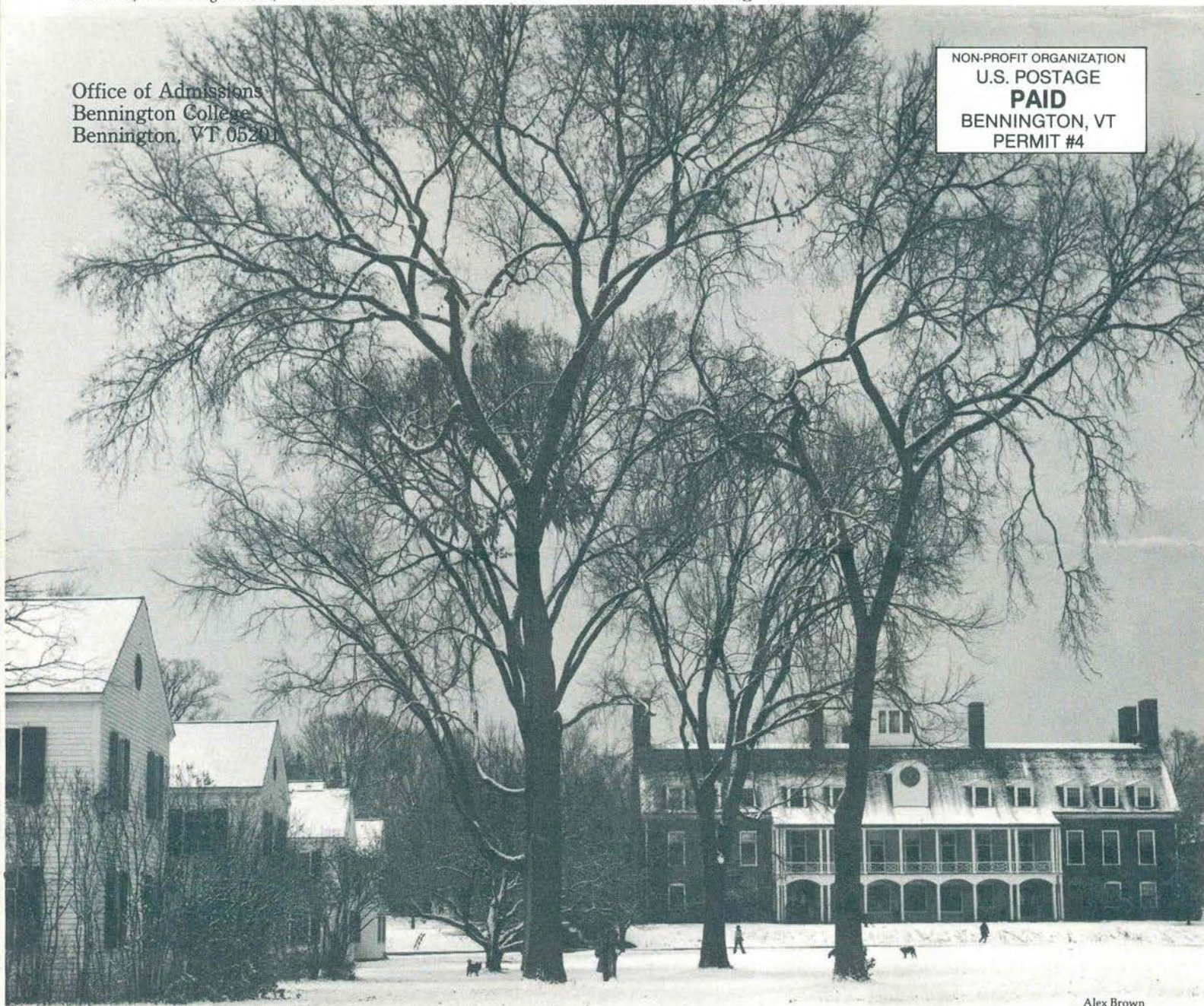
PAUL MATTICK (philosophy) recently read papers at the 6th International Conference on Culture and Communications and at the annual meeting of

the Philosophy of Science Association. LEE TRIBE (visual arts) exhibited welded steel sculptures at the Victoria Munroe Gallery in New York City last November. A review in *The New York Times* observed, "What makes (Tribe's) efforts worth following is his special feeling for steel and welding. However obvious his sources, he can draw in space with so much gestural facility that the steel lines almost seem part of the body."

THOMAS REITZ (chemistry) was a co-author of a paper published in the October 1986 issue of *The Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*. The paper was titled "Binding Requirements of Phenolic Phenylethylamine in the Benzonorbornene Skeleton at the Active Site of Phenylethanolamine N-Methyltransferase."

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