

*"It is an affront to treat falsehood with complacency."* Thomas Paine

# CAMPUS REPORT

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## LOSING GROUND TO MOOCs

*By: Malcolm A. Kline*

Academia is fighting Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, and losing.

**A**cademia is fighting Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, and losing. "Large state universities that adopt MOOCs that have been developed externally will most likely produce substantial, additional revenue from offering the MOOCs to student populations well beyond their currently substantial enrollments," Martin Kich writes on the Academe blog maintained by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). "In fact, in most instances, those new revenue streams should be substantial enough to offset some losses in their conventional enrollment due to some erosion in their prestige caused by their offering the MOOCs."

"In sum, their size will ensure that they have the technical resources and the name recognition and reach to profit from MOOCs, as well as broad enough curricular offerings to absorb an erosion in the rankings of some of their programs." Kich teaches English at Wright State University in Celina, Ohio.

"In pointed contrast, smaller colleges and universities, both public and private, will be damaged fiscally by the spread of MOOCs, regardless of whether or not they try to adopt them," Kich claims. "Most will have neither the technical resources nor the reputational reach to make their own adoption of MOOCs feasible."

"And even if their adoption of MOOCs is feasible, it will be very damaging to their prospects since most of these institutions attract students by emphasizing the elements of their physical settings, their histories and cultural milieus, their faculties, instructional innovations, and curricular offerings, and/or the opportunities for extracurricular personal development that make them atypical, if not unique."

Kich has also run photos of train wrecks in a photo essay entitled "Visual metaphor for MOOCs."

"Mitchell Duneier once was a MOOC star," Marc Parry reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education. "But today he's more like a conscientious objector."

"Worried that the massive open online courses might lead legislators to cut state-university budgets, the

*continued on page 3*

# Director's Corner

By Malcolm A. Kline, Executive Director of AIA



October 2013

Dear Reader,

As you can see from the newsletter that you are holding in your hand, or viewing on your computer screen, we are devoting about half of this issue to a trend that is becoming a preoccupation of ours—Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs. They are poised to do for colleges and universities what the internet did for newspapers—end them when they don't mend them.

Because Accuracy in Academia has always prided itself on being cutting edge, like its big sister organization Accuracy in Media, we are in the preparatory stages of jumping into the Brave New World of MOOCs. With AIM, we are developing a course on media bias.

Additionally, AIM and AIA are creating courses on:

- *Voodoo Anyone? How to Understand Economics Without Really Trying*, AIA's textbook. Author M. Stanton Evans, who still serves as a professor at Troy University, has agreed to teach this course.
- The History of Communism. Heritage Foundation senior fellow Lee Edwards, who is the founder of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, has expressed an interest in teaching this course.

Edwards also spoke to a packed crowd at AIA's special Constitution Day author's night at the Heritage Foundation, along with Peter Knickerbocker, project manager for We Read The Constitution. We are currently scheduling another author's night for November that will feature my predecessor at AIA, Dan Flynn, who will talk about his latest book, *The War on Football: Saving America's Game*.

All the best,

Mal Kline,  
Executive Director

## Voodoo Anyone?

How to Understand Economics Without Really Trying



by  
**Christopher T. Warden**

Forewords by M. Stanton Evans & Malcolm A. Kline



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## CAMPUS REPORT

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Princeton University sociology professor has pulled out of the movement—at least for now.”

Last May, Steve Kolowich reported that “Professors in the philosophy department at San Jose State University are refusing to teach a philosophy course developed by edX, saying they do not want to enable what they see as a push to ‘replace professors, dismantle departments, and provide a diminished education for students in public universities.’”

“The San Jose State professors also called out Michael Sandel, the Harvard government professor who developed the course for edX, suggesting that professors who develop MOOCs are complicit in how public universities might use them.”

Can it be that MOOCs are the closest thing academia has to a free market?

### Massive Open Online Catholicism

A professor at a Catholic college claims to make “A Catholic Case Against MOOCs” in the Chronicle of Higher Education but his arguments never veer far from the secular. “Moral education, which Catholic institutions promise (and secular ones, too, should offer), relies on dialogue and physical proximity. Students, therefore need accessible mentors on the faculty as well as counselors, advisers, and chaplains,” Jonathan Malesic of King’s College in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, writes.

Yet the moral education he envisions is not one that necessarily involves the seven sacraments but does primarily include himself. “By forswearing the production and consumption of MOOCs, Catholic colleges would also show that social justice entails not replacing human labor (here, faculty) with cheaper, less effective machine labor,” he asserts.

He manages to invoke a papal encyclical to support his claims. “In his 1981 encyclical on work, *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II acknowledged that technology can aid our work, but he also warned that it can become an ‘enemy’ by displacing workers and robbing work of its rightful meaning,” Malesic writes. “The threat is that

technology will depersonalize both the work and the worker, who is, the pope argued, ‘the primary basis of the value of work.’”

“MOOCs undercut that value for academic workers.” He goes on to give somewhat misleading definitions of two Catholic principles: “If, in a few decades, the number of Catholic colleges in the United States amounts to only a handful of mega-universities, with most students taking classes online, in physical isolation from their professors and peers, then the project of Catholic higher education will have failed. Not only will it have abandoned personal and local education, but it will have elevated the market principles of competition and consolidation above the Catholic social-justice principles of solidarity (making decisions that benefit the common good) and subsidiarity (making decisions at the lowest and most local possible level).”

Of the Common Good, Pope John Paul II went on to note that it is not the “[F]eeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

On the principle of solidarity, the pope noted that, “By intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the social assistance state leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies, which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients, and which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending. In fact, it would appear that needs are best understood and satisfied by people who are closest to them and who act as neighbors to those in need.”

“This guy dresses like he’s a model out of a Gap catalog and admits strange things to the class, like not knowing the subject at hand and having no friends in high school,” one of Malesic’s students observed on Rate My Professor.com.

**Can it be that MOOCs are the closest thing academia has to a free market?**



“This guy dresses like he’s a model out of a Gap catalog and admits strange things to the class, like not knowing the subject at hand and having no friends in high school.”

Indeed, it would appear that the professor faces a very real threat of a mass exodus if MOOCs do indeed start to cover his subject matter. “He also instructs students to leave if they are not interested, then he gets angered when students do leave,” another reviewer wrote on RMP.

“He also found it rather amusing to say things behind students’ backs, such as they act like high schoolers, after telling students to leave if not interested in the subject at hand,” another reviewer wrote.

*Malcolm A. Kline is the Executive Director of Accuracy in Academia. If you would like to comment on this article, e-mail [mal.kline@academia.org](mailto:mal.kline@academia.org).*

### Good News/Bad News

The Colorado Regents added political affiliation to the university’s nondiscrimination policy, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education

But

“...since 1980, fewer than half the sociology graduates hold full-time tenured or tenure-track jobs,” according to CHE—MAK

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## LOBBYING AGAINST MOOCS

**D**istressed at the thought that Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, could do to them what the internet has done to newspaper reporters, academics are lobbying state legislators to urge them to avoid considering them for use in state universities.

Anticipating the prospect that state solons would be impressed at the prospect of delivering more knowledge at a lower cost than bricks and mortar universities do, on Academe.org, the web site maintained by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Martin Kich has posted a sample letter to a state legislator. Kich teaches at Wright State University in Ohio.

The letter claims that: “Completion rates for most MOOCs have ranged between 1% and 9%—and those numbers simply mean that that percentage of students opened all of the course modules, not that they received a passing grade for the courses.”

The remainder of the letter is a string of assertions, although the missive does contain one very revealing insight: “MOOCs will most likely be offered as substitutes for site-delivered general education or core courses. Those courses are not only the largest revenue producers for most colleges and universities, they are also the most dependable revenue producers. They support departmental offerings at the junior, senior, and graduate levels, at which enrollments are always lower. In short, they make it possible for our colleges and universities to maintain degree programs.”—**MAK**

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## MAKE WAY FOR MOOCS

*By Spencer Irvine*



**M**OOCs are courses offered online frequently for free, offering a variety of topics such as artificial intelligence, U.S. history and the like. Some prominent MOOCs are run by Coursera, which has partnerships with the State University of New York, the University of Tennessee, the University of Colorado and the University of Georgia.

Daniel Lautzenheiser’s policy brief for the American Enterprise Institute, entitled “Getting More Bang for Our College Bucks,” makes the case that higher education reform can come from MOOCs.

MOOCs can potentially save California’s struggling students: only 16% graduate within four years. Offering courses online can serve 7,000 students who are on school course waiting lists as well as cut down the cost of college tuition. San Jose State University (SJSU) partnered with Udacity to construct courses that cost \$150, which is “roughly one-third the cost of a normal credit course at SJSU.”

But, faculty members objected and SJSU+ (the MOOC program) was shut down because of poor performance.

Lautzenheiser also highlighted Georgia Tech’s new master’s in computer science offering, which is a pilot program of Udacity and AT&T employees. Instead of paying \$25,000 for an online degree, it will be around \$7,000. But the results have yet to be seen. Also, Southern New Hampshire University is testing competency-based learning through their College for America online initiative. No textbooks have to be purchased and the course is competence-based, meaning that as students progress and show they learn and apply learning to course material and assignments, they improve their skill sets and competence in the workplace. This initiative was supported by Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who encouraged this approach in higher education. College for America graduated its first five students this past August. One student was able to earn an associate’s degree in 100 days.

**Spencer Irvine** is a staff writer at *Accuracy in Academia*.

If you would like to comment on this article, e-mail [mal.kline@academia.org](mailto:mal.kline@academia.org).

# SQUEAKY CHALK

by Deborah Lambert



## TALES OF A CONSERVATIVE PhD CANDIDATE

Jason Morgan, a conservative Ph.D candidate at the U. of Wisconsin, certainly has his hands full. Not only must Morgan concentrate on an advanced level of Japanese history that demands his full attention, but he also feels compelled to disclose some of the absurdities that keep popping up as “history” when in fact they are anything but.

Among the examples from a recent post on The College Fix are the following:

“Nowhere, outside of perhaps the IRS break room, is liberalism so ostentatiously on display as in academia. Here, liberals get to spend their time engaging in their favorite debates: the ones they don’t have to have. Disagree with them? You’re a racist. Please have your essay on ‘Why Everyone Who Disagrees With Me Is A Racist’ in my dropbox by this afternoon.

“In this article,” said Morgan, he listed “the ten most memorable Liberalisms read, heard, and overheard in my lengthening career as the token pariah in three separate institutions of higher education.”

**“10. Ronald Reagan disparaged... in a book about medieval forestry. In Japan.** Remember that time Ronald Reagan, Karol Wojtyła, and Margaret Thatcher drove the most blood-soaked tyranny in world history out of the freedom-crushing business? Well, liberals don’t recall that part, but they *do* recall that the ‘ideologically couched, interest-group Cold War politics of Reaganites and residual Breshnevites seemed to be propelling humankind toward catastrophe.’ Aha, this must be a book about geopolitics in the late twentieth century.

“Well, sort of, if by ‘geopolitics’ you mean ‘forests in Japan five hundred years ago.’ After this even-handed preface to *The Green Archipelago*, environmental historian Conrad Totman spends 214 pages outlining the minutiae of forest management during the Tokugawa Shogunate, proving that no subject is too esoteric to preclude a good jab at conservatives.”

**“7. Margaret Thatcher blamed for the coarse manners of the English, and for deliberately increasing unemployment in Britain, but the book is still assigned as serious scholarship.”**

“Terry Eagleton’s *Ideology* exposes perfectly the

hypocrisy of the current leftist custodians of the academy. He gets away with saying, for example, that Margaret Thatcher converted ‘the moderately pleasant people who populated [England ...] into a thoroughly nasty bunch of callous, self-seeking oafs. Unless most of the British have become completely hideous and disgusting characters, Thatcherism has failed in its aims. [... Margaret Thatcher] deliberately foster[ed] massive unemployment[, ... and] exploited the cynicism, apathy and masochism of some of the British people.’

“A model of sober scholarship, if ever there was one, Eagleton also informs his readers that ‘a peculiarly noxious brand of Christian Evangelicalism’ has swept across the United States. Once you’ve insulted an entire class of political party members, you may as well go ahead and insult their religion, too.”

**“2. There is no objective truth... said just about every college professor ever.**gender is a social construct. (Translation: Please don’t ask me what gender is.) All truth is subjective (except this one—check!). All traditions are invented (and only we, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, have been clever enough to realize it).

“Ever wonder why enrollments are dropping in the humanities? Perhaps some of the tradition-inventing, guns-and-God-clinging rubes that the professoriate loves to insult have figured out that they can skip the two-hundred-thousand-dollar college loan and just get some guy sitting next to them on the subway to say ‘reality is whatever you want it to be.’ In the world of federally subsidized higher education debt, following your bliss is a lot more expensive than it used to be.

“But next to the wishy-washy pseudo-intellectualizing of the postmodernists, even the Marxists look like they have some semblance of a clue.”

**“1. Please do not hold Marx or Marxists responsible for Marxism.** So communism killed a hundred million or so people. Big deal! They were probably reactionary capitalist roaders—running dogs of bourgeoisie decadence—so I’m sure they had it coming, anyway.

“In ten years, who will remember all of this riff-raff?” (Sorry, that wasn’t fair. The quote is from Stalin, uttered laughingly as he signed papers condemning lists of randomly-selected people to death. Stalin was also a Marxist. But what difference does that make?). . .”

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# THE CHATTERING CLASSES

## ACADEMICALLY HAPPY MARRIAGES

“Although the outcome was a happy one, there is much to dislike about the process by which it was achieved.”—Stanford Law professor [Deborah L. Rhode](#) on the U. S. Supreme Court’s gay marriage decision.

## BUILDING ON THE BAD

“I cannot, however, teach them grammar and proofreading in the course of a semester when their high-school educations have been shoddy”—[Aaron Barlow](#), [New York City College of Technology](#), [English](#), Faculty Member

## SIMPLISTICALLY CLEVER

“‘Simplistic,’ one of those words always used by people who want to appear cleverer than they are.”—Peter Hitchens, *The American Spectator*, September 2013.

## INEQUALITY & IMMIGRATION

“We benefit from bringing low skilled workers” into the United States, Dartmouth economist Ethan Lewis claimed at the Cato Institute but admitted that “we may be raising inequality.”

## A REALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

“Republicans appear to be a scarce commodity among the attorneys who work at the Department of Education. So scarce, in fact, that there aren’t any.” —Nathanial Harden, Phi Beta Cons, NROnline.

## WHAT FREE TUITION COSTS

The European Commission “identified nine countries that do not typically charge any tuition fees for students from within the EU[European Union] – Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Malta, Norway, Scotland and Sweden.” Should we emulate this model?

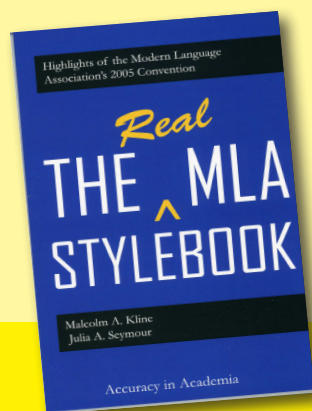
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## The REAL MLA Stylebook

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To show what college and university English Departments are really teaching, Accuracy in Academia compiled *The REAL MLA Stylebook*, filled with quotes from a recent convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA) where thousands of English professors gather to push their politically correct, radical agenda. Outsiders who attend this event expecting to learn more about Chaucer, Milton and Shakespeare are in for a rude awakening when they discover that panels are more likely to focus on topics such as “Marxism and Globalization;” “What’s the Matter with Whiteness,” and “Queering Faulkner.”

This book is must-reading for anyone interested in learning more about the mindset of faculty members who are tasked with teaching the great works of the English language to our nation’s students.



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