

A Test Not Just for the Evaluation of Your Knowledge, But a Trial of Your Ability to Tackle the Inte

If in the Midterm, you are given such questions as “Which countries have a common border with Iraq?” , “What has Napoleon to do with Egypt?” , “Who was Ashoka?” and “What is the "Ramayana"?” You will surely be mystified by these questions. Don’ t worry, check on your PC and find the answers from the Internet. In fact, these are some of the sample questions from a course “The Historical Background of Current Events” taught by Prof. Reinhard Duessel, Chair of the Department of German. The occasion was the Midterm held last Tuesday (April 19), 4:30 PM at Room B206, Business Building.

What makes it a far cry from the ordinary Midterm is that students have to do research on the Internet before they can write down a correct answer to the test questions. It may sound easy, but it is not, because it is an excruciating test on their fingers as well as their brain cells for handling the keyboard of a PC. So, when the time comes, we would see so many pairs of eyes gluing to the PC screens, as if they could blissfully get all the answers there. Unfortunately even if the answer were there, they didn’ t have enough time to jot them down.

The test was focused on two geographical areas: Middle East and South Asia.

How are students reacting to this innovative type of examination? Miss Helene Trepin, an exchange student from Lyons 3 University, France, said that since it is not a game, but an exam, she felt pressured. She had answered a little over 20 questions out of a total of 32. She said she

was doing OK. Miss Huang Ping-chia (Junior, Spanish) felt that the method of the test is “original”. Her total impression of the class is that the professor is dynamic and she enjoys the rapport between the teacher and the class.

How about the teacher himself? Prof. Duessel, on seeing all the answers from his students, commented that they are doing very well. Seen from the title of the course “The Historical Background of Current Events” one can tell the teacher is attempting to glean the significance of current news stories from the past events in history. In other words, by crossing the curriculum boundary, he wishes to arrive at a perspective of the modern or postmodern history from the end of cold war till the 9/11/01 terrorist attack on the World Trade Tower in NYC. He felt that thru the cutting-edge technology, a student might understand the whole world within a very short period of time; it is simply incredible. Given time, his students can perfect their skills on downloading information on the website---this they can achieve in the foreseeable future, he promised.

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