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Tamara Shepherd (Ryerson University) will discuss the tensions inherent in both studying media policy issues while also attempting to intervene as a public interest advocate in policymaking.

Alison Harvey (University of Leicester) will use the example of women in game-making to reflect on the theory and practice of feminist participatory action research, considering how academic activism is received in both the communities of practice under study as well as within formal research dissemination channels.

Andrea Zeffiro (Brock University) will use her experience as the other half of a 'two-body problem' to discuss the liberating/overwhelming process of positioning oneself outside of any official institutional affiliation or title, and of the gendered perceptions of use value while on the fringes of academia.

Mél Hogan (University of Colorado, Boulder) will draw from her design work (mat3rial.com and archinodes.com) to discuss the potential of research-creation, of putting theory into practice, and of rendering visible the traces of the creative process.

Mélanie Millette (Université du Québec à Montréal) will frame her experience in academia and the private sector as a socio-cultural hybridization to highlight the combination, tensions, and politics of practices and skills developed.

M.E. Luka (Concordia University) will discuss the synergies and frictions generated over two decades of blending professional consulting and management practices with scholarly work at the intersection of the media industry, public broadcasting, artistic practice, and cultural policy development.

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War of attrition – Asking why PhD students leave

Posted on July 17, 2013 by **Melonie Fullick**



The *Times Higher Ed* in the UK had a hit this past week, regarding the issue of doctoral supervision, with an article by Tara Brabazon titled "[10 truths a PhD supervisor will never tell you](#)". Worth noting alongside that one is a recent article by Leonard Cassuto that appeared in the USA's *Chronicle of Higher Education*, regarding [doctoral attrition](#), which has long been notoriously high (at least in the United States – an average of around 40-50 percent). Attrition rates in Canada are, as far as I know, not generally available though some numbers from eight of the "U-15" were published in [this article](#) from *Margin Notes* blog (and a longer discussion of completion rates and times to completion is [here](#)).

I mention these two issues together because for my dissertation I've been going over [the research](#) on PhD supervision and attrition, including the work of Barbara Lovitts (who's cited by Cassuto as well), [Chris Golde](#), and Susan Gardner among others. This research shows clear connections between supervision styles, departmental "climates", professionalization opportunities, "student satisfaction", and the outcomes of PhD study – including attrition.

What necessitates this research is that there are long-held misconceptions about the causes of non-completion. A key finding is that often [faculty attributions of student non-completion](#) have looked very different from either the students' understanding of their experiences (or of what other students experience), or from the reality of their reasons for leaving. Since those who leave don't generally get to tell their stories, assumptions can be made that they simply "didn't have what it takes" or that the admissions committee didn't "select" the right candidates for

About Speculative Diction

The Speculative Diction blog provides commentary and analysis on higher education policy and practice in Canada, linking them to developments overseas and also to the experiences of those working within the Canadian university system.

The blog is written by Melonie Fullick, a grad student working on her PhD at York University.

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A letter from jailed Al Jazeera reporter Abdullah Elshamy

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OPINION

The neoliberal assault on academia

The neoliberal sacking of the universities runs much deeper than tuition hikes and budget cuts, notes Barkawi.

Last Modified: 25 Apr 2013 08:30



Tarak Barkawi


Tarak Barkawi is Associate Professor in the Department of Politics, New School for Social Research.


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Pourquoi dénigrez-vous le doctorat?

11 février 2006 | Claude Chiasson | Finances personnelles

Dans l'édition du Devoir du samedi 4 février, une étudiante au doctorat nommée Julie vous demande des suggestions sur la manière de rembourser sa dette de 60 000 \$. Je lis souvent votre chronique et j'étais habitué à des réponses beaucoup plus techniques, même dans des cas plutôt catastrophiques. Je comprends que vous jugiez son niveau d'endettement très élevé, surtout si elle n'a pas de revenu. Néanmoins, vous avez consacré la presque totalité de votre réponse à critiquer sa décision de poursuivre des études doctorales. Cela n'aide en aucun cas la jeune fille qui, malgré son niveau d'endettement alarmant, prend la peine de vous écrire pour demander conseil, ce qui constitue tout de même un premier pas dans la bonne direction. Si vous aviez pris la peine de lui conseiller minimalement les actions qu'elle doit faire pour s'en sortir, vous l'auriez non seulement aidée elle, mais vous auriez aussi éclairé certains étudiants dans la même situation (aussi triste soit-elle).

De plus, vous citez en exemple les médecins qui, après de longues études, obtiennent des revenus «pouvant rapidement passer au-dessus de 100 000 \$ par année». Je tiens

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April 7, 2014

'What's Next for You?'

A Ph.D. decides to leave behind both academe and its self-defeating notions of success



Brian Taylor

[Enlarge Image](#)

By *SooJin Pate*

This semester I'm teaching a course at Macalester College called "Imagine Otherwise: Alternative Visions of Love, Family, and Nation." Most of my students are seniors, many of whom explained that they were drawn to the course because their

future after graduation is unclear and precarious. They hoped that learning about artists who have taken unusual paths would ease their own anxiety, and that being introduced to role models who lived courageous lives would give them the courage to do the same.

As the professor in the room, I never would have imagined that I would feel

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Published March 24, 2014, 08:50 PM

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College adjuncts 'hoping for the best': Tenuous positions, low pay common for part-time faculty

MOORHEAD — To balance its budget, Minnesota State University Moorhead is losing about 40 faculty members to retirements, layoffs and cutbacks over a little more than two years.

By: Cali Owings, INFORUM

MOORHEAD — To balance its budget, Minnesota State University Moorhead is losing about 40 faculty members to retirements, layoffs and cutbacks over a little more than two years.

Graduate student Sara Houselog



Graduate student Sara Houselog works with Paige Kappes, 6, of Moorhead Monday, March 24, 2014, at Murray Hall which houses the Speech Language and Hearing Sciences at Minnesota State University Moorhead. David Samson / The Forum

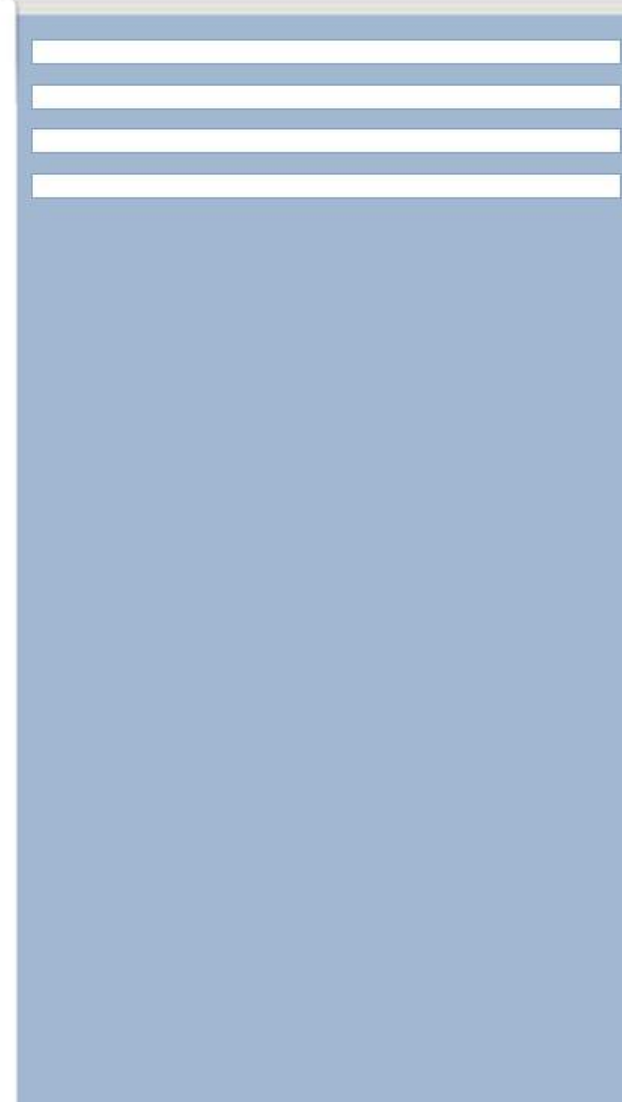
But there's no telling how the chips will fall for the 150 adjunct faculty members employed this semester. Maybe they'll be back. But maybe they won't, as the school cuts funding for adjuncts.

That could mean bad news for many who make a living teaching part time at the school. One of those is Wanda Walseth, a retired speech pathologist who oversees MSUM graduate students in a practical clinic in the speech language and hearing sciences department.

Walseth has been at the clinic since 2009, and this is the first time she hasn't been asked back for the upcoming semester. The clinic has a full-time director. Students are also supervised by faculty members, but Walseth said she doesn't know how it will run without adjuncts.

"I am afraid the people who are left will have a heavy workload," she said.

The limbo many adjuncts are in at MSUM is another example of how part-time instructors are



Being a college professor isn't really a cushy job

Updated by [Dylan Matthews](#) on April 24, 2014, 3:00 p.m. ET [t @dylanmatt](#) [e dylan@vox.com](#)

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More awareness, stats needed on mental health among PhD students

January 30, 2014

University Affairs blogger and York University PhD student Melonie Fullick suggests that there is a widespread growth in depression amongst graduate students that is surrounded by “a thickly-

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The Real Reason I Dropped Out of a PhD Program

by [AUDREY WATTERS](#) on 29 AUG, 2012



I'm a PhD dropout, and I'm not ashamed to admit it. It's on my Twitter bio and stuff.

AUTHOR



Audrey Watters is an education writer, rabble-rouser, rambler, recovering academic, lifelong learner, serial dropout, part-time badass, mom.



RECOMMENDED READING



- [Student Data is the New Oil: MOOCs, Metaphor, and Money](#), October 17, 2013
- [A Future With Only 10 Universities](#), October 15, 2013
- [The Myth and Millennialism of "Disruptive Innovation"](#), May 24, 2013



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The Colin McEnroe Show

11:57 AM THU JANUARY 30, 2014

Adjuncts in Academia

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By COLIN MCENROE, BETSY KAPLAN AND CHION WOLF

Imagine a day without adjunct faculty. Many colleges and universities would effectively shut down. Somewhere between 70-75% of the academic workforce in higher education is not tenured or on track for tenure. Most of those people fall into the category of adjunct.

That doesn't mean that tenured professors have lost their jobs. It just means that colleges have added part-time



Credit Brett Jordan / Creative Commons

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COMING OUT ABOUT LEAVING

WHY I'M LEAVING ACADEMIA.



I'm slowly coming out of the closet.

I'm telling a few close friends that I'm "probably" not going to hit the academic job market. I've yet

Alexandre Afonso

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How Academia Resembles a Drug Gang

In 2000, economist Steven Levitt and sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh published an article in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* about the internal wage structure of a Chicago drug gang. This piece would later serve as a basis for a chapter in Levitt's (and Dubner's) best seller *Freakonomics*. [1] The title of the chapter, "Why drug dealers still live with their moms", was based on the finding that the income distribution within gangs was extremely skewed in favor of those at the top, while the rank-and-file street sellers earned even less

Advice

November 26, 2003



The War on Higher Education

By Stanley Fish

Two columns ago, I analyzed "The College Cost Crisis," a report written (or at least signed) by U.S. Reps. John A. Boehner, an Ohio Republican, and Howard P. (Buck) McKeon, a California Republican, both members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. I found the report (these are the words I used) misleading, shoddy, slipshod, superficial, meretricious, and worthless, and gave it a failing grade.

One would think it would be hard, even for Representatives Boehner and McKeon, to outdo that performance, but I underestimated their resourcefulness. The two anti-higher-education crusaders have now produced a Web site -- again at the taxpayers' expense -- and it earns all the adjectives I bestowed on their first effort plus one more: dishonest.

The centerpiece of the Web site -- College Cost Central: A Resource for Parents, Students, & Taxpayers Fed Up With the High Cost of Higher

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Advice

February 8, 2010

The Big Lie About the 'Life of the Mind'



Brian Taylor

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By *Thomas H. Benton*

A year ago, I wrote a column called "[Graduate School in the Humanities: Just Don't Go,](#)" advising students that grad school is a bad idea unless they have no need to earn a living for themselves or anyone else, they are rich or connected (or

partnered with someone who is), or they are earning a credential for a job they already hold.

In a March 2009 [follow-up essay](#), I removed the category of people who are fortunately partnered because, as many readers wrote in to tell me, graduate school and the "two-body problem" often breaks up many com



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Advice



September 2, 2010

An Underclass Is Educating Your Children



Brian Taylor

Enlarge Image

By Rob Faunce

Let me testify, in case this isn't blatantly obvious already: The life of the adjunct does not resemble a Carnival cruise. The life is often exhausting, underpaid, undernourished, and rife with logistical challenges.

I think we've all heard that refrain before, but perhaps it's time to hear it again, and to think about the conditions of our younger peers as we move on into mythical jobs and mythical tenure. I finished my Ph.D. at a major public university in New York and taught at a campus with a panoply of class, race, ethnic, and sexual diversity. Fortunately, I had savings to fall back on, but some of my peers relied on Medicare and food stamps to supplement their adjunct incomes.

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January 20, 2014

The Odds Are Never in Your Favor

Why the academic job market is like the Hunger Games



Murray Close, Lionsgate, Photofest

The prospects of Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) in "The Hunger Games" might be seen as a life-and-death analogue of the academic job market.

By *Atlas Odinshoot*

If you're on the faculty job market, or will be soon, you may find

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Sydni Dunn

Staff Reporter at The Chronicle of Higher Education

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Digital Humanists: If You Want Tenure, Do Double the Work



January 5, 2014

As interactive databases and open-access online journals fill academic dossiers, one question continues to be discussed: What happens when the scholars who build them come up for tenure?

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THÈSES

Faut-il vraiment faire un doctorat ?

Les universités produisent de plus en plus de thésards et de "post-doc", qu'elles utilisent souvent elles-mêmes comme enseignants sous-payés. Un gâchis scientifique et humain.

THE ECONOMIST

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Dans la majorité des pays, il faut avoir un doctorat pour mener une carrière académique. Le doctorat est une introduction au monde de la recherche indépendante, une sorte de chef-d'œuvre intellectuel créé par un apprenti, en étroite collaboration avec un directeur de thèse. Les règles à suivre pour obtenir ce grade varient énormément selon les pays, les universités et même les sujets. Certains étudiants doivent d'abord être titulaires d'un master ou d'un autre diplôme. Les uns perçoivent une allocation, d'autres doivent payer. Certains doctorats consistent uniquement à faire de la recherche, d'autres impliquent de suivre des cours et de passer des examens, d'autres encore sont assortis d'une obligation d'enseigner à l'université. Une thèse peut faire quelques dizaines de pages en mathématiques ou plusieurs centaines en histoire.

Mais s'il y a une chose que partagent beaucoup de doctorants, c'est bien

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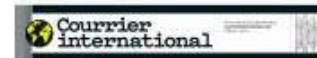


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October 7, 2013

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Paging Dr. Noodle: On not “using” my PhD.



By Alison Toron
PhD, English, University of New Brunswick
Co-owner and co-operator of Nashwaak Noodles, Currieburg, New Brunswick

Among my closest friends, I am affectionately known as Dr. Noodle. This nickname represents the complicated tension that exists between my academic credentials and my employment situation:

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The Degree Is Doomed

by Michael Staton | 8:00 AM January 8, 2014

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The credential — the degree or certificate — has long been the quintessential value proposition of higher education. Americans have embraced degrees with a fervor generally reserved for bologna or hot dogs. Everyone should have them! Many and often! And their perceived value elsewhere in the world — in Asia in particular — is if anything even higher.

From the evaluator's standpoint, credentials provide signals that allow one to make quick assumptions about a candidate's potential contribution to an organization and their ability to flourish on the job. To a prospective student (or parent), the value lies in assuming these signals will be accepted in employment markets and other times of social evaluation. These signals have long

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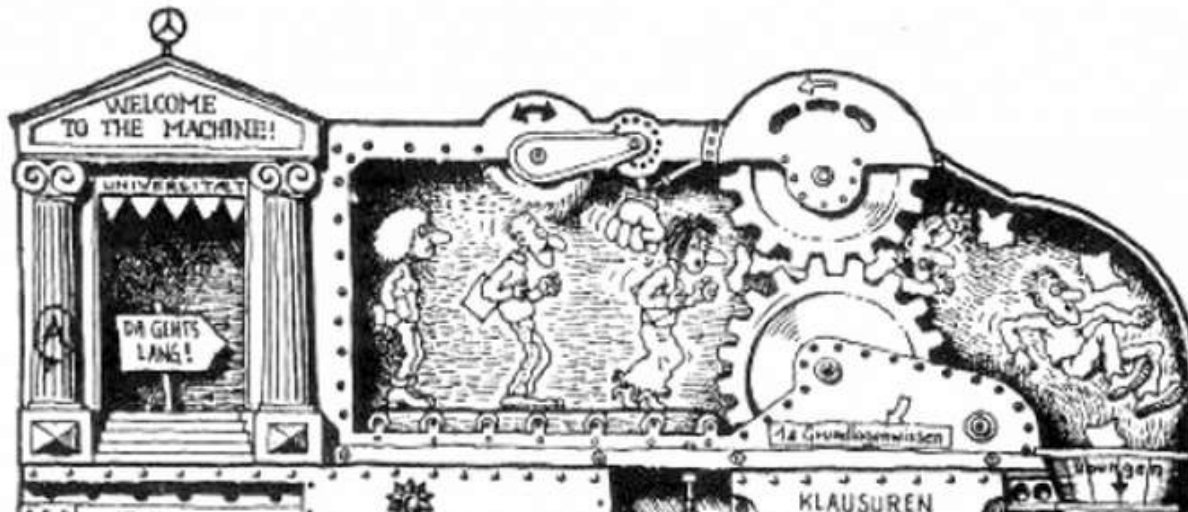
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By Susan Kelly , 10 October 2013

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Austerity U: Preparing Students for Precarious Lives

Published on Friday, 24 January 2014 08:00

By Alan Sears and James Cairns



Almost everywhere you look around the world, policy-makers are introducing big changes to university systems and pondering deeper transformation. It isn't surprising that these changes take different forms on campuses in countries as different as Canada, Britain, the United States, Chile, Greece, and India, but there are also important common themes in the change agenda globally. These include rapid increases in tuition fees, new models of university governance, new ways of teaching, a significant shift in subject matter, an attempt to depoliticize campuses, and major alterations in employment relations.

Politicians, bureaucrats and business leaders are clamoring for these changes on the basis of three key claims about colleges and universities. They argue that the post-secondary system: 1) is not preparing students for the contemporary job market; 2) costs too much in public funds; and 3) is horribly out of date, particularly in the age of information technology. The combination of technological change, high levels of unemployment or underemployment among younger people, and the recent wave of cuts to social programs and working conditions (also known as the austerity agenda) seems to present governments a compelling case for moving very quickly to transform post-secondary education.

In the face of these calls for change, we cannot simply defend the system as it is or casually dismiss criticisms of post-secondary education. Many students are desperately anxious about their futures and critical of the education they are currently receiving in massive classrooms that feel more like processing plants than places of learning. The standard curriculum continues to place the knowledge and history of the elite layer of the population of European powers above those of

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A few pieces worth reading

Wednesday, 15 January 2014

We'll soon have some new articles to publish, but in the meantime here are links to 3 pieces worth

Sarah Kendzior



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“Exploitation should not be a rite of passage”

Posted on [October 9, 2013](#)

This is the English-language version of an [interview](#) I did with journalist [Nigâr Hacızade](#) of [5Harfliler](#), a Turkish news site. My thanks to Nigâr for her terrific questions.

You were in academia and now you are “recovering from it”. From outside, academia may seem like this wonderland, where you are given the opportunity to be engrossed in your work, your craft, and even if you are a starter (ie aren’t making much money), you get the respect and the non-material satisfaction. How long did it take before you realized you weren’t going to do that? What was it like in that world and how hard was it to transition to freelance writing?

Contact Me

skendzior@gmail.com

About

Writer, researcher, critic. Columnist for Al Jazeera English, contributor to Foreign Policy and other publications

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In the Name of Love

Elites embrace the “do what you love” mantra. But it devalues work and hurts workers.

By Miya Tokumitsu

(Continued from [Page 1](#))

If we believe that working as a Silicon Valley entrepreneur or a museum publicist or a think-tank acolyte is essential to being true to ourselves, what do we believe about the inner lives and hopes of those who clean hotel rooms and stock shelves at big-box stores? The answer is: nothing.



Nowhere has the DWYL mantra been more devastating to its adherents than in academia.

Photo by iStockphoto/Thinkstock

denigrates the labor of those who do unglamorous work that keeps society functioning, especially the crucial **work** of caregivers.

If DWYL denigrates or makes dangerously invisible vast swaths of labor that allow many of us to live in comfort and to do what we love, it has also caused great damage to the professions it portends to celebrate. Nowhere has the DWYL mantra been more devastating to its adherents than in academia. The average Ph.D. student of the mid-2000s forwent the easy money of finance and law (now slightly less easy) to live on a



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Nobody Ever Saves “You”

The New Old Labor Crisis

Think being an adjunct professor is hard? Try being a black adjunct professor.

By Tressie McMillan Cottom



Students at Columbia University listen to Mark Rudd, chairman of SDS Columbia, speak in New York City on May 1, 1968.

Photo by Jim Garrett/*New York Daily News* via Getty Images

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he *New York Times* reported recently on an adjunct instructor, **James Hoff**, who walks like a professor, talks like a professor, and teaches like a professor, but has none of the benefits of being a professor, because he is an adjunct. Adjunct labor in higher education has revealed the structural flaw in our post-recession reality: The prescription for poverty—educational attainment—has become a condition *for* poverty. The high price, in dollars and opportunity costs, of getting All the Education™ has to be reconfigured, because tenured jobs with their tenured wages are

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Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Digital Media Toolbox

Journalism: It's not just about writing

By Gil Asakawa

I was appalled recently to hear a city editor from one of the top daily newspapers in the country tell a roomful of journalism students that they shouldn't worry about learning multimedia or any digital skills, and that journalism to him was all about one thing: writing.

In fact, this well-known and well-regarded veteran editor told the students that "backpack journalism" is just "bullshit." The only skill journalists need, he insisted, is to be a great writer.



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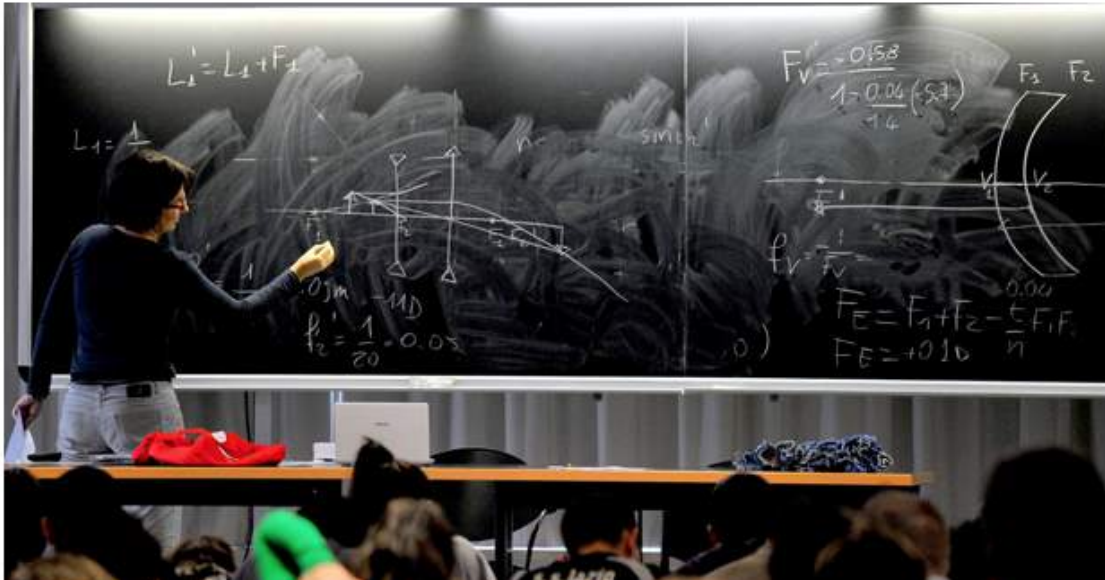
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Why do some academics feel like frauds?

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Ruth Barcan believes such feelings are a logical response to a broken academic system



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Academic Whores

When Does an Academic Become a Whore?

That's a question weighing heavily on me today after biologist [Danielle Lee](#) was [called a whore when she declined to write an essay for a science blog](#). Danielle does things with rats in labs. I do not always understand it but I read her blog at Scientific American where she translates the scientific process for people like me. That is why Biology Online, an online science resource, asked her to write an essay for them. She declined. Someone representing the blog responded by calling her an "urban whore". When Danielle wrote a post about the experience, Scientific American removed it. Full disclosure, I have followed [DN Lee](#) on twitter for quite some time. I read her work and happily shared news of her various engagements with bringing science to black media outlets and African American children. But even if I did not know DN Lee in the general way that we know anyone from social media spaces, I would know the story of how an accomplished scientist becomes an "urban whore".

We've got a gender problem in academia. Despite the impressive gains women have made relative to men at every level of educational attainment we remain a [minority in academic leadership roles](#) and overrepresented the least prestigious, most precarious roles in higher education. Feminized academic work like teaching and service work (advising student groups or serving on committees) is considered less important than research. Even within research there's a hierarchy that seems designed to undervalue the work of women scholars: quantitative research is considered more rational and valuable. It could be that the theory of the innate math deficiency of women, famously proffered by former Harvard president and federal reserve director Larry Summers, is to blame. The leadership gap isn't a problem if women are simply incapable of doing the work most valued by serious academics. Women should just do real work you say? Great idea except

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This entry was posted on October 13, 2013 by [tressiemc22](#).

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