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College

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INITIATORY COURSES
FOR FRESHMEN

INITIATORY COURSES FOR FRESHMEN. REPORT BY COMMITTEE G¹

Special initiatory courses for Freshmen are now being given in Amherst College, Antioch College, Brown University, Columbia University, Dartmouth College, Johns Hopkins University, Leland Stanford University, the University of Missouri, New Hampshire State College, the University of Pittsburgh, Princeton University, Reed College, Rutgers College, and Williams College.

Part I of the present report contains a survey of several of these courses. Part II contains a summary and a discussion with recommendations.

PART I

AMHERST

1. The Amherst course is called "Social and Economic Institutions." It was first given in 1914-15. All Freshmen must elect either this course or an elementary course in science: about two-thirds of them elect this course.

2. *Purpose.* President Alexander Meiklejohn, in his Presidential Report of 1914, stated the purpose of the course as follows:

Its purpose. . . will be to serve as an introduction to the humanistic sciences. We wish if possible to make students, at the very beginning of the college course, aware of the moral, social, and economic scheme—the society—of which they are members. Such a course should not encourage boys to believe that they have all at once found solutions of the problems by which their elder brothers are sorely perplexed; nor should it cast them down into the scepticism which regards all problems as insoluble. Its functions are rather (1) a sane, searching, revealing of the facts of the human situation, and (2) a showing of the intellectual method by which these situations may be understood.

Professor R. G. Gettell, who is in charge of the course, writes that its aims are these:

1. To interest Freshmen in current events.
2. To open up the field for further study in History, Economics, Political Science, and Philosophy.

¹ Committee G, On Increasing the Intellectual Interest and Raising the Intellectual Standards of Undergraduates. This report constitutes a single portion of the eventual General Report of the Committee

3. To teach Freshmen to use the library, read newspapers and magazines, make reports and carry on discussions of live topics and issues.

4. To give the Freshmen something quite different from the usual studies of Freshman year and of the Preparatory School. Teach them to think, if possible.

5. To give some idea of the unity and interrelations of the field of the Social Sciences, and emphasize the historical and evolutionary point of view.

3. *Content.* The course surveys the field of the social sciences. It shows their interrelations; discusses the importance of the physical and the human background; outlines the origin and development of social institutions—family, church, industrial groups, political groups, etc.; discusses the present organization of society; and presents some of the most important problems of the present day—social, economic, political, international, and ethical. During the first semester, the emphasis is on the historical and political phases; during the second semester, on the economic and philosophical background.

4. *Method.* The course runs through the year, with three meetings a week. Two hours a week are given to lectures. For the third hour the students meet in small groups (of about fifteen men each) for discussion, quiz, reports on reading, written work, etc. One professor gives all the lectures during the first semester, and another during the second semester. The small groups are met by instructors.

5. *Pros and Cons.* In his Presidential Report of 1918, President Meiklejohn said, with reference to the course:

I think that it has proved decidedly helpful and stimulating to genuine, sober, intellectual endeavor.

Professor Gettell writes:

The chief value of the course is the intellectual stimulus it gives, and the preparation for and interest in the later courses in the Humanistic Group. The chief criticism is that the course must cover a large field rather lightly and that much of it is over the head of the poorer students. It is a fine course for good students; not so good for those below the average.

Another member of the Amherst faculty writes:

I distrust bird's eye views of fields of study in the earlier years of college life, as tending to take the edge off the adventure of learning. . . So far as it may be supposed to furnish a display of the problems of society which the college work may be supposed to handle later, it may be a good sort of salesroom in which to sell the curriculum wholesale. . . Such a course for Freshmen is fine or poor de-

pending on how it is handled. I should not like it if it is too much in the hands of instructors. It demands the wisest, most experienced, most human, most alert full professor on the staff. Then I think it may be stimulating without being sophisticating.

ANTIOCH

1. The Antioch course is called "College Aims." It was first given in 1921-22. It is required of all Freshmen.

2. *Purpose.* President A. E. Morgan, who is in charge of the course, writes that its aims are these:

First, to indicate to the student the major issues, problems and experiences in everyday life for which his college training should be a preparation.

Second, to teach him how to budget his time and energies so as to eliminate the less essential and to include the more essential undertakings while at college.

Third, to teach him how to study.

Fourth, to make a survey of possible callings, and to indicate the manner in which he can best make an analysis of his own qualifications and the demands of the calling in order that he can make a wise choice.

Fifth, to give him an understanding of the purpose of scientific observation and research, and of the use of imagination in scientific study in the fields of physical science, biology, psychology, history, etc.

Sixth, to give him an idea of what contribution he may expect to receive from the various courses offered at the college.

3. *Content.* According to the Antioch Catalogue the course covers the following topics:

The Purpose of a College Education; History of the American College; History of Antioch College; Organization and Purposes of the Reorganized Antioch; The Course of Study; Autonomous Courses; Coöperative Work; Principles and Methods of Study; Use of the Library; Student Government; Athletics and Physical Education; Health and Personal Hygiene; Religious and Social Affairs; Choice of a Vocation.

4. *Method.* The course runs through the first semester, with three meetings a week. All departments of the College coöperate in conducting the course.

5. *Pros and Cons.* President Morgan writes:

Since this is the first year of this course we are scarcely ready to indicate in any definite way what its unsatisfactory tendencies are. Perhaps the chief danger is that it should become a general field of unorganized discussion. It is necessary to develop a definite syllabus with definite presentation of the various elements of the course.

BROWN

1. The Brown course is called "Orientation Lectures." It was first given in 1915-16. It is required of all Freshmen.

2. *Purpose.* According to the Brown Catalogue,

The object of the course is to explain to the new students the organization and administrative system of the University; to instruct them concerning the general content of the academic curriculum; to describe the libraries, laboratories, and other facilities for study; to offer general advice regarding methods of study and the preservation of health; and to discuss the relation of the social organizations to the University and the students.

3. *Content.* The course as now given consists of a series of ten lectures on the following subjects: General Instruction and Advice; How to Use the Library; Methods of Study; Causes of Success or Failure in College; The Cause of Disease; Manners; A College Man's Religion; On Art and Literature; Science; The Social Sciences. (When first given, the course consisted of twenty-seven lectures.)

4. *Method.* The lectures are given during the autumn, by different lecturers. Each student receives a printed Syllabus of the lectures,¹ and is required to write up his notes carefully afterward in essay form, and hand them in for inspection at the middle and again at the end of the course.

It is now planned to have all Freshmen report in the Autumn earlier than the other students, and to give them the first six lectures of the course before college actually opens.

5. *Pros and Cons.* Professor C. H. Currier, who is in charge of the course, writes:

The chief value of the course is in giving new students necessary information and advice and in giving them practice in writing up lectures, always a difficult thing for Freshmen.

COLUMBIA

1. The special initiatory Freshman course at Columbia is called "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization." It was first given in 1919-20. It is required of all Freshmen. It is discussed in a number of articles.² The Syllabus of the course is now in book form.³

¹ Copies of this Syllabus may be obtained from Professor C. H. Currier.

² C. S. Baldwin, "A Focus for Freshmen," in the *Columbia University Quarterly*, XXI (1919), 74; C. J. Keyser, "A Word about the New Wisdom and its Obligations," *ibid.*, 118; J. J. Coss, "The New Freshman Course in Columbia College," *ibid.*, 247; J. J. Coss, "The Columbia College Course on Contemporary Civilization, in *The Historical Outlook*, XIII (1922), 204; Isidor Ginsburg, "An Experiment in Social Education," in *The Educational Times* (London), N. S. IV (1922), 238.

³ *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization: a Syllabus*, 3rd edition, New York, Columbia University Press, 1921.

Another course given at Columbia, though not now conceived as a special initiatory course for Freshmen, is of such a nature that it seems advisable to include an account of it in this report. It is called "An Introduction to Reflective Thinking." It was first given in 1921-22. It is an elective course, suitable for Freshmen, open also to Sophomores and Juniors. The text for the course is to be published in the winter of 1922-23.¹

A. *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization*

A2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the course is stated as follows in the Introductory Note in the Syllabus:

The Purpose of the entire course is to raise for consideration the insistent problems of the present. To give the student, early in his college course, objective material on which to base his own further studies and his own judgments will, it is believed, aid him greatly in enabling him to understand the civilization of his own day, and to participate effectively in it.

A3. *Content.* The outline of the course is as follows:

FIRST DIVISION. *Civilization and its Basis*

Book I. The world of nature

Book II. The world of human nature

SECOND DIVISION. *Survey of the Characteristics of the Present Age*

Book III. Historical background of contemporary civilization, 1400-1870

Book IV. The recent history of the great nations, 1871 to the present

THIRD DIVISION. *The Insistent Problems of Today*

Book V. The problems of imperialism and the "backward peoples"

Book VI. Problems of nationalism and internationalism

Book VII. The problems of conservation

Book VIII. Industrial problems

Book IX. Problems of political control

Book X. Educational Problems

A4. *Method.* The course runs through the year with five meetings a week. There are some twenty sections, each of which is conducted by a single instructor throughout the year. These instructors are drawn from the departments of Economics, Government, History, and Philosophy. Unity of understanding and of method is achieved by means of weekly conferences of the instructing staff. The meetings of the sections are devoted to discussion based upon

¹ Columbia Associates in Philosophy, *An Introduction to Reflective Thinking*, Houghton Mifflin (1922 or 1923).

study of the Syllabus and outside reading. Each section elects a "student representative," and at informal gatherings of a cordial social character these representatives talk over the course with the instructors and bring to them the students' criticisms and suggestions for the improvement of the course.

A5. *Pros and Cons.* Professor J. J. Coss, who is in charge of the course, writes:

The chief values of the course are: (1) It brings together in the Freshman year the contributions of philosophy, history, government, psychology, and economics to the consideration of the actual problems which we are facing in our civilization. Very frequently students, though they take courses in these different fields, do not see their interconnections and do not appreciate the social implications of the subject matter. (2) We feel that the course, coming as it does at the beginning of the college work, marks a sharp break with the attitude of high school instruction and intends to introduce the students to the more advanced and mature work of their college career. (3) The course forms an excellent background for subsequent work in the fields already mentioned. . .

Some believe that it is impossible, without being superficial, to cover so many questions. We have felt that there is a difference between a general and a superficial survey and I think we can very well sustain this opinion. The course here was made to meet our own situation and a large number of those teaching, are those who actually wrote the syllabus. This we think to be a gain and we think that other institutions might be able to introduce the course best if a group coöperated in preparing a syllabus.

In 1921 Professor W. F. Bryan of Northwestern University secured opinions as to the value of the course from nine members of the Columbia faculty, some of them engaged in the work of the course, others not. The opinions on the whole were highly favorable. The main note of warning is to the effect that some students, failing to realize the merely introductory character of the course, develop "a false sense of omniscience."

Dr. J. H. Randall, Jr., an instructor in the course, wrote to Professor Bryan:

At the outset I was very much troubled by misgivings. . . I feared that the Freshmen might be left in a state of helpless bewilderment. After having taught in the course for two years, however, my initial misgivings have almost entirely vanished. . . So soon as one actually undertakes to teach the syllabus, the various details and facts fall into their proper relation and become subordinated to the main ideas and attitudes which they serve to illustrate. It then becomes clear that no attempt is being made to teach psychology or history or economics or politics, but that those fields are being drawn upon to illuminate certain fundamental problems. And I cannot help feeling that if it is a course "in" anything,

it is a course in philosophy. For its net result upon the students seems to me to be the development of critical habits of thinking, and of a temper of mind and a technique which can be applied to any problem. . .

My best students told me that they could hardly estimate what they had learned, that after C. C. they knew what they wanted to find out in college and what they would have to do in order to play an intelligent part in their lives. It was very interesting to watch them grow intellectually. I think it would be difficult to observe in any other course such a remarkable change in the ability to form judgments.

The professor of public speaking, who concerns himself more with the ability of his classes to think correctly and argue effectively than with the ornaments of form, came to us after C. C. had been taught for a year and asked, "What have you been doing to my students? I never had such an intelligent class before. They seem to know what they know and what they don't know, and they are able to find out what they are ignorant of."

Mr. A. M. Arnett, an instructor in the course, wrote to Professor Bryan:

The students seem to be nearly unanimous in the opinion that this course is the most valuable in the Freshman program. So distinct in its character from anything they have known in high school, it emphasizes in the outset that a college course has something to offer that is different from what they have formerly known. A new interest is thus awakened. As they proceed, they are not only led into new fields of inquiry, but are shown something of the inter-relations among these, and among more familiar subjects, formerly considered in separate compartments. Their horizons are broadened. Gradually they realize how prejudice and the like have clouded their own, and even maturer, minds. They begin to *think* more or less scientifically in terms of large concepts. They realize, often with considerable disappointment for a time, that they can get in this course, at best, only a fraction of what they would like to know about each topic.

B. *An Introduction to Reflective Thinking*¹

B2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the course is to acquaint the student with the thinking process and to increase his interest and ability to consider critically the foundation of his beliefs. It invites a consideration of the methodology of thought and proof with actual instances of thought in conflict. Two solutions of a single problem selected from an important field are given, and in their presentation and criticism the reasons for the change or modification of belief appear and the nature of hypothesis and the steps in its verification are developed. The aim is to impress upon the student the nature of thought, its pitfalls and limitations, its safeguards and possibil-

¹ This statement was prepared by Professor Coss, who is in charge of the course.

ities, and at the same time use an important and interesting series of illustrative cases.

B3. *Content.* The outline of the course is as follows:

1. *Introduction.*
The distribution of intelligence; the work of intellectual leaders; the Deweyan analysis of the steps of thought; the dangers of thought; the purpose of the course, the method of the course, and the part played by the individual examples which follow.
2. *Reaching a Decision—Diagnosis.*
Ancient Egypt and the Massachusetts General Hospital.
3. *The Development of Hypothesis in Astronomy.*
Copernicus and Ptolemy.
4. *The Methods of Experimental Science.*
How Infection Spreads—Pasteur and his Adversaries. Inductive Reasoning.
5. *Deductive Elaboration and the Relation of Implication in Mathematics.*
Ancient Egypt, Pythagoras, Euclid and Present Theory.
6. *The Function of Explanation in Physics.*
The Substantial and the Energetic Theories of Heat.
7. *Evolution as a Principle of Explanation.*
Special Creation and the Evolutionary Hypothesis.
8. *Historical Investigation and its Methods.*
The Structure of the Pentateuch.
9. *Reflective Thought in the Field of Values.*
General Consideration of Methods and Criteria.
10. *Measurements and Reflections on Social Problems.*
Subjective and Objective Judgments of Intelligence.
11. *The Judgments of the Law.*
A Revised Decision and its Reasons.
12. *Reflective Thought in the Field of Ethics.*
The Individualist and the Authoritarian.
13. *Judgments of Beauty.*
14. *Summary.*
Review and Systematization of the Characteristics of Adequate Thought, its Methods, Hindrances and Aids.

B4. *Method.* The course runs for one semester with three meetings a week—forty-five meetings in all. Each section of thirty is taught by one instructor throughout the semester. Discussion and informal lecture are used together.

B5. *Pros and Cons.* The course has pleased instructors and students. It is difficult to teach, but it holds the interest of the class. Exercises relevant to each section will be introduced more frequently in the coming year. These will give special emphasis to the method rather than the content of the illustrations used.

DARTMOUTH

1. At Dartmouth two special courses are given: one called "Evolution," the other called "Problems of Citizenship." The first of these courses was first given in 1919-20, the second in 1920-21. All Freshmen must take one of these courses in the first semester and the other in the second semester.

A. *Evolution*

A2. *Purpose.* Professor William Patten, the Director of the course, writes:

The purpose of the course may be best stated as follows: (1) It may be regarded as a personally conducted tour through the universe, or the manufacturing plant in which the young man is about to play his part as an intelligent worker. The idea being to explain, as best we can, what the raw materials are, what is being done with them, or has been done, the ways in which results are obtained, the relations of the main departments to one another, and where he comes in as a helper or hinderer.

(2) To give the young man a better sense of time and space perspective, and of constructive values.

(3) To lay some foundation for all his future courses in philosophy, sociology, biology, and the physical sciences.

A3. *Content.* According to the Dartmouth Catalogue,

The course includes brief discussions of the following topics: the purpose of science; the scientific method of enquiry; the creative power of coöperative action; the chemical materials and physical forces that constitute living and non-living things; measurements of time, space and mass; the earth and other astronomical bodies; plant and animal life; the social life of nature; theories of evolution; conservation and endowment in nature; inheritance, germinal, social; the growth of man as an individual and as a race; cultural evolution; great discoveries and inventions and their directive influence on the mental and social life of man.

Professor Patten writes:

The distinctive feature of the course. . . is the attempt to describe *all phases of evolution as steps in a continuous creative process, and to interpret them in the same moral and ethical terms as those of every day life.* Evolution, from this point of view, is not merely a collection of more or less interesting details, but a basic fact of very great educational value. . . Let me emphasize that this is not a course in the elements of half a dozen sciences. It is just one thing, the Story of Evolution, made as comprehensive and as significant as possible.

A4. *Method.* The course runs through one semester, with three meetings a week. Lecturers and instructors from the departments

of Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Biology, and Geology cooperate in giving the course.

A5. *Pros and Cons.* Professor Patten writes:

There is no question in my own mind. . . that a simple, logically connected story of this kind, a modern first chapter of Genesis, so to speak, is absolutely essential as an educational foundation.

B. *Problems of Citizenship*

B2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the course is indicated in the following statement, which appears in an official mimeographed account of the course:

Such a course will give the student before he is called upon to exercise judgment in the choice of electives an appreciation of the elements of unity and difference among the Social Sciences and the extent to which they are complementary; it will give stimulus to and a foundation for better coördination between the courses offered by the several departments giving instruction in the social sciences; it will place on a more rational basis the informal extra-classroom discussions of students concerning current problems of citizenship; and it will make possible by time of graduation when the student is called upon more actively to participate in matters of citizenship a more mature and reasoned judgment with respect to such problems than he now enjoys.

B3. *Content.* According to the same statement:

The course consists of a series of selected problems of recent or current interest. The problems may change from year to year, but all the Social Sciences will be drawn upon for the topics of discussion. Provision is also made at the end of the course for a statement of the nature of each of the Social Sciences illustrated by the topics already discussed in class, and for an explanation of the courses offered in the division of Social Sciences and their relationship.

The material and order of treatment in the course as given in the second semester of the year 1921-22 were as follows: Introduction; The Newspaper; Immigration; The Negro Question; The Feminist Movement; The Industrial Struggle; Civil Liberties; International Relations; Peace and War.

B4. *Method.* The course runs through one semester, with three meetings a week. Instruction is by lectures, quizzes, and recitation. For lectures the class is divided into two sections of about 150 men each, and for recitations into twelve sections of about twenty-five men each. The lectures are given by Professor Hayes Baker-Crothers, who is the Director of the course. The quizzes and recitations are conducted by Professor Baker-Crothers and an instructor who gives

all his time to the course and other instructors representing the departments of History, Political Science, Economics, and Sociology.

B5. *Pros and Cons.* The mimeographed statement above referred to contains the following paragraph:

Out of the course in "Problems of Citizenship" there is developing in the students a keener interest in present day affairs and a more rational thinking about them.

The end of the second semester shows a greater interest in the selection of elective courses offered in the division of Social Sciences. The newspaper and periodical reading required of the students in the first semester has been voluntarily continued in many cases after the completion of the course. . . The instructors testify to a rich experience in teaching and to a broader knowledge of the Social Sciences which will undoubtedly benefit their other teaching. . It is expected that all the humanistic departments will find in the students an improved capacity to understand the situations, motives and actions of the past and present.

JOHNS HOPKINS

1. The Johns Hopkins course is called "Introduction to College Work." It was first given in 1921-22, on an experimental scale, to a single section of about a dozen Freshmen.

2. *Purpose.* The fundamental purpose of the course is indicated in the following statement in the report of the committee (of which Professor A. O. Lovejoy was chairman) which was entrusted with the planning of the course:

At the critical period in mental development which is marked by the beginning of college life the all-important thing is that the student should, if possible, be acquiring sound habits of intellectual procedure—habits of definiteness in ideas and accuracy in statement, a sense of the difference between the plausible and the proved, an appreciation of the contrast between the patient, critical and circumspect methods of genuine science and the casual observation and hasty generalization of the untrained mind.

According to another paragraph in the same report:

It is of importance that every Freshman should from the beginning be made to feel that he is entering, not upon a mere continuation of his secondary school work, but upon an essentially new, distinctive, and much more serious and exciting stage of his education; and he needs a definite initiation into the methods and requirements of this new stage. To produce this effect upon the mind of the beginner, a course differing markedly in content and method from those usual in the secondary schools should be provided.

Professor Lovejoy writes:

What this course tries to do is, first, to make the student definitely conscious of the processes of thought which he *does* apply in his own dealing with problems; second, to make clear to him what are the right processes; and, third, to *habituate* him to the use of the latter.

3. *Content.* The outline of the course as given in 1921-22 was as follows:

1. *Preliminary tests of students' ability and general knowledge*
 - a. Powers of observation and accurate description
 - b. General information
 - c. Detection of fallacies in reasoning
 - d. Discussion of results
2. *How to study*
3. *Knowing, guessing, and believing*
4. *Why people disagree in opinion*
5. *The art of consistency and of proof from conceded premises*
6. *Physical facts: how to get them*
7. *Causes and effects: how they are determined*
8. *Facts concerning past events: how they are established*
9. *How a great scientific theory is built up*
10. *Some fundamentals of the scientific conception of man and nature*
11. *Some characteristics and problems of the present age*

4. *Method.* The class meets thrice weekly through the year. Dr. George Boas, who is in charge of the course, writes:

To keep the purpose of the course constantly in sight—namely, that certain habits of thinking must be inculcated in the students—formal lectures were practically eliminated, and when given, as stated below, were immediately followed by at least a full session of discussion by the class. The work proceeded as a series of exercises to be performed by the students; what background of facts was needed was brought in simply as illustration of certain ways of good or bad thinking. Thus the students learned of a number of classical experiments, *e. g.*, those of Wells on dew, of Priestley on "fixed air," of Darwin on earthworms, in learning the technique of formulating experiments for the testing of specific problems. They learned the outline and structure of the theory of evolution when they studied topic 9. They learned something of the European War when they discussed—with an officer of the Army War College—how a general forms his decisions for battle. But it was made as clear as possible to them that these and similar cases of reasoning, were illustrations of how thinking is carried on when it is controlled, and they were required to criticise other cases from what they had learned here; and much of the illustrative material was drawn from problems of college life or ordinary experience.

To keep touch with present conditions and to give the students a corroboration of the instructor's views, lecturers from other departments of the university and

in two cases from without the university lectured to the class. These were almost the only formal lectures given, and even then students were permitted to ask questions of the speaker as he talked. These lectures were given by authorities in the subjects on which they talked, and appeared to the students as evidence that there actually existed people who used the methods which they were learning.

It should be emphasized that in carrying on his share of the work, the instructor took especial pains to bring out the uniform character of good thinking whether it appears in building a railroad or in planning a set of experiments. For that reason he utilized material from the newspapers as well as from textbooks of law and logic, and the like. The one thing which was guarded against above all was giving the students the impression that they were learning a certain background or set of curious facts. They were made to feel steadily that, on the contrary, they were learning how to do something, not merely how other people did things.

5. *Pros and Cons.* Dr. Boas writes:

The course was successful in making the students more aware of the means by which thought becomes coherent and intelligent. Of course the instructor cannot vouch that all the students received the same impression. He can, however, say that there is not one of them who is not a better thinker now than he was when he entered the course. It is, of course, not assumed that this course alone is to be credited with this result.

What has been most noticeable is that as the year has progressed the students showed themselves more capable of asking "good questions." That is, they ceased asking questions about anything that happened to occur to them through the random association of ideas, and began to show a realization that some questions were enlightening to themselves and others were simply time-killers. A member of the medical faculty who gave a lecture in the course said afterward that the questions asked by these Freshmen were more pertinent, and showed a keener perception of where logical difficulties in the experiments he was outlining might lie, than the questions he usually gets from first-year medical students.

Though the instructor sees many improvements to be made in the manner of conducting his work, the plan in general seems to him of great promise, and the first year's experiment—which is, necessarily, not conclusive—has exceeded his expectations. The natural danger of becoming too abstract is avoided by making the meetings of the class drills in thinking. This means that many attractive features have to be sacrificed—namely, neatly constructed lectures and a wide subject matter—but it does result in more intelligent students. The problem then becomes to keep the intellectual habits acquired alive throughout the college course.

LELAND STANFORD

1. The Stanford course is called "Problems of Citizenship." It is required of all Freshmen.

2. *Purpose.* Professor M. S. Wildman, who is in charge of the course, writes:

Our aim is to give the student an intelligent approach to public questions of the day. At least he should learn the manner in which opinion on a political issue ought to be formed.

3. *Content.* The course is divided into three parts: Political Problems, Economic Problems, Social Problems. These three parts are practically independent. They consist of brief and systematic presentation of the principles which underlie social, economic, and political action. They are modified forms of the elementary courses previously given in these subjects, the modifications being such as to shorten the courses and adapt them to younger students.

4. *Method.* The course runs through the year with four meetings a week. Three hours a week are given to lectures, and one to discussion. Students write on an assigned topic each week. Their papers are criticised and returned. A syllabus is distributed as a supplement to the textbook. As yet it has not been possible to divide the class into small sections.

5. *Pros and Cons.* Dean J. P. Mitchell writes:

I feel that the course. . . has been successful, but that it is still in the making. . . The course has given our students a fairly comprehensive acquaintanceship with the fundamental principles of economics, political science and sociology. I believe it has made them better qualified for the duties of citizens; many have enjoyed and appreciated it while they were taking it, and some have told me that it was not until some months after they had finished it, that they realized how much good it had done them. At the least it has set them thinking about things that they were taking for granted, and this alone is worth while. . . With regard to the method of presentation we are all agreed that the lecture method, with classes sometimes as large as 275 is not ideal. We all think it would be better if we could have small sections of 20 or 30, each under a good instructor, with more recitation and discussion.

MISSOURI

1. The Missouri course is called "Problems of American Citizenship, Including English Composition." It was first given in 1920-21. It is required of all Freshmen. It is discussed by Professor Isidor Loeb, who is in charge of the course, in an article entitled "The Required Course in Citizenship for College Students."¹ The Syllabus of the course is now in book form.²

2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the course is twofold: to survey the

¹ *Journal of the Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1921, pp. 4-6.

² Isidor Loeb, *Syllabus of American Citizenship*, new and enlarged edition, Columbia (Missouri), the Missouri Book Company, 1921.

historical background and the development of political institutions, and the social and economic problems of the present day; and to provide training in the use of the English language.

3. *Content.* The outline of the course is as follows:

INTRODUCTION

- PART I. *Physical Basis of Society*
- PART II. *Chief Contributions to the Modern World*
- PART III. *Development of Economic Organization of Society*
- PART IV. *Historical Background of Present National and International Relations and Organizations*
- PART V. *Modern Economic Organization and Problems*
- PART VI. *The American Citizen and His Government*
 - A. Fundamental Considerations
 - B. Organization of National Government
 - C. Functions of National Government

4. *Method.* The course runs through two terms of sixteen weeks each, with six meetings a week. Three hours a week are devoted to lectures by Professor Loeb; and three hours to class work in sections of about twenty-five men each. The class work as a whole is in charge of Professor J. W. Rankin. Each section is in charge of a single instructor. The instructors represent the department of English and have had some training in the Social Sciences. The first of the three hours of class work is devoted chiefly to the discussion of the lectures and the assigned reading of the previous week; the other two hours to work in English composition based upon the same material. Unity is effected by weekly conferences of the instructors.

5. *Pros and Cons.* Professor Rankin writes:

(1) I believe this work provides an excellent orientation course for Freshmen. More satisfactorily than any other course I know of, it not only suggests the possibilities in university work but also tends to widen the student's horizon and to give him a historical perspective, which he utterly lacks when he enters the university.

(2) It early makes the student think about the many social, industrial, and political problems of our time.

(3) From the point of view of English composition, it affords as much practice in writing as did the formerly required Freshman English.

(4) It also affords sufficient time for instruction in elementary English (spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure) as well as in outlining and the use of printed sources of information.

(5) It provides a common and cumulative stock of information for the students to use in their writing.

From the English point of view the only objection that seems serious is that this course does not provide for practice in narration and description. This objection, however, I personally do not consider of much weight: *elective* courses can easily supply the demand for narrative and descriptive writing; and the Citizenship student is urged to read (from a list of historical novels and fiction dealing with contemporary problems) a good deal of both narration and description.

PRINCETON

1. The Princeton course is called "Historical Introduction to Politics and Economics." It was first given in 1918-19, but was radically revised in 1920, so that as now given it dates from 1920-21. It is elective, and is elected by about half the Freshman class.

2. *Purpose.* Professor J. C. Green, who is in charge of the course, writes:

In the first place, we are trying to give the student, at the beginning of his college course, knowledge of some of the fundamental facts and ideas which will be useful to him in further study of History, Political Science, Economics and Social Institutions. We have found that too large a proportion of our students are too ill-equipped upon entering college to pursue with profit the more advanced courses in these subjects. Some introduction is necessary in order that time may not be wasted in the more advanced courses. Heretofore, either professors have spent an undue proportion of their time explaining the meanings of fundamental terms, etc., or else they have assumed on the part of the student a knowledge of the meanings of these terms, only to find later on that their assumption was without foundation.

In the second place, we are trying to give the student early practice in the methods of study, which he must employ in his more advanced courses. Students coming to the University have too often had no practice whatever in the use of books of reference, even of such elementary aids as dictionaries, encyclopedias and atlases. They are entirely unaccustomed to the use of a library. They have sometimes had no proper training in the gathering and proper use of materials in writing essays. Some of them, whose serious studies have been almost entirely limited to the working of problems, the memorizing of verb forms, or the translation of so many lines a day, do not know how to go about the task of reading a book, making notes of the contents and assimilating them for future use.

In the third place, we are trying to provide a course which will be entirely different in content and in method from anything which the student has met with in his preparatory or high school work. We have found that a great many students come to the University with great expectations of an intellectual awakening. They are sometimes disappointed to find that a great deal of their work during Freshman year is nothing more than a continuation of the courses which they have been studying in the preparatory schools. If such men are disappointed during

their Freshman year, it is often difficult thereafter to arouse proper intellectual interest in them. Our course takes them in the beginning of their Freshman year into the study of subjects which many of them never dreamed of and in this way intellectual horizons are broadened and intellectual interests stimulated.

3. *Content.* Professor Green writes:

The course begins with a study of fundamental principles of geography, with special reference to the influence of geographical factors on human development in different parts of the world. Then we take up an elementary study of the principles of Politics and Political Economy. The second half year is devoted to the reading of books on different countries—this year we have studied India, Canada, and New Zealand—not so much with a view to giving the students a detailed knowledge of the history, government and economic conditions of those countries, as with a view to finding specific application for the principles which have been dealt with during the first term.

4. *Method.* Professor Green writes:

The course lasts one academic year. The class meets twice a week, in class-room divisions of approximately twenty, and once a week, for a two hour period of work in the Library, in somewhat larger sections. The two class exercises are largely given up to oral recitation based on required reading. When occasion seems to require it, informal, explanatory, or supplementary lectures are also given. At every third or fourth meeting of the class, without schedule and without advance notice, there is a fifteen minute written recitation. Great stress is laid upon the necessity of careful reading and upon the constant use of the dictionary, encyclopedia and atlas. Students are required to define any unusual terms in the text, to locate any places mentioned, and to give some definite information in regard to any persons who may be referred to. The written tests are returned to the students with copious corrections by the various instructors, so that no student may be at a loss to understand in what respect he is at fault. The two hour periods in the Library are taken up with the drawing of maps, the writing of short essays, the working out of specific problems for which the use of books of reference is necessary, etc. In addition to the class-room exercises and required hours of work in the Library, other hours are set apart at which students may meet instructors individually for the purpose of having their note books looked over, their outlines of reading corrected, difficult points explained, etc.

5. *Pros and Cons.* Professor Green considers that the course is in general successful. He thinks it likely that minor changes will be made from year to year. Another member of the Princeton faculty writes that in his opinion the course involves mastery of so large a mass of detailed facts that it exercises memory rather than real thought and independent resourcefulness; and that in his opinion the course would be of greater value if not limited to the fields of history and politics.

RUTGERS

1-3. The Rutgers course is identical with the Columbia course in name, purpose, and content. The Columbia Syllabus is used. The course was first given at Rutgers in 1921-22.

4. *Method.* The course runs through the year with three meetings a week. There are two sections of thirty-five men each. The course is conducted by Professor J. H. Logan and an assistant. The reading is done in the Library, and is similar to laboratory work in that definite problems are assigned and the reading is somewhat supervised. It is planned to have a special room in the Library set apart for the work of this course.

5. *Pros and Cons.* Professor Logan writes:

So far as I can judge, having had the work myself, the experience has been excellent for men who stand as high as *B*;—not so good for *C* men; worthless for *D* men. For the last six weeks we have kept the better men in one section, with splendid results. I propose to segregate them next year on the basis of a stiff test at the beginning *plus* the "intelligence test." I can't see how anything good could come of the course if too much lecturing is given. I am preparing to have the sections spend some time at the beginning on "How to Read" and "How to Study."

Dean Marvin writes:

To the best of my judgment, and belief, this course is decidedly successful. We are proposing to the departments of Geology and Zoölogy that a similar course be offered in the field of the history of the earth and of life by those two departments.

WILLIAMS¹

1. The Williams course is called "American National Problems." It was first given in 1919-20. All Freshmen must elect either this course or the Freshman course in Rhetoric. About half elect each course.

2. *Purpose.* (a) The chief aim of the course is to stimulate political thinking and to give training in scientific methods of thought in the field of the social studies. (b) It also serves as an introduction to the advanced courses in economics, government, and the other social sciences. (c) It attempts to give the student a sense of the im-

¹ This statement was prepared for the Committee by Professor R. D. Leigh, who is in charge of the course.

mediacy, significance and importance of the present-day problems of American political and industrial life.

3. *Content.* The course surveys the present-day public problems with emphasis upon the control or governmental aspects. This survey is preceded, however, by the historical background of the present situation and the basis in human nature for the group solution of these problems with emphasis upon the scientific method. The order of topics is as follows:

First Semester

- a. Historical Background of Contemporary American Society
- b. Human Nature, Public Opinion and Parties
- c. Representative Bodies and Lawmaking
- d. Executive Control and the Problem of Administration or Management
Control through Finance

Second Semester

The Insistent Problems of Today

- a. International Relations
- b. Justice and Order
The Courts
The Police
- c. Promotion of Human Welfare
Education, Health, Charities etc.
- d. Economic Development
Natural Resources and Conservation
Transportation and Public Utilities
Money and Currency
Trusts and Monopoly
Labor Organization and Relations
Proposals for Drastic Economic and Social Reorganization

4. *Method.* The course runs through the year with three meetings a week. For one hour each week the students in two large sections attend a lecture given by the member of the faculty in charge of the course. For the other two hours the class is divided into several sections of approximately thirty each for discussion, quizzes, etc. The professor in charge of the course meets two of these sections. Professors of the departments of history, government and economics meet the others. There are no sections in charge of instructors at present. Several texts are used and students are required to do outside readings and report on them.

PART II

SUMMARY

The purposes underlying these several courses are as follows:

1. To adjust the student to the college environment (An, B)¹
2. To train him in thinking (Am, An, CC, Crt, JH, M, P, R, W)
3. To provide a course which by its very difference from high school courses shall convince him of the seriousness of college work (Am, CC, Crt, D, JH, P, R)
4. To give him a sound general conception of the nature of the world and of man (CC, Dev, R)
5. To survey the historical background of contemporary civilization (CC, M, R, W)
6. To give the student a stimulating and intelligent interest in the main human problems of the present day (Am, An, CC, Crt, Dpc, LS, M, R, W)
7. To afford an introductory survey of a considerable portion of the field of collegiate study (Am, CC, Crt, Dev, Dpc, LS, P, R, W)
8. To afford an introductory survey of the entire field of collegiate study (An, B)²

The foregoing list of purposes serves also to suggest in general the content and the values of the several courses.

As to method, the courses fall into four groups:

- I. Lectures only, given by several men (An, B)
- II. Lectures by one or two men, with group discussions, each discussion group conducted always by the same instructor (Am, Dpc, M, P, W)
- III. Lectures by several men, with group discussions, each discussion group conducted always by the same instructor (Dev, JH)
- IV. Group discussions only, each discussion group conducted always by the same instructor (CC, Crt)

¹ Am = Amherst, An = Antioch, B = Brown, CC = Columbia "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization," Crt = Columbia "Introduction to Reflective Thinking," Dev = Dartmouth "Evolution," Dpc = Dartmouth "Problems of Citizenship," JH = Johns Hopkins, LS = Leland Stanford, M = Missouri, P = Princeton, R = Rutgers, W = Williams.

² The Brown and Missouri courses aim also to train the student in writing English: the question of the wisdom of associating this purpose with the other purposes of a special initiatory course is fundamentally a departmental problem, and is therefore not discussed in this report. The Antioch course aims also to survey possible post-collegiate occupations: this purpose is not discussed in this report.

The main dangers noted are these:

First: that the instructors may be incompetent to meet the heavy demands laid upon them.

Second: that such courses may be superficial; that courses intended merely as introductory surveys may leave the impression that the treatment of the subject dealt with is definitive, and may "take the edge off the adventure of learning."

DISCUSSION

1. In the following discussion the Committee has tried to hold in mind the needs of a typical undergraduate body. We recognize fully the fact that actual conditions vary greatly from institution to institution, and that plans well adapted for one college or university might not work well in another. The recommendations contained in this report are therefore intended merely to be suggestive. It is the hope of the Committee that each individual institution which may be interested in this question may work out its own special problem, and that in so doing it may derive help from the facts recorded and the suggestions made herein.

2. Of the several purposes listed above, those numbered 1, 7, and 8 are administrative rather than curricular. The purpose numbered 1 concerns general adjustments, and the purposes numbered 7 and 8 concern the problem of the election of courses. These are matters of the sort normally dealt with by deans or other officers rather than in regular classroom work. The subjects involved can be adequately treated in lectures or informal talks with opportunity for asking questions; they do not in general call for extended discussion. They are none the less of great importance. Treatment of these purposes will be resumed at the end of this report.

3. The other five purposes are essentially curricular. The purpose numbered 2 concerns the fundamentals of all intellectual *method*; those numbered 4, 5, and 6 concern specific matters of *content*. The purpose numbered 3 is in reality accessory rather than fundamental, and might in itself be achieved in a great variety of ways.

4. The Committee believes that the purpose numbered 2—the endeavor to train the student in thinking—is the most important of all. Certainly no other endeavor can point more directly to the increase of the intellectual interest and the raising of the intellectual

standards of the undergraduate. And we believe that the importance of this endeavor in itself, and the obvious fact that early training in thinking will magnify the value of all courses taken thereafter, combine to make it desirable that a systematic endeavor to train the student in thinking be made during the Freshman year. We subscribe heartily to the statement of the Johns Hopkins committee quoted above:

At the critical period in mental development which is marked by the beginning of college life the all-important thing is that the student should, if possible, be acquiring sound habits of intellectual procedure—habits of definiteness in ideas and accuracy in statement, a sense of the difference between the plausible and the proved, an appreciation of the contrast between the patient, critical and circumspect methods of genuine science and the casual observation and hasty generalization of the untrained mind.

5. Two of the courses surveyed above, the Columbia "Introduction to Reflective Thinking" and the Johns Hopkins course, are directed primarily to the endeavor to train the student in thinking, all matters of information being secondary and incidental to the one controlling purpose.

6. In several of the other courses, notably the Columbia "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization," the endeavor to train the student in thinking appears as a purpose secondary to some other purpose and pursued less constantly and less systematically than in the two courses referred to above. Professor Lovejoy writes, in criticism of the type of training in thinking afforded by such courses:

It is, of course, possible to use the problems covered by the Columbia course (*i. e.*, the "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization") as material for this sort of analysis; and that is evidently what is done there by some of the best of the instructors. . . The trouble is that it is impossible to do this sort of thing thoroughly and at the same time to cover the immensely wide ground which the Columbia course tries to cover. Nor can a course in which the informational element is so great as in that at Columbia have the effect of producing a habit of what may be called logical circumspection, or logical self-consciousness, which is what ours aims to accomplish. The factors of time and of repetition and of illustration of the same logical principle or process in several different fields, are of the essence of the business, as we view it; and we do not see how these factors can be realized under the Columbia plan.

7. The Committee believes that the fundamental importance of the endeavor to train the student in thinking, calls for the giving of

a course in which the fulfilment of this endeavor shall be the primary objective; and recommends, therefore, that a course in Thinking—a course, that is, similar in general to the Columbia "Introduction to Reflective Thinking" and the Johns Hopkins course—be given in the Freshman year.

8. The specific plan and content of such a course we regard as matters for local study and decision. The Columbia and Johns Hopkins courses offer notable suggestions. The illustrative problems, clearly, should be chosen to a considerable extent from among those problems with which the particular student body in question is and will be most naturally concerned.

9. Such a course would fulfil excellently the special purpose numbered 3 above—to provide a course which by its very difference from high school courses shall convince the student of the seriousness of college work.

10. Certain specific questions as to such a course will be discussed below, in Paragraphs 18–20 and 37–38.

11. The Committee believes also that the purpose numbered 4—the endeavor to give the student a sound general conception of the nature of the world and of man—is of fundamental importance. We hold this belief despite a full realization of the difficulties involved, which will be discussed below. Of the courses surveyed above, the two in which this purpose dominates are the Dartmouth course in Evolution and the Columbia "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization" in its First Division. In the Dartmouth course most of the time is devoted to a presentation of the major results of the physical sciences; in the Columbia course the emphasis is on the nature of man. We would call special attention to the statement of the content of the Dartmouth course (page 18).

12. The Committee believes that a general acquaintance with the modern view of the world and of man—with the modern view, that is, of "the chemical materials and the physical forces that constitute living and non-living things," the earth in its astronomical relations, the evolution of plants and animals, and the physical, intellectual and social evolution of man—alone affords the perspective which is indispensable for the proper organization of acquired knowledge and for the full development of the desire to receive and to contribute

advancement to knowledge.¹ Such a perspective constitutes the ideal point of departure for the entire intellectual enterprise of the undergraduate. We therefore recommend that a course on the Nature of the World and of Man be given in the Freshman year.

13. In this case also we regard the special plan and content of such a course as matters for local study and decision. The Dartmouth course offers suggestions in particular for the first part, and the Columbia course for the latter part, of such a course.

14. Such a course would fulfil excellently the special purpose numbered 3 above—to provide a course which by its very difference from high school courses shall convince the student of the seriousness of college work—and it would fulfil incidentally the special purpose numbered 7 above—to afford an introductory survey of a considerable portion of the field of collegiate study.

15. Certain specific questions as to such a course will be discussed below, in Paragraphs 18-36.

16. The Committee believes also that the purpose numbered 6—the endeavor to give the student a stimulating and intelligent interest in the main human problems of the present day—is of very great importance. It is to be noted that this is the dominant purpose in special initiatory Freshman courses already given at Amherst, Columbia ("Introduction to Contemporary Civilization"), Dartmouth ("Problems of Citizenship"), Leland Stanford, Missouri, Rutgers and Williams. We believe firmly that direct collegiate treatment of the problems of the present day constitutes an excellent method "of increasing the intellectual interest and raising the intellectual standards of undergraduates." And we believe that a course in which this purpose is dominant should be given at the earliest practicable point in the undergraduate curriculum. But we do not feel that such a course has, for the typical undergraduate body, so specific a claim to presentation in the Freshman year as the two courses previously recommended. If those two courses are to be given, it would hardly be possible or wise to introduce as well in the Freshman year a course on problems of the present day. Furthermore, such a course would yield better results to students who had previously taken the course in Thinking, recommended above, than to students

¹ We do not, of course, mean to imply that the modern view of the nature of the world and of man is single or definitive: a proper statement of the modern view would bring out its uncertainties and its tentativeness.

who had not taken such a course. It seems to us therefore that the logical place for such a course is in the Sophomore year. In another portion of our General Report (of which General Report the special report now published forms a single portion) we shall return to the discussion of courses on problems of the present day, with the recommendation that such a course be given in the Sophomore year. We would note here, however, that the problems involved in the conduct of such a course are essentially the same as the problems, discussed below in Paragraphs 22-36, which are involved in the conduct of the course on the Nature of the World and of Man.

17. The purpose numbered 5 above—the endeavor to survey the historical background of contemporary civilization—appears, in courses now given at Columbia ("Introduction to Contemporary Civilization"), Missouri, Rutgers and Williams, as accessory to the purpose discussed in the preceding paragraph. To the question of the extent to which this accessory purpose should receive embodiment in a course on problems of the present day, we shall return in the portion of our General Report referred to above. We may note here, however, that we should in general favor a marked limitation and subordination of the historical portion of such a course.

18. We recommend, then, for the Freshman year, two special initiatory courses: one in Thinking, and one on the Nature of the World and of Man. In view of the pressure of other Freshman courses, it would not seem practical to suggest that each of the two new courses be carried throughout the year as a full time course. We therefore recommend that one of the two special courses be given through the first half of the Freshman year, and the other through the second half. It seems both logical and practically desirable that the course on the Nature of the World and of Man should precede that in Thinking. The course in Thinking is logically a special course in applied psychology, and is thus in a sense a development of a certain phase of the study of the nature of man. The course on the Nature of the World and of Man, being informational, will afford less initial difficulty to the Freshman, and will serve more naturally as a transitional course. It will furthermore give the student a better perspective for both the central purpose and the miscellaneous problems of the course in Thinking. We recommend therefore that the course on the Nature of the World and of Man

be given during the first semester and the course in Thinking during the second semester.¹

19. We recommend that these courses be eventually required of all Freshmen; but we recognize the probability that in some institutions it might be best to give them first on an experimental scale, either as optional or for a selected group of Freshmen.

20. We recommend that each course be given as many hours a week as is practically possible—preferably five.

21. We next submit, in Paragraphs 22–36, certain special recommendations with regard to the course on the Nature of the World and of Man.

22. We recommend that for this course a common text or syllabus be used by all students. If a syllabus is used, it should indicate certain material to be studied by all students. We regard such community of textual information as essential for profitable discussion and quizzing.

23. If possible two special rooms in the library should be devoted to this course: a large room stocked with an adequate number of copies of the books most generally referred to, and an adjacent room for conversation—since all possible means should be employed to encourage discussion of the course among the students.

24. We recommend that the course be conducted by lectures and group meetings in the proportion of one lecture to three or four group meetings.

25. We recommend that the course be in charge of a Director (rather than a committee), in order that there may be a due degree of unity in the conduct of the course and a concentrated responsibility for its constant improvement.

26. In the giving of the lectures several different men should participate. The course touches several different departmental fields: it would seem appropriate that the lectures in each field be given by leading men in the departments concerned. Such a plan would give the Freshman a chance to form a sense of acquaintance with leading men with whom he would hardly come into con-

¹ In the case of an institution having three terms instead of two semesters, the division of the work would be a matter for local study and decision. If the courses are required courses, an even division could be made, regardless of the tripartite system. If it be thought best to give one term to one course and two terms to the other, we incline to the belief that the course on the Nature of the World and of Man should be given in the autumn term and the course in Thinking during the winter and spring terms.

tact otherwise in his Freshman year; it would reënforce his sense of the importance of the course; and it would afford a stimulating variety in points of view and methods of presentation. The number of lectures called for from any one man would not be so large as to make them an unduly heavy burden upon that man. Introductory, transitional, and summarizing lectures should be given by the Director of the course. In institutions in which the Freshman class is too large to meet as a single body for lectures, the Dartmouth plan of meeting for lectures in very large sections might well be followed.

27. For the group meetings the class should meet in sections of preferably not more than twenty men. These meetings should be devoted primarily to the discussion of the text and the lectures, to quizzing, and to frequent short written tests. All possible means should be employed to develop a sense of common interest in the members of a given group. A special subject, for instance, may be assigned for coöperative group reading and discussion.

28. We recommend that so far as possible each group be conducted always by the same instructor. As an immediately practical recommendation for the proposed course, we suggest that each group be conducted by one instructor during that part of the course which deals with the physical sciences, and by a second instructor during that part of the course which deals with man.¹

29. This recommendation calls up at once the first danger noted above: that the instructors may be incompetent to meet the heavy demands laid upon them. The course touches on several different departmental fields: where can we find instructors capable of conducting discussions in so many fields? The problem is of fundamental importance not only for the course now proposed but for all inter-departmental survey courses: we shall therefore discuss it at some length.

30. It is undoubtedly true that not many such instructors are to be *found*: but nothing prevents their being *made*. It is to be noted, in the first place, that almost any instructor working primarily in one of these fields has had a considerable amount of undergraduate or even graduate training in one or more of the allied fields. And it is to be noted in the second place that the discussion will not by any means require a searching acquaintance with technical detail in every

¹ The conduct of two sections of such a course through half a semester could be regarded as equivalent to the conduct of one section through a semester.

field. The instructor willing to prepare himself for such work should be able to do so by an amount of reading extensive, to be sure, but not exorbitant, and by frequent conference with the Director and the other men coöperating in the course.¹ The men coöperating in the "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization" at Columbia and those coöperating in the Missouri course meet weekly for discussion of the content as well as the conduct of the course. If a class group asks detailed questions which an instructor thus prepared cannot answer, he has only to say that he cannot answer, and to indicate how the desired information may be obtained. Straightforward admission of the limitation of knowledge in such a case is good, not bad, for educational morale.

31. Such a course demands more time and work from an instructor than the average course, but on the other hand it gives him larger rewards, and promises more for the advancement of knowledge and of education. For it is a beneficial thing to any instructor to widen his intellectual horizon in such a manner: he gains not only a broader perspective, but an acquaintance with the methods and results of other fields of knowledge which is likely to suggest to him not only special similar possibilities in his own field but also fruitful inquiries into the interrelations of the fields. It is generally felt that our collegiate life is at the present time altogether too much departmentalized: participation in such an interdepartmental enterprise is calculated to develop an eminently desirable consciousness of the essential unity of educational endeavor. And the association with men from other departments is calculated to produce—as it has done most notably at Columbia—a circle of interlocking friendships such as could hardly have developed otherwise.

32. It would seem intellectually and professionally desirable, however, that no instructor should devote his entire time to such a course; but that each should carry on as well his major work in the department of his special interest. This would naturally be the case if, as we have recommended, the course in question runs only through one semester.

¹ In the small college, where the number of sections in such a course would be small, the opportunity for conference would be less of course than in a university. Even in the extreme case of a course having but one section, however, the instructor could fit himself reasonably well for the work by resolute reading and by individual or group conferences with the older men on the faculty. Experience in the conduct of such a course in a university would be a most valuable preparation for giving such a course in a small college.

33. With the feeling that the youth of the average instructor tends to make him incompetent for such a course, the Committee has little sympathy. For a task requiring so much mental elasticity, the young instructor would appear to be better fitted than many men of older and riper scholarship. The young instructor's enthusiasm for his subject is on the whole more apt to be contagious among Freshmen than that of the average man of middle age—and contagious enthusiasm is a most valuable asset for such a task.

34. It may be added that the interdepartmental courses at Columbia and elsewhere in which instructors have covered various fields have, as a matter of fact, worked well.

35. It may be added also that such difficulties as are immediately to be met in the provision of such instructors are in a considerable measure due to the lack of men possessing just those habits of interest and of thought which would be developed by courses such as that proposed; and that the giving of such courses year by year will tend to produce an increasingly competent set of potential instructors for such courses.

36. A second problem which concerns this and all interdepartmental survey courses is the danger of superficiality. In the consideration of this danger there seems to us to be need for careful discrimination in the use of terms: for the word "superficial" is often used thoughtlessly—not to say superficially. It is obvious that any course which touches several fields cannot enter deeply into the detailed content of any one field. In this *descriptive* sense, any survey course whatsoever is superficial: it *describes the surface* of a broad field. But the description of a surface need not be superficial in its intellectual aims or its intellectual results. It will be intellectually superficial if the instructor gives the impression that his swift survey conveys all that is worth knowing about each portion of the field: it will *not* be intellectually superficial if the instructor recognizes constantly the limitations of the course, makes it clear that he is touching only the surface of each portion of the field, and suggests something of the significance of the material, within each field, which the course cannot examine. Such treatment, instead of giving "a false sense of omniscience" would give a due sense of intellectual humility; and instead of "taking the edge off the adventure of learning" would whet the eagerness for such adventure.

37. As regards the course in Thinking, we see no reason to recom-

mend methods other than those followed in the Columbia "Introduction to Reflective Thinking" and in the Johns Hopkins course.

38. The Committee desires to express its conviction that the endeavor to train the student in thinking should be regarded as a definite, though secondary, purpose in all undergraduate courses, and that to some extent the methods followed in the special introductory course should be echoed elsewhere. Undergraduate education is properly a single unified enterprise: if such a special introductory course is given, all undergraduate teachers should be made familiar with its aims and methods; all who teach courses in the second and later years should presuppose, officially and in reality, the training received in the introductory course; and all should reënforce the achievements of the introductory course. So only can the habits initiated in that course be so strengthened as to enter surely into the lifelong intellectual equipment of the student.

39. The purposes numbered 1, 7, and 8 remain to be reconsidered. These purposes, as we have seen, may be achieved by lectures or informal talks without group discussion.

40. The purpose numbered 1—adjustment of the student to the college environment—concerns material which should be presented to the Freshman as soon as possible after his entrance in the autumn. We therefore recommend the giving in the autumn of a short series of talks, preferably under the direction of a dean, dealing with such topics as are covered in the first lectures of the Brown course.

41. For the fulfilment of the purpose numbered 8—the endeavor to afford an introductory survey of the entire field of collegiate study—we suggest that a second short series of talks be given in the spring before the Freshmen make their elections for the following year; that these talks should in a general way survey the possibilities of the curriculum and the principles and consequences of election; that they should be designed specifically to guide students in planning their college work as a consciously unified whole; and that they be followed by a series of individual consultations with deans or other competent advisers.

42. The fulfilment of the purpose numbered 8 involves the fulfilment of the purpose numbered 7. It may be noted that, since the proposed course on the Nature of the World and of Man will attract particular attention to certain portions of the field of collegiate study, the series of talks suggested in the preceding paragraph should in

particular bring out the values of the subjects not represented in that course.

43. Attendance at both series of talks should be required of all Freshmen.¹

It is the hope of the Committee, as stated above, that each individual institution which may be interested in this question may work out its own special problem, and that in so doing it may derive help from the facts recorded and the suggestions made herein. We shall be glad to provide reprints of this report for use in local discussion.

For Committee G,

ERNEST H. WILKINS,
Chairman.

¹ There remain to be noted two articles which deal in a general way with the problems discussed in this report. Preserved Smith, in "The Unity of Knowledge and the Curriculum," in the *Educational Review*, XLV (1913), pp. 339-44, urges the need of providing in the Freshman year some general survey of the field of collegiate study. We believe that the courses and series of talks recommended above meet that need as well as it could be met in the Freshman year. A. C. L. Brown, in "What to Do Next?" in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XXXVII (1922), lxxxvii, argues against interdepartmental survey courses as required courses for Freshmen. He has in mind particularly a course on "World Problems" conceived as an informational course. We believe that the foregoing discussion controverts his position in so far as it is applicable to the courses which we recommend.