

STEM is not necessarily superior to other subjects

by Danika Lyle
Humor Editor



When students reach high school, two pathways emerge in front of them: the pathway that focuses on the humanities, arts, and communication, and the pathway that focuses on STEM, or Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. STEM, with its complex algorithms and equations, has gained a reputation as the smarter, superior pathway. Students who find themselves lacking STEM skills often believe that they are inferior to those who possess them. Due to the high demand for STEM-specialized workers, society tells teenagers that gearing up for a STEM career is the smarter, better plan. However, those who find themselves disadvantaged in STEM subjects are not necessarily less smart, and certainly should not be viewed as inferior or less than their STEM-focused peers.

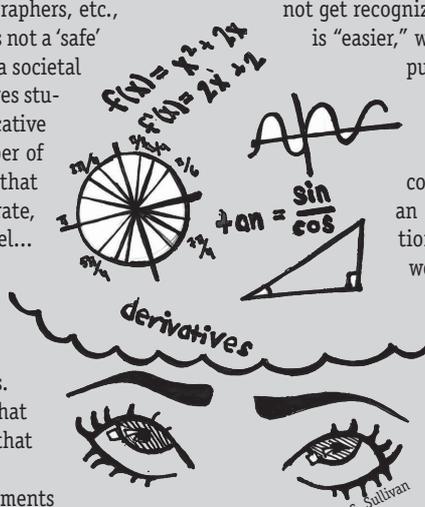
Students who sacrifice what they love to try and succeed at subjects they do not enjoy or do well in are wasting their time. These students should be spending that time applying themselves to their favorite subjects and passions. In today's society, many sacrifice working in the humanities and instead focus on more "practical" subjects, aka STEM. When I asked fellow junior and self-proclaimed STEM student **Elna Yon** what her take on the subject is, she stated, "I do think that society believes that the STEM field is 'superior' because

of its high average income, benefits, and practicality. You don't see a lot of parents or teachers pushing or encouraging students to become journalists or food critics or photographers, etc., etc. Most parents I know will tell you that it's not a 'safe' choice." Many students, including Yon, feel a societal and parental push towards STEM that pressures students to stay away from artistic, communicative courses. Yon goes on to say that "the number of STEM field classes offered in comparison to that of the arts is overwhelmingly incommensurate, especially those at the AP and honors level... taking science and math courses at the AP level during junior year is becoming the standard." Peers compete in school to have the "best" schedule, which often means having a heavy load of STEM courses. In reality, the "best" schedule is the one that pushes you to explore and improve the skill that you most want to pursue and achieve in.

The demand for technological advancements and scientific innovation is constantly increasing today, and many students feel the pressure to work where they believe work is needed. This can be beneficial to society, but students should not sacrifice time away from the things they love and in which they thrive. **Emerson Hughes**, a junior who regards herself

as a humanities-focused person, believes that "students who excel in more creative classes (like art, music, and creative writing) do not get recognized as much as they should because their class is "easier," when in reality, just as much work needs to be put into that class to excel. People do not realize the abundant amount of time that we put into those courses."

The STEM versus Humanities debate also continues into the college major decision. Today, an English major usually attracts comical attention. An English degree is seen as practically worthless and impractical for future careers. Not only is this completely untrue, but it produces a stigma against choosing English as your major. "What are you supposed to do with an English major? Teach?" Well maybe, sure. That option shouldn't seem so humorous and impractical in the eyes of Americans. The fact that STEM careers are perceived as contributing more to society is frustrating and gives the people in communications a sense of insecurity. STEM kids innovate technology, while humanities kids run the country. Both are extremely beneficial and necessary parts of our society that should not be compared as inferior or superior.



Understand political correctness

by Antonia Salisbury
Editor-in-Chief



These days, the term "politically correct" or "PC" is thrown around left and right, but what does it actually mean? While some people think that political correctness is overtaking media, education, and social structure in the United States, others think that political correctness is a magnificent power

of millennial justice. This article details what it truly means to be politically correct because, believe it or not, you probably believe in being politically correct without even realizing it.

Political correctness is a form of ideology that stems from values that are considered to promote equality in our modern world. For example, something that would fall under the scope of politically incorrect is using terms like "gay," "faggot," or "queer" synonymously to lame, unfortunate, bad, etc. While first amendment rights cannot keep someone from using these words, they are deemed politically incorrect because they degrade an entire group of people. They are point-blank offensive and have no place in contemporary society. Simply put, political correctness is a reflection of what is appropriate behavior in the twenty-first century.

So, if political correctness is just a mixture of current, progressive values, why does it get such a bad rap? Political correctness has a bad reputation because, similar to most social movements, radicals are given the most news coverage and therefore are disproportionately represented in the media. Comedians (such as Seinfeld and Kevin Hart who refuse to visit college campuses in

fear of political correctness), universities, and places of business are grappling to meet today's political correctness standards for one of two reasons. The first (and most common) reason is that their policies are simply out of date. Organizations that fail to promote racial or gender equality are inappropriately behind the times and are being forced to play a long overdue game of catch-up. Secondly, the organization may be experiencing an extremist kind of political correctness, such as those situations where first amendment rights are thwarted in a usually well-intended but ineffectual effort to reform.

If you believe in feminism (defined as the advocacy for female and male equality - for those of you who are still misunderstanding feminism), then you mostly likely support, at the very least, a moderate view of political correctness. Similarly, if you are on board with equal rights for people of color, gay rights, transgender rights, queer rights, disabled rights, etc., then you probably support political correctness to some degree.

For those people who believe that they have unfairly been labeled racist, homophobic, or bigoted at the hands of political correctness, chances are that it's time for some self-reflection. Political correctness allows communities to set standards for what is offensive, thereby recognizing the ignorance of people who attempt to brush off their hateful remarks with lines such as "It was just a joke," or "I only said it one time." Sure, people make mistakes, but it is important to learn from your mistakes and realize that, if you are in a situation where you aren't subject to many of the demeaning social stigmas and structures that many sans white-privileged people find themselves in, it's important to be sympathetic to struggles you cannot understand. It's time for change. It's time to be politically correct.



L. Sanders

Stereotypes prevent female Bond

by Sarah Sullivan
Culture Editor



As a child, I loved spy movies, especially the old James Bond flicks. Filled with suspenseful car chases, action scenes, and cool gadgets, I always loved to picture myself as a tough double-oh MI6 agent, just like Bond. However, I noticed the conspicuous absence of powerful women in the series, and all the

female characters were nothing more than Bond girls, not Bonds themselves. The concept of a female Bond seems far-fetched to most, which is the reason behind what makes a female Bond impossible in today's society.

Women can be violent: films such as Kill Bill, Terminator 2, and Mad Max: Fury Road, all of which star female lead protagonists, have again and again proven successful. Actresses such as Angelina Jolie and Uma Thurman prove that women can make great action heroes capable of expressing grit and gore, with or without using their sexuality. So, why is making Bond a woman so hard? The problem with reinventing Bond as a female character is that the change would not be as easy as a simple gender swap. If Bond were a woman, traditional aspects of the Bond movies would have to be altered or removed, a change that would upset most fans of the series. Although a talented actress could portray a gun toting, classy renegade, just like the male James Bond, one problem juts out ahead of the rest. The role of James Bond is built for a man. The films achieve this by degrading the role of any females in the series in order to contribute to the essence of superiority Bond exudes. From defeating the supervillain to overcoming evil syndicates, to even

defying MI6 and Bond's superiors themselves, Bond constantly asserts his dominance throughout the film series. Bond's womanizing tendencies are just another way to achieve this, as his skills in seduction allow him to control and manipulate his female victims.

Thus, the role of Bond is one of dominance, while the role of any Bond girls in the series is submission. If a woman were cast as Bond, she would assume the superior position, which would force her male romantic liaisons to assume an inferior position, a change most Bond fans would not be receptive to.

The power imbalance between Bond and his Bond girls is also evident in the extreme age differences between the two. The film For Your Eyes Only featured an age difference of 30 years between 53 year old Roger Moore as James Bond and Bond girl Carole Bouquet, who was 23 at the time. The average age of Bond in the films is 42.8 years old, whilst the average age of his romantic interests is 28.6, with an average age difference 14.2 years between them.

Despite the major problems Bond films need to overcome, the Bond series has made more strides to escape its traditionally misogynistic themes. The casting of Judi Dench as M in the current Bond revival was a momentous achievement, proving that roles initially played by men could be brilliantly pulled off by women. Dench has received widespread critical acclaim for her portrayal of M, a genderbent character who, even as a woman, still received the respect of all of MI6, even Bond himself. However, until Bond movies totally catch up to the times and promote healthy and equal relationships between Bond and his Bond girls, James Bond can never be a woman.



S. Sullivan

Be more original

by Charlotte Pla
World Editor



Social media's original message was to "get connected," which then became "stay connected." Recently, social media has changed its motive into something entirely different: emulate this. Social media is breeding unoriginality and inauthenticity, and, in some cases, celebrity. Those who have gained followers on social media have acquired an audience for

whatever they choose to post or advertise on their accounts, which leads people to refine their social media personas to please their audiences.

Social media is already disingenuous as it is - most of the things posted on social media have undergone some type of editing/ posting process to fit a preference - so why base an opinion on a heavily edited and refined representation of someone or something?

Social media presences are overemphasized in general, and now qualify as character-defining because of recent generations deeming an account on Instagram worthy of an opinion or judgement.

Think about the effort that goes into an Instagram post... taking a photo, selecting which of the many (yeah you took more than ten) is the best, filtering (if you're into that), cropping (if you're into that), thinking of a caption that will best represent your personality traits (witty, serious, or just an emoji-lover!), and then posting it. Then it isn't over yet, for you still have to reply to any comments your followers graciously leave under your photo. And lastly, looking at your profile's photo grid (this is the "bird's eye view" of your account) to make sure the photo fits the desired aesthetic of your account. So whether the photo is of yourself or your brunch at Urth, you've thought about the angle, caption, and filter way too much. The censorship that now clouds the reality of social media paints unrealistic pictures that portray embellished lifestyles of those with social media influence. Of course the intent of joining social media isn't to conform your account to the likeness of others, but influence is inevitable on social media, if you're mind is malleable enough.

The unoriginality which stems from social media usage began when it became a competition concerning follower count and "who has the best life-portrayed-through-their-account?" No one has verbalized the need to compete with one another through social media, but that's what it has come down to, with the help of influential young celebrities. People imitating what they see whomever they have deemed their "idol" doing through social media has led to a standardized expectation for social media. For example, if you happened upon the Instagram of a high school sophomore girl, it would look strikingly similar to the Instagram of another sophomore girl. That's because apps catering to the replication and standardization of social media accounts frequent the phones of young social media-using teenagers and contribute to the similar aesthetic of millions of accounts.

So why is originality being forfeited to please an audience acquired on social media? And if you've lost your originality on social media, what does that say about you in reality? Easy access to technology and ultimately social media contributes to the constant comparison: my account versus theirs. Frankly, constant competition for something as petty as the best Instagram aesthetic is pitiful; what are you striving to achieve through competing? The answer may be even more pitiful than the competition: likes. A number underneath your photo that now connotes a reputation. Likes shouldn't serve as a source of confidence, brand, or reason for self-deprecation because they simply show an appreciation of a refined representation of someone/something, not a love of something realistic. In short, social media presences are overplayed and people who orient themselves around emulating or seeking out a specific media aesthetic should secure a new hobby.



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