# What Cho Learned In The English Department

by Phyllis Schlafly May 9, 2007

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What was the motive behind 23-year-old Cho Seung-Hui's killing of 32 students and teachers at Virginia Tech? Why was he consumed with hate, resentment and bitterness?

Cho was an English Department major and senior. As a frequent lecturer on college campuses, I have discovered that the English Departments are often the weirdest and/or the most leftwing.

A look at the websites of Virginia Tech's English Department and of its professors reveals their mindset. We don't yet know which courses Cho took, but it could have been any of these.

Did he take Professor Bernice L. Hausman's English 5454 called "Studies in Theory: Representing Female Bodies"? The titles of the assigned readings include "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," "The Comparative Anatomy of Hottentot Women in Europe, 1815-1817," "Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace," "The Anthropometry of

Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture," and "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power."

One of the assignments in this course (worth 10 percent of the total grade) is to "choose one day in which they dress and comport themselves in a manner either more masculine or more feminine than they would normally."

Is this really a course taught by the English Department? It sounds like just the thing to confuse an already mixed-up kid.

Hausman uses "feminist pedagogy" theory, believing that sex and gender are merely "rhetorical constructs" resulting from cultural experiences, and that "students are more responsible for the creation of knowledge." She lists her areas of expertise as "sexed embodiment, feminist and gender theory, and cultural studies of medicine."

Other titles authored by Professor Hausman include Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender, "Do Boys Have to Be Boys?," and "Virtual Sex, Real Gender: Body and Identity in Transgender Discourse."

Perhaps Cho took Professor Bernice Hausman's English 3354 on "Fundamentals" for which the syllabus promises an understanding of "deconstruction" (a favorite word in English departments).

Did Cho get evil egotistical notions from Professor Shoshana Milgram Knapp's senior seminar called "The Self-Justifying Criminal in Literature"? Indeed, that could serve as his own self-portrait.

Did Cho take Professor J.D. Stahl's senior seminar, English 4784, on "The City in Literature"? The assigned reading starts with a book about an urban prostitute who finally kills herself and a book about a violent man who kills his girlfriend.

Virginia Tech's Distinguished Professor of English, Nikki Giovanni, has built a reputation as a "renowned poet," even though many of her so-called poems feature violent themes and contain words that are not acceptable in civil discourse. She specializes in diversity, post-modernism, feminism, and multiculturalism.

Giovanni appeared last year at a public celebration to open Cincinnati's new Fountain Square. She used the occasion to call Ken Blackwell, then the Republican candidate for Ohio Governor, an "S.O.B.", and when challenged, simply repeated the slur. (Note: Nobody suggested giving her the Don Imus punishment.)

Did Cho take a course from Professor Paul Heilker, author of another peculiar piece called "Textual Androgyny, the Rhetoric of the Essay, and the Politics of Identity in Composition (or The Struggle to Be a Girly-Man in a World of Gladiator Pumpitude)"?

Or maybe Cho preferred the undiluted Marxism espoused by English instructor Allen Brizee, who wrote: "Everyday, the capitalist system exploits millions of people. ... Our role in the capitalist system makes us guilty of oppression!"

Victim Ross Alameddine (one of the students who was tragically killed) sat a few feet from Cho for months in a class on "Contemporary Horror." The students in this class were required to keep what were known as "fear journals."

Cho was a frequent user of eBay. He bought and sold many books about violence, death and mayhem, including several books he had used in his English classes.

Other books Cho sold on the eBay-affiliated site Half.com included books by three authors whose writings were taught in his Contemporary Horror class. He sold "Men, Women, and Chainsaws," "The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Takes of Horror and the Macabre," and "The Female of the Species: Tales of Mystery and Suspense."

At the campus-wide convocation to honor the victims, Professor Nikki Giovanni read what purported to be a poem. On behalf of the English Department, she declaimed: "We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it."

Maybe others will render a different verdict and ask why taxpayers are paying professors at Virginia Tech to teach worthless and psychologically destructive courses.

Further Reading: Paper by Cho Exhibits Disturbing Parallels to Shootings, Sources Say, Washington Post, August 29, 2007