



Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1091: Turn a good idea into a bad one with 1 weird trick!

Plus a catalogue of novel college courses from Week 1087



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers September 25 at 1:30 PM [Follow @PatMyersTWP](#)

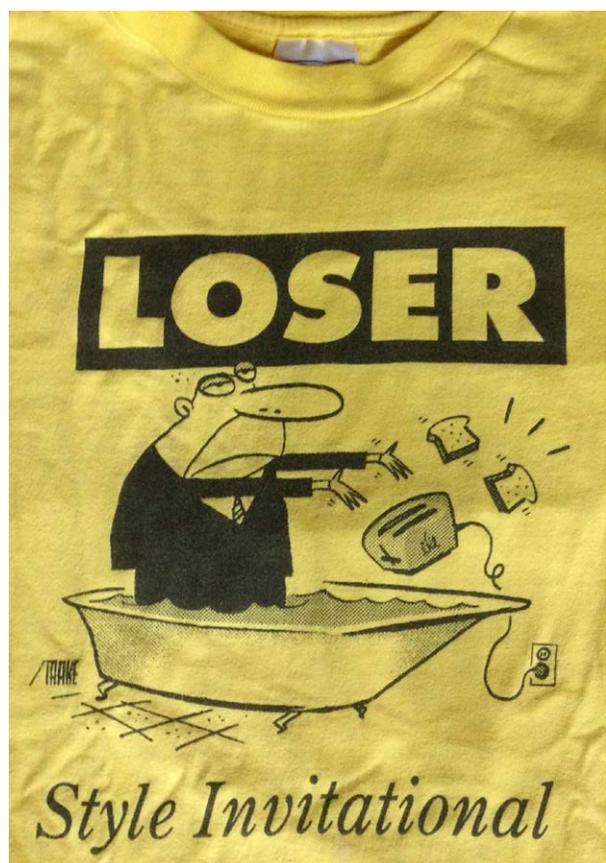
(Click [here to skip down](#) to the results of Week 1087, our contest for novel college courses.)

Good idea: Wash hands after using toilet.

Bad idea: Wash hands using toilet. (Jay Snyder)

Good idea: Showing pictures of your kids at a private party.

Bad idea: Showing pictures of your privates at a kids' party. (Ira Moskowitz)



Bob Staake's design for the 1995 Loser T-shirt (front).

Here's a contest we haven't done since back in Week 102, when the Czar ripped it off from the ["Animaniacs"](#) TV cartoons. The [results back in 1995](#), including the above entries, were classic, so the Empress hopes that the Loser Community can give this form a fresh, crisp ripping sound. **This week: Come up with a good idea and, through a small change in wording, a bad idea.**

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, in line with our wallow in the 1990s, a [genuine 1990s Loser T-shirt](#) from the prize collection of Elden Carnahan (barely if at all Eldened);

and a fine example of the Old Bob period of the Bob Staake oeuvre. The front of the ugly yellow tee shows a man in a business suit standing in a full bathtub and tossing a plugged-in toaster into it. The back — the winning entry of Week 132, by George Montgomery — shows Bob's drawing of the same man with the toaster on the floor; his throw has missed. This was the first

in a series of Loser T-shirts joking about people failing to kill themselves, a tack we eventually abandoned in a rare display of taste.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired “Whole Fools” [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, either the [Po’ Wit Laureate](#) or [Puns of Steel](#). First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 6; results published Oct. 26 (online Oct. 23). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include “Week 1091” in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. This week’s honorable-mentions subhead is by Beverley Sharp; “Off-course catalogue” and the alternative headline in the “next week’s results” line are by Tom Witte. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click “like” on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

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☐ **The Style Conversational:** The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

THE OFF-COURSE CATALOGUE FROM WEEK 1087



... And on the back, the winning idea by George Montgomery. The shirt is this week's second prize.

about liberal-arts graduates; that nugget of snark has become progressively less funny since it ruffled the feathers of the Rev. John Harvard in 1637.

As our back-to-school gift to you, we asked for course catalogue descriptions of classes appropriate for today's world. This seemed to trigger the codgerosity hormone in numerous entrants, who suggested classes in how to read a print newspaper, fold a paper map, etc. The Empress hereby officially retires "Would you like fries with that?" from any further Style Invitational jokes

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

PSYC 207: Welcome to Your College Nightmare. Participants will not be notified of their enrollment in this class until the morning of the final exam. Note: Class location is subject to weekly change without notice; each student will attend at least one class session in the nude. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

2nd place and the caterpillar fungus from a Beijing Wal-Mart:

SOC 101: Overcoming Prejudice. In this course, you will learn to identify and overcome the various prejudices — racism, sexism, classism, etc. — that all people like you have. (John Glenn, Tyler, Tex.)

3rd place

PHIL 332: Modern Social Justice and Ethical Inquiry. "A friend posts a cute cat picture on Instagram *and* Facebook; am I obligated to Like it on both platforms?" "If I know someone on LinkedIn but don't think her new job is good, should I congratulate her?" Discuss problems that have engaged philosophers for minutes. This class will be graded Like/Fail. (Dan McMahan, Adelphi, Md., the principal of DeMatha High School)

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4th place

PE 124: State-School Polo. Students will each be issued a Hopper Ball and a mallet . . .
(Margaret L. Welsh, Oakton, Va.)

Hackedemia: honorable mentions

TT 01: Introduction to Time Travel. Covers chronological flow, looped causality and temporal paradoxes. (Prerequisite: TT 02: Advanced Time Travel.) (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

CONG 101R: An emergency remedial course in basic organizational functions, such as budgeting, decision-making and inter-group cooperation. Enrollment limited to 535 (joint session). (Jennifer Gittins-Harfst, Annandale, Va.)

HLTH 101: Alternative Medicine Safety. Do you know a feng shui line of power from a chi line from a chakra? Are you sure? Are you *really* sure? Don't mess with ancient forces till you part with modern cash. \$795, to be exact. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf, Md.)

MATH IXa: Asicbay Yptographycray. (Jeff Contompasis)

HIST 404: Lost Civilizations. This course will closely examine seven ancient cultures for

which no evidence has ever been found. (Warren Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

Urban Studies 464: Surface Transportation. Learn advanced scheduling, mapping routes, and achieving success in delivering your UberX passengers to different locations. (Jeff Wolfson, Potomac, Md.)

HISTORY 000: Contemporary Issues: Students discuss celebrity tweets made in the hour before class. Exams are not cumulative. Prerequisite for Ancient History 349: Tweets From Three Days Ago. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

AMST 326: Checking Out the Checkout Line. Learn why Brad snubbed Jen at the Oscars; how to lose 20 pounds eating just bacon and Fritos; and 30 sex tips that will leave your lover begging for more. Course materials are free, as long as you can complete the reading in the time it takes to scan 12 items or fewer. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

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Classics 401: Greek Tragedy. Learn how to cope when your frat house is shut down for health code violations; when you catch your roommate making out with your date to the fall formal; and when you graduate with a 2.0 GPA and a hangover. (Mark Raffman)

JOUR 348: Hdlns & Digests. Learn to boil down the world to the essentials in this too-much-news world. Projects include the EU crisis in two sentences, Scotland in 12 words and, in the final, China in three short paragraphs. (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

BUS 489: Hedge Fund Management. What you need to know — and need to make sure no one else knows. Students in this course should also take POL 400, Our Criminal Justice System, and ART 107, Introduction to Metalworking: The License Plate. Exam answers sold separately. (John Glenn)

Linguistics 1337: 57ud3n75 mu57 m337 c0ur53 pr3r3qu15173 by 1n73rpr371n6 7h15 d35cr1p710n. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

JRNL 407: Applied Print Journalism. Students learn how to make shoes out of old newspapers in case their unpaid internships don't lead to actual paychecks. (Michael Peck, Alexandria, Va.)

Journalism 210: Elements of Punditry. Learn how to puff no great matter (driving to work, ordering a pumpkin spice latte) into no great column. (Students must not have previous course work in politics, policy, political economy, philosophy, sociology, statistics, history or anthropology.) (Lawrence McGuire; Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

Poli Sci 300: Conflict Analysis: Students will be divided into two groups based on political affiliation and associated strategies: "Just start dropping bombs anywhere" and "Can't we all just get along?" The groups will then spend the semester hollering epithets at each other. All grades to be determined by a joint project between the two groups. Most students will repeat this course for several terms. (John Kammer, South Riding, Va.)

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PE 535: Moral Yoga. Practice the moral flexibility needed to excel in Congress. Poses taught include Downward-No-Upward-Facing Dog, Special Interest Warrior and POTUS Lotus. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

Internet Journalism 201: You won't BELIEVE what a sophomore accomplished in this class last term! 24 quizzes. (Kevin Doport)

SOC 247: Caveat Empress. Examines the inner workings of an arcane society in which winners are losers, excrement is extolled, decorum is debased, and a homosexual horse-breeding ritual is conducted annually. (Randy Arndt, Clarksville, Md.)

Still running — deadline Monday night: Our contest to write a poem featuring a rude-sounding (but wholesome) word. See bit.ly/invite1090.

Next week's results: Ask Backwards, or Query Picking, our perennial contest in which

we supply a list of phrases and you come up with a question that one of them could answer. [See bit.ly/invite1088](http://bit.ly/invite1088).

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