

## Fear and loathing at final exam time

### Whatever doesn't kill us...

By Rachel Land  
Staff Opinion Writer

Get your Scantrons, pencils, calculators, and cheat sheets - whatever is allowed - and get ready. Finals are almost here. Every semester when the end rolls around I have to decide whether finals will make or break me. Finals can be a blessing; they can be the difference between a B+ and an A-. They can do the opposite and send me straight to the minus side of the scale. Finals are really the only way the professor can prove that I have retained any information I was fed and that in the real world I will know how to apply it.

The two types of finals I hate the most are the cumulative

and the test on the last chapters covered. I don't mind the paper with presentation or the speech on a specified topic, and I don't even mind the final that is worth fifty percent of my grade. Put me in front of an easel and I'll be a happy woman. But the cumulative and the final-chapters tests are the worst. The cumulative test, for those students who don't know, is another way of saying "Let me test you on everything you have learned in this course, even though you have already been tested on most of it, so I (the professor) can be sure that you really learned something." I always feel like

screaming for my life when I see the words "cumulative final" on the last page of the syllabus. I know why the cumulative final isn't supposed to be a big deal. The idea is that throughout the semester the information learned is all retained and so studying for the final should be a simple task of perusing review questions and skimming notes. Yeah, right; if it were that simple then students wouldn't cringe in their chairs at the sight of a cumulative final.

I think the worst feeling around finals is knowing that I need an A on the final in order to keep my A or B in the course. I've had professors say that students shouldn't count on the cumulative final to bring their grade up. The class average is mostly around a dazzling 70%, and with those encouraging words, why bother?

Of course the other dreadful final is on the last few chapters in the text. The professors

think this actually make it easier than a cumulative final. The torture is all the same if you ask me. At the end of the semester, especially the last two or three weeks, the last thing I am focused on is absorbing new material. But the material isn't the problem, it is the time it is learned in. During the semester if a problem of understanding comes up in the classroom the professor can take an extra day for further discussion or push the next test back to allow more time. When it is material for the final that option is not available. This puts extra pressure on students to absorb, understand, and use this new material.

I know finals are a necessary evil. They keep me up late reading a chapter I read only two or three months ago. I know it is sick, but I actually have nightmares that I wake up late and miss my final, and when I finally get to school my

unsympathetic and sadistic professor refuses to let me make up the final to make an example out of me. Am I obsessed with finals just a little? They are important; like I said, they can make or break me.

It is just the end of the semester and I know I am not the only one looking forward to getting it over with. In a sick and demented way I look forward to finals. Finals are a form of closure for a class. I walk into the room for the last time, put my calculator on the desk for the last time, use one of my last Scantrons, and show the professor what I have learned (I always wonder if professors get nervous around finals). I'll be taking finals for a longer amount of time than I care to mention, but oh well. The studying is tiring and the review questions are tedious, but taking finals is a relief. It's over after that. I'll never have to return to that class again, hopefully.

### Random Musings

By Darryl Richardson  
Editor-in-Chief

"For all that you have done, I am ever mindful. How can you doubt that I ever forgot it—but don't remind me of it too much at this time." — Thomas Wolfe.

I can't believe it, but it is almost time for my reign over this little empire called *The Rebel Yell* (at least by some, I know other names that we have been called) to come to an end. This has definitely been the most memorable year of my life, not to mention the most stressful. If I wasn't already losing my hair, it would have started falling out this year.

Over the past few weeks I have started to think about how to wrap up this year. I knew that the day would come when I would have to say good-bye to a lot of people who have played important roles in both my own personal development and that of this newspaper. That day has finally come.

I want to thank the Academy for this...Oh, wrong file! Here's the right one.

First of all, I want to thank the greatest staff in the world. Without all of you, none of this would have been possible. So, thanks to: Jen, for making sure that I didn't have to read A&E;

Jeff, for making sure that I remain un-PC and for the Minnie Driver picture; Tiff, for not reporting us to the sexual harassment gestapo; Jason, for providing comic relief for us all (the Caps will still lose to the Sabres); Ray, for the soccer talk (much love, bro); Andy, "Mr. Swing" and a damn fine writer; Megan and Sandra, for not killing Jacob when he messed up an ad; Sarah and Kurt, for making the other room run so smoothly; Jacob and Colleen, for putting up with the late nights to make a great-looking paper (most of the time, at least); Erik, for being the best photographer the paper has ever had; and Alex and Jerry, I'll stack your cartoons up against any other college paper's.

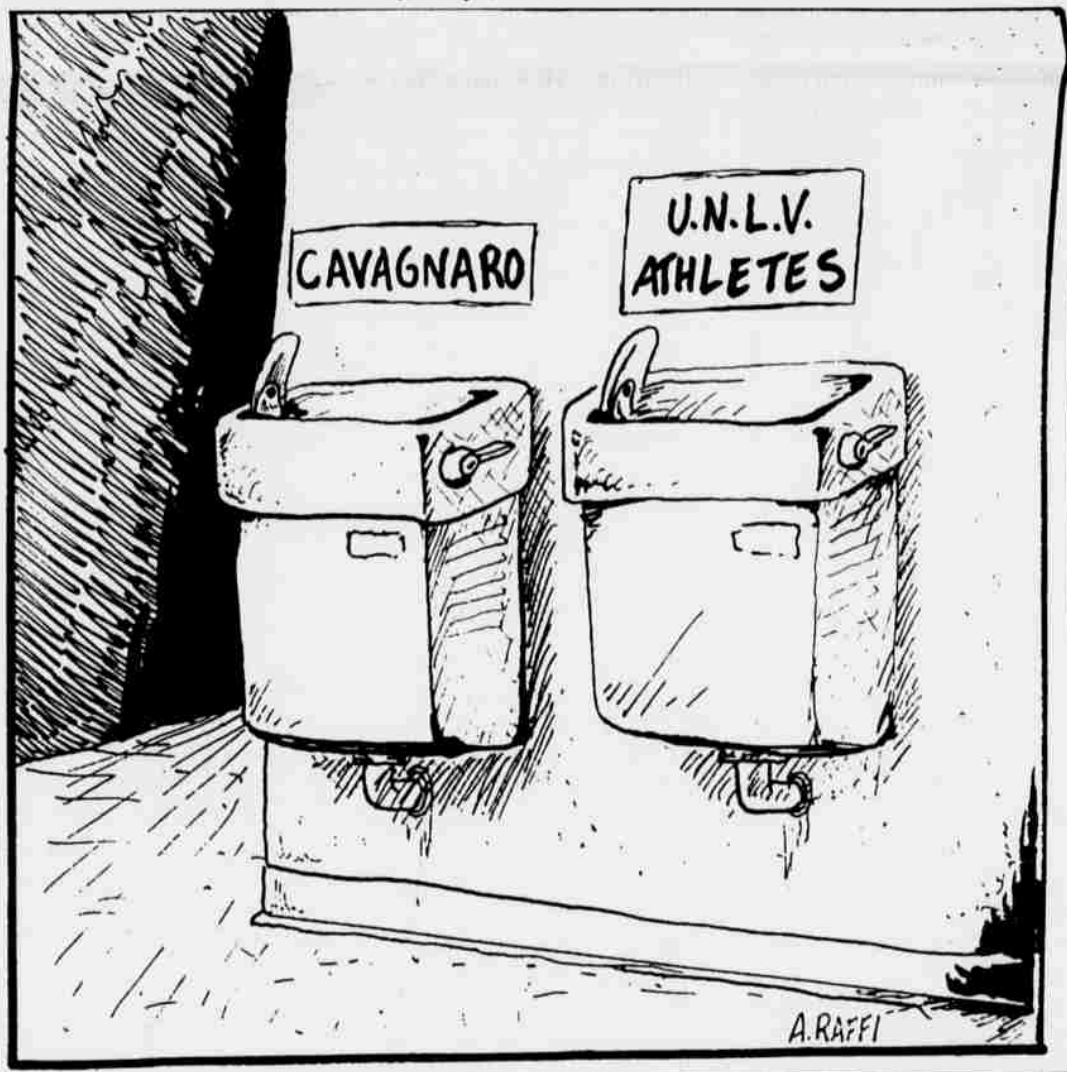
To all of the writers, receptionists and contributors to the paper this year, a big round of thanks. Without all of your work and dedication, we couldn't have gotten as far as we did this year.

Finally, to Mr. Tittrington, my erstwhile successor. We had a big hole to dig the paper out of last year. I would have liked to have gotten farther out of the hole, but we made a start. I am counting on you to continue the

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BY ALEX RAFFI



A. RAFFI

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