

Core Values

Chicago is a place you can never escape.

You come in wearing a College branded hoodie that your mother bought you from the University Bookstore. Orientation Week they tell you not to go past 61st Street. Beyond there, it's the hood, your white and well-meaning RA tells you. She is always meaning well.

Your first week you register for Philosophical Perspectives, where you learn the perspectives of old and dead white men whose interests were those of a slave holding class. You imprint on the idea that politics are earthly, and therefore of no use, and you smugly tell your housemates that you aren't voting this election. Come rotting carved pumpkin eve, a white hooded beast impossibly--or predictably--rears its ugly orange head and you are no longer so smug.

Winter Quarter a girl with monolids like hoods from the suburbs of Columbus, Ohio spoons you after taking your virginity, and you feel inexplicably seen.

That spring, you decide to major in Philosophy. You like explaining the world with reason. You like syllogisms (platitudes), formal logic (signifiers), and an a-historical approach to morality (religion). Your now girlfriend mentions Mencius, and when you ask the Philosophy department's Director of Undergraduate Studies about a class on him, you are surprised to learn his name is actually Mengzi, which means that his work is taught in Religious Studies, where all the non-Western philosophy courses are taught, and no you cannot crosslist the course in Philosophy. This is because the Philosophy Department at the University of Chicago does not want the business of deciding what is philosophy and what is not, she tells you. She is white and God-fearing and always meaning well.

You are abroad the spring that UCPD shoots a student. When you read the Maroon headline, you think you've mistaken it for the Shady Dealer. He was wearing a black hoodie and a helmet, someone in your program tells you, while you are waiting in line at the Musée du Louvre. If anyone was wearing that and coming at me with a baseball bat, he says, I would pull the trigger too. You are uncomfortable, but you nod absentmindedly as not to escalate the conversation.

Your last year, you break up with your girlfriend and register in Classics of Social and Political Thought, where you take the Platonic justification for social stratification as Truth, where you digest and accept that the Asiatic peoples lack spirit, so their continuous subjection and slavery is really their own fault.

The last quarter, you read your first text written by a Black man. You learn about a Veil, which is different from a hood, because a veil covers your eyes. When you graduate you wear a hood as white as a cop car.

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