



Tenure for Socrates: A Study in the Betrayal of the American Professor (Reference Guides to the State)

Jon Huer

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In this provocative criticism of the contemporary American professoriate, Jon Huer argues that tenure has created a kind of academic stupor in which those who have it no longer live up to the ideals of their profession. In Huer's view, the institution of tenure has created an economic sinecure, rendering the tenured professor irrelevant to the society that sustains him or her. The typical tenured career, Huer asserts, often degenerates into intellectual boredom, the routine publication of a series of narrowly specialized research papers, a pervasive dissatisfaction, and a search for monetary and other rewards outside the university. Huer proposes that the time has come to reexamine the issues surrounding tenure in an attempt to determine the best ways to reinvigorate the professoriate and reestablish a fruitful connection between academic and nonacademic society. Divided into four sections, Huer's work is written throughout in a refreshingly nonacademic style. He begins by examining the institution of academic tenure and its relevance given current market realities. Subsequent sections explore the impact of tenure on issues of academic freedom, on the relationship between the professor and the larger society, and on the professor and his or her career. Huer demonstrates that, in general, those who have tenure do not need it, and those who need it do not have it. In pursuit of tenure, professors are forced to produce meaningless scholarship relevant only to their specialized colleagues and immediate career goals. Tenured professors, on the other hand, far from using their academic freedom in service of truth and society, help perpetuate the academic insulation and irrelevance. Certain to spark controversy and debate, *Tenure for Socrates* serves as a much needed reevaluation of both the role of the American professoriate and the impact of tenure on that role.

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