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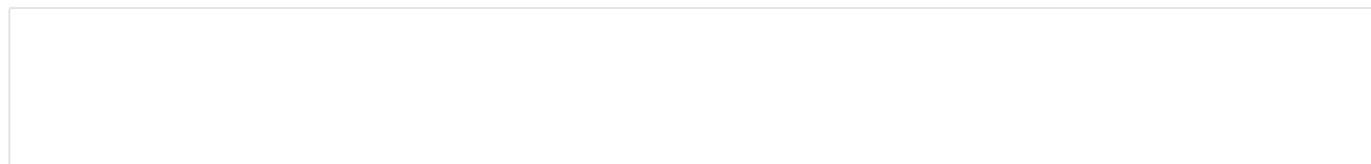
When Teaching Critical Thinking Backfires

Students taught to doubt scientists and other authorities may end up doubting their teachers.

By John Horgan on December 14, 2015



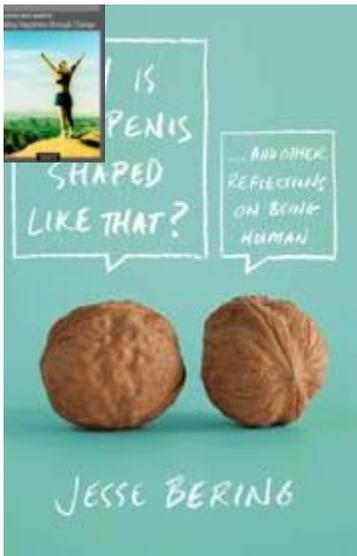
We professors must teach our students to be skeptical. But we must also accept that, if we do our jobs well, their skepticism may turn on us. Image: Wikimedia Commons.



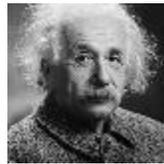
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As the fall semester ends, I'm brooding once again over the contradictions of teaching "critical thinking," especially as applied to science. Below is an edited version of an essay I wrote for The Chronicle of Higher Education when I was in a similar mood. –John Horgan

Don't always believe what scientists and other authorities tell you! Be skeptical! Think critically! That's what I tell my students, *ad nauseam*. And some learn the lesson too well.



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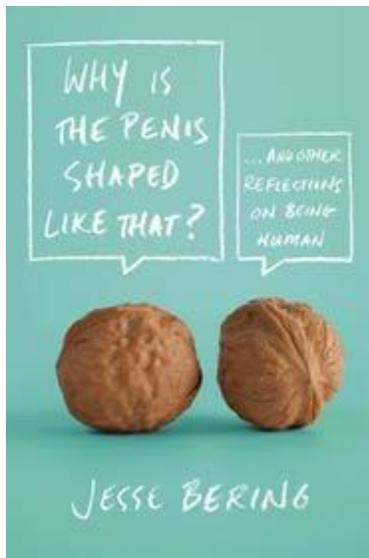
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