FOCUS: On Re-Meeting bCourses, UC Berkeley's CMS:

When I run into systems that *get in my way* relative to systems that I remember having decades ago…

What I want the webpage to look like:

> **Lecture Notes:**
>
> 2022-01-26 Th: Malthusian Logic
>
> ---
>
> **Required Readings:**
>
> Clark: *A Farewell to Alms* chs. 2-5 <https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/files/85040117>
>
> ---
>
> **Optional Readings:**
>
> Brad DeLong: *Lecture Notes: The Solow Growth Model:* Malthusian Economies <http://datahub.berkeley.edu/user-redirect/interact?account=braddelong&repo=history-of-economic-growth-theory-readings&branch=main&path=heg-growth-theory.ipynb>

In order to get this up onto Berkeley's bCourses website—which I am returning to after a fall sabbatical semester—I would prefer to use John Gruber's wonderful Markdown <https://daringfireball.net/projects/markdown/>, and type:

Lecture Notes: ▼

> *2022-01-26 Th: Malthusian Logic*

Required Readings:

> **Clark**: *A Farewell to Alms* chs. 2-5 *https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/files/85040117*

Optional Readings:

> **Brad DeLong:** *Lecture Notes: The Solow Growth Model: Malthusian Economies* *<http://datahub.berkeley.edu/user-redirect/interact?account=braddelong&repo=history-of-economic-growth-theory-readings&branch=main&path=heg-growth-theory.ipynb>*

But I can't. So I type into bCourses's WYSIWYG editor and punch some formatting buttons. bCourses produces an underlying html layer.

What I would consider "acceptable" html:

```
<p><strong>Lecture Notes:</strong></p>

<blockquote><p>2022-01-26 Th: Malthusian Logic</p></blockquote>

<hr />
<p><strong>Required Readings:</strong></p>

<blockquote><p><strong>Clark</strong>: <em>A Farewell to Alms</em> chs. 2-5 <a href='https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/files/85040117'>https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/files/85040117</a></p></blockquote>

<hr />

<p><strong>Optional Readings:</strong></p>

<blockquote><p><strong>Brad DeLong:</strong> <em>Lecture Notes: The Solow Growth Model: Malthusian Economies</em> <a
```

But this is the underlying html code that Berkeley's CMS wants to give me:

```
1  <p><span><strong>Lecture Notes:</strong></span></p>
2  <p>2022-01-26 Th: <a class="inline_disabled" href="https://braddelong.substack.com/p/day-3-lecture-notes-the-logic-of"
   target="_blank" rel="noopener">Malthusian Logic</a>     <a class="inline_disabled external"
   href="https://braddelong.substack.com/p/introduction-to-history-of-economic" target="_blank" rel="noopener"><span
   class="external_link_icon" role="presentation"><span class="screenreader-only">Links to an external site.</span></span>
   </a></p>
3  <hr />
4  <p><strong>R</strong><strong>equired Readings:</strong></p>
5  <p class="ally-file-link-holder" style="padding-left: 40px;"><strong>Clark</strong>: <em class="ally-file-link-holder">
   <img class="ally-accessibility-score-indicator-image" src="https://prod.ally.ac/static/ally-icon-indicator-medium-
   circle.4428c6d77d3c6c6de8a1cf6a36e70408.svg" alt="" /><a class="inline_disabled"
   href="https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/files/85040117" target="_blank" rel="noopener" data-api-
   endpoint="https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/api/v1/files/85040117" data-api-returntype="File" data-id="85040117">A Farewell to
   Alms</a></em> chs. 2-5<br /><em></em></p>
6  <hr />
7  <p><strong>Optional Readings:</strong></p>
8  <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><span><strong>Brad DeLong</strong>: </span><em><span>Lecture Notes: The Solow Growth
   Model</span><strong>; </strong></em><span>Lecture Notes: Malthusian Economies &lt;</span></em><a
```

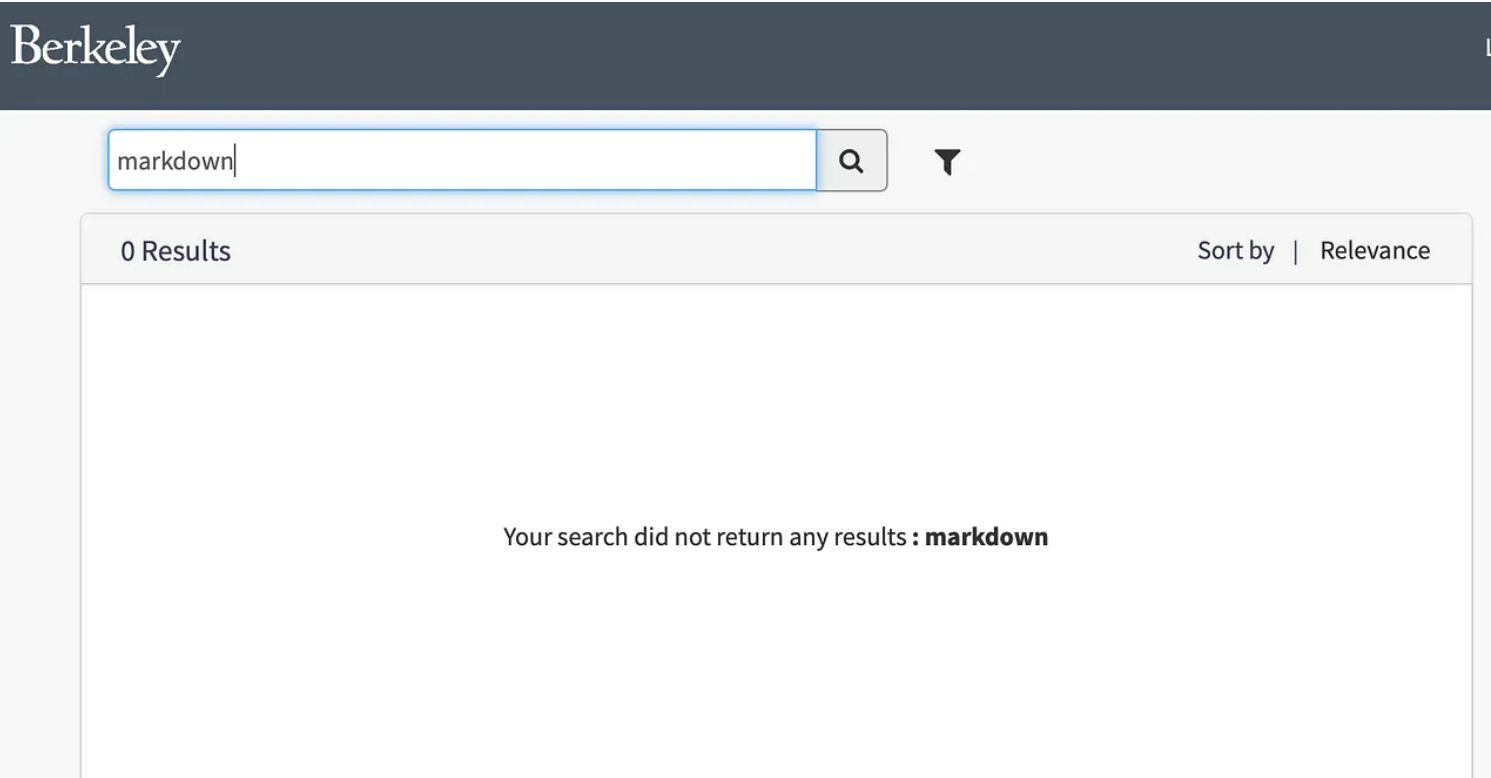WHY, in the Holy Name of THE ONE WHO IS, WHY?

Yes, I understand that you are really not supposed to look at the html in a CMS. Yes. Still: BUT WHY!?

I just want plain-vanilla text, **bold**, *italic*, and <[links](#)> that behave in a default way. I have no need for things to be of the `inline_disabled` class; for `target` tags so that some links to open in the current and some links to open in a new tab/window—either one would be fine, if it were consistent—for a distinction between links that go into and links that go outside the CMS; for `data-api-endpoint`, `data-api-returntype`, and `data-id`s, all of which are implicit in the target url; for pointless `<em></em>` and other null tags left in the html stream; and for pointless `<span>…</span>` tags. (I can approve of `rel=" noopener "`; and I understand, and can forgive, the social-engineering nudges involved in the accessibility-score dial.)

It is more than purely Æsthetic.

At least once a day, when editing something in bCourses's WYSIWYG editor, something goes wrong and I do have to drop into html to see (most recently, why shift-return has not generated a simple `<br />` but instead something really weird). I then have to undertake a five-minute de-crufting process before I can see what is going on. And so I am knocked out of my flow.

"John Henry and the steamhammer!" you say? No! I love steamhammers! But the steamhammer should be a well-designed steamhammer, with proper affordances. It should be something like Markdown! It is Markdown! But if you search bCourses help for "markdown":

Yes, I should spring and pay $15 for Typora <https://typora.io> or some such, and write-and-paste.

Maybe this past week of semester-start and renewed contact with bCourses will induce me to do so…

And, meanwhile, elsewhere in infotech gone wrong: Chat-GPT tells me that right now I am best known as the author of *Slouching Towards Utopia: The Economic History of the Twentieth Century* and of *The Fist of Contrition: A History of the Public Debt of the United States*.

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MUST-READ: How Stupid Does Elon Musk Think San Francisco Juries Are?:

Wow:

        Mack DeGeurin: [Elon Musk Tells Jury That 420 Has Nothing to Do With Weed](#): 'The Tesla CEO dismissed associations between a $420 share price and marijuana and accused the head of Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund of "ass covering" …

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The Ford F-150 since 1960.

Ford makes what sells…

ONE AUDIO: How China Is Ruled:

<<https://overcast.fm/+oiPVDTr-A>>

> **Ezra Klein:** â€˜A lot is happening in China right nowâ€¦. Yuen Yuen Ang is a professor of political economy, a China scholar at Johns Hopkins University and the author of â€œChinaâ€™s Gilded Age: The Paradox of Economic Boom and Vast Corruption.â€ Her basic argument isâ€¦ you need to first understand Chinaâ€™s unique, often misunderstood political systemâ€¦ â€œautocracy with democratic characteristics.â€ Because we in the West are so fixated on how China selects its leaders, she argues, weâ€™ve overlooked a more subtle but far more consequential revolution in how China is governed. That transformation of the Chinese political system is the deeper story behind both the countryâ€™s economic success â€” as well as its current troubles. And it provides an illuminating lens through which to view American politics as wellâ€¦

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Very Briefly Noted:

- **Noah Smith:** Fiscal arsonists: â€˜We didnâ€™t go very far down the slippery slope to this sort of disaster in 2011.... But that doesnâ€™t mean that what the Tea Party Congress did was OK. It took us one step down the slippery slope toward catastrophe, and thatâ€™s one step too many. Americans were not happy.... The GOPâ€™s debt ceiling brinksmanship might have been a factor in Mitt Romneyâ€™s defeat in 2012...

- **Tara Palmieri:** Feeling the Vern: â€˜Vern Buchanan exploded after losing Ways & Means to a McCarthy ally, fueling anxiety that he could retire out of piqueâ€”and that McCarthyâ€™s favor trading has eroded his narrow margin of supportâ€¦

- **Jason Smith:** Genuine â€œLongtermismâ€ : â€˜A genuine longtermist wouldnâ€™t be racist. Genotype diversity is species survival, not special preferences for specific phenotypesâ€¦ social welfare policies so that every human can live and support a familyâ€¦ redistribute the wealth of billionairesâ€¦ basically be a social democratâ€¦

- **Eric Hoel:** Why I am not an effective altruist: â€˜The origins of the effective altruist movement in utilitarianism means that as definitions get more specific it becomes clear that within lurks a poison, and the choice of all effective altruists is either to dilute that poison, and therefore dilute their philosophy, or swallow the poison whole. This poisonâ€¦ is not a quirk, or a bug, but rather a feature of utilitarian philosophy, and can be found in even the smallest dropâ€¦

- **Robert B. Hubbell:** A press release beneath the dignity of the Court: â€˜â€˜The one thing that the press release **does not say** is that the Marshal interviewed the justices as part of the investigation. Instead, we are told that the Marshal â€œspokeâ€ to the justices as part of an â€œiterative processâ€ in which they â€œasked and answered questionsâ€ …

- **Paul Krugman:** â€˜Many people think inflation is still running wild; the big deceleration in the 2nd half of 2022 hasn't broken through to public consciousnessâ€¦. Traditional core inflation still reflecting rent increases from a year ago. And asymmetric reporting: breathless coverage of rising inflation, disinflation not so muchâ€¦

- **Typora:** A new way to read & write Markdownâ€¦

- **Paul Fussell** (1983): Class : a guide through the American status systemâ€¦

Â¶s:

Martin Wolf: In defence of democratic capitalism: â€˜The marriage of liberal economics and democracy has brought immense benefits to the world, but faces its toughest test in decades. What needs to be done? The energy behind populism cannot be ignored, let alone suppressed. It needs to be harnessed, instead. Politicians committed to liberal democracy must respond to the widespread distrust of elites not by surrendering to them, but by making themselves trustworthy, once again. This is what Franklin Delano Roosevelt achieved in the 1930s, by combining the innovative ideas and competence of people such as Frances Perkins, the labour secretary who laid the foundation of the US social security system, with barnstorming rhetoric against what he called â€œgovernment by organised moneyâ€ . Successful renewal is possible now, tooâ€¦. It is impossible to sustain a universal suffrage democracy with a market economy if the former does not appear open to the influence â€” and the latter does not serve the interestsâ€”of the people at large. This, in turn, demands a political response rooted not in the destructive politics of identity, but of welfare for all citizensâ€”that is, a commitment to economic opportunity and basic security for all. Building on FDR himself, domestic policy goals should be rising, widely shared and sustainable standards of living, good jobs for those who can work, equality of opportunity, security for those who need it and ending â€œspecial privilegesâ€ for the fewâ€¦

Can Duruk: Google vs. ChatGPT told by aglio e olio: â€˜The *real reason* Google is at risk that thanks to their monopoly position, the folks over at Mountain View have left their once-incredible search experience degenerate into a spam-ridden, SEO-fueled hellscapeâ€¦. The fact that many people are comparing OpenAI's tech demo to Google's flagship product should be causing alarm bells to go off. For a long time, Google's claim to fame was getting the users the answers they want faster than the competition. That doesn't hold true for many types of queries anymore. More than half the time, I have to add `site:reddit.com` to get anything that is not SEO spamâ€¦

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