Columbia Tests
New Approach
To Humanities

Students Form First-Hand
Opinions of Books, Art;
Study of Criticism. Cut

Students learn more from reading
great books than from studying
summaries or criticism, Robert E.
Hawkes, dean of Columbia College,
said yesterday. In response to five
years of tests given to Columbia
freshmen in a prescribed course in
humanities, the second year of
the course, in which emphasis is
placed on first-hand acquaintance
with music and art, with historical
treatment and "appreciation" made
secondary, also has been found
successful, according to Dean Hawkes.

"Our whole effort is to eliminate
predigested opinions," he said. "The
students are induced to listen to
and observe for themselves the great
monuments of the Western tradition
in music and art. The conclusions
they reach are of less importance
than the training they receive
through direct examination and dis-
discussion, but the method will
remain and may be transferred from
college courses to other courses
with which the student will come
into contact throughout the rest of
his life."

Most freshmen at Columbia find
the reading assignments in the first
year of humanities extremely heavy.
Between September and June, large
doses of nearly every important
writer from Homer and Plato to
Dante and Shakespeare are admin-
istered. Tests and instructors' com-
mments enable the dean's office to
discover in ample time the students
who have deficient reading or study
habits, Dean Hawkes pointed out.
These students receive special
assistance.

The first-hand acquaintance
method in humanities has been so
successful that the staff of the
course in contemporary civilization
has prepared a revision of reading
assignments, Dean Hawkes an-
nounced.

Several innovations to facilitate
instruction in the humanities course
are being used this year for the first
time. The College Study provides
tables where students may listen to
records of the musical assignments
with earphones so as not to disturb
those who may be reading, and pic-
tures will be provided for prepara-
tion of the work in fine arts.