

MARQUETTE WARRIOR

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 09, 2014

Marquette Philosophy Instructor: “Gay Rights” Can’t Be Discussed in Class Since Any Disagreement Would Offend Gay Students

A student we know was in a philosophy class (“Theory of Ethics”), and the instructor (one Cheryl Abbate) was attempting to apply a philosophical text to modern political controversies. So far so good.

She listed some issues on the board, and came to “gay rights.” She then airily said that “everybody agrees on this, and there is no need to discuss it.”

The student, a conservative who disagrees with some of the gay lobby’s notions of “gay rights” (such as gay marriage) approached her after class and told her he thought the issue deserved to be discussed. Indeed, he told Abbate that if she dismisses an entire argument because of her personal views, that sets a terrible precedent for the class.

The student argued against gay marriage and gay adoption, and for a while, Abbate made some plausible arguments to the student —

ABOUT ME

JOHN MCADAMS
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, UNITED STATES

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pointing out that single people can adopt a child, so why not a gay couple? She even asked the student for research showing that children of gay parents do worse than children of straight, married parents. The student said he would provide it.

So far, this is the sort of argument that ought to happen in academia.

But then things deteriorated.

Certain Opinions Banned

Abbate explained that “some opinions are not appropriate, such as racist opinions, sexist opinions” and then went on to ask “do you know if anyone in your class is homosexual?” And further “don’t you think it would be offensive to them” if some student raised his hand and challenged gay marriage? The point being, apparently that any gay classmates should not be subjected to hearing any disagreement with their presumed policy views.

Then things deteriorated further as the student said that it was his right as an American citizen to make arguments against gay marriage. Abbate replied that “you don’t have a right in this class to make homophobic comments.”

She further said she would “take offense” if the student said that women can’t serve in particular roles. And she added that somebody who is homosexual would experience similar offense if somebody opposed gay marriage in class.

She went on “In this class, homophobic comments, racist comments, will not be tolerated.” She then invited the student to drop the class.

Which the student is doing.

Shutting People Up

Worst Job Description Ever

The Indignity of Microaggression in Colleges and U...

Republican Allen West to Speak at Marquette



Useful Links

Right Wisconsin — Coverage of Wisconsin news and politics from a conservative perspective.

The Louis Joliet Society — An Alumni Association trying to get Marquette to live up to its claims to be “Catholic.”

Marquette Tribune — Marquette's own junior version of the mainstream media.

Marquette College Republicans — Pretty active of late.

Marquette College Democrats — Just what the name implies, and like the College Republicans, pretty active.

Dad29 — Marquette alum writing mostly on state politics issues.

Marquette University Law School Faculty Blog — Law professors

Abbate, of course, was just using a tactic typical among liberals now. Opinions with which they disagree are not merely wrong, and are not to be argued against on their merits, but are deemed “offensive” and need to be shut up.

As Charles Krauthammer explained:

The proper word for that attitude is totalitarian. It declares certain controversies over and visits serious consequences — from social ostracism to vocational defenestration — upon those who refuse to be silenced.

The newest closing of the leftist mind is on gay marriage. Just as the science of global warming is settled, so, it seems, are the moral and philosophical merits of gay marriage.

To oppose it is nothing but bigotry, akin to racism. Opponents are to be similarly marginalized and shunned, destroyed personally and professionally.

Of course, only certain groups have the privilege of shutting up debate. Things thought to be “offensive” to gays, blacks, women and so on must be stifled. Further, it’s not considered necessary to actually find out what the group really thinks. “Women” are supposed to feel warred upon when somebody opposes abortion, but in the real world men and women are equally likely to oppose abortion.

The same is true of Obama’s contraception mandate.

But in the politically correct world of academia, one is supposed to assume that all victim groups think the same way as leftist professors.

The “Offended” Card

Groups not favored by leftist professors, of course, can be freely

write some of the best blogs in the country, so it's good to see Marquette Law faculty joining that movement.

Shark and Shepherd — Blog from a conservative Law School faculty member.

Mark F. Johnson — Marquette Thomist theologian on various topics.

The Dimming Torch — Liberal Marquette Philosophy professor on politics and other things.

Health Reform Explained — Marquette alum writes about the changes in the health care system.

Kennedy Assassination Home Page — one of this bloggers other obsessions.

Hot Christian Acappella Internet Radio — Yet another project from your humble blogger.

Student Blogs

Gay/Straight Alliance of Marquette — Student organization Marquette recognized claiming it was in no way in conflict with Marquette's Catholic mission

attacked, and their views (or supposed views) ridiculed. Christians and Muslims are not allowed to be “offended” by pro-gay comments.

(Muslims are a protected victim group in lots of other ways, but not this one.)

And it is a free fire zone where straight white males are concerned.

Student Seeks Redress

The student first complained to the office of the Dean of Arts & Sciences, and talked to an Associate Dean, one Suzanne Foster. Foster sent the student to the Chair of the Philosophy Department, saying that department chairs usually handle such cases. The chair, Nancy Snow, pretty much blew off the issue.

Interestingly, both Snow and Foster have been involved in cases of politically correct attacks on free expression at Marquette.

Foster took offense when one of her colleagues referred to a dinner which happened to involve only female faculty as a “girls night out.” He was reprimanded by then department chair James South for “sexism,” but the reprimand was overturned by Marquette.

Snow, in a class on the “Philosophy of Crime and Punishment” tried to shut up a student who offered a response, from the perspective of police, to Snow’s comments about supposed “racial profiling.” The student said talk about racial profiling makes life hard for cops, since it may make minorities hostile and uncooperative.

Snow tried to silence him, claiming “this is a diverse class.” This was an apparent reference to two black students in the class, who were, Snow assumed, likely offended on hearing that.

The majority of the class, contacted by The Marquette Warrior, felt the

Wisconsin Blogs — A Selective List, All Highly Recommended

Media Trackers

Wagner on the Web

Jiblog

Boots & Sabers

MacIver Institute

An Ol’ Broad’s Ramblings

Freedom Eden

yoSAMite says

Wigderson Library & Pub

Badger Pundit

Christian Schneider

Milwaukee Federalists

The Provincial E-Mails

From Where I Sit

Dooley Noted

Wisconsin Family Voice

Modern Commentaries

Cold Spring Shops

Crusader Knight

Atom Feed For This Site

comments were reasonable and relevant, but Snow insisted that the student write an apology to the black students.

So how is a student to get vindication from University officials who hold the same intolerant views as Abbate?

Conclusion

Thus the student is dropping the class, and will have to take another Philosophy class in the future.

But this student is rather outspoken and assertive about his beliefs. That puts him among a small minority of Marquette students. How many students, especially in politically correct departments like Philosophy, simply stifle their disagreement, or worse yet get indoctrinated into the views of the instructor, since those are the only ideas allowed, and no alternative views are aired?

Like the rest of academia, Marquette is less and less a real university. And when gay marriage cannot be discussed, certainly not a Catholic university.

Labels: Cheryl Abbate, Gay Marriage, Intolerance, Leftist Intolerance, Leftist Professors, Liberal Intolerance, Marquette, Nancy Snow, Philosophy Department, Political Correctness, Suzanne Foster

POSTED BY JOHN MCADAMS AT 6:06 PM 

72 COMMENTS:

 Walter-marie Miller said...

Being forced to drop PHIL 104 in November is a huge burden on the student. That's a required class. It's a time penalty, it's a financial sanction. That she would make that remark about dropping the class is

despicable. She should be fired.

9:55 AM

 Kate Mulligan said...

Thanks for these posts. I went to Marquette as an undergrad and am so disappointed by the decline. A couple of years ago, I complained about the Gender and Sexual Resource Center, and a Jesuit, in response to my assertion that the center was propagating beliefs contrary to Catholic teaching, said that there were many truths. Not one truth, not Catholic. Unless this university rights itself soon, there is no way I'm sending my children to MU.

10:29 AM

 Walter-marie Miller said...

This kid should file a civil rights lawsuit to get his tuition money back.

It's a dangerous precedent that the controlling P.C.-regime at Marquette can do this and the worst thing that happens is a blog post.

But I mean a hardball lawsuit, fully aware that you'd win it even by losing it. Dragging Lovell, P.C higher-ups to depositions, etc. Mix in a little press, a couple headlines "Anti-Catholic discrimination alleged at Catholic Marquette."

I forgive the left so very many trespasses, but this silencing opposition stuff is the lowest. I would love to see the right coalesce around one of these cases and do it.

8:07 AM

 John McAdams said...

Chris Writes

A student at Marquette does not have 1st amendment protections in the

same way a student across town at UWM would.

The reason: State Action.

Marquette is a private institution. Your first amendment rights only protect your speech from action by a governmental entity. Marquette has policies in place that give similar protections to student expression...but there is no "right" of speech on the campus. Professors have the authority to control the classroom (and what occurs there) absent constitutional protections.

I'm not defending what occurred here, (I go out of my way when in the classroom to discuss things that make people uncomfortable) I'm trying to let you know, what the professor said is both technically and legally correct.

If you have questions about this response...feel free to email me at crterry at uwm dot edu.

2:43 PM

 John McAdams said...

@ Chris:

I never said that the student had a First Amendment right to speak up in class.

Arguably, the student has a *contractual* right to say certain things, since Marquette's states commitment to the free exchange of ideas is the sort of thing that some courts have ruled is binding.

See the FIRE website on this.

But the issue, as I see it, is simply intolerance of certain viewpoints.

It would be one thing to say "we are not going to discuss gay marriage" if the subject of the class had nothing to do with gay marriage. In a calculus class, for example.

It's another to say we are not going to discuss gay marriage because we can't let certain viewpoints be expressed.

2:48 PM

 John McAdams said...

This comment has been removed by the author.

3:11 PM

 justone1618 said...

Abbate is, of course, wrong in asserting that debate over so-called gay "marriage" is redundant and everybody agrees on gay "rights." Recent polls clearly show that Americans are increasingly against same sex "marriage."

I hope the cause of this outstanding student is taken up by a legal entity which shares the student's, my, and most of the country's standpoint on the subject.

Please can you provide an e-mail address for the person at the university who we should contact to express our outrage at this disgraceful behavior by an instructor who should be looking for alternative employment by now.

5:18 PM

 Umair Khan said...

What a waste of resources. People are fighting for their right to be stupid and bigoted. This Marquette Warrior is no warrior. The person, Cheryl Abbate, who is being demonized is not just a responsible adult and teacher but also a trainer for the United States army and a scholar. Thanks a lot for publishing her name and picture all over the Christian network because that is way more helpful than just evolving to be better

human beings.

7:59 PM

 Clayton Littlejohn said...

This is a very interesting story. I just read about this on another blog (<http://dailynous.com/2014/11/18/philosophy-grad-student-target-of-political-smear-campaign/>).

In writing this post, did you take account of the student's side of the exchange _and_ the professor's side or just the student's? I've read that you wrote this without first having consulted Abbate for a comment.

8:56 AM

 John Protevi said...

Your post is challenged here at Daily Nous, a prominent philosophy blog: <http://dailynous.com/2014/11/18/philosophy-grad-student-target-of-political-smear-campaign/>

One of the main points is that you took the student's account as true w/o contacting Abbate for her version of events. Is that accurate? If it is, why did you not contact Abbate?

8:58 AM

 David Ray said...

How do you know what actually happened in the class, and what exactly was said? Were you present? Is your account based on only one source? Did you attempt to check it with others who were present?

12:38 PM

 Garret Merriam said...

I'm curious, Prof. McAdams: what is your source for this information? Is this all coming from the student, or did you speak to the instructor as

well? Did you confirm this account independently from other students who may have witnessed it? It seems like before reporting on the story to the world you should at least make a good-faith effort to make sure the facts are correct and not being skewed one way or another.

In addition to potentially being intellectually dishonest, there is also concerned that this is professionally irresponsible. You are a professor who is critiquing a graduate student, and potentially putting her career at risk. If you are going to take such a move, there is a considerable burden on you to make sure that the facts you were reporting are correct. You have an ethical and professional obligation to make sure that you were not simply repeating a one-sided misrepresentation of events in a libelous fashion. Based on your post, it doesn't seem as though you have lived up to that obligation.

12:49 PM

 Craig said...

Did you discuss this with the grad assistant in question, or just write a blog post based on the student's allegations?

It is difficult enough to be a grad assistant and be overworked for a pittance without having outside faculty attempting to micromanage based on something they did not bear witness to.

12:59 PM

 KeynesianPacker said...

Dr. McAdams routinely misrepresents the statements and curriculum of other professors. I have taken specific courses that he has blogged about and the portrayal he gives, based on his student sources, has consistently been unfounded.

7:41 PM

 KeynesianPacker said...

Justone, please provide support for your claims that support for marriage equality is declining and a majority of Americans disapprove. It is pretty obvious that you are making these claims with no factual basis.

Gallup confirms this.

7:47 PM

 John McAdams said...

In writing this post, did you take account of the student's side of the exchange _and_ the professor's side or just the student's?

I wrote Abbate and asked her for her side of the story.

She failed to respond.

Remember that all the after-class exchange that I quoted was based on a recorded audio of the exchange.

Do you believe that gay marriage can be discussed in class, even if some students might make arguments against it?

Or do you believe that politically correct victim groups should be protected against ever hearing arguments which which they are presumed to disagree?

10:16 PM

 John McAdams said...

Dr. McAdams routinely misrepresents the statements and curriculum of other professors. I have taken specific courses that he has blogged about and the portrayal he gives, based on his student sources, has consistently been unfounded.

I only post based on students who accounts I know are reliable.

I think you have a high tolerance for politically correct professors.

And only case I can think of where you disagreed with one of my posts regarded a class titled "Psychology of Prejudice."

10:29 PM

 Rodney W. Cupp said...

According to Abbate, mention of gay marriage came up in a discussion of Rawls's equal liberty principle. The issue wasn't the merits of gay marriage; the issue was whether a ban on it violates the principle. If that is true, then a discussion of the merits of gay marriage would obviously be off the topic.

In addition, the research the student wished to discuss has been discredited. They could have discussed the research and its merits, but again, what does that have to do with Rawls's equality principle?

Me, you, and Abbate are all instructors, and we all know that we are constantly having to make decisions about how to best manage class time. I am certain that you would not tolerate students hijacking your classes with off-topic comments and discredited research.

It is inappropriate for you to second guess other instructors' decisions about how class time is to be used, especially in this case, where I presume you have not attended Abbate's class and you based your opinion solely on the testimony of the student. You're not in Abbate's department and I am certain that you do not supervise her. I hate to say that you should mind your own business, but it appears that someone needs to tell you that.

10:59 PM

 Garret Merriam said...

Dr. McAdams: "Do you believe that gay marriage can be discussed in class, even if some students might made arguments against it? Or do you believe that politically correct victim groups should be protected against ever hearing arguments which which they are presumed to disagree?"

I have taught gay marriage in my applied ethics class several times. We read peer-reviewed articles by respected scholars on both sides of the issue. I teach my students through example how to debate potentially sensitive topics with consideration and respect. I don't believe I've ever met a teacher or scholar who thinks this cannot or should not be done. I have never heard anyone claim that topics such as these should not be discussed in class, only that they be discussed in a professional, scholarly manner that respects the sensitivities of vulnerable populations. You seem to set up a straw man when you imply that some people think 'victim groups should be protected against ever hearing arguments with which they disagree.'

From my understanding of events, however, Ms. Abbate's class was not an applied ethics course, but a moral theory course. Gay marriage was brought up in passing as an example, not as a point for substantive discussion. As such, it makes perfect sense that Ms. Abbate wouldn't spend limited class time debating the issue, as it was not the subject of the class. And given the student's seemingly hostile and surreptitious behavior (according to Ms. Abbate's version of events, at least) it makes sense that she would be concerned about this student's ability to discuss a sensitive issue in a respectful way, one that is consistent with your own University harassment policy.

11:55 PM

 John Protevi said...

Professor McAdams, you do not provide the text of your email contacting Ms Abbate, nor the time frame you offered for her response. Nonetheless, we now have her side of the story, at the Daily Nous post:

<http://dailynous.com/2014/11/18/philosophy-grad-student-target-of-political-smear-campaign/>. I warmly invite you to respond there.

7:32 AM

 Kimberly Engels said...

It has been reported that you emailed Ms Abbate on Sunday morning and posted your blog on Sunday night. Something tells me that you did not have a "deadline" to meet for your own blog. If that's true, why did you only wait 9 hours? Justin Weinberg has criticized you for this on the Daily Nous stating:

UPDATE 4 (11/19/14): McAdams states on his blog that he wrote to Abbate and asked for her side of the story. He wrote her at approximately 9am on Sunday, November 9th and published the original piece on his blog 9 hours later. One might think that the professor would know that this is an insufficient window of time, for it would be wise for a graduate student instructor to consult her chair or other administrators at the school (about school policy, or FERPA, good teaching practice, etc.) before divulging information about student behavior, in writing, to a third party such as himself, and that people sometimes are difficult to contact or check their emails less frequently on Sunday. If he was really interested in hearing her side of the story, he would have waited to hear back from her. What was the rush? Let me also share that his email (which I have a copy of) begins with the line, "I'm working on a story about an after class confrontation you had with a student." Notice how this assumes there is actually a news story here, prior to hearing from Abbate. That doesn't quite inspire confidence in the fairness or accuracy of his reporting. Finally, let me add that McAdams sent this email to Abbate from his official university email address, and in doing so gives the impression that his inquiry is official university business. This makes it all the more imperative for Marquette University to make a public declaration of support for Abbate and to explain that it does not condone professors using university resources to conduct politically-motivated witch hunts that target its students.

3:19 PM

 cassamandra said...

McAdams: "all the after-class exchange that I quoted was based on a recorded audio of the exchange." Is this a case of terrible writing, or is this a confession? In the first case, you would have written, "all quotes were direct transcripts of the recording." In the second case, well, that's not what you wrote, eh?

3:42 PM

 KeynesianPacker said...

How do you know those students' accounts are reliable? I am an open-minded person and I am willing to admit when liberal professors are biased. It seems to me that you trust student sources to be reliable because they are conservative. I'm not saying that conservatives shouldn't be believed, but being conservative does not inherently make a student credible. I am friends with multiple conservative professors with whom I do not agree on most policy issues, but none of them would publicly shame a fellow Marquette professor based on the word of one student. Your conduct is highly unprofessional.

11:40 PM

 Navigator Scc said...

Sorry but justone1681 has his/her facts wrong. Two successive Gallup polls in 2012 saw support climb from 53% to 54%, indicating a steady but slight growth in acceptance of gay marriages over the past year after a more rapid increase between 2009 and 2011. In the latest May 8-11 poll, there is further evidence that support for gay marriage has solidified above the majority level.

10:24 AM

 lorri loves parties said...

Oh my, I will put Marquette College to my list of universities we refuse to

pay for our kids to attend. We have five more years to decide and have told them they can go anywhere they want. The school seems very intolerant of all thought except their own preconceived notions. I have a feeling this instructor is hiding in his big closet and is afraid to come out.

3:17 PM

 Kyle Dingman said...

What if the student was instead opposed to interracial marriage? Is the instructor obligated to devote class time to entertaining and rebutting his arguments on that point?

In any class, there are always more potential debate topics than can be addressed in the limited time available for discussion. Someone has to make a judgment call about which topics will be allotted time and which will be sidelined. Almost always, the appropriate person to make that judgment call is the professor.

This student may disagree with the instructor's allocation of time, but that hardly means he's been silenced.

3:32 PM

 Noneof Urbusiness said...

This is what passes for progress in the warped minds of liberals.

There are solid opinions opposed to changing marriage and those opinions need to be shared, especially at the college level.

4:59 PM

 Randy Gire said...

It is sad that this is what we are talking about in America. We have Russia annexing Crimea, IS murdering and raping innocent civilians, and Mexican officials killing students over a protest. True Christians

will always hold the point of view that homosexual marriage is wrong in the eyes of God. Don't believe me, read the bible. But we are not here to condemn you, just like we are not here to condemn all of the straight unmarried folks for their behavior. But IF the question is asked of us, we should have the right to share our honest opinion, that we disagree with gay marriage based on our religious beliefs. If you don't like it or don't agree, welcome to America. We all have the same freedoms. Feel free to express yours.

11:55 PM

 Mike Oehl said...

As an '83 grad from Marquette's NROTC program (and a former John McAdams student) I was disheartened to open a news link and find my alma mater dealing with this issue. Unfortunately, these PC views are not limited to MU. I have two children attending Catholic Universities, thinking they would be in environments where both sides of such an issue were respected. I realized how mistaken I was when I read about Fr. McShane's (Fordham's President) public humiliation of the College Young Republican's for the invitation they extended to Ann Coulter to speak at Fordham. He belittled them in the public arena until they rescinded their invitation. (It's OK to have an opinion, as long as it agrees with the professor's...or the University's President). I am not an Ann Coulter fan, but the Young Republicans certainly had a right to invite her to speak, especially after Fordham allowed controversial Philosopher Peter Singer to address the university; a man who was banned from speaking in Germany for his views on the moral status of the fetus and the newly born. I can only wonder a young Karol Józef Wojtyła would have dropped Professor Abbate's class. Would she have taken exception to his views on human sexuality and marriage? The question is not how we got here. It's how we get back on track.

7:17 AM

 Ronald Creswell said...

This professor needs to be terminated.

11:41 AM

 Brian Leslie said...

erratum?

3:04 PM

 Nancy Danielson said...

Surely a Catholic School that no longer recognizes that God created us male and female to live in Loving relationship as sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, but rather believes that God created us according to sexual desire/orientation, to live our lives in relationship as objects of sexual desire, having lost both Faith and reason, can no longer profess to being Catholic.

10:32 PM

 CoachAnnH said...

It's a very sad day when the Jesuits have so abandoned Catholic beliefs in favor of an out and out promotion of the secular regressive agenda. Sadder still that they fail at an opportunity to strengthen Catholic identity in our young people. Many truths? Are you kidding me?! Marquette is certainly off the Catholic college application list at our house.

12:51 AM

 Aaron Lercher said...

From published accounts, Professor Abbate's conduct was well within the bounds of academic freedom.

She was teaching Rawls's theory. Gay marriage is not a useful topic for discussing that theory.

If one were to discuss the extent to which Rawls's theory "stacks the deck" in some ways, then gay marriage would also not be a good topic

for that purpose either.

2:09 PM

 Joe D. said...

What is ironic here is that if Jesus himself was taking Ms. Abbate's class he would be asked to drop it as well. In his own words the definition of marriage, Matthew 19:4-5, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"

6:11 AM

 mordred x said...

@Joe D,

(Learn what the word "ironic" actually means)

The sanctimonious bully-pulpit tone of the Christian hardline Right never fails to frighten and to disgust.

You could just as well say that all the fighters of ISIL would also walk out of this class.

NOWHERE - including in the verse that you quoted - does Jesus in the Gospels say anything against homosexuality.

On the other hand - and completely contra the utterly BS "family values" camp - there are number of passages in both the Gospels and the letters of Paul that would seem to speak strongly *against* marriage.

Luke 14:26 ""If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, even their own life--such a person cannot be my disciple."

In any case, if Jesus of Nazareth had been in the class, do you think that He would have recorded a conversation held with the teacher afterwards, lied about making the recording, then sent off the recording to a fanatical far-right culture warrior that He knew would use the recording as a basis for a David Horowitz witch-hunt and as an occasion for a public show-trial?

How "Christian" is it to persecute "sinners" on the basis of third hand rumor and innuendo?

9:42 AM

 Ron & Kim said...

I agree 100% with this professor.

Eventually we have to move on from the hate and discrimination arguments. Once-upon-a-time it was socially acceptable to argue against integration or interracial marriage and as time progressed those views became hateful and bigoted. Giving gays equal rights should no longer be a political debate, its a matter of treating ALL American's fairly.

9:31 AM

 Stephen Staedtler said...

Colleges act like they are about diversity, but they are not about diversity of thought. I am sure Christianity can be bashed in class, and they don't go out and commit suicide. Gays should be able to handle it when people criticize gay marriage in class. This whole "bullying" thing has become a giant front for gay indoctrination and to silence anyone with traditional values. Really disappointed in Marquette, especially being a Catholic University.

7:36 PM

 atomly said...

Wow, seriously? I'm about as left as they come, and I find things like this absolutely disgusting. I thought the entire point of a liberal arts education, especially one in philosophy, was to learn from diverse fields, viewpoints, and schools of thought... The second we start saying that a viewpoint is not OK to have, we might as well be tiptoeing toward fascism.

11:37 PM

 Kevin Kervick - Owner/Facilitator said...

I just finished teaching a human sexuality class and I believe we handled this diversity quite well. There were three openly gay, two lesbian, and one questioning student in class. All perspectives were encouraged. This is a private, non-sectarian university. I used one class to present Rick Warren's pro-heterosexual marriage comments at the Humanum Conference. Gay students had plenty of opportunity to offer their ideas but I refused to make the sexuality class, a class in sensitivity training. We tried to deal with the facts.

The concern I have is the rapidly evolving gender fluidity meme that is entering the field without empirical basis. Students are being peddled all sorts of nonsense.

A issue that does not get enough play is peer pressure among faculty. Gay and lesbian professors can be quite vocal and militant, thus intimidating peers that might want to disagree.

6:58 AM

 Rich Croesus said...

Holz, Dr. Richard C.

(414) 288-7230

Dean

Klingler College of Arts and Sciences

Sensenbrenner Hall 102
richard.holz@marquette.edu

I encourage those to express their thoughts to Dean Holz

6:02 PM

 Sam Lee said...

A teacher certainly has the right to limit conversation to the topic at hand in class. However, if the details presented of the recording are accurate, Ms. Abbate is definitely in need of a little sensitivity training.

9:29 PM

 William Jansyn said...

I must start by saying that I'm a Catholic, but I've never attended MU or any other Catholic University. John Mcadam's post seems to be well reasoned, concise, and restrained so as to remain within the bounds of civil discourse. This is, perhaps, the most civil post and collection of responses that I've ever encountered. In today's online world of boisterous, ill-mannered blogs where trolls seem to dominate, MU should take pride in the fact that a member of its faculty has so ably demonstrated such a high degree of professionalism in a public venue. Rather than succumbing to the emotional irrationalism of your typical Facebook page, John Mcadams has maintained his academic posture.

I received my Bachelor of Science from a secular, public university. Even though my Catholic views were often at odds with the views of my professors in several social-science courses, I never encountered any form of attempted censorship like the actions attributed to Cheryl Abbate. All of my professors were willing to have an open debate on issues relevant to the course lecture.

I believe that this is due to the fact that my Alma Mater, Northeastern Illinois University, is considered to have one of the most diverse student

populations in the country. Bosnian, Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, German, South African, Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Viet Nameese, Guatemalan, Costa Rican, Israeli, Palestinian, and Brazilian would be a short list of the countries of origin of my classmates. Because many of them came from societies and cultures where the free exchange of ideas was not tolerated, I believe that any attempt to censor would have been immediately and fiercely challenged.

Indeed, many times, my expression of ideas whose origin was in my Catholic faith often began a spirited debate, pro and con. My understanding of the modern term “university” (first in Bologna, Italy?) is that ALL ideas are open for discussion, no matter how unpopular, or even offensive, they may be.

The administrators at Marquette University seem to be opening themselves to two distinct dangers in this case, because the issue at hand deals with an attempt to silence a student expressing a Catholic point of view. Do the administrators wish to change the public perception of Marquette as being a Catholic institution; thereby foregoing any support from the Catholic Church and Catholic alumni? Do the administrators also wish to abandon the rule of academic freedom for faculty AND students, composing a list of forbidden ideas or points of view?

The administrator’s decisions as to the fate of John Mcadams may determine if, in the future, the public’s perception of Marquette University becomes Marquette College. The administrators at Marquette College may find that their former patrons now view them in the same light that they would view a corporation which issues a mission statement full of high ideals and lofty goals simply for PR purposes.

At many prestigious universities, the actual requirements of liberal arts studies have become so lax that these institutions are in danger of descending to the level of mere trade schools. With true liberal arts

degrees becoming an obsolete idea, does Marquette now wish to lead the way in abandoning the idea of true universities?

9:43 PM

 Kevin Kervick - Owner/Facilitator said...

Support for gay marriage actually declined by 5 points in the latest Pew poll. African Americans are not budging.

10:05 PM

 Courtney said...

This is so disturbing on so many levels. Now Christians are being persecuted from within? I thought Marquette was a Catholic University? How can a student at a Catholic institution be punished for expressing a Catholic viewpoint? My Catholic children won't go to Marquette-a so called Catholic School.

5:03 AM

 Smokey said...

Great job professor! We need to dive into political correctness i.e. Cultural Marxism and see how it is destroying this nation, especially when it comes to our national security. But first, let me say, I saw this coming over 20 years ago when I retired from the federal government because of it. We had an affirmative action plan in DoD that placed minorities above everything, especially when it came to hiring, firing and discipline. Trying to demote, transfer or fire a minority was next to impossible even when the individual could not walk, talk and chew gum at the same time! I equated their diversity, affirmative action, multiculturalism program as the Minuteman II missile philosophy, i.e. it would not work and you could not fire them. We coined the phrase because the missile did not have a good record of reliability and it was similar to what the government did back in the late 1960's when they forced supervisors and managers to hire or promote a black even when they did not qualify for the position. This greatly degraded the federal

fire service.

Our politicians in BOTH political parties make decisions involving our national security based upon Cultural Marxism i.e. political correctness views and how the useless media will portray them if they used common sense. For example, illegal immigration, Shariah/Islamic law, gun rights, secure borders, holding hearings on a group listed as a terrorist organization in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE however, here in the U.S. they are invited into our White House, all agencies, departments and programs. They are leading us towards a Caliphate and we cannot discuss it in either the House or Senate because both the Democrat and Republican's will not uphold their oath of office/affirmation, along with our Constitution Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 and the Preamble, BOTH require them to "provide for common defense" of this nation. So tell me how someone can write a plan to destroy us and it will not be discussed in either the House or Senate? You can buy a copy of their plan to destroy America at Amazon for only \$5.00 An Explanatory Memorandum: From the Archives of the Muslim Brotherhood in America or, you can read an online copy here at Center for Security Policy website.

<http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2013/05/25/an-explanatory-memorandum-from-the-archives-of-the-muslim-brotherhood-in-america>

To see the overall effect of this go to YouTube and watch Stephen Coughlin, Part 5: The Role of the OIC in Enforcing Islamic Law
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkAZUvQAzkc>

6:34 AM

 Unknown said...

I am not shocked just disgusted. People oppose gay marriage. I don't. But I would never tell, someone, they can't express their opinions.

It is really sad that progressives have become what they hate, and they can't even see it.

If the author experiences any penalties, I would expect Abbate to receive the same penalty. If this article is harassment then clearly Abbates approach would be considered the same. She made the classroom a hostile place for this student

7:24 AM

 wrlord said...

And then, in reinforcement of this article's point, the author was banned from the University for having written it. I suspect the cogs who made that decision were completely oblivious.

2:05 PM

 Al Cannistraro said...

I came to this website after reading an item about this posting on the National Catholic Reporter website <http://tinyurl.com/nn8toed>

If I were Prof. McAdams's boss, I'd be angry about his exploiting and pouring gasoline on a private dispute between a teacher and her for ideological purposes. The recording does not, cannot, provide all necessary and relevant context.

This disputed needs to be worked through by the directly involved parties. By this time, perhaps it has, but no thanks to Prof. McAdams.

1:27 PM

 Patrick Cullen said...

Thank your for standing up to the LGBT mafia in academia, who say you are free to express any opinion so long as it doesn't differ from theirs.

I'm sorry to hear that they have suspended you for speaking the truth. If you setup a paypal account to help fund your legal defense, I'm in.

8:51 PM

 T Hanson said...

"According to Abbate, mention of gay marriage came up in a discussion of Rawls's equal liberty principle. The issue wasn't the merits of gay marriage; the issue was whether a ban on it violates the principle. If that is true, then a discussion of the merits of gay marriage would obviously be off the topic"

No it would not. You could debate the merits AND see how the principle would apply. Could be a very interesting discussion. Too bad the TA missed the opportunity from what appears to be ideological blinders. Eg. If the equal liberty principle supports gay marriage, then by parity of reasoning why not polyamorous marriage? Incestuous marriage? If you don't like this consequence is the principle wrong or just misapplied? There - see how easy it is to apply the principle and debate the merits?

11:15 PM

 Candice Andrews said...

@Nancy Danielson, ouch! Well said, spot on!

@mordredx - way to misquote and take things out of context. The particular passage you quote, for example, has nothing to do with marriage, but rather is an expression of one's life for God, in contrast to one's love for the people around them (i.e. that one's love for God is strong enough to make one's love of family as hatred).

Finally, I believe the purpose here was to address the exchange between student and teacher - which, if I read this correctly, both occurred outside the class and was recorded. Irregardless of whether or not the topic should have been discussed in class, the question is: does Miss Abbate have the moral and legal right to tell a student that their personal, moral, religious, or political views are unacceptable or inappropriate for any class discussion based on the fact it might offend an unknown classmate? Whether it was pertinent to the actual

discussion at hand is irrelevant, especially considering the fact it was not, indeed, actually addressed in class.

That being said, I fail to see how this post, a personal opinion posted on a blogger account (as opposed to a university hosted space), which was well written, and seems to me to be an intelligent piece using the exchange being so hotly debated here as a jumping off point to address deeper issues on many university campuses.

Of topic, but since so many address it in the comments... Whether you believe the discussion of gay marriage is PC or just plain cruel and heartless, there is no inequality in stating that religious institutes (which necessarily adhere to biblical canon) see marriage as a Godly union between one man and one woman - and perhaps there is no ill in seeking equality in the legal union between two people, Irregardless of who/what they are. The true problem here is the creation of the marriage license, which allows the government to place itself into the administration of a religious ceremony.

4:04 PM

 T Hanson said...

The prof has no "obligation" to discuss the merits of interracial marriage or gay marriage or polyamorous marriage or incestuous marriage. But part of being a good prof is the ability to take important controversial issues and relate them to theory (Rawls) and this was a perfect opportunity the T A missed by bowing to PC pressure that she apparently internalized. Given the fact that the social sciences are overwhelmingly inhabited by leftist/liberals (if you deny this you are simply ignorant of the research) the cumulative effect of such silencing undermines the goal of education to pursue the truth insofar as it is possible.

3:35 PM

 Mercury Redbone said...

No position that denies full equality is defensible or ethical, and the religious bases of anti-gay attitudes are completely without relevance in an academic institution. Religious superstition is not worthy of respect, and the day will come when there's no such thing as an accredited religious school at any level. Justice is served in your termination.

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3:15 PM

 hound said...

It was distressingly unprofessional and unethical of you to post Ms. Abbate's name, Mr. McAdams. You could have discussed this issue just as well without leading a pack of frothing, harassment-prone ideologues to her front door.

Consider how much better this might have gone for everyone involved if you had simply not identified Ms. Abbate in your post. She would not have been harassed; appropriate Marquette University authorities would have been able to investigate her conduct free from the distraction of this mess; and you would not have been fired.

This entire situation is a massive disaster for you and I recommend you cease inflaming it as soon as possible. Alternatively, you could be as odious as possible and join the talking heads on Fox - but what good would it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

3:45 AM

 Derek Wolf said...

What an alarming story.

Professor McAdams, you did exactly what needed to be done.

Had the student not been outspoken enough to air their frustration, yet another student's independent thoughts would be suppressed by the instructor's PC agenda.

Had you not put the transcript to open view, how many students would also be suppressed by said agenda?

It is laughable that the "proper protocol" which you "should have" followed, consists of muddling around with HR departments and behind the scenes negotiating of complaints.

That is censorship protocol. This story would have never made it through the PC filters and to the students.

You did the right thing. Publish the event (transcript) as it happened and let the free-thinking public make up their own minds.

The school's integrity is being tarnished when even rational viewpoints are suppressed because it may hurt someone's feelings.

12:27 PM

 Rob said...

Whether everything the teacher said is 100% appropriate isn't the main problem. The main problem is that the student was completely breaking Wheaton's Law: they showed up thinking it would be clever to try to catch their teacher out on tape.

1:31 PM

 Jason said...

Redbone somehow missed the fact that this is a Catholic institution.

And then argued that accreditation should be stripped of religious schools.

Scratch a liberal, you will find a fascist. Every time.

10:56 AM

 Joe Smith said...

It's sad when a university classroom is considered an inappropriate venue to discuss a hot button issue currently being discussed in courts of law, state legislatures, and the public square. Were I a student in that class, I would feel infantilized. Were I a gay student in that class, I would be offended by this condescending idea that I have to be sheltered from a point of view that is still widely held in the public at large. I would relish the opportunity to assert what I consider to be my basic civil rights, and confront anybody who wants to tell me I shouldn't have that right.

10:15 AM

 The Beagle said...

I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said that "Truth will ultimately prevail when pains are taken to bring it to light". On behalf of thinking Americans everywhere, thanks to this courageous students and professor for taking on the painfull slings and arrows of bigoted politically correct totalitarianism.

11:35 AM

 Glass said...

Excellent blog post. It is time to stand up to leftwing fascism, counter-enlightenment and reaction, and not let these leftist get away with

ensorship and iron fist policies. There is no ethical standard that the TA could invoke in her own defense of censorship.

And the student had all the right to record her. May I suggest if she is not comfortable for being recorded (in particular after committing an unethical action), she should leave the university so it can gain back its dignity so tarnished by censorship activists.

Orwell: Inside each leftist is a totalitarian struggling to come out.

12:56 AM

 Glass said...

Dear Professor McAdams, thank you for carrying the flag of freedom and democracy in your battle against obscurantists and the counter-enlightenment and those who wish to enslave us in the name of political correctness.

It was Voltaire who 250 years ago was the standard bearer against obscurantism and intellectual fraud. Such personalities are as rare today as they were at that time. The leftwing today is more religious and backward than even the priesthood of the 18th century, and we need a Voltaire to address these latter day (secular) but religious fanatics.

1:05 AM

 Richard Hendricks said...

This philosophy instance is not exactly the same as when I took these courses 30 years ago but the slant seems to be the same. The most liberal of opinions was presented as fact and any disagreement was, even then, dismissed. It left me wondering why such a course was necessary. Of course it wasn't. Folks at the time just referring to it as a GPA raising opportunity. "just tell them what they want to hear and you'll get an A" was the advice. Seems like little has changed.

This isn't just a Marquette problem. It is societal. If you can't defeat your opponent on merit, just out shout them. If that doesn't work, stifling the opposing view is used. Apparently in written text, Marquette believes censorship will do the trick.

A private college can do what they like but they should not forget that students have free choice. Marquette isn't the only place to go.

11:47 AM

 Keir said...

I teach history at an international school in kreis Dachau, just outside the notorious site where I also happen to be accredited. I am deeply concerned that in the United States, the country which liberated Dachau 70 years ago, is now a place where academics can be summarily fired because their views are simply inconvenient. It is also astonishing to me, who also teaches a type of philosophy course (Theory of Knowledge) which expects students to discuss uncomfortable ideas and examine them on their merits. The idea that there is anything which is universally accepted is nonsensical and anathema to the subject. This needs to be fought in the spirit of the four freedoms your country stood for all those years ago; such a long time now.

<http://tracesofevil.com>

9:18 AM

 Justa Dude said...

If anyone wants a good laugh the ever prescient Onion had this all figured out a long time ago. College encourages lively exchange of idea.

<http://www.theonion.com/article/college-encourages-lively-exchange-of-idea-38496>

9:24 AM

 Justa Dude said...

You can't catch someone who doesn't eagerly gobble up the bait though.

9:26 AM

 Justa Dude said...

<http://www.theonion.com/article/college-encourages-lively-exchange-of-idea-38496>

9:29 AM

 Leslie Alexander said...

She is a tyrant and should be treated as such. Her behavior is anti-intellectual and inexcusable.

10:44 AM

 Leslie Alexander said...

Oh please. The facts couldn't be clearer. There is a recording.

10:45 AM

 gopasdaughter said...

Oh my gosh...I just checked out Cheryl Abbate's page. If the student were an animal, he'd get more respect from her and a recognition of his rights, no doubt.

10:03 PM

 Stan said...

How do people evolve unless confronted by opposite points of view? I agree demonizing a TA, who is trying to structure her class, is wrong. She made the critical mistake of expressing her opinion that the matter of gay marriage is no longer in dispute as a reason not to entertain it during class. It clearly is in dispute by a large minority in the U.S. The

world we created is now hostile to all, unless one has no opinions about anything. This is a mess that shouldn't have been used, as it was, in my opinion, for self-aggrandizement. Now he has a bully pulpit - but no job.

2:00 AM

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