

Quote of the Day:

“The highest purpose of education is to unlearn what we once took for granted, to replace certainty with subtlety, prejudice with compassion, and destiny with possibility.”

-- psychiatrist and writer Neel Burton

Readings for next time

Paper due Monday, 10:00 PM

Comments on today's readings, especially those by Lara Schwartz and Musa Al-Gharbi

- open-mindedness, dialogue, viewpoint diversity, and free expression are instrumental rather than absolute values; they help us avoid groupthink, confirmation bias, and other impediments to finding truth**
- embracing these truth-seeking principles does not require a stance of “anything goes”; we have to draw lines somewhere; no false equivalence**
- supporting your views vs. searching for truth**
- good principles can be abused by bad actors**

Main item for today: universities and truth

The pursuit of truth is generally considered either the most important purpose of universities, or among the most important.

Current controversies about universities that lie outside the scope of our course:

- cost**
- access**
- quality**
- campus life**
- etc.**

How important to students is the truth-seeking function of universities?

“In deciding to go to college, how important to you was each of the following reasons?” (very important, somewhat important, or not important)

[Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA]

	“very important” 2019 U.S. Freshmen*	“very important” 2020 Pol S 334 Students
economic/career (A, D, F, G)		
truth/knowledge/learning (B, E)		
social (C)		
family (H)		
A. To be able to get a better job	84%	72%
B. To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	75%	71%
C. To make me a more cultured person	50%	47%
D. To be able to make more money	73%	61%
E. To learn more about things that interest me	83%	82%
F. To get training for a specific career	79%	41%
G. To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	60%	46%
H. To please my family	37%	20%

***data from Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA**

The mottos of American universities (and others around the world) often mention truth, among other goals

University

Harvard University

Yale University

Princeton University

University of Michigan

University of North Carolina

University of Washington

Motto (translation)

Truth

Light and truth

Under God's power she flourishes

Art, science, truth

Light, liberty

Let there be light



**Christo et ecclesiae, “Christ and church”
Veritas, “Truth”**



Lux sit, “Let there be light”

http://www.dailyuw.com/news/article_66c479de-c6c0-5960-82d9-b9b75c1deac4.html

The word “liberal” in “liberal arts” captures a similar idea.

Let’s examine whether universities can and do serve as sites for discovering and disseminating truth through their:

- research**
- teaching**
- other campus events and conversations**

Key concepts for truth seeking in universities:

- **academic freedom of professors**
- **academic freedom of students**
- **dialogue, engagement, rigorous methods of inquiry**
- **diversity of backgrounds and identities**
- **diversity of viewpoints**

The “Chicago Principles” of free expression on campus

<https://provost.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/documents/reports/FOECommitteeReport.pdf>

Something similar has been adopted at 55 American universities, though not yet at UW.

Key parts of the Chicago Principles:

- **Freedom of expression within universities**
- **Exceptions for illegal speech, defamation, threats, harassment, and privacy/confidentiality**
- **The university provides the forum but does not address disputed matters as a university**
- **Individuals are free to “criticize and contest” but not to limit others’ ability to speak and hear**

Academic freedom: the right of members of an academic community to research, teach, study, hear, and express ideas without being targeted for imprisonment, job loss, expulsion, low grades, and other severe sanctions.

Let's first examine the academic freedom of faculty, then of students.

Some famous violations of faculty academic freedom:

- 1930s: Purging in Soviet universities of scientists studying genetics, replaced by devotees of agricultural scientist Trofim Lysenko**
- 1950s: Purging in American universities of professors with alleged communist sympathies, including three professors at UW**
- Last several years: firing and prosecuting Turkish professors**
- Last several years: many violations of academic freedom in Hungary, including forcing Central European University to relocate to Austria**

Tenure is supposed to protect professors' academic freedom.

Firing tenured professors in the U.S. for their research and writing is virtually nonexistent, though many people try. It's a different matter for non-tenured professors (now the overwhelming majority) and people who have accepted but not yet started academic jobs.

Academic freedom of professors in the classroom: the right to select the approach to the topic at hand, along with the course materials, assignments, and evaluations.

Not designed to cover:

- **A professor's incompetence**
- **A professor who opines on subjects outside the purview of the course**
- **A professor's ethical violations**
- **Core courses (such as those required for a major) designed at the departmental level**

Academic freedom of students:

- **Choosing majors**
- **Choosing courses**
- **Hearing outside speakers**
- **Investigating ideas within courses**
- **Investigating ideas elsewhere on campus**
- **Heterodox Academy survey: many students keep their views to themselves**

Truth seeking within universities requires dialogue, engagement, and rigorous methods of inquiry

- **Peer review for academic articles and books**
- **In published academic articles and books, citations to previous works**
- **Discipline-specific research methods**
- **Are classes rigorous?**

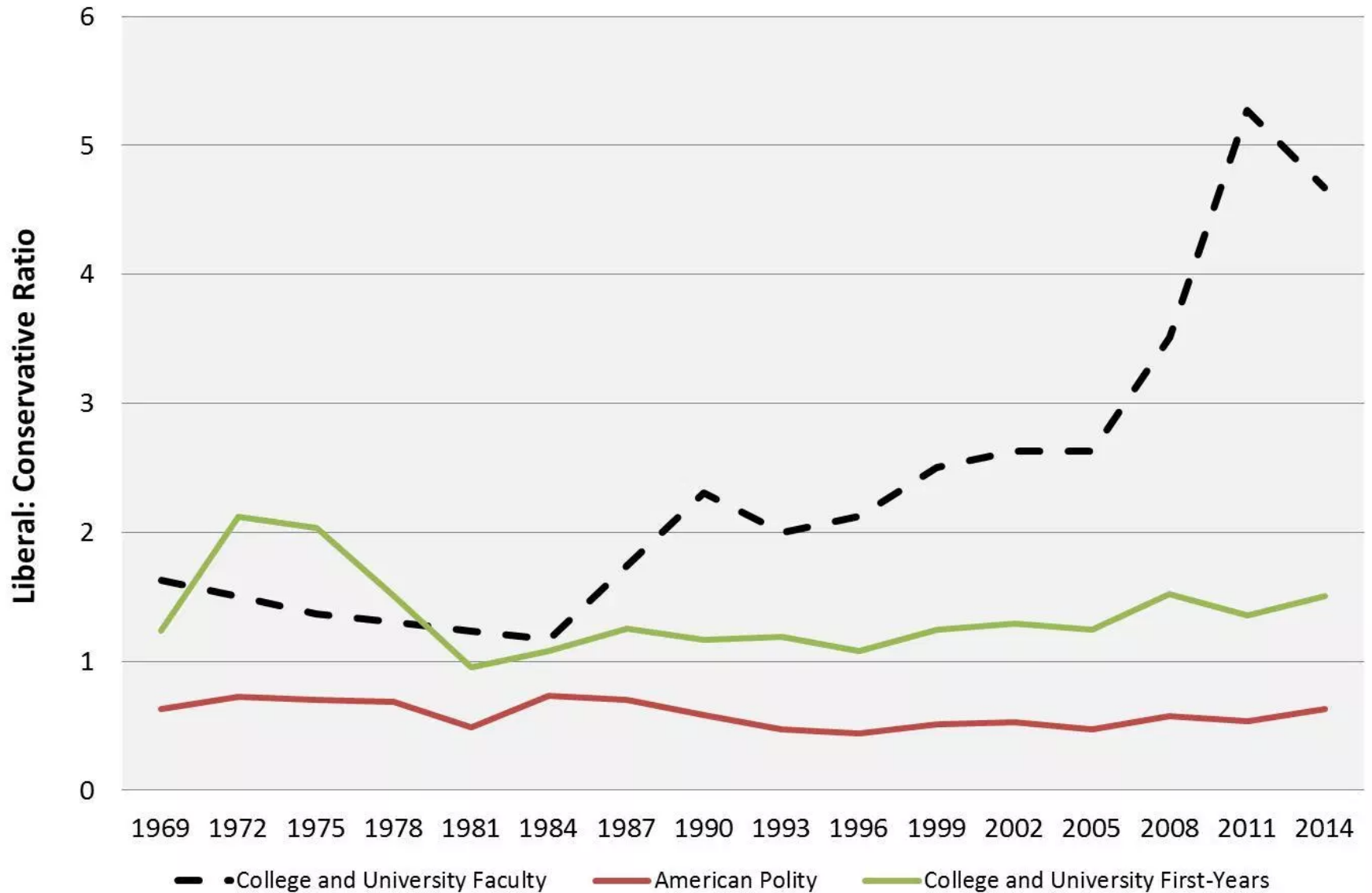
- **Student papers: cite sources and address particular authors and ideas**
- **Dialogue and engagement through classroom discussions**
- **Dialogue and engagement among students elsewhere on campus**

**Diversity of identities and backgrounds among faculty teaching at American colleges and universities, including community colleges
(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017)**

Male	53%
Female	47%

White	76%
Black	6%
Hispanic	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%

Ideological diversity of college and university faculty

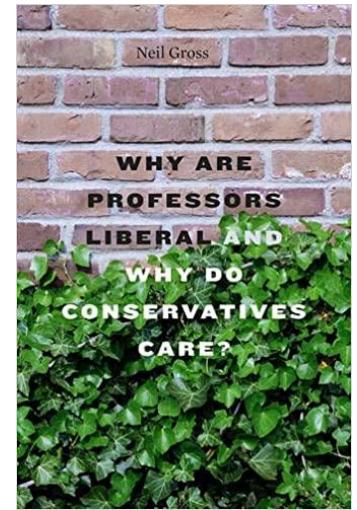


Your experiences with the ideological orientation of UW faculty?

Neil Gross, *Why Are Professors Liberal and Why Do Conservatives Care?*

Explanations that have been proposed:

- **Education (of which professors have a lot) has a liberalizing effect**
- **Class envy, gap between education and income of professors**
- **Liberals more likely to choose meaning-oriented professions such as academia**
- **Liberals are smarter than conservatives (commonly alleged, through not by scholars)**
- **Discrimination against conservatives in hiring for faculty positions**



Neil Gross finds evidence for some of those explanations but favors a different one.



- **Professors are typecast as liberal.**
- **Among equally talented students at every stage (before college, freshman in college, senior in college, during graduate school) liberals are more likely than conservatives to seek careers in academia.**
- **Thus we have self-selection where liberals opt in and conservatives opt out.**
- **Neil Gross: Irony in conservative rhetoric about universities, potentially creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.**