

## ***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**

**Questions on the second paper**

**Readings for next time**

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

- viewpoint diversity, open-mindedness, dialogue, and free expression are instrumental rather than absolute values; they help us avoid groupthink, tribalism, 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**
- false equivalence**
- supporting your views with evidence 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)**

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

**\*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**

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

**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 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?**

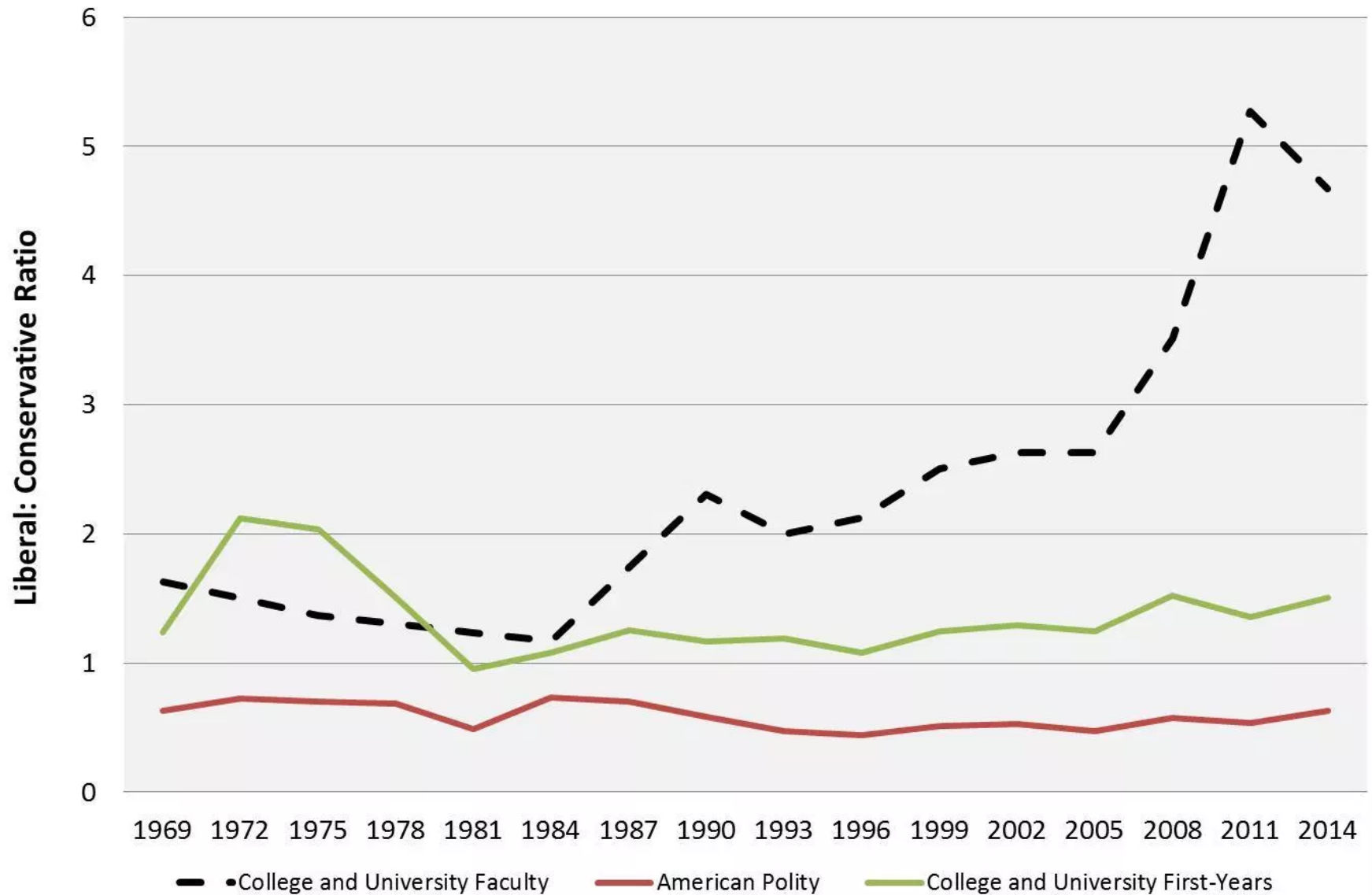
- **Student papers: cite sources and address particular authors and ideas**
- **Dialogue and engagement through classroom discussions?**
- **Dialogue and engagement among students elsewhere on campus?**

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

<b>Male</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>47%</b>

<b>White</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	<b>11%</b>

# Ideological diversity of college and university 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, though 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.**



**Does it matter that most professors are liberal?**

- **Allegations of indoctrination (though not much hard evidence of it; difficulty of separating influence of classes from college more generally).**
- **Maybe the lack of viewpoint diversity among professors compromises the search for truth in their research, eventually affecting classes and the wider society?**

## Social psychologist Lee Jussim:

