



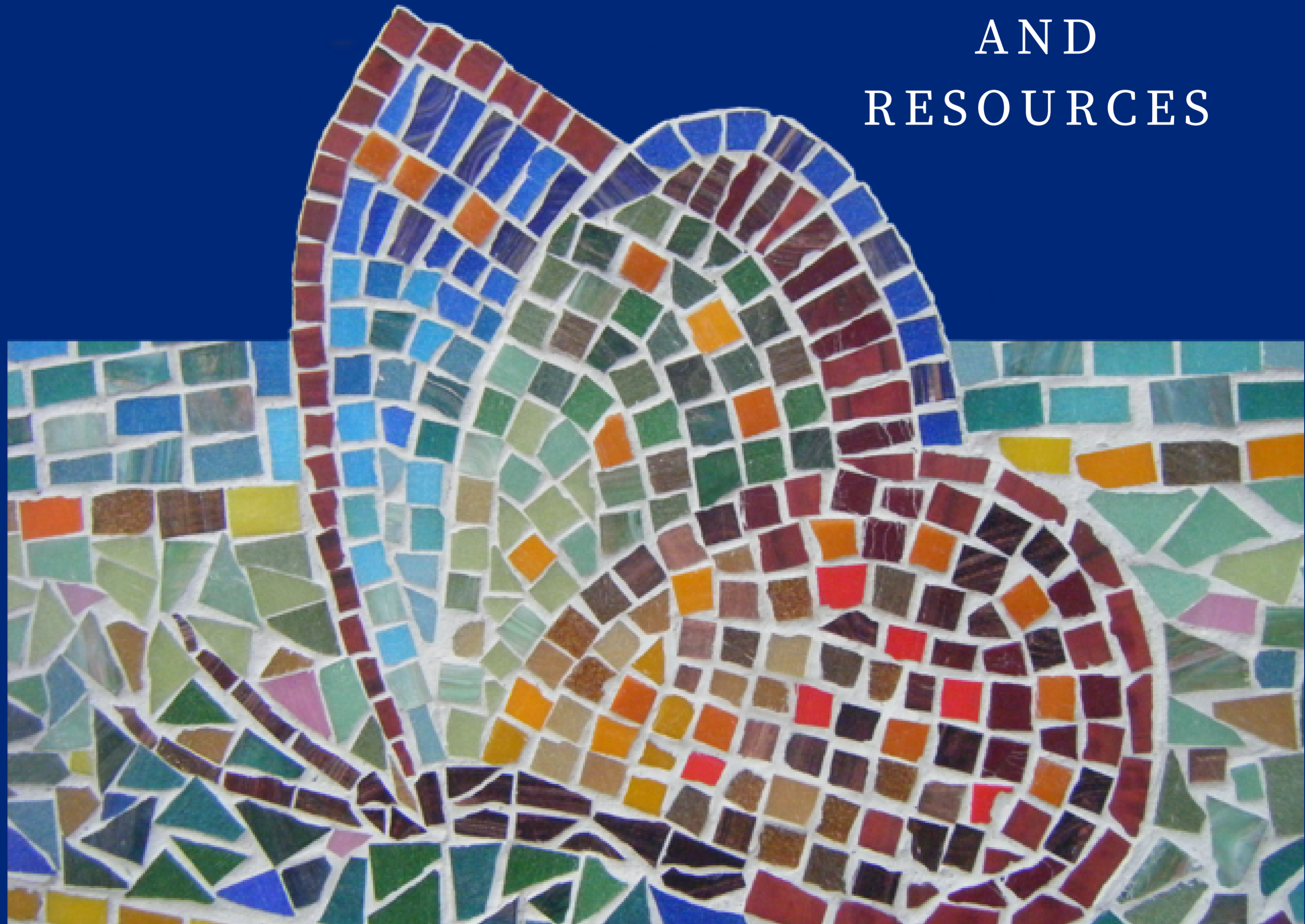
EMORY  
UNIVERSITY

Center for Faculty  
Development and Excellence



# INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

DISCUSSIONS  
AND  
RESOURCES



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Vanderbilt University, Center for Teaching, “Diversity & Inclusive Teaching” — emphasizes how to create inclusive classrooms that value and support diversity, particularly in terms of racial, ethnic and cultural identity; gender; sexual orientation; and disabilities

- <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/faculty-accountability-culturally-inclusive-pedagogy-and-curricula>

AACU (Association of American Colleges & Universities) article calling for greater faculty accountability for culturally inclusive curricula and pedagogy

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-akUss3uj0M>

3.5-minute video made by Columbia University, which features students and instructors explaining what they believe inclusive teaching means

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4eJXuCeSjA&t=6s>

5-minute video made by Columbia University, which features students and instructors describing concrete experiences of inclusive teaching

## Microaggressions

The term “racial microaggressions” was first coined in the 1970s by Harvard professor and psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, who used the term to describe the everyday insults and slights he saw regularly inflicted on Black Americans. In the 1974 *American Handbook of Psychiatry* Pierce asserts, “The subtle, cumulative mini-assault is the substance of today’s racism” (p. 516). In 1973, Mary Rowe, adjunct professor and ombudsperson at MIT, extended microaggression theory with the term “micro-inequities,” which she defines as “apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator. Micro-inequities occur wherever people are perceived to be ‘different’” (Rowe, 1990, p. 2). Rowe has written about instances of micro-inequities grounded in sexism, homophobia, and discrimination on the basis of religion, ability, or appearance.

More recently, the language and concept of microaggressions has entered popular culture, largely due to the work of psychologist and educator Derald Wing Sue, who edited the 2010 book *Microaggressions and Marginality*. Sue defines microaggressions as “the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership” (p. 3). He contrasts these with overt, intentional acts of bigotry, such as racial slurs or hate crimes. Microaggressions, he explains, are often committed by “well-intentioned individuals who are unaware that they have engaged in harmful conduct toward a socially devalued group” (p. 3).

Examples of microaggressions include: statements or nonverbal behavior that subtly demean a person’s identity, that reflect or reinforce stereotypes, that overlook or render

someone or their contribution invisible, that express discomfort with a minority group, that position the dominant culture as “normal” and others as “abnormal” or even pathological, that minimize the existence of discrimination, or that attempt to deny the microaggressor’s own bias. While microaggressions are often brief interactions or remarks and may on the surface appear trivial, research indicates they have a powerful, cumulative, detrimental impact on the wellbeing of marginalized groups.

In addition, researchers have begun to study “intersectional microaggressions,” or microaggressions endured by people who are marginalized or oppressed on the basis of multiple, intersecting aspects of their identity, such as race and gender. As researcher and writer Maya Goodfellow explains, “The particular intensity of misogyny directed at black women is so commonplace that it was given a name by academic [and Emory alumna] Moya Bailey: misogynoir.” (See Goodfellow, “Misogynoir: How social media abuse exposes longstanding prejudices against black women,” *New Statesman*, 27 February 2017, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2017/02/misogynoir-how-social-media-abuse-exposes-longstanding-prejudices-against-black>.)

Not only are researchers and administrators paying increasing attention to the impact of microaggressions and micro-inequities; they are also concerned with how to prevent and counteract such harms. As Mary Rowe recognizes, since micro-inequities are often unconscious, they can be difficult to “catch” and stop in one’s own behavior. So she proposes the practice of “micro-affirmations,” which are similarly everyday, usually brief acts—yet aimed toward positively building up others and motivated by the desire to help others thrive. She gives the following examples:

Micro-affirmations are tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening. Micro-affirmations lie in the practice of generosity, in consistently giving credit to others—in providing comfort and support when others are in distress, when there has been a failure at the bench, or an idea that did not work out, or a public attack. Micro-affirmations include the myriad details of fair, specific, timely, consistent and clear feedback that help a person build on strength and correct weakness. (Rowe, 2008, p. 4)

Rowe believes micro-affirmations are an important practice especially for mentors and managers to cultivate. Because micro-affirmations are consciously practiced, over time they can become habitual patterns of positive behavior, potentially even spreading throughout an organization and shifting that organizational culture.

**Scott Lilienfeld**, professor of psychology at Emory University, argues that the scientific research on microaggressions is not yet solid enough to support the implementation of microaggression training programs. Lilienfeld has recommended a moratorium on such programs, citing research that they can do more harm than good.

*For further discussion of this topic, see:*

- <https://aeon.co/essays/why-a-moratorium-on-microaggressions-policies-is-needed>



Lilienfeld critiques the research behind microaggressions and recommends a moratorium on training programs.

- [https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/centerforteaching/interrupting\\_microaggressions\\_january2014.pdf](https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/centerforteaching/interrupting_microaggressions_january2014.pdf)  
A tool that provides examples and guidelines for interrupting microaggressions
- [https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions\\_InterruptH O\\_2014\\_11\\_182v5.pdf](https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_InterruptH O_2014_11_182v5.pdf)  
A tool that provides examples and guidelines for interrupting microaggressions as a third-party observer
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/05/study-delivering-microaggressions-linked-harboring-racist-attitudes>  
Discusses a study in *Race and Social Problems* that suggests microaggressions indicate underlying racism in aggressors
- <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2009/02/microaggression.aspx>  
APA (American Psychological Association) article about racial microaggressions and their psychological impact on people of color
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/us/as-diversity-increases-slights-get-subtler-but-still-sting.html>  
Details the growing attention to microaggressions in public discourse and on university campuses
- <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-rise-of-victimhood-culture/404794/>  
Discusses how microaggressions relate to what a recent sociology publication has identified as the rise of a “victimhood culture” on college campuses
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/10/25/teaching-controversial-topics-age-microaggressions-trigger-warnings-and-tweeting>  
A professor’s reflections on how he can best teach controversial material in the classroom “in an age of trigger warnings, microaggressions and tweeting”
- <http://www.microaggressions.com/>  
Tumblr blog about microaggressions, power, and privilege as they manifest in everyday life

## Implicit Bias

Microaggressions may be a manifestation of implicit bias (or unconscious bias), which refers to social stereotypes and judgments that get formed outside of one’s conscious awareness. In fact, these judgments resulting from unconscious bias may even clash with one’s consciously

held values. Implicit bias gets triggered as the brain processes new information by using past knowledge to make assumptions.

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity (at Ohio State University) publishes a yearly *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review* that overviews current public discourse and recent scholarly publications about racial and/or ethnic implicit bias. Grounded in research from the neuro-, cognitive, and social sciences, these annual reviews document the social disparities caused by implicit bias. The 2016 report reviews trends in criminal justice, health, employment, education, and housing.

Shaped by cultural environment and personal experiences, unconscious biases develop in childhood but appear to be malleable. So steps can be taken to address implicit bias and to limit its impact. The Kirwan Institute's *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2016* suggests such steps as: educating oneself through the Implicit Association Test (IAT), increasing contact with people outside one's own demographics, holding oneself accountable for the impact of one's biases, and shifting unconscious associations and thought patterns through in-depth trainings or mindfulness meditation. All editions of the *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review* are available on the Kirwan Institute website:

<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/implicit-bias-review/>.

As implicit bias has become a topic of greater public attention, many organizations have begun to implement trainings to address implicit bias and to mitigate its harmful effects in the workplace.<sup>2</sup> Particular areas of concern include recruitment and hiring practices, performance reviews, opportunities for promotion, mentoring or management styles, and organizational decision-making policies.

*For further discussion of this topic, see:*

- <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>  
Project Implicit is a non-profit organization developed by researchers who study social cognition. Goals of the organization include raising public awareness about hidden biases and gathering further data on this topic. They have developed several versions of an Implicit Association Test (IAT), which can be taken online.
- <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2017/01/psychologys-racism-measuring-tool-isnt-up-to-the-job.html>  
Detailed *New York Magazine* piece about the history of the IAT; criticizes the test's methodology for failing to meet scientific standards of reliability and validity
- <https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias-resources>

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the Unconscious Bias Training offered by Emory's Office of Equity and Inclusion: <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/diversity/programs/unconscious-bias.html>. As the OEI website notes, these training sessions are "open to all faculty and are particularly recommended for those serving on search and appointments committees."

List of resources to learn more about unconscious bias; includes “comprehensive list of recent and classic implicit bias literature”

- [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/opinion/sunday/the-roots-of-implicit-bias.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/opinion/sunday/the-roots-of-implicit-bias.html?_r=0)

*New York Times* piece written by psychology researchers studying the roots of implicit bias and ways to overcome that bias

- <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004818663/peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism.html>

The *New York Times* has published a series of six brief videos about recognizing and overcoming implicit bias. This link takes you to the first video in the series, and on that site are links to the other five.

- <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/tag/implicit-bias>

APS (Association for Psychological Science) listing of recent scholarly and public media references to and discussions of implicit bias

## Trigger Warnings

A trigger warning is a statement given at the beginning of a text or video that alerts the reader or viewer to potentially distressing material (images, graphic writing, etc.) in the text or video that follows. Trigger warnings first developed on the Internet as a way to flag content that graphically depicts or discusses causes of trauma, such as military combat, torture, sexual assault, or other forms of violence or abuse. Such warnings may be helpful to readers or viewers who have a particular sensitivity (including post-traumatic stress disorder) to that subject matter, by either allowing them to avoid it or by helping them to better prepare for and manage their reactions as they read or watch.

As trigger warnings have become more prevalent in higher education and have begun to encompass a wider range of topics, they are sometimes critiqued because they’re perceived as a form of censorship or as “coddling” overly sensitive students, allowing these students to avoid material that makes them feel uncomfortable. A 2014 AAUP (American Association of University Professors) report argues, “The presumption that students need to be protected rather than challenged in a classroom is at once infantilizing and anti-intellectual.” This report also expresses the concern that mandatory trigger warnings (i.e. requiring teachers to provide warnings for any assigned material that may trigger difficult emotional reactions) threatens academic freedom—especially for non-tenured or contingent faculty—and creates a repressive climate for critical thinking. (See “On Trigger Warnings,” Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” AAUP, <https://www.aaup.org/report/trigger-warnings>.)

On the other hand, philosophy professor Kate Manne argues that trigger warnings, rather than excusing students from engaging with challenging ideas, actually *help* students to better exercise rational and critical thinking. Manne explains that when someone who has

experienced trauma gets “triggered,” that person undergoes intense mental and bodily reactions, such as flashbacks or panic attacks, and is unable to fruitfully engage any other matter. So giving a trigger warning may allow “vulnerable students [to] be able to employ effective anxiety management techniques” prior to and during potentially triggering reading assignments and class discussions. Although Manne does not believe the use of trigger warnings should be mandated by the administration, she does see a willingness to use them as a pedagogical best practice. (See Manne, “Why I Use Trigger Warnings,” *New York Times*, 19 Sept 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/opinion/sunday/why-i-use-trigger-warnings.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/opinion/sunday/why-i-use-trigger-warnings.html?_r=1).)

*For further discussion of this topic, see:*

- <http://ncac.org/resource/ncac-report-whats-all-this-about-trigger-warnings>  
The National Coalition Against Censorship conducted a 2015 survey of over 800 college educators to gather their experiences with and perspectives about trigger warnings. This report summarizes findings from that survey, highlighting both concerns about trigger warnings and reasons for using them.
- [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/university-of-chicago-trigger-warning\\_us\\_57bf16d9e4b085c1ff28176d](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/university-of-chicago-trigger-warning_us_57bf16d9e4b085c1ff28176d)  
A response to the University of Chicago’s widely publicized stance (in August 2016) against trigger warnings; this piece attempts to clarify what trigger warnings are intended to do and how they relate to mental health.
- <http://www.npr.org/2016/09/23/495226526/university-of-chicago-freshmen-react-to-letter-denouncing-trigger-warnings>  
An interview with two University of Chicago freshmen responding to the U of C’s letter criticizing trigger warnings and safe spaces
- <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>  
An oft-cited 2015 article in *The Atlantic*; the two authors (a constitutional lawyer and a social psychologist) argue that trigger warnings and other forms of “vindictive protectiveness” are disastrous for higher education and for students’ mental health.

## Safe(r) Space

The origins of the concept of “safe space” have been traced to the 1960s and 70s, specifically to gay and lesbian bars and to “consciousness raising” groups in the women’s movement—all of which were intended to provide spaces where marginalized people could find and nurture community, empowerment, and resistance to social repression. As Malcolm Harris points out, such “safe spaces” were neither free from risk nor free of internal disagreement. Rather, they were characterized by shared commitments to political goals of resistance and

social change. (See Harris, “What’s a ‘safe space’? A look at the phrase’s 50-year history,” *Fusion*, 11 Nov 2015, <http://fusion.net/story/231089/safe-space-history/>.)

Wikipedia notes that, in educational institutions, “safe space” and related terms (e.g. “safer-space” and “positive space”) were originally used “to indicate that a teacher, educational institution or student body does not tolerate anti-LGBT violence, harassment or hate speech, thereby creating a safe place for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safe-space>, accessed on 11 April 2017). Safe space campaigns and trainings still often focus on promoting a safe and affirming environment for LGBT persons.<sup>3</sup>

However, as the term has evolved and become more prevalent, particularly on university campuses, the concept of “safe space” has been extended to express concern for the wellbeing of any individual who experiences systemic marginalization. For example, the online forum The Safe Space Network (TSSN) defines a safe space as:

a place where anyone can feel at ease and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability. Basically, a place where the rules guard each person’s self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others.

(<http://safespacenetwerk.tumblr.com/post/23095736498/welcome-to-the-safe-spaces-network>)

Such safe spaces may be online virtual spaces, such as the TSSN, or they may be physical locations, such as classrooms, offices, or campus community centers. Sometimes “safe space” refers to a designated place on campus for members of a particular identity group to gather and hold activities. Sometimes “safe space” indicates a commitment to practice awareness, respect and welcome towards members of historically marginalized groups.

What these spaces all have in common is their participants’ attention to—and attempts to resist and overcome—discrimination and unequal power relations. Some people prefer the phrase “*safer* space” because of how this phrase acknowledges that no space is entirely “safe,” since challenging and eliminating discrimination is an ongoing process, rather than an already accomplished goal. In addition, some proponents of safe space emphasize that “safe” is not the same thing as “comfortable,” and that safe spaces will not necessarily be free from controversy and conflict.

Like trigger warnings, “safe space” has been criticized as being contrary to free speech and to academic freedom. Recent articles and opinion pieces have pointed to ways that the rhetoric of “safe space” may get leveraged on campuses in order to quash debates or to

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the training offered by Emory’s Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Transgender Life: [http://lgbt.emory.edu/programs\\_events/safe\\_space/index.html](http://lgbt.emory.edu/programs_events/safe_space/index.html).

silence people who have divergent or unpopular opinions. Some educators and college administrators, such as Judith Shapiro, worry that safe spaces “over-protect” or “infantilize” students and thus hinder critical learning and growth. Shapiro suggests that designated “safe spaces” imply that all other places on campus will be “unsafe,” at least for certain students, and that this will disproportionately magnify their “sense of personal danger” and ultimately impede their development of “authentic courage.” (See Shapiro, “From Strength to Strength, *Inside Higher Ed*, 15 Dec 2014, <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/12/15/essay-importance-not-trying-protect-students-everything-may-upset-them>.)

*For further discussion of this topic, see:*

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/07/24/debate-over-art-teaching-and-prejudice-school-art-institute-chicago>

Michael Bonesteel, an adjunct assistant professor at the School of Art Institute of Chicago, resigned after an investigation that found Bonesteel's conduct with a student constituted harassment based on gender-identity. SAIC objected to the professor's ridiculing the student for requesting a trigger warning and associating the trans student with another trans student with whom the professor was having difficulties. In resigning, Bonesteel complained of being targeted by militant LGBT students with an authoritarian agenda.

- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/06/safe-space-or-free-speech-crisis-debate-uk-universities>

This 2015 article in *The Guardian* reports on recent controversies at UK universities, which are experiencing a “wider battle for the nature of student life – should university be a ‘safe space’ for all, or a place where anything can be debated?”

- <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/opinion/sunday/judith-shulevitz-hiding-from-scary-ideas.html>

Opinion piece arguing that “safe spaces” in higher education tend to repress critical thinking and reinforce insularity

- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/brown-university-president-safe-spaces-dont-threaten-freedom-of-expression-they-protect-it/2016/09/05/6201870e-736a-11e6-8149-b8d05321db62\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/brown-university-president-safe-spaces-dont-threaten-freedom-of-expression-they-protect-it/2016/09/05/6201870e-736a-11e6-8149-b8d05321db62_story.html)

Opinion piece offering the counter argument: that safe spaces on campus offer an “anchor in an unfamiliar environment” and thus actually support critical reflection and academic freedom

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/08/29/students-deserve-safe-spaces-campus-essay>

Argues that students “deserve” safe spaces on campus “because the absence of such spaces is counter to the very mission of higher education”



## Academic Freedom/Free Speech

The online Encyclopedia Britannica defines academic freedom as “the freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure” (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/academic-freedom>, accessed on 11 April 2017). That is, members of the academic community should be free to study the topics and research questions that are of interest to them, to present and publish their findings and conclusions, to evaluate the soundness and value of each other’s conclusions, and to engage in intellectual debate—all without fear of censorship or of reprisals for expressing ideas that are unpopular or inconvenient to external authorities. Academic freedom also concerns teachers’ freedom in choosing how to teach and in discussing their subject matter in the classroom.

In the United States, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is a leading proponent of academic freedom. In 1940 the AAUP, along with what is now the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), jointly authored a “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” which continues to ground current notions of academic freedom. (For the full statement, see

<https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure>.)

This statement supports faculty members’ freedom in research, publication, and teaching—as well as their freedom to write or speak out as private citizens—but it also acknowledges certain limitations. For example, an institution may limit academic freedom due to “religious or other aims” but should clearly state such limitations “in writing at the time of the appointment.” The 1940 statement also urges teachers to avoid introducing into the classroom “controversial matter” unrelated to their subject. It further urges faculty members, when they speak out as citizens, to take care to be accurate, appropriately restrained, respectful, and clear that they are not speaking for the institution.

While academic freedom seems to be a central principle and widely supported in higher education, it is a contested issue. This emerges most vividly when academic freedom appears to clash with civility or even justice—when a member of the academic community is expressing ideas or opinions that others find inflammatory, offensive, damaging, and/or oppressive.

*For further discussion of this topic, see:*

- <http://op-talk.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/02/steven-salaita-and-the-quagmire-of-academic-freedom/?r=0>

Examines the controversy (and implications for academic freedom) sparked by the University of Illinois’ decision to rescind their hiring offer to Dr. Steven Salaita due to his anti-Israel tweets

- <http://www.thecrimson.com/column/the-red-line/article/2014/2/18/academic-freedom-justice/?page=1>

Opinion piece arguing that “academic justice” should trump “academic freedom”

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2010/12/21/defining-academic-freedom>

AAUP president attempts to clarify the concept of academic freedom by listing what it does and does not do.

- <https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/resources-academic-freedom>

The AAUP considers its core mission to be protecting academic freedom and has developed various policy statements on topics ranging from tenure, to controversy in the classroom, to free speech on campus.

- <https://www.aacu.org/about/statements/academic-freedom>

ACU statement that supports professors’ academic freedom, linking such freedom to the professors’ educational responsibilities to students

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