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University of Houston follows UT and Texas A&M down the road to censorship

The Graduate College of Social Work has already used Course content review to censor race, sexuality, and gender content

Houston, TX — Under political pressure, administrators at the University of Houston are moving to implement a policy requiring faculty to self-evaluate their course content, echoing similar censorship measures implemented at the [Texas A&M](#) and UT Systems.

“Along with curtailing academic freedom, this appears to be an attempt to infantilize our students by not trusting their ability to engage in critical thinking and to label everyday expectations of learning as potential acts of ‘indoctrination,’” **said UH Professor Nick Flynn.**

This policy move is both a threat to free and open discourse and unnecessary. The self-assessment will require professors to pledge not to “force” a particular opinion on their students or to “indoctrinate them.” However, administrators admit no “indoctrination” is occurring, and the policy is redundant because existing professional standards already draw a careful distinction between education and indoctrination, which faculty follow. Under AAUP guidance, indoctrination occurs when an instructor dogmatically insists that students accept professionally contestable propositions as unquestioned truth while preventing meaningful challenge. That has not happened at UH.

“The people who seek to muzzle faculty from entering into uncomfortable topics in the classroom are doing a disservice to our students. Discussing difficult topics is how we teach students to think critically, to form and support their own arguments, and to engage in thoughtful and respectful debate,” **said UH Professor Holley Carole Love.** “The students in our classrooms are old enough to have to work to put food on the table, to be drafted into military service, and to saddle themselves with debt to pay for tuition. We owe them the tools to make sense of the world they live in. That’s what they’re paying for, and that’s what faculty remains focused on.”

“Instead of ensuring a robust conversation in the classroom, these guidelines introduce uncertainty and fear. Professors may shy away from challenging subject matters and topics that

students have chosen to learn and have a right to confront in their education,” **said UH Professor Hilary Reed.**

The language in the self-assessment is deliberately vague. Should faculty refuse to certify self-censorship, who will do the reviewing? At Texas A&M, a similar syllabus review was conducted using AI. Will the same happen here? In practice, all syllabi would have to be reviewed by keyword search to make sure nothing related to LGBTQIA+ or race, among other topics, is being taught.

“Faculty and instructors are being forced to sign a loyalty oath without any real clarity from UH about what specifically they deem unacceptable to teach,” **said UH Professor David Mazella.** “Like other institutions around the state, the new policy appears to result not from documented instances of alleged indoctrination but instead from mounting political pressures from both Washington D.C. and Austin. UH is undermining the quality of their students’ education in a futile attempt to get state leaders off their backs.”

"The people who claim kids are being indoctrinated in school are the same people who only want one narrative taught about gender, race, U.S. history, evolution, etc. They also have not spent that much time in a classroom. To them, simple exposure to other forms of thinking counts as indoctrination. To even entertain a thought that goes against the pre-established narrative is to work against America, and that is why communication has broken down," **said Colton Llenos, a UH Graduate.**

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The Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), affiliated with the Texas American Federation of Teachers (AFT), has 2,600 members on 100 campuses across the state. We are a faculty-led union defending the right to teach, research, and speak freely. The University of Houston chapter represents over 150 faculty members, staff, and graduate students.