

Political Incorrectness is Treated More Harshly Than Actual Hate Speech. Why?

On June 18, four days after James T. Hodgkinson opened fire on a group of Republican congressman at a baseball field in Alexandria, Va., Professor Johnny Eric Williams of Trinity College (CT) posted the following message on his Facebook page:

"It is past time for the racially oppressed to do what people who believe themselves to be 'white'

will not do, put end [sic] to the vectors of their destructive mythology of whiteness and their white supremacy system. #LetThemFuckingDie"

Nine minutes later, it was followed by this:

"I'm fed the fuck up with self identified "white's" daily violence directed at immigrants, Muslim

and sexual [sic] and racially oppressed people. The time is now to confront these inhuman assholes and end this now."

The #LetThemFuckingDie hashtag is a reference to [an article on Medium](#) written by anonymous blogger Son of Baldwin, which Williams had shared following the shooting. The article argued that people of color should not help their enemy—"white/cisgender/heterosexuals"—but instead let them die.

If you see them drowning.

If you see them in a burning building.

If they are teetering on the edge of a cliff.

If their ships are sinking.

If their planes are crashing.

If their cars are skidding.

If they are overdosing.

If their hearts have tellingly arrested.

If they are choking in a restaurant.

If they are bleeding out in an emergency room.

If the ground is crumbling beneath them.

If they are in a park and they turn their weapons on each other:

Do nothing...

Let. Them. Fucking. Die.

When Campus Reform [broke](#) the story detailing Williams' social media messages, Trinity College [placed](#) him on leave. Williams was reinstated, however, earlier this month by Trinity, which defined his posts as "extramural utterances." (Further details of the investigation can be found in this [31-page report](#) conducted by officials at Trinity College.)

Compare Williams' comments and the post he shared to the following:

- In January 2015, Marquette University [fired tenured political science professor John McAdams](#) for a 2014 [blog post](#) that criticized a graduate student's handling of a philosophy course after she allegedly suggested a student's views were homophobic and not worthy of discussion (the student was against gay marriage).

- In May 2016, Yale Professor Nicholas Christakis and his wife Erika Christakis were compelled to step down after the latter wrote an email [urging students to think critically](#) about the wisdom of newly established guidelines on what types of Halloween costumes were appropriate.
- In October 2016, NYU professor Michael Rectenwald [was placed on paid leave](#) when it was discovered that he administered [a Twitter account](#) critical of safe spaces, triggers warnings, and political correctness.
- In November 2016, a University of Rochester professor named Ted Pawlicki [was forced to resign](#) for offering to purchase transportation to Canada for protesters of then President-elect Donald Trump.
- In May 2017, Paul Griffiths, Warren Professor of Catholic Theology at Duke University, was [forced out of the university](#) for encouraging colleagues to skip diversity training, which he called “intellectually flaccid” and a waste of time.
- In July of 2017, Trent Bertrand, a Johns Hopkins University economics professor, [was met by campus security personnel](#) and told he was suspended for telling this joke related to job-offshoring: “An American loses his job due to his work being off-shored. He is very depressed and calls a mental health hot line. He gets a call center in Pakistan where the call center employee asks, ‘What seems to be the problem?’ The American responds that he has lost his job due to the work being sent overseas and states, ‘I am really depressed and actually suicidal.’ The call center employee says, ‘Great. Can you drive a truck?’”

Williams’ posts, which called “whites” “inhuman assholes” and suggested they should die, appear far greater transgressions of acceptable discourse. His utterances take academic discourse to a new low, some have suggested.

“If we are at the point where #LetThemFuckingDie is upheld as a wholesome exercise in ‘extra-mural’ academic speech, we are in serious trouble,” [wrote](#) Peter Wood, President of the National Association of Scholars, and [Dion J. Pierre](#).

Nonetheless, Williams is still teaching while the others are not.

While many have lamented [the broad collapse of free speech](#) on college campuses, the abandonment of this core principle is particularly bitter for academic conservatives, who see two sets of standards. Wood and Pierre touched on this in [their article](#) for The Federalist:

“Trinity’s dilemma is in large part a matter of a double standard, created to coddle black radicals on campus. The prevailing view among colleges and universities is that robust declarations of racial resentment by African-American professors or students should be considered within the bounds of academic freedom. This allowance is a one-way street. Similarly abusive language from a white or Asian professor would almost certainly be met with severe sanctions.”

This is a serious charge. But there is reason to believe that Wood and Pierre might have a point—at least if one accepts the premise that a double standard is even possible.

This qualification is necessary because there is a prominent school of thought that says there can be no double standard because we live in a society defined by white oppression. It’s a view increasingly pervasive in both [academia](#) and [popular culture](#).

As *Dear White People* creator Justin Simien recently explained, because of the oppressive nature of white culture, there can be no double standard. This, he explains, is why white people cannot make jokes about black people but black people are free to make jokes about white people.

“Yeah, that’s not a double standard,” Simien and star Logan Browning say in unison (1:00 mark below).

Such a philosophy would help explain why Williams is free to call white people “inhuman assholes” who deserve to die while a person who writes critically of Social Justice ideology is punished.

Similarly, it would help explain how a professor who said all he wanted for Christmas was “white genocide” (a tweet he claims was “satire”) is still employed at Drexel University while a professor who joked about buying tickets to Canada for Trump protestors is no longer employed.



Assuming the idea is true, the next question is whether a philosophy that has one set of rules for people of color and another set for people who are not is actually workable or healthy.

In a nation founded on the idea of equality, the answer would seem to be no. Indeed, our nation [learned this lesson once](#)

[already](#), to its detriment and great shame. Much of American history has been a struggle to see all people as equal.

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,” Martin Luther King Jr. famously said.

It would be a great irony for America to make the same mistake twice. But, as they say, history repeats itself.