

## *Original Paper*

# What I Have Learned from Conservative Students Teaching American Politics at a Predominantly White Institution (PWIs): Reflections of a Minority College Professor

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### ***Abstract***

*Disruptive, conservative college students are a symptom of a larger problem that we have in higher education today. Also, many of our students are unprepared academically, but some think that they should pass American politics—and other controversial courses—anyway, without doing the necessary work. Of course, this higher education issue has taken on new gravity, given that liberal college professors are being verbally attacked and threatened by these conservative, college students, especially if they are from a minority group, or if they are African Americans at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Their major complaint is always about there being a liberal bent in academia, but many are tricked into thinking in a certain, conservative way. These are carefully crafted, politically motivated attacks, because some of these students don't respect or believe in the veracity of anything told by minority professors, particularly their diversity of ideas about current political issues. As we might imagine, for example, the social injustices and racial terrorism of the past toward minorities, in the United States, just doesn't register with some of these conservative students, with latent prejudices, because they mostly want to just rail against liberal professors of all stripes, ratcheting up the divisions we have at the higher education level. Moreover, these conservative students also applaud the tactics and rationale behind their verbal, classroom attacks and threats, as they monitor certain (liberal) college professors. Perhaps they have a prevalent belief that most liberal professors are somehow evil. Finally, these disruptive students believe what they want to believe, which isn't the best way to consider important policy matters today. Indeed, these misguided students should think more critically about the social and political issues, without blindly following someone because they tell the best story, or because of their conservative values. In the final analysis, we must wonder if the traditional ways of*

*teaching students at Liberal Arts College and Universities are dead.*

**Keywords**

*diversity, justice, equality of opportunity, academic freedom*

**1. Reflections**

I am an African American professor at a Predominantly White College in Las Vegas; and I have been teaching political science and Black American History for almost twenty-five years. During this entire time, I have personally enjoyed teaching all these many years—that is, until recently, because of the (abrasive) caliber of some college students that are signing up for my American politics classes. Unfortunately, some conservative students are taking my political science classes for *ulterior* motives or nefarious reasons, which makes my job even harder. In fact, some of my conservative students are disruptive and disrespectful, because of who I am and what I represent. In essence, I believe that these particular students would like to quash *any* liberal voice that see the world differently than they do, which is beyond ridiculous. They even questioned whether I should be in the classroom *at all*, because of my race. Where did these conservative students get their dyspeptic beliefs? Why can't they be reasoned with? And where do they come from? Paradoxically, many disagree with the known facts and *objective* truth if it doesn't conform to their mistaken and narrow-minded attitudes, and far-right views. It is hard enough teaching American politics without their ludicrous interferences, and sometimes reckless assumptions and disruptions. In other words, these conservative students energetically and *unapologetically* state their right-wing ideologies and positions, with the *insouciance* that is the hallmark of white nationalism and racial tribalism. Speaking the truth is *verboten* to many of them, as I always based my lectures on telling the truth. Unfortunately, some of my previous conservative students had closed their minds about the truth in politics; or they were not open-minded, because many collectively wanted *everyone* to think about the social and political issues (of the day) in the same way that they did. But clearly, we are divided by ideology in the United States.

Shockingly, some of my former conservative students were inclined to dislike progressive, liberal professors, like myself, as they saw me and others as true villains, for whatever reasons, and even un-American. Never mind that I served honorably in the U.S. Army for over twenty years. Of course, my military service didn't matter to some of these students, nor did they care about me standing up for my liberal and progressive beliefs, as if I was *unpatriotic* in some way. To be sure, I recall that some of these conservative students tried to stoke fear and loathing against liberal professors who didn't share their conservative values, or pretentious and negative ideas. Many were offended even when I told them to step back and think critically about the political issues, or their interpretation of the facts. Inevitably, these conservative students made their odd and preposterous positions known in a *scripted* and *orchestrated* way. They also believed in speaking their mind, and “out-of-turn”, even when they

were totally incorrect about politics and history, and not called on, which stirred their annoyance with me. I often cringed from their misperceptions and misinformation, as they trafficked in *right-wing* conspiracy theories. Nevertheless, these students thought that their “voice” should be given a platform in every classroom, in every situation, no matter what. For example, one conservative student, only nineteen years old, didn’t want to believe in our common humanity. To say the least, we became completely at odds with each other, because of his perceptions about race. But every educated person knows that we (all human beings) have a common ancestor (Crystal, 1994a; Glaude, 2016; King, 1981; Fairbanks, 2015). The particular point this student made was that what I was trying to impart was “made-up”, as he didn’t want to plumb the depths of the truth and the evidence, as it contradicted with his misperceptions about racial or ethnic groups.

As if on cue, this same conservative student, with his political biases, would sit every day on the front row in my classroom and loudly fumble with his papers, as I tried to lecture, which was rude and unpleasantly distracting. On the surface, these conservative students seemed curious and eager to learn; but I quickly realized that nothing could have been further from the truth, as their *Modus Operandi* (MO) was to distract. Also, this particular conservative student only wanted to talk about the *Benghazi* investigation in Congress, which had nothing to do with the reading assignment and lessons of the day. This was not totally unexpected, because we are living in an academic world where some professors are afraid to speak their minds or the truth. As it turned out, many of my conservative students, as mentioned, didn’t want to think critically about the political issues, because their minds were already made up, especially in our ideologically conflicted and polarized nation today. Therefore, our capacity to teach and agree on historical facts is being threatened by sometimes angry, misguided students in a coordinated way. All in all, this situation in the college classroom today is problematic, and something professors, like myself, haven’t had to deal with in the past—that is, being hassled by lazy thinking students, which is certainly damning in regards to higher education and the breakdown of *civility* in our country and politics. Many also use the techniques of *whatifisms* or *whataboutisms*, because some don’t put a lot of stock into what liberal professors say about mostly *anything*, especially the political issues. These conservative students also *obsequiously* asked inconspicuous questions, at awkward times—, which almost never related to the various assignments—as a pretext to starting a serious classroom dispute and disruption. So they asked about *irrelevant* things, just for the sake of argument. Moreover, many didn’t want to know the incontrovertible facts about American politics, especially if it was negative toward conservatives. What these conservative students also failed to recognize was that we are not a *monolithic* society. That is, conservatives and liberals don’t think alike, particularly about certain public policy issues. Yet many believed that conservatives should be totally in charge (or control) of our governments, without knowing *exactly* why they felt this way, which was illogical and embarrassingly uninformed, considering that we have a two-party, democratic system.

Furthermore, many of my conservative students believed that facts were *subjective*, which was absolutely nonsense. In this regard, I told this student that made this equivocal comment that *facts* are *facts*, and can be checked for accuracy; but this abrasive student didn't want to believe it. So I asked him to give me the exact date of his birth; and he did so. I next told him that his birthday was not really a fact, and that he was born on another date, to prove to him that his birth was not *subjective*. Nonetheless, he still didn't understand the nuance of what I was explaining or imparting to him—or the truth of my argument. In general, *politics* can be a dirty business, and it is hard to point out or disseminate the truth and facts when teaching political science (in the college classroom) today, particularly for some conservative students, because some facts don't fit their ideological frame of reference (Robinson, 2018) (Note 1). Let me explain: In one of my classroom lectures about the American Revolution, I informed my students that the first person to die for the American Revolution was a black man, a patriot named Crispus Attucks, during the Boston Massacre (Stevens, 2000a). Another conservative student expressed his misgivings and opined that this fact really didn't matter. After all, he went on to *grandstand* and *argue* that no one cared about the first person to die in the Vietnam War, either. I told this conservative student that he was mixing apples and oranges, to use the metaphor, and that he was making a very *specious* argument. I went on to let him know that the Vietnam War had nothing to do with our fight for independence from Great Britain. But this same conservative student, with his confusing beliefs, would brook no criticism, mainly because of the “Mutability of the Past” theory, where he thought that a black man, sacrificing his life for the founding of our nation didn't matter; or that this truth should be ignored. It became immediately apparent to me, then, why this conservative student was registered for my American politics class in the first place. He was there to monitor what I was saying about current social issues, not to listen or to *think* and learn about the *truth* of our nation—in terms of politics. I also believed that his mission (this conservative student) was to verbally attack me personally, which he did, as he aligned himself with the far-right. And he told me so.

Some of my colleagues also knew before hand when there was a problem with a conservative student, because we discussed these matters in faculty, discipline/department meetings; but many failed to call these students out, which I thought was an appropriate thing to do. Also, at the start of each semester, I made it a point to tell my students that there was a proper and respectful *etiquette* in my classroom—or any college classroom, for that matter; but they were “put-off” by this comment from me. In addition, many of my former conservative students were offended by me addressing other controversial, social and political topics, as if I didn't have the right or authority to talk about such matters. Some students even refused to accept *uncomfortable* facts, even if the information was retrieved from a reliable news sources. They called it “fake news” (Albom, 2018; Stibel, 2018) (Note 2). Many of these same students also claimed that there was no real evidence to support the political facts that I presented to them, on a

“silver platter”, so to speak, and even if *everything* I imparted to them made absolute sense. Perhaps it wasn’t easy for them to think critically for themselves. Or it might have been easier for them to be “spoon-fed” information from agents of their *political socialization*, like with family members, where they learned their political values. This is to say that many of my conservative students came to my classroom with preconceived, sometimes dubious notions about government and politics. And their faulty logic and warped attitudes about politics, generally, could be breathtakingly wrong. So is this a sad commentary on the state of secondary education in the United States today? (Gambescia, 2018) (Note 3) Perhaps. Moreover, I was once personally threatened by a female, conservative student in an *anonymous* phone call, as she didn’t believe that I should bring up controversial topics of our political past, or inconvenient, ugly truths about our government leaders, like with the knowledge of President Andrew Jackson, a slave owner, who was responsible for the “Trail of Tears”, where Native Americans were forced marched from their native lands in the 1800s (east of the Mississippi), leading to the death of over 4,000 Cherokee Indians (Stevens, 2000b; Wilkins & Stark, 2018).

Equally important, many of my older conservative students didn’t believe in the Orthodox, Socratic Method of teaching, either, as they never wanted to be asked probing questions about the specific, political lessons, as they were mostly unprepared, which was totally unacceptable. Some disrespectful students also believed that they were entitled to good grades, without earning them, and even if they didn’t attend *any* classes. Additionally, some took the truth for granted, or out of context, as one conservative student told me, “the truth doesn’t matter”. I know that I couldn’t control these students and what they chose to believe, but I was actually flabbergasted when this conservative student told me this. But contrary to the opinion voiced by this student, I tried to let him know that the truth always corresponds to the facts and *reality*. In other words, *facts* are *facts*, as mentioned, and not in “the eyes-of-the-beholder”. This argument had no effect on this student’s thinking, however. When I began a lecture about Watergate, this same conservative student opined that we should forget that the Watergate scandal even happened in the 1970s, where the illegal activities of a conservative administration broke into the Democratic Party’s National Headquarters (Crystal, 1994b; Edwards & Lippucci, 1998), to steal operational/party secrets. Eventually, President Richard M. Nixon, a conservative, had to resign, because he tried to cover up this crime, but was later pardoned by Gerald Ford, who was never elected President of the United States by the American people, as he succeeded to the office of the presidency (Crystal, 1994b), having previously been given the Vice Presidency by Nixon and the Congress. This same conservative student was outraged by this knowledge, and angry that I even brought up Watergate, as he only wanted to discuss the second amendment. Indeed, he firmly believed that *only* liberals wanted to take away the rights of the American people to keep and bear arms. However, I informed this particular student that nothing could be further from the truth, as he was a member of the National Rifle Association (NRA). I added that this was a misperception. Unfortunately, the NRA continues to push or

espouse this nonsense—that is, when liberals only want our government to address sensible gun control laws. Further, the American people should know that many liberals are also members of the NRA, in good standing. I also explained to my class, and this conservative student, much to his chagrin, that the second amendment says nothing about the rights of individual citizens to have arms (Stevens, 2000c; Volkmer, 2007). College students should always know the truth about this contentious and controversial policy issue.

And more important, I have been tirelessly committed to the truth in politics, like discussing the Iran-Contra Scandal of the mid-1980s, involving illegal weapons transactions, by the Reagan administration to Iran to secure the release of U.S. hostages held in Lebanon (Stevens, 2000d). Also, at that time our government was supposed to ban *any* aid to the Contras (an enemy), and “a rebel force” that wanted to overthrow Nicaragua’s legitimate government (Stevens, 2000d). These complex facts have been largely forgotten by college students, or never really talked about anymore by American citizens today. Or the American people have forgotten this politically damaging scandal. Therefore, it is hard to see “eye-to-eye” with someone who refuses to accept the facts, or those who pass off their lies as the truth, and verbally attack *anyone* that disagree with them. But as their political science professor, I always tried to understand where my conservative students were coming from, respecting their right to express their views, as they are cut from a different *political cloth*. I tried to let them know that it is okay to disagree, without being disagreeable. But their romantic views about (the goodness of all) conservative ideas, without empathy or compassion, was enough to frustrate anyone. Additionally, when it came to addressing the *abortion* issue, for example, these unnamed conservative students, who infiltrated my classes, argued that women should *never* have the right to an abortion, no matter the circumstances. However, all Americans should know that the right of a woman to have an abortion is “settled law”, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* ruling (Weaver & Mascaro, 2018; Volkmer, 2007; Edwards & Lippucci, 1998) (Note 4). Many times, these conservative students also brought up *Planned Parenthood* and how horrible they thought that this organization was supposed to be, but without knowing the complete facts, the history, or much about this important women’s group. Indeed, their weak arguments and distorted opinions could be irritating, to say the least. Yet, I felt these students should be allowed to speak out about the *abortion* issue for the sake of discussion and fairness in the classroom. But many were sometimes stressed out by their disagreements, and lack of political knowledge, which was often on shaky grounds. Or they looked for unattractive, alternative explanations (Krugman, 2018; Kazin, 2018) (Note 5).

Moreover, many of my conservative students had foul dispositions, as they seemed angry with me personally, because I didn’t keep my (so-called) tongue, or sugarcoat *anything* in my political science classes, even when I was threatened by some of them, and especially when I was critical of conservative government, which was always based on the objective facts and the truth. Some saw my

fearlessness in telling the truth about current politics and our political history as a threat, or an affront to their agenda, whatever that might have been. The bottom line: Many of my conservative students were being exploited and manipulated (perhaps without knowing it), and swayed by *Herd Poison*, where they conformed—to conservative notions—without thinking critically, which can be extremely dangerous and disconcerting. Indeed, some of these conservative students seemed to care only about protecting their *hate speech*, or alternative views of the world, which is slowly tearing our country apart from within, especially with the resurgence of white supremacist groups, and the climate of racial hatred in American politics today. Perhaps most tellingly, these students wanted to dissuade and marginalize professors like me, or keep me from criticizing our ugly past. They told me (in no uncertain terms) that I should focus on our *exceptionalism*, and nothing else. Furthermore, many of my conservative students didn't want to be reminded of how conservative administrations brought us the Great Depression, which “was unprecedented in its length and in the wholesale poverty and tragedy it inflicted on (American) society” (Harris & Levey, 1975, p. 1132) between 1929 to 1934. Of course, Republican Herbert Hoover, a conservative, was the President of the United States during most of this time. Conservatives were also responsible for the Wall Street disaster during the Bush administration, where the American people had to bail out the big banks—because they were (so-called) too big to fail—with taxpayers' dollars. To say the least, many of the Wall Street bankers were never held accountable. Even more important, we have a tendency to gloss over the unending wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, started by a conservative administration. Conservatives also don't like to address the 2000 Presidential election fiasco, where unfortunately, the conservatives on “the Supreme Court played a decisive role in determining who won the presidency when in a 5-to-4 ruling it halted the manual recounting of ballots in Florida”, and gave conservative George W. Bush the U.S. presidency (Burns et al., 2004, p. 392). Because of an inattentive public, American citizens have quickly forgotten these important political events.

Many conservatives only want to hold liberals responsible, in some way, as if they had something to do with the second major recession in recent American history, starting in the late 2000s, during another conservative administration. In this regard, my conservative students distracted from this discussion in my American politics classes by bringing up the spectacular moral failure of President Bill Clinton, who was impeached by Conservative Republicans in the House of Representatives in Congress, because he had a consensual affair with Monica Lewinsky, a young intern, and committed perjury by initially denying the relationship (Burns et al., 2004; Tomasky, 2017) (Note 6). I let my conservative students know that their interruptions had nothing to do with the 2000 Presidential Election, or the recession brought on by a conservative government. But they didn't want to endure *any* kind of intellectual disagreement, like their denial of *Climate Change*, which is negatively affecting our environment almost on a daily basis (Albeck-Ripka & Pierre-Louis, 2018; King, 2018; Friedman, 2018;

Masto, 2018), because of the rolling back of environmental regulations. Nor do conservative students want to discuss the dismissal of civil rights cases under the current conservative administration (Green, 2018), or a stolen Supreme Court seat. In fact, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a conservative Republican, has indicated that his greatest political achievement was “to stop former President Barack Obama from filling the Supreme Court vacancy created by Antonin Scalia’s death in 2016” (McConnell, 2018, p. 10A) Question: Why did senate conservatives think that it was fair to deny federal appeals court Judge Merrick Garland even a hearing? Was this uncouth action even constitutional?

I personally believe that some conservative students, as mentioned, didn’t care about these finer points, or which political arguments even made the most sense, even if it was based on the *real* facts. Or they disliked the concept of “constructive engagement”, which some thought was nonsense. Surprisingly, many of my colleagues have also been verbally attacked by some of these conservative students, who have accused them of *harassment* or *discrimination*, especially those professors who are originally from other countries, or who are naturalized U.S. citizens. I also firmly believed that some of these conservative students would like to disparage and silence these professors—who often pose provocative questions, and tell the earnest truth—at all cost. What is going on at our respective college is “shameful”, and jaw-droppingly wrong. It has certainly been a wake-up call for some of us. Unfortunately, some colleagues at my college are not even able to teach what they know to be truth, without fear or repercussions, which is a famous *adage* expressed by Albert Einstein. In the final analysis, these conservative students know almost nothing about academic freedom. Why?

## 2. Conclusions

Unfortunately, many historians, philosophers, and political scientists today, on college campuses, are taking a *neutral* stance when it comes to teaching history or American politics, because they are unwilling to take a (righteous) stand against these disruptive and seemingly disgruntled, conservative students. But to my mind, this *capitulation* is a very cowardly thing to do. More surprisingly, many of these liberal professors are now teaching *on-line*, because many don’t want to resist the lies, or be targets or bothered by these conservative students in a “brick and mortar” classroom setting *anymore*. So are their actions just a cop-out, because of differences of opinions and viewpoints? Clearly, some of these students appear to deliberately provoke certain professors with the lie that their first amendment rights are being violated in some way. To be sure, liberal professors are even afraid to confront these disruptive, conservative students—to tell them what is acceptable, *credible* and what is not. But professors today must be undeterred and not afraid to teach what is right; nor should they be intimidated or bullied by these ill-informed students, just because they don’t agree with their particular points of view. This is to say that some students see things only from a conservative perspective and



nothing else, like their dismissal of Affirmative Action (Stevens, 2000e), as some kind of *inappropriate* hand-out for minorities. What they should know is that Affirmative Action has tried to balance the *inequality* that continues in this country for racial minorities. Moreover, many of these conservative students dislike being censored, even if their *partisan* or ideological information is highly suspect. There is also no doubt that these students want to avoid engaging in productive, tolerant, meaningful and intellectual discussions. Therefore, I think that what these conservatives say in my classroom is deliberate and coordinated, particularly when they make baseless assumptions about American politics. And they present the same unfortunate and tired ideas, almost every semester. But more than that, many use “identity politics”, to flame racial discord, to justify what they say in an effort to make other young, brilliant students in my classroom see things their way. Equally significant, their ideological “orthodoxy” is like a *train wreck* waiting to happen. Some conservative students are also dismayed and offended by me personally when I ask them to consider important parallels in political time, like the eventual failure of conservative or *autocratic* governments throughout (organized) human history.

To further complicate matters, and in an effort to affect what we teach at the higher education levels, wealthy Republicans and conservative “big shots”, like the *Koch Brothers* are spending millions to influence professors and students at colleges and universities—that is, what is taught, and what these billionaires want people to believe, which is a strict conservative view point (Greenwald, 2012). It certainly doesn’t have to be this way. But the United States is in an unhealthy situation (and environment) when it comes to higher education, and the negative implications are enormous. In light of this, it is all the more important that political science students consider all the facts and the absolute truth, like the real reasons for the American Civil War, which was essentially to maintain the cursed institution of black slavery, in perpetuity, not some state rights’ issue (Crystal, 1994c; Jillson, 2005); and despite words to the contrary. To be blunt, some conservative students, in my American politics classes tried to find excuses for some of their slave-owning ancestors, while trying to justify their inhumane actions. Historically, we have had to deal with an American, slave-dominated world, but my conservative students didn’t want to hear it, as they told me that it was *old news*. Essentially, I informed my students that it is hard to defend the indefensible. But this advice usually went on death ears. It also remained unclear if my conservative students would even learn from history, or the truth about our political system, and fragile democracy. Or perhaps many see the issues presented in this reflection as irrelevant. But contrary to what some students might think, such issues, as presented in this work, are more important than ever. To say the least, many of my conservative students wanted *everyone* to respect their values, but felt no need to respect the values of others, with different viewpoints, especially liberal students and college professors. This, of course is a serious mistake, as our nation is a diverse, multi-racial democracy, and all our opinions should be respected.

Finally, it is difficult to teach students *anything* if their minds are already made up about what they think is right, like the issue of *creationism* over *evolution* (Crystal, 1994d; Fairbanks, 2015; Toler, 2012) (Note 7). *Doubters* about evolution should know that one theory is based on faith, and the latter is based on scientific facts that can be supported by solid evidence. Many of my conservative students could have cared less about the truths of *evolution*. Toward this end, political science professors must continue to repudiate unsophisticated, *myopic* ways of thinking, because something has to give. Even more important, professors must indeed understand the malicious intentions of some of their students, while remaining vigilant, and fighting back against racial *tribalism* and the conservative politics of division and *polarization* at the highest education levels, as it shows no signs of abating. Professors must also be aware of the partisan divide, and MO of intimidation by some conservative students, and reject their *divisiveness*, as it is a dangerous recipe for undermining the “teacher-student” relationship at the university level. This doesn’t mean that conservative students should be shunned or banned automatically from the college classroom, because of their immaturity, but their disrespect and disruption shouldn’t be tolerated. More broadly, conservative students should *never* be underestimated, either. In my role as a teacher, I often tried to tell students that they should strive to do better when it comes to understanding American politics and our political spectrum, without shooting from the hip, and without knowledge, or making things up. But I was often ignored on this front. *Racism*, for example, continues to raise its ugly head (in many ways), in our nation today; however, my conservative students didn’t want to believe it. Obviously, they were not always challenged or intrigued by the topics at hand, particularly with their right-leaning political views. Keep in mind, as mentioned, that nothing has prepared some professors for such *existential* threats to their livelihood and teaching profession.

In the end, professors who are disrespected by these conservative students must *never* take what is happening to them personally in the classroom, or lying down. Further, they must not turn a blind-eye, or accept their disgraceful behavior, either, especially if they are from a minority group, like me. Conventional wisdom holds that professors should always listen to their students with respect and empathy, but their *uncouth* behavior must *never* be normalized. Furthermore, a sense of humor and understanding, with patience, is also important too; however, it is also important to remember that nothing should be taken for granted at our college and universities, when professors are being personally threatened by students. Finally, unflappable professors today must have the *stones* to push back (delicately) in higher education against the unruly, disruptive college student, no matter what, because ignoring this issue will have serious, negative implications for our long-term education future. Unfortunately, many American citizens are stubbornly ignorant about this higher education issue.

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## Notes

Note 1. College students must know that you cannot make up your own facts. Perhaps this conservative student had an unconscious bias, and my factual viewpoints were unwelcomed. Of course, many conservative students want to shut down liberals with whom they disagree.

Note 2. It should be pointed out that the truth is not whatever you want or think it should be, especially given the egregious way politicians are misinforming and lying to the American people.

Note 3. It is a “shameful thing” that some college students today don’t know a lot about “some founding principles of American government”. Professor Stephen Gambescia goes on to write that such “discussions with students are important before we dig deeply into how policymaking occurs in the United States”.

Note 4. Unfortunately, some conservatives try to offer a picturesque view of Republican policies, which have been disastrous for American citizens over the years, as explained in this article/reflection.

Note 5. Conservative students are disrupting college and university classes throughout the United States.

Note 6. It should be noted that Clinton was never removed from office, because you need two-thirds vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate of Congress.

Note 7. It should be noted that creationists oppose “the theory of evolution, and some evangelical conservative Christians claim there is scientific evidence to support creationism, though this has not been supported by other scientists”.

### Biographical Sketch

EARNEST N. BRACEY is a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, with over twenty years of active military service. He was commissioned through Reserve Officer Training (*Distinguished Military Graduate*) at Jackson State University, where he graduated with honors (*Magna Cum Laude*), and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in political science in 1974. In addition, he received the Masters of Public Administration in 1979 from Golden Gate University, his Masters of Arts degree in International Affairs in 1983 from the Catholic University of America, his Masters of Business Administration in 2009 from California Coast University, and his doctorate of Public Administration (with emphasis in Public Policy) in 1993 from George Mason University. Dr. Bracey also earned his Ph.D. in Education from Capella University in 1999.

A recipient of numerous military awards and civilian honors, he is also a graduate of the United States Naval War College and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and previously served as Director of Administration at the prestigious Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D.C. He was also recognized as Who's Who Among America's Teachers in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Dr. Bracey is professor of political science, and currently teaches American Politics and Black American History at the College of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas. He was formerly Chair and Professor of Political Science at Jackson State University and Chairperson of the Political Science and History Department at Hampton University. He serves as an editorial board-member for the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly. His work has appeared in professional journals and other publications, and he is the author of the books, *Prophetic Insights: The Higher Education and Pedagogy of African Americans*, University Press of America, 1999, *On Racism: Essays On Black Popular Culture, African American Politics, and the New Black Aesthetics*, University Press of America, 2003, *Daniel "Chappie" James: The First African American Four Star General*, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003, *Places in Political Time: Voices From the Black Diaspora*, University Press of America, 2005, and *The Moulin Rouge and Black Rights in Las Vegas*, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009. He also co-authored the book, *American Politics and Culture Wars* (2001). He is also the author of the novels, *Choson* (1994) and *The Black Samurai* (1998), and the book of short stories, *Requiems for Black Folks*, 2002.