

September 29, 2017

Re: "The Case for Colonialism" by Prof. Bruce Gilley

Dr. Stephen Percy, Dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs
College of Urban and Public Affairs
506 SW Mill Street, Suite 750
Portland, Oregon 97201

CC: Dr. Birol Yesilada, Interim Director of the Hatfield School of Govt.
Dr. Joshua Eastin, Director of the Master of Public Policy Program
Dr. Christopher Shortell, Chair of the Political Science Dept.

We are writing to express our collective outrage, sadness, and frustration as current and former students of Professor Gilley. We would like to join Portland State University in recognizing the importance of academic freedom while also distinctly distancing our views from those expressed in "The Case for Colonialism" by Prof. Bruce Gilley. We understand the value in academic critique. However, **scholarly critiques are inadequate to articulate the personal effects this article is having on his students. We assert that this is not an isolated incident of implicit or explicit bias. Professor Gilley has a pattern of marginalizing individual students based on their race and gender in classes.** It is the opinion of the group that Gilley has collectively violated the trust that students place in their institution, professors, and advisors for ethical professional and academic guidance. The interpersonal dimensions of discrimination are difficult to cite in an academic fashion. **The hindsight offered by this unfortunate event has solidified for many individuals in [REDACTED] that discriminatory treatment experienced under Professor Gilley was overt rather than incidental.** His article was seen as a piece of very emotionally disparaging evidence that his past individual interactions were rooted in a deeper ideology.

Most of us were required to take his courses in order to earn our degrees and contend that his expressed perspective is not limited to the pseudo-academic article that the editor of *Current Affairs* magazine describes as, "...not only unscholarly, but is morally tantamount to Holocaust denial."^{1,2,3,4} While academic and moral outrage are distinct, it is our view that he is recklessly testing the academic limits of white supremacy rather than trying to promote rigorous scholarship. Dr. Gilley has made his views apparent prior to this incident decrying diversity in hiring practices, while ironically extolling the virtues of diversity of political opinions in academia.⁵ He has written articles excusing black face,⁶ and dismissing issues of historic racism as trivial identity politics.⁷ The [REDACTED] documented concerns about Gilley's conduct and his dismissive attitude toward practices and mechanisms to increase diversity.⁸ Structural program changes were made in response to these documented concerns.

We are explicitly taught in our policy programs at PSU that diversity, ethics, and historical contexts must all be considered if we are to create just political systems. The voices which have historically been subjugated to the spectrum of silence are also currently exposed to similar interpersonal disregard. Dismantling institutional barriers begins first with developing a capaciousness, including moral courage, to categorize and classify what is inadequate and then, in turn, to build those systems which move beyond, innovate, and boldly respond to systemic injustice.

We have 3 requests. (1) Students should not be *required* to take core courses on comparative public policy, or any core courses, from Dr. Gilley. (2) PSU should consider this statement when evaluating Professor Gilley's tenure in the future. (3) We request a public forum for discussing how to better evaluate implementation of diversity training in the classroom. This letter should serve as evidence to the administration at PSU that a single online diversity class is not adequate to address the systemic injustices perpetuated upon students. This focusing event should provide insight into how to reassess and more appropriately monitor, evaluate, and properly implement diversity training for faculty at PSU.

Respectfully,

██████████ Students of ██████████ of Public Policy Cohorts.

We do not claim to represent the views of all students and are individually identified below:

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¹ <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2017/09/a-quick-reminder-of-why-colonialism-was-bad>
² At the time of this letter, Gilley has requested a retraction from TWQ amidst pressure from millions of readers, thousands of petition signatories world-wide, and resignation of 15 members of the TWQ editorial board who contend that the article did not go through peer review in contradiction to the official statement of TWQ. See footnote 3 and 4
³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/20/much-third-world-quarterlys-editorial-board-resigns-saying-controversial-article>
⁴ <https://scroll.in/article/851305/third-world-quarterly-row-why-some-western-intellectuals-are-trying-to-debrutalise-colonialism>
⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgeleef/2017/05/10/professors-shouldnt-be-forced-to-pledge-allegiance-to-diversity/#6f53aae811cc>
⁶ http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2016/11/professor_group_criticizes_uo.html
⁷ http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2017/08/saving_a_state_historic_site_f.html
⁸ <http://remezcla.com/culture/bruce-gilley-colonization/>