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Student Perspectives of Political Bias in the College Classroom

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STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF POLITICAL BIAS
IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership

by
Darren L. Linvill
August 2008

Accepted by
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how students experience political bias in the college classroom and the extent to which this bias is perceived by students in one midsized, public, land-grant university in the Southeastern United States. The current study addressed the issue of politically biased college professors in U.S. college classrooms, a matter that has gained attention in academia and the general public in recent years. A review of literature explored both partisan research and the limited available peer-reviewed research addressing political bias in the classroom. The research model, the sequential, exploratory mixed methods model, was described followed by the results of the study. Three qualitative themes common to subjects' experiences with political bias in the classroom were identified through interview data: *limited classroom scope*, *a feeling of powerlessness* and *a need to conform*. Survey data supported the existence of these themes, as they were all found to be positive indicators of self-reported experiences with political bias in the classroom. Survey data also illustrated political conservatism as a positive indicator for the experience of political bias in the classroom. Gender and ethnicity were found to have mixed results and will require further research. The academic classification *freshman* was found to be a negative indicator of experience with political bias in the classroom, but no other academic classification was found to have a relationship to the experience. The role of academic classification also requires further research. This study also found that political bias is not as pervasive at the study institution as the findings of many non-peer reviewed and partisan research studies would

suggest. Also, while conservative students report higher levels of political bias, political bias is not experienced only by conservative students.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
I. CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM	1
A. Introduction	1
B. Problem Statement	5
C. Purpose Statement	6
D. Research Questions	6
E. Organization of the Study	8
II. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
A. Research Addressing Bias	10
B. Partisan Research Addressing Political Bias	11
C. Peer-reviewed Research Addressing Political Bias	14
1. <i>Political Affiliation Research</i>	15
2. <i>Student Experience Research</i>	17
D. Critical Theory Perspective	22
E. College Student Development	24
1. <i>Psychosocial: Identity Development</i>	25
2. <i>Cognitive-Structural: Moral Development</i>	28
F. Definition of Terms	30
III. CHAPTER THREE: QUALITATIVE METHODS	34
A. Type of Mixed Methods Design	34
B. Qualitative Data Collection Procedures	36
1. <i>Type of data</i>	36
2. <i>Sampling Strategy</i>	37
3. <i>Data Analysis</i>	39

IV. CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE RESULTS	41
A. Bracketing	41
B. Interview Data Analysis	42
C. Description of the Experience	51
1. <i>Textural Description: What Was Experienced</i>	51
2. <i>Structural Experience: How It Was Experienced</i>	52
V. CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE METHODS	54
A. Survey Development.....	54
1. <i>Survey Design</i>	54
2. <i>Question Development</i>	55
a. <i>Limited Classroom Scope</i>	55
b. <i>Feeling of Powerlessness</i>	58
c. <i>Need to Conform</i>	60
3. <i>Pilot Testing</i>	63
B. Quantitative Data Collection Procedures	65
1. <i>Type of Data</i>	65
2. <i>Sampling Strategy</i>	65
3. <i>Data Analysis</i>	66
VI. CHAPTER SIX: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	69
A. Construct Validity	70
1. <i>Exploratory Factor Analysis</i>	71
2. <i>Structural Consistency</i>	76
B. Descriptive Statistics	81
1. <i>Participant Demographics</i>	81
2. <i>Experience with Political Bias in the Classroom</i>	84
3. <i>Questions Addressing Themes</i>	89
C. Regression Analysis	91
1. <i>Binary Logistic Regression Analysis</i>	92
2. <i>Ordinary Least Squares Analysis</i>	98
3. <i>Poisson Regression Analysis</i>	102
4. <i>Demographic Variability in Subscales</i>	106
VII. CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	110
A. Qualitative Research Question:	
How Do College Students Experience Political Bias in the Classroom?	110
1. <i>What do Students Perceive as an Expression of Political Bias?</i>	110
2. <i>How Do Students Respond to the Perception of Political Bias?</i>	111
3. <i>How do Students Feel when Faculty Are Politically Biased?</i>	111

B. Quantitative Research Question:	
How Prevalent Is the Experience of Political Bias in the College Classroom?.....	112
1. <i>Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Gender?</i>	113
2. <i>Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Academic Classification?</i>	115
3. <i>Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Academic Major?</i>	116
4. <i>Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Race/Ethnicity?</i>	117
5. <i>Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Political Orientation?</i>	118
C. Implications and Recommendations	119
D. Conclusions	121
 APPENDICES	 122
 REFERENCES	 204

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Qualitative interview demographics	39
2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data.....	42
3. Qualitative themes and evidence from significant statements identified in interview data	48
4. Development of PBCS question seven: In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect	56
5. PBCS <i>Limited classroom scope</i> subscale questions	57
6. Development of PBCS question two: Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs.....	59
7. PBCS <i>Limited classroom scope</i> subscale questions	60
8. Development of PBCS question nine: On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own	61
9. PBCS <i>need to conform</i> subscale questions	62
10. Pilot testing: Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted	64
11. Rotated component matrix for participant responses to questions one through 12	74
12. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on 12 items addressing student perceptions of political bias in the classroom (N=528).....	78
13. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale (N=528).....	79
14. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale (N=528).....	80
15. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on <i>need to conform</i> subscale (N=528)	80

16. Distribution of subjects by Race/Ethnicity	82
17. Question 19: “I consider myself to be politically_____.”	83
18. Question 20: “To what extent would you say religion provides guidance in your day-to-day life?”	84
19. Experience with political bias: Yes/No/Not Sure	85
20. Questions 15 & 16: “In my experience politically liberal/conservative professors have a political bias in class.”	86
21. Questions 17 and 18: “I have had _____ politically liberal/conservative professors who showed a political bias in class.”	88
22. Descriptive statistics for three themes of the Political Bias in the Classroom Survey: <i>limited classroom scope, feeling of powerlessness</i> and <i>need to conform</i>	90
23. Dependent variable q13, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias,” modeled with <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale	93
24. Dependent variable q13, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias,” modeled with <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale	94
25. Dependent variable q13, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias,” modeled with <i>need to conform</i> subscale	94
26. Dependent variable q14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” modeled with <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale	96
27. Dependent variable q14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” modeled with <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale	97
28. Dependent variable q14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” modeled with <i>need to conform</i> subscale	97

29. Dependent variable q15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale	99
30. Dependent variable q15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale	99
31. Dependent variable q15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>need to conform</i> subscale	100
32. Dependent variable q16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale	101
33. Dependent variable q16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale.....	101
34. Dependent variable q16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>need to conform</i> subscale.....	102
35. Dependent variable q17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale	103
36. Dependent variable q17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale	103
37. Dependent variable q17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>need to conform</i> subscale	104
38. Dependent variable q18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale	105
39. Dependent variable q18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale	105
40. Dependent variable q18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with <i>need to conform</i> subscale	106
41. Dependent variable <i>limited classroom scope</i> subscale modeled with demographics	107
42. Dependent variable <i>feeling of powerlessness</i> subscale modeled with demographics	108

43. Dependent variable *need to conform* subscale modeled with demographics 108

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods Model.....	35
2. Scree plot for PCBS items one through 12	72
3. Question 19: “I consider myself to be politically_____.”.....	83
4. Questions 15 & 16: “In my experience politically liberal/conservative professors have a political bias in class.”	87
5. Questions 17 and 18: “I have had _____ politically liberal/conservative professors who showed a political bias in class.”	89

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In recent years, the role of professors' personal politics in the classroom has become a point of discussion. The public's view that liberal ideology plays an inappropriate role in higher education is mainstream. According to a 2004 poll conducted by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51% of 1000 individuals surveyed in the United States (U.S.) believed colleges improperly introduced liberal bias into their classrooms (A Special Report, 2004). Similarly, a 2006 study by Gross and Simmons found 68.2% of 1000 Americans surveyed believe academia favors professors with liberal social and political views. Of Gross and Simmons' sample, 37.5% claimed political bias in the classroom as a very serious problem.

The perception of a liberal bias among faculty has had an impact on students. In 2004, a student group at the University of Colorado at Boulder solicited the group's peers to report experiences of politically-based bias in the classroom (Hebel, 2004). That same year, the Duke University Conservative Union published an advertisement in the university's student newspaper that listed the political affiliation of faculty in the humanities and social sciences. The advertisement illustrated a clear majority of professors as being Democrats and thus stirred a campus-wide debate regarding the role of politics in the classroom (Ferrerri & Hunter, 2004). Several organizations have formed to address what is perceived as a growing crisis of politicization in U.S. colleges and universities. These organizations include groups such as Campus Watch, No Indoctrination and, most prominently, Students for Academic Freedom (SAF).

Students for Academic Freedom is a subsidiary of the Horowitz Freedom Center (HFC), formerly The Center for the Study of Popular Culture. This organization is “dedicated to defending the cultural foundations of a free society,” (Center for the Study of Popular Culture, 2007, ¶ 1). SAF is led by activist David Horowitz; described as “the left’s most brilliant and articulate nemesis” (Center for the Study of Popular Culture, ¶ 1). SAF is a coalition of student organizations with the stated goal to “end the political abuse of the university and to restore integrity to the academic mission as a disinterested pursuit of knowledge” (Students for Academic Freedom, About SAF, 2007, ¶ 1). SAF maintains professors are violating students’ academic freedom by being too one-sided in presenting issues and using the classroom as a political soapbox to indoctrinate students in their political beliefs (Dogan, Call & Kaplan, 2006).

SAF claims chapters at 150 colleges and universities across the country, most with two or three members (Dubner, 2005). SAF’s mission statement asserts the group is “dedicated to restoring academic freedom and educational values to America’s institutions of higher learning” (Students for Academic Freedom, Mission and Strategy, 2007, ¶ 1). The group aims to accomplish this specifically through securing the adoption of the Academic Bill of Rights as official university policy at institutions nationwide (Students for Academic Freedom, Mission and Strategy). The Academic Bill of Rights is, largely, a creed of general principles emphasizing the “pursuit of truth” and “the discovery of new knowledge” (Students for Academic Freedom, Academic Bill of Rights, 2007, ¶ 1). Horowitz, the author of the Bill, asserts that its purpose is to codify a long tradition of academic freedom and enumerate the rights of students (Horowitz,

2004). The Bill differs from current practice in its goal to protect students from the imposition of orthodoxy of a religious, political, or ideological nature by means of the purposeful advancement of a pluralistic campus environment. It proposes accomplishing this aim through ideologically neutral hiring and advancement of faculty, purposeful curriculum choices and institutional neutrality with respect to substantive disagreements that divide researchers (Students for Academic Freedom, Academic Bill of Rights).

In the past several years, Horowitz and SAF have lobbied to make the Academic Bill of Rights policy at public institutions across the country. Since 2004, 22 state legislatures have considered legislation incorporating some or all of SAF's Academic Bill of Rights (Academic Bill of Rights: Proposed Government Oversight, 2006). Most recently, in January of 2007, a Virginia House education sub-committee voted five to three to table a bill designed to measure political thought at Virginia's public colleges (Adams, 2007). A similar bill was narrowly defeated in Colorado in 2004 only when a coalition of the state's university presidents agreed to a compromise by adopting the Bill's provisions as university policy (Dubner, 2005).

In 2005 and 2006 the Pennsylvania House of Representatives held a series of hearings to investigate allegations of political bias in the state's university system ("Academic Bill of Rights": State Legislation, 2006). During the hearings, lawmakers read aloud from state university class descriptions and job postings, criticizing what they viewed as politically liberal requirements (Jacobson, 2005). A call was also made for universities to make "the same commitment to a diversity of political viewpoints as they have made to ethnic and gender diversity" (Jacobson, p. A32). In its final report, the

House committee determined there were already mechanisms in place at the university level to address issues of bias that may arise in the future (“Academic Bill of Rights”: State Legislation, 2006).

Tenets of SAF’s Academic Bill of Rights were included in the U.S. House of Representative’s College Access and Opportunity Act of 2006 (H.R. 609). Section 103 of the Act, as it was presented to Congress, reads in part: “. . . students should be treated equally and fairly, including evaluation and grading, without regard to or consideration of their personal political views or ideological beliefs.” Such language is very similar to that of SAF’s Academic Bill of Rights and contains an implied federal role in ensuring compliance.

Opponents of the Academic Bill of Rights claim, though the Bill may have the appearance of possessing apolitical and positive goals, “the underlying agenda is the decidedly political one of forcing colleges and universities to hire conservative professors in order to assure ideological balance” (Fish, 2005, p B12). Throughout the debate surrounding the Academic Bill of Rights, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has been one of its most outspoken opponents. In the view of the AAUP, the danger of forcing a plurality of methodologies and perspectives is that it invites diversity to be gauged by political standards. Such standards diverge from the academic criteria of the scholarly profession. Measured in this way, diversity may become contradictory to academic goals (Academic Bill of Rights: AAUP Statement, 2003).

Friedl (2006) views SAF's Academic Bill of Rights as both dangerous and unnecessary. It is dangerous because, as illustrated by the AAUP statement, it threatens freedom of inquiry and critical thought. It is unnecessary because, as was decided by the Pennsylvania hearings, institutions already have safeguards in place. Friedl believes, when properly applied, existing standards protect students and "provide balance without destroying the spontaneity and intellectual stimulation that is currently found in our classrooms" (§ 2).

Minnich (2006) holds that the debate created by the Academic Bill of Rights, however, could potentially harm academia. Minnich views the education system as crucial to citizens' shared futures and believes it is important to engage in a public dialogue about educational policy and direction. Minnich states the real risk to academia is that intellectual judgments may be "discredited wholesale as 'bias' and rendered irrelevant in favor of a mindless 'impartiality,'" (p. 20). According to Minnich, it is the faculty members' judgments, and more specifically their freedom of judgment, that allows academia to evolve.

Problem Statement

Organizations such as Students for Academic Freedom indicate a perception by some college students of a pervasive political bias in the college classroom among faculty. Political bias is defined for the purposes of the current study as a suppression of political beliefs other than one's own and/or a belief that an individual's own political beliefs are the only correct beliefs. The suppression of student views contrary to the views held by faculty, and holding to the belief that faculty views are the only proper

ones to take is not only contrary to academic goals, but to the rights of the student as well. The AAUP's 1967 Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students outlines a faculty member's responsibility to foster unhindered discussion, inquiry and expression in the classroom (Joint Statement, 2007). This statement also reinforces the importance for students to feel free to take reasoned exception to any views offered in a course.

Purpose Statement

Despite the manner in which the issue of political bias in university classrooms has resonated with the public, and the abundant rhetoric coming from both sides of the debate, little empirical research can be found in the academic literature on the topic. Existing literature suggests that supporters of the Academic Bill of Rights may be overstating the seriousness of the problem. Research addressing political bias in the classroom can be found outside of the peer-review process, though a preponderance of this research has been conducted by partisan organizations. The rhetoric of much of the current political bias debate centers on either anecdotal evidence or on philosophical grounds. The purpose of this study was to explore how students experience political bias in the college classroom and the extent to which this bias was perceived by students in one mid-sized, public, land-grant university in the Southeastern United States.

Research Questions

This study addresses student experiences with political bias in the college classroom and is guided by two primary research questions, each of which has several sub-questions. The first primary question, qualitative in nature, leads directly to the

second primary research question which is quantitative in nature. These questions are as follows:

1. How do college students experience political bias in the classroom?

Sub-questions:

1. A. What do students perceive as an expression of political bias?

1. B. How do students respond to the perception of political bias?

1. C. How do students feel when faculty are politically biased?

2. How prevalent is the experience of political bias in the college classroom?

Sub-questions:

2. A. Are there significant differences among students regarding their perceptions of political bias based on gender?

2. B. Are there significant differences among students regarding their perceptions of political bias based on academic classification?

2. C. Are there significant differences among students regarding their perceptions of political bias based on academic major?

2. D. Are there significant differences among students regarding their perceptions of political bias based on race/ethnicity?

2. E. Are there significant differences among students regarding their perceptions of political bias based on political orientation?

Political bias in the college classroom is clearly a topic that has gained prominence in recent years. A clear understanding of the phenomenon and students'

experiences with it would help to clarify the ongoing debate. Empirical research is necessary in this regard.

Organization of the Study

This chapter has laid out the research problem and research questions guiding the current study. The next chapter explores student development theory, the lens used to discuss this study's findings. This includes Gilligan (1982), Cross (1991) and Marcia (1966). Chapter Two also addresses research directly addressing classroom political bias. Utilizing the work of Mousatakas (1994) and Creswell (2003), Chapter Three describes the phenomenological research methods employed in the qualitative first phase of research while Chapter Four explores the findings of this qualitative research. The following chapters, Five and Six, describe first the quantitative methods employed in the quantitative second phase of research and then the findings of that phase. Finally, Chapter Seven discusses conclusions that can be drawn from the current study as well as possible future directions for research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the experience of political bias in the college classroom, both at the individual and organizational levels, it is important to explore existing literature and to put the current study into context within this literature. This process will also help to inform empirical research. This chapter provides an overview of current research addressing bias in the college classroom. It goes on to discuss critical theory as a lens for understanding how political bias in the classroom as an issue has grown, both in and outside of academia. Finally, this chapter discusses student development theory as a lens for understanding findings in the current study.

Hickey and Brecher (1990) discussed bias in higher education in terms of the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition: “inclination, leaning, bent, predisposition towards, predilection, prejudice” (p. 300). Hickey and Brecher pointed out that it is only the last of these, *prejudice*, which appears to have any indoctrinatory connotations. Their work explained that a level of bias in education is required; educators are continually called upon to make a level of prejudgment regarding the content and focus of their teaching. According to Hickey and Brecher, it is concealed bias that is reprehensible. Concealed bias is not open to students’ examination and therefore does not allow for the exercise of critical thinking skills. It is one of the purposes of education to develop these very skills in students. Hickey and Brecher asserted that indoctrination proceeds from educators’ concealed bias, through the “suppression of views other than one’s own; by the pretence that one’s partial view is the only proper view to take” (p. 301). Hickey and Brecher

stressed that to indoctrinate students into holding viewpoints that are openly professed and discussed is logically impossible.

Research Addressing Bias

Bias and discrimination in the classroom have been topics of research in the academic literature for the past thirty years. Articles can particularly be found in the literature involving both racial and gender inequality.

Empirical evidence exists that illustrates women have suffered from a “chilly” classroom environment as compared with men and this has had a negative effect on cognitive gains made in college (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Nora, & Terenzini, 1999). Fassinger (1995) found support for student gender playing a role in classroom participation. Specifically, males were found to be more likely to raise questions and make comments. Class traits and individual student traits were greater predictors of participation than faculty interpersonal traits. Fassinger concluded that chilly classroom environments for female students may often be created by students themselves.

Research exploring the impact of racial discrimination has tended to downplay the effects of overt classroom bias in favor of more covert forms of campus discrimination. In exploring minority freshman adjustment to college, Smedley, Myers and Harrell (1993) found attention-grabbing stresses such as racial conflict and overt racism had a much lower correlation on freshman stress than did social factors and more subtle feelings of alienation. Similarly, Nora and Cabrera (1996) and Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella and Hagedorn (1999) found that while perceptions of prejudice negatively

impacted students' adjustment; performance, social and outside factors all exercised a much stronger influence.

Partisan Research Addressing Political Bias

Due to the concern outside of academia regarding the issue of classroom political bias, several partisan, conservative organizations have funded and promoted research on the topic, the bulk of which has appeared in since 2003. Three sponsors of non-peer reviewed research addressing the issue of political bias in the classroom are: The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), the National Association of Scholars (NAS), and the Horowitz Freedom Center (HFC). ACTA was co-founded in 1995 by Lynne Cheney, Vice President Dick Cheney's wife, with funding from conservative groups such as the John M. Olin Foundation and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (Wilson, 2006). Despite professing a bi-partisan perspective, ACTA often is criticized for following a conservative agenda (Wilson). The NAS is a conservative organization of university professors, graduate students and administrators. During the Pennsylvania state legislature hearings, NAS President Dr. Stephen Balch referred to academia as an environment "of one-sided beliefs, very intensely held, where vested interests in advocacy and activism are deeply entrenched" (Balch, 2005, p 28). At the hearings, Balch advocated for several specific tactics to incorporate political diversity into Pennsylvania state schools. The HFC was founded by activist David Horowitz and is the parent organization of Students for Academic Freedom (SAF).

Political bias research published by these organizations attempts to illustrate what the groups view as a problem in academia through analysis of the existing political

diversity of both faculty and curriculum. Two studies sponsored by these groups (Klein & Western, N.D. and Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003) analyzed voter registration data demonstrating a high percentage of Democrats present in university faculty. A third study (Klein & Stern, N.D.) demonstrated the same high percentages through self-reported survey data conducted at six social-science professional association meetings. While these studies collectively illustrated a high proportion of Democrats as compared to Republicans in some departments at some universities, they failed to make a connection between party affiliation and academic decision making.

Woessner and Kelly-Woessner (2008) conducted a study that attempted to explain the partisan imbalance in higher education. Their research, published by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, a conservative think-tank, utilized 2004 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) data. The HERI data were comprised of surveys taken by 15,569 college seniors attending 149 U.S. colleges. Woessner and Kelly-Woessner analyzed the HERI data to explore differences in students' college experiences based on political affiliation and how these differences related with the students' self-reported desire to pursue a doctorate degree. The researchers analyzed variables related to academic performance, faculty mentoring and students' overall college experience. Woessner and Kelly-Woessner's analysis of the HERI data concluded the best indicators of the desire to pursue doctoral education are differences in personal priorities between conservatives and liberals. Conservative college seniors are more family-oriented, more focused on financial success, less interested in writing original works and less interested in developing a meaningful philosophy of life, as

compared to liberal college seniors. All of these factors, according to Woessner and Kelly-Woessner, make conservative students more likely to pursue professional degrees as opposed to doctorate degrees.

A study published by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA, 2006) used qualitative analysis to examine course descriptions in the humanities and social sciences at 48 top-ranked institutions. The study claimed to reveal “how narrow, single-minded, and tendentious much of American higher education has become” (p 4). To illustrate this claim, 65 course descriptions were evaluated which are purported by the authors of the study to have a liberal agenda. The study, however, does not reveal how the researchers chose either their sample institutions or the 65 course descriptions taken from these institutions. The claims made by the study are sweeping for such a small sample, and the discussion goes well beyond claims made possible by an analysis of course descriptions. The study specifically states, however, that it is not intended to be scientific and in this regard it is correct.

Only one study (American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2005) attempted to determine the extent to which faculty include personal political agendas in the classroom. The ACTA surveyed 658 students employing a Likert scale and used the results to portray an academic environment that is one-sided in its political views. The authors of the report, however, failed to disclose either their sampling methods or all of the survey results. Also, by aggregating data, such as combining “somewhat agree” responses with “strongly agree” responses, their reported results are less precise. Without more specific information regarding the ACTA’s methods, the report’s findings cannot be relied upon.

Lee (2006) conducted a study sponsored by The American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, to assess the objectivity of current faculty bias research. Lee analyzed six studies published by partisan organizations (American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2005; American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2006; Klein & Western, N.D.; Klein & Stern, N.D.; Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003; and Balch, 2006) and two published in peer-reviewed journals (Rothman, Lichter & Nevitte, 2005 and Kelly-Woessner & Woessner, 2006), all of which presented evidence there is a systematic liberal bias in American higher education. Drawing on the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's definition of objectivity in research, Lee (2006) assessed if each of these studies followed five research principles: (a) allowance for replication, (b) the establishment of clear definitions, (c) accounting for alternative explanations, (d) drawing logical conclusions and (e) eliminating bias. Lee found that none of the eight reports met all of the five standards. Furthermore, Lee found four of the reports met none of the standards. The four reports were: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2005; American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2006; Klein & Stern, N.D.; Rothman, Lichter & Nevitte, 2005. The reports by Horowitz & Lehrer, 2003; Kelly-Woessner & Woessner, 2006; and Klein & Western, N.D. met only two of the standards.

Peer-reviewed Research Addressing Political Bias

Existing peer-reviewed research in the academic literature has explored the role political ideology plays in the classroom through one of two basic approaches. One approach has been to identify the political affiliation of college faculty (Gross & Simmons, 2007; Rothman, Lichter & Nevitte 2005 and Zipp & Fenwick, 2006). The

second approach has been to analyze students and their experiences in the classroom (Kelly-Woessner & Woessner, 2006; Kelly-Woessner & Woessner, 2008 and Kemmelmeier, Danielson & Basten, 2005).

Political Affiliation Research

Rothman, et al. (2005) explored the political affiliation of U.S. college faculty and then looked to see if there was a relationship between faculty's self-identified political affiliation and the prestige of the institution employing the faculty member. The researchers utilized the 1999 North American Academic Study Survey, a random sample of 1643 faculty at 183 four-year colleges and universities. Analysis of the survey indicated an "across-the-board commitment to positions that are typically identified with contemporary liberal ideals" (p 8), by a majority of U.S. faculty. Seventy-two percent of respondents placed themselves ideologically left of center. Multivariate analysis indicated both conservative faculty and practicing Christian faculty were less likely to work at a prestigious institution, while liberal and practicing Jewish faculty were more likely to work at prestigious institutions. Rothman, et al. asserted that their findings supported the hypothesis that "political conservatism confers a disadvantage in the competition for professional advancement" (p 13).

Ames, Barker, Bonneau and Carman (2005) criticized the findings of Rothman, et al. (2005). The principle critique given of the Rothman, et al. study was that the study's conclusions assumed causality where there was only correlation, and the study lacked theoretical justification for the assertion that conservatives were less likely to advance in academia. Ames, et al. offered an alternate hypothesis to the one given by Rothman, et

al.: self-selection. Ames, et al. contended conservatives are statistically less likely to live in an urban environment or in the Northeast, locations that contain a proportionally higher percentage of the nation's prestigious universities. Furthermore, Ames, et al. suggested some conservatives may deliberately choose not to seek employment at top-tier research institutions on the grounds they disagree with a major tenet held by these institutions: the scientific method. Ames, et al. could not test their hypothesis, however, as Rothman, et al. had not disclosed their data at the time of publication.

Zipp and Fenwick (2006) also conducted research regarding the political affiliation of college faculty. Their research utilized the 1989 and 1997 National Surveys of Faculty, conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, to assess the political attitudes of U.S. faculty. Zipp and Fenwick were able to draw several conclusions from a comparison of the 1989 and 1997 surveys. While the percentage of self-identified liberal or moderately liberal faculty rose slightly, from 55.6% in 1989 to 55.9% in 1997, faculty as a whole became more politically self-identified centrist. Zipp and Fenwick went beyond analysis of political ideology to also examine several survey items that probed the ideals faculty felt were important in the classroom. From these survey results the researchers were able to make two important observations: (1) self-identified conservatives were more likely than self-identified liberals to believe that shaping students' values was a core value of higher education and (2) self-identified conservative faculty were less likely than self-identified liberal faculty to support the free exchange of ideas as a core value of higher education. Both of these observations are counter to the beliefs of supporters of the Academic Bill of Rights, who assert liberals are

attempting to shape students' values, and that a free exchange of ideas on campus is necessary to allow students to shape their own beliefs.

Gross and Simmons (2007) greatly extended previous work regarding faculty political affiliation in a working paper presented at an October 2007 Harvard symposium. Gross and Simmons randomly sampled institutions from the National Center for Education Statistics' dataset on degree completion, a comprehensive dataset that included community colleges, a population ignored in previous research. The researchers then randomly identified one faculty member to contact from each program's departmental Website. The study included 1,417 full-time faculty members of every rank. Gross and Simmons' findings were consistent with previous research in that they found the professorate was politically left leaning. Their data also supported Zipp and Fenwick's (2006) assertion that the professorate is becoming more centrist. Furthermore, based on analysis of answers to questions regarding social and political views, Gross and Simmons argued that moderate professors now outnumber liberals and conservatives.

Studies analyzing the political ideology of U.S. college faculty do, as a group, suggest faculty are slightly more likely to be politically liberal than conservative. The studies fail, however, to illustrate what impact, if any, this has in the classroom. Some research is beginning to appear that addresses the issue of classroom bias by surveying students directly.

Student Experience Research

Kelly-Woessner and Woessner (2006) explored the relationship between students' perceptions of their political science professors' ideological views and how those

students rated their professors on student evaluations of the professors. The study sampled 30 instructors and 1,385 students at 29 universities. Analysis of the data found students who perceived their professor as politically similar to themselves rated the professor more highly on student evaluations. The researchers indicated that their results suggest instructors who want to be viewed well on student evaluations would do well to mimic their students' particular political views. They do not advocate this tactic, however, stating:

As instructors we ought not to refine our pedagogy exclusively for the purpose of making students comfortable or improving course evaluations. There are times when students must confront new and controversial ideas in order to help them think critically or broaden their perspective of the world, even if they find these new ideas to be unsettling. (p 499)

Kelly-Woessner and Woessner (2006) illustrate that student perceptions are affected by faculty ideology. They fail, however, to illustrate what larger impact ideology may have on students or students' learning. Kimmelmeier, Danielson and Basten (2005) attempted to address this issue by exploring student success as a function of conservatism. Utilizing person-environment fit literature, Kimmelmeier, et al. hypothesized that conservative students would do better in a classroom environment that matched their ideological beliefs. The research utilized data from a four-year longitudinal study comprised of a cohort of 5,534 students at a major public university. Kimmelmeier, et al. had two significant and related findings. First, in disciplines that tend to attract liberal students (sociology, American studies, African-American studies,

cultural anthropology, education, nursing and women's studies), there was no relationship between students' political views and the grades they received. Second, in disciplines that tend to attract conservative students (economics and business), these students made somewhat higher grades than liberal students, by a factor of 0.25 on a four-point grading scale. These findings are directly contrary to the views held by supporters of the Academic Bill of Rights. Kimmelmeier, et al. assert this research demonstrates academia is "by no means distant from society, as is often alleged; rather, it is deeply entrenched in maintaining its current hierarchical structure" (p 1397).

Kelly-Woessner and Woessner (2008) surveyed political science classes to test the effects of partisanship on students' experiences in the classroom. Their dataset consisted of 1385 student surveys sampled from 69 courses taught by 30 separate instructors at 29 different institutions. The survey Kelly-Woessner and Woessner employed examined student assessments of the course being taught on dimensions including their effort in the course, interest in the subject, self-reported learning, and rating of the instructor. The survey also included questions addressing students' ideological and partisan views, as well as their perceptions of instructors' ideological and partisan views.

Kelly-Woessner and Woessner (2008) found several significant relationships between students' and faculty's politics and the classroom experience. Students reported putting more effort into a class when the instructor was politically similar. Students also self-report higher levels of learning from politically similar instructors. Finally, students reported less enthusiasm for classes taught by instructors politically dissimilar to them.

Kelly-Woessner and Woessner concluded from these findings students taught by politically dissimilar instructors gain less from the classroom experience than their counterparts who share their instructor's views. Kelly-Woessner and Woessner did find, however, there was no relationship between ideological distance in professor and student and the perception that the professor was a fair grader. Also, the majority of students, 87%, graded their professor's expertise as excellent, regardless of ideology.

Mariani and Hewitt (in press) utilized Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) data to perform a longitudinal study exploring changes in students' political ideology during their college years. The HERI data used by Mariani and Hewitt was drawn from 2,883 faculty members and 6,807 students at 38 colleges. Students were surveyed at the start of their freshman year in 1999 and then again at the end of their senior year in 2003. Mariani and Hewitt had several important findings. First, their research was consistent with previous research indicating that university faculty is disproportionately liberal in comparison to the general U.S. population. Second, students in their sample seemed to self select in their choice of institution: liberal students attended more liberal institutions and conservative students attended more conservative institutions. Third, students who have a change in ideology during their college years do tend to become more liberal, but at rates similar to the general U.S. population of the same age range. Finally, there was no evidence found in their research indicating that faculty ideology at the institutional level has an impact on student ideology. Mariani and Hewitt explain this finding by arguing that other factors seem to affect changes in student ideology, such as socio-economic status and gender. Mariani and Hewitt recognize as a

limitation to their study the fact that their research does not explain students' individual experiences. They acknowledge that faculty in their study may simply be failing in efforts to indoctrinate students.

Very little peer-reviewed research has attempted to address what type of student is likely to perceive political bias in a college classroom or when students are likely to perceive bias. One line of research that has touched on these issues, however, employed syllabi to gauge student perceptions of a professor, including perceived bias, based on the professor's race and gender. Moore and Trahan (1997) surveyed students regarding their perceptions of a *Sociology of Gender* course. Participants were asked to read a syllabus for a course, the only difference being whether the course was taught by a male or female. It was found that students who thought they were reading a syllabus from a female professor were more likely to rate the instructor as having a political agenda and to feel the course reflected the instructor's biases.

Ludwig and Meacham (1997) conducted a similar study utilizing syllabi to gauge student perceptions of professors teaching a *Racism and Sexism in American Society* class. The researchers added race as a factor, changing both the race and gender of the professor. Similar to Moore and Trahan's (1997) findings, Ludwig and Meacham found students rated the course as more controversial when taught by a woman than a man. They also found students rated the course as more controversial when taught by an African-American professor than by an Anglo professor.

More recently, Anderson and Smith (2005) completed similar research employing syllabi to measure the effect of student and professor characteristics on student

preconceptions of professors. Their findings did not support previous research by Moore and Trahan (1997) or Ludwig and Meachum (1997). Anderson and Smith's research focused on how women and Latinos would be perceived by students taking a *Race, Gender and Inequality* course. Contrary to previous research, their data found no relationship between the professors' race or gender and students' perceptions of the class having a political agenda or political bias. Anderson and Smith did find, however, that students' characteristics affected the likelihood of perceiving a political bias. Specifically, Anglo men were more likely to perceive a class as having a political bias.

Political bias in the classroom has become an issue of national interest, rising in prominence within the space of just a few years. It is useful to discuss why and how this increase in interest has occurred. The field of critical theory offers insight into the public's perception of political bias in the classroom and the Academic Bill of Rights that may be found useful by educators.

Critical Theory Perspective

Critical theory refers to both the body of work associated with the Institute of Social Research, commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School, as well as the particular process of critique which is commonly found in the work of scholars linked to the Frankfurt School (Carr, 2000). The Frankfurt School was established in Germany in the early 1920s and founded its ideological roots in the works of Kant and Marx (Carr). Critical theory's aim was to "produce a particular form of knowledge that seeks to realize an emancipatory interest, specifically through a critique of consciousness and ideology"

(Carr, p 209). Critical theorists view reality as subjective and judge reality can be distorted in various ways.

In practice, critical theory has a distinctive approach to examining social relationships which, as Jermier (1998) explains, “requires thoughtful examination of the structures of control in society and of the political implications of academic work” (p 236). A resulting common theme within critical theory literature is the misuse of power and control in society. This theme has found new importance in recent years, as Jermier believes, “we have entered a new age in which the forms of control being used are more insidious and widely misunderstood” (p 235).

Grubbs’ (2000) research identified three forms of cultural imperialism: *cultural domination*, *cultural imposition* and *cultural fragmentation*. Grubbs characterizes *cultural imposition* by the replacement of the subject group’s culture by another. This is done through a process that begins with the subject group being required to adopt specific artifacts, such as particular systems of management or decision making. The process of *cultural imposition* can be lengthy, but “... over time, the cultural imposition goes to the very core of the affected organization, resulting in the supplanting of the subject cultures with the values and beliefs of the dominant organization” (Grubbs, p 226).

From a critical theory perspective, attempts to adopt the Academic Bill of Rights as government or university policy can be seen as a means of political interests to gain more control. Current literature has failed to demonstrate an educational need for the policies proposed in the Academic Bill of Rights. If mandated, however, the Academic Bill of Rights could open doors for political conservatives to exercise additional power,

both in the academic hierarchy and in college classrooms, based only on their political beliefs. This is done through a process Grubbs (2000) terms *cultural imposition*.

Alternative methods to implementing the Academic Bill of Rights to avoid political bias and demagoguery in the classroom, regardless of their source or purpose, can be found in critical theory. Freire (2002) discusses the *banking* concept of education. In *banking* education, instead of communicating, “the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat” (Freire, p 72). To educators practicing *banking* education, knowledge becomes a gift bestowed on those they consider to know nothing. According to Freire, *banking* education limits a student’s creativity and the process of free inquiry.

An alternative teaching method to *banking* which Freire (2002) suggests is the concept of *problem-posing* education. In *problem-posing* education, both the student and the teacher are simultaneously students and teachers. *Problem-posing* education encourages an educational process in which students are no longer docile listeners, but “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (Freire, p 81). Freire explains the role of the *problem-posing* educator is to create, together with the student, an environment where true knowledge can be found. *Problem-posing* education is “education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination” (Freire, p 81).

College Student Development

Critical theory supplies a framework for understanding the social relationship between society and perceived political bias in the classroom. To understand the role

political bias plays with students in the classroom, it is necessary to look to the field of student development research.

The 1960s saw significant changes in student affairs as social scientists began to theorize about how students change and develop in college (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Between 1960 and 2008 there was a boom in research addressing developmental theory related to students. While no comprehensive model of student development exists, current theories group into several broad categories (Evans, et al). Cognitive-Structural theories stress changes in the *way* individuals think and their intellectual development. Typology theories examine differences in how individuals relate to the world and how they learn. Person-Environment theories examine not only the individual, but also the individual's interaction in the college environment. Of particular interest to the current study, however, are psychosocial theories and cognitive-structural theories.

Psychosocial theories examine individuals' personal and interpersonal lives, attempting to address how students relate to others and themselves. Early psychosocial development research was conducted by Erikson in the 1950s and 1960s (Evans, et al). Cognitive-structural theories address how people reason and make meaning of their experiences. Some early cognitive-structural research was conducted by Kohlberg, also in the 1950s and 1960s (Evans, et al).

Psychosocial: Identity Development

Erikson (1950), basing his work on Freud, was the first clinical psychologist to introduce identity development as the primary psychosocial task of adolescence.

Although Erikson's work was groundbreaking, according to Berzonsky and Adams (1999) it only "provided a rich theoretical narrative about ego identity; he did not produce an explicit set of empirical operations that could be used to define identity in unambiguous, publicly replicable terms" (p 559). Marcia (1966) was the first to produce an empirically testable construct of identity development. Marcia's identity-development construct will be employed by this study as a possible rationale to explain the relationship between college student development, specifically student identity development, and the perception of political bias in the classroom.

Marcia's (1966) purpose was to directly address the "psychosocial criteria for determining degree of ego identity" (p 551) with the goal of testing "hypotheses regarding direct behavioral consequences of ego identity" (p 551). Marcia's work utilized four experimentally derived profiles of identity status. *Identity achievement* represents a consolidated sense of self. *Moratorium* represents active exploration for a sense of self. *Foreclosure* represents an endorsement of authoritarian values, "an apt description for one who is becoming his parents' alter ego" (Marcia, p 558). Finally, the profile of *diffusion* represents a pattern of apathy and lack of direction.

Marcia's construct has maintained its heuristic value for more than 35 years based in large part on its "elegance and simplicity" (Schwartz, 2002). Since its development, the construct has inspired hundreds of scientific investigations (Berzonsky & Adams, 1999). While Marcia's work has received some criticism for its representation of Erikson's original concepts, Berzonsky and Adams believe it still has utility, "especially

as a model of differences in how individuals negotiate demands and expectations within institutionalized moratoria like university contexts” (p 584).

Since the work of Erikson and Marcia, psychosocial research has addressed identity development of individuals in terms of varying constructs such as race, gender and sexual preference. Cross (1971) developed a psychosocial theory of psychological *Nigrescence*, defined as the “process of becoming Black” (Cross, 1991, p 157). First developed in 1971 and revised in 1991, Cross’s theory outlines a developmental process by which African-Americans internalize a manner of thinking about and evaluating themselves in terms of their race.

Cross (1991) outlines a five-stage sequential process of racial identity development. In stage one, *preencounter*, individuals “hold attitudes toward race that range from low salience to race neutrality to anti-Black” (p 190). Individuals in this stage view the world from a Eurocentric perspective, often distancing themselves from their own race and sometimes actively preferring Whiteness. Stage two, *encounter*, involves some sort of event that has the effect of shattering the individual’s world view and, inducing “identity metamorphosis in the individual” (p 199). This stage often includes a period of anger at Whites and anxiety regarding what the individual should become.

Stage three of Cross’s (1991) psychological Nigrescence is referred to as *immersion-emersion*. In this stage an individual commits to personal change. This transition often includes a demonizing of White culture and a “dichotomized view of the world in which all that is White becomes evil, oppressive, inferior, and inhuman and all things Black are declared superior, even in a biogenetic sense” (p 202). Stage four,

internalization, is marked by anti-White feelings giving way to a sense of self-confidence about being Black. Individuals in this stage range from those for whom race remains a central consideration to their identity formation to others for whom it is one of many considerations.

According to Cross (1991), some individuals develop a Black identity that meets their needs and then do not engage in a long-term interest in Black affairs. These individuals remain in stage four, with some possible movement to previous stages in the case of new encounters. Individuals that progress to stage five, *internalization-commitment*, succeed in finding ways to “translate their personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment” (p 220).

Cognitive-Structural: Moral Development

Starting in the 1950s, Kohlberg began researching moral reasoning and how individuals make moral judgments (Evans, et al, 1998). Central to Kohlberg’s research is a sequential three-level theory of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976). Kohlberg’s moral levels focus on judgments of fairness and obligation. Individuals moving through Kohlberg’s stages begin with a self-centered perspective, become increasingly concerned with societal expectations and norms and culminate at a level that is focused on human rights and equality.

Gilligan (1982) criticized the work of Kohlberg and others for utilizing only male subjects in research and for remaining centered in the male perspective, stating that not until “theorists divide their attention and begin to live with women as they have lived with men will their vision encompass the experience of both sexes and their theories

become correspondingly more fertile” (p 23). Based on her work with female subjects and expanding on the work of Kohlberg, Gilligan (1982) proposed a three-level theory of women’s moral development. The levels of Gilligan’s theory are similar to Kohlberg’s. The lowest level of Gilligan’s theory is also one in which the individual is self-centered. In the next level the woman becomes more reliant on others and is focused on social acceptance. The third and final level, *the principle of nonviolence*, the woman’s focus shifts to avoiding hurting others or herself.

Gilligan differs from Kohlberg in how shifts from one level to another are made. Kohlberg’s (1976) transitions are fueled by changes in cognitive capability. Gilligan’s (1982) transitions are fueled by changes in a woman’s sense of self. Furthermore, Gilligan asserted that women primarily employ moral reasoning based on care, termed *morality of care*, while men employ moral reasoning based on justice, known as *morality of justice*.

Gilligan’s work has received criticism for what is perceived as unscientific selection and analysis of data (Nails, 1983). Despite criticism, Gilligan’s work has inspired a number of empirical studies, some of which support her theory and some of which do not. Jaffe and Hyde (2000) performed a meta-analysis of 113 empirical studies addressing moral reasoning, evaluating empirically Gilligan's assertion that the justice and care orientations are gender differentiated. Jaffe and Hyde found a small difference favoring women for the care orientation and a small difference favoring men for the justice orientation. The differences were so small, however, they concluded that “although distinct moral orientations may exist, these orientations are not strongly

associated with gender” (p 719). Jaffe and Hyde believe differences that have been found in justice and care orientation based on gender exist because of variables that have been confounded with the measurement of moral orientation.

Fisler and Foubert (2006) discuss the importance of understanding college student development and its relationship to the perception of political bias in the classroom, saying:

A greater understanding among educators of the cognitive development of students is essential as the debate over alleged liberal indoctrination unfolds. As students advance their understanding of knowledge, shifting their focus from right answers to reasoned arguments, they learn a more mature approach to relating intellectually to others. (p 3)

An understanding of both cognitive-structural theories and psychosocial theories is a benefit in understanding and exploring the findings of the current study.

Definition of Terms

A clear definition of terms used in this study is necessary so concepts may be operationalized and accurately measured. For the purposes of the current study, key terms are defined as follows:

- *Political Bias*: A suppression of political beliefs other than one’s own and/or a belief that an individual’s own political beliefs are the only correct beliefs.
- *Prejudice*: A partiality that inhibits objective consideration of an issue, person or situation.

- *Academic Classification*: A subject's standing as a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior.
- *Religiosity*: A subject's religiousness, based on the degree to which religion plays a role in his or her day to day life.
- *Ideology*: "A value or belief system that is accepted as fact or truth by some group. It is composed of sets of attitudes toward the various institutions and processes of society. It provides the believer with a picture of the world both as it is and as it should be, and in so doing, it organizes the tremendous complexity of the world into something fairly simple and understandable" (Sargent, 1969, p 1).

The definition of political labels that express ideology poses particular difficulty to empirical research. Spitz (1982) explains this difficulty, saying:

Political labels, by the very fact that they are verbal abridgements of political life, are as mischievous as they are useful. Indeed, if they are to be useful, not merely as ideological weapons but as categories of analysis, they must be employed with extreme caution, and as guides to rather than as specific descriptions of political realities. All this has to be borne in mind when one encounters the use of such labels in contemporary America, nowhere more so than in the case of such terms as liberalism and conservatism. (p 26-27)

The difficulty in utilizing ideological labels is exacerbated by the fact that they are relative terms. Scruton (1980) points out that there is no universal conservative policy. Liberalism and conservatism both encompass multiple beliefs and multiple movements.

Political labels have different meanings in different places. A conservative in Britain, for instance, is often more liberal than a liberal in the United States (Spitz, 1982). The difficulty in using ideological labels is amplified not only through their uncertain meaning, but also by the fact that, as Sargent (1969) expresses, “an individual may hold within himself a variety of ideologies that may be in conflict” (p 6). Individuals may be liberal in some of their ideological beliefs and conservative in others. It should be noted that while many studies used the terms *liberal* and *conservative*, no research discussed in the current chapter defined these terms. Instead, as the current study does, researchers relied on subjects’ self-identification as *liberal* or *conservative*. Research conducted by Luttbeg and Gant (1985), however, found that most individuals surveyed were not able to correctly define the terms *conservative* or *liberal*, leading the researchers to question if the public employs ideology in their decision-making processes.

Taking these facts into consideration, for the purposes of the current study, liberal and conservative are defined as follows:

- *Liberal*: A political ideology focusing on individual rights and equality of opportunity. Particularly favorable to progress and reform.
- *Conservative*: A political ideology that favors tradition and gradual change with a focus on established institutions and social stability.

The literature discussed in this chapter illustrates a need for the current study. Though research exists on political bias, faculty ideology and student development, very little research has been done specifically addressing students’ experiences with political bias in the classroom. Furthermore, much of the research that currently exists has been

conducted by partisan organizations and thus the findings are questionable. This chapter has discussed Marcia's (1966) identity development model, Cross's (1991) psychological Nigrescence and Gilligan's (1982) theory of women's moral development as frameworks with which to discuss the current study's findings regarding student perceptions of political bias in the classroom. In order to begin research into students' perceptions of political bias, Chapter Three goes on to describe the qualitative methods employed in the first phase of the current study.

CHAPTER THREE: QUALITATIVE METHODS

To produce empirical evidence addressing the essence of the experience of political bias in the classroom and the extent to which this bias is experienced in one mid-sized, public land grant university in the Southeastern United States, this study employed a mixed methods design. A mixed methods design allowed for the qualitative exploration of the first research question: How do college students experience political bias in the classroom? Branching from this, a mixed methods design allowed for the quantitative exploration of the second research question: How prevalent is the experience of political bias in the college classroom?

In this chapter the research methods employed in the qualitative first phase of the current study are addressed. Chapter three begins with a discussion of the type of mixed methods design employed. It then reviews the type of qualitative data, qualitative sampling strategy and qualitative data analysis techniques employed. The qualitative phase of research was focused on answering the first research question: How do college students experience political bias in the classroom?

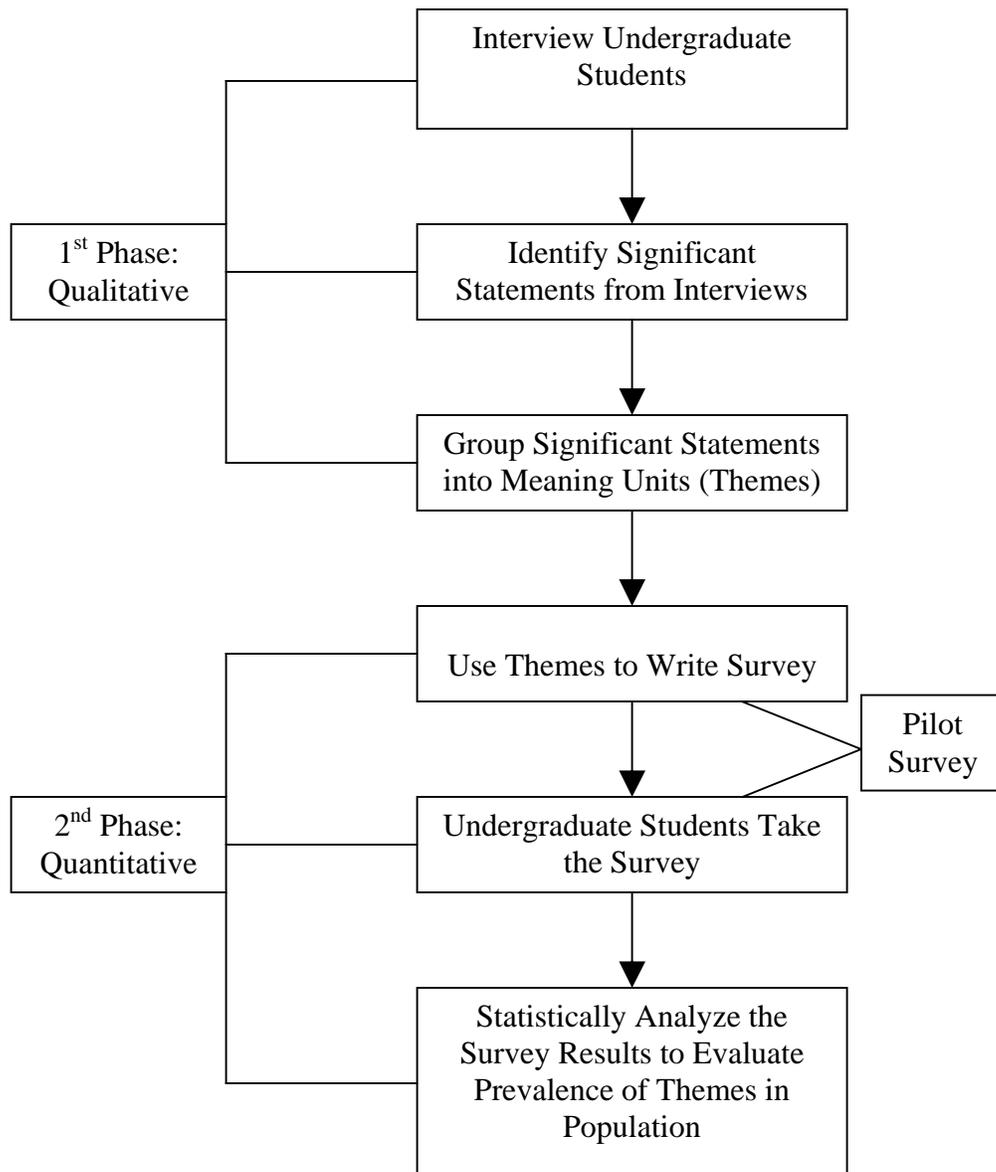
Type of Mixed Methods Design

This study followed the sequential exploratory mixed methods model (Creswell, 2003). Creswell described the sequential exploratory mixed methods approach as useful to a researcher who “wants to explore a phenomenon but also wants to expand on the qualitative findings” (p 216). The sequential exploratory mixed methods model involves a qualitative first step followed by a quantitative second step to generalize the qualitative findings to a larger population. This sequential exploratory mixed method study

consisted first of a phenomenological qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase comprised of a psychometric measure developed from the phenomenological findings.

See Figure 1 for a visual illustration of the current study's research model.

Figure 1. Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods Model



Creswell (2003) observed that the exploratory mixed methods design is an effective method of presenting data to a broad research community. Since the issue of political bias in the classroom affects all educators, regardless of their discipline, results that are understandable across disciplines are essential.

Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

Cresswell (2003) discusses qualitative research as interpretive with the researcher “typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants” (p 184). This was the case in the qualitative phase of the current study. Prior to the start of qualitative research, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from the study institution for both phases of research (Appendix A). The first phase of research consisted of a phenomenological study of students’ experiences with political bias in the classroom. According to Moustakas (1994), the purpose of empirical phenomenological research is:

. . .to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essences or structures of the experience. (p 13)

Qualitatively understanding the essence of the experience of political bias in the classroom is an essential first step to testing the prevalence of the experience.

Type of data

The data collected for the phenomenological phase of research were comprised of semi-structured interview transcripts of 12 participant interviews (Appendix B). The

interview protocol (Appendix C) included *grand tour*, *example* and *prompt* questions, as recommended by Leech (2002). *Grand tour* questions are open-ended questions that allow the subjects freedom to address an issue however they wish. *Example* questions are probing questions that attempt to elicit more information from the subject regarding an issue the subject has addressed, often asking for specific examples from the subject's experience. *Prompt* questions guide the subject to address an aspect of an issue that they have not yet discussed; these questions are often formulated from the results of previous interviews.

Sampling Strategy

Creswell (1998) recommended criterion sampling when undertaking phenomenological research. Criterion sampling is a form of purposeful sampling that, as Patton (1987) explained, has its power in "selecting *information-rich cases* for study in-depth. *Information-rich cases* are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the evaluation" (p 52).

Moustakas (1994) recommended preparing a pre-interview questionnaire when criterion sampling in phenomenological research. Accordingly, a statement was prepared describing the nature of the study (Appendix D). The statement was emailed to intact and existing classes at the study institution, Introduction to Human Communication and Introduction to Public Speaking, during the fall of 2007. Approximately 1200 undergraduate students received the email along with an attached pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix E). Willing participants were asked to respond to the pre-interview questionnaire to establish if they met several essential criteria: (a) first-hand

experience with the phenomenon of political bias in the college classroom, (b) the experience had occurred within one year of the interview, so they could clearly remember and articulate the experience, (c) interest in understanding the nature of the experience, (d) a willingness to participate in a lengthy interview, and (e) willingness to grant the right to digitally audio record the interview and publish the findings.

Nine eligible participants responded to the email. One additional respondent was declared ineligible for participation based on the criteria that his experience with the phenomenon was more than one year previous to the date of the current research. The researcher visited three intact and existing Introduction to Human Communication classes, each with an enrollment of 150 students, to recruit additional participant volunteers. Three additional eligible participants were found in this manner to reach the goal of 12 eligible participant volunteers for the qualitative phase of research. The participants consisted of three White females, one African-American male and eight White males. The participants' academic classifications included two freshmen, five sophomores, two juniors and three seniors. The mean interview length was 16 minutes and 33 seconds (Table 1).

Table 1. Qualitative interview demographics

Student	Rank	Ethnicity	Gender	Interview Length
1	Fresh	African American	Male	0:16:58
2	Soph	White	Female	0:17:41
3	Junior	White	Female	0:07:13
4	Soph	White	Male	0:18:35
5	Fresh	White	Male	0:14:25
6	Junior	White	Male	0:17:09
7	Senior	White	Female	0:16:26
8	Soph	White	Male	0:24:32
9	Senior	White	Male	0:20:52
10	Soph	White	Male	0:20:01
11	Soph	White	Male	0:16:05
12	Senior	White	Male	0:08:34
Mean				0:16:33

Once eligible participants were identified through analysis of the pre-interview questionnaire, a time was agreed upon via email with eligible participants to meet individually with the researcher. Interviews took place in a conference room at the study institution. Interviews followed the interview protocol (Appendix C).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed through an exploration of transcripts of the 12 interviews (Appendix B). First, identifying information of any students or faculty named in the interview process was removed from all transcripts to ensure anonymity of the

participants, their classmates and their professors. Following this, analysis continued as suggested by Creswell (1998). All analysis took place at the subject institution under the guidance of an expert in the field of qualitative research and data analysis.

Significant statements were identified from interview transcripts regarding how the participants experienced political bias in the classroom. These *significant statements* were subjectively identified by the researcher through a close reading of the interview transcripts, focused on any statement given by the participants that described how they experienced the phenomenon of political bias in the classroom. Repetitive and overlapping *significant statements* were eliminated. These non-repetitive and non-overlapping *significant statements* were reduced to three *meaning units*, or themes. Participants' experiences were then used to write a textural (what was experienced) description as well as a structural (how was it experienced) description of the phenomenon. Member checking, or taking data analysis back to participants and determining if the participants felt the findings were accurate (Creswell, 2003), was employed to ensure the validity of the findings.

This chapter has outlined the sequential exploratory mixed methods model (Creswell, 2003) guiding the current study. Methods employed in the first, qualitative phase of the current study, including qualitative data collection and qualitative data analysis methods were discussed. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter Four: Qualitative Results.

CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

This chapter describes the results of the qualitative phase of the current study. The purpose of the qualitative phase of the current study was to answer the research question: How do college students experience political bias in the classroom? The qualitative data were comprised of 12 interviews conducted with undergraduate participant volunteers discussing their experiences with political bias in the classroom. These 12 participant volunteers were comprised of three women and nine men, one African American and 11 Whites, two freshmen, five sophomores, two juniors and three seniors (Table 1).

Phenomenological analysis requires the researcher to assert his or her beliefs regarding the phenomenon under study. This process is referred to by Creswell (1998) as *bracketing* and by Moustakas (1994) as *epoche*. The researcher's existing assumptions are then suspended in order to examine the participants' statements without prejudice and thus fully comprehend the experience of the participants without imposing a pre-existing hypothesis on that experience.

Bracketing

As part of the bracketing process, this study relied on Hickey and Brecher's (1990) discussion of bias. Hickey and Brecher defined negative bias in the classroom as bias that serves to indoctrinate students. Hickey and Brecher describe indoctrination as an action to:

. . . present a set of values as though they were not values but indisputable facts; a concept as politically neutral when it is not, or as having just whatever content

anyone may care to give it when it has not; or an approach as—uniquely—beyond rational question when—in common with all others—it is clearly not. (p 301)

While it is acknowledged that no two classroom experiences can be the same, this study assumes there are some commonalities among experiences of political bias, or indoctrination, in the classroom. These commonalities can be identified through analysis of verbal descriptions of the experience given by student participants.

Interview Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in the manner suggested by Creswell (1998) for a phenomenological study. Treating each significant statement identified through a close reading of the interview transcripts as though it had equal worth, all significant statements were analyzed and a list of non-overlapping and non-repetitive significant statements was created. A final list of 41 non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements concerning the experience of political bias was compiled and is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data

Significant Statement
“It had an impact because people just didn’t want to go to class, and so if you don’t go to class, you’re not going to get a good grade. But a lot of people felt like even in going to class you couldn’t say anything right in his eyes, so you’re not going to get a good grade anyway.”

Table 2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

“The class versus the teacher.”

“Some people tried to tell him what he wanted to hear and their grade kinda went up, but it still wasn’t where they felt it should be, and it’s not like you could just drop the class.”

“You just had to grin and bear it and hope you come out with a C or better.”

“He pretty much was the God of the course.”

“Once he figured out we aren’t going to lean the way you lean just because you want us to, he started picking out the people he did like.”

“I shifted focus and I got a good grade.”

“...but you were very, very, very, you know, held back about coming out about... with your opinions and talking about what you thought, you know, was the right or wrong opinion.”

“So it made you hold back, and even in your papers and your responses on essay, um, questions and that sort of thing, you, you wanted to kind of more lean towards his way so you didn’t, you know, you didn’t want that to alter your grade at all.”

“It was very intimidating and you didn’t want to, um, to bring up your... any sort of opinions you might have for fear of, you know, like you, you always like to stay on your professor’s good side, you know, especially in college when they have more control over your grades and whatnot.”

Table 2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

“I don’t think that we got really everything out of the discussions that we could have because people did hold back their opinions a lot.”

“He would go off on tangents and throw things in your face and a lot of stuff that you couldn’t, you know, refute because you didn’t have the knowledge that he had.”

“He wanted the discussion to lead towards exactly what he was thinking, and so it definitely hindered a lot of the conversation in the class.”

“It took away from what the class was actually about, because class had nothing to do with politics or the government and we should be talking about English.”

“I believed in that guy, in that particular candidate’s views, and he just totally discredited them altogether.”

“I kind of felt lost, because, you know, I had believed that all my life, so I was like, maybe other people believe something totally different and I’m on this island that I don’t.... I need to change my views so I can fit in with this college group because that’s what people want from a college kid.”

“It just made class, class. Just something I have to go to it so I can get the grade; it wasn’t something I looked forward to.”

“I felt like my grade was low-balled because it didn’t have the elements of his ideals.”

Table 2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

“Whether it was because she agreed with the presidency, or liked the presidency, or whether she liked war or any of it, it’s just that she curved the discussion to not go there. Which essentially was political bias.”

“On the little ability to think spectrum, that’s like ‘we tell you what to think,’ which is the lowest of the learning curve, or whatever it’s called.”

“Basically if you said what she said back to her, that’s what she wanted to hear, obviously. So, and I’m sure that helped with your grade.”

“I’d rather get an A than just talk to this, you know, disagree with and argue with this person that’s not going to listen to me, or respect what I have to say to begin with.”

“When you begin to um, not allow any other logical introduction of ideas or thought, that’s kind of when the bias becomes real apparent, I think, is when you’re not willing to actually discuss another person’s viewpoint if they’re coming at it from a logical, or if they’re coming out from the same ground that you are... .”

“He never really acknowledged them as being real other possibilities.”

“You feel like you’re in a corner, you feel like you’re the underdog.”

“You kind of feel like you’re setting yourself up to be torn apart, or just dismissed.”

“...and in the classroom, I felt like it had an intensity, I doesn’t make it as open-minded, and as, as open-minded of an environment to be in.”

Table 2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

“I felt like we were even getting nailed by the teacher, yet the other team was not, because we could have, possibly, been ...we were on the opposite side that she believed in.”

“I just didn’t want to feel like I was the only one in the room who felt that way, or who had that view.”

“It got to the point where I wasn’t going to bother trying to correct by any means. And just kind of roll with it.”

“What I believe or even what the books may say aren’t necessarily the answers we need to be giving him.”

“I kind of felt like I was selling out.”

“I think it can be obnoxious and probably not as serving to the intellectual environment.”

“...because he is very, um, certain that he is correct—not that he doesn’t acknowledge that other people hold other beliefs. But, kind of more the attitude that, yes, these people hold them, but these beliefs need not exist, that they are somehow sub-par to his own.”

“So, instead of letting the students wrestle it out and feel you know, just kind of let the class have access to all that information that’s floating in each other’s head, he’ll more be quick to brush that off.”

Table 2. Qualitative non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

“...essentially he’s going to have the final word because he is the professor and that’s one thing, and there’s not much you can do about that as a student.”

“You no longer want to give it your best effort.”

“I’m hearing all these things said that I know personally are not true, or at least half the story. It was just simply, that was all that was going to be said, and so it’s frustrating.”

“I don’t feel like learned that much from him. Waste of credit hour almost.”

“If you wanted to know what the other view was... Go find it yourself.”

“I got a C, when I felt it was a very well written paper. But, one of the comments he left was that it was not the correct view on the war. It was a personal question I felt. It was very odd.”

Significant statements were then qualitatively grouped into meaning units, or themes. Three themes regarding political bias emerged from analysis of the statements: *limited classroom scope*, *a feeling of powerlessness* and *a need to conform*. Evidence of these three themes is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Qualitative themes and evidence from significant statements identified in interview data

Theme	Evidence in students' statements
Limited Classroom Scope	“He wanted the discussion to lead towards exactly what he was thinking, and so it definitely hindered a lot of the conversation in the class.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“I don’t think that we got really everything out of the discussions that we could have because people did hold back their opinions a lot.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“He never really acknowledged them as being real other possibilities.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“... and in the classroom, I felt like it had an intensity, I feel like it doesn’t make it as open-minded, and as, as open-minded of an environment to be in.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“... because he is very, um, certain that he is correct - not that he doesn’t acknowledge that other people hold other beliefs. But, kind of more the attitude that, yes, these people hold them, but these beliefs need not exist, that they are somehow sub-par to his own.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“I’m hearing all these things said that I know personally are not true, or at least half the story. It was just simply, that was all that was going to be said, and so it’s frustrating.”

Table 3. Qualitative themes and evidence from significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

Limited Classroom Scope	“If you wanted to know what the other view was... Go find it yourself.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“So, instead of letting the students wrestle it out and feel you know, just kind of let the class have access to all that information that’s floating in each other’s head, he’ll more be quick to brush that off.”
Limited Classroom Scope	“You no longer want to give it your best effort.”
Feeling of Powerlessness	“...it had an impact because people just didn’t want to go to class and so if you don’t go to class you’re not going to get a good grade but a lot of people felt like even in going to class you couldn’t say anything right in his eyes so you’re not going to get a good grade anyway.”
Feeling of Powerlessness	“He pretty much was the God of the course.”
Feeling of Powerlessness	“He would go off on tangents and throw things in your face and a lot of stuff that you couldn’t, you know, refute because you didn’t have the knowledge that he had.”
Feeling of Powerlessness	“You feel like you’re in a corner, you feel like you’re the underdog.”
Feeling of Powerlessness	“You kind of feel like you’re setting yourself up to be torn apart, or just dismissed.”

Table 3. Qualitative themes and evidence from significant statements identified in interview data (continued)

Feeling of Powerlessness	“...essentially he’s going to have the final word because he is the professor and that’s one thing and there’s not much you can do about that as a student.”
Need to Conform	“...but you were very, very, very, you know, held back about coming out about with your opinions and talking about what you thought, you know, was the right or wrong opinion.”
Need to Conform	“I felt like my grade was low-balled because it didn’t have the elements of his ideals.”
Need to Conform	“Basically if you said what she said back to her, that’s what she wanted to hear, obviously. So, and I’m sure that helped with your grade.”
Need to Conform	“I just didn’t want to feel like I was the only one in the room who felt that way, or who had that view.”
Need to Conform	“It got to the point where I wasn’t going to bother trying to correct by any means. And just kind of roll with it.”
Need to Conform	“What I believe or even what the books may say aren’t necessarily the answers we need to be giving him.”
Need to Conform	“I kind of felt like I was selling out.”

Description of the Experience

Following Creswell's (1998) procedures for conducting phenomenological research, the analysis of interview data (Appendix B) is followed by a description of the participants' experience with the phenomenon. The researcher first gives a *textural description*, explaining what was experienced or what happened to the participants. The researcher then describes the *structural experience*, or how the phenomenon was experienced and what the participants felt.

Textural Description: What Was Experienced

Subjects of this study who experienced politically biased college classrooms believed professors were guiding discussions only along the political topics the professor wished to address, even if those topics were not related to the class subject. Subjects believed ideas contrary to the professor's beliefs were avoided, or actively discredited, by the biased professor. One participant felt the professor believed alternate views "need not exist . . . they are somehow sub-par to his own." Subjects believed students who presented to the class alternate perspectives for viewing a topic from the perspective presented by a biased professor would have their ideas ridiculed by the professor. One participant reflected this attitude, stating "you kind of feel like you're setting yourself up to be torn apart, or just dismissed." Subjects also believed students who presented ideas contrary to the professor's political beliefs in assignments often had their grades lowered, or, in the words of one participant, "low balled," as a result of the opposing views. Subjects of this study also believed students whose ideas were similar to the professor's were allowed to contribute more to class discussions and received higher grades on

assignments. Subjects felt students perceived this difference and were therefore sometimes not genuine in their assignments and in class discussion so as to align their beliefs with their professor's beliefs and thus, it was perceived, receive higher grades. This view was reflected in the statement that "if you said what she said back to her, that's what she wanted to hear, obviously. So, and I'm sure that helped with your grade."

Structural Experience: How It Was Experienced

Subjects who experienced political bias in the classroom felt they were not receiving the full benefits of the educational experience they deserved, and often felt cheated as a result. The perceived actions of a politically biased professor made these subjects feel that going to class or trying to contribute was a waste of time, which further limited their classroom experiences. Subjects who experienced political bias often felt attacked and belittled by a biased professor for having contrary views. This led many subjects to feel as though they were in conflict with the professor. Many subjects felt powerless to counter a professor's attacks as the professor was seen as both an intellectual superior and an authority figure with control over the subject's grades. Many subjects who experienced political bias would respond in one of two ways. Some subjects would not say anything to counter the professor's perspective, attempting instead to simply blend into the class. These subjects did not want to stand out in any way from the rest of the class, fearing the professor's response if it were known they did not agree. Other subjects would not be genuine and instead aligned their views with the professor's on assignments, tests and in class discussion in the hope of receiving a better grade.

These disingenuous actions sometimes made subjects feel negative about themselves and thus feel further cheated by the politically biased professor.

This chapter has described the findings of the first, qualitative phase of the current study. Chapter Five goes on to describe how these findings were used to develop a quantitative survey. It also explains the pilot testing as well as sampling and analysis procedures for the second, quantitative phase of research.

CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE METHODS

This chapter begins by describing the manner in which qualitative findings were employed in the development of the Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (PBCS). This chapter then addresses the pilot procedures for the PBCS. Finally, this chapter addresses the sampling strategy as well as analysis methods employed in the second, quantitative phase of the current study.

Survey Development

Survey Design

Survey design of the Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (PBCS) was conducted working directly with an expert in the field of qualitative and mixed methods research. Twenty-five total questions were drafted. Twelve questions, each with a six-point Likert scale response, with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “6” being “strongly agree,” were drafted to comprise a scale exploring students’ perceptions of political bias in the classroom. These 12 questions were divided into three subscales addressing the frequency with which participants experience each of the three themes identified in the qualitative phase of the current study: *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform*. Four of the 12 questions were drafted to comprise each theme.

Six additional questions addressed the participants’ self-reported degree of experience with professors who held a political bias. A definition of political bias, “political bias can be defined as a suppression of political beliefs other than one’s own and/or a belief that an individual’s own political beliefs are the only correct beliefs,” was supplied to the students prior to these six questions to help them understand the concept

being explored. This definition was adopted from the work of Hickey and Brecher (1990), who discussed the “suppression of views other than one’s own; by the pretence that one’s partial view is the only proper view to take” (p. 301). Seven demographic questions were also included. The version of the PBCS used for pilot testing is seen in Appendix F. A short informational letter was included with this survey to comply with Institutional Review Board requirements (Appendix G).

Question Development

Question development was conducted working directly with an expert in the field of qualitative and mixed method research. Initial wording for questions addressing each theme identified in the qualitative research, *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform*, was taken from transcript data. Questions underwent seven drafts to improve and refine them prior to pilot testing.

Limited Classroom Scope

Questions addressing participants’ perceptions of *limited classroom scope* explored participants’ perceptions of whether or not their professors address multiple political viewpoints in the classroom, and if the participants believe their professors respect other viewpoints. These questions were developed from significant statements found in the interview transcripts, such as:

... because he is very, um, certain that he is correct — not that he doesn’t acknowledge that other people hold other beliefs. But, kind of more the attitude that, yes, these people hold them, but these beliefs need not exist, that they are somehow sub-par to his own.

The meaning found in this significant statement was then expressed in a question as part of the first draft of the PBCS: “My professors portray political beliefs they do not agree with as incorrect.”

Working with an expert in qualitative and mixed methods research, the researcher improved this question through four incremental revisions in the drafts written of the PBCS prior to pilot testing. This question appeared in the pilot test and the final version of the PBCS as question seven: “In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect.” These incremental revisions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Development of PBCS question seven: In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect.

Version	Question
1	My professors portray political beliefs they do not agree with as incorrect.
2	In my experience, professors treat political beliefs inconsistent with their own beliefs as incorrect.
3	In my experience, professors assume political beliefs inconsistent with their own beliefs are incorrect.
4	In my experience, professors assume that political beliefs in opposition to their own beliefs are incorrect.
5	In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect.

The *limited classroom scope* subscale had three additional questions in the pilot test and final versions of the PBCS: question one, “in my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues,” question four, “in my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor’s own political beliefs” and question ten, “in my experience, professors are respectful of students’ political beliefs, even when the professors’ and students’ beliefs differ.” These questions went through a similar development process as question seven. All PBCS *limited classroom scope* subscale questions are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. PBCS *Limited classroom scope* subscale questions

Question Number	Question
1	In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues.
4	In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor’s own political beliefs
7	In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect.
10	In my experience, professors are respectful of students’ political beliefs, even when the professors’ and students’ beliefs differ.

Feeling of Powerlessness

Questions addressing participants' perceptions of a *feeling of powerlessness* explore participants' perceptions of their professors attacking or belittling students that disagree with them politically, as well as the participants' self-expressed ability to vocalize their own disagreements with a professor's political views. These questions were developed from significant statements found in the interview transcripts, such as, "you kind of feel like you're setting yourself up to be torn apart, or just dismissed." The meaning found in this significant statement was then expressed in a question as part of the first draft of the PBCS: "I feel as though it doesn't matter how well I express my opinions on political issues, my professors are going to dismiss them regardless."

Working with an expert in qualitative and mixed-methods research, the researcher improved this question through three incremental revisions in the drafts written of the PBCS prior to pilot testing. This question appeared in the pilot test and final version of the PBCS as question two: "Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs." These incremental revisions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Development of PBCS question two: Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs

Version	Question
1	I feel as though it doesn't matter how well I express my opinions on political issues, my professors are going to dismiss them regardless.
2	In my experience, professors dismiss my political beliefs as incorrect.
3	Professors have dismissed my political beliefs as incorrect.
4	Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs.

The *feeling of powerlessness* subscale had three additional questions in the pilot test and final versions of the PBCS: question five, "I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs," question eight, "professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically" and question eleven, "when a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class." These questions went through a similar development process as question two. All PBCS *feeling of powerlessness* subscale questions are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. PBCS *Limited classroom scope* subscale questions

Question Number	Question
2	Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs.
5	I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs.
8	Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically.
11	When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class.

Need to Conform

Questions addressing participants' perceptions of a *need to conform* explore participants' ability to express their true political beliefs in class and their perceived need to incorporate their professors' views in tests and assignments in order to preserve their grade. These questions were developed from significant statements found in the interview transcripts, such as, "basically if you said what she said back to her, that's what she wanted to hear, obviously. So, and I'm sure that helped with your grade." The meaning found in this significant statement was then expressed in a question as part of the first draft of the PBCS: "In class assignments, I feel as though I need to change my answers to match with the professor's political views."

Working with an expert in qualitative and mixed-methods research, the researcher improved this question through four incremental revisions in the drafts written of the PBCS prior to pilot testing. This question appeared in the pilot test and final version of the PBCS as question nine: “On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors’ political beliefs rather than my own.” These incremental revisions are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Development of PBCS question nine: On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors’ political beliefs rather than my own

Version	Question
1	In class assignments, I feel as though I need to change my answers to match with the professor’s political views.
2	In my experience, I feel I need to change my answers in class assignments to match with the professor’s political views.
3	On assignments, I feel obligated to elaborate on my professors’ political beliefs rather than my own political beliefs.
4	I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor’s political beliefs.
5	On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors’ political beliefs rather than my own.

The *need to conform* subscale had three additional questions in the pilot test and final versions of the PBCS: question three, “I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors’ political beliefs,” question six, “I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor’s political beliefs” and question twelve, “I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors’ political beliefs.” These questions went through a similar development process as question nine. All PBCS *need to conform* subscale questions are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. PBCS *need to conform* subscale questions

Question Number	Question
3	I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors’ political beliefs.
6	I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor’s political beliefs.
9	On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors’ political beliefs rather than my own.
12	I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors’ political beliefs.

Pilot Testing

To ensure internal reliability, version seven of the PBCS was pilot tested with 31 undergraduate student participants in two intact and existing sections of Introduction to Public Speaking at the study institution. A standardized Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency evaluating how well a set of items measures a single unidimensional latent construct, of 0.835 was obtained for the 12-item PBCS scale addressing student perceptions of political bias in the classroom. The Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted from the PBCS is shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Pilot testing: Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted

Question	Cronbach's Alpha If-Item-Deleted
1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues	0.842
2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs	0.825
3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs	0.809
4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs	0.834
5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs	0.827
6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs	0.817
7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect	0.820
8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically	0.813
9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own	0.806
10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ	0.823
11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class	0.838
12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs	0.813

Only two items improved the Cronbach's Alpha value if deleted. Question one, "in my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues and question," if deleted would raise the Cronbach's Alpha value to 0.842. Question 11, "When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class" if deleted would raise the Cronbach's Alpha value to 0.838. Neither of these values was judged to be significant enough to delete the given question from the PBCS based on the pilot study results.

After pilot testing, the order of the questions related to self-identified experience with political bias in the classroom and the demographic questions was changed to aid in survey fluidity and ease of the participant in reading the survey. Questions 17 and 18 were transposed with questions 19 and 20 so that all demographic questions would appear sequentially. Appendix H shows the final version of the PBCS as used in the current study.

Quantitative Data Collection Procedures

Type of Data

Quantitative data consisted of participants' responses to the PBCS (Appendix H). The PBCS consisted of 12 questions which employed a six-point Likert-type response scale, with each question directed at addressing the students' experiences with one of three themes identified in the qualitative phase of research. The PBCS also consisted of six questions which were directed at assessing the participants' self-identified degree of experience with political bias in the classroom. An additional seven demographic questions brought the survey to a total of 25 questions.

Sampling Strategy

The quantitative phase of the current study was conducted through convenience sampling, meaning the participants were chosen based primarily on their availability and accessibility (Creswell, 2003). Participants (N=528) were current undergraduate students in three intact and existing Introduction to Human Communication (N=252) classes and 15 intact and existing Introduction to Public Speaking (N=276) classes in the spring 2008 semester at the study institution. Though a convenience sample, the courses sampled

were sound selections for research, as they were general education courses and contained a cross sample of the student body both in academic classification and major field of study. The sample was 22.2% freshman, 35% sophomore, 22.5% junior and 20.3% senior. The sample's fields of study were 14.2% technical sciences, 4% arts and humanities, 29.4% business and finance, 18.8% health and human development, 14.4% natural and life sciences, 17.9% social sciences and 1.5% undeclared.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed statistically using Stata™ and SPSS™ statistical analysis software. Descriptive statistics were run exploring the prevalence of students' perceptions of political bias in the classroom. Employing questions 13 through 18 (Appendix H) as dependent variables, regression analysis was employed using all demographic questions (including gender, age, race/ethnicity, major, academic classification, political ideology and religiosity) as independent variables to explore significant relationships between them and a participant's self-reported experience with political bias in the classroom. These relationships were used to inform the building of regression models with the subscales *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* as additional independent variables to test each subscale's value as an indicator of responses to questions 13 through 18.

Different modeling techniques were used depending on the dependent variable employed. Binary logistic regression modeling was employed with questions 13, “according to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias” and question 14, “according to

this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor's political bias" as dependent variables. According to Bryant (2000), "logistic regression is appropriate when the criterion measure is dichotomous, although it can also be extended to criteria that have been measured using three or more categories" (p 107). Questions 13 and 14 required a response of "yes," "no" or "not sure." Binary logistic regression was utilized as a statistical measure to evaluate significant indicators of a "yes" response for these questions.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) modeling was employed using question 15, "in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class" and question 16, "in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class" as dependent variables. DeMaris (2004) states that linear regression, including OLS analysis, is acceptable as long as the independent and dependent variables are approximately continuous, and that "a rule of thumb for approximately continuous to hold is that the variable should be at least ordinal and have at least five different levels . . . in fact, X (the independent variable) can be dichotomous" (p 43). Questions 15 and 16 required a response on a six-point Likert scale with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "6" being "strongly agree." OLS was utilized to explore relationships between responses to these questions as well as demographic variables, and the *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales.

Poisson regression modeling was employed using question 17, "I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class" and question 18, "I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class"

as dependent variables. DeMaris (2004) stated that a Poisson regression model is appropriate for a dependent variable that is a count ranging from zero to infinity. Questions 17 and 18 required the subject to write in a number corresponding to the number of professors they have had who showed a political bias in class. A Poisson regression was utilized to explore relationships among responses to these questions as well as demographic variables, and the *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales. Finally, OLS was used to explore the relationship between the subscales *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* as dependent variables and all demographic independent variables: *political ideology*, *religiosity*, *academic major*, *age*, *race/ethnicity*, *gender*, and *academic classification*.

Building from the results of the qualitative phase of the current study, this chapter has first described the use of qualitative findings in the design of the Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (PBCS). This chapter went on to address the pilot study procedures and results as well as to describe the sampling strategy and analysis methods employed in the quantitative, second phase of this sequential, exploratory mixed method study. The results of the quantitative phase of this research are described in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

According to Creswell (2003), quantitative research, and specifically survey research, is useful in that it supplies a “numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From sample results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population” (p 153). The claims of this study are specifically made through the creation of statistical models, defined by DeMaris (2004) as, “a set of one or more equations describing the processes that generated the observations on one or more response variables” (p 2). DeMaris cautions that, by their nature, statistical models are not to be taken literally, but “to the extent that a model provides a broad outline of the dynamics underlying behavioral phenomena, it can be useful for advancing knowledge” (p 2).

This study’s qualitative findings served to inform the creation of the PBCS (Appendix H) addressing student experiences with political bias in the classroom based on each of the three themes identified from the qualitative phase of research. Four questions were drafted to address each of the three themes. Six additional questions addressed the participants’ self-reported degree of experience with professors who held a political bias. Seven demographic questions were also included. The PBCS was administered to participants in three intact and existing Introduction to Human Communication (N=252) classes and 15 intact and existing Introduction to Public Speaking (N=276) classes in the Spring 2008 semester. Statistical regression models were constructed from these survey results. These statistical models are presented in this chapter.

Construct Validity

Thorndike (2005) explains the need for testing a measure's construct validity, saying:

Sometimes, with respect to an educational or psychological test, we ask neither "How well does this test predict future performance?" nor "How well does this test represent our curriculum?" Instead, we ask "What do scores on this test *mean* or *signify*?" What does the score tell us about an individual? Does it correspond to some meaningful trait or construct that will help us to understand the person?

For this last question, the term construct validity has been used. (p 175)

Thorndike goes on to define the term construct as a concept that is constructed by the investigator to account for regularities in observed behaviors. In the current study, construct validity is tested to understand if the PBCS identifies a construct or constructs which account for regularities present in the experience of political bias in the classroom.

Cronbach and Meehl (1955, as cited in Shultz & Whitney, 2005) suggest several methods of testing construct validity. These methods include:

1. Group differences: if one or more groups are expected to differ on a construct then they should differ on the measure of the construct.
2. Stability of test scores: enduring traits should remain stable over time.
3. Test taking process: single measures can be impacted by multiple constructs, evaluating the process by which a person gives a response on a measure can give valuable insight into other constructs that impacting responses to the measure.

4. Structural consistency: items on a test that measure a single construct should be interrelated. This can be accomplished through measures of internal consistency such as coefficient alpha.

5. Factor analysis and correlation matrices: Thorndike (2005) defines factor analysis as “a way to analyze the pattern of correlations between several measures in order to identify a smaller number of underlying components or factors” (p 342). Given the limited amount of existing research regarding political bias in the classroom and the constraints of the current study’s research design, methods one through three listed above were not possible means of evaluating the construct validity of the PBCS. Method four, structural consistency, and method five, factor analysis, were employed and those results are reported here.

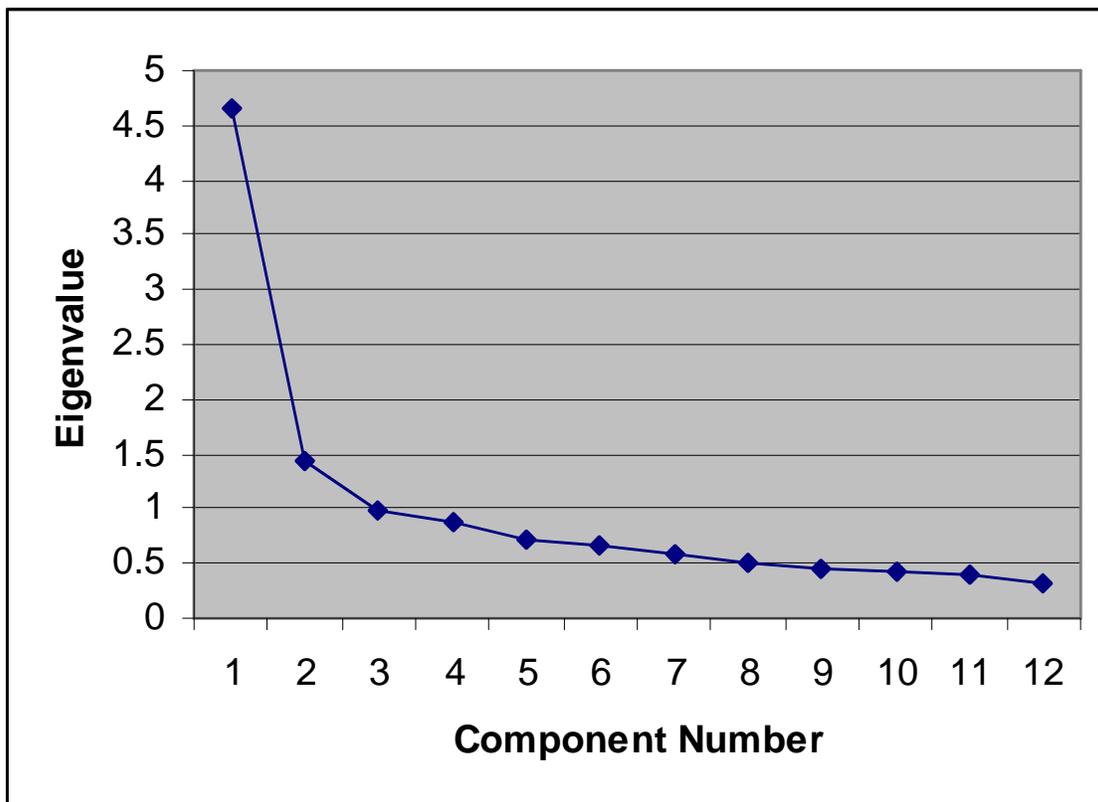
Exploratory Factor Analysis

Shultz and Whitney (2005) explain that factor analysis attempts to condense the number of factors from the number of original items by accounting for common variance, or *communality*, between the items. The current study employed exploratory factor analysis to reduce the number of factors in the PBCS from 12, the number of questions which address participants’ experience with political bias in the classroom. Shultz and Whitney go on to recommend a sample size of no fewer than 100 cases and a sample size relative to the number of items of at least five to one. The current study met this standard (N=528).

SPSS™ was employed to perform factor analysis on the 12 questions addressing participants’ experience with political bias in the classroom. Reise, Waller and Comrey

(2000) suggest constructing a scree plot and performing a scree test to extract the best number of latent factors from items. Reise et al explain “the objective of the scree plot is to visually locate an elbow, which can be defined as the point where the eigenvalues form a descending linear trend” (p 290). Figure 2 shows the scree plot constructed from participant responses to questions one through 12.

Figure 2. Scree plot for PCBS items one through 12



Analysis of the scree plot shows one very strong factor followed by a second, less robust factor. The third factor, just below eigenvalue equal to one, reaches the *elbow* referred to by Reise et al (2000) and level off in a linear relationship. For this reason, the

current factor analysis extracted only two factors by using only eigenvalues greater than one. Table 11 shows the rotated component matrix for participant responses to questions one through 12. Components were extracted using principal components analysis and varimax rotation method was employed.

Table 11. Rotated component matrix for participant responses to questions one through 12*

Question	Component	
	1	2
3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs	-0.615	0.340
5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs	0.757	-0.053
6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs	0.641	-0.265
9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own	-0.578	0.306
11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class	-0.663	0.171
12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs	0.797	-0.132
1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues	0.126	-0.403
2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs	-0.055	0.704
4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs	-0.226	0.595
7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect	-0.124	0.798
8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically	-0.301	0.722
10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ	0.364	-0.717

*Higher loading component is in bold.

Component one explained 38.86% of the total variance in responses to the 12 PBCS questions addressing participant experience with political bias in the classroom.

The second component explained an additional 11.92%, for a cumulative 50.78% of the variance explained. This percentage is 1.25% less than the average percent variance explained in exploratory factor analysis comprising Henson and Roberts (2006) meta-analysis of peer reviewed research articles (N=60) appearing in four top tier educational psychology journals.

An analysis of the component matrix shows that all of the questions that comprise the *limiting effect* theme (questions one, four, seven and ten) loaded strongly on the second component and all of the questions comprising the *need to conform* theme (questions three, six, nine and twelve) loaded strongly on the first component. Questions comprising the *feeling of powerlessness* theme (questions two, five, eight and eleven), however, did not load strongly on the same theme. Questions five and eleven loaded strongly on the first component, with the *need to conform* questions, while questions two and eight loaded strongly on the second component, with the *limiting effect* questions.

A qualitative analysis of the questions loading in each component shows a distinction between the two groups. The questions loading in component one ask the participant to be self reflective. For example, both question eleven, “when a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class,” from the *feeling of powerlessness* subscale and question nine, “on assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors’ political beliefs rather than my own,” from the *need to conform* subscale ask the participants to address how the participant himself or herself feels or acts. The questions loading on the second factor, however, ask the participant to be attributive in their response. For example, both question four, “in my

experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs" from the *limiting effect* subscale and question eight "professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically" from the *feeling of powerlessness* subscale ask the participants to address what they perceive regarding how their professors think or act.

It is possible that factors unrelated to political bias in the classroom or the three themes identified in the qualitative phase of research influenced responses to items one through twelve. Factors instead related to the self-reflective versus attributive nature of these items may cause these items to load on separate components. It seems more likely, however, that participants who perceive the same thought or action from their professor react to it in very different manners or to different degrees, and that this fact is reflected in the exploratory factor analysis.

Although the current study has successfully extracted two strong components from the data, it should be stressed that an analysis of the scree plot (Figure 2) shows one factor loading on an eigenvalue more than three times as large as any other in the factor analysis. This is support for the construct validity of the PBCS and that it is measuring the construct of student perceptions of political bias in the classroom, particularly given the difference in the nature of the questions loading on each of the two components discussed in this section.

Structural Consistency

Employing the results of the quantitative phase of research (N=528), reliability analysis was performed on the first 12 items of the PBCS, those addressing student

perceptions of political bias in the classroom. Analysis was performed on the 12 items as one scale and on each of the three subscales addressing themes identified in the qualitative phase of research. Where necessary, responses to negatively worded items were transformed prior to analysis.

Reliability analysis using the results of the quantitative phase of research (N=528) performed on the full scale of 12 items resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha score of .85. Cronbach's Alpha values if-item-deleted are reported in Table 12. This analysis shows that only the deletion of question 1, "In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues," improves the Cronbach's Alpha value for this scale. The increase is of 0.003, however, and based on these results question one did not warrant elimination from the current study.

Table 12. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on 12 items addressing student perceptions of political bias in the classroom (N=528)

Question	Cronbach's Alpha if-Item-Deleted
1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues	0.853
2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs	0.844
3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs	0.834
4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs	0.841
5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs	0.841
6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs	0.836
7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect	0.838
8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically	0.832
9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own	0.838
10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ	0.831
11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class	0.840
12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs	0.834

Reliability analysis performed on the *limited classroom scope* subscale resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.670. Cronbach's Alpha values if-item-deleted are reported in Table 13. This analysis shows that only the deletion of question 1, "in my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues," improves the Cronbach's Alpha value for this subscale. The increase is by a value of 0.018,

however, and based on these results question one did not warrant elimination from the current study.

Table 13. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on *limited classroom scope* subscale (N=528)

Question	Cronbach's Alpha if-Item-Deleted
1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues	0.688
4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs	0.620
7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect	0.567
10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ	0.524

Reliability analysis performed on the *feeling of powerlessness* subscale resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.637. Cronbach's Alpha values if-item-deleted are reported in Table 14. This analysis shows that there is no question that, if deleted, would improve the Cronbach's Alpha value for this subscale.

Table 14. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on *feeling of powerlessness* subscale (N=528)

Question	Cronbach's Alpha if-Item-Deleted
2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs	0.613
5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs	0.578
8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically	0.536
11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class	0.539

Reliability analysis performed on the *need to conform* subscale resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.749. Cronbach's Alpha values if-item-deleted are reported in Table 15. This analysis shows that there is no question that, if deleted, would improve the Cronbach's Alpha value for this subscale.

Table 15. Political Bias in the Classroom Survey (N=528) Cronbach's Alpha if-item-deleted on *need to conform* subscale (N=528)

Question	Cronbach's Alpha if-Item-Deleted
3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs	0.680
6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs	0.667
9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own	0.696
12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs	0.720

Shultz and Whitney (2005) report that the common standard of a strong reliability estimate is 0.70. The Cronbach's Alpha values for the *limited classroom scope* (0.670) and *feeling of powerlessness* (0.637) subscales do not meet this standard. Thorndike (2005), however, points out that while high reliability estimates are required to make reliable evaluations of individuals, a reliability estimate as low as 0.50 will still "permit us to make useful studies of and draw dependable conclusions about groups, especially groups of substantial size." (p 131). These Cronbach's Alpha values are still acceptable given the number of participant volunteers in the quantitative phase of the current study (N=528).

Descriptive Statistics

Participant Demographics

Survey questions number 21 through 25 of the PBCS addressed participant demographics. The survey sample was 52.5% female (N=277) and 47.5% male (N=251) and the reported race/ethnicity was 87.7% White and 7.4% African American (see Table 16 for race/ethnicity distribution). The reported ages ranged from 18 to 49 (mean=20.04, median=20, mode=19). Reported academic classification was 22.2% freshman, 35% sophomore, 22.5% junior and 20.3% senior. For analysis purposes, undergraduate majors were grouped into one of seven categories. Participants reported as 14.2% technical sciences, 4% arts and humanities, 29.4% business and finance, 18.8% health and human development, 14.4% natural and life sciences, 17.9% social sciences and 1.5% undeclared.

Table 16. Distribution of subjects by Race/Ethnicity

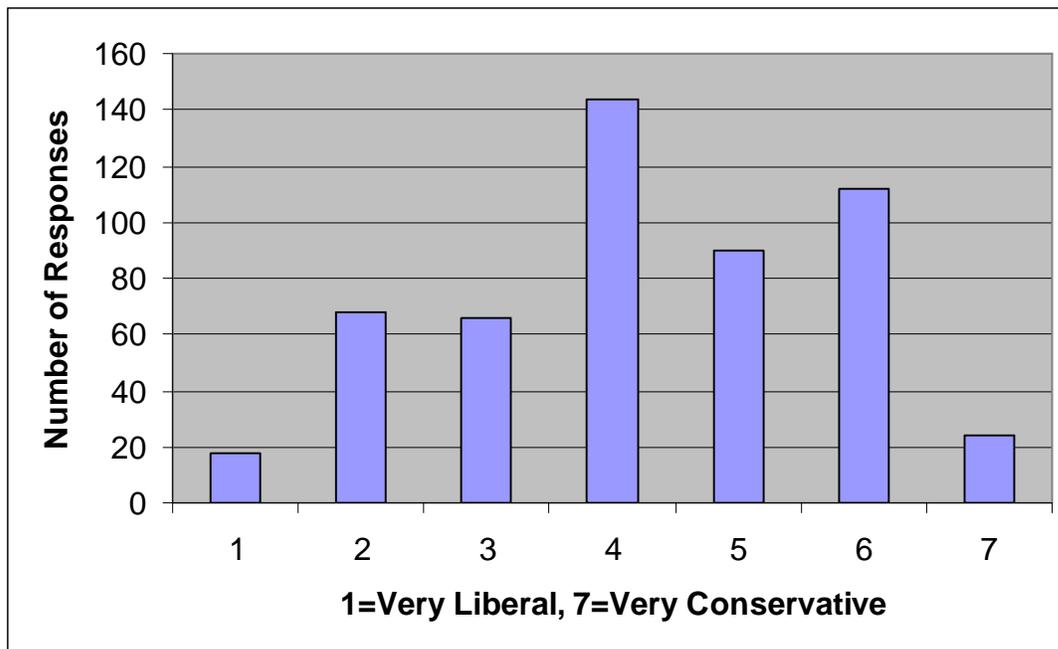
Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
White	463	87.7
African American	39	7.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	8	1.5
Hispanic	3	0.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0
Multiple Ethnicities	10	1.9
Other	4	0.8
Total	528	100

Survey questions 19 and 20 of the PBCS addressed participant political ideology and religiosity, respectively. On a Likert scale, with “1” being “very liberal” and “7” being “very conservative” the sample’s self reported political ideology had a mean of 4.25 and a median and mode of 4 (Table 17 and Figure 3).

Table 17. Question 19: “I consider myself to be politically_____.”

Political Ideology	Frequency	Percent
Very Liberal	18	3.4
Liberal	68	12.9
Somewhat Liberal	66	12.5
Moderate	144	27.3
Somewhat Conservative	90	17.0
Conservative	112	21.2
Very Conservative	24	4.5
Total	522	98.9
Missing	6	1.1

Figure 3. Question 19: “I consider myself to be politically_____.”



The participants were asked to respond on a four-point Likert scale to the question, “to what extent would you say religion provides guidance in your day-to-day life,” with one being “not at all” and four being “a great deal.” This question, a measure of the participant’s religiosity, had a mean of 2.71, a median of 3 and a mode of 4 (see Table 18 for religiosity distribution).

Table 18. Question 20: “To what extent would you say religion provides guidance in your day-to-day life?”

Religiosity	Frequency	Percent
Not at All	83	15.7
Some	157	29.7
Quite a Bit	110	20.8
A Great Deal	173	32.8
Total	523	99.1
Missing	5	0.9

Experience with Political Bias in the Classroom

Survey questions 13 through 18 of the PBCS addressed participants’ self-reported degree of experience with professors who held a political bias based on the following definition supplied to the participants: “political bias can be defined as a suppression of

political beliefs other than one’s own and/or a belief that an individual’s own political beliefs are the only correct beliefs.” Questions 13 and 14 required a response of “yes,” “no” or “not sure.” Response distributions for questions 13 and 14 are presented in Table 19. On question 13, 41.7% of participants reported having witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias, 40.2% reported not having this experience, and 18% were “not sure.” On question 14, 12.5% of participants reported being a victim of a professor’s political bias, 75.9% reported not being the victim of a professor’s political bias and 11.6% were “not sure.”

Table 19. Experience with political bias: Yes/No/Not Sure

Question	Yes		No		Not Sure	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
13. According to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias?	41.70%	220	40.20%	212	18%	95
14. According to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias?	12.50%	66	75.90%	400	11.60%	61

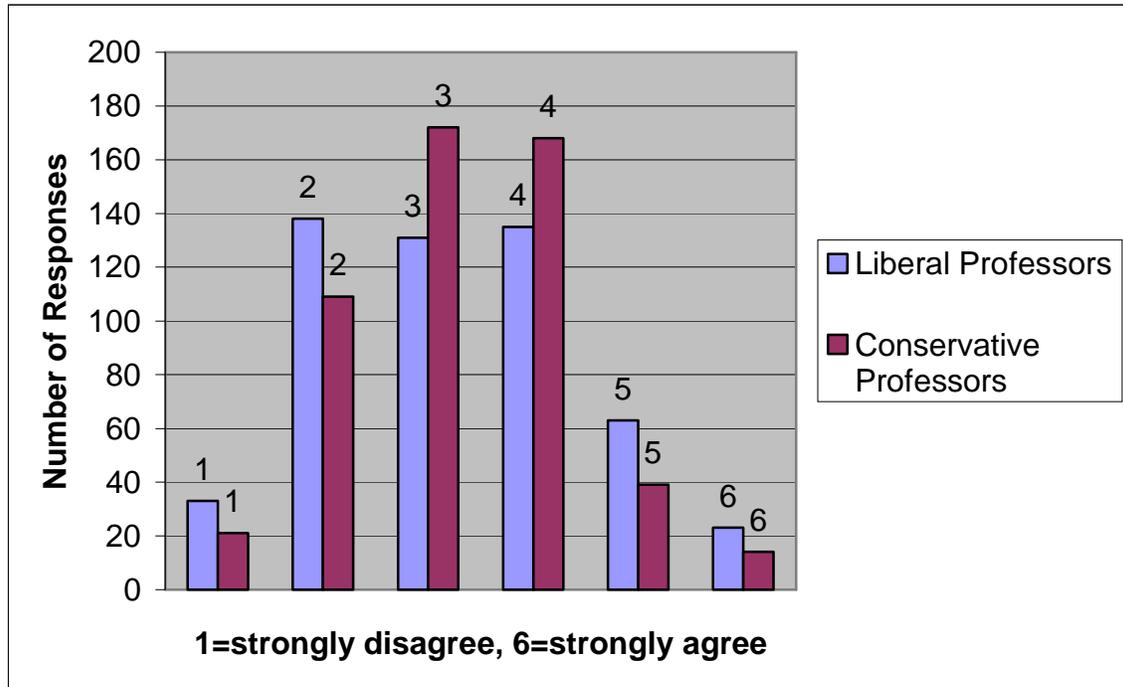
Survey questions 15 and 16 required a response on a six-point Likert scale with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “6” being “strongly agree.” Responses to question 15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” had a mean of 3.24, median of 3, and mode of 2. Responses to question 16, “in my experience,

politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” had a mean of 3.26, median of 3, and mode of 3 (Table 20 and Figure 4).

Table 20. Questions 15 & 16: “In my experience politically liberal/conservative professors have a political bias in class.”

response	Liberal (Q15)		Conservative (Q16)	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
1	33	6.2	21	4
2	138	26.1	109	20.6
3	131	24.8	172	32.6
4	135	25.6	168	31.8
5	63	11.9	39	7.4
6	23	4.4	14	2.7
total	523	99.1	523	99.1
missing	5	0.9	5	0.9

Figure 4. Questions 15 & 16: “In my experience politically liberal/conservative professors have a political bias in class.”

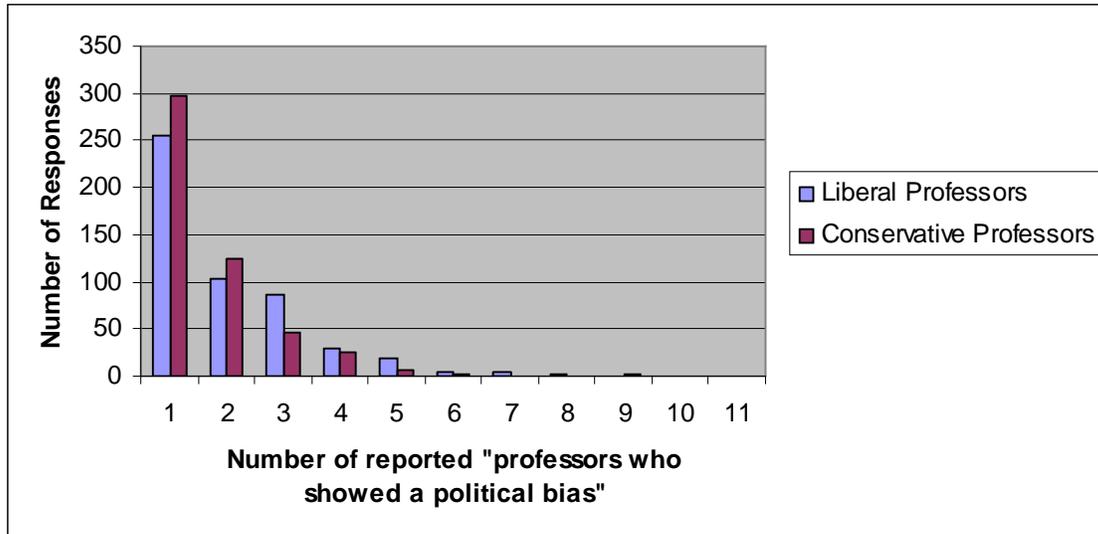


Survey questions 17 and 18 required the participants to fill in a number that applied to them. Question 17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” had a mean of 1.03, a median and mode of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.4. Question 18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” had a mean of 0.72, a median and mode of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.1 (Table 21 and Figure 5).

Table 21. Questions 17 and 18: “I have had _____ politically liberal/conservative professors who showed a political bias in class.”

response	Liberal (Q17)		Conservative (Q18)	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
0	256	48.5	297	56.2
1	104	19.7	124	23.5
2	86	16.3	47	8.9
3	30	5.7	26	4.9
4	19	3.6	7	1.3
5	5	0.9	2	0.4
6	5	0.9	1	0.2
7	2	0.4	1	0.2
8	0	0	2	0.4
9	0	0	0	0
10	1	0.2	0	0
total	508	96.2	507	96
missing	20	3.8	21	4

Figure 5. Questions 17 and 18: “I have had _____ politically liberal/conservative professors who showed a political bias in class.”



Questions Addressing Themes

Survey questions 1 through 12 of the PBCS each addressed one of the three themes found in the qualitative phenomenology phase of research: *limited classroom scope*, *a feeling of powerlessness* and *a need to conform*. These questions required a response on a six-point Likert scale with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “6” being “strongly agree.” See Table 22 for descriptive statistics of questions 1 through 12.

Table 22. Descriptive statistics for three themes of the Political Bias in the Classroom

Survey: *limited classroom scope, feeling of powerlessness and need to conform*

Theme	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Limited Classroom Scope				
*1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues	3.85	4	4	0.975
4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs	3.19	3	2, 4	1.102
7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect	3.1	3	2	1.108
*10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ	4.34	4	5	0.89
Feeling of Powerlessness				
2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs	3	3	2	1.056
*5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs	3.56	4	4	1.297
8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically	2.84	3	2	1.116
11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class	3.21	3	2	1.221
Need to Conform				
3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs	3.19	3	4	1.449
*6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs	4.03	4	4	1.147
9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own:	2.87	3	2	1.219
*12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs	3.95	4	4	1.118

*Question is negatively coded

Four questions addressed each of the three themes. Questions addressing each theme were grouped to create three subscales. After transposing negatively coded questions, the mean of the means for each subscale, on a six-point Likert scale with “1” being “strongly disagree” and “6” being “strongly agree,” was as follows: *limited classroom scope*, 2.53; *a feeling of powerlessness*, 2.87; and *a need to conform*, 2.52.

Regression Analysis

Employing questions 13 through 18 as dependent variables, regression analysis was employed as a statistical tool to explore the relationships between these questions and individual demographic questions used as independent variables. Demographic variables included *political ideology*, *religiosity*, *academic major*, *age*, *race/ethnicity*, *gender*, and *academic classification*. These relationships were employed to inform the building of regression models with the subscales *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* as additional independent variables to test each subscale’s value as an indicator of experience with political bias. Different regression analyses were used based on the dependent variable employed. Binary logistic regression was employed with questions 13 and 14 as dependent variables, ordinary least squares (OLS) was employed with questions 15 and 16 as dependent variables and Poisson regression was employed with questions 17 and 18 as dependent variables. Finally, employing the subscales *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* as dependent variables, OLS was employed to explore the relationship between these subscales and demographic dependent variables: *political ideology*, *religiosity*, *academic major*, *age*, *race/ethnicity*, *gender*, and *academic classification*.

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

No demographic questions were found to be significant (at the Alpha < 0.05 level) indicators of a “yes” response for question 13, “according to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias.” This was true in single binary logistic regressions and when placed into models together. Two dummy coded variables were created from demographic data that were found to be significant, however. The dummy coded variable *Freshman* was created from responses to the class standing demographic question and found to be a significant negative indicator of a “yes” response to question 13 ($p < 0.01$, B of -0.605, Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.019). Dummy coding is a system of coding categorical variables into a regression equation. According to DeMaris (2004), the name is derived from the fact that the codes, ones and zeros, “only represent whether or not a case is in a given category of the variable, and otherwise contain no quantitative meaning” (p 127). The dummy coded variable *social sciences* was created from responses to the undergraduate major question and found to be a significant positive indicator of a “yes” response to question 13 ($p < 0.05$, B of 0.512, Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.013). These dummy coded variables were placed into multivariable binary logistic regression models with each subscale. Each subscale, *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform*, was found to be significant positive indicators of a “yes” response to question 13 ($p < .01$). Each subscale also increased the Nagelkerke R^2 , a measure of the

proportion of variability in a data set that is accounted for by a statistical model. See Tables 23, 24 and 25 for these model results.

Table 23. Dependent variable q13, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias,” modeled with *limited classroom scope* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Freshman	-.626	.241	.010*
Social Sciences	.711	.253	.005*
Limited Scope	.299	.038	.000*
Constant	.195	.130	.133

Nagelkerke R² with limited scope=0.212, without limited scope=0.035
 *significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 24. Dependent variable q13, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias,” modeled with *feeling of powerlessness* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Freshman	-.648	.233	.006*
Social Sciences	.572	.242	.018**
Powerlessness	.171	.030	.000*
Constant	-.922	.158	.000

Nagelkerke R² with powerlessness=0.119, without powerlessness=0.035

*significant at the p<0.01 level

**significant at the p<0.05 level

Table 25. Dependent variable q13, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias,” modeled with *need to conform* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Freshman	-.714	.236	.002*
Social Sciences	.646	.242	.008*
Need to Conform	.170	.027	.000*
Constant	.008	.121	.949

Nagelkerke R² with need to conform=0.142, without need to conform=0.035

*significant at the p<0.01 level

Several of the demographic questions were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$ level) indicators of a “yes” response for question 14, “according to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias.” The demographic independent variable *political ideology* was found to be a significant positive indicator of a “yes” response ($p < 0.01$, B of 0.252, Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.028). The dummy coded independent variable *social sciences* was also found to be a significant positive indicator of a “yes” response ($p < 0.01$, B of 0.821, Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.025). The dummy coded independent variable *female* ($p < 0.01$, B of -0.822, Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.33), created from the *gender* responses, was a significant negative indicator of a “yes” response. When placed in a model with *political ideology*, *social sciences* and *female* variables, the dummy coded independent variable *freshman* approached significance ($p = 0.063$, B of -0.719). *Political ideology*, *social sciences* and *female* were placed into multivariable binary logistic regression models with each subscale. Each subscale was found to be a significant positive indicator of a “yes” response to question 14 ($p < 0.01$). See Tables 26, 27 and 28 for these model results. Note that in the models with the *limited classroom scope* and *feeling of powerlessness* subscales, the demographic independent variable *political ideology* is no longer significant ($p > 0.05$).

Table 26. Dependent variable q14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” modeled with *limited classroom scope* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Female	-.758	.303	.012**
Social Sciences	1.084	.339	.001*
Political Ideology	.173	.099	.081
Limited Scope	.377	.057	.000*
Constant	-2.302	.513	.000

Nagelkerke R² with limited scope=0.263, without limited scope=0.086

*significant at the p<0.01 level

**significant at the p<0.05 level

Table 27. Dependent variable q14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” modeled with *feeling of powerlessness* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Female	-.975	.295	.001*
Social Sciences	.887	.325	.006*
Political Ideology	.163	.098	.098
Powerlessness	.222	.046	.000*
Constant	-3.408	.516	.000

Nagelkerke R² with powerlessness=0.172, without powerlessness=0.086

*significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 28. Dependent variable q14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” modeled with *need to conform* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Female	-.957	.291	.001*
Social Sciences	1.027	.317	.001*
Political Ideology	.212	.096	.027**
Need to Conform	.161	.037	.000*
Constant	-2.513	.492	.000

Nagelkerke R² with powerlessness=0.152, without powerlessness=0.086

*significant at the p<0.01 level

**significant at the p<0.05 level

Ordinary Least Squares Analysis

When responses to question 15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” were employed as the dependent variable, OLS analysis showed the demographic independent variables *political ideology* ($p < 0.01$, B of 0.416, R^2 of 0.255) and *religiosity* ($p < 0.01$, B of 0.198, R^2 of 0.029) to be significant positive indicators. The dummy coded independent variables *female* ($p < 0.01$, B of -0.435, R^2 of 0.030) and *African American* ($p < 0.01$, B of -0.702, R^2 of 0.021), created from the *ethnicity* demographic question, were found to be significant negative indicators. A model employing all four of these variables, however, shows that *African American* and *religiosity* both lose their significance at the $p < 0.05$ level. The independent variables *political ideology* and *female* were placed in multivariable OLS models with the *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales. All three subscales were found to be significant positive indicators at the $p < 0.01$ level. See Tables 29, 30 and 31 for these model results.

Table 29. Dependent variable q15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with *limited classroom scope* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Ideology	.361	.028	.000*
Female	-.258	.085	.002*
Limited Scope	.180	.015	.000*
Constant	2.183	.142	.000

R² with limited scope=0.431, without limited scope=0.270
 *significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 30. Dependent variable q15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with *feeling of powerlessness* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Ideology	.351	.030	.000*
Female	-.402	.090	.000*
Powerlessness	.125	.014	.000*
Constant	1.523	.145	.000

R² with powerlessness=0.369, without powerlessness=0.270
 *significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 31. Dependent variable q15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with *need to conform* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Ideology	.374	.029	.000*
Female	-.380	.090	.000*
Need to Conform	.105	.012	.000*
Constant	2.055	.150	.000

R² with need to conform=0.366, without need to conform=0.270
 *significant at the p<0.01 level

When responses to question 16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” were employed as the dependent variable, simple and multivariable OLS analysis revealed only one significant demographic indicator variable: *political ideology* (p < 0.01, B of -0.088, R² of 0.016). The independent variable *political ideology* was placed in multivariable OLS models with the *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales. All three subscales were found to be significant positive indicators at the p<0.01 level. See Tables 32, 33 and 34 for these model results.

Table 32. Dependent variable q16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with *limited classroom scope* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	-.121	.029	.000*
Limited Scope	.126	.016	.000*
Constant	4.015	.139	.000

R² with limited scope=0.126, without limited scope=0.016
 *significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 33. Dependent variable q16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with *feeling of powerlessness* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	-.118	.030	.000*
Powerlessness	.081	.014	.000*
Constant	3.476	.136	.000

R² with powerlessness=0.074, without limited scope=0.016
 *significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 34. Dependent variable q16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class,” modeled with *need to conform* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	-.108	.030	.000*
Need to Conform	.071	.012	.000*
Constant	3.859	.140	.000

R² with need to conform=0.075, without limited scope=0.016

*significant at the p<0.01 level

Poisson Regression Analysis

Several demographic and dummy coded independent variables were found to be significant indicators of responses to question 17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class.” The demographic variables *political ideology* (p < 0.01, B of 0.299) and *religiosity* (p < 0.01, B of 0.132) were both found to be significant positive indicators. The dummy coded variables *female* (p < 0.01, B of -0.253), *freshman* (p < 0.01, B of -0.356) and *African American* (p < 0.01, B of -0.706) were all found to be significant negative indicators. Multivariable modeling, however, showed only *political ideology* and *freshman* to remain significant at the p<0.05 level. The independent dummy coded variable *female* was close to significance. The independent variables *political ideology* and *freshman* were placed in multivariable Poisson regression models with the *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales. All three subscales were found to be significant positive indicators at the p<0.01 level. See Tables 35, 36 and 37 for these model results.

Table 35. Dependent variable q17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with *limited classroom scope* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	.264	.0316	.000*
Freshman	-.300	.1197	.012**
Limited Scope	.140	.0155	.000*
Intercept	-.967	.1628	.000

*significant at the p<0.01 level

**significant at the p<0.05 level

Table 36. Dependent variable q17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with *feeling of powerlessness* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	.264	.0320	.000*
Freshman	-.369	.1191	.002*
Powerlessness	.087	.0133	.000*
Intercept	-1.474	.1637	.000

*significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 37. Dependent variable q17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with *need to conform* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	.287	.0318	.000*
Freshman	-.382	.1190	.001*
Need to Conform	.081	.0114	.000*
Intercept	-1.122	.1628	.000

*significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

Preliminary Poisson regression modeling employing responses to question 18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” as the dependent variable demonstrated the demographic variables *political ideology* ($p < 0.01$, B of -0.159) and *religiosity* ($p < 0.05$, B of -0.095) as significant negative indicators. The dummy coded variable *social sciences* ($p < 0.05$, B of 0.262) was the only variable to act as a positive indicator. Multivariable modeling showed the demographic variable *religiosity* to lose significance at the $p < 0.05$ level and for the dummy coded variable *social sciences* to move just outside of significance at the $p < 0.05$ level. The independent variables *political ideology* and *social sciences* were placed in multivariable Poisson regression models with the *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales. All three subscales were found to be significant positive indicators at the $p < 0.01$ level. See Tables 38, 39 and 40 for these model results.

Table 38. Dependent variable q18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with *limited classroom scope* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	-.175	.0340	.000*
Social Sciences	.257	.1264	.042**
Limited Scope	.097	.0184	.000*
Intercept	.455	.1500	.002

*significant at the p<0.01 level

**significant at the p<0.05 level

Table 39. Dependent variable q18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with *feeling of powerlessness* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	-.188	.0349	.000*
Social Sciences	.225	.1279	.078
Powerlessness	.084	.0167	.000*
Intercept	.036	.1524	.811

*significant at the p<0.01 level

Table 40. Dependent variable q18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class,” modeled with *need to conform* subscale

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	Sig.
Political Ideology	-.176	.0346	.000*
Social Sciences	.272	.1264	.031**
Need to Conform	.069	.0138	.000*
Intercept	.414	.1501	.006

*significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

**significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Demographic Variability in Subscales

OLS regression was employed to explore the relationship between the subscales and demographic variables. Using the subscales as dependent variables, responses to demographic questions and dummy coded demographic variables were tested in multivariable OLS regression. *Political Ideology* was found to be a significant positive indicator for all three subscales ($p < .05$). The dummy coded variable *African American* was found to be a significant negative indicator for the *limited classroom scope* and *need to conform* subscales ($p < .05$). The dummy coded variable *female* was found to be a significant positive indicator for the *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales ($p < .05$). See Tables 41, 42 and 43 for these OLS regression models.

Table 41. Dependent variable *limited classroom scope* subscale modeled with demographics

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	.229	.083	.006*
Female	-.282	.250	.261
Freshman	-.433	.300	.150
Social Sciences	-.015	.324	.964
African American	-1.153	.477	.016**
Constant	-2.543	.419	.000

$R^2 = 0.038$

*significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

**significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 42. Dependent variable *feeling of powerlessness* subscale modeled with demographics

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	.406	.093	.000*
Female	.681	.281	.016**
Freshman	-.384	.336	.254
Social Sciences	.182	.364	.618
African American	-.858	.534	.109
Constant	1.546	.469	.001

$R^2 = 0.054$

*significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

**significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 43. Dependent variable *need to conform* subscale modeled with demographics

Ind. Variable	B	S.E.	P value
Political Ideology	.248	.108	.022**
Female	.668	.327	.042**
Freshman	-.287	.391	.464
Social Sciences	-.073	.423	.863
African American	-1.676	.623	.007*
Constant	-3.121	.547	.000

$R^2 = 0.034$

*significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

**significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

This chapter has included a discussion of the construct validity testing, descriptive statistics and regression modeling performed on data collected in the quantitative second phase of the current study. Conclusions drawn from this data and suggested future directions of research are addressed in the Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section discusses significant results within the context of each research question. The qualitative research question, “How do college students experience political bias in the classroom,” and sub-questions are addressed first. This is followed by a discussion of the quantitative research question, “How prevalent is the experience of political bias in the college classroom” and sub-questions.

Qualitative Research Question:

How Do College Students Experience Political Bias in the Classroom?

The qualitative portion of this study found three themes to be important facets of how students experience the phenomenon of political bias in the college classroom. These themes were: *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *a need to conform*. The existence of these themes as facets of the student experience was supported by quantitative findings that showed each theme as being a significant statistical indicator of several variables assessing the degree of subjects’ experiences with political bias in the classroom.

What do Students Perceive as an Expression of Political Bias?

Subjects who have self-reported experiences with political bias in the classroom describe a few key experiences. They described professors who guide class discussions only to what the professor wants to discuss, even if that topic is not related to the topic of the class. The subjects also stated that politically biased professors ignore, dismiss or sometimes denigrate students who have beliefs contrary to the professor’s beliefs. In some cases subjects also reported that politically biased professors give lower grades on

tests and assignments to students who express beliefs that do not conform with the professor's beliefs. Similarly, subjects reported students who agree with a politically biased professor's views are more likely to be allowed to contribute to class discussions and may receive higher grades on tests and assignments.

How Do Students Respond to the Perception of Political Bias?

Subjects responded to the perception of political bias in one or two important ways. First, subjects stated they sometimes disengaged from the class. They might attend class less often, and if they did attend, they would be less likely to contribute in a meaningful manner. This detachment limited the classroom experience for the subject. Additionally, subjects often conformed to a professor's beliefs by responding in class discussion, as well as on tests and assignments, in the manner to which the subject felt the professor would best respond, rather than with what the subject believed. This action was typically taken with the belief that to do otherwise would harm the subject's grade. These adjusted responses often made the subject feel disingenuous.

How do Students Feel when Faculty Are Politically Biased?

Subjects had varying and typically multiple emotions regarding their experience of political bias in the classroom. Some students felt they were not receiving the full breadth of knowledge they should about many class topics. Often subjects felt that going to class with the politically biased professor was a waste of time, and that they were being cheated out of time, knowledge and money. Subjects often felt like the class was overly confrontational as a result of the politically biased professor. Subjects often felt attacked and belittled by the professor, but powerless to do anything about the attacks

because the professor was still viewed as an authority with control over the subject's grade and expert in the topic being discussed.

Quantitative Research Question:

How Prevalent Is the Experience of Political Bias in the College Classroom?

The majority of subjects participating in the current study and responding on the PBCS seemed to have limited experience with political bias in the classroom. Based on self-reported data, 41.7% of subjects have had an experience in a college classroom in which they have "witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias." The percentage of subjects who claimed to have been a victim of political bias dropped to 12.5%. On average, subjects reported experience with 1.03 liberal professors and 0.72 conservative professors who have shown "a political bias in class." When asked to respond on a six-point Likert scale (with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "6" being "strongly agree") if they felt professors had a political bias in class, subjects very slightly disagreed for both conservative (mean=3.26) and liberal (mean=3.24) professors. On this same scale, subjects more strongly disagreed with the presence of each of the themes identified in the qualitative phase of research: *limited classroom scope* (mean=2.53), *a feeling of powerlessness* (mean=2.87) and *a need to conform*, (mean=2.52).

Data collected at the study institution do not support assertions found in the popular media and in partisan articles that classrooms have become a place of rampant political indoctrination. If future research at other institutions were to have similar findings, it would contradict the American Council of Trustees and Alumni's (2005) conclusion that campuses have become "islands of oppression in a sea of freedom" (p 4).

Simply because the issue is not pervasive, however, does not mean political bias in the classroom is not worthy of future research. The 12.5% of students who reported being victims of political bias during their academic career should not be ignored.

Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Gender?

Regression analysis using responses to PBCS question 14, “do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor’s political bias,” indicated that women self report being victims of political bias in the classroom less often than men ($B=0.758$, $p=0.012$). Women also reported more disagreement than men ($B=-0.258$, $p=0.002$) to question 15, “in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class.” These relationships are consistent with Anderson and Smith’s (2005) finding that Anglo men were more likely to perceive a class as having a political bias. For reasons in need of future research, however, this same variable did not show significance for question 16, “in my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class.”

The negative relationship found between women and the perception of bias for questions 14 and 15 are in contrast to the regression analysis performed on the three theme subscales: *limited classroom scope*, *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform*. Multivariable OLS analysis using these themes as dependent variables and the dummy coded demographic variable *female* as an independent variable show being *female* to be a positive indicator for both *feeling of powerlessness* ($B=0.681$, $p=0.016$) and *need to conform* ($B=0.668$, $p=0.042$). While these findings are counter to the findings regarding

questions 14 and 15, they are supported by Whitt, et al's (1999) research pertaining to the "chilly environment" women experience in higher education, as well as Fassinger's (1995) research regarding the role gender plays in classroom participation. Future research will need to address if women are experiencing political bias in the classroom and simply not identifying it as such, or if, as suggested by Fassinger, the chilly classroom environments are created by the students themselves.

One lens that can be utilized to understand women self-reporting less bias in PBCS question 14, "do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor's political bias" and question 15 "in my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class" as well as *female* performing as a positive indicator on the *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales, is Gilligan's (1982) theory of moral development. Research should particularly focus on Gilligan's concepts of *morality of care* and *morality of justice*.

According to Gilligan (1982), men employ moral reasoning based on a *morality of justice*, focusing on perceptions of equality and what is perceived as fair and right. Women, however, employ moral reasoning based on a *morality of care*, focusing on interconnectedness and the importance of relationships. Men employing a *morality of justice* might help explain their reporting a higher rate of political bias in questions 14 and 15. A moral focus on fairness and justice may influence men to more likely perceive inequality in the classroom. Similarly, women employing a *morality of care* may help explain their higher scores on the *feeling of powerlessness* and *need to conform* subscales. A moral focus on the importance of relationships may influence women to more likely

make sacrifices in the classroom to protect their relationship with the professor and their classmates. Given the criticisms Jaffe and Hyde (2000) make of Gilligan's theory, however, future research should be careful to control for variables that may confound the measure of moral orientation.

Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Academic Classification?

Academic classification was not a significant indicator, positive or negative, for any dependent variable analyzed in this study. The dummy coded variable *freshman*, however, performed as a significant negative indicator for both PBCS question 13, "do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias" (B=-0.626, p= 0.010) and question 17, "I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class" (B=-0.300, p=.012). These results are not surprising considering the fact freshmen have had much less experience in academia and fewer total professors compared to their classmates in other academic classifications. For this same reason, however, it is significant that the academic classification independent variable is not a positive indicator for these, and other, dependent variables. Similarly, age was not found to be a significant indicator of any dependent variable in this study.

These findings suggest that other variables, unidentified by this research, are playing a role in students' perceptions of political bias in the classroom. Future research should explore the relationship between age and academic classification and the perception of political bias in the classroom. Particular attention should be paid to the

role Marcia's (1966) identity development construct may play in this relationship. As Berzonsky and Adams (1999) point out, Marcia has great explanatory power, "especially as a model of differences in how individuals negotiate demands and expectations within institutionalized moratoria like university contexts" (p 584). Students of differing identity statuses may perceive political bias in the classroom in different ways. Marcia (1966) explains that *identity achievement* individuals "subscribed somewhat less than other statuses to authoritarian values and their self-esteem was a little less vulnerable to negative information" (p 557). It seems possible that *identity achievement* individuals with strong self-esteem and confidence in their beliefs would be less likely than individuals of other identity statuses to perceive political bias that is not present. Further research examining the relationship between identity achievement and perceived political bias may shed light on the kind of student who perceive bias in the classroom, as well as how to better work with those students to reduce incidences of perceived bias.

*Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of
Political Bias Based on Academic Major?*

Few differences were identified in how subjects with different academic majors experienced political bias in the classroom. The only significant finding in this regard was subjects in the social sciences reporting more "yes" responses to PBCS question 13, "do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias" (B=0.711, p=0.005) and question 14, "do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor's political bias" (B=1.084, p=0.001). This finding is not surprising, as social

sciences classes are more likely to regularly discuss political subjects than classes in other fields. Interestingly, the *social sciences* independent variable was also a positive indicator of question 18, “I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class” (B=0.257, p=0.042), but not of question 17, “I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class.” Future research will need to address if this finding illustrates that conservative social science professors at the study institution are more likely to have a political bias than their more liberal peers or if some intervening variable is causing the difference. Future research should also explore if this finding is true at other institutions, as the political disposition of social sciences departments varies among institutions.

Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of Political Bias Based on Race/Ethnicity?

Due to the lack of significant ethnic diversity of the sample population in the current study, little exploration of the *ethnicity* variable was possible, and the analysis that was done should be treated with some uncertainty. The dummy coded demographic variable *African-American* emerged as approaching significance on several dependent variables and as a significant negative indicator for two of the three theme subscales: *limited classroom scope* (B=-1.153, p=0.016) and *need to conform* (B=-1.676, p=0.007). These relationships are consistent with Anderson and Smith’s (2005) finding that Anglo men were more likely than African-American men to perceive a class as having a political bias. Again, though, the sample size of African Americans was very small. Future research should further explore why African Americans rated differently on the

feeling of powerlessness subscale then they did on the other two subscales. Future research should also explore relationships between ethnicities other than African American and the perception of political bias in the classroom.

One lens that could be used to understand why *African American* emerged as a negative indicator on the *need to conform* subscale is Cross's (1991) theory of psychological Nigrescence. Anger at a predominately White culture is indicative of individuals in stages two and three of Cross's developmental theory. It is possible that individuals in these stages would be less likely to agree to conform in any way with the dominate culture in the classroom and thus would rank low on the *need to conform* subscale. Cross's theory is less valuable in explaining *African American* performing as a negative indicator on the *limited classroom scope* subscale. While future research into the relationship between racial identity development and political bias is necessary, *African American* performing as a negative indicator on the *limited classroom scope* subscale suggests there are multiple factors to the broad concept of *bias*.

*Are There Significant Differences Among Students Regarding Their Perception of
Political Bias Based on Political Orientation?*

The *political ideology* demographic variable was the most consistent positive indicator of political bias in the classroom of any of the demographic variables used in this study. The self-reported conservative subjects of this study were clearly more likely to perceive political bias in the classroom than their less conservative counterparts. Political ideology failed to be significant for only one independent variable, question 13, "do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor

illustrate a political bias.” Independent variables for which political ideology was a significant indicator included all three theme subscales: *limited classroom scope* (B=0.229, p=0.006), *feeling of powerlessness* (B=0.0406, p=0.000) and *need to conform* (B=0.248, p=0.022).

This finding is not surprising as it is consistent with previous research. Numerous studies have illustrated professors are more likely to be liberal than they are to be conservative (Gross & Simmons, 2007; Rothman, Lichter & Nevitte 2005 and Zipp & Fenwick, 2006). Kelly-Woessner and Woessner’s (2008) research illustrated that students who are politically dissimilar from their professor self-report less enthusiasm, less motivation, and lower levels of learning than students who are politically similar to their professor. This study’s findings help put the work of Kelly-Woessner and Woessner into perspective. In particular, less learning, less motivation and less enthusiasm for class on the part of the subjects were found to be important qualitative components of the *limited classroom scope* subscale.

Implications and Recommendations

This study illustrates several aspects of political bias in the classroom in need of future research. The roles gender and ethnicity play in the phenomenon are in need of further exploration, particularly considering the relative racial and ethnic homogeneity of the sample population in the current study. Analysis of the relationship between age and academic classification indicate that other variables, not addressed in this study, are playing an important role in the perception of political bias in the classroom. The use of Marcia’s (1966) identity development construct, Gilligan’s (1982) moral development

theory and Cross's (1991) theory of psychological Nigrescence are suggested as a possible tools to address this issue.

Future research should also further address the PBCS's construct validity. Currently, no measure similar to the PBCS is available to compare to the PBCS's results. Should such a measure become available, a comparison would be crucial for helping to validate both measures. Also, the relationship between the self-reflective questions and the attributive questions should be further explored to help explain how and why factor analysis shows them to load strongly on separate components. Understanding this difference will help researchers to better understand the factors contributing to the perception of political bias in the classroom.

Future research on how students experience political bias in the classroom is essential, particularly from a faculty development perspective. While the issue of political bias in the classroom may be overstated by some critics of academia, it is a problem that is perceived by a large number of students to varying degrees. Understanding fully what these students perceive as political bias and how and why they respond to perceived bias can facilitate faculty improving the classroom experience for all students. Fislser and Foubert (2006) address students' perception of political bias, saying, "students' perspectives on professors and administrators may hinge, at least in part, on how well educators help them become more intellectually mature and how well educators communicate with their students in the process" (p 3-4). If faculty members approach the issue of perceived political bias with sensitivity and a willingness to

understand these students' perspectives, perceptions can be improved to the benefit of faculty and students alike.

Conclusions

In this study, exploration of students' experiences with the phenomenon of political bias in the classroom has had several significant results. The qualitative phenomenological phase of this study has described three themes common to many subjects' experiences with classroom political bias: *limited classroom scope*, *a feeling of powerlessness* and *a need to conform*. These three themes were then included in the creation of a survey that was used to explore the prevalence of the experience of political bias in the college classroom. The existence of these themes as facets of the student experience was supported by the quantitative findings of the survey, as each theme was found to be a significant indicator of several variables addressing the degree of student experience with political bias in the classroom.

Furthermore, quantitative findings illustrated two important conclusions regarding the experience of political bias in the classroom at the study institution. These conclusions are:

1. Political bias is not as pervasive as the findings of many non-peer reviewed and partisan research studies would suggest, and
2. While conservative students report higher levels of political bias, political bias is not experienced only by conservative students, contrary to the rhetoric of some partisan advocates.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval E-mail

From: Daniel Harris
[dharri2@clemson.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2007
11:59AM
To: 'havice@clemson.edu'
cc: 'darrenl@clemson.edu'
Subject: Validation of IRB application #IRB2007-168 entitled "Exploring Threats to Academic Freedom: Political Bias in the College Classroom"
Attachments: Co_1_Responsibilities_8_15_06.doc; PI_Responsibilities_8_15_06.doc

Dear Dr. Havice:

The Chair of the Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) validated the proposal identified above using Exempt review procedures and a determination was made on **May 30, 2007** that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as Exempt from continuing review under **Category 2** based on the Federal Regulations. You may begin this study.

Please remember that no change in this research proposal can be initiated without prior review by the IRB. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately. The Principal Investigator is also responsible for maintaining all applicable protocol records (regardless of media type) for at least three (3) years after completion of the study (i.e., copy of validated protocol, raw data, amendments, correspondence, and other pertinent documents). You are requested to notify the Office of Research Compliance (ORC) if your study is completed or terminated.

Attached are documents developed by Clemson University regarding the responsibilities of Principal Investigators and Research Team Members. Please be sure these are distributed to all appropriate parties.

Good Luck with your study and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Please use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

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www.clemson.edu/research/orcSite/indexComply.htm

Appendix B

Qualitative Interview Transcripts

Interview One

D: _____, tell me about an experience you have with a professor who has suppressed political views in their classroom or portrayed their own political views as the only right ones to have.

R Well, the teacher I had was my teacher in STS.

D What's STS

R STS is society technology and science. So its basically like how science affects society and the book we went over was the Axe makers gift which says that if you give a man an axe than you basically shape his world because the only thing he can use is the axe. But, he talked a lot about politics and his political view was like straight Libertarian and if you said anything else he would shut you down or bring out his own views. And like we couldn't talk about technology we would talk about like media and a lot of my friends wanted to do Fox or CNN and he would completely shut those out because he was like those are all this or all that and the Republican party, if you brought up anything Republican in his class he would shut you down and Democratic only a few things so his view was straight forward and anything you had to do with politics was either Libertarian or nothing. I've never had any problem with him because most stuff I did was not politically based, but if you did media and you cover the war in Iraq you could only say certain things America did. A good example would be that his view on the war in Iraq was how we should cut back and cut back and cut back so if you did a project on how we should do more so we could support our troops with more armor and stuff like that he would pretty much tell you to shut up and fail you on your project.

D: alright thats a good broad overview, can you give me a specific example about an exchange he had with either you or another student in class.

R: This one girl who sitting in the front of the class started talking about how extending the date for the war in Iraq and my teacher came in on this conversation and we were having a pretty good debate before he got there and he pretty much jumped all over her and told her "this is all about wasting Americas money, I don't know what you are talking about extending the date for because we need that money here and you are wrong and your views are wrong." He kept spewing out all this information. I don't even know where he got it from but all about we are spending so much money here and so much money here a no one is putting there and it's taking all of Americas funding and funneling it toward a cause we don't even know about.

D: So that was a discussion that wasn't even within the context of the class it was a discussion before class?

R yea, we were just talking before he walked in and he just walked in and completely just shut down the entire conversation

D what about assignments?

R with assignments not so much assignment based outside of class but in class we would have to write about a certain technology and media is a very important technology. So, a couple people would write about what they saw on TV that night like people speaking certain ways. One I remember having to do with tone, like you don't use a southern accent you don't use a northern accent you use a mid-western accent, and he felt like the government should not be allowed to pick which accents people use because just because you don't like the way someone talks doesn't mean you should shut them out. And his way of saying that was basically every paper that was turned in from like a point of view that we think we should talk a certain way was completely closed out. So I wrote a paper and I felt the tone should be not really northern but more southern because it seems more laid back and not high strung and people would be used to it but his view was that it should be more overall and that you should talk the way you talk and everyone should like it and so I got a D. But the one person in class who said it should be a combination of all, even people with different accents from different countries should be allowed to talk, because it really doesn't matter. That person was like the only A or B in the class.

D: and it was basically an opinion.

R: Yea, it was an opinion.

D: what about, where there tests in the class

R: no, we just had to write papers. The guy pretty much created the course so he pretty much dictated our grades by what we said and how we acted in class and we didn't really have a hearsay, like I never got above a C in the class because my paper bias was more towards helping the greater good, like looking out for the individual and I don't think he felt that was right, cause all my papers were bad in his eyes, but I thought my papers were pretty good.

D that's interesting. So, what do you think from your own perspective and what you perceived from other students in the class, what was their feeling towards the impact that his biases had on peoples' grades.

R a lot of people stopped coming to class. I remember my roommate would not go to class just because he was like I'm going to go in there and I'm going to say something and he's going to hate me for the entire class and not want to talk to me and not let me

answer questions or not like even consider giving me a good grade on the paper so I'm just not going to go. And so it had an impact because people just didn't want to go to class and so if you don't go to class you're not going to get a good grade but a lot of people felt like even in going to class you couldn't say anything right in his eyes so you're not going to get a good grade anyway.

D: so what effect do you think that had on the class dynamic.

R: the class dynamic, like what do you mean

D like, how, you know conversation in class, discussion that kind of thing. What people were able to say.

R well a lot of people stopped talking. About the middle of class I realized out of about twenty people only about ten would show up and out of those ten he would talk to only about three and those were the people who felt the same way he did. So either you didn't come to class and you just didn't care, you came to class and just tried to listen to him and take notes on what he did say but not raise your hand or open your mouth and just listen to him have conversations with three other people. So, the class itself wasn't split up by like individual people but by the class versus the teacher.

D really

R yea... so that's the way I felt and that what I saw.

D so it was more people didn't try to tell him what he wanted to hear, they just stopped talking.

R some people tried to tell him what he wanted to hear and their grade kinda went up but it still wasn't where they felt it should be and it's not like you could just drop the class. I felt like with a lot of people if it had just been an elective would have dropped it, but you have to have an STS credit so there was nothing you could do you just had to grin and bear it and hope you come out with a C or better.

D how did it make you feel?

R it was annoying. I pretty much hated going to that class, cause, okay, my roommate and I had the same class at the same time so if I didn't go I would tell him what happened but he was basically I'm not going and you don't have to tell me what's going on but basically he doesn't like me so I'm not going to get a good grade. My situation was even if I try, hopefully he'll give me a good grade but I didn't hate him for it, but I felt like he could have been more open to the situation. He could have not put his views into everything. Even though he pretty much was the God of the course because he created it and he knew what he wanted. He could of told us what he wanted a bit more, or been

more lenient but he wasn't. So that just like I have to take this I have to get through with it but I'm gonna suffer through you to get through it.

D: where there any other specific examples you can think of from that class, how long ago was this class?

R this was fall of last year

D can you think of any other specific exchanges he had with people?

R the book we had, the book was called the axe makers gift and I guess he figured everyone was hating the book because we stopped coming to class and we stopped talking about that book so there was shift toward a book called freakanomics. That book was I guess it was more tailored to what he wanted and what he liked so instead of the course being centered around the course and centered around the book we were supposed to buy, we had to go out and buy another book that he liked but then he didn't even teach from that book. He started talking logic. Instead of teaching from the book he made us buy again he started teaching logic. Which basically shifted the whole course focus and nothing we did at the beginning was anything like what we did toward the end.

D what was the connection between the class and the class description when you signed up for it?

R the class description when I got from it was that I was suppose to figure out how technology shapes society. A key example he gave was about the type writer. Everything used to be in alphabetical order, but people would type it so fast they would get carpal tunnel. They switched the letters around so people would slow down and that was the only instance where human agility actually outdid technology. But I figured I would just talk about that or how technology has helped us shape society. In the end I ended up talking about logic and how just stuff I didn't even care about. And pretty much just got the Greek and Aristotle and stuff like that. So I didn't even know what I got out of that class in the end.

D so there wasn't a connection between what he said he was going to teach and...

R... yea he hated... from what I got out of it he hated the class himself. Because he taught it in fall...

D wait, do you mean the individual in the class or

R he hated teaching it, I don't know if it was because of the way we felt about the class or the way we felt he was reigning over the class like giving us bad grades when we thought we were doing good papers. He didn't like teaching it because he said the course didn't make any sense and the only reason he taught the class our class in fall was because he

didn't have to teach in the spring, he would get somebody else to do it... so, I guess the class was just something he could see if he could do and we were just an experimental class and it didn't matter what we felt or not, because we would have to take it over again. I guess he still got his paycheck and whatever.

D anything else you want to say about that class, any other specific examples...

R I kinda didn't like the set up for one thing. In most classes like I understand if the teacher wants to get in with the student get in and talk because classes like that are small and you can get to know your students but instead of getting to know us at first he did try to get to know us but then once he figured out we aren't going to lean the way you lean just because you want us to he started picking out the people he did like. I don't know if those people were leaning his way or that was just well they came in with that idea and they just happen to be on the same boat, but he coulda opened up to everyone else and not just shut us down because we have different views then he did.

D do you have any related experience in other classes

R not really politics but where the teacher had one view and the class had a slightly separate view was my biology teacher and this was about global warming. Everything we did was related to biology but other things like extra credit projects were all about global warming. He made us raise our hands: okay, who believes in global warming and like maybe 90 percent of the class said yes. And then he was like who doesn't, and he's like nobody should raise their hands and maybe the other 10 percent did and he like what's wrong with you people why don't you believe in global warming look at all this information and then like there the abortion topic are you for it or against it but that was like a 50/50 split so he really couldn't say much because 50 percent of the class felt one way and 50 percent felt a different way.

D do you think in that class it had any impact on what the class was willing to say.

R I wouldn't really know because that was a lecture class. About 150 people in the class. It may have in a smaller one, it may have been a problem but considering it was big I don't know.

D how many students were in this STS class

R somewhere between 16 and 20. We started out with about 20 people but toward the end maybe 10 people show up a day, if that.

D any other examples from any other class... don't stretch...

R no... those are pretty much the only two. Like I said that was really the only one that was really politically based. Everything else was just like certain subjects.

D in the sts class did you do anything did you take any particular action because of the way you felt you were treated or the way you felt other people were treated.

R when I did my teacher review thing I put he was totally biased, but other than take action through the college or anything I didn't. I tried to, because I knew I had to pass the class, I knew I had to get my credit for it, I did change the way I wrote my papers a bit. Instead of saying something that would be complete for the greater good, I started shifting. Instead of completely writing about media technology, I started writing more of like one specific one. My first paper basically covered like camera and how different cameras have changed society because we can get greater images and but we could get better images but cameras now can be edited and changed and you can photoshop stuff in. And I felt like that had an effect. On that paper I got a D, but then my next paper I wrote didn't focus on media at all, I did a paper about violence in video games and how parents should be responsible and not the media, and that paper got a B.

D a pretty libertarian idea that parents should be responsible

R blame the parents not society, I shifted focus and I got a good grade.... And the mood of the class changed to. Like in the beginning everybody we would talk and laugh and have a good time, this was like maybe just the first week. And after the first week we had a debate about the book, he told us you give a man an axe he can't change his environment in any other way but by using the axe you gave him and we were like, okay... but what if does this but what if he does that, he was like no, no... the axe is the only way there is no other way he can change it. Then after that people started shifting focus. And by the end instead of the class going in there being like a happy aura, people would just come in with food and sit there and eat, just like barely pay attention. Like, the beginning of the class nobody took a laptop to class except to just to take notes, by the end of the class everyone had their laptop everybody was on youtube and playing a game and barely paying attention, because nobody wanted to listen to him because everyone felt like he was going to be like you're wrong and that's it.

D alright... anything else you want to share about things people have said on campus about political bias on campus in other classes.

R I haven't really heard anything like media wise or anything.

D I think we're done.

Interview Two

D: _____, tell me about an experience you've had with a professor who's suppressed political views in their class, or portrayed their own political views as the only right ones to have.

T: Um, does it have to be at Clemson specifically, or?

D: In college

T: ok

D: In a college classroom

T: Um, that my, um, I had a professor last year -I went to Presbyterian College last year, I transferred here, and who um where we, it was actually during a test review session, so we were supposed to be reviewing for a test and someone brought up the point of affirmative action and we spent the entire 50 minutes ex- him expressing his views of affirmative action and going into great detail about that and getting very angry about that. Wasting our time. (laugh) yea, I was kind of upset by all that. Like

D: Instead of... reviewing for the test

T: Yeah, instead of reviewing for the test, exactly. So

D: Uh, did that (pause) how did it, did his expression of his views affect the class dynamic?

T: Um yes. The, his views were very obvious, like throughout the entire class, that was one time specifically, so it made it, you know, it hindered your ability to kind of come out and say what you- it was a political science class and kind of it was like um an American politics class, so of course it was dealing with issues that we're very familiar with and all of them, uh everyone who was in there was political science majors, so everyone had an opinion. But you were very, very, very, you know, held back about coming out about with your opinions and talking about what you thought, you know, was the right or wrong opinion.

D: What was his, what was his perspective?

T: He was very, very extreme liberal, and I'm more moderate. And a lot of the things he said even, like as a moderate, not even like as an extreme conservative, I was, disagreed with a lot of- and more, the majority of the class disagreed with what, a lot of the things that he said, so it made you hold back and even in your papers and your responses on

essay, um, questions and that sort of thing, you, you wanted to kind of more lean towards his way so you didn't, you know, you didn't want that to alter your grade at all.

D: Was it, was it just, was it mainly just that one session, or was it throughout the entire course?

T: (interrupting) No, no, it was consistent through the entire course

D: Ok

T: Especially, I had him for um Political Thought, which it came out a little bit more so, and the next semester I had him for American Politics. It came out basically every class for the most part. And it was very obvious.

D: Do you remember any specific exchanges he had with students?

T: Um, well it was one student was um questioning the need for, um, certain dynamics of the affirmative action policy and so, and he obviously was completely supporting the policy, which, you know, was his own opinion that's right or wrong, like you know to know him, but they and then the student that he was having the exchange with disagreed with him on the majority of his opinions about the affirmative action policy. And he very blatantly told him he was wrong, and that, you know, went into great detail, you know, explaining why he was wrong. Um, another time we were talking about, um, just kind of general like American politics, and I think the one time was talking about President Bush and you know, like he of course went off on that sort of thing, you know, which everyone has their opinion about that. And, there, I mean, there was- most of the time like every class there would be some outlet of his political perspective.

D: Did he ever express his bias in any exchange with you personally?

T: Um, yes. I had- like I said I'm more moderate, and I'm more, especially when it comes to that situation, I kind of, I don't like to, you know, get my toes stepped on that (laugh) So it kind of, I more hold back when it comes to that sort of thing. Especially with professors who control your grade, whether that has a, anything to do with that or not, but, um, the one time what we were talking about was trade, I believe. And he thought that it was the uh, outsourcing that was ruining America because he, he believed that it was the low-income people who were discriminated against anyway and that um that was their jobs that were being outsourced and that we should close trade because that is, we should be more self-sufficient to have more jobs in America, even if it's gonna cost us more. Because it's the wealthier people that need to take the burden anyway.

D: So from what you were saying earlier, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but he not only expressed his own point of view, but he expressed it as the only correct point of view to have. You said earlier that he was telling that student that they were wrong

T: (overlapping) He didn't say that specifically, but yeah, he, he, I mean it was not quite in those words, but it was for the part that was what his point was coming across, and it was harshly said as to, you know. I don't think he ever actually said "you're wrong, I'm right" but, it was pretty obvious that, you know, that was the kind of, you know, that he didn't have to say that, I guess, is what I'm saying.

D: How did this make, this make you feel?

T: Um, I know a lot of the class 'cause we had some discussions about it outside of class that it was, it was very intimidating and you didn't want to, um, to bring up your any sort of opinions you might have for fear of, you know, like you, you always like to stay on your professor's good side, you know, especially in college when they have more control over your grades and whatnot, so it was, it was really intimidating. Even in class discussion, I don't think that we got really everything out of the discussions that we could have because people did hold back their opinions a lot. And you never- if there was an opinion stated that he obviously agreed with and, it was always obvious if he agreed or disagreed, 'cause when he made statements implying, you know, that if he did or not. Um, then he would, you know, you, you didn't want to say anything to refute that statement, or if um, it, it was several times like when people, like for um, you know, there's a lot of examples when people would say- you know, if he, if he agreed with what you said then he'd just kind of nod his head and agree, and you know, acknowledge it, but if he didn't then he would, he was obviously a political scholar; he had been to graduate school and also knew a lot more than- I'm a sophomore now, so it was freshman political science class- and most of weren't nearly as educated as he was. And so, he would go off on tangents and throw things in your face and a lot of stuff that you couldn't, you know, refute because you didn't have the knowledge that he had. [Mm-hmm] And even so, like he would just kind of throw it out there, I think, just to show that, you know, he had more experience and he was, you know, smarter, I guess than we were- more educated, so his opinion was the right one.

D: How did that particular aspect make you feel, the.. using his education?

T: (interrupting) it was, I mean, it was intimidating. Yeah, you didn't want to say anything because you don't want to feel dumb, and you don't wanna, you know, get in an argument with someone- in a debate with someone I should say- that, you know, is gonna try to prove me wrong, and it's a little, I mean of course it's a little bit embarrassing to get, you know, thrown down- especially for the people that have the same opinion as him, you know, to get..

D: right

T: or whatnot, you know, just to kinda, it's, it gets thrown in your face and it, it's a lot intimidating actually (laughs).

D: Yeah. Tell me more about what this did to the class dynamic. I mean, were there, was there...

T: the dynamic as in like the..

D: As in the conversation, the discussion in the class

T: It, it was one-sided definitely. It, it, I mean, not that, I, not that I'm saying- I don't believe that professors should have an opinion and just kind of throw out their opinion, but I think it should be more of like on an objective basis, like they kind of throw it out there, not necessarily saying this is the right one and get offended if you disagree about it, or said anything otherwise. But kind of throw it out there just to start discussion. But his was more that he wanted the discussion to lead towards exactly what he was thinking, and so it definitely hindered a lot of the conversation in the class.

D: Were there, were there people in the class who obviously agreed with him?

T: Yes, yes. There, there was a small handful of people, but for the majority of people they might have agreed with some of the things he said, but not most of it.

D: Did he treat people differently at all?

T: Um, he tended to call a lot more on the- there was one girl in particular- that like, she would, always seem to have something to say that was exactly what he was thinking, and I think that she knew that as well. And so, he would tend to call on her a lot more often than he would for anyone else. Or he would skip over people too, you know, basically to, to kind of keep her opinion in the conversation, and keep the opinions of the people he knew were on his side in the conversation versus the refuting opinion.

D: mm hmm. Um, do you think that his biases, or do you know from experience, that his biases have any effect on the grades in the class?

T: Um, I don't know from experience, but that, I think that, I don't know if there would be any evidence to show that or not because I think the people for the most part knew that it was kind of safe to stay away from that. [mm hmm] that there, I mean, I, I did. Like I kind of copped out when it came to that (laughs) if there was something that, in an essay that would lead to that, I would completely avoid it. Or, kind of stay very neutral, I typically wouldn't go to you know, his side of it, but I would, I would try to, you know, tiptoe around it.

D: So then it affected they way you're writing- it affected what you submitted for a grade?

T: Yeah, mm hmm, absolutely.

D: What kind of assignments did the class have?

T: Um, well, first semester was the Political Thought class, so it was kind of more abstract, so all of our essays, I mean, all of our tests were done in essay form, so it was all take-home essays that we turned in. And then, um, second semester when I had him, which was when it was a lot more prevalent, we would have tests that were multiple guess and you know, fill in the blank. But then we'd usually have several essay questions, that had something to do with it, and on those essay questions was when it was most prevalent.

D: Um, in speaking to other people from the class, do you know if, did they do the same thing that you did? Did any of them..

T: (overlapping) I, the ones I spoke to, did the same thing; 'cause we had talked about it, and we, we laughed and joked about it. Really, that's what, you know, you just- you don't want to get on, you know, you, you want to avoid that. 'Cause if people do that to you in conversation, you know, you don't want to tempt 'em to you know, just.. Or, even when you get a paper back, you don't want, you know, a big, you know, what- a comment written on the side that kind of disagrees with what you're saying, or whatnot.

D: So because of that, you never saw it affect your grade, personally, or..?

T: (overlapping) No, no, no, no. I mean, not mine personally, I, I mean I, never gave him a reason to, you know, I, I avoided it in general.

D: Did you do anything else as a result of, of this? Did you take any action, or?

T: Um, what, like, outside of class? Or inside of class?

D: Either one

T: Um, just in general, like, what do, I don't..

D: Besides changing the way you uh, what you said in class [uh huh] and, and what you said on the essays, did, I mean, did you, did you go to anyone to complain? Or did you..?

T: Oh, well, I mean that's, it's not, if it was high school, you know, maybe. But, I mean, even then probably not. But, in college, I mean, it was, it was a political science class. And, I guess we were talking about politics, and you know, he couldn't get in trouble for that. But, I mean, I wouldn't have complained about it because the fact that it's more accepted in college. I don't think any action would have been taken, and I'm not.. you know, if it was the other.. I had never had an experience with it being someone who's extremely conservative but I doubt anyone would complain about that either. I wouldn't

think that anyone would have complained, just for the circumstances that it was in college and that's more accepted in college.

D: Do you have any similar experiences in other classes?

T: uh, yes. I have, there's a class here that I'm taking that the professor, when he talks about presidential candidates he obviously talks about like the certain ones that he favors, and um, in general when he talks about like um policies and whatnot, he obviously favors, you always know exactly what his thoughts are about

D: What type of class is that?

T: It's an African American politics class. And so, and it's not always, you know, it doesn't always stay on necessarily one side or the other, but it's pretty obvious what his views are- which his aren't as, you know, he tends to stay more neutral than the other professor that I had the experience with. But it's still obvious that, you know, what his opinions are.

D: Does that, even though it's a less extreme case, does it change the class dynamic in the same way?

T: I haven't really spoke to anyone else about it in the class, but it definitely changes what my comments are. And, you know, I kind of, again, I kind of tiptoe around it, and I don't want to say anything that would, you know, I wanna kind of stay on the side. 'Cause I haven't seen any experience with anyone disagreeing with him, but I want to stay on the side that it wouldn't bring up a huge, a big to-do about whatever comment I had said or whatever comment someone else had said. I'm sure the other people have kind of similar thought processes.

D: And how does that make you feel in that kind of circumstance?

T: It's also a little disappointing because I have pretty strong political opinions and it's, and it goes, it's not necessarily conservative or liberal, I have some of each. And it's kind of- I would like to have a well-rounded conversation when we have debates in class. And I feel like it stays more on one side, it's not so much as a debate, as a conversation with everyone agreeing about the same thing, you know. I feel like the people are like, intimidated to bring up any other topics.

D: Has it changed again what you submit in assignments?

T: Well I haven't had any work that I've submitted in assignments, but I'm sure that- and it wouldn't necessarily- most of the stuff we talk about, at this point, is more historical, so it's more kind of facts and that sort of thing. But, it definitely would if I had to submit an opinion paper, it would definitely- I would stay completely neutral I think.

D: Any other classes, just off-hand, to any degree that you've had similar experiences?

T: Um, well the only other I can think of was an economics class actually, who I had this- last year as well- the professor. And it was the other way, he was a lot more conservative, and um, he tended to make his views expressed, and talk about you know, the policies that were- and I mean I enjoy talking about the modern policies and you know, what's going on in the world today, but he would talk about it as if it was right or wrong- not necessarily objective, like I was saying, kind of throwing it out there to be criticized or whatnot.

D: Do you have any kind of just general thoughts on bias in the classroom? Do you ever talk to your classmates about it?

T: I definitely enjoy having, of course other than sitting there and being lectured to, it's always more fun to have a conversation or debate. It's not that I think that it's always a bad thing, it's when you're intimidated to really have like a good debate. I don't feel like you could have a debate that would, you know, really get to the point if you have like an obvious bias of a professor in the classroom because no one's gonna bring up the other side, cause no one wants to be the bad guy that's gonna- especially with the rest of the class, if the majority of the class obviously feels one way, you don't want to bring up that and be the outcast of the class. I mean, not that- I definitely think bias are a -to some extent- good thing just to have opinions, but I think that they should, you know, instead of expressing that as their opinion, expressing it as a general opinion, and stating that this is the way some people think and at the same time throwing the other side of it out there. Just to have, you know, a lot more rounded- there's some people that take political science classes that have never experienced anything in politics before and don't keep up with politics. And so their views from politics may come just solely from that class that they take. Same thing with the news, like the news could be sort of biased too and so you look at that and you don't want people to take that as that's the right thing. You want them to have the whole story and develop their own opinion.

D: Anything else you want to say?

T: No, I'm good

D: Well I think we're done. I appreciate your time.

Interview Three

D: _____, tell me about an experience you had with a professor who's suppressed particular political views or portrayed their own political views as the only proper ones to have.

A: Well I had a professor last year and I distinctly remember him calling President Bush an asshole during class. He would just make comments about, I guess, stuff going on in the news and stuff, and um, how he just disagreed with the government at the time, and what they were doing.

D: What was the class?

A: English class- Contemporary Lit.

D: And, specifically, do you have any specific examples of a time when they did that sort of thing? Or an exchange they had with a student?

A: Um, I don't remember exactly him saying things specifically to students. I'm sure that people wouldn't want to make comments against him because he was obviously strong-willed about the subject, and I don't know... I just remember him making comments specifically about the President and how he was completely incompetent, and insulting him on a regular basis.

D: Did you feel that this at all changed the class dynamic? Or how people, how conversation developed in class?

A: I'm sure it made people in there- some people in there- like uncomfortable, because I'm sure there are people in there who did approve of the President and what he was doing, and they probably didn't want to speak up about it because they thought he might think less of them, or something. I'm sure it suppressed some speaking from happening, and also it took away from what the class was actually about, because class had nothing to do with politics or the government and we should be talking about English.

D: Did it affect you specifically and how you approached the class?

A: Not really. I mean, I personally didn't really care about politics that much, so it didn't bother me or anything, or prevent me from saying anything. But, it just kind of annoyed me that it took up my time to hear him saying stuff like that.

D: How did you feel, other than obviously annoyed?

A: Um, I don't know... just, like my time was being wasted, basically.

D: What about, besides that specific instance, just the concept of that kind of bias; how does that make you feel?

A: Um, I think there's a place for it, and it's not really in the classroom. That's not what people come here for, they didn't come to hear the professor give them what they believe about something. Um, I know I had friends in Environmental Science last year who- their professor, every class would basically spend a lot of time ranting about the same things and about how the government was stupid and, like if anyone said anything different they would- the professor would get annoyed with them and stuff. I think it's pretty prevalent.

D: Do you have any other examples, other than that- your English class?

A: Um, (long pause) I can't really think of any I've had. I mean, just like I told you with my friends having heard their story and stuff.

D: What did they say?

A: They were just talking about how basically if you agreed with the professor about how the government was wrong, and President Bush was stupid that he would give you a better participation grade. (laughs) For the class

D: So it affected their grade then?

A: I believe it did.

D: What about in your instance. Do you think it affected your grade at all?

A: I don't think so. Since it had nothing to do with the class (laughs)

D: And it didn't affect anything that you turned in, the way you approached any assignments?

A: No, it was all, like, essays on literature and stuff, so it didn't really have anything to do with that.

D: Right. Um, did you take any action as a result of any of the exchanges in class?

A: Not really. I may have told people not to take that professor because of the fact that he didn't really use class time like it should have been. I didn't do anything to stop it or anything, though.

D: Did you talk to any of your classmates, or friends, about that professor after class?

A: Um, I don't think- I don't know if I talked to my classmates about it. I definitely talked to my friends about it, though. I would tell them about his crazy antics. He would

just do stupid stuff in class. One time there was lizard in our class, and he like, decided to play with the lizard for like, thirty minutes.

D: In an English class...

A: He was a weird guy.

D: So you don't remember any specific exchanges. How often did it really come out?

A: Um, it was pretty often. I'd say at least once every week or two, he would make some kind of comment about how he felt about what was going on.

D: Now, did he simply express his opinion, or did he express his opinion in a manner that made clear that that was the only opinion to have? How open was he to other ideas?

A: He didn't seem very open to other ideas. He seemed pretty stuck in his view, and that it was right, when he talked about it.

D: But, you don't remember him ever actually being challenged on it?

A: No, I don't think anybody ever challenged him.

D: Why do you think that was?

A: Because they didn't want him to think less of them, probably.

D: So his opinion was important?

A: I think so. I think people are worried about what their professors think about them and they don't wanna make them be that kid that they don't like or something, so.

D: Is there anything else you want to say on this subject? I mean, either conceptually or from other specific experiences, or any conversations you've had with friends?

A: Um, I don't know. I think professors should be told not to do things like that, not to force their opinions upon students and something should be done about it, if it's found out that they are doing that.

D: How did it make you feel that you were in an English class, and that this was happening?

A: Not happy. (laughs)

D: Alright, well unless you have anything else to say, I think we're all through. I appreciate your time.

Interview Four

D: So, _____, tell me about an experience with a professor when they've suppressed political views which they disagreed with and/or portrayed their own political views as the only correct ones?

S: Uh, last semester my Political Science 104 class with, I viewed my belief as a Southern Baptist about my Republican views and uh, about how the world works and it was

D: Be specific, what kind of views did you express?

S: Oh, I was just- we were talking about um, because the primaries, the candidates were just starting to come out of the woodworks, and I was just expressing my feelings about certain ones and it came across like 'that guy'll never win, he has no chance because his ideals are wrong'

D: Your view came across that way, or his views came across that way?

S: Well, since I believed in that guy, in that particular candidate's views, and he just totally discredited them altogether. He said, 'well, that's nothing because such and such' but um,

D: Political Science 104- what is that class, what do you study?

S: It's comparative politics.

D: Again, be specific, what kind of views were you agreeing with, with that candidate? And in what way was the professor portraying those views?

S: I think we were talking about the difference between freedom and liberty, or not freedom and liberty but freedom and equality, and this was just after the race party and uh, and it was after the free speech zones, and I was just expressing that I thought that, when it comes down to it, liberty trumps equality because if you have to, you know, force everybody to coalesce, I just don't think that's what the founders thought. And that's what we were arguing over, and he was saying 'you have to push liberty aside for the sake of equality' and that just got me upset because- that race party, I didn't see it as a racial thing, I just think it was freedom of expression. But, stuff like that. He just kind of..

D: What other kinds of things did he do in class? Did you see it with any other students?

S: Not really, I seemed to be in the minority. It was a professor from the North, and I was a freshman, and most of the class was junior/senior, and they were Northern students, so I don't know if that was just a regional bias or what the deal was with that.

D: Were there any other discussions that you had in that class besides the equality class, where you felt that he was discrediting your opinion just based on his own political views?

S: Not really in that class, no.

D: How did it make you feel, when he did that?

S: I kind of felt lost, because, you know, I had believed that all my life so I was like, maybe other people believe something totally different and I'm on this island that I don't.. I need to change my views so I can fit in with this college group because that's what people want from a college kid. So I was just, I had to take a step back and say 'do I want to be, you know, one of the crowd?'

D: Did you do anything differently? Or did you take any action as a result of that exchange with the professor?

S: Uh, well I definitely toned down my interaction with him, I didn't, I wasn't as willing to speak up in class, I wasn't, you know, as forthcoming when I, when he asked questions for fear that it would just be squelched again.

D: What did that do to your classroom experience as a whole?

S: It just made class, class. Just something I have to go to it so I can get the grade, it wasn't something I looked forward to. Because politics is my major, I was thinking, you know, I'll get some in-depth discussion, so I felt like it somewhat was limiting in that aspect.

D: Do you think you learned anything in that class?

S: I definitely learned. But you know, it wasn't exciting.

D: Do you have any other experiences with other professors that are similar to that? Where they've squelched opinions or?

S: I don't know if it's applicable, but you know, biology, it's just...that's a religious conflict, but..

D: But I mean, it's got political implications.

S: Yeah, I mean it was brought up whether, you know, Intelligent Design was part of it, but you know, it was just dismissed. It wasn't like we had a...

D: Go into more detail, again, like start from the beginning.

S: Well at the beginning of the year, we were trying to define the parameters of the class, we were trying to say is this you know, biology, you know is this fish, walking fish, man. Just like that progression, or are we going to talk about Intelligent Design- are we even going to acknowledge that aspect. And from the get-go he said, nothing like that will be acknowledged because this is the way it is. Biology is this, biology is the study of what we can prove, and what we can prove is what's real. So, that was somewhat of a conflicting to me.

D: Was there any discussion about that in the class? Or was it just the professor speaking?

S: It was just the professor speaking.

D: Ok. Do you think that had any effect on the class?

S: Well, it affected in the sense that I just took the class as it were, you know, I didn't- it's kind of like the political science class, I just did it to get it over with, because it wasn't, we weren't going to talk about another opinion. We were just going to talk about that one way, so...

D: Going back, for a minute, to the Political Science 104 class, did it change the way you did your assignments at all?

S: Yeah, they were very much fact-laden, instead of opinion. Just for the fact that I didn't want to be called out again in class, I didn't want...

D: What kind of assignments did you have in that class?

S: Uh, mainly essay type. We had like 3 or 4 essays, and we would have to write you know, the rule of law, which was largely based on the Constitution on all that, from the beginning. You know, and my conflicting views with that made it, just dry, made that paper all dry.

D: What do you mean by that- your conflicting views within that paper?

S: Well he just didn't see the Constitution the same way I did, and knowing that I wanted to get a good grade in the class, I just put, I put verbatim what the Constitution said, leaving out my interpretation. So as not to be...

D: Do you think that affected your grade at all?

S: It probably helped, I would think, because I mean, my opinions weren't with his. For that reason...

D: Did you ever perceive bias in the way that he structured his assignments? The way he asked questions, or the type of essay questions he asked in those tests?

S: I'm trying to recall...(long pause). The only thing would be like the overtone of his voice, you know, he would ask a question, he would just put certain stresses in his voice to make that opinion sound stupid, you know. Should we be here, should we not do this.. things like that, it wasn't...

D: What kinds of issues did he do that on? Or are you talking about the stress in his voice during lecture, and that kind of thing?

S: Yeah, well I mean, it was very much a talking class

D: Oh it was discussion class? How big was the class?

S: About 25. But, um, we would take surveys like amongst the class, where there were, the two options were essentially A and A+, it was just, there wasn't a B, so, in that regard it was just kind of tunneling the way he wanted to go.

D: What effect did that have on you? How did that make you feel?

S: Well I was always in the minority on the votes, so... (long pause)

D: So, again, can you think you of any other examples from other humanities classes? Any other political science classes have any similar examples?

S: No, I had an English class where the other was evident. He would, he was very much preachy towards us, so I don't know if that's what you wanted or not..

D: On political issues?

S: Well, just, not so much political issues, but just the type of people we should be, and very much, I don't know, I don't know how to say what I'm trying to think here

D: Again, going back to your political science professor's lectures, be specific with the kinds of issues that he was expressing as far as things that he said that this is the way to believe, when he was disregarding other points of view.

S: Well he, for one, he traveled to Russia a lot, and we would try to discuss how, what are ethical ways of obtaining information. And he was of the opinion, you know, the ends-the means justify the ends. And you know, we thought, well maybe, maybe not, you know, as in the case do you have to sacrifice people along the way in order to get your

research results. And that's what he was saying, you know, it doesn't matter how you get it as long as you get it. And it was just a bullish way of getting his information.

D: And do you think that had any effect on the class?

S: Some, because we, I mean the minority of us, we thought you know, well if he's saying the means justify the ends, well, that's how he wants our papers to be, that's how he wants the discussions to be. He wants to hear this, so we'll say this.

D: Ok. Alright, do you have anything else at all, any general things you want to say about the topic, or about the issue? Have you ever had conversations about it with your friends? And what have they said?

S: Um, amongst friends, we're of the opinion that the student body is much more conservative and understanding of other people, and accepting of other people, and just, you know, I guess that's just a youthful way of thinking, but, sometimes we feel professors are so lodged in their own ways that it comes across, you know, as the way, when it's not that way. Somewhat of inhibiting free thought, I think.

D: Anything else you want to say? Just speaking from the gut? (pause) Alright, well I guess we're done, I appreciate your time.

This is an addendum to _____'s last comments

D: We were talking a moment ago about your first paper for that professor, before you started changing your point of view to fit what he had to say. Tell me again about that, about the experience with your first paper.

S: Well the first paper, not fully understanding what he wanted to, how he wanted the class to be conducted, I felt like my grade was low-balled because it didn't have the elements of his ideals, and I felt like it was a good paper because I'm- I mean this is not boasting, but I write good, I write very well, and I had the information, I had the sources, I had- everything was factual, but it was my opinion on top of it. And in the same respect, I got a lower grade on that paper, it was a B, everybody else- like 95% of the class got As, whereas I got a B. I mean, I was fairly confident in that paper.

D: What were the ideas that you were expressing?

S: That paper was um.. (long pause)

D: I know you're having to think back..

S: I keep wanting to say Islam, but it's not. (pause) it will come to me.

D: What was generally the political perspective, though?

S: The perspective?

D: Yeah, I mean conservative, liberal, moderate?

S: Oh, very much liberal.

D: Your perspective?

S: No, no, mine wasn't.

D: Yours was conservative?

S: Conservative to an extent, yeah

D: I don't want to put words in your mouth. Do you remember what kind of, did he make any comments on the paper? On why he gave you a B instead of an A?

S: No, it was just a grade at the end of the page. I mean, I asked him after the class and he said you know, it was just, there could have been more. And I don't see what, I mean, there was no way in my estimation that I could have added more to it.

D: And so you felt it was based simply on the opinions that you were expressing?

S: Opinions I put on top of the facts, yeah.

D: And, so what effect did that have on your later papers?

S: Well I, I just put the facts and I added what he would want. I could tell from that point on that my opinions were not going to get me the grade that I wanted.

D: Right. Alright, thanks.

S: Alright this is just coming from the gut, but I think it's there's a contradiction in our student body that's not from the South, in that they think all Southerners are you know, Bible-believing, bash you over the head with God, conservatives who don't listen to other people's opinions, but the moment we speak up, we are immediately, you know, silenced by them. They won't accept us, the same as we, or differing it, we accept them. I don't know what the regional bias is here on campus, but there is something, aspect where they don't accept us because of their thoughts.

D: You're talking just about the students, the student body. Do you see any of that in the professors at all?

S: Somewhat because, you know, that first day with the comparative politics, it was you know, if you're from the South, then be prepared because this isn't, I'm not. So what I have to say is going to be differing, and I could accept that, but as soon as we voiced our opinion- "we" being from the South, you know it was like woah, woah, that's backwards, that's different, that's, I mean, God forbid you should be conservative or stuff like that. It was just, there's a contradiction there.

D: Right. So, he wasn't, so how was he portraying the ideas, his ideas, versus?

S: His ideas were widely accepted, he accepted everyone, he wanted in-depth conversations, he wanted everybody to understand one another, and you know be free. But as soon as we, I keep saying 'we', as soon as I said something, or, to the extent 'I disagree with that based on this, because I grew up here' - you know, that's not right because you're backwards. You still have a lot of catching up to do, stuff like that. I just couldn't get over that contradiction, I was accepting of everybody, but this group.

D: Thanks.

Interview Five

D: _____, describe for me an experience you've had with political bias in the classroom or when a professor has portrayed their political views as the only correct views to have.

T: In, um, one of my history classes recently, um, the professor often would appeal to emotion and appeal to like, certain individuals within, like they would shoot appeals to the troops and say you need to support the troops, no matter what you think, whether we're right or wrong in the war in Iraq and everything like that. But, she also, like she said, you can say whatever you want to about the war, but every time you would bring up something about the war and attempt to discuss it, like typically you would bring up something negative that happened, because there wasn't much positive actually going on

D: Yeah, not a lot of good news coming out recently

T: Yeah, exactly. (laughs) and every time that would happen, she would automatically change it from what we were trying to discuss to 'support the troops', 'why are you against the troops?' and although that wasn't saying 'hey, the Iraq war is wrong' like, I mean, 'the Iraq war is right, we should be there because of this, this and this,' she appealed to emotion where you almost felt like you were hurting her by bring up something. Like, and I don't know if she did that purposefully. If she did, it was some... it worked.

D: Effective? (laughs)

T: Yeah, it was an effective method, a disturbingly effective method, but I mean, it's also, it also did its part to say 'don't talk bad about this war'. Whether it was because she agreed with the presidency, or liked the presidency, or whether she liked war or any of it, it's just that she curved the discussion to not go there. Which essentially was political bias.

D: Did you see the bias of her political opinions coming in, in any other types of discussion?

T: Uh, yeah. She would, most specifically when we were talking about the Civil War, which is an obvious thing down here- down South. Um, she would, again, she would talk about, you know, she would emphasize more positive things, like she would talk about how great generals were in the South, and you know, this war wasn't about slavery, which you know, you can argue that either way. She would, and whether you agree that, what the war was about and all the stuff, she would emphasize certain things about everything. Like, it wasn't like she did a broad, like 'ok this is the Civil War, this is what the North thought about it, this is why they did it, this is what they thought they were doing correctly, this is what the South ..' It would more be like, it was 'this is what one

party did'. Whatever she agreed with, at times she would emphasize the most. And like, she would teach almost like, like you know if you learned about World War II here, it's going to be a lot different if you learned about it in Germany. It's things like that. And that's also natural bias, but it's also, you know, if you emphasize certain aspects along, almost along a political line, like conservatism, then that's somewhat more obvious. I mean, even though I consider myself partly conservative too, maybe not as much as my teacher was, you know, it's still, I recognize it, because I enjoy hearing the other side, and I want to argue, because that's what you're supposed to do.

D: How did this make you feel?

T: Uh, it just made me feel like I couldn't get, you know, that much out of the class. I mean, because she was just saying stuff that either I already knew, and you know, agreed with, or like, she wasn't trying to make you think about stuff like 'ok, you think this way- why?' Like, you have this opinion of, you know you have the conservative opinion of this- for what reasons? And like why do you think you're correct, and what's the possible faults of your certain view. She never did that. It was kind of just like, this is what you, what we're doing, this is what you're supposed to do. And like, on the little ability to think spectrum, that's like 'we tell you what to think' which is the lowest of the learning curve, or whatever it's called.

D: So, what effect do you think it had on the class as a whole? I mean, how did it impact class discussion, or the interaction of class?

T: Well there was definitely not, um, definitely subdued class discussion. There was not much going on because there was people constantly, you know, agreeing, and like re-enforcing agreeing, because there was that first time in class that someone, you know, stood up and said something different and it was kind of like, she was like, 'ok that's your opinion', but you could also tell that she was you know, 'never say that again'. I mean, not like- it was all nonverbal stuff, obviously, but it definitely subdued class discussion. People, I guess people- who also didn't respect her- didn't respect the teacher just because she didn't, you know she wasn't teaching the span of what should be taught.

D: Do you think it affected her grading?

T: Uh, I think possibly, maybe not obviously. Maybe not like, you're a liberal therefore you're going to fail. Maybe not something that, you know, blunt. But it's definitely a possibility, that if you, it's more along the lines if you, like, even if you didn't agree personally, but if you agreed in class, you were fine. Because as long as you reinforced what she said, and like, basically if you said what she said back to her, that's what she wanted to hear, obviously. So, and I'm sure that helped with your grade.

D: Did that, how did you react to this whole thing? Did you change any of your actions?

T: Um, in some situations, I did. I said what I thought, I wasn't just going to not say anything, but then it got to the point where, you know, what's the point. I'd rather get an A than just talk to this, you know disagree with and argue with this person that's not going to listen to me, or respect what I have to say to begin with. So, I mean, there might have been a personal, you know, lax, but I gave up and just was like 'alright I'll just get an A'. I mean, I'd rather, if it's not going to do anything for anybody else, I might as well just get an A and move on.

D: Did it affect her assignments at all?

T: Possibly? We didn't really have much assignments, there was just basically reading, you know, and I mean...

D: How were you tested?

T: We were tested on, basically, straight-up comprehension. Like, I guess pretty basic. Even though it was a college-level course it was pretty basic, like what battle lead to what, you know, this kind of stuff. But the main thing, we watched a lot of movies throughout the semester, and so that's a possibility. She didn't show certain movies that, you know, like in my other Poly-Sci class they showed like "Fahrenheit 9-11", and they showed "Fahrenhype 9-11" like, you know the things going back, we kind of just watched one style. Even though they were Hollywood movies, like we watched "Gone with the Wind" and things like that, you know, and "Pearl Harbor" you know which obviously emphasizes the importance of America. But, so, I don't know.

D: So do you have any similar experiences with other professors?

T: Um, yeah. There's, there was another experience. This professor was more, was more- he would, he was better about it than she was. He would tell you, you know, he would lay it out for you and then he would also let you know 'this is what I think'. He would sum it up with 'my opinion' kind of thing, but he would also talk about that a lot. Like you could also tell it influenced his, what he talked about. We did, like, current events a lot, so and like, you can interpret current events so you want, you have to almost give it some type of political affiliation, or you know, what you think of the situation. So, I mean, he told us it was his opinion, but it was also a lot of that, it wasn't like 'this is my opinion, oh and this is what other people think'. I mean even though he told us it was, you know, still kind of, that was the one thing he talked about.

D: Kind of conceptually, these professors taking their point of view and you know, teaching that point of view like you've been talking about; how does that make you feel? What's your gut reaction to that?

T: Well, I mean, it's almost kind of like in beat the pulpit kind of thing. They have the position of a teacher, and that's possibly why they became a teacher, so they could

influence, you know, younger generations to think they way they think. Especially, it's a lot different in like a high school location because they have a set out curriculum- this is what you have to teach. And if you say something, you know, off-the-wall, you're going to get in trouble for it. But like, college, it's more like, you're less regulated for what you can do. So I guess, I mean, maybe they're just trying, they feel like they have the power, feel like they have the responsibility, and like because they are so inclined that what they think is right, so I mean, they feel 'I'm a teacher so why not let them know what's right?'

D: What about at those moments like you were talking about when you were expressing your opinion, and you said you felt it was like talking to a wall? How did you feel at that moment in time? What was your reaction?

T: I mean, I felt, you know, kind of, maybe that I became, like, she became like the teacher and I became like the... and I know we had a teacher-student relationship, but it almost

D: The recording can't see hand motions.

T: True, sorry, I talk with my hands. So, um, no, it almost put it like, ok you're a student, that's good you're trying, but you're still not getting what I'm saying.

D: Like what they're saying is the only important thing?

T: Yeah, like, in all the, I couldn't care less whether she wanted to hear my opinion or not, or what she thought of my opinion, because I mean, well it didn't bother me, but still it was kind of like almost 'this is how it goes'. You know, that kind of thing.

D: What did other students say about that experience?

T: Um, a lot of people just didn't like her. I mean, that's kind of elementary and immature. It was almost like they just, when they got into class it was kind of just -they got into a mode where 'ok this is what we have to do for the next hour, hour and a half, whatever' and so they thought 'this class is a waste of time'. You know, it's just, you can read, you can watch Fox news if you want the more conservative viewpoint, you can watch you know, CNN if you want the more liberal viewpoint. You don't have to, you're in a classroom to learn what these two people were trying, like why they're doing this, and why they're having these different views and, you know, how to depict and how to figure out which person's right. Whether it be, you know, Republican or Democrat. And so, we're in a classroom that's kind of, you know, skewing towards one thing all the time, it's kind of hard to learn, you know, maybe the conservatives aren't always right. Or Democrats aren't always right, that kind of thing. But, I mean, you think, 'alright I already get that with the media, I don't need it', but in a typical classroom where I'm supposed to be learning about what I'm seeing on tv.

D: Anything else you want to say? Just kind of broadly?

T: Um, I guess, basically that's what Poly-Sci is, almost. I mean, you just gotta, I mean yes teachers shouldn't do that, they shouldn't let what they personally think affect how they teach and what they teach and everything. But in a way, it also teach, if you know initially about the process already, it also helps you understand it further, I guess. Like, if you have a liberal teacher you'd be like 'ok, so this is why she's thinking that', and she uses this to explain this, and she emphasizes certain variables of a, something happen, variables that work out for her, like for that argument as opposed to a conservative teacher who uses different things and emphasizes them more. I guess if we already have an understanding, it would be good, to some degree, I guess.

D: Well I appreciate your time, thanks.

Interview Six

D: So, _____, tell me about an experience that you've had with a college professor who has suppressed political views in their class or portrayed their own political views as the only valid ones to have, in some way.

E: There are two distinct instances, or two distinct professors I can think of that were inclined to present one sided views of, um, political or philosophical oriented things. One of them was freshman year, my Science and Technology in Society professor. Um, we, he apparently used to be involved more heavily in the philosophy and ethics department, and so one of his favorite discussions was on deontological versus utilitarian ethics. Um, which he seemed to portray utilitarian ethics as being the more practical, the more correct way of viewing ethical decisions. And utilitarian pretty much, an oversimplification would be 'the ends justify the means'. Um, that would be an oversimplification, he was always careful to correct this when we just want to say it that way. The other professor I had was my Environmental Science professor who is, who um has basically said that the past two or three conservative presidents have been environmental disasters, as far as environmental policy goes. That, that statement might be the case, but he doesn't usually offer any kind of objective research or facts, so it comes off as being opinion. And it's, there's an obvious hostility in the way he says it that I think is probably the main thing that tells you that it's a little bit biased.

D: Can you remember any specific instance or specific something that happened in class that really illustrated either of these professors' biases?

E: One of the professors, in Science and Technology in Society, we were, I think we were talking about utilitarian ethics and I basically said that, I challenged him on his, I rose my hand and challenged him on his um, his structure of logic because it seemed circular to me. And I said 'I think you're circular reasoning' because we were talking about, he was talking about some like, line or something like that. And he was giving me an explanation, actually responding to a question I had, or a comment I had, and I gave a hand motion saying that 'it sounds circular to me' and um, I told him that. And he said 'it's not circular,' he said something to the effect of 'I just ended up back where I started'. It was a dismissive comment meant, and that when you begin to, the kind of, should that when you begin to um, not allow any other logical introduction of ideas or thought, that's kind of when the bias becomes real apparent, I think, is when you're not willing to actually discuss another person's viewpoint if they're coming at it from a logical, or if they're coming out from the same ground that you are...

D: Now, with this STS professor, did those philosophical beliefs, did it ever hedge over into any political discussion you had in class as well?

E: I think we had one, yeah because we talked about abortion, the utilitarian ethics wanted the big examples for ethical dilemmas for this abortion. That's the only specific instance I can remember of a, like directly political or social related.

D: And what happened in that discussion?

E: Um, (long pause). I can't remember anything specific.

D: Ok. Alright well, back to your other professor then. Environmental Science, you said? Um, do you remember anything specific that happened in that class that portrayed the professor's biases?

E: Um, (long pause). We had, the closest specific example that's happened, and the most recent view class, is we had a class discussion

D: Oh, this is a class you have right now?

E: Yes. A class discussion we just had on evolution. Um, he allowed other people's views to be expressed, but he never really, he never affirmed them, or, not affirmed them- he never really acknowledged them as being real other possibilities. He seemed dismissive in his tone, dismissive in the way he treated those individuals afterwards, and kind of condescending sometimes, that I think is kind of part of his personality.

D: How did that make you and how do you perceive it made other students feel?

E: I think other students felt really um, backed into kind of a corner. Here's this guy who's got a doctorate, does all this research and has made a point to kind of, one of the first things he told us in class was basically, early on during our orientation class, he quickly established- he used the word academia and himself several times, quickly establishing correlation between him and intelligence, research, you know 'I know stuff' and this is why I'm teaching the class. So he established his authority based on the fact that he was, had more education than us, was smarter and had seen more, and stuff like that. Which is true. So, but immediately you feel like you're, in the way- a lot of times- he words questions or responds to comments, you feel like you're in a corner, you feel like you're the underdog. And you don't feel, he looks for a response, so you give him a response. Then after you give him a response, you kind of feel like you were duped, because now you just, he makes you feel stupid. And I think some of it is, um, people just get so nervous when they talk to him because he is pretty intimidating. So I think a lot of people are intimidated and become defensive.

D: What about yourself? How does it make you feel?

E: Um, intimidated as well. I would like to think I'm a pretty articulate individual, but even when I try to say stuff, um, it might be even what he's looking for, not necessarily

juxtaposed to what he just said, or what he's asking. In class, to make a comment or bring up another question, it's pretty nerve-wracking. Um, and you do kind of feel like sometimes, you kind of feel like you're setting yourself up to be torn apart, or just dismissed. That seems to be what he just mostly does, is he doesn't just lay into you with 'well that's a stupid idea, whatever' he just doesn't say anything, he just kind of..

D: What do you perceive is the overall effect that this has on the interactions in the class, and the class discussion?

E: It can be very stifling, it limits it. That's the immediate effect that I've seen.

D: Can you think of any instance recently where you felt like the discussion was stifled?

E: Uh, the evolution discussion was almost between like, only about three people. And there were other people who tried to make attempts at bringing up certain things, or whatever, or just basically wanting to say 'I believe in, that there was a God who created the Earth in seven days, why is that less feasible than what you're saying?' Basically trying to say that, but they were never, they just weren't given the same attention out of people who were wanting to talk on the pure scientific quote unquote intellectual level. And this, so, you, I think the other thing is when people are often feel irritated by views being, by hostility to what maybe they would consider to be true, that hampers their learning experience because they don't want to take the professor seriously. So they end up being dismissive of him, because their dismissive of them. It's kind of 'reap what you sow', it becomes a reactionary type of relationship where a lot of views that you hold are now held because he holds the opposite.

D: What about in his assignments or grading or the questions he poses, do you see any biases expressed in any of those things?

E: I haven't had a test yet, we're having a test this, tomorrow actually. But he's never had any, any graded assignments generally speaking don't have, I don't really remember any specific instances of grading the assignment, the discussion was graded. You had to participate, his discussions are graded you have to participate in the discussions. He said he was going to be easy this time around, he was just going to give you credit for being there. But he said in the future, you know, you have to speak if you want credit to be a part of discussion

D: What effect do you think that has?

E: I think that's even further intimidating because you have to say something, even if you're not particularly prepared to deliver it, or you don't.. you become so, the combination of the persona you're talking to, the fact that you have to tell them something, makes you feel like you're really getting set up to make yourself look like a fool. Because there's multi-direction pressure coming from him and from the assignment. But not of his actual questions, graded assignments, have been directly politically biased.

D: Have you or anybody else in the class done anything, taken any action, changed anything?

E: No. I think there's a general feeling with a lot of students that this is how he is, I mean, he's a passionate guy about the environment, he's a passionate guy subsequently about political and social related factors that go into environment. So that has its own benefits and stuff like that. And I think that's kind of what people have kind of come to expect in some ways from certain places in that you're just going to have people who have specific views and I wouldn't even be surprised, and honestly to give him credit, I think people also would say that he probably gives, he actively tries to tone down sometimes, his views or his viewpoints. So that's another reason why maybe people aren't reporting or anything like that, it's not blatant, it's not toward the point to where it's so disruptive, or counterproductive an experience that it would, I don't think it would warrant..

D: What about just broadly speaking, have you ever talked to you know, your friends or other students about the issue or about the issue with this professor in particular?

E: Yeah

D: And what kind of stuff comes up in just conversation about it?

E: People who've had him say yeah, that's pretty much just how he is. He is, just has that reputation for being zealous and passionate about those things and making statements that might bother some people. Last year there was um, it seemed like somebody was talking about he, he basically said SUVs are the biggest waste of resources and energy and you're a horrible person if you drive an SUV, that kind of thing. Basically, that's how, that's how people took it at least. Whether or not he actually expressly said that, but people really kind of felt like he was calling people who drive SUVs 'scum' and uncaring about environment or whatever.

D: What about with any other professors? Have you ever had any discussions or has the issue ever come up?

E: With uh..?

D: Talking about other professors, other than this guy

E: Um, just, do you mean like third-hand information from others?

D: Yeah, I mean have you ever talked to anybody about political bias on campus and how did that conversation go, what did people say?

E: It was fine, I mean people always are a little bit irritated, there's always irritation when people talk about that. And a lot of times it's also irritation with the reaction of students

who hold the exact opposite of views. Normally what happens is, most of my friends are fairly middle-of-the-road type people, and a professor might be on the far end of a political spectrum, the political and social issue spectrum, and then somebody in the class on the other end of the spectrum and they'll try to speak up, and then to a lot of my friends, it's all the more annoying because it's, you now have two extremes kind of yelling at each other, quote unquote. Basically telling one that the other's wrong and the other one telling the other one's wrong. Nothing's really being discussed, because it's coming from a point of conviction not a point of education or real open-mindedness or discussion. So they're normally annoyed, they seem to be most annoyed when actually, ironically, when other students voice the opposite, the opposing opinion.

D: From the faculty member?

E: Yeah, from the faculty member.

D: Is there anything else you want to say about either of these professors you had? I mean, any other experiences you remember that are worth noting?

E: No. I mean I kind of, I mean I enjoyed both of these professors a fair amount. For some reason, I sometimes like personas that can be qualified as assholes, I don't know why. But sometimes they're just entertaining people and you can, you take them with a grain of salt and you realize, yeah they're a little bit crazy but, whatever I'll try to learn from this person. Um, and a lot of times they do have good points and stuff like that, so you try not to be dismissive because they're jerks. You just factor that into, part of the explanation of why they view certain things or why they say it a certain way. It's, for me, political bias isn't a particular problem. I think it's, political, bias has to be expected in certain fields. Any kind of field that's related to, that is applied in society, you're going to have social issues enter into the lesson and enter into the lecture, where political bias should be expected. And it's almost more annoying when a teacher tries to tiptoe around issues, being as politically correct as possible so as not to offend people, than it is for them just to go ahead and say something that we can go ahead and process that compared to what you think, instead of just having to have it all willy-nilly and airy, it's just up to you, kind of thing. So sometimes it's nice to have a very strong viewpoint put into, because you are forced then to say 'well how do I really feel about this? Am I going to be this passionate about the opposing viewpoint, or am I somewhere in between, or I have a problem not with what he's saying, but the way he's saying it'. So I don't have a particular problem. I feel like it's a reasonable expectation to find that in upper academic level, there will be political bias. And there will be viewpoints expressed that are expressed as being completely true when they're actually more subjective, those kinds of things. I think it's unreasonable to ask everybody to be completely neutral, you can't be all things to all people, I think that's a major failing point of the public school system. That's about it though.

D: Cool, well thanks for your time, I appreciate it.

Interview Seven

D: Ok, _____, tell me about an experience that you've had with a professor who's suppressed political views in their class or portrayed their own personal political views as the only correct ones to have.

B: A specific example would be, especially when I was in Political Science, I only took one class of this, I took Political Science 101 and I felt like all the speeches were pushed in a certain direction when we had to do debates and certain things, I felt that they were pushed very much to the left, to the liberal side, and I felt that she would often side with the liberal side instead of seeing actually both sides. And in the classroom, I felt like it had an intensity, I feel like it doesn't make it as open-minded, and as, as open-minded of an environment to be in, like it definitely made me feel like I needed to lean that way to get the certain grade that I wanted to get. And I felt like my, where I had come from as far, being very Southern and being held in the Bible Belt and my father preaching to me about being a Republican and this is the way to go, I felt that, I'm a very open-minded person and like to see both sides evenly and balanced. And I felt that it, possibly, just made me, possibly, suppress some of my own views.

D: Well, tell me if you would about something specific that happened in that class, that you felt expressed the teacher's bias.

B: I, ok, is a specific debate example would be whenever we had to cover what was going on in Iraq and how America, um, how America intervenes a lot with a lot of other countries, and how people felt about that. And I felt, specifically that we were nailed a lot harder in the classroom by other students, and especially by our teacher. Specifically...

D: You mean you as the conservative students?

B: We had, we actually covered the, we were actually covering that there were certain times when America had to do certain things. We were actually..

D: She set up a debate?

B: Right, and it was two teams..

D: Were you assigned one position, or?

B: Yes. We were basically assigned a team, a you know, we were split up into two different teams and then you have to cover the pro, you have to cover the cons, specifically, team 1 and team 2. And..

D: So even if you'd been liberal, you would have still had to cover the side that you had been assigned?

B: Right, right. Which I do think that that's a great thing, because it makes you possibly have to cover another side than you agree with, or vice versa. Maybe you ended up on the side which you go with, obviously

D: As you did, you did in this case?

B: Right. I just felt that, um, I don't know. In the actual debate, during the actual class, and during the actual time period, I felt that it was, I don't know, our facts and our resources, and what we had, you know, said that we were gonna cover these points and these were the points we were going to stick to, to defend our side. I felt like we were even getting nailed by the teacher, yet the other team was not, because we could have, possibly, been, we were on the opposite side that she believed in.

D: Right, do you remember something specific she said or something specific she did?

B: Um, just basically, not verbatim, but basically just to, I don't know, 'where did you get that resource from?' and then when we say that, and then she says that 'well do you think this and this and this?' And it was almost in a derogatory way, I felt like. I don't know how to specifically state what she quoted, just mainly I guess nailing the resource, or maybe, I don't know. Maybe it was a way of her trying to get us to see the other side. But in the debate, I felt, we felt completely ganged-up against, in the classroom.

D: How did she treat the other side?

B: The other, oh yeah, just nodding. Didn't, didn't nail them, you know, didn't even respond to them. Would sit back and kind of listen, and let the students ask questions. And even the students would ask us questions, but when we would give a response, I felt that she was almost coming back and saying 'well the students were right, and they were saying this and this and this' instead of saying 'oh I understand your side also.' And I just felt that there wasn't a balance there, actually.

D: Did this happen other times too? Other than that one debate?

B: Well, in other debates, I was just watching. There were abortion debates as well, every debate that she had assigned was fairly controversial.

D: Did she assign the topics?

B: Yes, she assigned the topics, and you signed up for a team and then these two teams were placed, and then she would say 'ok, this team is pro, this team is con'. It was all assigned, completely assigned. And just watching other teams, you could always tell, you could always tell that she leaned left, you could always tell that her liberal views were

here views, and she didn't, I didn't feel that it was very extremely open-minded. In several of the debates, in every debate you could tell which side she sided with.

D: How did these biases that you perceived, how did that make you feel?

B: I don't know, like I say, I try to keep an open mind about everything and I try to feel like my teachers would instill that in themselves also, and in the classroom. And it just made me feel, like I said, I felt like I had to suppress my more conservative views, even though I may be, you know, on both sides of the fence with different, you know, because I have to consider, I like to consider each and every point of every situation. And I just felt that, you know, like I had to suppress myself, and maybe not be able to open.

D: And did you?

B: I did. I most certainly did. Would just keep my conservative views to myself on just, on a point to not feel humiliated or, I don't know, like the entire class was on me, and hearing what I said and was totally against me. I just didn't want to feel like I was the only one in the room who felt that way, or who had that view, or...

D: What about in class discussion? Was there much class discussion in this class?

B: Yeah, there was a lot of class discussion. We had to speak, you know, about what was going on currently, you know, recent news and stuff like that. And, um, it was just, it was very (long pause), I don't know, lot of, obviously just a lot of college people, you know, you know how we are here in Clemson, as far as how the students lean, or do not lean. There are a lot of liberal views in college and I think a lot of that may come from some of our professors. And, um, I don't know, I just..

D: But did you see her biases affect class discussion at all? Or even affect the class dynamic in any way?

B: I mean, you would just, you could definitely tell that some students, you know, would try to push that and then to a certain point they would just finally back down. Some students don't, some students keep saying this is what I believe, this is what I feel. And finally she would change the subject. She would be sure to get off of the subject, she went, she wouldn't keep pounding you, pounding you, pounding you, humiliating you in front of the class whenever she recognized that you obviously weren't backing down or changing your views.

D: But she would up until that point?

B: Yes

D: Ok. What about on assignments? Did you see, did you perceive any biases in the assignments, whether it was the way she graded it, or what the questions she asked on assignments?

B: Maybe, maybe no not necessarily. She tried to get you to, I don't know, probably more or less cover both sides, and she would try, I don't know, I guess she tried to show or to appear that she didn't, you know appear as though she didn't pick a side or as though she didn't care. But just, I guess it was mainly in discussion, because mainly when it was an individual assignment, and I wouldn't try to portray specific opinions, I would try to just stick to more so facts and analyzing those situations academically, instead of throwing opinion in there.

D: So you think you changed how you went about the assignments because of the way you felt about her?

B: Oh quite, oh most certainly. Most certainly. I would be way more, um, I would just try to be way more cautious of what I said and how I said it. And I would just try to cover both sides in a balanced way so that I knew, that even if I did receive a bad grade, I would have an argument against it. I would just try not to throw my opinion in there so that if her opinion did not agree, did not coincide with mine, that maybe I wouldn't receive any deduction in points or penalties for that.

D: Did you ever feel that you did receive any unfair grading?

B: Not necessarily, but because I refrained so much, just because of the classroom environment because I saw...

D: So you did that right from the beginning, from the first assignment?

B: Exactly. Just because, through the discussions and through the first day of classes, you could tell just because of the way she spoke and the way she presented the material and the way she presented herself. You could just kind of tell. In her speech, just the way she talked to you, she would always lean that way.

D: Did you ever take any particular kind of action because of the way you felt about her?

B: No sir, no I did not.

D: What about other students? What did you see? Did you ever talk to other students about this, or what did you see in the class?

B: I mean other than.. my team specifically, you know, my debate team or who I would have to work with to study, in study groups and stuff. We all just kind of spoke in general terms, 'wow she's really hardcore on this side and it's really obvious' more or less. But

basically we would just speak very generally about how you could just tell in the classroom, and we didn't know if it was a class-wide thing, but yes, we had the four or five, five of us, five students had just seen that personally, and we were like wow. And we mostly recognized that our speech was not on her side, that what we needed to cover was not her side. And that's what really concerned us, is just by watching her in the classroom, by classroom discussions, how it would go whenever we actually gave our debate. And we were on an opposing side that we, that she hadn't stood up and said "I feel this way" but it had been conveyed in certain other terms, and in certain other discussions, that she more or less probably did lean the other way. In that way, it was, I don't know, just a concern of ours, how, we were almost nervous, you know, to present just because we didn't know how she would be. Yet our grades, you know, written grades, the outline, everything else, was obviously graded accurately, I feel

D: What about the debate itself though?

B: The debate itself, I think she gave us, I mean, she gave us credit for our arguments and stuff, and she tried to, I felt that we were graded fine. But at the same time, I just, during the presentation, and the way we felt in front of the class, and the way our team had been conveyed as if that was the way we felt, and that was how it was, and there were no changes, if, ands, or buts. And I felt that the whole class had kind of, along with the teacher, kind of gone against us publicly, you know, I felt like it was very public..

D: Even though that was what you were assigned to do

B: Exactly, exactly.

D: Do you have any similar experiences with other teachers, or other professors, other than this Political Science teacher? Or anything you can even compare to it?

B: Well whenever you asked me about political bias, the first thing that actually came to my mind was when I studied in Mexico, and I realized that's not here in Clemson. But it was in a Clemson program, and it was, and I mean it was completely different, but we just, I dealt with a lot of political bias in the classroom studying with students from Mexico, and dealing with that just because it was very...

D: Was it a college class?

B: It was. It was Advanced Conversation and Composition, but...

D: But was it biased coming from the faculty or from the other students?

B: It was more or less from the faculty of my college in Mexico, but through Clemson. It really wasn't, I can't think of another specific time here in Clemson. Coming right off the

top of my head, I cannot think of another, you know, specific teacher coming to my mind in Clemson.

D: Well, I'm trying to focus on Clemson, so.. just them. When you talk to your classmates, what did other, regarding assignments and that kind of thing, did you ever talk to your fellow students about how they reacted on the assignments or how they...

B: I mean really, I didn't hear of anyone specifically saying that they had noticed that their grade was absolutely murdered. Yeah, she was a tough grader, and like I said other people, I have heard people mention, you know, about taking their opinions out who had it first, and were just kind of, note-wise maybe were brought down a couple of letter grades, but more or less, people didn't, the teacher had written specifically on there, you know, I don't know if you want to, and had basically told them, 'be careful when including your opinion because I may not feel the same way as you'. More or less, in so many words. Use caution when stating your opinion, in a specific assignment or something of this nature because being in political science, you more or less need to see both sides of an argument or of a situation.

D: Is there anything else you want to say broadly about this topic or how you feel about it, or any other experience you had in that class or just anything coming from the gut?

B: Um, I mean, really I feel a lot of our professors and faculty, you know obviously, have their opinions, and have their, as we all do, have their own opinions about politics and things of that nature. And especially in a time like now, when we're in war and dealing with so many, you know, horrible things that are going on in America and we have all these political issues regardless, I think that it's obvious that some of us are going to come in contact with a teacher, one or more teachers, or professors, instructors, who push their side a little more. And I feel that it's something I've come, my friends have experienced, and I've sat around with them even when I haven't known that professor and such, and things of this nature, even bring in religious things into the play here, and things of that nature. And I just think that it's gonna happen. But yet, it's obviously not right and it should, it shouldn't affect anyone's grades. And I feel that any instructor, if they're at that level, they, hopefully, can see both sides, and can understand that everyone has an opinion, and everyone is going to feel a certain way from what they come from and from what they know, and how knowledgeable they are about certain things that are going on. If that makes sense.

D: It does, thanks. I think we're done. I appreciate it.

B: Thank you.

Interview Eight

D: _____, tell me about an experience you've had with a professor who's either suppressed political views that the professor disagreed with or portrayed their own political views as the only correct ones to have.

V: Alright, well History 173. Albeit, it is kind, you know, kind of classical early history, and, but what kind of went on in that class a lot of times when we got to certain civilizations, certain views, he would bring them up in kind of a modern text and a lot times put them along, you know, 'that view falls in line with the dominant parties during this period'. And it was pretty much presented in a way, at least you know, and being something of what I would consider myself somewhat left-wing, I felt a lot of the views from the professors on said civilizations and stuff were very, kind of conservative. One of the biggest things that I remember was when we went over classical Greece, which is you know, predominantly thought of as, you know, I guess the basis of liberal arts colleges and such, and free thinkers. They were presented to the class as very much a group of barbaric, you know, paganistic heathens because they, their, they pretty much sat, the way he said it, they pretty much sat around all day talking about nothing, accomplished nothing, and had sex. And just, that was what the Greeks did, while you know, generally when you think of classical Greece you think of you know, a lot of the big achievements from, and artistic achievements from that time, and a lot of that was downplayed by him because of what was a democratic government and the government begin run by the people, if the people you know were heathenistic pagans, couldn't possibly be a good government. And couldn't come forth, and those were the kinds of ideas we had to kind of spit back out on the test. Being that, I know a fairly good bit of history myself, I at least personally knew that, you know, that's really not how it was, how it went. But, I can't say for other people in the class who haven't been in history that they're getting this idea of Greeks as not the, you know, classical idea that has generally been put forth throughout the ages. Now, on the contrary, sort of when it came to Rome, because Rome was more of a republic, and definitely much more of a military presence, they were at least in his eyes, presented as a much, you know, more developed civilization. Which they were, but it was very much because, you know, it was led by people who were born to lead, as opposed to the plebeians having the say of what happened in, it was more of the idea in Greece. I mean, you did have your king but there was also, in some provinces before it became one, but that was a lot of how it was presented. A lot of, and a lot of the other societies before that, um, were just because, you know the Assyrians any of those others just because, at least in his eyes, they believed in some, he would constantly call them 'false gods'. Rather than, and present, downplay their religion, and present it as something that was wrong, up until Christianity started to come, and that was very much portrayed as, you know, the correct way and a Christian based society was the way to go. And that was another reason Rome was good, because they eventually, you know, move into the Christian beliefs as he put it.

D: Can you give an example of maybe a particular specific interaction that you or somebody else had with him?

V: Ok, there's one particular instance, that one older man who was in the class, I think he was like 40 or so, was asking about, with Greece, because a lot of this was based on, you know, what these things did to progress the society. You know, we were talking about Greece and he was downplaying a lot of it, he said 'what about' I want to say a lot, a few of the temples he named off, and some of the more famous artwork pieces he said 'didn't those play a role?' (lots of background noises on tape) And, you know, didn't those artistic achievements and some of the brilliant thought ideas, didn't they lay a huge basis for the Roman ideals to come, and weren't they big achievements in the progression of society and it was stated that, by the professor in response to that, that the, that artistic achievements are overrated and, I want to remember exactly how he put it, but it's been a while. But he said that they were overrated and really the aesthetics were not truly what will progress a society, and that that has no hope of keeping the society together. And that the society needs strict, you know, republic, leaders and government officials for anything from that period to be of value for societies to come.

D: Did you ever have a similar kind of interaction with him personally?

V: Um, not any that I can remember, other than after the first test, um, I scored poorly because I took a different approach. We had an essay section of the test, and it was the, one question was to present- I can't remember, I want to say the Babylonians?- and talk about their achievements and how they, you know, became important to other civilizations and how they were a power. And a lot of what I talked about was the, you know, artistics- they made one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and they were a very highly developed society. Very scientifically intelligent society, and I was generally basing it on their technological achievements and how those helped progress, and give them the power to be, you know, over other states. And he said that that was wrong, the power came through the military and through the government and everything else was an offset of that, while you know, and so because of that my answer was more or less completely wrong because his idea was very much government and military based and that, like I said, the arts were of little value in the society. And as was religion. And so, pretty much any reason the society succeeded from that point on, I pretty much wrote that the government and its leaders were you know, what propelled that society forward.

D: And you think that opinion was a result of his political biases and political opinions?

V: I would say yes and that, you know, I don't think that it was directly, you know, his belief that his part of history was very much 'that is why'. I don't think it was a scholarly opinion so much as it was a kind of political bias, because on several, at least on several occasions, he had mentioned going to like Republican conferences and stuff. And would talk a lot about a lot of the Republican candidates at the time in the Senate. Those sort of

things, and talk about, you know, strong Republican or, what is the word, I can't think of the word, to, a Republican does what as opposed to a democrat?

D: They're conservative? Minimal spending?

V: Represents! A representative government

D: Oh like a Republic versus democracy

V: Yeah, and like the power of that being what was, you know, needed for a society to progress and stay strong. And with, you know, talking about it being something that is needed today and you know, there is that argument today between the democracy, because we're split. We're a democratic Republic, and bringing that back and placing, you know, this society is a good society because it had strong leaders to represent its people, while this society was not because the people were allowed too much say, and the people didn't know what was best for themselves.

D: Now, when you have these kind of experiences, that you've perceived as his bias coming through, how did that make you feel?

V: They make me feel, in some ways, somewhat cheated because when I came to college I was, I came from a, I lived in South Carolina, a kind of back-water area. It was a very, very conservative environment for me to grow up in. I was hoping, you know, college would be a lot different. And when I got there, when I was presented my first semester with this class, you know, I was very disappointed in it, and I also felt like there were a lot of very significant parts that were just missing from what I was being taught. And really, a lot of it was just, you know, kind of frustration that I would take out with friends and talk with a lot of my friends who I discuss politics with, we'd be, we'd discuss you know, what our teachers had said in class and how it just kind of unnerved us that this is what's being taught as the fact-base to society to other kids. And it was kind of worrisome in that, that you feel like there is a bias, an opinion being spread to the class, and personally I don't know how much it spreads to other people. I was very much in a state that I would sit there a lot of times and just brush off a lot of things he said. But just remember them for test taking purposes. And it just, later I'd be like, it got to the point where you kind of, at least for me, I kind of quit caring about whether the things he said were true or not, or whether they were represented equally, because it got to be what I expected, and so it got to the point where I wasn't going to bother trying to correct by any means. And just kind of roll with it.

D: What impact do you think that these biases had on the class dynamic or class discussion?

V: Um, yeah, I'm sure it being that it is a General Ed class, there were plenty of people in there who would probably have little discussion on, because they didn't care much about

history and a lot of them would forget it as soon as it would be gone. But there are a number of people who are entering a more directed field towards, you know, that particular major and I would think, with it being a lot of people's kind of first impressions into the study, when you're presented with the idea of civilizations as the Greeks being a fairly menial group because of their religious beliefs and their social practices, I think, for a lot of them, I think a lot of that could have gone through. I, because I do know the power of persuasion especially when you have someone in an authoritative figure, like a professor, is there. So, I think people who do bother to, or you know who bothered to remember what was taught in that class, and that was their really good first impressions on what those societies and what history was, I think that could very well have stuck with them. And, for, I was going, I went into architecture as my field of study, and had I gone in there and, I have a love of history too, but had somebody else come in there and really liked the history and gotten that from him, when they come into another area and start discussing that, or let's put it this way. If I brought out of that class that, you know, Greece was this menial society.. (background noise, tape interruption?) Ok, I think the best way to put what I wanted to say was, if that's not your field that you're going, for this case in general, or in specific, if you're going into history, you're probably going to get a mixed balance of things and it may not matter as much. But if you're someone who isn't going into history, but you actually care about this class, what, one of the things you would have learned from it were his political views and so when it, so that you believe, basically if you, those beliefs are what you come out of there with. And so they end up playing into your personal life, so you're influenced by that when you, maybe not in your field specifically, but in your beliefs on life, when you learn that, this is what makes a good government, this is what makes a good society, and you're not presented with that, you know other opinion.

D: What about emotionally, how did this make you feel?

V: Emotionally, it was just very much that I felt like I was missing a lot of things that I could have gotten from that class, because even if I knew a lot of the material we were covering, it's fun to, you know, hear it again and just get all those little pieces in. And when I'm not presented this part of, you know, history that I'm expecting that I want to hear out of this class, I feel like I'm being cheated because I feel like I'm missing something very important. I feel like the rest of the class is being presented a skewed idea.

D: Did you take any action in response to these biases that you saw?

V: Not outside of discussing the first test, you know, with him, which more or less resulted in him saying that 'this and this and this is the reason this was' and so, from that I learned that, ok, what I believe or even what the books may say aren't necessarily the answers we need to be giving him. Because the books, in general, at least the most large textbooks, not necessarily some of the smaller ones that a lot of professors give, tend to be much more sterile information. And don't tend to lean you one way or the other, but

when you get, you know, take from the lectures in class and that's more what he wanted fed back to him. It was that kind of deal, but that was really the only action I took as far as that, because it was my freshman year, and I'd already had a bad experience trying to get something changed on a totally different topic, but with curriculum.

D: Have you ever had any similar experiences since then with other professors?

V: Not, none that really, you know, I've had professors that will occasionally present, you know political views in class, or a lot, I've had a number of them talk about George Bush and what they thought about his particular policy or something. But none such that they've worked that into their actual teachings.

D: You said you changed the way you responded on his tests. Were there any other types of assignments?

V: In that class there was, there was one writing assignment and really, the only difference in it than the test- the test consisted of I think 10-20 multiple choice or true/false, any mix of those. And two or three essays that you had to write on. The writing assignment was just a longer version of one of those essays.

D: You said you, obviously, you perceived his biases and what he said in class and how he portrayed history. Did he express those biases at all in his assignments, not in the grading, but even in the questions he was asking?

V: (long pause). There, for the most part, not. I guess that's the best way to say that, or the only thing I can think of is the fact that there were, because of that it would be in the test, certain things would be omitted and they would be more governmental based questions, and there would be less, there would be very little in the questions when it would say list, or talk about a certain thing, rarely would it be anything, what would be considered liberal arts. It was mostly, you had to discuss industry, you had to discuss government, or you had to discuss military achievements for the most part.

D: Did you ever talk to other students in this class? Did you ever really get a feel for how other students felt? And what did they say, if anything?

V: Um, I talked to some. It was an auditorium class, so there wasn't a lot of socializing, but I had talked to some about it. Some people were perfectly fine, some, with the way he was teaching because from, at least what I gathered from them, they believed a lot of what he said to be true. And believed that he was correct when he said that, you know, would say that this is what is need and I would hear people, when discussing tests or different lectures, regurgitate a lot of the same views that he would have. Whether they were their own, or whether they were his, I can't say for certain, but when you hear, you know, I guess when I hear people talk about, go from talking history to talking about, a lot of the things people would talk about were the pagan religions and how they were so

wrong and this is why this country shouldn't have succeeded anyway. But, but I did talk to, I had one friend in that class who was also in a couple of my other classes who did share, we would discuss in our architecture studio a lot of the things he would say, and talk about a lot of the things that were missing. And he kind of felt the same way that I did, and we just felt like we were being cheated out, and you know, missing a lot of stuff and just what the people were given in general was just one side of history.

D: Is there anything else you want to say on this topic? Just from the gut, from your experience with this person? Anything at all?

V: The only thing, I guess, the biggest gut feeling I got from that, and just a mix of stuff around campus that semester, but really with this class was, it kind of disappointed me when I came fresh from high school and got here and found that influence here, that I came. And it kind of just, you know, downgraded my view of the faculty a good bit. Whether or not that was a correct view that I adopted, but just coming and having a very biased professor and having mild, very, very mild influences within other classes, was just not something I was expecting out of a college, college when I got here. So it was very much of a let down.

D: Also, I should have asked. When you got, you felt you got a lower grade on that first test because of the political differences, did you ever, how did that make you feel when you got the lower grade? Emotionally, I mean.

V: When, emotionally, I felt, when I found out that was, the reason was I did not present the same view

D: Right, that's what I meant

V: I felt angry. Kind of, that you know, that I was like. Kind of angry and just kind of a feeling when I figured that from that point I was going to have to answer questions his way, I kind of felt like I was selling out. And that I was answering these questions, and those really weren't the answers that I knew them to be, or that I believed them to be.

D: Alright, well I sure do appreciate your time Victor, thanks.

Interview Nine

D: So, _____, tell me about some experience you've had where you've felt a professor in a college classroom has been biased in some way politically or they've expressed their political opinions as the only correct one's to have.

C: well, I've been in college this has happened and I guess that only two of my courses – both political science courses with the same teacher actually. It's actually surprising that in most of academia you find most of political science professors generally and definitely here at Clemson are more liberal. But, I've had one conservative professor who made it well known from day one that he was conservative, and staunchly so. Thematically, throughout the class he will portray his own views and has no real problem presenting them as the correct ones. He'll do so sometimes in a joking manner, and in that way it's not offensive. I'd say more than anything, that approach can be obnoxious because here we are at an institute of higher learning. We all like to feel like we're not just the random person on the street who has some ill-informed opinions that we more or less know what we're talking about. Hopefully, after finishing three years of a major or even one; for someone to come out and so blatantly push their own views to the belittlement even of other people's. I think it can be obnoxious and probably not as serving to the intellectual environment.

D: Tell me about something specific that he's done in class where you felt that his biases were portrayed.

C: well, let's see. Well, many teachers will have students write on note cards- and this is a political science class – what your political affiliation is. You know, that kind of makes sense to get a feel for the scheme of the class. But, as he gets to know you he'll read out, slowly but surely, everyone's index cards. That's kind of a good way to get to know each other, professor to get to know the class. But, he likes to harp on that. You know, he'll come across the question of party affiliation and he will, uh. If you say democrat, like I said he's conservative, he'll make a couple puns on you. He pretty much colors a lot of the material that he presents. Instead of presenting it and showing both sides, or just letting it stand for what it is, you know. He'll go ahead and elaborate heavily on the conservative side. He has plenty of names he likes to call liberals and the whole gang of feminists, wackos, communists and all this stuff he likes to throw out. Not that I think it's to the detriment of anyone's ego or self esteem, but I think that it's not as valuable as it could be if he took the Socratic approach. Here's the question and let it go ahead and explore, instead of exploring in all directions it seems to always take one turn into the direction that suits his fancy.

D: so you think it has an impact on the class discussion then?

C: yeah, I think it can. It's not that he calls on one side more than the other. Politically, it's not like he looks for one answer out of his conservative kids here or there. I've had

other classes where we've covered similar material, especially in the philosophical area where pretty much everything is fair game and there are just many, many, many ways you can dice any situation or any theory. We seem to always tend to drift toward that theory which kind of keeps with his. Because he is very, um, certain that he is correct - not that he doesn't acknowledge that other people hold other beliefs. But, kind of more the attitude that, yes, these people hold them, but these beliefs need not exist, that they are somehow subpar to his own. Being myself, much more to the opposite persuasion, um, it may stand out more or I see it more where others don't. But um, I think it certainly has some impact in the classroom where the pure pursuit of intellect and of knowledge. It seems to whittle back down to a very well calculated formula - not formula, but ideology that he already holds. I don't think that's optimal in that environment.

D: you say that he has these biases towards these other political viewpoints in concept. But, have you ever seen him, I don't want to use the word attack, but you know - disagree with a student directly about their political opinions?

C: sure, once again it's not in an intellectually intimidating way as far to you know just passionately tell them that they're completely wrong and that they don't have any idea what their talking about and something to that effect. But, instead of letting them really get to their core, where their philosophy kind of blossoms from, we just let them kind of put out their whole view. He more stifles it with a joke, you know, "leftist wacko" you know, this that and the other. Instead of taking the debate further, and that's where I think the class maybe loses out, from hearing if a student has a good argument or if he gets to a standstill, but then maybe another student could jump in and fill in some of his gaps, take it a little bit further. Really beat it the hard... that's what we're here to do is wrestle with big issues especially in political science, I mean, these are pertinent issues to society and to our degrees even. So, instead of letting the students wrestle it out and feel you know, just kind of let the class have access to all that information that's floating in each other's head, he'll more be quick to brush that off. Whereas, um, not that he spends time trying to dogmatize the class in his views, but over the course of the semester we'll spend a lot more time... He just tends to spend a lot more time smiling and talking about what he wants to talk about, not necessarily feels comfortable with, but what he thinks is objective truth you know. Um, in his views, rather than really exploring the depths of everything else and letting it all be put on the table there.

D: What about in his assignments? Does he structure his assignments in any way that it shows his biases?

C: Let me see, the assignments? Um, I think he's probably pretty safe. In the two classes that I've had: one, the assignments will give you a small philosophical nugget and you can expand and I certainly would never say that he, at least in my experience I can't speak for the class as a whole, never let somebody's view affect his grading. Um, most of the assignments were not set up in such a way, at least the one's I've encountered in

his class, that would actually plan in. Any of the assignments I've had your party affiliation or your philosophical ties wouldn't come into play with the assignment. So, in that sense it's safe in that it's not necessarily coming into the written papers or projects. Although, on the same note, there is participation page and it's hard to measure these kind of things. But, speaking frankly, I believe that the more you get to know him and get on his good side and talk, that that would kind of play into the participation grade a bit. I think you might kind of run some risks there even, not saying you do it consciously, but subconsciously, but you're maybe of opposing views and you're not really rubbing him right. I think he'd have a much easier time pulling your grade down, than if you were someone with opposite views, but at least talked to him and formed a relationship of respect or of someone who shared similar views, but was not necessarily, he didn't know them but he also knew that their views were kind of more like his. To be fair, I think I could see that playing into the participation grade a little bit which is probably not fair in an academic pursuit.

D: these perceptions you have of his biases. Did they ever affect your approach to the class, or what you did or said in the class?

C: yeah, I think um. In talking to at least one other person that I can think of off the top of my head. It's the type of situation where you just after a while..... He does it in a way that like I said is sometimes a little more joking, brush some things off, maybe harp on some others, nothing in a severe way that is really going to hurt anyone. But, over the course of the semester to be really dedicated to any one class and especially this one that I think this professor is particularly difficult to do well in his class, to stay motivated over the course of the whole semester knowing that you're going to come in and either be slightly looked down upon for your views or know that, no matter what sub-topic comes up in class – essentially he's going to have the final word because he is the professor and that's one thing and there's not much you can do about that as a student. I think in that sense it can kind of play into the class and affect your experience in the class just as far as really staying motivated to want to do well, to want to bring your best to class. Where I've had other professors who were very welcoming to the community of ideas, they want to bring whatever is in you out, maybe to build it up a little, even if that means by tearing it down – pointing out holes in what you've said wrong. That allows you to reevaluate what you're saying, it's more of a... you know, your views are cast aside as less important. Then, you don't want to show up to class, having your head exploding with ideas and wanting to spit them out there. Granted, people with PH.Ds you have to respect. You think they're smarter than you and they've worked for it, so you want them to kind of hear it and reply to it or whatever. I think that, maybe not having the motivation to want to bring all this in to the classroom could have an affect. Even if it just tells on one person. If I had some profound insight on something and didn't want to share it, then the rest of the class may lose that and the same for everyone else. If there was a close that really called them to say a lot and speak their mind, whether the professor agreed or not I might benefit from it. Even if I disagreed with them, it would at least challenge me to come up with a more formal dispute rather than cast some knee-jerk

you're crazy thing, which is what we get more in this class. You know, you just kind of want to brush into the table and you don't want to hear the other side of the coin, because it's liberal wacko stuff. I'd say mainly it's that whole portion of really being as dedicated as you can and motivated to stay on target and really, you know, bring your best to class.

D: you're talking in hypotheticals, to a certain degree, but how did it make you personally feel, these biases that you perceived?

C: I'd say I'm one of the students that, although I have very diametrically opposed views. But, also I've taken him for one class before. It was very demanding; we had to go in for extra time outside of class, to find out what he wanted for specific assignments. I tried very hard, I did well and I think I earned some respect in his eyes there. So, maybe it's not as detrimental to me, although in some ways I think it is. In some ways, I'd show up to that class knowing that no matter what my feelings really are, no matter how much I'd like to, you know, sit there and debate with him and the rest of the class. I know I'm not really going to get a chance to do that. So that's my hypothetical... it's coming from my personal experience that I feel like I'm not, necessarily getting the full benefit of his class. Because these are topics that I like to talk about or I like to think about and explore, and I certainly think I would get more out of it if I was allowed to do that and others too in an open forum, rather than something that was going to be stifled at some point. So, in my own experiences I think it does make me feel a little discouraged I guess is the right word. When I know that no matter what I've said, no matter if I've had a great revelation over night, I read some great book or I felt like I could really peg him down on an issue, before we ever got to do it and let him with the PH.D and a lot of intelligence replied to... it's never going to get there because it's just going to be shushed and brushed away.

D: What about other students in either talking to them or just in watching them, did you ever see any of the biases having an affect on other students?

C: yeah, the one other student I can remember talking to about... this student had the class last semester, the one I have now. When I asked her about it, she was maybe much more... had a much bigger problem with it than I did, because she was a little more shy, she probably didn't develop much of a relationship with him outside of the classroom. She just said that she felt he was pompous and egocentric and she had a lot of negative things to say. I think that when you have that reaction toward a teacher, you know, even outside of class with your papers and stuff like that, you no longer want to give it your best effort. You're almost doing these things out of spite. When you were younger and maybe in middle school and got an assignment and you hated the teacher because you didn't want to do it. Whereas now, I feel like successful college students, you present them with a paper that's a challenge and it's our job to step up and meet that and do research or, you know, sit and think and reflect over something and reply. Whereas, if you didn't have that relationship with the teacher where you despise them, then your sure to revert back to that reaction of how you've got to do this assignment and nock it out.

Whereas, I'm intimidated by his demeanor and I think he's going to do me unfairly and unjustly anyway. I can see how students would develop that if they're never going to go see him after class because he's quite willing in class to talk about liberal wackos and point out individual students and, you know, including myself and call them liberal wackos and things right to their faces and feminists and whatever he thinks.... It's ridiculous. So, I think in and out of class it can have a real affect anyway. Other experiences if I was just talking to other people um, I talked to one other person I think at least about it, who didn't say too much about how house affiliation played into the class a whole lot. They were definitely aware that he was conservative, they were also liberal. They thought that some of his testing was unfair, but not an indication to politics and ideology and uh...

D: Have you ever had any similar experiences with other profs or just this one?

C: well, uh, alternatively like I was saying, Classes where I know I go and it's kind of like uh, you know, an open forum for participation and ideas. In those I've had plenty of experiences and I think that those have always been really beneficial. I'm trying to think other instances where politics have played into the classroom...

D: specifically political bias.

C: right, right. Freshman year I had a teacher who opened on the first day and said that he was of a certain affiliation. He was a republican, he would kind of present his views in the classroom, but in the over arching way as to crush out the other ones. He didn't come across nearly as intelligent anyway. I think most of the people in there felt that they were smarter than him anyway. But, that's very different even if he reflected some biases here along the way. It wasn't in the same fashion of the, "I'm right, you're wrong". I was more, this is what I feel and I know I can talk about this a lot, because ... I guess, when you have an ideology you stick to you kind of look for you seek it out, you have more information maybe to divulge about it. But, he wasn't of the same persuasion to say, "Yes, but everyone else is wrong." I think that's ok in the classroom to do that. I don't think it's ok to say how you feel in the classroom, and also I'm right and you're wrong, and we're going to conduct class with that being the preface and that being the understanding. That's like the contract on day one, he makes it clear that this is it. It's this way, I'm right, the rest of you guys are nuts and we're going to start marching from here. Experiences like that, I don't think I've had any others outside of this one class and professor.

D: ok, alright. Anything else you want to say about him, about the concepts in general? I want to make sure you say your peace.

C: right, um. I think I'm harping on ideas I've already said. I like the Socratic Method, I like professors who... I'm not saying he's insecure, but I like professors who are secure enough in their knowledge that they'll throw out a question and let you respond and

they're normally good professors. I think that ones who let your respond can dig out another question from what you've just said and push the debate even further. And just continue to push things further and let other people chime in, push that further and I think that kind of broadens everyone's horizons and creates a better understanding at least. It kind of fosters a healthy debate whereas I don't feel that method is being applied here, like I said. If anyone wants to let their conservative peace out, that's pretty tolerated, but anytime anyone else has something it's, not in an intimidating or mean way, but it's kind of set aside and not really given the same merit in the class I'd say as those who are more in agreement. Like I said, I think an open forum encourages all forms of ideas to come to the front and pushes and pushes and is probably the most secure method to conduct a political science or a philosophy or any class like that where you're really getting at abstract concepts that don't really have a right or wrong answer. Unless, you're in a class with someone who thinks that there is only one right answer. But, I think that that's not the best way to conduct them

D: well alright, well, I appreciate your time. Thanks a lot.

Interview Ten

D: _____, tell me about an experience you've had with a professor who has either suppressed political views that they don't agree with or has somehow represented their own political views as the only correct ones to have in a college classroom.

S: My econ teacher, this was at USC upstate, which was before I transferred here. I transferred this year. Um, and he very, he was very obviously conservative, which is typical for an econ class. I was also an environmental science class, which is typically considered democratic or liberal. And so, the ideas that I was, like, it was funny 'cause there was another girl who was in both those classes. I tended to lean towards the liberal side, and uh, she obviously leaned towards the conservative side. And so, our econ teacher... like, she would bring up something that we discussed in our environmental class. For instance, plate tectonics. He actually laughed out loud when she brought up plate tectonics, and he said... 'and so these big plates just move around,' that was an exact quote. He was, yeah, I wanted to go like, "yes, yes they do." And also, when we talked about... I mean we talked about oil, and stuff like that, that really... it has to do with the economy, but we focused on that stuff more than we focused on the, like, I mean literally all we learned from econ in that class was like, general vocab and stuff like that. I'm in a higher econ class now, which I am not really struggling with. It's something that comes fairly easily to me, but it's definitely not coming off of things I learned in that class, which should be the next step up.

D: Right

S: 'cause all we did was talk about political issues, like oil. Like I said he would talk about how there's rivers of oil everywhere. We're not running out of oil and things like that. That other girl in the class, she would talk about that environmental science class. My environmental science teacher was always like, "we're running out of oil, it's only in select places," and things like that. It definitely, both those classes really play a big part.

D: OK, um, can you tell me any other specific examples of what they did or said, that demonstrated their bias in either direction in either of those professors? Maybe an interaction they had with a student?

S: um, well I know an interaction with me was the... my econ teacher was talking about how there's so much political bias in Hollywood. He was talking about all Hollywood's liberals. He said that they're uneducated and things like that. I kind of, as a comm. Major, very much, you know, like, plan on going into a Hollywood type field. Not movie making or anything like that. But, that type of field and you know... I said, I brought up the fact that basically it's not all liberal. There's like, Tom Hanks, and many conservatives. He said that, No, the media's purely liberal, and that fox news actually, he mentioned fox news. Um, as being, as also being liberal, but being less liberal. Which, you know, that's like completely conservative. And, my environmental class that female

student, when she would say things like: running out of oil and things like that. My econ teacher would spend the entire rest of the class talking about that. You know, how we are indeed out of oil. Even if it was totally unrelated. We could be talking about microbiology or something like that, but the entire rest of the class would be talking about how oil drilling in Alaska's not economically feasible because it would cost so much to run pipes out there and stuff like that. That's the real reason we're not drilling, and stuff like that. It didn't really have anything to do with what we were learning. Same thing in my econ class, if you brought up anything somewhat liberal, it would go the opposite way. You would hear, you know, like, I think Bill O'Reilly had gotten in trouble. It wasn't the Al Sharpton thing, although I'm sure he's talking about that right now. He had done, I don't know, it was one of those stupid... anyway, he talked about something he'd seen on Bill O'Reilly, which obviously had nothing to do with econ again.

D: yeah

S: And, yeah econ. Getting my Es mixed up. But, yeah, I mean, both of them would go off on tangents that would last the rest of the class.

D: What effect, if any, did this have on the class dynamic, the class discussion?

S: Well, my environmental teacher was very much a class discussion, like that's what led most of the class. My econ teacher, um, was more of a lecturer. If any views or anything were brought up, it would be purely him talking for the rest of the period about, for instance, if we started talking about oil again, he would be talking about that – the only one talking about that. Um, and no one would raise their hands because, if you disagreed with him... Everything in that class was very subjective, like the tests were essay type questions and things like that. So, I'm not going to argue with the professor that is purely grading on subjective matters. But, my environmental science class was very open and talking and as far as how it affected me. Since I do kind of lean toward the liberal side, it was kind of frustrating. I knew that certain students, like that girl in that class specifically, they're being affected by things that my econ teacher is saying and I can't argue with them about it. You know, I can't bring up that everything you're saying is a lie. I can't mention that, and so it's frustrating, because I'm hearing all these things said that I know personally are not true, or at least half the story. It was just simply, that was all that was going to be said, and so it's frustrating.

D: Did you see that frustration in other students at all? Or did you talk to other students about it?

S: Well, my girlfriend actually was in that class too. She also leans towards the liberal side, and she definitely mentioned the bias in both of those classes, which was pretty obvious. I know that she would get frustrated. She would say stuff a little bit more than I would in that class, as far as bringing up other points and things like that to the econ teacher.

D: What was his reaction to her bringing up points?

S: well, anything was somewhat liberal concerned. I'm trying to think of a specific example. Literally any time she would bring up, I don't want to go to oil again... I know one thing we talked about was Ronald Reagan's... How he cut back on taxes and things like that. One thing that was never brought up in the class was... All we talked about was how wonderful that was that all these taxes were being cut. How the economy would flourish. Now, obviously to do that, air pollution standards were lowered. Things like that were lowered to make up for this tax. Stuff like that was never brought up. One time, she did say, "what did we have to give up to get these taxes?" He said that what we gave up was not important because the economy literally flourished. He's like, "what's better than having a good economy?" I know that happened almost verbatim.

D: When that kind of thing would happen, how would it make you feel?

S: Uh, I well. It made me somewhat angry. Because like I said, I know that there are students who are only hearing what the econ teacher is saying and don't watch the news, don't do anything. So, that's their only source of information. I know that that's going to eventually, if it were on a more broad nature, affect elections and things like that. I felt that it was ridiculous. I had an "A" in there. But I definitely didn't put as much work into that class as I would have if it was not a political class - if it were literally an econ class. Because when you dislike your professor that much, it's hard to do all his assignments and things like that.

D: What about the assignments? Did you ever notice in his assignments and the questions he would ask in the assignments, his political perspective coming into play?

S: In his tests, they definitely did. Like, he would use examples that we went over in class. Like, Ronald Reagan or oil or something like that. The actual homework was straight from the book. That was pretty subjective, when it was straight from the textbook. Not subjective but, it was pretty straightforward.

D: Did it change the way you approached his assignments?

S: Yes. We had to write, like I said, the tests were mostly essays and things like that. And, I definitely, if I had said anything somewhat liberal, or talked about the downside of having lower taxes. If I had said anything like that, I know I would have done badly on the test. I definitely formed my answers.... I didn't want to straight up agree with him, but I didn't want to mention things that I would have if it had been another kind of class.

D: Did you know or happen to experience someone who did put something on the test that he disagreed with politically, which affected that grade?

S: I don't think so. I know I didn't. Um, because it was obvious straight off that bat.

D: from the beginning you were....

S: yeah. Like first day of class, I'm like OK. This guy is obviously pretty hardcore conservative – so avoid that.

D: What about the other class?

S: In environment? No. Those tests and things like that were a little harder because they're not what we talked about in class. But, those tests were pretty objective. It's things like: terminology, and vocab and things like that. It was mostly that kind of test. It was either you got it or you didn't.

D: Now you said that class was more based on class discussion. What effect did you see his political opinion have on the class discussion and the dynamic of the class.

S: I was probably more willing to speak, because I knew that we somewhat saw the same thing. But, I knew on the same level that if I had disagreed with him I probably. That was a class that if you did bring up conservative issues, it wasn't. He didn't rant like the econ teacher did, but I definitely think that if I had disagreed with the professor I may not have been as talkative as I was in class. Even though both sides are shown in that class a little bit, it definitely leaned towards the professor's side, because it's hard to disagree with a professor. Even though that class was more objective, test-wise and material wise, which meant that it was probably a little easier.

D: did you take any action or do anything as a result of what you saw?

S: no. I would bring up stuff in my environment class that my econ teacher had said. But as far as do anything about it? Not really. I would say, Professor King was his name in Econ. I would say things that he would say. I would be like, "Oh well, this and this and this."

D: In conversations with other people?

S: Well, to my environment class. I could tell my environment teacher. I mean, they knew each other, that's not a huge university. You could tell that they chat a lot outside of class. As far as actually taking action or going to the dean or anything, no.

D: Um, did you talk to other students about it? Besides your girlfriend, did you get any kind of idea about what other students thought about the issue? Or if they thought anything about the issue?

S: I hesitate in saying this, but that other girl who was not my girlfriend in both classes, she wasn't very bright I don't think. And I could tell that she was kind of struggling hearing the exact opposite. I mean, in one class we're hearing about how taxes are great and the other is telling us how taxes are bad. I could tell that she was frustrated about it, and she would sometimes ask me questions about environment class. I think that actually stopped her from doing great in environment. Because she not only somewhat leaned towards the conservative side, so she was listening more to the econ teacher. I think that probably, you know, she was struggling with things that really were not that complicated, like air pollution and stuff like company regulations on things. You know, stuff that was pretty straightforward for me anyway. I know that she would have a little more difficulty understanding, because she had to be untrained and re-trained in this thing. Her and my girlfriend are the only two people I talked to in either of those classes.

D: how big were the classes?

S: they were both probably 20 students. Because they were both, well, Environment's not a gen ed., but you have to take a lab science. So, both of those were bit for upstate – 20 people:

D: besides these two experiences, have you ever had any similar experiences in other classes?

S: in high school. College level... My econ teacher this year is definitely. Econ is a subject that is more conservative by nature, but he definitely leans towards.... For instance we talked about the cigarette tax in that class, and how the tax because it's a per-pack tax. Each pack of cigarettes is more deadly than it was before the tax and more addictive. It has more nicotine and more tar in the cigarettes because the companies had to make the cigarettes a little more addictive so that people would buy more cigarettes. Obviously, talking about the downsides of a cigarette tax would be more conservative. He's nothing like the econ teacher at upstate. Especially in the examples, not so much in the actual lecturing and teaching, but definitely in the examples he leans towards the conservative side.

D: Do you think it has any kind of broad impact on the class at all?

S: I know again, on tests and stuff like that, I try to word my ways around my personal political views in a way to not hurt myself on the test. I would never talk about how cigarette tax is bad. Other than that, that's a lecture based class – not discussion. His lectures are fairly straightforward, but the examples are when he kind of sways.

D: is there anything else you want to say about the issue? How you feel about it? Anything you've ever had a conversation about with it? Anything you just broadly want to say?

S: my friend base is kind of liberal too, not purely but... It's frustrating because some students, that's all they know is what they hear from the professor. Certainly, if I were an econ major, I would come out of that conservative if I'd never looks at any outside things. Same thing with environmental science, or something like that, if I went straight through that without looking at outside sources I'd be a pure liberal. It's dangerous because most students don't do their own research on things and aren't like, "what about this, if that happened?" It's dangerous, you know. I know high school level teachers are unionized, which, as a whole, doesn't affect anything now. But it certainly made things more liberal back in the day. Teachers unionized in the 30s and in the 60s we had a big outbreak of liberalization. Which is the kids growing up being taught be those liberal teachers. Stuff like that, like I said unions now don't really mean anything, it's just something you pay for. I think it's dangerous and can actually affect. Clemson there's 17,000 students. That's a huge percentage if Clemson were to suddenly say, "oh well, all the teachers are leaning conservative." That's 17,000 conservative voters, or 17,000 liberal voters.

D: Alright, well. I appreciate your time, it's been great. Thanks a lot.

Interview Eleven

D: _____, tell me about an experience you've had with political bias in the classroom, or when you've felt a professor has portrayed their own political views as the only right ones to have or has disregarded political views that weren't their own and treated students differently because of it.

P: American politics. My professor was very conservative in his views, and did not acknowledge liberal views as possible and actually created many arguments within out class because of it. Every time someone would raise their hand and ask a question that even attempted to be liberal, he shot them down. It just wasn't a fair class. We didn't learn enough especially because it was an American politics class.

D: Tell me about, if you can, a specific current between the professor and one of the students.

P: We actually had a gay student, and homosexual marriage came up. They got into a very hard argument with each other.

D: the student and the professor.

P: The student and the professor, yeah. It got to the point where the class chose sides and it was a huge debate. The professor ended up yelling at the students on the liberal side, throwing the book at 'em.

D: throwing the book at them?

P: yeah, like the Bible.

D: literally?

P: literally like, tossed it to them and told them where to read in the Bible. It just turned very ugly.

D: hmm, um. Any other examples other than that time in class?

P: um, watching the media we pretty much... I don't remember a time not watching fox news. Very conservative based news reporting.

D: in class you watched media?

P: uh hu,

D: what types of topics did you watch?

P: watched a few about, a couple interviews with part of Bush's staff, parts of war, gay and lesbian marriage as well, a couple historical things, but they were history channel based. They weren't too conservative but didn't stretch the idea of any liberals in the...

D: you talked about what he did, do you remember anything that the professor said that you felt expressed his bias?

P: um, I mean, he commended a president a lot, in places others would feel he doesn't deserve. Specifically, on the war. Um, that's when I saw the most. He was very pro-war, always commenting on how we should handle it, and how it should be taken care of. Other than that, speaking out about his views on the marriage. The marriage thing was a big topic in our class, since we actually did have a gay person in there.

D: right. Um, how quickly did you learn about the professor's biases?

P: within the first couple of weeks. It wasn't too apparent until we dove into current subjects and current topics that you were able to understand. He talked about this history of our government. He explained everything that had happened. You know, Reagan-omics. He dove into other things that he thought might be conspiracies, he was out there.

D: what other things did he think were conspiracies?

P: definitely the Kennedy shooting, and he was big on area 51.

D: hm. Um, what did you feel this professor's biases did to the class dynamic?

P: It definitely made us kind of hostile towards them. Because we couldn't express an opposing view without being shut down and disregarded for the rest of that day or the rest of that week even. The class as a whole did not enjoy being there. I don't feel like learned that much from him. Waste of credit hour almost.

D: how do you think the students reacted?

P: there were definitely a few students in the few weeks before the drop date ended who dropped the class. I don't know if they requested a new teacher or what. I know, uh, that a few students verbally spoke out against him to his supervisor. We were, as a group of 40-45, no one enjoyed sitting there. No one enjoyed listening to him as the year went on. Other than that....

D: Um, how did this professor's biases make you feel when he expressed them in class?

P: I was a little taken aback. It was the first college-level course that I had taken. I was there to learn about American politics and all I was getting was American conservative

politics. I was raised conservative, but I want the other view so I'm not just another person like him. I don't feel like I got enough out of it.

D: Do you know of anything specific you feel was missing?

P: definitely, opposing views. We never had an opposing view presented at all. Never had an opposing view on gun rights, or marriage, or anything. Whatever the other view was, we weren't responsible for learning it, we weren't taught it. If you wanted to know what the other view was... Go find it yourself.

D: were they ever brought up in conversation in discussion with other students?

P: yeah, with other students we did discuss some of it. We were an active class together because we didn't feel like we were learning enough from him.

D: but, during class time was it ever brought up? Was there much class discussion?

P: on certain days we debated about topics...

D: how big was the class?

P: 45. We would divide up conservative and liberal. And there would basically be arguments

D: were you assigned sides?

P: no, you were allowed to choose. Sometimes it split 50-50. Other times it leaned more conservative because that's what we had been presented and what we learned. I feel that some people just didn't look at the topic and only knew what they were arguing about on one side.

D: what about the assignments? Did he express any of his biases through what he was assigning you or through the questions he would ask in assignments?

P: most of our assignments... We had three tests and one paper. The paper was on a current topic, so it was, "do you feel the war is right or not?" I don't know what other people wrote. I know mine was more of a moderate view of it. I got a C, when I felt it was a very well written paper. But, one of the comments he left was that it was not the correct view on the war. It was a personal question I felt. It was very odd.

D: did you ever feel that you were not true to yourself in your responses to any of his questions?

P: very much. I think that myself, as well as a good number of the class, were answering the questions to be on his side. Not saying what they felt, but what they new he wanted to hear. I know I did a few times just to stay out of his path.

D: right. Can you give me an example of one of those times?

P: um, gun rights came out. He feels very strongly that guns should be allowed in every person's house. That they shouldn't be as restrictive as they are. I personally feel that they should be more restrictive, that you shouldn't be allowed to have assault rifles, that you shouldn't be allowed to carry a gun in your coat. You shouldn't be allowed to buy something without a three day background check, I mean. He was to the point saying that you go there, you're an American citizen, you present your driver's license – you can buy a gun. I agreed with him on one point that day, that would work because I wanted to stay out of his way.

D: OK. UM, have you ever had any similar experiences with other professors in college? Um, last semester I had a liber..... My psychology was a libertarian - Vice presidential candidate 96. We got a little bit of her views. She was pretty good about it. Uh, my... his name was doctor _____.

D: I don't need names

P: anyways, he was a... It was a science class. I'm not sure which class it was. But, he was very liberal in his views on the green ideas. We were required to go see "an inconvenient truth" and were required to report on green peace for our class.

D: Um, did you ever get the other side in that class, or were you presented with the idea that, "this is the only correct view to have and no other view is correct?"

P: Um, in that class, he mostly stuck to his literal views. Um, he presented one other tiny view of the earth as a melting kinda idea. Um, it was maybe a four minutes clip. That was the only experience we had with it. Other than that no, he was pretty gung-ho about all the green stuff.

D: um, back on your other teacher. How did it make you feel when you, uh, answered his questions or took his tests and you had to say something that you didn't believe?

P: um, it kind of weighed on my conscience a little bit, because I knew that's honestly something that I feel and 40 something other people around me are... That guy's just like our professor, and we're taught never really to lie, and that's pretty much what I was doing. It weighed heavily on me.

D: did you ever talk to other people in that class. In either of these classes you you've mentioned did you ever talk to people about how you felt?

P: In the more conservative class yeah. A few of my friends were actually in the class. One is actually a very liberal person, and he was taken aback by the entire class. That I would agree with him, she was very taken aback, and it hurt our friendship a little bit even. We did talk about it and, you know, he still comes up in conversations now. When we get on political subjects.

D: um, Did you take any action because of these biases you perceived? Besides sometimes answering the questions differently?

P: He may have swayed me a little bit, to some of my more conservative views now. I don't know if you mean like, taking action against him?

D: any kind of action at all. You mentioned answering questions differently. Anything else, whether it was against him.

P: as a class we spoke to the administrators of the school it was at, and I'm not sure if he came back teaching but I know a good three quarters of the class including myself talked openly about what he had done to our class.

D: to administrators?

P: yes

D: so you actually spoke to administrators. What did you say?

P: I told them about how he was verbally abusive to the gay marriage idea. That it was not a well-taught class. We didn't get what we paid for, that's where our tuitions going. Basically, I told him how we felt at the time. I felt very strongly against him. I persuaded my friends not to take the class next year.

D: how did you feel after your meeting with the administrator?

P: I felt better about what I had done, like, relaying my answers straight from his mouth. Um, you know it kinda lifted a little of the weight off for lying about it. I felt like maybe I had helped someone in the future to not have to put up with him.

D: Is there anything else you want to say about either of those two experiences?

P: I wish they had been a little less strong in their views. Presented a little more of each side, 'cause those things I came to the school to learn was politics. It's part of my college experience.

D: well thanks for your time. I sure appreciate it.

Interview 12

D: _____, tell me about an experience you've had where a professor has suppressed political views or possibly portrayed his or her own political views as the only correct ones to have?

M: um, the only time I really experienced political bias was at Clemson university my sophomore year. It was English 103 and it was taught by a grad student. He seemed very liberal from the get-go. About half way through the semester he showed us a documentary on a Fox news group, which pretty much showed how conservative the fox news group is and how they can sway their opinions to ultimately sway the views and beliefs of the people watching. I think his point was to make the class aware of the news in general and how it can kind of be swayed one way or the other depending on the station's views in general, with Fox being more conservative.

D: Did he say why in English class he was presenting that video? Was there a stated purpose for it?

M: No, we had to write an opinion paper after we watched the movie. He allowed us to say whether we enjoyed it and took something out of it or whether we didn't like it. Just being in the South and all a lot of people are conservative. So, he gave us the option to write whether we liked the documentary or if we didn't.

D: Um, do you think that the class as a whole felt as you did, that there was an obvious bias with this professor?

M: yeah, I think so.

D: Do you think it did anything to the class dynamic? Like the way class discussion went or how you interacted with the professor?

M: I wouldn't say it changed anything negatively. I think it opened up.... A lot of kids opened up in class after we watched the movie. A lot of people had their opinions. In a way I think that was a good thing to get people talking and see how other people in the classroom thought. I personally liked the movie because I had no idea that fox was like that to begin with. I mean, I know that there's two sides to every story. I heard that CNN was real liberal, is that true?

D: it depends on who you talk to

M: yeah I guess. I mean, I enjoyed it. I wrote my paper about how much I liked it just because I was not aware beforehand of how everything about fox news and how it started and how they filmed it and everything.

D: um, you said that there's two sides to every story. Do you feel like you got both sides out of this class?

M: no.

D: um, what about in the assignments that this person gave you. Did you perceive any bias in the way questions were structured?

M: we had to write an opinion paper and he did say in class.... He was kind of a laid back guy; he didn't give us a rubric or anything.... He just said in class, "Give me a paper about your opinions and views on this documentary I just showed you." So, I guess he left it up to the students to decide whether they believed in the movie or whether they were against it; if they hated the movie if they liked it, if they supported it. So, he kind of left that open for the students to think on their own.

D: do you think that anybody, with yourself included, that the professor's biases affected your responses in any way?

M: at first I was just naïve to the fact that everything about Fox news group and how it started. How they get memos every day, and each memo is to like, make this point apparent to the public. Those points are usually pre-determined. They're usually like, I don't know how to describe it, but it's like a whole idea to sway the public on the....

D: I've seen the video.

M: yeah, ok. So, yeah, I had no idea about that. So, now when I watch the news I try to second guess it. I try to analyze it for myself rather than just taking it word for word.

D: Um, seeing this professor's biases or this grad student's biases how did that make you feel in the classroom? Or even after the fact?

M: Um, it really didn't affect me all that much. I'm not a hardcore politician. I don't really care about politics that much. But, it was obvious - especially when you brought up the subject of political bias in the classroom - that that's what he was doing. At the time I didn't really think much of it, but um, now that I think back on it, it was definitely pretty obvious that that's what he was trying to do.

D: do you think that was fair.

M: Um, not really. I wish he could have talked about the other side of the story more, but he didn't. Like I said, I enjoyed the teaching and everything, but now that you bring it up, he was definitely pushing to one side more than the other.

D: um, have you ever had similar experiences with any other class and its professor?

M: no, I take mostly science classes so.... No.

D: Have you ever talked about the issue outside of class with one of your friends?

M: yeah, some of my classmates actually. This one kid, I guess he was pretty conservative. I don't know if he was upset, or if he was just confused as to why he would do this. I didn't really care....

D: are we talking about this specific class?

M: yeah, the same class. He was kind of upset that the teacher would show this video. It kind of like, looks bad for conservatives. So, he was upset about that.

D: what about any other classes. Have you ever talked to friends about any experiences that they have had?

M: not when it comes to political bias?

D: so is there anything else you want to say about the issue? Just speaking from the gut?

M: that's about it. Honestly, I said, I enjoyed it. Obviously it was pretty biased. I know everything in the documentary wasn't exactly true, but I found it really interesting. I actually enjoyed the class a lot. So, he was being biased, but I didn't really mind it.

D: Right. Well, thanks for your time.

Appendix C

Qualitative Interview Protocol

Grand tour question. Tell me about an experience when a professor suppressed political views that the professor disagreed with and portrayed his or her own political views as the only correct ones.

Example questions. Tell me about something specific your professor did/said to suppress opposing political views in his or her classroom.

Tell me about something specific your professor did/said to portray his or her own political view as the only correct one.

Give me an example of something you did/said that your professor disagreed with.

What view was your professor expressing that he or she felt was the only correct view?

Prompts. How did this make you feel?

What happened as a result of what your professor did/said?

Did you take any action?

Do you have any other examples of how this professor showed a bias?

Do you have any similar experiences with other professors that you would like to share?

Appendix D

Informational E-mail for Prospective Participant Volunteers

Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study Clemson University

Exploring Threats to Academic Freedom: Political Bias in the College Classroom

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Pamela Havice and Darren Linvill. The purpose of this research is to understand the nature of the experience of political bias in the classroom and to explore its prevalence among undergraduates.

Your participation will involve an interview with a researcher regarding your experience with political bias in the classroom during which your voice will be digitally recorded.

The amount of time required for your participation will be forty-five minutes to an hour.

There are no known risks associated with this research.

Your participation in this research will help our understanding of the phenomenon of political bias and aid researchers in the development of a survey to explore the prevalence of the experience among undergraduates.

Your participation in this study will not be disclosed and we will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, please fill out and return the attached pre-interview questionnaire to: darrenl@clemson.edu. You will be notified in three to seven days regarding your participation and, if you qualify, to make arrangement to meet with a researcher for an interview.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Pamela Havice at Clemson University at (864)656-5121. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.

Appendix E

Pre-interview Questionnaire for Participant Volunteers

Name: _____

Class Rank: _____ Major: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Gender: _____

Do you have an experience when a college professor has suppressed political views which that professor disagreed with and portrayed their own political views as the only correct ones?

Yes No

Was this experience in the past year?

Yes No

Are you interested in understanding the nature of this experience?

Yes No

Are you willing to participate in a lengthy interview regarding this experience?

Yes No

If yes, would you be willing for this interview to be digitally recorded?

Yes No

If yes, would you be willing for information obtained from this interview to be published (you would not be personally identified in any publication resulting from this interview)?

Yes No

Appendix F

Political Bias in the Classroom Survey: Pilot Study Version

Please circle the answer that best applies to you:

1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Additional Questions

Political bias can be defined as a suppression of political beliefs other than one's own and/or a belief that an individual's own political beliefs are the only correct beliefs.

13. According to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate a political bias?

Yes No Not Sure

14. According to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor's political bias?

Yes No Not Sure

15. In my experience, politically liberal professors have a political bias in class:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. In my experience, politically conservative professors have a political bias in class:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. I consider myself to be politically:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Liberal	Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Moderate (neither liberal nor conservative)	Somewhat Conservative	Conservative	Very Conservative

18. To what extent would you say religion provides guidance in your day-to-day life?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Some Quite a bit A great deal Don't know

For the following two questions, please insert a number into the blank that applies to you:

19. I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed a political bias in class.

20. I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed a political bias in class.

Please answer the following demographic questions:

Major: _____

Current Age: _____

Ethnicity (circle all that apply):

White African American Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan Native Other

Gender (circle one):

Male Female

Class Rank (circle one based on the number of years you have been in college):

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Appendix G

Informational Letter for Participant Volunteers

Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study Clemson University

Exploring Threats to Academic Freedom: Political Bias in the College Classroom

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Pamela Havice and Darren Linvill. The purpose of this research is to explore the prevalence of the experience of political bias in college classrooms.

Your participation will involve filling out a short questionnaire regarding your experience with political bias in the classroom.

The amount of time required for your participation will be five to ten minutes.

There are no known risks associated with this research.

Your participation in this research will help our understanding of the prevalence of political bias in college classrooms.

You do not need to reveal your identity on this survey. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study. Data will be reported in an aggregate form.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Pamela Havice at Clemson University at (864)656-5121. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.

Appendix H

Political Bias in the Classroom Survey

Please circle the answer that best applies to you:

1. In my experience, professors present multiple political views when discussing political issues:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Professors are dismissive of students' political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I believe I should censor my own political beliefs to preserve my grade when my political beliefs are different than my professors' political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. In my experience, professors tend to limit class discussion to the professor's own political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I would feel comfortable informing my professors of my disagreement with their political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I feel free to express my political beliefs on class assignments, irrespective of the professor's political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. In my experience, professors assume political beliefs that oppose their own are incorrect:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Professors tend to belittle students with whom they disagree politically:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. On assignments, I feel obligated to incorporate my professors' political beliefs rather than my own:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. In my experience, professors are respectful of students' political beliefs, even when the professors' and students' beliefs differ:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. When a professor expresses political views that differ from my own, it is difficult for me to contribute to class:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. I feel free to express my political beliefs during class discussion, irrespective of my professors' political beliefs:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Additional Questions

Political bias can be defined as a suppression of political beliefs other than one's own and/or a belief that an individual's own political beliefs are the only correct beliefs.

13. According to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you have witnessed a professor illustrate an unfair political bias?

Yes No Not Sure

14. According to this definition, do you have an experience from a college class in which you consider yourself to be a victim of a professor's unfair political bias?

Yes No Not Sure

15. In my experience, politically liberal professors have an unfair political bias in class:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. In my experience, politically conservative professors have an unfair political bias in class:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

For the following two questions, please insert one number that applies to you into the blank:

17. I have had _____ politically liberal professors who showed an unfair political bias in class.

18. I have had _____ politically conservative professors who showed an unfair political bias in class.

19. I consider myself to be politically:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Liberal	Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Moderate (neither liberal nor conservative)	Somewhat Conservative	Conservative	Very Conservative

20. To what extent would you say religion provides guidance in your day-to-day life?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	Don't know

Please answer the following demographic questions:

Current Age (insert a number): _____

Major: _____

Ethnicity (circle all that apply):

White	African American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Other
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Gender (circle one):

Male Female

Class Rank (circle one based on the number of years you have been in college):

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

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