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## **No One's Callin' For Stalin**

*By Karl DeVries*

Academic freedom, the right to express one's thoughts and opinions inside the classroom is, as most would agree, a necessary facet of a productive education. And while no one would suggest that it be revoked or hindered in any way, it is a privilege extended to responsible men and women, particularly professors residing on the Montclair State University payroll.

In this case, Grover Furr, a seasoned, tenured English professor, has recently found himself in the spotlight of intellectual discussion due in part to his unconventional leftist classroom discussions. The issue is not whether or not he is entitled to his pro-communist political viewpoints, but rather his accountability to his students and whether or not such political discussions belong in the classroom.

He is, after all, an English professor, not history, and is assigned to teach certain classes, such as his "Great Books and Ideas" class. A book such as Karl Marx's "Communist Manifesto," while greatly important to the events of the 20th century, is not necessarily a great book, and thus, is not appropriate subject matter to be digested by students in that particular class.

Another of Furr's classes, centering on American involvement in Vietnam, demands an objective voice in regards to a sensitive subject, and Furr, a blatant, self-proclaimed communist, may not be the most appropriate choice to teach this class (just as a devout, right-wing extremist would be equally inappropriate).

As American society becomes more and more fearful of offending certain people and interest groups, the flavor and variety of American education suffers in suit. Open discussion and "radical" ideals are becoming discouraged in the classroom, and the flamboyance and inspiration of many teachers is replaced in favor of bland automatons, young professors desperate for the work and willing to blindly follow the marching orders of administrations nationwide. In this era, the counter-culture politics of a Grover Furr are rare, and in some ways that's a shame, limiting the horizons of both students and teachers.

However, in this case, the vocations and professionalism of an MSU educator outweigh political diversity. If it can be proven that Furr has strayed off-course in his class sessions, then discipline on the part of the English department is fully justified. After all, he has been hired to do a job, whether he likes it or not. Professors should be allowed to conservatively mix in their personal thoughts, but not to the point of controlling their curriculum and distracting their students from the education they pay good money for. It is the necessary system on which education must function.

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