



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 22, 2016

Teacher Tells Class: “To be White Is to be Racist, Period”

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA — James Coursey, a high school philosophy teacher at Norman North High School in Oklahoma, recently delivered a lecture that was billed as an effort to heal the racial divide. The teacher told his class, “To be white is to be racist, period.” That ought to do it.

Coursey, who is white, expanded on his theme. “Am I racist? And I say, yeah. I don’t want to be. It’s not like I choose to be racist, but do I do things because of the way I was raised?”



Some of the students in the class were understandably upset at the remarks, and one of them took out her phone and began recording the incendiary comments. The student told KFOR-TV, the local NBC affiliate, that she felt picked on because she is white. “Half of my family is Hispanic, so I just felt like, you know, him calling me racist just because I’m white ... I mean, where’s your proof in that? I felt like he was encouraging people to kind of pick on people for being white.”

Norman Public Schools Superintendent Joseph Siano attempted to smooth over the situation. “While discussing a variety of philosophical perspectives on culture, race and ethics, a teacher was attempting to convey to students in an elective philosophy course a perspective that had been shared at a university lecture he had attended.” (Norman is the location for the University of Oklahoma, but Siano did not say which university was the source of the anti-white lecture.) “We regret that the discussion was poorly handled,” Siano added, but he was not specific as to what he personally believed was wrong with the teacher’s statement.

In the recording, the teacher reportedly utilized a YouTube video about imperialism to make his point that all whites are racist. In the video, a man uses white out on a globe as an illustration of the spread of European influence around the world.

The girl’s father was incensed, asking, “Why is it okay to demonize one race to children that you are supposed to be teaching a curriculum to?” The *Norman Transcript* reported that some have responded by calling Coursey the racist, and some have even called for his termination.

One source told *The New American* that many students at the school believe the teacher’s comments were taken out of context. But another student who was quoted as saying the same thing illustrated in his very comments that the “all whites are racist” philosophy is a common theme in the school: “The information was taken out of context and we believe it is important to have serious and thoughtful discussions about *institutional racism* in order to *change history* and promote inclusivity.” (Emphasis added.)

The very phrase *institutional racism* is regularly used by progressives who promote the viewpoint that all whites are racist. The student also probably said more than he intended when he said the purpose of such discussions about “institutional racism” is to “change history.” History is what history is, but it is quite possible to change what people *believe* happened in the past. Once that is done, then one can use



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this changed perception of the past to influence the present — and the future. George Orwell said as much, when he said, “Those who control the present, control the past. Those who control the past, control the future.”

While it is not certain in what “context” the teacher said that “to be white is to be racist, period,” what is clear is that such anti-white bigotry is standard progressive ideology in today’s world, in high school and in colleges. For example, Paul Ketchum, a liberal studies professor at the University of Oklahoma, told the *Norman Transcript* that research supports Coursey’s comment. Ketchum did not argue against Coursey’s assertion, but rather contended that he had just made a “rookie error” in the way he presented it. “You go for the big term when a less loaded term would be better to make it a teachable moment.” In other words, yes, all whites are racists, but the college professor thinks the high school teacher could have said it in a different way.

Such views are typical in higher education — Coursey even said he learned it in a college lecture — but they are not limited to the halls of academia. Any place in which those on the Left can impose their ideology, they do it. Even the U.S. Army is indoctrinated with the view that white soldiers should understand their “white privilege.” In a recent training session for 400 soldiers in the 67th Signal Battalion at Fort Gordon, Georgia, soldiers were informed, “Our society attaches privilege to being white and male and heterosexual.”

Among the assertions foisted upon the soldiers forced to sit through the “training” session included, “Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they’ve done or failed to do.”

The term “white privilege” evidently was first used among the radicals of the 1960s, after an essay was included in a radical pamphlet entitled “White Blindspot.” The essay mentioned the “struggle” against what it called white skin privilege, and was widely read among members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other groups of the New Left.

In fact, Bernadine Dohrn, a leader in the violent Weather Underground (an offshoot of the SDS) and wife of terrorist Bill Ayers (who bombed New York City police headquarters in 1970), wrote an article in a 1977 issue of *Lesbian Tide*, in which she used the term. Dohrn lamented that even she had allowed “white privilege” to betray “revolutionary principles.” Ayers made the news recently with his protests designed to shut down a rally of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

The expression “white privilege” became accepted in mainstream liberal circles in 1987, when Peggy McIntosh wrote an essay entitled, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” She described white privilege as “an invisible weightless knapsack of assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks.” Today the concept of “white privilege” is accepted dogma in liberal academic circles.

And the average leftist has happily adopted the concept. In an online rant found in *Onyx*, contributor Stephanie Monk, who is white, was especially blunt in arguing that “all” whites are racists. “We (whites) are all ingrained with racism and anti-blackness from the time we are babies.”

“During the era of Jim Crow, we whites were running around, calling black people “colored” and lynching black people, pouring acid in swimming pools of black people and burning down black communities. It was a time of very outward, blatant racism that we displayed and yes, I say — we. This is *our* history of racial terror in the United States. Us. Ours. Our grandparents, grand aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. all had a hand in that.”



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This assignment of multigenerational responsibility for past evils is very common today. Folks who rarely apologize for any faults of their own are often quick to offer apologies for what happened decades before they were even born.

Monk continued her indictment of whites, arguing, “Every time we say ‘I don’t see race,’ we are contributing to white supremacy, as well as willful blindness to racism.”

“All white people raised in America are racist,” Monk insists.

And what about those who do not agree with her assertions? “White people need to shut up, look at ourselves with utter honesty and brutal examination so that we can check ourselves, check each other and get to work uplifting our black sisters and brothers on their journey and fight for liberation.”

Of course, “liberation” is a term often used by Marxist-Leninists to describe what happens when a society has a communist dictatorship imposed upon it. Monk may or may not understand the meaning of that term, but it is very clear that the lecture by the Norman, Oklahoma school teacher is not unique.

This is what is taught in the vast majority of the institutions of higher education, across the United States: White people are racist, period. Coursey himself said he was taught this doctrine at the university, and he was simply passing it along to his high school scholars. One would be quite naïve to believe that Coursey’s lecture that all white people are racists — period — is unique or even uncommon in America’s public schools.

What Mr. Coursey’s purpose in telling his students at Norman North High School that all white people are racists — period — is uncertain. But what is clear is that this viewpoint is widely shared and widely disseminated among American progressives. It is the overarching message in the annual attacks upon Christopher Columbus, and the disparaging remarks often made about the Founding Fathers.

But what is the purpose of this persistent anti-white ideology, taught in the universities and the high schools? Leftist ideology, going back even beyond the time of Karl Marx, has an ulterior motive. It is to create the idea that there exists an oppressed class that is under the heel of a ruling class, and the solution is to hand increasing power over to the government to cure this situation.

Marx called for a dictatorship of the proletariat. Modern progressives ordinarily mask their intentions in sweeter language, but the end result is always the same: more government, more control of the individual. The goal is to make white persons feel guilty, and to beguile them into believing that the only way they can absolve their “white guilt” is to hand over more control of our lives to the government.

Too bad Mr. Coursey’s class can’t hear this lecture.

Steve Byas, who lives in Norman, Oklahoma, teaches history at nearby Randall University in Moore.



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