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Academic freedom in the teaching, learning and research of Politics and IR

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Cancel culture has had a chilling effect on Universities the world over. Students and Universities alike suffer from a loss of viewpoint diversity. Students are no longer taught the greatest range of possible viewpoints and often (e.g., in essay feedback) castigated for controversial views by politics teaching staff. Universities, in turn, are at risk of losing credibility. Instead of being in John Tomasi's words 'gardens of knowledge', they are rendered bastions of groupthink.

Academics too suffer the effects of academic unfreedom. Many self-censor afraid to lose a job that pays for a mortgage and dependants. International relations scholars are concerned with the state of academic freedom nationally and internationally, and the interaction between them. International relations scholars or students may conduct archival or field work in other countries or find their research or teaching on other countries may also become subject to external interference.

In this roundtable we explore how these issues have affected teaching, learning and research in International Relations and Politics. A major aim of this roundtable is to bring greater prominence to how to tackle academic unfreedom to the IR community. This is considered necessary because IR scholars are underrepresented in a range of action groups, including the LSE's academic freedom network and the Committee on Academic Freedom. The roundtable brings together a range of individuals active on academic freedom as well as students of IR/Security Studies. How has cancel culture affected you in your teaching, learning and research? What, if any, coping mechanisms/strategies have you developed? How, if at all, should your University position itself on conflicts (Gaza, Ukraine etc)? These are just some of the questions the roundtable will address.

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