

DISRUPTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

Freedom of expression is essential to intellectual life, and a classroom is the crucible for the development of intellectual life on a university campus. Yale has long affirmed (in the words of the Woodward Report) “that the primary function of a university is to discover and disseminate knowledge by means of research and teaching” and has therefore developed policies on freedom of expression that carefully balance the listener’s right to conscientious protest with the right of instructors and officially invited speakers to be heard. (For more information, see “Peaceful Dissent, Protests, and Demonstrations” in the Undergraduate Regulations.)

While peaceful dissent and protest are permitted within reasonable limits, disruptions that infringe on the instructor’s ability to teach are not permissible and may subject the students who organize or participate in such disruptions to disciplinary action by the Yale College Executive Committee. If a class is disrupted in a manner that impedes teaching, the instructor may ask those who are protesting to leave or may cancel the remainder of class to be rescheduled at a future date. If there are safety concerns, the instructor should immediately contact the Yale Police Department at 203-432-4400. Any instructor who is concerned about a disruption that has taken place in their classroom should bring the matter to the attention of the Executive Committee at yc.executivecommittee@yale.edu, along with the names of the alleged participants and other such evidence as may be available.

In addition to classroom protests or demonstrations, disruptions in class may be caused by group hazing activities. These should also be reported to the Yale College Executive Committee. If a disruption raises mental health or other student wellness concerns, please contact the student’s residential college dean, as described in the section “Concerns About a Student.”