



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 31, 2019

NYU Nixes Journalism Class About Dealing With the “Far Right” Over Lack of Interest

New York University has cancelled a class entitled “Reporting on the Far Right” after only two students signed up for the elective course. The course was scheduled to be taught by former *New Yorker* fact-checker Talia Lavin.

Lavin [resigned](#) from the magazine last year after a Twitter dust-up surrounding her mistakenly identifying the tattoo of a wheelchair-bound ICE agent as a Nazi cross. Lavin later deleted the tweet and [sort of apologized](#) for her mistake. “Some vets said this ICE agent’s tattoo looked more like a Maltese Cross than an Iron Cross (common among white supremacists), so I deleted my tweet so as not to spread misinformation.”

I’m not quite sure how her statement is an apology as much as an admission that she didn’t know what she was talking about. But I suppose that such an admission is as much as we can ever hope for from a leftist.

“I just feel like I made a small mistake and it’s ruined my life,” Lavin said at the time.

But it wasn’t a “small mistake.” Lavin called out the ICE agent and unleashed a social-media storm of hate on the agent and on ICE in general. ICE responded by [publicly scolding](#) Lavin by issuing a tweet of its own, lauding the agent in question and explaining that the tattoo in question was the symbol of his platoon in Afghanistan.

After being put in her place by ICE, Lavin then compounded her mistake by doing what leftists do. She attempted to turn the story around and claim victimhood, saying, “It seems ironic that, for the crime of being too hasty to associate someone with white supremacy, I’ve had self-identified neo-Nazis publicly fantasizing about turning me into soap.”

Oh, the poor woman — such a victim. After all, she checks off so many of the intersectional boxes. Just ask her: “I think conservative media sunk their teeth into the story because it was everything they hate,” Lavin said. “A lot of the articles about me are like ‘smug *New Yorker* fact-checker,’ a lot of them mention my Harvard education, certainly a lot of the comments are about me being fat. The Daily Stormer was all about me being Jewish. I’m a pretty richly compound-identified person, and all of them are fodder for this war from the right against the left.”

Lavin, also a former Media Matters staffer, wasn’t unemployed for long, however. Good leftists that they are, New York University hired Lavin to teach a course about reporting on the “far right.” Given her alleged expertise on the subject, surely it would be among the most requested elective courses at the university. NYU billed Lavin as an “authority on far-right extremism and social justice.”





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But only two students signed up. Perhaps NYU didn't properly promote the course. Maybe it was lost in the minutiae of the course catalogue. Could it be that NYU didn't properly explain that this was a course that would prepare young journalism students for dealing with the "far right" demons?

Or maybe even the most liberal of students don't want to take a course from an observed liar.

"Cancelling the class had nothing to do with Talia's writing, tweets or anything else. We cancelled it because too few students enrolled," according to Adam Penenburg, the director of the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at NYU.

It also appears that NYU has removed Lavin's biography from its staff directory. According to Penenburg, it's unlikely that NYU will offer her the opportunity to teach another class. "It would make no sense to try it again, given how few students expressed interest," Penenburg said. "We have no plans to offer Talia another course, simply because her main focus (and the focus of her upcoming book) is the far right."

In the current media culture, it is rare to see such a wonderful example of karmic retribution as this. May Lavin's upcoming book do as well as her teaching career at NYU.

Images of NYU: [Screenshots of NYU's advertisements](#)



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