



## University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chapter

### **Statement on Academic Freedom, Free Speech, and the Course, “Conflict over Israel/Palestine”**

The UNC-Chapel Hill chapter of the American Association of University Professors supports the academic freedom of Kylie Broderick and of all instructors at the University of North Carolina. We condemn the recent efforts of Israeli officials and North Carolina politicians to interfere with the teaching practices of UNC-Chapel Hill instructors. We call on administrators at UNC-Chapel Hill and the UNC System to vigorously defend all UNC instructors from such interference.

The backstory to the current controversy is straightforward. The UNC-CH History Department appointed Ms. Broderick, an advanced PhD student and veteran instructor, to teach a long-established course on the “Conflict over Israel/Palestine” in the fall 2021 semester. The History department vetted Ms. Broderick, who was appointed specifically to teach this course. Subsequently, local agitators condemned Ms. Broderick’s social media posts, labeled them anti-Semitic, ignited a defamation and harassment campaign against her, and called for the course’s cancellation. In August, as [has recently been disclosed](#), highly placed government officials from Israel and politicians in North Carolina requested meetings with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to whom they repeated their fierce opposition to the course and the instructor. We commend Ms. Broderick’s courage in the face of these attacks, and we applaud her continued commitment to her students (who, it should be noted, sing her praises in course evaluations).

The principle of academic freedom—that faculty, by virtue of their expertise, should control the content of their classes—renders moot any political objections to a course’s content, including those from elected state or federal officials and foreign governments. In addition, instructors have the right, granted in the First Amendment, to express themselves on social media and in other public venues. We acknowledge the respect for academic freedom demonstrated by the appointment of Ms. Broderick to teach the course “Conflict over Israel/Palestine.” In addition, we call on administrators at UNC-Chapel Hill and of the UNC system to publicly affirm the right of faculty to free speech and to publicly affirm academic freedom as a core value of our shared educational mission.