

Wilfrid Laurier University TA claims censure over video clip on gender pronouns



Wilfrid Laurier University is seen on Sept. 12, 2014.

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An Ontario university says it's launching a third-party investigation after a teaching assistant aired a clip of a debate on gender-neutral pronouns to two tutorials.

Lindsay Shepherd says she was conducting a lesson on grammar and was trying to show her first-year communications students at Wilfrid Laurier University that a language containing gender-specific pronouns, such as English, can wind up impacting facets of the society in which the language is spoken.

To prove her point, Shepherd says she aired a clip of controversial University of Toronto professor Jordan Peterson debating a fellow faculty member on a current affairs television show.

Peterson has famously refused to use gender pronouns other than "he" or "she" and was defending his position against a professor who argued it was necessary to use the pronouns that a person prefers to be called.

Shepherd says officials at Laurier censured her for using the clip and says they told her trying to present Peterson's views without condemning them was tantamount to being neutral on the views of Adolf Hitler.

Laurier would not confirm what discussions have taken place with Shepherd, but say they have asked an unidentified "neutral third-party professional" to "gather the facts" of the case.