
Overview:

In “Protesting in America,” Thomas Estrella from Lourdes University, explores the implications of personal political dissent, freedom of expression, and First Amendment issues on career and profession as well as corporate entities.

Summary:

In this excerpt, “Investigating Dissent, Freedom of Expression, and Protest in Professions,” Thomas Estrella, Associate Professor of Psychology at Lourdes University, uses examples from his own career as well as the well-known example of the NFL’s Colin Kaepernick to discuss issues surrounding the First Amendment such as freedom of expression, appropriateness of expression, political dissent, and freedom of speech as they may impact one’s career or place of employment. Estrella seeks to get at the heart of where the most appropriate “line” is with regard to self-expression in the Trump Era.

ODE 9-12 STANDARD: *Social Studies; Course, American Government; Topic 1, Civic Participation and Skills; Topic 2, Basic Principles of the U.S. Constitution*

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the limits to protesting when you are a part of a group, team, or community greater than yourself?
2. Do personal beliefs affect who you are willing to work or play for?
3. Can the First Amendment be detrimental to a company? In what ways?

Activity:

Practice with the First Amendment.

Are the following statements protected by the First Amendment?

1. Burning the American flag as a symbol of freedom of speech? (Yes, protected.)
2. A newspaper receiving top secret documents that the government has been lying about regarding its ongoing involvement in war? (Rights to publish are protected.)
3. Someone wants to fight the person who called their mother a derogatory name? (Speech protected; violent retaliation is not protected.)
4. A group of white supremacists have a permit for an event to march and carry signs that harshly criticize other races? (Speech and assembly are protected, as long as they are peaceful.)

Resources:

First Amendment: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/>

