

University of Sydney Investigates Sociology Professor's Lecture Materials Referencing Palestinian Genocide

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The University of Sydney is currently undertaking an investigation on its sociology **Professor Sujatha Fernandes** for breach of code of conduct. After her "Week 9 - Power 1" lecture in April, some students in her class leaked her slides to *The Australian*.

The Australian then published an article on May 30, revealing to the public that multiple Jewish groups have called on the University to open an investigation into the professor.

The following slide was singled out as the source of complaints:

Role of the media - ISA

Western media has played the role of an Ideological State apparatus by suppressing coverage of the atrocities, peddling fake news (promoted hoaxes that Hamas beheaded babies and carried out mass rape, in order to shore up support for Israel), and distorting events.



Honi understands that in Fernandes' full lecture presentation, she referenced the Palestine genocide as a case study on power. She explored the use of passive language by Western media to absolve Israel of guilt, and the media's role in what French philosopher Louis Althusser referred to as the "ideological state apparatus."

Why do subordinate classes go along with the status quo, why don't they revolt against class divisions?

State Power / Domination

	<u>Coercion</u> (Violence)	<u>Consent</u> (Ideology)
Gramsci	state coercive power (state)	spontaneous consent (civil society)
Althusser	Repressive State Apparatus (RSAs) - army, police, prisons	Ideological State Apparatus (ISAs) - religion, schools, media

The Australian article also includes a two-minute clip from the lecture recording where Fernandes discusses the *New York Times* article published on December 28, 2023, entitled "Screams Without Words: How Hamas Weaponised Sexual Violence on Oct. 7."

Fernandes can be heard on the recording discussing the article.

“The witnesses, they supposedly had said that... it never happened to them. The sources were retracted, all kinds of things to prove that this story...it was not a real story, that a lot of what was in this article, was not true. And yet they haven’t retracted the article,” she says.

The Australian said that it alerted the University after obtaining access to Fernandes’ lecture materials and recording. Alex Ryvchin, co-chief executive of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), also wrote to the University demanding an investigation.

When contacted for confirmation, a University spokesperson told *Honi Soit* that “a preliminary investigation” has begun and the University is “looking into this matter as a priority.”

The spokesperson maintained the University’s commitment to “academic freedom and freedom of speech” and as a “forum for debate and discussion.”

“Academic staff giving lectures must exercise their intellectual freedom according to the highest ethical, professional, and legal standards. We are fortunate to have some of the world’s best academics and we expect all of them to apply a best teaching practice approach incorporating evidence and analysis”, the spokesperson said.

They also said that “when breaches against University policy have occurred”, the University has “acted and taken disciplinary action.”

It was not specified if Fernandes’ lecture materials or remarks had breached the academic code of conduct.

President of the USyd National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) branch Nick Riemer told *Honi*,

“NTEU members will not tolerate intimidation or censorship of Palestine solidarity, whether for students or staff. Zionists clearly think that the university’s internal processes are there to be weaponised for their own political purposes. Management must show that this is not the case.”

Professor Fernandes was approached for comment.

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