

3B—Academic Freedom, Neutrality, and “Civil” Discourse: The Case of Stephen Salaita at the University of Illinois

Steven Salaita and the Critical Importance of Context: Contingency and the ALA Code of Ethics, Sveta Stoytcheva (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign).

Taking up the University of Illinois’ recent decision to rescind the appointment of Dr. Steven Salaita to a tenured professorship in the American Indian Studies Program as a case study, I argue for an ethics of contingency in librarianship. A critical recognition of context, particularly of embeddedness within structures of power, can help practitioners navigate complex ethical dilemmas in order to come to equitable judgments. I argue that the ALA Code of Ethics, as well as our professional training, should be amended to better reflect this complexity.