

# Classroom Disruption Protocols

A Resource for Faculty

Thursday, August 20, 2020

Jennifer Hamer, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of African American Studies  
Senior Faculty Mentor, Office of Educational Equity



**PennState**  
Educational Equity



# Inclusive Classrooms

- Where the contributions and perspectives of students, **regardless of social differences, are respected and valued.**
- Where faculty are prepared and able to respond to incidents that negatively affect the learning environment, such as inappropriate classroom behaviors or **minor and major disruptions** that distract from the course.



**PennState**  
Educational Equity

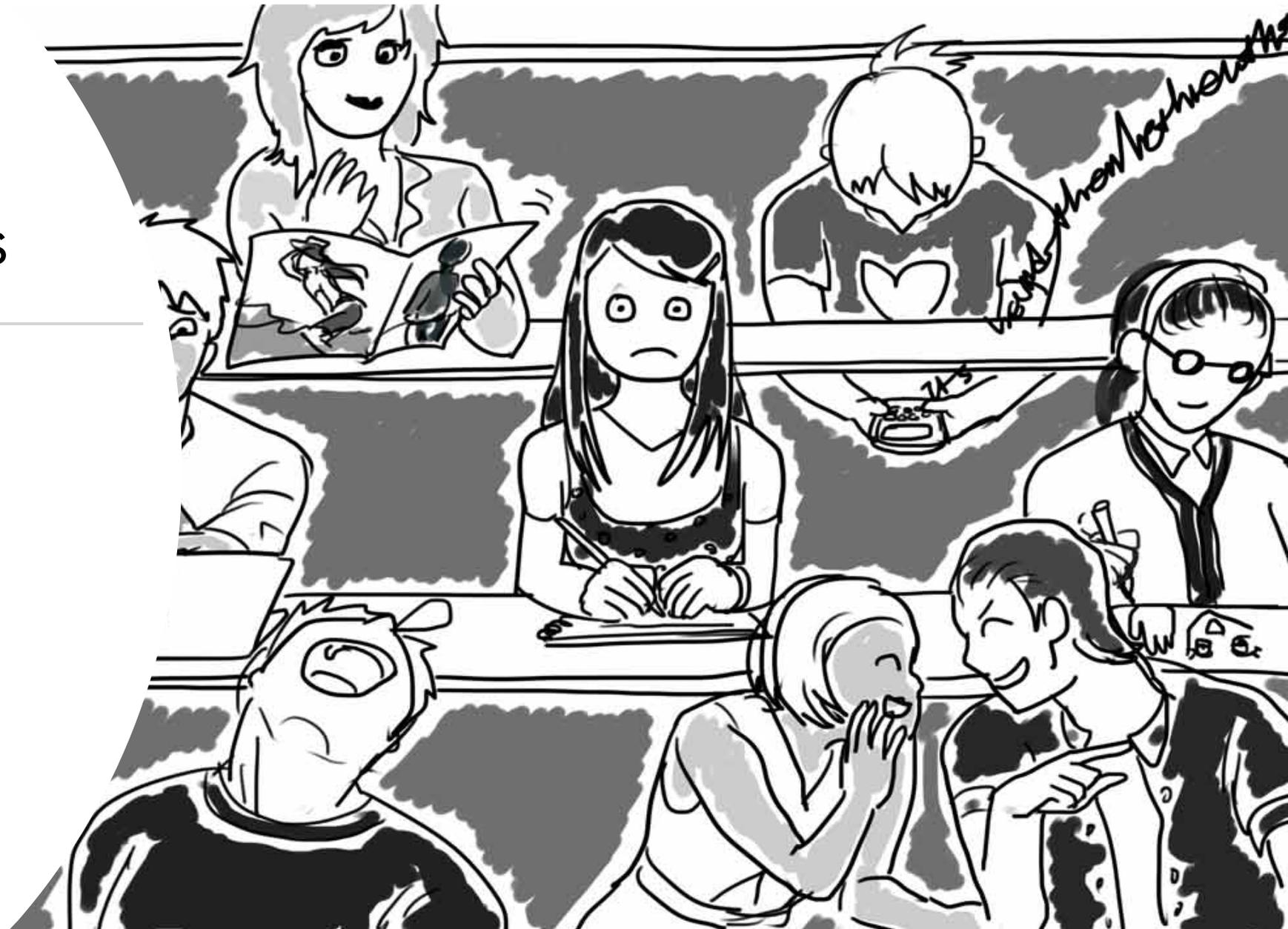
# Minor Disruptions

## Some examples:

- Sleeping in class
- Chronic lateness
- Mobile phone use
- Interruption of instructor/peers

## A few appropriate faculty responses:

- Speak with student privately
- Remind student of expectations
- Zoom lock classroom/control chat





# Major Disruptions

---

## Some examples:

- Progressive/chronic disruptions
- Erratic/irrational behavior
- Physical threat, verbal assault

## A few appropriate faculty responses:

- Speak directly to student
- Ask student to leave
- Dismiss class
- Zoom—mute/stop video/remove
- Report

## Impact on students:

silence  
fear/intimidation  
heightened emotion  
emotional trauma  
physical harm  
unwelcome  
feel unsafe



# Social Identities and Subject Matter

- Faculty of all ranks and across social differences are **increasingly** challenged by classroom disruptions
- **Visible social identities**, such as race, ethnicity, gender and gender expression, and physical disabilities affect the classroom experience
- Those who teach “**hot button**” subject matters such as race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, religion and politics lend themselves to emotional disagreement among classroom participants



In sum...

# Classroom Disruption Protocols

are guidelines that:

- Acknowledge that the classroom experience **differs by social identities**
- Offer quick assessment of misconduct by categorizing **"minor" vs. "major"**
- Help instructors to **strategize** how to manage disruptive and threatening behavior and **recognize the varying comfort levels in doing so**
- Provide **appropriate faculty responses** to minor and major disruptions
- **Point instructors to appropriate others** should they need advice, information, and/or support before, during, or following an incident
- Facilitate an instructor's ability to **manage situations and feel supported in the process**



**For guidance on the management of inappropriate classroom behavior** and steps to follow when you need assistance, please see: *Classroom Disruption Protocols: Guidelines for Faculty and Academic Units* at <http://equity.psu.edu/sfm/classroom-disruption-protocols>.

**For guidance on Zoom tools:** Visit Teaching and Learning with Technology, <https://tlt.psu.edu/>

**For direct classroom support:** Consider Tech Tutors and Tech Teaching Assistants, <https://techtutors.psu.edu/>

**For guidance on the navigation of workplace concerns**, which can sometimes include the classroom, **contact Senior Faculty Mentors** Keith Gilyard, Departments of English and African American Studies and Jennifer Hamer, Department of African American Studies at [seniorfacultymentr@psu.edu](mailto:seniorfacultymentr@psu.edu).

To continue the **conversation**, contact me, Jennifer Hamer, at [jenniferhamer@psu.edu](mailto:jenniferhamer@psu.edu).

