

5-4-2023

The Threat to Academic & Intellectual Freedom

Christopher M. Jimenez

Florida International University, jimenezc@fiu.edu

Melissa del Castillo

Florida International University, medelcas@fiu.edu

Stephen Thomson Moore

Florida International University, stepmoor@fiu.edu

Lowell Bryan Cooper

Florida International University, lbcooper@fiu.edu

Jacqueline Radebaugh

Florida International University, jradebau@fiu.edu

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/glworks>



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Collection Development and Management Commons](#), [Education Policy Commons](#), [European History Commons](#), [History of Religion Commons](#), [Intellectual History Commons](#), [Medieval History Commons](#), [Policy History, Theory, and Methods Commons](#), [Political History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jimenez, Christopher M.; del Castillo, Melissa; Moore, Stephen Thomson; Cooper, Lowell Bryan; Radebaugh, Jacqueline; and Pearson, George, "The Threat to Academic & Intellectual Freedom" (2023). *Works of the FIU Libraries*. 127.

<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/glworks/127>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the FIU Libraries at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Works of the FIU Libraries by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.

Authors

Christopher M. Jimenez, Melissa del Castillo, Stephen Thomson Moore, Lowell Bryan Cooper, Jacqueline Radebaugh, and George Pearson



The Threat to Academic & Intellectual Freedom

A First Thursday Presentation

Today's Presenters:

The Academic & Intellectual Freedom Ad Hoc Committee



Bryan Cooper
Library Administration

George Pearson
Info & Research Services

Melissa Del Castillo,
Info & Research Services

Jacqueline Radebaugh
Collection Development & Resource Access

Tom Moore
Sound & Image Resources

Christopher M. Jimenez
Info & Research Services

library.fiu.edu/academic-freedom

Agenda

- **Freedom, Rights, & Democracy**
- **Early 20th Century Roots of Academic & Intellectual Freedom**
- **Definition of Academic & Intellectual Freedom Today**
- **Recent Challenges to Academic & Intellectual Freedom in Florida**
- **Real World Scenarios**
- **Open Discussion**

A decorative graphic at the top of the slide, consisting of a white, torn paper-like border that curves across the top edge of the page.

Freedoms, Rights, & Democracy

Medieval & Early Modern Freedoms of Religion & Speech

The Magna Carta

1215 CE

- Includes no clauses about either freedom of speech or freedom of religion
- Does include two clauses specifically disempowering Jews

Jews expelled from Bavaria in 1276
Jews expelled from Naples in 1288
Jews expelled from England in 1290

Early Modern Era

1450-1750 CE

- **Spain**—The Inquisition & Expulsion or Conversion of all Jews & Muslims from Spain, 1492
Expulsion of Jews & Persecution of Jewish Converts + Final expulsion of Moriscos, 1609
- **Portugal**—Forced conversion in Portugal, 1497
- **Bohemia**—Hussite wars, 1419–1619
- **France**—Huguenots awarded rights, 1598; rights revoked, 1685
- **Central Europe**—Anabaptists: Mennonites & the Amish
- **England**—The English Civil War & the rise of the Quakers in 1642

**Early
Modern Era
Continued
1450-1750 CE**

- **England**—Ban on Jews revoked, 1656 (356-year ban)
- **British Colonies**— Catholics generally not accepted
- Groups that emigrate during this period include
 - Jews (from Brazil)
 - Hussites (Germany – Pennsylvania)
 - Huguenots (New England)
 - Mennonites & Amish (Pennsylvania)
 - Quakers, Catholics (Maryland)
- None of these groups had Freedom of Speech or religion until they emigrate to the Colonies

American Revolution & Constitution

1775-1791 CE

- **The Bill of Rights, 1791**
- **First Amendment Rights**
 1. Freedom of Religion
 2. Freedom of Speech
 3. Freedom of Assembly



The Roots of Academic & Intellectual Freedom

The United States in the early 20th century

Progressive Era

into the 1920s CE

- Rise of Environmentalism – Preservation & Conservation
- Birth Control Clinics Open / Women's Right to Vote
- Protection of Working Classes & Children
- Middle-class support for expanding government regulation - limit power of business/industry

Academic Freedom Articulated

- Edward A. Ross's position is threatened at Stanford University, 1896
 - His politicization is issue – not because of his racism
 - Admin believed professor should not express public political opinions.
 - Fear reputational harm to Stanford
 - 10% of the faculty also resign in support
- Also resigning was Arthur Lovejoy; joined John Dewey to found American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
- First Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure, 1915
 - Safeguarded academic inquiry through tenure.
 - Equated faculty as appointees, like expertise of judges.
- Reinforced by 1940 Statement of Principles – AAUP and AAC Join forces.

Progressive Era Challenges

- Ethnic antagonism - Opposition to Immigration from Southern/Eastern Europe; Japan; China
- Prohibition, 1920-1933
- KKK membership hits highpoint of 5 million, 1920
- Morality police – obscenity laws on the rise
- Rise of mass-produced books
 - Librarians either forced or voluntarily take on censorship roles
- Fiction and social reality books; ethnic books censored.

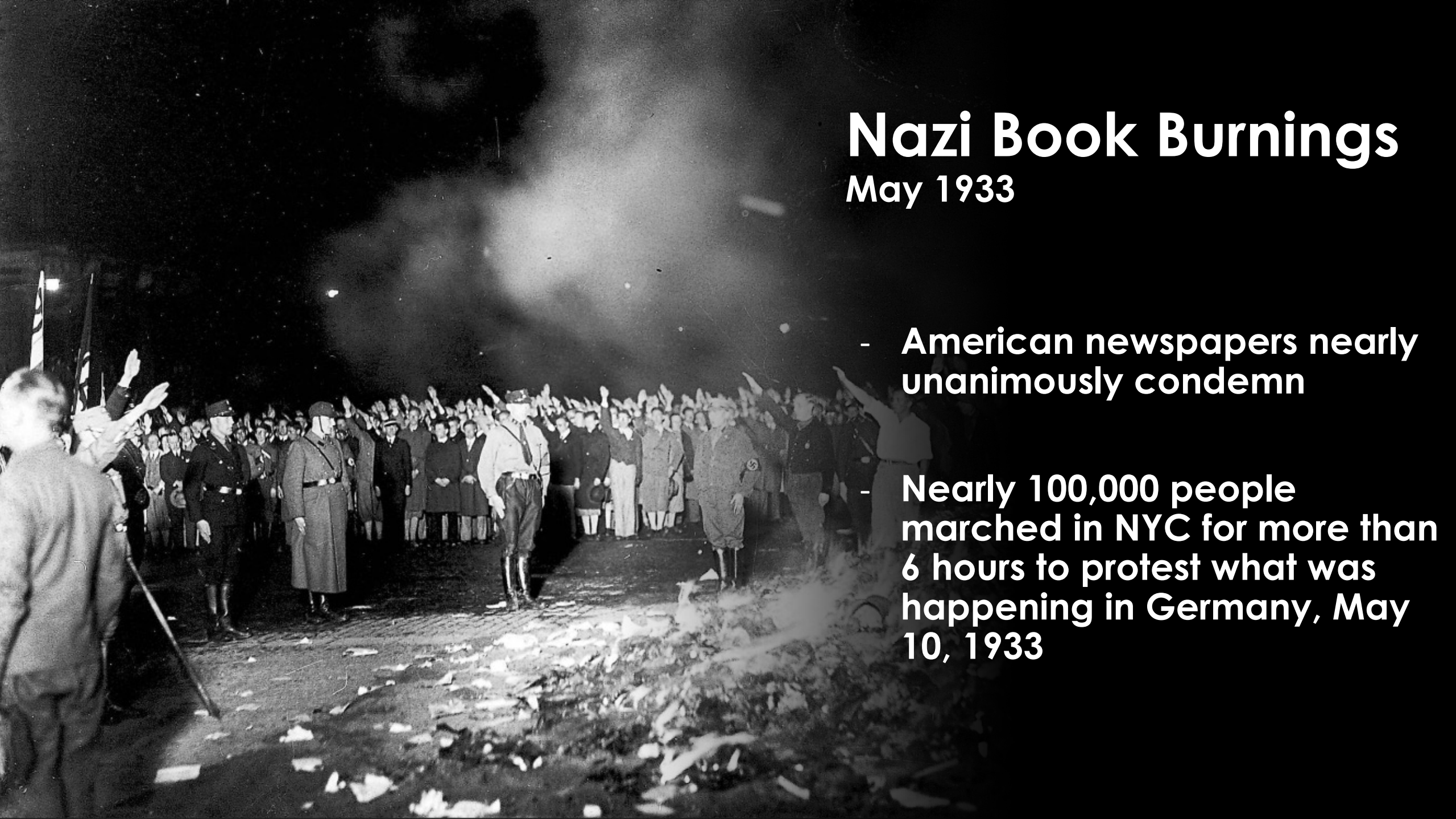
The Great Depression

1929-1945 CE

- Economic stress in America; Germany & worldwide
- Social alienation with disconcerting, rapid change (industrialization / urbanization)
- Spread of right-wing extremism; Totalitarianism & Fascism in Europe
- Rise of anti-intellectualism; antisemitism; anti-immigration; anti-pacifism, etc.
- Hitler's rise to power – from within German democracy, 1933

Nazi Book Burnings

May 1933



- American newspapers nearly unanimously condemn
- Nearly 100,000 people marched in NYC for more than 6 hours to protest what was happening in Germany, May 10, 1933



Responses took many forms

Intellectual influence in the US

- Plays
- Libraries for the burnt materials
- Many authors respond with statements, letters, etc.

John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath 1939

- Published 6 years later after Nazi Book Burnings
 - National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
- Book burnings in the US, August 1939
 - Steinbeck's life threatened
- The American Library Association (ALA) adopts Forrest Spaulding's Des Moines's Library statement
 - Becomes the Library Bill of Rights, 1939
- World War II starts 3 months later

Library Bill of Rights

- Reflected strong response to spread of totalitarianism
- The LBR was introduced at ALA in 1939 with this preamble:

“Today, indications in many parts of the world point to growing intolerance, suppression of free speech, and censorship affecting the rights of minorities and individuals...”

Postwar Period

1947-1991 CE

- **House Un-American Activities Committee, 1938 (response to both fascism and communism)**
 - Becomes a standing committee with Fascist defeat, 1945
- **McCarthyism – weaponization of government power against US citizens, 1950**
 - Targets government employees, entertainment industry; left-wing politicians; academics; labor union leaders – stoking fear; uses inconclusive and questionable evidence.
- **Coalition of Professors, directors, librarians, publishers and business owners respond, 1953**
- **The American Library Association publishes the Freedom to Read Statement, 1954**
 - Opening Sentence... "The Freedom to Read is essential to our democracy."

Definitions of Academic & Intellectual Freedom

What we mean when we talk about academic & intellectual freedom



What is the difference between Intellectual Freedom & Academic Freedom?

- If intellectual freedom is defined as encompassing the essential principles of freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression
- Then academic freedom can be defined as an application of intellectual freedom in the university setting

- Intellectual Freedom, Academic Freedom, and the Academic Librarian by Jesse D. Mann

Protecting Free Speech

- Freedom of Speech is protected by the constitution and is a right enjoyed by all Americans
- There are established Free Speech court cases that set precedents "to provide certainty and consistency in the administration of justice"





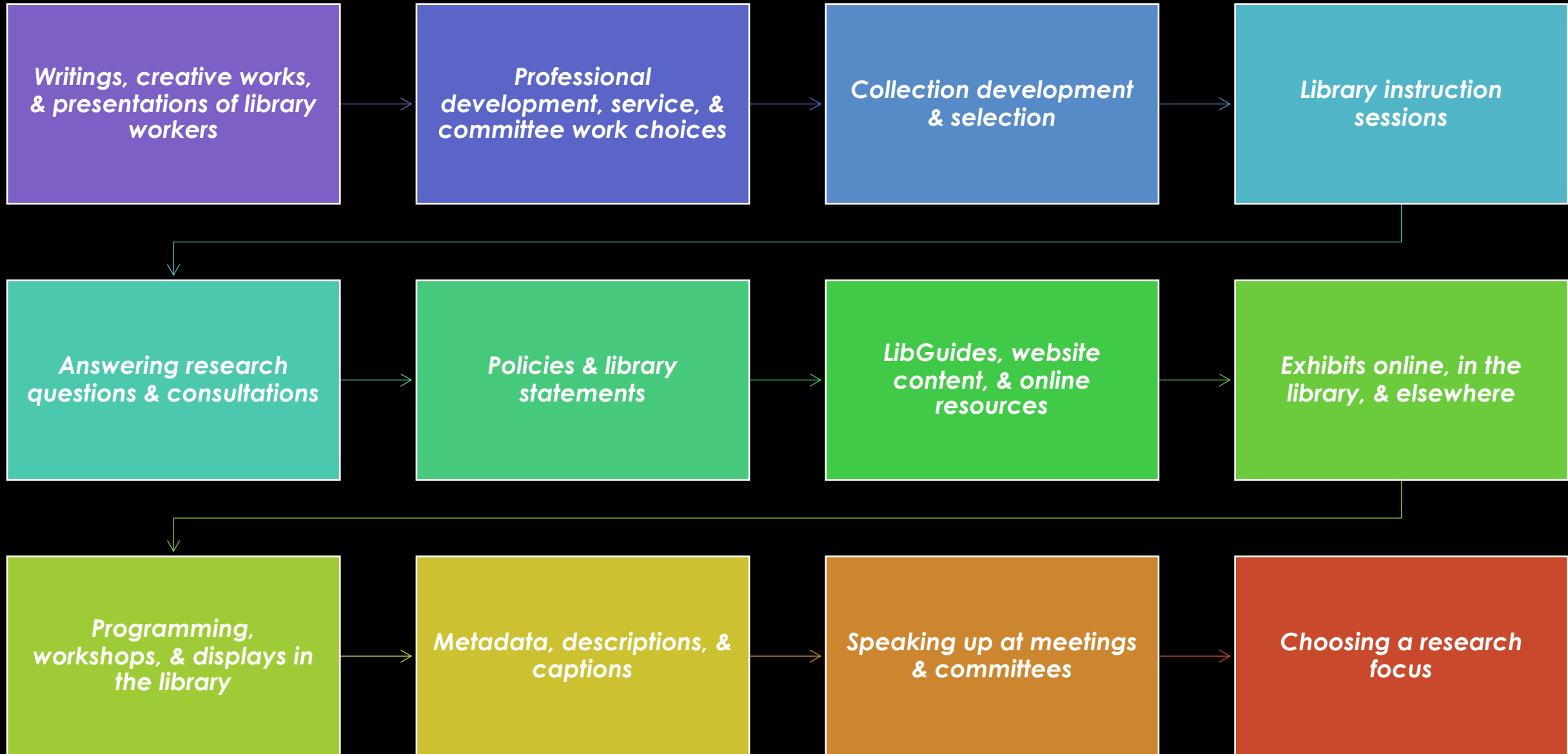
Protecting Academic Freedom: How is it different?

- The source of this right can "depend on constitutional law, state law, institutional custom and policy, and whether the institution is public or private"
- With so many factors, educators must piece together a defense strategy that can vary state to state, institution to institution

- Organization of American Historians Committee on Academic Freedom

Academic Freedom in the Library

Why is this important to you?



Challenges to Academic & Intellectual Freedom in Florida

Why are we so concerned right now?



Bills Introduced to the Florida Legislature

- HB 1557: "Don't Say Gay Bill" (Parental Rights in Education Act)
Signed into law
- HB 7/SB 148: "Stop Woke Act"
Signed into law
- HB 1467: Parental rights to select books and instructional materials in schools
Signed into law
- HB 999/SB 266: "Public Postsecondary Educational Institutions"
Pending

Real World Scenarios

What does all this mean for our jobs today & in the future?

Challenge

The library doesn't have enough books by conservatives.

You have Obama's autobiography, but not Trump's Art of the Deal.

Rachel Maddow but not Sean Hannity.

Nothing by Wayne LaPierre.

Challenge

You have eight copies of *Mein Kampf*.

Why so many copies of such a viciously antisemitic book?

Challenge

How much money do you spend on DEI and CRT books?

Isn't it against Florida law to use state money for woke programs and materials?

Challenge

You have I Am Curious a Blue Film.

This movie has a graphic, pornographic sex scene.

Are minors allowed to check out or view this porn?

Challenge

You have a book that features photos of naked and injured children, *Immediate Family*, by Sally Mann.

It's very disturbing.

Even some critics believe the book is inappropriate.

Do you think this belongs on the shelf?

Perhaps it could be kept in the back and made available if requested.

Challenge

You have a propaganda poster of Che Guevara on display which is offensive to Cuban Exiles here in Florida.

How can you glorify a villain to an entire community in your art gallery?

Challenge

How can the library display a photograph of youth with rifles at target practice?
(Gallery exhibit containing 1950s social, cultural and police photography from the City of North Miami.)

I find this image disturbing and threatening.

Can these images be removed from the exhibit?



Open Discussion

Questions, Comments, Ideas,
Thoughts, Topics