

HATE SPEECH vs. FREE SPEECH

What is hate speech? Hate speech is speech that offends or insults groups based on race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or other traits. They are words that are hurtful, emotionally harmful, and psychologically stunning.

Is hate speech legal? The short answer is “Yes.” Hate speech is protected by the First Amendment.

When is hate speech illegal? Generally, hate speech is not illegal; however, threats of violence, incitement of violence, and harassment are not protected speech and are subject to criminal action. Students responsible for these behaviors are also subject to the university disciplinary process.

What can I do if I encounter hateful speech? The best way to combat hate speech is to speak out against it. Think about it – it’s better to “call it out” than to create policies to suppress offensive speech. Those policies run the risk of suppressing your speech.

You can report the hateful speech to law enforcement, university personnel, or the [online reporting system](https://ucsystems.ethicspointvp.com/custom/ucs_ccc) (ucsystems.ethicspointvp.com/custom/ucs_ccc).

For more information, visit the [UCI Free Speech Website](https://freespeech.uci.edu) at freespeech.uci.edu

Information taken from the [American Bar Association website](https://www.americanbar.org)
www.americanbar.org

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