

The Department of History is a community that serves a wide range of constituencies. Our community includes graduate students, contract faculty, post-doctoral fellows, undergraduate students, office staff, and full-time faculty. As such, decision-making can be difficult, time-consuming, and fraught.

We hope this response addresses the concerns raised in the open letters from our CUPE 3903 colleagues, alumni, and others though we realize that this response will not satisfy everyone. We also realize that some of the points below have been included in previous statements on these matters. We will listen. And we will talk.

- I. We support all contract faculty, teaching assistants, and graduate assistants from CUPE 3903. Their labour in the classroom contributes to the education of all students, peers, and professors. In short, they are integral members of this department. We recognize CUPE 3903 members' right to collectively bargain with the Employer and, when necessary, to strike, a right enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, according to the Supreme Court of Canada. We support our students' rights, under York University Senate Policy, not to participate in academic activities including their right to refuse crossing a virtual or actual picket line, without being penalized for such absence from academic activity for whatever reason. We also recognize that our students are entitled to receive an education that meets the expectations of academic integrity, as determined by their course instructors. CUPE 3903 members are critical to teaching and research in our department. In their absence, the department cannot function adequately. We recognize the contributions CUPE 3903 colleagues have made and continue to make to the historical profession, the mission of our public university, and the knowledge that emerges from research generated by the Department of History.
- II. We call for a prompt resumption of bargaining to reach a fair agreement and resolve this labour dispute.
- III. The Department of History cannot compel course directors to suspend classes. According to the *York University Act*, that power properly resides with the Senate. Currently, university policy instructs individual course directors to decide whether to continue classes during this labour disruption based on an assessment of the ability to maintain the academic integrity of a course. That decision, and any responsibility for that decision, therefore lies with the individual instructor, not the Department.
- IV. History Department YUFA faculty do not concur on the matter of suspending classes during the CUPE 3903 strike. There are numerous reasons for this disagreement over a complicated and difficult decision. Because the decision to continue or suspend classes rests with the individual faculty member, no vote as a Department can compel either a continuance or a suspension of classes offered by the Department. The majority of courses have been suspended while some have continued.
- V. We recognize the risks CUPE 3903 members face on the picket lines and call upon all members of the York community to behave in a civil and peaceful manner when

crossing the picket lines. We condemn all violence against striking employees, and any intimidation and surveillance of them.

- VI. YUFA History faculty members have not replaced and will not replace the labour of our colleagues from CUPE 3903.
- VII. Following the strike, YUFA History faculty members will collaborate with graduate students, undergraduate students, contract faculty, and office staff to explore ways of improving departmental communication and transparency.
- VIII. We call upon all members of the department to uphold and practice civil discourse when communicating with one another, especially in a public forum, such as department email listservs or online social media. Civil discourse and open dialogue remain the best paths for expressing our disagreements and resolving conflicts. We condemn the use of abusive language, personal attacks, harassment, intimidation, and any other forms of non-collegial behaviour in all of our communications with one another. We encourage all colleagues to exercise thoughtful discretion, caution, and respect when engaging in discussion and to communicate with one another in a manner that fosters safe, open dialogue.

Signatories:

Thabit Abdullah
Jennifer Bonnell
Stephen Brooke
Elizabeth Cohen
Tom Cohen
Boyd Cothran
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Alan Durston
Jonathan Edmondson
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Sakis Gekas
Michele Johnson
Edward Jones-Imhotep
Joan Judge
Sean Kheraj
Janice Kim
David Koffman
Rachel Koopmans
Molly Ladd-Taylor
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Marcel Martel
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