A philosophy professor explains why you're not entitled to your opinion

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Professor Patrick Stokes (again!)

Stokes teaches at Deakin University in Australia, and his message to students on their first day of class is: "You are not always entitled to your opinion." The reason Stokes makes the provocation is in order to teach his students how to construct and defend an argument, he says.

"The problem with 'I'm entitled to my opinion' is that, all too often, it's used to shelter beliefs that should have been abandoned. It becomes shorthand for 'I can say or think whatever I like' and, by extension, continuing to argue is somehow disrespectful," he explained in [The Conversation](#).

Stokes' first category of opinion

"I'm entitled to my opinion," is considered a logical fallacy. An opinion is a view or judgement about something. So, ==by definition, an opinion has attached to it a certain degree of uncertainty or subjectivity, and using it as a defense only works in certain situations.==

There's no way you can argue with me if I were of the opinion that ginger tastes horrible. You might actually like ginger's taste, but my preference against it is beyond question. But you have all the rights to question me if I claim it's "only my opinion" that global warming is a hoax. After all, there is overwhelming scientific evidence to show that there is very little uncertainty that global warming is happening; therefore, the evidence is not a candidate for opinion.

Stokes' second category of opinion

"If 'everyone's entitled to their opinion' just means no one has the right to stop people thinking and saying whatever they want, then the statement is true but fairly trivial," Stokes writes. "But if 'entitled to an opinion' means 'entitled to have your views treated as serious candidates for the truth' then no, you are not entitled to your opinion.

Stokes' second category of opinion