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## UT Professor Exemplifies the Importance of Public Intellectuals

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In these quarrelsome times public intellectuals, particularly academics with an area of expertise, can elevate debate on current political issues.

One such academic is UT faculty member Richard Cherwitz, the Ernest S. Sharpe Centennial Professor in the Moody College of Communication and Founding Director of Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium (IE), who's spent his career studying political rhetoric. Congratulations to him as he prepares to retire from the University of Texas at Austin and take what he imagines will be a brief break from publishing insightful op-eds across the country — easily more than 150 since the mid-1990s, including many in these pages.

Cherwitz describes his field of rhetoric as “as the bridge between theory and practice.” One recent example of his applying theory to the modern world is a piece that draws parallels between the alleged attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman and the Gulf of Tonkin crisis almost 55 years ago.

“There’s a myth inside the academy that you are either a scholar or a doer,” he said. “Not so. It’s not either/or. Academics must talk about what they know, not hiding in the alleged ivory tower.”

As one of his colleagues says: “Cherwitz is a “happy populist.” He’s up-front about a president he regards with suspicion if not a little fear, but the bedrock of his analysis is not political bias. He makes his case with a provocative but calm tone, which seems to be a rarity of late.

Anti-intellectualism has long been a force in American politics but it’s arguably not been as powerful, as virulent, as it is today since the 1950s. Cherwitz views his moonlighting as meeting an obligation to counter that. As a result, you’ll likely see his again writing in these pages and elsewhere before long, aiming to make the world a little better one submission at a time. I hope so.

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