# Diversity and Disconnection: Does an Online Setting Affect Student's Understanding of Privilege, Oppression, and White Guilt?

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Should educators teach diversity courses in online formats? Courses covering sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, or homophobia are increasingly part of the curriculum requirements for college students. This study compares student surveys from six sections of the author's introductory Diversity in Politics course; three of these sections are taught asynchronously online, and three are taught in a face-to-face setting. Results reveal no difference between online and face-to-face students' understandings of privilege and oppression, sense of belonging, or white guilt. However, although all Republican students increased their understanding of privilege and oppression from this course, Republican students uniquely entered the course with less knowledge of oppression and experienced increased growth compared to their online counterparts. The importance of partisanship suggests a more student-centered approach can be valuable in determining the transmissibility of online diversity courses and provides evidence for a successful model for political science diversity courses in online and in-person spaces.

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## Introduction

Diversity courses are a growing part of the college curriculum. As of 2016, about 2/3rds of all colleges have incorporated diversity courses into their core curriculum (Hart Research Associates 2016). These courses are found across multiple disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and political science. There is a slew of positive outcomes associated with these courses, such as decreased prejudice (Case and Stewart 2010), increased understanding of others (Rockwell et al. 2019), and increased comfort with discussing issues of marginalization (Kernahan and Davis 2010).

Despite the growing prevalence, scholars still know very little about learning within these classes. Notably, we do not know if teaching diversity courses online is as effective as teaching a diversity course via a face-to-face format. As more colleges rely on a required diversity course to support students' cultural and racial competence, and there is an increase in the desire for online classes offered, educators and students will likely see an increased appetite for these required courses in an online format. However, questions remain concerning the effectiveness of online diversity courses when learning about sensitive and increasingly controversial identity-based topics.

To explore if teaching diversity courses online is equally effective as face-to-face class environments, I utilize pre and post-surveys from students taking a diversity course in a medium-sized state institution during the 2021-2022 term. The course explores how historically underrepresented groups have been marginalized and represented in the American political system and involves learning about race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and privilege. Online and in-person versions of the course cover the same material, incorporate the same activities, and have the same professor. The difference lies within the medium: half of the sections were taught

asynchronously online, and the other half were taught face-to-face, meeting three times per week. The pre and post-surveys measured multiple learning outcomes concerning race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender, as well as a measure of sense of belonging and a measure of white guilt for white students in the course. Overall, these results suggest that most students can learn about diversity and oppression in online or face-to-face environments with comparable learning outcomes. However, students who identified as Republicans entered the course with lower levels of understanding of race and privilege and seemed to benefit from an in-person setting.

This paper is important for practical and scholarly purposes. Pragmatically, understanding the learning process for diversity courses provides educators with critical information for what produces a successful learning experience. Simply designating a course to fulfill a requirement without providing the necessary structure could result in symbolic and shallow learning outcomes. Furthermore, if there are no differences in learning outcomes when teaching diversity courses online, colleges can have new opportunities to reach students unable to attend synchronous classes. Within the scholarly realm, this paper fills a much-needed gap in the political science discipline. There have been few studies on political science diversity courses (Auerbach 2012, Holland et al. 2013) and startlingly, some research suggests that political science courses are the least successful in achieving the desired learning outcomes (Holland 2006). In response to this disheartening finding and the dearth of information on political science diversity courses, this paper has the dual purpose of adding to the literature by providing a model for diversity courses in the political science field (See Appendix D for a condensed version of the syllabi).

**The Benefits and Challenges of Diversity Courses**

Diversity courses have been a part of multiple disciplines, including sociology, psychology, and political science. Despite this discipline variation, the unifying feature of diversity classes is the focus on understanding various groups within society and acknowledging the privileges and powers associated with these groups. Often, the curriculum is designed to promote self-reflection and understanding concerning prejudice and oppression of various social groups (hooks 1996; Lewis 1990). Knowledge of the students' own identity is critical, as diversity courses assist students to "understand themselves and their multiple histories more profoundly; their country's textured, interwoven history and unfulfilled aspirations more poignantly; and their own responsibility to create a more equitable society as an imperative" (Humphreys, 1997, p. 40).

Most of the literature suggests positive outcomes from these courses (Denson and Bowman 2017), including increased civic engagement (Bowman 2011) and cognitive development (Bowman 2010). Diversity courses are associated with increased awareness of white privilege (Kernahan and Davis 2007), understanding of racism (Winkler 2018), knowledge of unconscious bias (Ghosh et al. 2019), ethnocultural empathy (Patterson et al. 2018), and reduced racial prejudice (Engberg 2004; Loya and Cuevas 2010). These patterns extend beyond race and ethnicity, as studies have indicated that diversity courses can influence students' understanding of sex and gender, including male privilege (Case 2007), heterosexual privilege (Case and Stewart 2010), and decrease prejudice against lesbians and gay men (Hawkins 1993; Serdahely and Ziemba 1984; Story 1979; Waterman et al. 2001). Picca, Starks, and Gunderson (2013) showed statistically significant changes in student thinking on race, gender, and social class. These effects may hold for some time, as Kernahan and Davis (2010) find that a year after completing a diversity course about race, students still have increased feelings of comfort with discussing racial issues.

Although there are many positive results from diversity courses, these classes are not necessarily "easy" to teach. Educators are tasked with a challenging endeavor to support students' cognitive and emotional understanding of polarized, politicized, and emotionally charged topics. Cognitively, concepts like racism, sexism, and privilege can be challenging to comprehend for students unfamiliar with structural power dynamics and learning about these concepts can induce feelings of anxiety, helplessness, guilt, or anger (Tatum 1992).

Importantly, students with different backgrounds have different experiences in diversity courses. This finding is particularly true for students from marginalized backgrounds compared to students of privileged backgrounds (Bowman & Culver 2018). Scholars note that white, male, heterosexual, or culturally privileged students may have the most to gain from taking diversity courses and experience the class differently. Simultaneously, much of the literature has highlighted white students' resistance to learning about structural advantage (Boatright-Horowitz et al. 2012; Cabrera 2014; Yang and Montgomery 2013; Smith and Lander 2012) or increased guilt (or white self-preservation) when learning about structural racist advantages (Kernahan and Davis 2007; Johnson, Rich, and Cargile 2008).

The experience of students of color in diversity courses are also unique and underdeveloped in the literature (Blackwell 2010; Ford and Malaney 2012; Maybee 2011). Bowman notes that students of color can question how useful diversity courses are for students of color, particularly when potentially damaging interactions with white students can occur (Bowman 2012). Yet, other scholars have noted the gains students of color also make within diversity courses. Winkler finds that students of color who assessed their understandings of race and racism on the first day of classes as mixed (rather than expert or weak) more quickly understood class concepts (Winkler 2018).

**Sense of Belonging in Online and Face-to-Face Courses**

Adding to these increased challenges when teaching diversity courses, educators still lack an understanding of how the online classroom environment can impact the learning process in diversity courses. This gap in the literature is partly due to the wide variation in both curriculum and pedagogy of diversity courses (Laird & Engberg 2011). The limited literature on learning environments for diversity classes has produced varied results suggesting two possible expectations for this research.

First, there is reason to expect that the online diversity class will be associated with diminished learning outcomes for students. Scholars have shown that various pedagogical and environmental factors can affect learning outcomes for diversity courses. For example, students in the non-lecture, discussion-heavy classes were more likely to increase awareness of racial privilege and institutional racism (Chick et al. 2009). Furthermore, classroom climate, teacher credibility, course size, and instructor rank impacted learning outcomes for diversity courses (Holland 2006). Thus, it is probable that the online structure may impact learning outcomes in diversity courses, particularly due to the variation in the sense of belonging between online and face-to-face.

Inclusion is vital in all courses, particularly as a sense of belonging improves students' motivation (Krause 2005), academic success, progress, and social acceptance (Morrow and Ackermann, 2012), and students generally value it (Thomas and Teras 2014). However, a high sense of belonging is likely more necessary in a diversity course, where controversial and difficult topics are discussed. As diversity courses are centered on understanding privilege and oppression, a sense of belonging is vitally important, and the online environments may limit that sense of belonging. Experimental studies suggest the importance of emotional safety in the

classroom (Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien 2005; Lowery, Knowles, and Unzueta 2007; Unzueta and Lowery 2008), particularly when engaging with complex or controversial topics, like those covered in diversity courses. Being able to safely "attach" within the classroom can impact one's ability to overcome the resistance toward 'threatening information' (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007) and is positively correlated with "students' perceptions of their own learning, their grades, and their awareness of some aspects of racial privilege and discrimination" (Kernahan et al. 2014, page 8).

Alternatively, it's also possible that the online environment does not impact learning outcomes for diversity courses. Students who desire to take online courses, particularly digital natives, may feel more comfortable engaging in an online setting, even with more emotionally vulnerable topics common to diversity courses. Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005) suggest that simply being in an environment committed to antiracism can impact students' attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, studies demonstrate mixed experiences of feelings of belonging in online classes. In a qualitative study, some students noted that "their online experience had been more conducive to community building and the development of a sense of belonging than the face-to-face contexts in which they'd studied," while others had a negative experience (Thomas and Teras 2014, page 72).

**Research Design**

To explore these competing expectations on the effectiveness of teaching diversity courses in the online and in-person setting, I gathered data from six sections of a 'Politics of Diversity' course taught between the Fall of 2021 and Spring of 2022.[1] I taught half of these sections online and half in a face-to-face setting. This introductory political science course examines how

[1] This research was approved by the XXX Institutional Review Board, number IRB-FY2022-20.

historically marginalized groups have been represented by the American political system, considering the influence of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation on an individual's role in the political system. This course attracts many non-political science majors, first-years, and sophomores, as the course fulfills multiple requirements for graduation. Students can take the course in-person, meeting three times a week, or asynchronously and online via a learning management software. Despite the different formats, these courses are taught by the same professor, cover identical content, and have similar assessments.[2]

I collected data from three sections of the online asynchronous course and three sections of the face-to-face course format, each composed of about 35 students in each section[3]. Students in these classes were asked to take a pre-test survey within the first week of the course and complete a survey in the last week of the course. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics and took around 10 minutes to complete. Ultimately, I had 114 students respond to either the pre or post-survey, with response rates depicted in Table 1. As evident in Table 1, there was a significantly higher response rate for the pre-class survey compared to the post-class survey. This change is likely due to students being busy at the end of the semester with final exams and having limited time for completing a voluntary survey.

Table 1. Response Rates for Survey

| | Pre-class Response Rate | Post-class Response Rate |
|---|---|---|
| PSC 101 face-to-face 2021 (one section) | 32.35% (n= 11) | 23.5% (n=8) |
| PSC 101 online 2021 (one section) | 60.6% (n=20) | 27.27% (n=7) |
| PSC 101 face-to face 2022 (two sections) | 29.23% (n=19 | 26.15% (n=17) |
| PSC 101 online 2022 | 29.16% (n=21 | 12.5% (n=9) |

[2] A copy of both syllabi are located in the Appendix Section D. and E
[3] A copy of the survey instrument pre-course and post-course are located in the Appendix Section A and B.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (two sections) | | |

Both surveys include brief demographic information, privilege and oppression awareness questions, and white guilt questions for white students. The post-class survey also includes questions to assess the learning environment and overall learning outcomes. I will address each of these variables and measurements from the survey.

It was important to capture some elements of demographic identity that may impact the student's understanding of privilege and oppression and allow for comparison between classes. Thus, I collect data on the student's class standing, gender identity, racial identity, and partisan identity. To assess the student's understanding of privilege and group oppression, I utilize questions from a racial privilege awareness scale (Case 2007), heterosexual privilege awareness scale (Case and Stewart 2010), and gender privilege awareness (Case 2007).[4] Due to concerns about survey length, not every item is utilized from the original scales. Additionally, I utilize Swim & Miller's (1999) measurement of White guilt for students who identify as White or Caucasian. As other scholars have found that White students can experience greater guilt from diversity courses, assessing this reaction across online and in-person settings can provide valuable information on how guilt might increase or diminish in an online setting.

As part of the post-test survey, students were asked several questions about their feelings during the class. The first of these feelings includes a sense of belonging within the class environment. In education, a sense of belonging refers to the extent to which students consider themselves an integral part of an institution and feel supported and accepted by its members

[4] Some of these scales needed to be updated to correspond with changing understanding of different identities. For example, rather than utilizing the phrase “homosexuals” in Case’s heterosexual awareness privilege scale, I replaced the term with LGBTQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer). Additionally, for the gender privilege awareness scale, I added two questions that directly asked about cisgender/transgender or nonbinary privilege. These questions are modeled after Case’s original questions for consistency.

(Juvonen 2006). It is essentially the experience of being cared for, respected, and valued by the campus community and other individuals on campus, such as the faculty members and peers (Kim and Irwin, 2013). I utilize a slight alternative Kernahan et al. 2014 'sense of belonging' measures.[5] This measurement includes items such as "I felt listened to in this class" and "I felt that students in this course were a cohesive unit." Additionally, per Kernahan's recommendation, I include Wilson and Ryan's measures of professor-student rapport (2013). The professor-student rapport refers to the relationship between the student and professor and is associated with a host of learning outcomes, including time spent studying (Benson Cohen and Buskist 2005) and the student's desire to pay attention (Buskist and Saville 2001). Specifically, I include the six items Wilson and Ryan' find most valuable in their study of the Professor–Student Rapport Scale (Wilson and Ryan 2013). Like the privilege and oppression knowledge scales, these classroom environment measures are Seven-point Likert scales ranging from one, 'not at all' to seven, 'very much.'

Finally, I account for learning outcomes more broadly. In the post-survey, I ask students, ' Thinking about the class overall, how much do you feel you learned?' Students respond via the seven-point Likert scale from one- not at all to seven – very much. I also ask the student to estimate their current grade.

Critically, we cannot assess causality in these results, as students are not randomly distributed into online and in-person courses. Rather, students self-select into these courses for specific reasons. This meaningful variation certainly impacts the understanding of these results, as students self-selecting into online courses are meaningfully different on a range of variables. For example, some students, particularly in the wake of Covid-19 and virtual courses, are more

[5] I removed two questions originally used by Kernahan due to concern that Kernahan's original questions could be misinterpreted.

socially anxious and prefer to interact online. Other times, students who select the online asynchronous courses are older with more life responsibilities (like having children or careers).

Despite this limitation in assessing causality, in comparing some descriptive characteristics of survey respondents, it appears that respondents in online and in-person classes shared many demographics.[6] Both online and in-person students tended to end the course with an A or B average (40% of in-person respondents reported an A grade, 36% of online students reported an A grade, and 8% of both online and in-person respondents reported a B grade). Additionally, there is similar gender composition, as women make up a slightly higher portion of online student respondents (39% compared to 24% of in-person courses) while male-identifying students make up around 11% of online courses and 20% of in-person courses. Similarly, there are comparable partisan identities, as student respondents identifying as Democrats compose 24% of online and in-person courses, student respondents identifying as neither Democratic nor Republican compose 17-18% of both class forms, and students identifying as Republicans are slightly over-represented in online courses (11% compared to 6% of in-person courses). Comparing racial demographics, 68% of respondents for in-person courses are white, and 62% of respondents are white in online classes. Additionally, analyzing the major concentration of students reveals that psychology students made up the majority of majors in online and in-person classes. In person class also has a high portion of pre-business majors, exploratory majors, communications, and criminal justice. Similarly, for online classes, top majors are Political Science, criminal justice, inter-disciplinary, and exploratory majors.

Despite these similarities, there are discrepancies between online and in-person class demographics, particularly when assessing the student's class standing. First years make up only

[6]See Appendix Section C for comparison data of survey respondents.

10% of online classes on average, but 43% on in-person classes. Additionally, Seniors make up 24% of online classes, but only 6% of in-person classes. This variation suggests that first-year students may desire a face-to-face learning experience, compared to seniors who may desire a greater degree of independence officered by an asynchronous online course.

**Results**

To analyze this data, I first explore the broader descriptive trends and Welch Two Sample independent t-tests to assess the differences between groups displayed in Table 2. Table 2 presents t-tests for three key variables; understanding of privilege and oppression, learning environment or the sense of belonging for the student, and the level of white guilt expressed by white students. For all these variables, I compare across multiple groups, including location (online or face-to-face), timing (before or after the course), partisan identification (identifying as Republican or Democratic), gender (identifying as Male or Female and Nonbinary) and race (identifying as white compared to other racial groups). I note the mean of the group's response to the question on the 7point Likert scale, as well as the P-Value for the t-test. A statistically significant P value (P<0.5) suggests that the two groups are statistically meaningfully different.

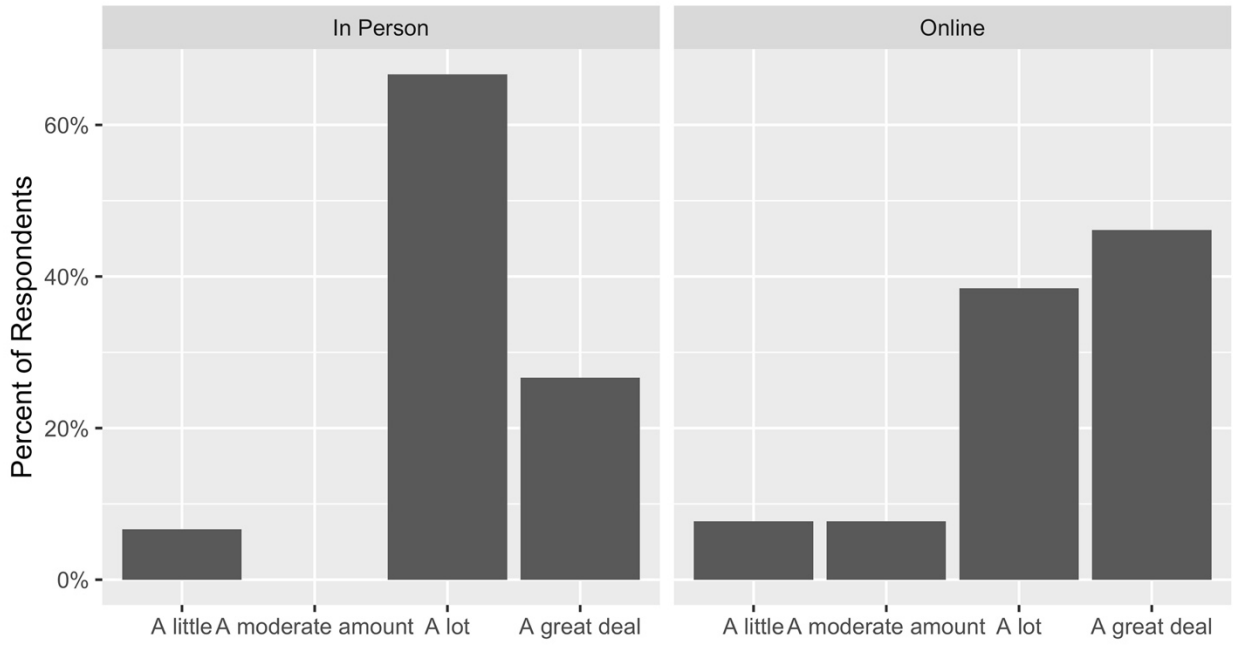
Table 2. Two Sample T-test Results

| | | *P-Value* | *Mean of Group #1* | *Mean of Group #2* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Understanding of Privilege and Oppression | by Location | 0.212 | 4.45 (Online) | 4.22 (In-person) |
| | by Timing | 0.654 | 4.28 (Pre) | 4.38 (Post) |
| | by Party | 0.027* | 2.88 (Republican) | 5.03 (Democrat) |
| | by Gender | 0.000* | 3.62 (Males) | 4.83 (Female/Nonbinary) |
| | by Race | 0.085 | 4.22 (White | 4.76 Minority |
| Learning Environment | by Location | 0.063 | 5.43 (Online | 6.15 (In Person) |
| | by Party | 0.510 | 5.66 (Republican) | 6.00 (Democrat) |
| | by Race | 0.612 | 5.73 (White) | 6.07 (Minority) |
| | by Gender | 0.176 | 6.39 (Male) | 5.75 (Female/Nonbinary) |
| White Guilt | by Location | 0.180 | 3.64 (In-person) | 4.23 (Online) |
| | by Timing | 0.750 | 3.85 (Pre) | 4.01 (Post) |
| | by Party | 0.668 | 4.28 (Republican) | 4.72 (Democrat) |
| | by Gender | 0.996 | 4.34 (Male) | 4.34 (Female) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | P < 0.5*, N = 432, n = 103 |

Broadly, there are three results to closely consider. The first set of results investigates if there is a substantial difference in learning outcomes between online and in-person courses. Overall, I find very little difference between in-person and online students' reported understanding or experience. Students in both courses who completed the survey overwhelmingly perceive that they have learned "a lot" or "a great deal," as evidenced in Figure 1. This pattern does not change when accounting for identities, like political party, race, or gender.

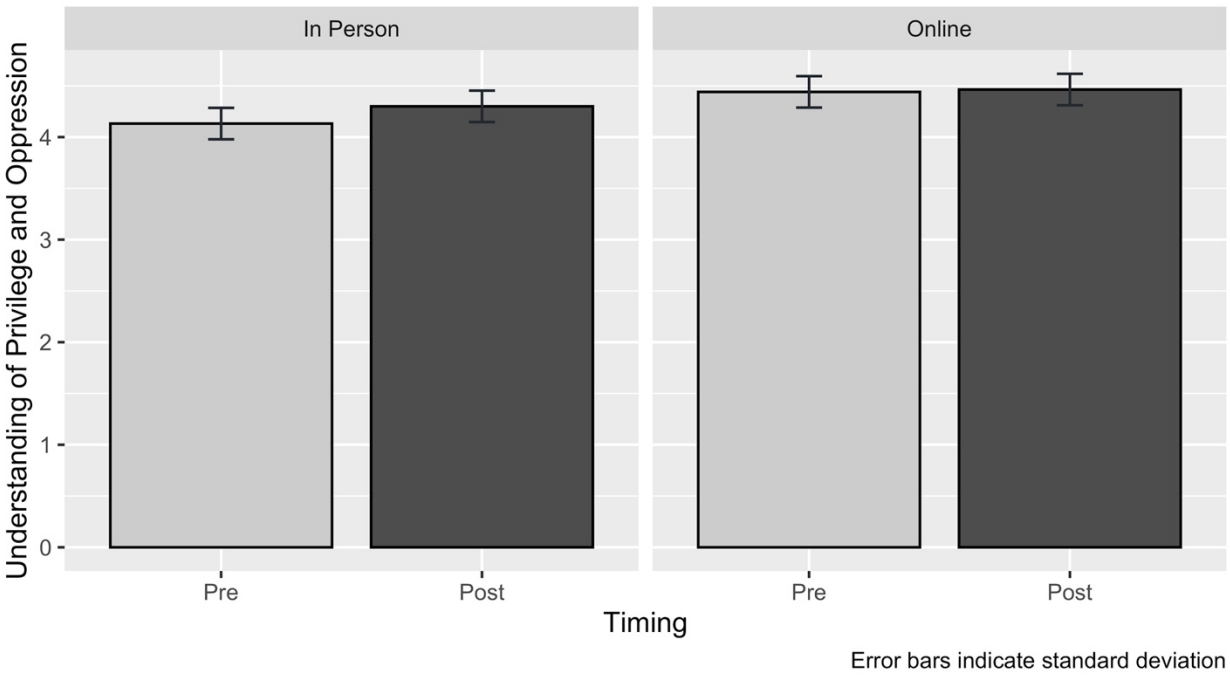
Figure 1. 'In this class, how much do you feel you learned?'




Beyond self-reported measures, I also utilize a scale of questions to assess the student's understanding of privilege and oppression before and after the course. To analyze the difference between groups, I compare the mean score from questions measuring understanding of privilege and oppression in the pre-class surveys and post-class surveys, as well as between students in

the online and in-person courses, to determine if there is a meaningful difference between the scores. Figure 2 depicts the mean results for all respondents.[7]

Figure 2. Mean Understanding of Diversity by class




Results suggest that knowledge of privilege and oppression is high across both courses, and there appears to be little increase by the end of the course. Students generally entered the course with a high understanding of privilege and oppression. This descriptive result does not definitely say there is no difference, and results from t-tests in Table 2 similarly suggest that we can accept the null hypothesis that there is no difference in mean understanding between in-person and online or before and after the course.

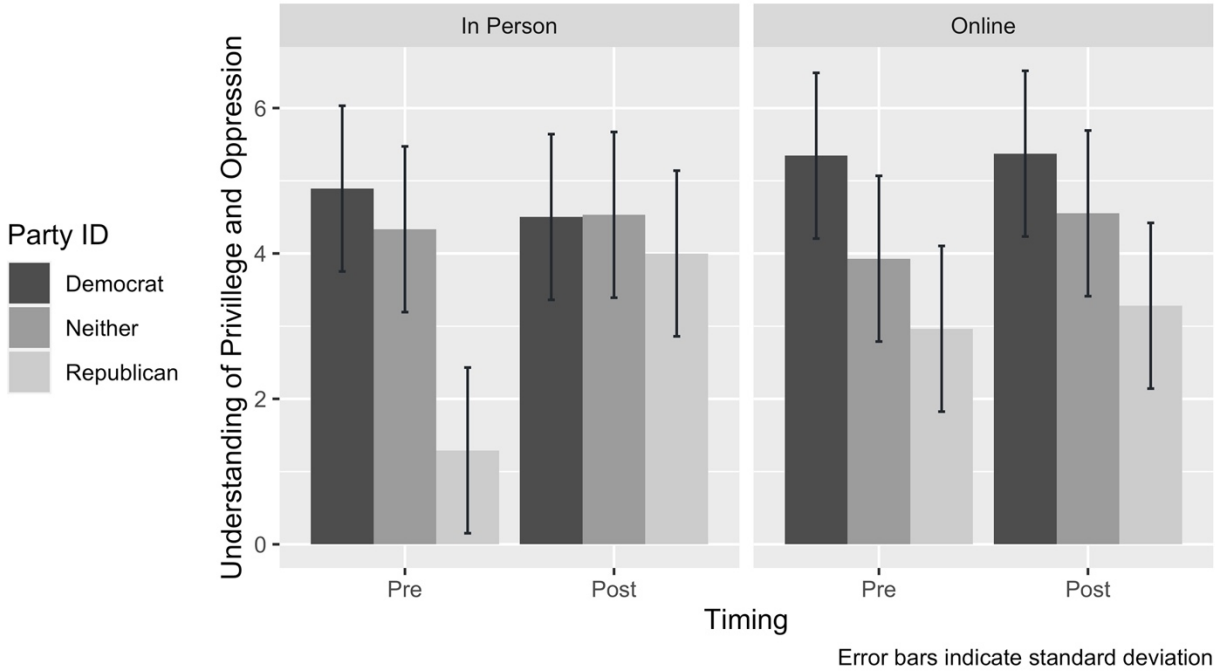
It is possible that students from privileged identities are more likely to experience an increase in understanding from this class and thus could be more sensitive to the class environment. For example, male students may be more likely to experience an increase in their

[7] I utilize standard deviations rather than standard errors in these figures because I am dealing with a mean sum of scaled questions, and consequently do not have a large enough count to utilize standard errors while accounting for location and timing.

understanding of privilege and oppression for women as they have not previously considered their own male societal privilege and consequently be more sensitive to the online or in-person environment.

Results from the survey suggest some descriptive evidence that the understanding of privilege and oppression is related to the student's identity. Although not statistically significant, considering gender, students who identify as non-binary or as women report having a greater understanding of privilege and oppression than male students. Similarly, students of color had a higher understanding of privilege and oppression than white students. Being online or in-person did not change the growth of understanding for those students with greater privilege.

Figure 3. Mean Understanding of Diversity by Party




Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, partisan identity is the only characteristic with a statistically significant change in understanding. As depicted in Figure 3, descriptive results indicate Republican identifying students in both online and in-person courses enter with a lower understanding of privilege and oppression. Democratic students enter the course with about 30%

more understanding of privilege and oppression compared to Republican students. These pre-class differences are statistically significant.[8]

As Republican students are entering with lower levels of understanding; it makes sense that these same students experience the most growth in their understanding. Republican identifying students in both courses appear to increase their understanding of privilege and oppression, but none so clearly or statistically significantly as for Republican students in the in-person course. It is telling that partisanship is the only identity where location seems to be related to levels of understanding and growth.

Party affiliation is a social identity (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2004; Tajfel 1981) and thus it is possible that party identification is capturing other factors related to party, such as race or gender. Students who identify as Republican in the class are almost exclusively white. Because of this possibility and the desire to better understand what party identity is capturing, I ran a simple model accounting for the other demographic factors I collected to see if the value of party identity shifted. The model, depicted in Table 3, includes students who participated in both surveys and suggests that party identity is related to a statistically significant decrease in understanding privilege and oppression, even when accounting for factors like race, gender, the environment for the class, their sense of political efficacy, and levels of white guilt. These findings on Republican students are suggestive of the importance of partisan identity for learning outcomes in diversity courses. However, due to the small sample size within these classes of Republican identifying students, further exploration on a wider set of data is critical.

[8] Results from a Welch Two Sample t-test of pre-levels of understanding for Republican students reveal a group mean for Republicans of 2.88, Democrats of 5.02, and a p-value of 0.027, suggesting a statistically significant difference between the pre-levels of understanding between Democratic and Republican students.

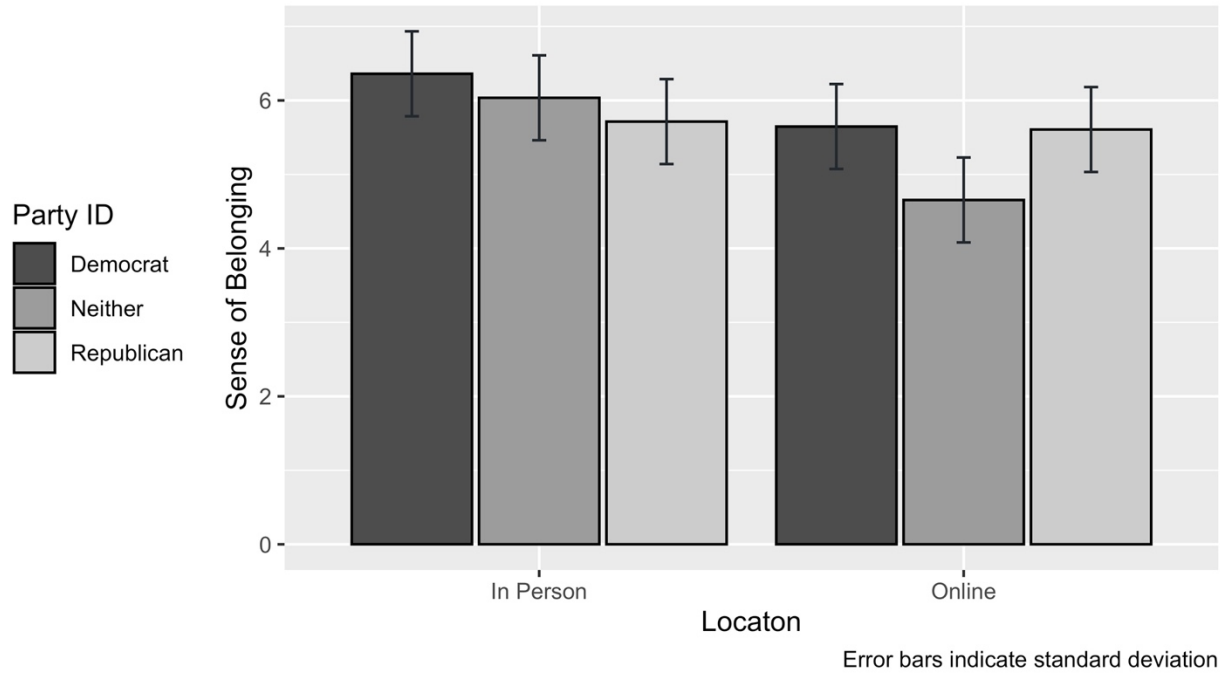
| Table 3. OLS Model of Understanding Privilege and Oppression | |
|---|---|
| Class environment (online) | 0.029 (0.312) |
| Pre levels of understanding | -0.243 (0.230) |
| Level of white guilt | 0.143 (0.088) |
| Level of political efficacy | 0.367** (0.120) |
| Party id (neither) | -0.293 (0.383) |
| Party id (republican) | -1.869*** (0.371) |
| Gender (male) | -0.992** (0.311) |
| Gender (nonbinary) | -0.657 (1.000) |
| Race (white) | 0.397 (0.398) |
| R2 | 0.668 |
| Adjusted r2 | 0.598 |
| F-statistic | 9.61 (df=9;43) |
| P < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01, N = 432, n = 103 | |

Why might Republican students in in-person courses experience statistically significant growth in their understanding of privilege and oppression while Republican identifying respondents for the online courses do not? One possible mechanism is the sense of belonging in the classroom. The second set of results explores this possibility by examining the sense of belonging for students in online and in-person settings. Overall, students in person did report a slightly greater sense of belonging (about a point higher than students online). However, these differences are not statistically significant. Furthermore, students of all races and genders do not appear to have any statistically significant differences in belonging.

As partisan identity seems to be a more impactful correlate in an understanding of privilege and oppression, and Republican students generally enter with a lower level of understanding of privilege and oppression, it is possible that Republican students need to feel a

greater sense of belonging. As depicted in Figure 4, results descriptively suggest that Republicans have less sense of belonging than Democratic students in online and in-person classes. However, t-test results do not suggest a statistically significant difference between Republican and Democratic students.

Figure 4. Mean Learning Enviorment by Party




The third and final set of results explores levels of white guilt for students in online and in-person experiences. White guilt is the guilt white people can experience around the unearned privileges associated with their white race and existing in a racist system (Grzanka et al., 2020). Students in the online class appear to have slightly higher rates of white guilt by about one point, and students in all classes appear to report elevated rates of white guilt by the end of the course. However, the difference in white guilt between online and in-person classes and pre and post-class is not statistically significant. Furthermore, there does not appear to be statistically significant differences by gender.

Figure 5. Mean White Guilt by Party

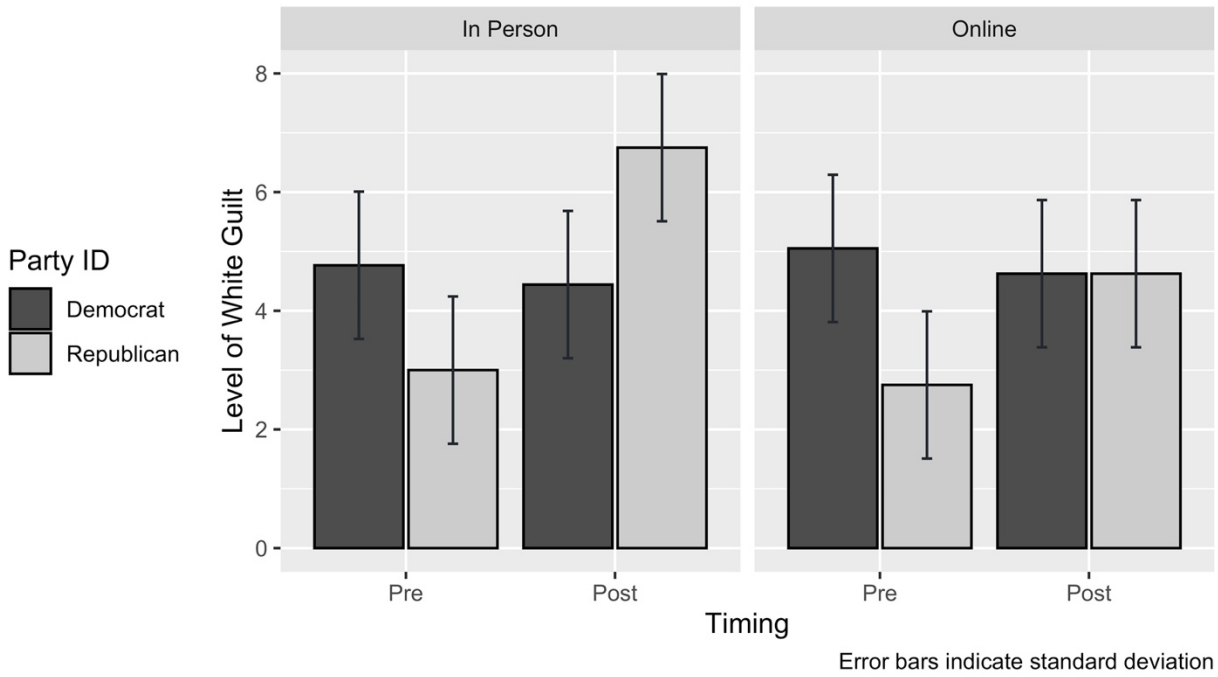



Figure 5 depicts partisan differences in white guilt. Results suggest Democratic students initially hold higher rates of white guilt, which corresponds to other studies finding that Democrats report higher levels of white guilt (Grzanka et al. 2020). However, Republicans in both online and in-person courses seem to have increased rates of white guilt by the end of the course, particularly for in-person sections. This result is not surprising considering the levels of growth in understanding privilege and oppression, as Tatum found that white students experience guilt "when they become aware of the pervasiveness of racism in our society" (Tatum 1994, p. 463). However, t-test results indicate that this difference between Democrats and Republican students is not statistically significant.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This research investigated the effectiveness of teaching diversity courses in the online and in-person setting concerning the understanding of privilege and oppression, sense of belonging, and levels of white guilt. The findings indicate that, generally, students do not seem to be limited in

their understanding of diversity and privilege in an online or face-to-face format. There may be a slightly stronger sense of belonging in face-to-face courses and slightly lower levels of white guilt. However, this seems more impactful for Republican students entering the course with lower levels of understanding about race and privilege and with higher levels of white guilt.

One implication of this research is that the online environment does not limit the ability to form a strong sense of belonging with students. 92% of students in the in-person course and 85% of students in the online course report learning "a lot" or "a great deal" from the diversity course. However, as Holland (2006) indicates, this result does not mean the classroom environment does not matter. Rather, this research suggests that a strong sense of belonging can form in online and in-person classes. Furthermore, the increase of online teaching in the wake of COVID may alter these results, as students likely have become more familiar with the online learning structure. It is possible that, as students return to in-person learning, their sense of belonging in online courses may diminish. More research comparing different educators, timing, and pedagogical practices would further elucidate this connection and best practices in teaching sensitive political material in an online setting.

All students benefit from a stronger sense of community in their learning environment, and there are numerous ways to support an increased sense of community in online courses. Tangibly, Shackelford and Maxwell (2012) find that interactions most predictive of a sense of community were introductions at the beginning of a class, collaborative group projects, sharing personal experiences, entire class discussions, and exchanging resources. Exchanging resources is particularly useful because "giving students an opportunity to express how class content relates to their life or professional experience is important in building connectedness and shared learning" (Shackelford and Maxwell 2012, page 240; Stepich and Ertmer 2003). Additionally,

tools like public poling to illustrate student opinion (Holland et al. 2013) or integrating social media into an online course significantly increase the interest and self-efficacy of online learners. Finally, a key aspect in building a sense of community online is the relationship between the professor and students. Commenting on student posts, providing opportunities for connection with students, and making oneself available during office hours can be valuable in developing community in online courses.

A second key implication of this research is the importance of party identification in understanding privilege and oppression. Other scholars have connected the relationship between party identification and elements of privilege, such as attitudes towards racism (Tesler 2016), LGBTQ acceptance (Jelen 2017), and sexism (Kam and Archer 2021). Furthermore, as diversity courses become aligned in the media as a "Democratic agenda," educators are, perhaps unfairly, tasked with not only teaching these difficult topics but deconstructing the partisanship of diversity courses. Like other scholars who identified the importance of identities like race and gender in diversity course experiences (Bowman and Culver 2018, Ford and Malaney 2012, Winkler 2018), different demographic factors like age and gender have been found to impact a student's success with online courses (Glazier et al. 2019). The results from this paper remind educators to consider the importance of prior political socialization when learning about privilege and oppression in the classroom. Although earlier decades likely saw variation in understanding privilege and oppression, current polarization means that this variation is strongly associated with partisan identity.

In many ways, these results are not surprising, as students likely have been introduced to and formed conceptions of privilege and oppression before entering the classroom- be it online or face to face. Other scholars have found similar results in assessing learning outcomes of face-

to-face and in-person courses (Johnson et al. 2000). As much as classroom interventions can produce change and understanding of privilege and oppression, prior political socialization (Hughes et al., 2006; Hagerman 2014) and social networks likely play a large role in students' willingness to engage with and understand these topics. Furthermore, in a similar assessment of an earlier version of this course at university, Schnell and Delshad also find no statistically significant difference between online and in-person learning outcomes (Schnell and Delshad 2013). However, this research does draw attention to a less considered element of identity that influences the ability of diversity classes to transition online: partisan identity.

This project prompts multiple avenues for future research concerning diversity courses and the online or in-person environment. First, more details and more data on the socio-economic and life experience of students identifying as Republican can better elucidate what party identity is capturing, as well as the impact. This research was limited due to the small sample size of Republican identifying students, so a larger data collection effort could further validate results. Additionally, including a question to capture ideology would be a valuable addition to the survey, as I do not account for ideology in this original survey due to survey length. In an increasingly polarized times, party identity has been found to be stronger motivator than ideology (Barber and Pope 2019). However, including ideology would be useful to parse out what party identity is capturing, as well as including questions on socio-economic class and prior political engagement.

Another avenue for future research is exploring the sense of belonging in greater detail. In this study, sense of belonging did not appear to differ between the online and in-person courses. Comparing multiple educators with different pedagogical strategies would better elucidate characteristics that specifically develop a sense of belonging in these courses.

Additionally, more qualitative research into the experience of students of color and different identities would provide a greater perspective on their learning experience and add to the much-needed literature highlighting the perspective of students from marginalized backgrounds.

Additionally, learning more about the experience of different minoritized students would be valuable. Due to a smaller sample size and the need to protect student identity, I was not able to differentiate between the experiences of students who identify as Latino, Asian pacific islander, Black, or mixed race or ethnicity. However, applying an intersectional understanding to students experience of diversity courses is a natural next research step.

Online learning is not for every student, nor can every class be taught in an online format. However, results from this study broadly suggest the value and ability to teach political science diversity courses in both an online and face-to-face setting. With a continued focus on developing a strong sense of belonging in the course, the online learning environment does not appear to be an obstacle for students in diversity courses. As Diversity courses become increasingly common, figuring out the conditions in which they work, whom they work for is critical for inclusive pedagogy.

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**Appendix A. Survey Instrument: Pre-Course Survey**

Demographic Questions

Which of the following best describes your class year?

- First year
- Second year or sophomore
- Third year or junior
- Senior or years or four or more

What gender expressions best describe you? (i.e., male, female, trans, nonbinary, etc)

_____

Which of the following best describes your identity?

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- White or Caucasian
- Multiracial or Biracial
- Race/Ethnicity not listed here
-

Do you identify as a Republican, Democrat, or neither?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Neither

Privilege and Oppression Awareness Scales

LGBTQ Privilege Awareness Scale (Likert scale, strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree)

- Heterosexuals currently have more rights than lesbians and gay men in society.
- Gay men and lesbians are at a disadvantage.
- Heterosexuals have certain privileges not given to homosexuals.

- Heterosexuals are at an advantage because their sexual orientation determines what is considered normal.
- Heterosexuals must give up their privilege before we can achieve equality based on sexual orientation.
- Lesbians and gay men get special privileges that heterosexuals are not given. (R)
- Heterosexuals and homosexuals are treated equally in this country. (R)

White Racial Privilege Awareness Scale (Case, 2007) (Likert scale, 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree)

- Whites are at an advantage because their cultural values determine what is normal.
- Non-whites are the advantaged groups and whites are currently at a disadvantage. (R)
- White people automatically have more opportunities than non- whites.
- Just as non-whites are the disadvantaged, whites are the advantaged.
- Whites must be willing to confront their privileged status before racism can end.
- Whites and non-whites have equal chances at success in this country. (R)

White Guilt Scale (Swim & Miller, 1999) (Likert scale,1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree) – Completed by students who identified their race as White or Caucasian.

- Although I feel my behavior is typically nondiscriminatory toward Blacks, I still feel guilt due to my association with the White race.
- I feel guilty about the past and present social inequality of Black Americans (i.e., slavery, poverty).
- I do not feel guilty about social inequality between White and Black Americans. (R)
- When I learn about racism, I feel guilt due to my association with the White race.

Gender Privilege Awareness Scale (Likert scale,1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree) (Case 2007 and extension of questions concerning cis/trans gender)

- Men have privileges that women do not have in the United States.
- Men automatically have more opportunities than women in employment and education.
- Women are disadvantaged in society and men are at an advantage.
- Men are at an advantage because they hold most of the positions of power in society.
- Women and men have equal chances at success in this country. (R)
- Women are advantaged and men are currently at a disadvantage. (R)
- Trans and nonbinary individuals are disadvantaged in society compared to cisgender individuals. (McQueen)
- Cisgender individuals have more opportunities in employment and education than trans or nonbinary individuals.

Social Justice Engagement Scale (Likert scale, 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree)

- I believe it's important to get involved in causes I care about
- I have often volunteered, protested, or supported causes I care about

- It is important to vote in elections
- I can have a positive impact on my community
- It's important to use my privilege to create a more equitable world

**Appendix B. Survey Instrument: Post Course Survey**

Demographic Questions

Which of the following best describes your class year?

- First year
- Second year or sophomore
- Third year or junior
- Senior or years or four or more

What gender expressions best describe you? (i.e., male, female, trans, nonbinary, etc.)

_____

Which of the following best describes your identity?

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- White or Caucasian
- Multiracial or Biracial
- Race/Ethnicity not listed here
-

Do you identify as a Republican, Democrat, or neither?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Neither

Privilege and Oppression Awareness Scales

LGBTQ Privilege Awareness Scale (Likert scale, strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree)

- Heterosexuals currently have more rights than LGBTQ individuals in society.
- LGBTQ individuals are at a disadvantage.
- Heterosexuals have certain privileges not given to LGBTQ individuals.

- Heterosexuals are at an advantage because their sexual orientation determines what is considered normal.
- LGBTQ individuals get special privileges that heterosexuals are not given. (R)
- Heterosexuals and LGBTQ individuals are treated equally in this country. (R)

White Racial Privilege Awareness Scale (Case, 2007) (Likert scale, 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree)

- Whites are at an advantage because their cultural values determine what is normal.
- Non-whites are the advantaged groups and whites are currently at a disadvantage. (R)
- White people automatically have more opportunities than non- whites.
- Just as non-whites are the disadvantaged, whites are the advantaged.
- Whites must be willing to confront their privileged status before racism can end.
- Whites and non-whites have equal chances at success in this country. (R)

White Guilt Scale (Swim & Miller, 1999) (Likert scale,1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree) – Completed by students who identified their race as White or Caucasian.

- Although I feel my behavior is typically nondiscriminatory toward Blacks, I still feel guilt due to my association with the White race.
- I feel guilty about the past and present social inequality of Black Americans (i.e., slavery, poverty).
- I do not feel guilty about social inequality between White and Black Americans. (R)
- When I learn about racism, I feel guilt due to my association with the White race.

Gender Privilege Awareness Scale (Likert scale,1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree) (Case 2007 and extension of questions concerning cis/trans gender)

- Men have privileges that women do not have in the United States.
- Men automatically have more opportunities than women in employment and education.
- Women are disadvantaged in society and men are at an advantage.
- Men are at an advantage because they hold most of the positions of power in society.
- Women and men have equal chances at success in this country. (R)
- Women are advantaged and men are currently at a disadvantage. (R)
- Transgender and nonbinary individuals are disadvantaged in society compared to cisgender individuals. (McQueen)
- Cisgender individuals have more opportunities in employment and education than transgender or nonbinary individuals. (McQueen)

Social Justice Engagement Scale (Likert scale, 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree)

- I believe it's important to get involved in causes I care about
- I have often volunteered, protested, or supported causes I care about
- It is important to vote in elections
- I can have a positive impact on my community

- It's important to use my privilege to create a more equitable world
- I believe it is important to talk about issues of racism and sexism

Environment and Learning Measurements
Sense of Belonging Scale (all answered on a 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) range)

- "I felt that students in this course were a cohesive unit",
- "I felt a sense of belongingness in this class",
- "I trusted others in this class",
- "I felt secure in this class",
- "I felt listened to in this class"

Professor-student rapport (answered on a 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) range)

- My professor encourages questions and comments from students
- I dislike my professor's class (R)
- My professor makes class enjoyable
- I want to take other classes taught by my professor
- My professor's body language says, ''Don't bother me' (R)
- I really like to come to class

Learning Outcomes

- Thinking about the class overall, how much do you feel you learned? (1 is not at all to 7 very much)
- What is your best guest for your current grade? If you don't know, you can circle NA.
    - A
    - B
    - C
    - D
    - E
    - F
    - NA

**Appendix C. Characteristics of Survey Respondents**

| Table 1. Gender by Class Location | | |
|---|---|---|
| | In Person (n=49) | Online (n=54) |
| Female | 22 | 36 |
| Male | 19 | 10 |
| non-binary | 3 | 3 |

| Table 2. Party Affiliation by Class Location | | |
|---|---|---|
| | In Person (n=49) | Online(n=54) |
| Democrat | 25 | 25 |
| Neither | 17 | 18 |
| Republican | 6 | 11 |

| Table 3. Race by Class Location | | |
|---|---|---|
| | In Person (n=49) | Online (n=54) |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 2 | 3 |
| Black Or African American | 8 | 13 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic or Latino | 4 | 3 |
| Multiracial or Biracial | 5 | |
| Native American/ Alaskan Native | 1 | ` |
| White or Caucasian | 33 | 39 |

## Appendix D. Condensed Syllabus for Politics of Diversity Online

**Description:** What do sports teams have to do with partisanship? Why do Black and White Americans disagree so about racially charged police shootings? How do we begin to make sense of the different racial, ethnic, classist, ableist, gendered, sexist tensions within the American Political system? This course examines the American government by analyzing how historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have represented the American political system and its institutions. It investigates how different theoretical approaches such as pluralism, elitism, socialism, and liberalism define concepts such as equality and liberty and how social movements have contributed to social change. By focusing on elements of political culture and social experiences of underrepresented groups, it also considers how historical and cultural contexts have shaped the differential experiences of individuals and how race, class, gender, and sexual orientation influence an individual's role in the political system. Lectures and discussions are embedded in a political science ethics framework. We will examine questions about ethical leadership, the "character" of elected officials, and the "morality" of political decision-making and resulting public policies by using ethical dilemmas and case studies.

**Course Structure:** This is an online completely asynchronous course. That means we don't meet at specified times or hours during the week. Rather, you may progress through each week's material at your own pace. Please check your email and our class's website frequently for updates. The course is delivered and administered on D2L, XXX's learning platform utilizing your own university provided login. The week runs from Monday to Sunday. All exams and assignments must be due/completed on the Sunday of each week. All lectures and course content for the week will be available each Monday. We will cover the topic per week. All assigned readings, lecture viewing, discussion questions, and assignments must be completed by 9 pm on the Sunday of the week in which they occur. Being asynchronous, this class is a great opportunity to practice self-management and avoid procrastination. You need to keep up with deadlines and material each week. If you would like strategies for staying on top of the work, reach out to me during office hours.

**Graded Course Material:** Grades are based on three main activities.
Discussion Board Ethical Reflections Each week, you'll post a response to an ethical discussion prompt on the board, and comment on another student's post. These short questions will help you synthesize lecture information, apply ethical frameworks, and are excellent study tools for you to continually review the class content. Additionally, this activity can help form a tighter bond with other class members and bear whiteness to various perspectives. The responses should be 2-3 paragraphs in size, refer to the class material, and are due weekly Sunday 9pm.

Reading Quizzes. Each week you will have the opportunity to complete a reading quiz on the material. These quizzes will allow you and me to assess what information needs greater review, and what information you understand. Additionally, these quizzes are a great way to review class content. You will have unlimited attempts to complete the reading quizzes during the week. However, a quiz must be submitted by Sunday 9pm to get credit.

Exams will cover the preceding weeks of the curriculum. I include exams because (1) some students prefer this assessment to papers, (2) often students reinforce concepts best by studying for the exams, and (3) exams can illustrate what "stuck" from the course and what needs to be reviewed. I'm happy to discuss study and exam-taking strategies during office hours. The exam may include a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay

questions focusing on material from the readings, lectures, and discussions. Exams are due by Sunday 9pm of the week they are assigned.

| Item | Weight | Due |
|---|---|---|
| (15) Weekly Reflections | 30% | by Sunday 9pm |
| (15) Weekly Reading Quizzes | 15% | By Sunday 9pm |
| Exam #1 | 15% | By Sunday, September 25th 9pm |
| Exam #2 | 20% | By Sunday, November 6th by 9pm |
| Exam #3 | 20% | TBD Finals Week |

**Texts:** We will be using the following main text (MT) for the class duration. In addition to the main text, we will be reading articles or excerpts from other texts as well. You have the option to purchase this text in the bookstore. Alternatively, I can provide a PDF for the chapters we are using.

- Khaliah Brown. Identity Politics in the United States. 2019 (Published by Wiley and Sons, Polity Press)

You should also make a habit of following current events with some diligence, preferably via a major newspaper (The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times) or publication (The Economist). Some of these news sources require a subscription, and student rates are available for the Washington Post and New York Times. Regularly consuming the news will not only bring course material to life, but it will also make the class more interesting. There are plenty of exciting political events going on!

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this course, all students should meet the following objectives:

- Critically analyze the relationships between identity, groups, and power in U.S. politics.
  - This is assessed in Exams 1-3
- Develop and communicate responses based on fact and research.
  - This is assessed in Weekly Reflections
- Understand the patterns and practices leading to the marginalization of diverse groups
  - This is assessed in Exam 1-3
- Apply an ethical framework to analyze the marginalization of groups in U.S. politics
  - This is assessed in Weekly Reflections

**Class Schedule**

August 29th Topic 1. Definitions and Frameworks

*What is Identity? What is Diversity? What is power? What is political science? Why do definitions hold power? Who decides on the definitions? What does it mean to "socially construct" an identity? How can we use ethics to understand diversity in politics?*

- Syllabus
- The Eight Key Questions
- MT Chapter 1
- Challenge Reading: Davenport, "The Role of Gender, Class, and Religion in Biracial Americans' Racial Labeling Decisions" (2016)

September 7th Topic 2. Identity in Politics?

*What are foundational features of American politics? What is pluralism? How are groups involved in American Politics? What is Social Contract Theory? What is the Veil of Ignorance? What are rights? What are liberties?*

- Federalist Paper #10 https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-1-10#s-lg-box-wrapper-25493273
- Federalist Paper #51 https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-51-60#s-lg-box-wrapper-25493427
- The U.S. Constitution https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/constitution.pdf

September 12th Topic 3. The Power of Group Identity

*How do people form groups? What makes a group "powerful"? What is the difference between group identity and group consciousness? Does forming an in-group instantly make an out-group? What is group think?*

- "Excerpt from Ezra Klein's book *Why We're Polarized* (2019) "Your Brains on Groups" Chapter 3
- Challenge Reading: McClain, Paula D., Jessica D. Johnson Carew, Eugene Walton Jr, and Candis S. Watts. "Group membership, group identity, and group consciousness: Measures of racial identity in American politics?." Annual Review of Political Science 12 (2009): 471-485.

September 19th Topic 4. Dominant Group Identities and Interest Groups

*Is being white a political identity? What does white identity have to do with concepts like white privilege, white consciousness, and racism? Why is whiteness "hard to see"? What do dominant interest groups and identity groups have in common?*

- Excerpt from Ashley Jardina's book *White Identity Politics* (2019) "Making the Invisible Visible" Chapter 2
- Listen to this podcast https://www.npr.org (35 minute listen)
- Challenge Reading: Junn, Jane. "The Trump majority: White womanhood and the making of female voters in the U.S." Politics, Groups, and Identities 5, no. 2 (2017): 343-352

September 26th Topic 5. Citizenship

*What does it mean to have citizenship? How has the definition of citizenship changed over time? Who determines who is a "citizen" and who is "undocumented"? How does power dynamics and politics impact the legal construction of citizenship?*

- MT Chapter 3 (PDF)
- Listen to this podcast from NPR located at NPR.Org. (23 minute listen)
- Challenge Reading: Excerpt from Gordon Allport's book *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) "The Formation of In Groups" Chapter 3

October 3rd Topic 6. Race & Civil Rights

*How is race a social construction? Is race an identity or something different? What is racial priming? What are the different forms of racism and anti-racism? How has race been used to create "the political outsider" in American politics?*

- Listen to Episode One from the New York Times Magazine 1619 Project. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/23/podcasts/1619-slavery-anniversary.html
- Check out the following link about the construction of race through PBS.org. Excerpt from *How to Be Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi, "Definitions" Chapter 1
- Read this article by Anemona Hartocollis and Stephanie Saul (2017) https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/us/affirmative-action-battle-has-a-new-focus-asian-americans.html
- Challenge Reading: White, Ismail K. "When race matters and when it doesn't: Racial group differences in response to racial cues." American Political Science Review 101, no. 2 (2007): 339-354.

October 10th Topic 7. Ethnic Identity

*What's the difference between Race and Ethnicity? What shapes ethnicity? What does it mean to have a loss of white-ethnic identity? How has ethnicity been used to create "the political outsider" in American politics?*

- MT Chapter 5 (PDF)
- Le, Loan, Okiyoshi Takeda, Sara Sadhwani, and Andrew L. Aoki. "Are Asian Americans a Meaningful Political Community?." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 54, no. 2 (2021): 232-234.
- Listen to "The Kid Mero Talks 'What does it mean to be Latino' (2021) https://www.npr.org/2021/04/28/991629761/the-kid-mero-talks-what-it-means-to-be-latino
- Challenge Reading: Chandra, Kanchan. "What is ethnic identity, and does it matter?." Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci. 9 (2006): 397-424.

October 24st Topic 8. Gender

*What is gender, and how does it differ from sex? How is gender a social construct? Is gender a political identity? What does it mean to move beyond a gender binary? How has gender been used in American politics to create the "political outsider"?*

- Pratto, Felicia and Angela Walker. 2004. "The Bases of Gendered Power" In The Psychology of Gender, ed. Alice H. Eagly, Anne E. Beall and Robert J. Sternberg.Guilford Press.
- Excerpt from Sister Style (2018) by Nadia Brown and Danielle Casarez Lemi Chapter
- Challenge Reading: Taylor, Jami Kathleen. "Transgender identities and public policy in the United States: The relevance for public administration." *Administration & Society* 39, no. 7 (2007): 833-856.

October 31st Topic 9. Sexuality

*How is sexual identity socially constructed? How has sexual identity been used to create the "political outsider" in American politics? Why is terminology important?*

- Carrera, Maria Victoria, Renée DePalma, and Maria Lameiras. "Sex/gender identity: Moving beyond fixed and 'natural' categories." *Sexualities* 15, no. 8 (2012): 995-1016.
- Listen to this podcast: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-why-public-opinion-changed-so-dramatically-on-same-sex-marriage/ (45 minutes)
- "Scandal hurts gay candidates more than straight ones — but in a roundabout way" by Akhil Rajan and Christina Pao (2020)
- Challenge Reading: Flores, Andrew R., and Scott Barclay. "Backlash, consensus, legitimacy, or polarization: The effect of same-sex marriage policy on mass attitudes." *Political Research Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2016): 43-56.

November 7th Topic 10. Religious Identity & Civil Liberties
*Why does the United States have a particular proclivity to emphasize religious identities? How does religious identity intersect with racial identity? How has religious identity been used to create the "political outsider" in American politics?*

- MT Chapter 7 (PDF)
- Listen to this podcast https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-americans-are-losing-their-religion-thats-changing-politics/ (48 minutes)
- Challenge Reading: Tesler, Michael. "Islamophobia in the 2016 Election." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics* 3, no. 1 (2018): 153-155.

November 14th Topic 11. Voting
*How and why do citizens vote? What role does identity play in the voting decision? How important is voting in expressing political power? How has voting been suppressed? What are the democratic implication of voter suppression?*

- Excerpt from Just Mercy by Brian Stevenson
- "Voters Don't Care How Women In Politics Look." By Danny Hayes and Jennifer Lawless (2013)
- "Views about Race Mattered More in Electing Trump than in Electing Obama" by Michael Tessler (2016)
- "Do voter identification laws suppress minority voting? Yes. We did the research." By Hajnal, Lejevardi and Nielson (2017)
- Challenge Reading: Excerpt from *Racial Coalition Building* by Andrea Benjamin (2017) "An Experimental Test of Co ethnic Elite Cues Theory" Chapter 2

*Thanksgiving Break – November 23-27th – No Class*

November 28th Topic 12. Representation
*What is symbolic and substantive representation? Why is the representation of different identities important? What identities are underrepresented in politics? When do we know representatives are corrupt or ethical?*

- Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'" Journal of Politics 61 (August): 628-657. 5
- Challenge Reading: White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. "Selling out?: the politics of navigating conflicts between racial group interest and self-interest." American Political Science Review 108, no. 4 (2014): 783-800

December 5th Topic 13. Using your Voice: Social Movements and Public Opinion
*How do social movements connect to groups? Are social movements politically effective? Why is it difficult to prompt a social movement? How do activists overcome that difficulty? What is collective action? What is diffusion of responsibility?*

- MT Chapter 8 (PDF)
- Watch this ted talk (4 minutes)
- "How Public Opinion Has Moved on Black Lives Matter" By Nate Cohn and Kevin Quealy (2020) https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/10/upshot/black-lives-matter-attitudes.html
- Clayton, Dewey M. "Black lives matter and the civil rights movement: A comparative analysis of two social movements in the United States." Journal of Black Studies 49, no. 5 (2018): 448-480.
- Challenge Reading: Weldon, S. Laurel. 2011. When Protest Makes Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups. Michigan. "Inclusion, Identity, and Women's Movements: State Policies on Violence Against Women of Color."

December 12th Topic 14. Political Parties and Identity Alignment
*What are "mega identities"? How have political parties "sorted" identities? What are the different arguments concerning the use of "identity politics"? Is identity politics normatively or ethically good for the United States?*

- Excerpt from "Why We're Polarized" by Ezra Klein, "When Bipartisanship Becomes Irrational" Chapter 8
- Video: https://bigthink.com/videos/group-identity-politics

And one of the following depending on our debate groups…

- "The Promises and Perils of Identity Politics" by David Azerrad (2019)
- "Debating the liberal case against identity politics" by Sean Lling (2017)

## Appendix E. Condensed Syllabus for Politics of Diversity In-person

**Description:** What do sports teams have to do with partisanship? Why do Black and White Americans disagree so about racially charged police shootings? How do we begin to make sense of the different racial, ethnic, classist, ableist, gendered, sexist tensions within the American Political system? This course examines the American government by analyzing how historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have represented the American political system and its institutions. It investigates how different theoretical approaches such as pluralism, elitism, socialism, and liberalism define concepts such as equality and liberty and how social movements have contributed to social change. By focusing on elements of political culture and social experiences of underrepresented groups, it also considers how historical and cultural contexts have shaped the differential experiences of individuals and how race, class, gender, and sexual orientation influence an individual's role in the political system. Lectures and discussions are embedded in a political science ethics framework. We will examine questions about ethical leadership, the "character" of elected officials, and the "morality" of political decision-making and resulting public policies by using ethical dilemmas and case studies.

**Graded Course Material:** Grades are based on four main activities.

- **Participation** is not how many times you speak in class, but your ability to engage, listen, add to a cumulative discussion, and leave space for others to participate. It can look like answering a question during a lecture, proposing a question to the class, filling out a reading quiz, or engaging actively in a small group project. It can also look like emailing me a question, listening to an opposing view, or encouraging other classmates to contribute to the discussion. Participation is part of your grade because it is critical to the learning process and is associated with a deeper understanding of the material. You will not perform well if you are absent from class. Attendance is included in this activity because of the value of learning as a community. If you miss more than two classes for an unexcused absence, your participation grade will drop to half credit.
- **Reading Ethical Reflections** There are 10 reading reflections due by the Wednesday of each week. These reading reflections allow you to prepare for class discussion, interact with the readings, you and me a better understanding of what content you understand, and what we need to further review. Reading reflections incorporate class concepts, readings, and a chance to apply ethical frameworks. You will be provided a short prompt and should respond with a 1-page response that incorporates reading material and ethical reflections. All reading is expected to be completed by Wednesday and submitted via D2L. Reading Reflections 1-10 are candidates to upload for your e-portfolio. For the list of reading reflection prompts, see page 14.
- **'Diversity Daily' Where do you see 'Diversity in Politics' in the news?** At the start of class, each student will have an opportunity to present a class concept found in a current news story. The concept may be reflected in any news section, from politics to entertainment, from local to national news. Each student will sign up to present during the day which is how we will start class most days. This activity is meant to warm up our brains and get us ready for diving-into Diversity and Politics. Additionally, it will strengthen our critical thinking skills and analysis of class concepts. Presenting this information in a brief and concise way will also grow our presentation and public speaking skills. This will be a short 5-minute (or less) presentation. Email me in advance if you would like something projected for the class.

- **Exams** will cover the preceding weeks of curriculum. I include exams often students reinforce concepts best by studying for the exams, and exams can illustrate what "stuck" from the course and what needs to be reviewed. I'm always happy to discuss study and exam-taking strategies during office hours. The exam may include a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions focusing on material from the readings, lectures, and discussions.

| Item | Weight | Due |
|---|---|---|
| Participation in class and Attendance | 10% | ~ |
| 'Diversity Daily" News Presentation | 5% | ~ |
| 10 Reading Reflections | 25% | Wednesday 10am D2L |
| Exam #1 | 15% | By Friday September 2rd 9pm |
| Exam #2 | 20% | By Friday November 4th by 9pm |
| Exam #3 | 25% | TBD Finals Week |

**Required Texts:** We will be using the following main text (MT) for the class duration. In addition to the main text, we will be reading articles or excerpts from other texts as well. You have the option to purchase this text in the bookstore. Alternatively, I can provide a PDF for the chapters we are using.

- Khaliah Brown. Identity Politics in the United States. 2019 (Published by Wiley and Sons, Polity Press)

For most weeks, I also provide an optional challenge reading. These are not required. Rather, if you want to challenge yourself and build your reading skills, these are readily available options. Additionally, you should also make a habit of following current events with some diligence, preferably via a major newspaper (*The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times*) or publication (*The Economist*). Consider a news podcast or TheSkim. Regularly consuming the news will not only bring course material to life, but it will also make the class more interesting. There are plenty of exciting political events going on!

**Class Learning Objectives**: By the end of this course, all students should meet the following objectives:

- Critically analyze the relationships between identity, groups, and power in U.S. politics.
  - This is assessed in Daily Diversity Presentations and Exams 1-3
- Develop and communicate responses based on fact and research.
  - This is assessed in Reading Reflections 1-10
- Understand the patterns and practices leading to the marginalization of diverse groups
  - This is assessed in Exam 1-3
- Apply an ethical framework to analyze the marginalization of groups in U.S. politics
  - This is assessed in Reading Reflections 1-10

**Class Schedule**

August 29th Topic 1. Definitions and Frameworks

*What is Identity? What is Diversity? What is power? What is political science? Why do definitions hold power? Who decides on the definitions? What does it mean to "socially construct" an identity? How can we use ethics to understand diversity in politics?*

- Syllabus
- The Eight Key Questions
- MT Chapter 1
- Challenge Reading: Davenport, "The Role of Gender, Class, and Religion in Biracial Americans' Racial Labeling Decisions" (2016)

September 7th Topic 2. Identity in Politics?

*What are foundational features of American politics? What is pluralism? How are groups involved in American Politics? What is Social Contract Theory? What is the Veil of Ignorance? What are rights? What are liberties?*

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- Federalist Paper #51 https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-51-60#s-lg-box-wrapper-25493427
- The U.S. Constitution https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/constitution.pdf

September 12th Topic 3. The Power of Group Identity

*How do people form groups? What makes a group "powerful"? What is the difference between group identity and group consciousness? Does forming an in-group instantly make an out-group?*

- "Excerpt from Ezra Klein's book *Why We're Polarized* (2019) "Your Brains on Groups" Chapter 3
- Challenge Reading: McClain, Paula D., Jessica D. Johnson Carew, Eugene Walton Jr, and Candis S. Watts. "Group membership, group identity, and group consciousness: Measures of racial identity in American politics?." Annual Review of Political Science 12 (2009): 471-485.

September 19th Topic 4. Dominant Group Identities and Interest Groups
*Is being white a political identity? What does white identity have to do with concepts like white privilege, white consciousness, and racism? Why is whiteness "hard to see"? What do dominant interest groups and identity groups have in common?*

- Excerpt from Ashley Jardina's book *White Identity Politics* (2019) "Making the Invisible Visible" Chapter 2 OR "The Content and Contours of Whiteness" Chapter 5
- Listen to this podcast https://www.npr.org (35 minute listen)
- Challenge Reading: Junn, Jane. "The Trump majority: White womanhood and the making of female voters in the U.S." Politics, Groups, and Identities 5, no. 2 (2017): 343-352.

September 26th Topic 5. Citizenship
*What does it mean to have citizenship? How has the definition of citizenship changed over time? Who determines who is a "citizen" and who is "undocumented"? How does power dynamics and politics impact the legal construction of citizenship?*

- MT Chapter 3 (PDF)
- Listen to this podcast from NPR located at NPR.Org. (23 minute listen)
- Challenge Reading: Excerpt from Gordon Allport's book *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) "The Formation of In Groups" Chapter 3

October 3rd Topic 6. Race & Civil Rights
*How is race a social construction? Is race an identity or something different? What is racial priming? What are the different forms of racism and anti-racism? How has race been used to create "the political outsider" in American politics? What are the ethics of anti-racist policies?*

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- Check out the following link about the construction of race through PBS.org. Excerpt from *How to Be Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi, "Definitions" Chapter 1
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- Challenge Reading: White, Ismail K. "When race matters and when it doesn't: Racial group differences in response to racial cues." American Political Science Review 101, no. 2 (2007): 339-354.

October 10th Topic 7. Ethnic Identity
*What's the difference between Race and Ethnicity? What shapes ethnicity? What does it mean to have a loss of white-ethnic identity? How has ethnicity been used to create "the political outsider" in American politics? Can we decide ethically decide court cases that balance security and identity?*

- MT Chapter 5 (PDF)
- Le, Loan, Okiyoshi Takeda, Sara Sadhwani, and Andrew L. Aoki. "Are Asian Americans a Meaningful Political Community?." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 54, no. 2 (2021): 232-234.
- Listen to "The Kid Mero Talks 'What does it mean to be Latino' (2021)
- Challenge Reading: Chandra, Kanchan. "What is ethnic identity, and does it matter?." Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci. 9 (2006): 397-424.

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- Listen to this podcast: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-why-public-opinion-changed-so-dramatically-on-same-sex-marriage/ (45 minutes)
- "Scandal hurts gay candidates more than straight ones — but in a roundabout way" by Akhil Rajan and Christina Pao (2020)
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*Why does the United States have a particular proclivity to emphasize religious identities? How does religious identity intersect with racial identity? How has religious identity been used to create the "political outsider" in American politics?*
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- Listen to this podcast https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/politics-podcast-americans-are-losing-their-religion-thats-changing-politics/ (48 minutes)
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- Challenge Reading: White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. "Selling out?: the politics of navigating conflicts between racial group interest and self-interest." American Political Science Review 108, no. 4 (2014): 783-800

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*How do social movements connect to groups? Are social movements politically effective? Why is it difficult to prompt a social movement? How do activists overcome that difficulty? What is collective action? What is diffusion of responsibility?*
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- "How Public Opinion Has Moved on Black Lives Matter" By Nate Cohn and Kevin Quealy (2020)

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- Challenge Reading: Weldon, S. Laurel. 2011. When Protest Makes Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups. Michigan. "Inclusion, Identity, and Women's Movements: State Policies on Violence Against Women of Color."

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- Video: https://bigthink.com/videos/group-identity-politics

And one of the following depending on our debate groups…

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- "Debating the liberal case against identity politics" by Sean Lling (2017)