

Reflections in Student Learning about Race and Racial Politics

Jeffrey Carroll, Ph.D.

Chestnut Hill College
St. Joseph Hall 214
9601 Germantown Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19118
carrollj@chc.edu
215-753-3697

Abstract

This paper examines lessons learned in teaching the course, “Race and the American Political System.” Surprisingly, assignments that were meant to be “informal” exercises meant to encourage reflection – a weekly journal, a weekly voice memo, and a podcast – ultimately captured a spirit of nuanced, deep and thoughtful investigation into race in America. To that end, this paper investigates the pros and cons of utilizing these assignments and considers their potential in conveying important student learning outcomes as it relates to racial politics. The paper relies heavily on student work in these assignments as tangible examples.

Background

Some recent conversations in political science at the intersection of teaching and learning on race include the importance of identity of the instructor and institution (Bower & Clancey 2018, Mendez & Mendez 2018, Holland 2006, Sampaio 2006), dearth of scholarship on race in the discipline (Michelson & Wilkinson 2022, Reid & Curry 2019, Behl 2017, Alexander-Floyd 2015, McClain, et.al. 2016, Sinclair-Chapman 2015), and pedagogical practices (Spry 2022, Carroll 2021, Clancey & Bauer 2018, Rasmussen 2014, Stout et.al 2016). This study continues this conversation on pedagogy, in line with evidence presented in Watson (2021) that draws attention to careful course design in alleviating the challenges of teaching race. In an analysis of student assessments that include weekly questions and written assignments and exams, Watson finds power in the “discomfort” of the theme of race, ultimately concluding that “teachable moments exist” insofar that “sharing personal anecdotes of race’s effects are a powerful learning tool for students. Instructors must thus be willing to speak candidly about how issues of race *have or have not* touched their lives” (p. 655).

In this paper, I analyze a set of assignments in the course, “Race and the American Political System,” taught in Spring 2017, Spring 2019 and Spring 2021. Given that the issue of race in America took on new complexity since the course was first offered (e.g., the Trump presidency, rise in White Nationalism, the 2017 Charlottesville, VA tragedy, the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement), the course has been popular, having above average course enrollment (total N =50, approximately 17 students a semester).¹

The course has three parts: Part I opens with an introduction to the theoretical foundations of understanding the social construction of “race” and the notion of “political equality.” Part II transitions to a discussion of social movements (with heavy emphasis of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s, Black Power Movement of the 1970’s, and Black Lives Matter) followed by a consideration of various political institutions. Part III closes with a discussion of various public policy domains such as immigration, criminal justice, and education.

Assessments: Weekly Blackboard Journal, Weekly Voice Journal, and Reflection Podcast

The instructor included one assessment intended to elicit active reflection about the course’s themes. By design, these assignments were less formal than other assignments in the course² and “anonymous” shared only with the instructor³.

The instructor altered this assignment in each of the years that the course was taught in an attempt to account for deficiencies. It was the “Weekly Blackboard Journal” in Spring 2017,

¹ The course was taught face to face in 2017 and 2019 and online-synchronous in 2021 due to social distancing policies due to the COVID19 pandemic.

² In addition to this assignment, other assessments included quizzes, response papers, a research paper, and oral presentation.

³ An “anonymous assessment” as defined in this paper is an assessment that is only shared with the instructor (unlike a “discussion board” post which is publicly shared with the class).

“Weekly Voice Journal” in Spring 2019, and “Reflection Podcast” in Spring 2019. The following section describes these assignments and offers some observations about their utility.

Weekly Blackboard Journal (Spring 2017)

For the Weekly Blackboard Journal, the student was required to submit a journal entry, posted online to the learning management system, Blackboard, for 12 weeks of the semester. Each journal entry required a minimum of 150 words and was due at the end of the week. It was encouraged that students write about the week’s theme, but this was not required (as long as the post was relevant to racial politics). The Weekly Blackboard Journal was assessed for breadth and depth of commentary, integration of course concepts, and timeliness of submission.

Of N=14, less than half of the students completed all 12 postings (n=6), with the average number of postings = 7.8. When compiled, the journal entries of all students amounted to a voluminous 44 single spaced pages of writing. Please see Appendix A (“Select Weekly Blackboard Journal Submissions”) for a selected compilation of student work.

- Advantages of the Weekly Blackboard Journal: Consistency and Rigor

Weekly Blackboard Journals met the goal of having students write and reflect consistently through the course. The assignment allowed the student to consider the week’s theme and an opportunity to comment on an event covered in the mass media and trending on their social media feeds. An example of a popular post was the announcement of President Trump’s Muslim and Refugee Travel Ban executive order (January 2017). Inevitably, current events that carried significant racial implications were popular journal topics.

Interestingly, although the Weekly Blackboard Journal was considered to be “informal” writing compared to other assignments in the class, most entries possessed formal elements (e.g.,

employing citation styles, a reluctance for writing in the first person as one would for a journal entry, avoiding conversational tone, and possessing a proper introduction, body and conclusion). Also, the typical posting exceeded the 150-word minimum with many postings surpassing 500 words. Overall, the Weekly Blackboard Journal possessed an unexpected rigor.

- **Disadvantages of the Weekly Blackboard Journal: Imbalance Among other Assignments**

Students had difficulty completing the required 12 postings. Submissions were lacking on weeks where other writing assignments were due (e.g., response papers or research and writing for their final papers), a signal that priority was given to other “formal” (and more heavily weighted) assessments.

Weekly Voice Journal (Spring 2019)

The Weekly Voice Journal was similar to the Weekly Blackboard Journal insofar that it was an anonymous journal entry and required students to post about the course’s theme of the week or a topic relevant to racial politics for 12 weeks out of the semester. The main difference, however, was that students were required to record an .mp3 file of their voice and upload it to the course’s cloud drive. Each journal entry required 5 minutes of recording at minimum. The Weekly Voice Memo was assessed for breadth and depth of commentary, integration of course concepts, and timeliness of submission.

Of N=18, five students successfully completed all voice memos with the average amount of posts = 7.2. When compiled, there were 87 .mp3 files. Please see Appendix B (“Selected Weekly Voice Journal Excerpts”) for a selected compilation of student work.

- **Advantages of the Weekly Voice Journal: Depth and Informality**

Students did not have difficulty in providing a voice memo of at least 5 minutes, with several students submitting entries upwards of 10 minutes. Many students would remark in their voice journals that they “would just be getting started” or “that they had so much more to say.” Overall, the Weekly Voice Memo allowed the student to delve into a topic with depth and in a tone that was conversational, relaxed, and unrestrained. The instructor found that the tone captured the spirit of informality as intended, marking a sharp contrast from the Weekly Blackboard Journal.

- Disadvantages of the Weekly Voice Journal: Imbalance (again) Among Other Assignments and Technological Barriers

The conversion from a weekly written assignment to a weekly voice journal did not increase response rates as expected. Less than half of students completed all postings. Like the Weekly Blackboard Postings, students found it difficult to balance this assignment with other assignments in the course. Also, there were students that faced technological obstacles and found it difficult to record and upload their voice memos.

Reflection Podcast (Spring 2021)

At the conclusion of the term, students were required to produce an 8-10 minute podcast reflecting on the themes covered in the course spending 5 minutes on the following questions: 1) To what extent has your thinking about race in America evolved since the first day you were in this course? 2) Given what you’ve learned in class, what do you believe it will take to have a productive, national dialogue on race in the United States? Unlike the Weekly Blackboard Journal and Weekly Voice Journal, the student was required to only make one submission.

Of N=18, all but one student completed the assignment. All students that completed the assignment spoke for at least 10 minutes. When the podcasts were transcribed, it produced 34 single spaced pages. Please see Appendix C (“Selected Reflection Podcast Excerpts”) for a selected compilation of student work.

- Advantages of the Reflection Podcast: Culminating Reflection

Given that the Reflection Podcast was assigned at the course’s conclusion, the questions were tailored for students to integrate course content and to reflect on how their thinking has changed over the course. As demonstrated in Appendix B, students were able to employ course content and illustrate how it impacted their outlook on race and racial politics.

- Disadvantages of the Reflection Podcast: Inability in Capturing Attitudes Over Time and Respond to Events in Real-Time and Technological barriers

Although the Reflection Podcast produced some very powerful commentary and demonstration of course content, the students were deprived of the opportunity to engage in an iterative, weekly reflection. Thus, the Reflection Podcast seemed to demonstrate competency in the course material rather than “grappling” with it.

Also, similar to the Weekly Voice Memo, students had technological obstacles with completing the Reflection Podcast. Students wished to submit a “polished” product that was high in audio quality similar to the professionally produced podcasts that they listen to. Students sought to record their podcasts with high quality equipment (e.g., the multimedia computer labs) with some students learning new multimedia software (e.g., Apple Logic and Adobe Premier).

Lessons Learned

In terms of learning about race in America, what were some lessons learned through these assignments?

First, *the anonymous submission mattered significantly*. Without peer scrutiny, students were incentivized to engage the course content freely. Students would repeatedly demonstrate struggle with content, illustrated by statements such as “I’m working through how I feel” and “I’m unsure what to make of this.” The spirit of the assignments was exploratory with students offering free-flowing expression and being less measured than other assessments. The Blackboard Weekly Journal and the Weekly Voice Journal might be better tools in capturing this exploration. It provided a means for students to think about the course content iteratively through the term. Conversely, the Reflection Podcast may be a better tool in capturing students’ reflection of their journey after the course has concluded.

Examples:

Recently, I have been having trouble deciding whether or not I should engage in conversations about race in certain situations with certain people. I think it is a common struggle for people that depends on a couple different factors. I usually do feel compelled to criticize those who judge and speak with racial biases but, depending on the person, sometimes I worry that it could turn hostile or ruin a relationship (Weekly Blackboard Journal, Spring 2017).

Unfortunately, it’s hard for me to express opinions about race relations because I do not truly know how to word it. It’s extremely difficult for me to even write this short 150 word passage without second guessing every sentence I write. In the end this main dilemma is that I feel that every single sentence written on this topic is over analyzed. I’m not a White supremacist by any stretch of the imagination but instead a man who is very aware of the current deteriorating state of race relations in our world today. Instead I hope for peace, equality and courage for all genders and races. Overall I’m a tad apprehensive about speaking my mind in class but very aware that I need to push through these barriers so that I can expand my knowledge (Weekly Blackboard Journal Spring 2017).

During this week’s class there was a good amount of discussion about the true definition of equality when it comes to race relations. This brought me to think a lot about what I thought it truly meant. Does equality mean that we should equal the playing field to allow all people, no matter what ethnicity they come from, a chance at the same opportunity? Or is equality defined as the opportunity being the same and it can only be met if you put the hard work regardless of race? In my mind, I believe both are neither fully right or wrong. I believe that things like scholarships to minorities improve everyone’s lives. However I also believe that standards shouldn’t be changed just to include different types of people. (Weekly Blackboard Journal Spring 2017).

I was thinking about what we talked in class about the United States party system and how people have a hard time choosing in the two party system. So thinking about myself and my family, I remember my uncle was telling me when he first came to United States that he registered as a Republican and now he's registered as a Democrat. Just seeing the difference in that and what we were talking about in class how people change, individual changes or group changes. So it was kind of like my whole family changed parties at a certain point in time, which is really cool to look at and think about. I think about how people choose the lesser evil. I think we talked about that in class and how people don't know what side to be on and they just choose the side. That kind of fits them a little bit and have to go along with it, which is more common than I thought it was. I didn't think everyone felt that way. So it was interesting to look at that the topic that got me very interested in classes when you asked "does the Republican Party need more diversity or more ethnic minorities to join?" (Weekly Voice Memo Spring 2019)

I remember growing up as a kid and not understanding the differences between me and the minority kids in my class. Society told me over and over again, about the differences between us and the struggles we faced and how they were vastly different. Learning about race and talking about it is one of the ways that we can educate ourselves about race and the struggles individuals of other races face. Before this class, I knew about the struggles, stereotypes and injustices that affected minorities. However, I was always nervous to talk about it, because I only knew from what people have told me, or that I have learned or seen, I never went through that. I have known that injustices that minorities face are rooted in our justice system. They stem from laws or beliefs that were created and stem during a time where society kept minority individuals as slaves. And we have not fixed these issues. If this class has taught me anything, it is that the next generation has to be better than the ones before it. (Reflection Podcast Spring 2021)

Race was never a theme that we very explicitly talked about in my family. And it wasn't until my freshman year that I really began to critically approach my view on the world and how it impacts others. For this reason, on my first day in this class, I was still relatively new to the idea that race is a social construct, but it's also one that impacts every facet of life for both me and for those of other races. At this point, I had spent what I thought to be fairly significant amount of time unpacking my inherent privilege as a white individual in America. Additionally, I had recently been introduced to the idea to the discussion about how when White people talk about race and when they talk about issues stemming from race, they tend to center themselves in the conversation. This is deeply harmful as it shoves and crowds out the voices of those who have lived experiences with racism in the American political system. (Reflection Podcast Spring 2021)

Second, *informal assignments produce a modicum of healthy expression for themes that are personally and emotionally difficult to navigate.* Given the inundation of news that students are exposed to in the digital media environment, students are naturally compelled to offer a "real-time" response. These assignments provided an outlet for the student that allows for constant cognitive processing of an event.

Examples:

In the past couple of days we've had this topic explode to a huge scale: Trump's immigration reforms, to first build a wall between the US and Mexico and secondly ban immigrants from 7 predominately Muslim countries from entry into the US. I feel like people overlook the fact that the current system of vetting potential immigrants is extremely outdated and in need of change. In this aspect I agree with President Trump, yet how he's gone about executing this plan seems a tad crazy in my opinion. I feel the proper way to improve the problems some Americans have with illegal immigrants is by improving our own immigration system (Weekly Blackboard Journal Spring 2017).

The Washington Post published an article about the movie "Get Out" at the end of February with the headline "A Horror Film That Makes Racism Terrifying." Someone on Twitter tweeted a photo of the article saying "So when hasn't racism been terrifying?" I think the movie and this article are very interesting and important because it does make clear that institutional racism is legitimately scary and threatening. Although I have not seen the movie yet I think that it has been so successful because it has tapped into the fear and danger that many people feel or face because of racism. And I think that this tweet is also trying to state that. "Get Out" doesn't use the theme of racism as a dramatic way to create a horror movie. It uses typical horror film tropes to show that institutional racism is actually just horrifying (Weekly Blackboard Journal Spring 2017).

Kendrick Lamar's latest album, "DAMN," dropped tonight. In the song DNA, Kendrick Lamar features a recorded quote from someone (not sure who) who is talking about how hip hop has done more damage to African-Americans than racism has. Although you cannot deny that themes of sexism and violence are present in some hip-hop songs, the quote KL uses perfectly portrays how many people feel as if they have the right to delegitimize black art and culture and act as if they are being advocates. Minorities, especially black people, have been systematically silenced and pushed to the fringes and people attempting to cast off hip-hop as if the whole genre promotes violence furthers this pattern of silence. (Weekly Blackboard Journal Spring 2017).

What happened in Ferguson a few years ago? A lot of people were angry as they should be, but to riot like they did and businesses to their ground - what good came from that? I thought during that time, what happened to a peaceful protest that King had modeled for this nation? Especially what happened in DC over this last weekend and what's happening with trans rights and the Women's Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter and immigration, I believe this nation is just creating more division between people. Using hate and not befriending them, we just hate someone who has a different beliefs and just automatically write them off and don't care. How are we expected to change if we don't understand each other. If we don't get to know each other and understand each other. Where we all coming from? (Weekly Voice Journal Spring 2019)

But what this class really helped me do is be able to just spark conversation with others on the issue of racial injustice in America. I mean, not having been a victim directly from police brutality, but I know many friends and family who have been. Even if my families are not the one who involved in those names such as Trayvon Martin, or Brianna Taylor, and George Floyd, I feel for them because I know their family must feel this ache and hatred towards the system.

Because who would ever want a family member to die, especially over law enforcement? Especially over incidents that should have never escalated to that point. (Reflection Podcast Spring 2021)

Potential Changes to the Course

- *Creating and employing a rubric sensitive to critical thinking on race.*

This rubric might adapt existing rubrics for personal journaling that assess course content engagement and personal growth. A powerful exercise may be for the class to engage in the development of the rubric and to self-assess by the term's end.

- *Finding the correct balance between a weekly, iterative reflection and an end-of-term reflection.*

It is important to appropriately balance the assessments of the course. Doing so may warrant eliminating other course assignments to allow the time and space for the completion of a weekly assignment. Another alternative could be to simply reduce the number of reflections in a term. In substance, there is a difference between reflections occur iteratively through the term and a one-time reflection assignment at the conclusion of the semester. It is sensible, then, to offer both options if possible.

- *Careful reconsideration of technology.*

The transition from a weekly written journal to a weekly voice journal was an attempt to alleviate the burden of concurrent written assignments. While this captured the spirit of informality, it did not increase response rates and imposed a technological barrier for some. Those who were advantaged were those with smartphones, on-campus residents (who had access to computer labs) and were competent in digital navigation/organization.

Conclusion: Teaching and Learning About Race in the Context of Student Learning Outcomes

The student work is voluminous amounting to 44 single spaced pages of writing and approximately 10 hours of voice recordings (about 80 single spaced pages when transcribed). More than sheer quantity, the work exceeded expectations of student outcomes, particularly for “Intentional Learning.”⁴

From the student perspective, there is a reluctance to engage publicly when discussing race. In this course, there is evidence of self-censorship and constraint when there is sharing among peers (in class dialogue and in shared assignments). Students expressed a difficulty in this course to “think about loud,” mostly for fear of being insensitive. The informality and anonymity of these assignments provides permission and agency for students to be unsure and if needed, an outlet to state “I don’t know.”

From the instructor’s perspective, these observations are impactful to the conversation about teaching and learning about racial politics. The main takeaway is that “safe spaces” to discuss politically sensitive areas must extend past the classroom and embedded into the course’s assessments⁵. This opens the question, then, to how to best capture the reflective spirit that is necessary for Intentional Learning while rewarding critical thinking and personal growth.

This study illustrates that active reflection might be achieved through course designs that embed anonymity and informality. Thankfully, there is a wealth of knowledge devoted to both areas. For anonymity, it has been valued for its potential of bringing out diversity of opinion

⁴ “Intentional Learning” is a prominent student learning outcome at the instructor’s institution. It is defined as “Students will be provided with opportunities to cultivate intellectual agility and creativity, purposeful learning, self-assessment, health awareness, self-confidence and the ability to manage change. Students will be encouraged to continue lifelong holistic development personally, professionally, aesthetically and physically through self-reflection, feedback from others and new learning experiences.” (Chestnut Hill College Student Learning Outcomes). For a deeper discussion of intentional learning, see Bereiter & Scardamalia (2018).

⁵ Carroll (2021) discusses “safe spaces” for political dialogue through an alternative space outside of the classroom. This takes this argument further in thinking about expressive outlets via course assessments.

within a classroom and provides agency for the student to be critical. New tools in learning management systems (LMS) and clicker/polling technology provides for great opportunity but should be employed with caution. Instructors must be aware of students who are disadvantaged: those without smartphones, live off campus (without access to computer labs), and are technically deficient in digital navigation and organization. For informality, there is evidence that a thoughtful assessment augments the course experience considerably. Informal assessments help the instructor obtain a sense of progress over the course while providing a student with a means to make mistakes without penalty. This study finds that informal assessments are ideal for active reflection, but that it is imperative to find a balance between weekly, iterative reflection and end-of-term reflection.

References

- Alexander-Floyd, N. (2008). Critical race pedagogy: Teaching about race and racism through legal learning strategies. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 41(1), 183-188.
- Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (2018). Intentional learning as a goal of instruction. In *Knowing, learning, and instruction* (pp. 361-392). Routledge.
- Behl, N. (2017). Diasporic researcher: an autoethnographic analysis of gender and race in political science. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 5(4), 580-598.
- Bauer, K., & Clancy, K. (2018). Teaching race and social justice at a predominantly white institution. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(1), 72-85.
- Carroll, J. N. (2021). How a hip-hop digital space became an outlet for political dialogue. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 17(sup1), 762-769.
- Clancy, K. A., & Bauer, K. (2018). Creating student-scholar-activists: Discourse instruction and social justice in political science classrooms. *New Political Science*, 40(3), 542-557.
- Rasmussen, A. C. (2014). Toward an intersectional political science pedagogy. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 10(1), 102-116.
- Holland, L. (2006). Teaching and learning in diversity classes: The significance of classroom climate and teacher credibility. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2(2), 187-203.

- Mendez, J. M., & Mendez, J. P. (2018). What's in a Name... or a Face? Student Perceptions of Faculty Race. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(2), 177-196.
- McClain, P. D., Ayee, G. Y., Means, T. N., Reyes-Barriénte, A. M., & Sediye, N. A. (2016). Race, power, and knowledge: Tracing the roots of exclusion in the development of political science in the United States. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 4(3), 467-482.
- Michelson, M. R., & Wilkinson, B. C. (2022). Best Practices in Diversifying Political Science. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 1-4.
- Rasmussen, A.C. (2014) Toward an Intersectional Political Science Pedagogy, *Journal of Political Science Education*, 10:1, 102-116, DOI: [10.1080/15512169.2013.862501](https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2013.862501)
- Reid, R. A., & Curry, T. A. (2019). Are we there yet? Addressing diversity in Political Science subfields. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 52(2), 281-286.
- Sampaio, A. (2006). Women of color teaching political science: Examining the intersections of race, gender, and course material in the classroom. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 39(4), 917-922.
- Sinclair-Chapman, V. (2015). Leveraging diversity in political science for institutional and disciplinary change. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 48(3), 454-458.
- Stout, V., Kretschmer, K., & Stout, C. (2016). The continuing significance of history: an active-learning simulation to teach about the origins of racial inequality. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 12(2), 230-240. Chicago
- Spry, A. D. (2022). The# RiceBreaker: Facilitating Intercultural Dialogues in the Classroom by Engaging Shared Experiences. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 1-10.
- Watson, R. D. (2021). Hard Truths: The Importance of Teaching Race in Introductory American Government and Politics for Undergraduates. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 17(sup1), 649-659.

Appendix A: Selected Weekly Blackboard Journal Submissions

On Race and Ethnicity

In class on Wednesday, we discussed the difference between race and ethnicity and the professor challenged the class to think about whether or not race is a made-up construct. In regards to this idea, I would like to pose the idea that the categorization of race may be beneficial to the social scientist, but perhaps may be destructive to the individual.

As a white male, my categorization as white does classify me as within a group of euro-centric people but it is important to think of how many in society view the term "white". Many see it as people who are very assimilated into U.S. Culture. Nevertheless, as a white male who also

has a very strong ethnic background that may put me at odds with the main culture as many white immigrants carry strong ethnic backgrounds while avoiding assimilation. In fact, throughout my childhood, I have had often been told that I'm "too ethnic" to be white as I have clung very close to my Italian ethnicity.

Beyond my personal example, another is that the classification of Hispanic may be helpful in classifying a whole community of people in one block, but many Hispanic people prefer to be recognized by their country of origin and find offense to such an umbrella term. In fact, it often allows people to generalize the whole Hispanic community such as seeing one who is Mexican in a similar light as to one who is Puerto Rican or Cuban. In addition, many Hispanic people are often mixed race between indigenous groups and different African heritages which would make their race very difficult to identify.

The Puzzle of Minority Coalitions

As seen in the example of Mayor Bradley in Los Angeles, there is much electoral power gained by building a political coalition of different groups. Bradley was able to bring different groups together such as blacks, Latinos, Asians, and whites. What was remarkable was how different each of these groups are and how it was not a given that these groups would band together.

Previously, as someone whose first real glance at politics was the Obama candidacy, perhaps I have taken these types of coalitions for granted. To me, it always made sense that racial minorities would band together due to the economic and civil rights battles that each group faces. However, this chapter has really made me realize just how complex the relations between minority groups can be. For example, in LA, there was much tension between Blacks and Asians as Koreans began buying black stores that were accelerated by the shooting of a black person by an Asian store owner. This shows how minority groups may have conflicts that prevent them from uniting as it seems one group, may get the resources another group wants. Cultural barriers also exist which can prevent these groups from coming together. With all that said, the coalitions of Barack Obama and Tom Bradley should actually not be seen as typical political behavior but as a carefully constructed political miracle. Both of these leaders were able to appeal to a variety of people and appeal to their troubles and allow them to come together despite barriers. Both were even able to get a significant of white people as they ran in places with a majority white electorate. Going forward, as the number of minorities climb, especially Latinos, it's a wonder if the Obama coalition will remain or if Latinos may feel that they may not at some point even need the assistance of other minority groups.

Immigration Motives

This week we focused on immigration policy in the United States, especially Donald Trump's ban on immigration from Muslim nations. While proponents of limitations on immigration such as the Muslim ban or a wall on the U.S. southern border with Mexico claim that this is an act for the well being of Americans to protect them from criminal illegal immigrants from Mexico or immigrants from Muslim nations that could be terrorists, data has shown that these instances are a vast minority. If these immigrant groups are not really harmful to the safety to

the American public, why are Republicans and others so adamant about excluding these people?

I wonder is if there is something about the race of these immigrants that make some Americans not want their entry into the U.S. If one looks at attitudes towards Mexican and Muslim-American citizens, one can find similar attitudes that are held to these groups trying to enter the nation. Muslim-Americans have faced verbal and sometimes physical abuse in public areas from people who do not accept their religion and fear their faith. It has become a stereotype that some associate Islam automatically with violence and terrorism. In the case of Mexicans, the Mexican ethnicity has become associated with the drug trade, with being an undocumented citizen, and almost has a bad connotation in everyday language. Therefore, while many wish to believe that the move to ban certain groups from entering the country, while safety may be the concern for some, one must observe how Muslims and Mexican citizens are treated in this country and all the prejudice and intolerance they face. This isn't just safety politics, it's Us vs Them racism politics of exclusion.

Expression of Race

An interesting conversation today regarding the difference between race and ethnicity, among other things, I can't help but think about how I personally don't feel much of anything towards the origins of my family. My father's family was always quick to point themselves out as being Irish. That being said, my grandmother's family traces back to Ireland, but my grandfather's? Not so much. Regardless, that side of the family is fully decked out in Irish trinkets to show pride in.... something I guess. That in my estimation is the extent of their devotion to their Irishness. To be Irish for them is more about the American experience of it as much as any sort of hearkening back. It was an easy way to have an ethnic identity in America, one that centers around a yearly corned beef dinner, which itself is an American institution. Their Irish celebration is steeped in a meal that is not Irish at all. On my mother's side, my grandfather's family hails from all over Europe, but my grandmother is of specifically Polish descent. She is 93 now, but earlier in her life, I'm told she listened to Polish radio and got a newspaper delivered specifically in Polish language. That being said, with absolute certainty I can say my grandmother has never spoken a word of Polish in front of me. My grandmother took a specific, calculated decision when it comes to their feelings towards her ethnic background. Her generation wanted their children to learn English, to be American first, and chase the American dream. I feel some disappointment at the unwillingness of that generation to find a way to embrace their ethnic roots. I understand they made this choice in the wake of the Great Depression to try to achieve a better life, but it leaves me with only an ability to use an ancestry service to create an ethnic legacy for myself. Taking family tradition out of that journey takes away the warmth of community that I think that journey is all about, or at least I hope it is.

Race and Gender

A question that I have been attempting to rack my brain around is how a minority in both race and gender has been at the forefront of the American political and economic spectrum since the dawn of the United States of America. Obviously I am talking about the white male

population, one that I categorize myself as, and how for 200 plus years, has been able to keep a "lock" on political ideology and representation in the United States government. With the impending population shift in which the Latino population will overtake the white population as the majority in the U.S., will this shift allow for the Latino population to be better represented in the government? This question has baffled me, simply because I truly cannot see this happening. I believe this because the United States ideology was forged behind the WASP population and their beliefs, and to change this or even combat this would meet strong opposition from those currently in power. I find it somewhat troubling that in a country where the government is supposed to be run by the people, and for the people, that a majority of the population is under represented, and therefore their values and needs are not met as much as those who run the country. My question for anyone, is that in a country where the majority of the population is non-white, will the social values, and government public policy change to meet their needs? Or will the dominant white male population continue to control politics, and continue to shape public policy on their own beliefs, rather than that of the majority? I hope that my research, as well as this class, will be able to help me fully understand this shift and see if the public policy will change or stay the same.

Syria

For this week's journal entry I would like to discuss the recent Assad led bombings of Syrian cities and the chemical weapons used to murder innocent civilians, in what was said to be an attack on terrorists. First, after the horrible incident took place, Donald Trump acted swiftly and launched missiles into Syria taking out the Air Force base where the bombs took off from. Personally I think this was a bold move but a necessary one. For the first time someone acted out against the Assad regime, and said that what they are doing is bad and doing something about it. I am thinking this with race, because social media (of course) has blown up over this, no pun intended. I have seen terrible tweets, one specifically where an individual divided the country up into states, labeled them blue and red, and said "Syria bomb the red countries, where the whites who voted for Trump are". I am not sure in what world this is acceptable, but to condemn a race, simply for who they voted for in 2017!? This is insanity, and what is worse is the amount of positive feedback and encouragement it received. The division in this country, both politically and racially is massive. I wonder what steps are needed to even make a dent in bringing the gap closer together.

Kendrick Lamar

Kendrick Lamar's latest album, "DAMN," dropped tonight. In the song DNA., Kendrick Lamar features a recorded quote from someone (not sure who) who is talking about how hip hop has done more damage to African Americans than racism has. Although you cannot deny that themes of sexism and violence are present in some hip-hop songs, the quote KL uses perfectly portrays how many people feel as if they have the right to delegitimize black art and culture and act as if they are being advocates. Minorities, especially black people, have been systematically silenced and pushed to the fringes and people attempting to cast off hip-hop as if the whole genre promotes violence furthers this pattern of silence. I cannot count the number of times I have heard older white people say that rap isn't music, isn't art. Although hip-hop is no longer fringe, it does seem as if black culture has been exploited by consumerism. We so readily embrace black art and culture, but so often fail to embrace the people, communities, and messages behind that culture. Granted, I did choose to pick the only part of Kendrick

Lamar's song that was not sung by a black person. Maybe I also participate in this exploitative and hypocritical pattern.

On Racial Slurs and Stereotypes

I have never felt discriminated against because of my race. People will also joke and tell me that I am not really that Asian because I am half white and "act white." And maybe that is true. I don't know that many Japanese people and I don't speak Japanese. However, whenever I meet someone new -- particular men -- the second or third question they ask me is always something to do with my ethnicity. Even though I don't fulfill some of those Asian stereotypes I am always immediately perceived as Asian. I've decided that I am not just going to laugh it off when someone uses an Asian slur around me or for me. My mother once told me that when my father was unemployed he made dozens of phone calls to people who were hiring and they hung up on him when they heard his accent. I've also seen people make fun of my father for his accent and culture because they thought he wouldn't understand (and, usually, I don't think he did). I know that many Asian Americans face intense discrimination. And that racism usually goes unchecked because it doesn't necessarily manifest itself in ways that we consider traditional racism.

Appendix B: Selected Weekly Voice Journal Excerpts

These submissions have been transcribed from .mp3 sound files.

Legacy of MLK

To reflect about Martin Luther King, what I admired most about King was his advocacy for a nonviolent and peaceful protest. Honestly, that's why I believe King was able to make such an impact. He had every reason to be angry and lash out and hurt people who hurt him. But instead he always kept his composure through everything he didn't let anger get the best of him, but instead transform that anger into good faith in love for other people. King once said he would befriend a man who is denying him rights and change that man. Through friendship. Does this change happens when individuals can make a connection to what is different for them? When they get to know someone? Who has different beliefs and a different background, different life story? And therefore learn to see the world through that said person perspective. I do believe we are all one. We as human beings have far more connections with each other than differences and it starts with befriending that one person. Who has a different life story than you do?

On Mass Incarceration

The United States has the most incarcerated people in the world. This fact is really shocking to me, especially because I know that countries like India and China have over a billion more people than we do. Doing research on this topic, I learned that if the US prison population were a city, it be t in the top ten largest cities in our country. Mass incarceration is a huge problem that needs to be continuously worked on and to be solved. An issue of why there are so many people behind bars is that people cannot afford to post bail, so they'll just sit in jail

until it's time for court take action. This I feel, puts poor people at a serious disadvantage. This issue affects families and I think plays a part in the downward spiral of money issues as well as more jail time. Many people associate our country's mass incarceration with the War on Drugs, which I personally believe holds true. In many ways, our drug laws are very misguided and come with very harsh sentence requirements. Another issue is that Black and Latino people are way more likely to be imprisoned than White people for the same drug charge, which is completely ridiculous and just very frustrating. I found that there were 1.5 million drug arrests in the United States of the year 2016, and 80% of them were for possession of drugs. Just possession of drugs. I also found that a person of color experiences discrimination at every stage of the judicial system and are far more likely to be stopped, searched, arrested, convicted and harshly sentenced, particularly for drug law violation. Research shows that prosecutors are twice as likely to pursue a mandatory minimum sentence for black people than white people charged with the same offense. That statistic is just very frustrating to read honestly among all people who received mandatory minimum sentencing. 38% were Latino. 31% were black.

On Party ID and Race

I was thinking about what we talked in class about the United States party system and how people have a hard time choosing in the two party system. So thinking about myself and my family, I remember my uncle was telling me when he first came to United States that he registered as a Republican and now he's registered as a Democrat. Just seeing the difference in that and what we were talking about in class how people change, individual changes or group changes. So it was kind of like my whole family changed parties at a certain point in time, which is really cool to look at and think about. I think about how people choose the lesser evil. I think we talked about that in class and how people don't know what side to be on and they just choose the side. That kind of fits them a little bit and have to go along with it, which is more common than I thought it was. I didn't think everyone felt that way. So it was interesting to look at that the topic that got me very interested in classes when you asked "does the Republican Party need more diversity or more ethnic minorities to join"?

On Immigration

In this journal, I wanted to start talking about the immigration wave that we learned about in class. So learning about the four waves was really interesting to me, I like to see how and when people came into the country. I didn't really learn about that before. And I've also been learning the same stuff in my geography class, so it was really cool to investigate and see how and what people reactions were. Wave one, I kind of knew about Western Europe and then wave two. I kind of knew about the Irish and the Germans coming into United States. So wave three and wave four were kind of interesting to me. I didn't really learn about these waves, but my family fits into wave 4. And that was kind of cool to compare to, so I really liked learning about that. My oldest aunt and uncle came in the 1970s and it was kind of cool to see that fits in. I didn't really know about the immigration reform, so that was also cool to look into. Besides that, I really liked learning about the immigration waves, and I feel like each time is a similar pattern of residents in the United States having kind of a negative outlook on immigration. But again, I feel like immigrants have a much better experience than what they would have had in their home countries. It's an odd situation. I guess immigrants come into

the country for economic opportunity or an opportunity to have a better life and hopefully and for the most part, they succeed in that. We're also talking about American values and how those can change. Over time, but isn't that the point of the United States to be a melting pot where anyone is welcome and we kind of come together as a nation? I feel like everything changes over time and so will immigration and so will the United States. Different cultures and traditions will only bring more value in my opinion. I mean, I might just be saying that because I am a minority group in my experience, I feel like my family has done a lot to fit into the ideal American culture, but also have kept part of their roots. So I think the United States is heading for an expansion of values and the more the values, the more in depth the country is and more accepting it as of other people

On the Future of Race Relations in America

It is hard to predict the future because it can change so quickly. But just as it is stated above, history does sometimes repeat itself and that is something that needs to be watched over constantly. We cannot go through what the United States went through before. It not only tears our country apart, but it also makes us vulnerable to any other nations. Yes, the future is important and should be a concern to everyone. More important are the moments that we're in right now. And right now it is believed that progress has definitely been made. As stated in the book, in spite of these ongoing concerns, progress has clearly been made. The authors of the book are both black women. One was raised in the West and north. And the other was raised in the South. One was born in 1950 into a society that was highly segregated. The other was born in 1982 into a society that was simultaneously relatively integrated and socially segregated. In our lifetimes we have seen a major transformation in the social, educational, and political opportunities of various racial groups. One of us has seen grandsons and granddaughters of slaves registering to vote for the first time. The signs that designated colored water fountains and restrooms were removed and the election of the first black mayors. You had both seen the election of the first black governor in the state that was at the heart of the old Confederacy. Integrated churches and police forces in the rural deep, South, and most importantly, the election of the first black president of the United States of America. Progress has been made, although not equitably or swiftly. In conclusion, although progress has been made, it is still not enough. We must continue to make progress and better our nation.

On Private School Vouchers

I wanted to ask what he thinks of private school vouchers because that's an intrinsically racial issue and in areas like Philadelphia, where the charter schools aren't good. I mean there's supposed to be more advanced versions of regular high schools, but if the Charter Schools aren't good should we be giving scholarships to go to private school? And of course I'm biased about this because I went to one. It wasn't a private school, it was a public school, but it was a boarding school and we were on a college campus and we received an inordinate amount of government funding for each student. I think it's like \$20,000 for each student for each year. I wouldn't have been able to go there. I mean, all we had to pay was room and board, but I still would not have been able to go there had I not gotten scholarships that lowered my price to \$600 a year. My family just didn't have the money. So I think it's really good for people to be able to. What they were experiencing in terms of high schools and go to better schools if they're smart enough to go and make the most of that experience. I know that in Washington

DC, they approved self or private school vouchers. The people who oppose private school vouchers say, we should just put this money into repairing the public school system.

On the Perception of the Black Panther Party

Not a really fair thing to associate the Black Panthers with military or retaliation because that wasn't completely, you know what they stood for. They you opened schools and soup kitchens and foster homes and did a lot of good community things. So I think it would be fair to attribute the positive attributes or contributions made as well. That's not a very known part of the movement there. Most people only associate violence and I don't think that's very fair. We know we have Martin Luther King Day and while we're talking about him in this voice memo well, I guess but we don't have a Malcolm X day. I think that's a flaw in our country. It would be good for people to kind of understand the good parts. We always dwell on the negatives, for our class moving forward also.

Rise of the Alt-Right

I wanted to discuss today the alt right movement in correlation with the 2016 election now. Of course, we can't really say Trump directly caused the increase in hate crimes or the increase of the alt-right. There's definitely a correlation between the two, since it has heavily been impacted since 2016 and it's the same year Trump was elected president. You can't deny that there's not a correlation. Now the question is, do these individuals exist before Trump and had these beliefs beforehand? And Since Trump was elected president ,they felt more empowered? Had more courage to step up? And if that's the case... How do we, if these individuals already had these said beliefs about certain people? How do we.... Challenge their beliefs? They were already previously embedded in them. What is the problem then (if it's not necessarily Trump)? What has continued these certain beliefs? Once Trump doesn't have a platform anymore, there could be a decrease in alt-right movement? And a decrease in hate crimes? I kind of. That's something that I'm leading towards if Trump did lose. If there is a correlation between the increase of hate crimes and Trump's election, then maybe since of Trump doesn't have a platform anymore, would there be a decrease in hate crimes. That's kind of the question - what's going to happen in 2020? How is that going to impact individuals in society? The 2020 election is something I am looking forward to.

Appendix C: Select Reflection Podcast Submissions

These submissions have been transcribed from .mp3 sound files.

Question 1: To what extent has your thinking about race in America evolved since the first day you were in this course?

Question one, my thinking of race in America evolved since the first day of his course. From a more statistical standpoint, I would say I had a pretty good knowledge on race in America, because as a black woman, I was very much aware of the disparities between the races here in America and their reasons and why they occurred. I was also aware of the past history, but I can say during this course, we dug deeper into how race in America functions. For example, I definitely gained more knowledge on bills, acts and policies, and the historical context as to

why these were signed. This course tied in my current knowledge of race into politics, and how they go hand in hand.

I learned how race can affect our education. Beforehand, I knew a lot of schools were underfunded. But after taking this course, it came to my realization that many other districts that were underfunded are predominantly minority communities, and that definitely has an effect on our futures. In this day and age, it's very hard to succeed without an education. And if that is not accessible, then people might lead to other things to support themselves, unfortunately, can you lead a lot of people down the wrong path. On a different note, I've never taken a class that involves race as much as this one. And it was pleasant to hear other students and the perspective their perspective on it, because I feel like it's not talked about enough in education, especially the effect that it has, whether people realize it or not. I enjoyed hearing various experiences of other students and how they view things. With the visual examples that we watched, like, the videos are in class, and the ones we had to watch, on our own, definitely opened my eyes more. I think for me, seeing and hearing the breakouts, the citizens and just the overall trauma that comes with, great lengths just to have equality, we're still fighting for that today. This course just simply connected a lot of dots for me and a lot of just various aspects of race and politics into one and how they intermingle with each other. Before this course, I'd never fully considered the impact race has on politics as much as it actually does. I think I saw it more as a separate thing with race and politics, being in their own entity. But now I for sure know that they are definitely correlated with each with each other.

To begin, I want to state that I am a criminal justice major and a restorative justice minor, in which I've had a lot of experience and learning and thinking about race in America. However, not much when it came to race in American politics, I've learned many new ideas and terms. And I'll admit, I had no idea what politics was coming into the class. Like, I have some ideas, but I didn't feel like I had a grasp of understanding. I knew from history classes of inequality towards blacks, Latinos, Chinese, and so forth, such as with slavery, Jim Crow laws, voting disenfranchisement, of poll taxes, the grandfather clause, and the literacy tests. And then you have immigrant policies and more.

But when it came to this class and learning, I like the depth of intersectionality, of race and gender. So often, women of color, I feel at least are forgotten about. Not broadcasted enough to see their struggles with intersectionality and inequality can also be true for one's race, and their religion. Becoming more knowledgeable in politics, I can see how policies and life can change through social movements or having a representative that can make that change. I like how we learn things from our main textbook, *American government in Black and White*. It was well rounded and gave a good introduction of the beginning of how America started out with their policies and political institutions which can be seen as extractive due to the fact that they were selective in the groups of people who benefited. As America evolved, there is a sense of vicious and virtuous circles that separated the south and north, which didn't come closer together until the end of the Civil War, and later, the end of segregation policies. While there was de jure segregation, there is a sense of de facto segregation to this day. I've seen the growth of polarization, as the Democratic party with their ideologies grow further from those of the Republican Party. The small section, from *The New Jim Crow* book was very interesting

and similar to what I've read about from prison abolitionists. However, I agree that I can see mass incarceration as a new, evolved form of Jim Crow. For a nation that it has united in its name, it's ironic how often it seems that the people are divided.

I felt it was best to answer this question in a series of parts, beginning with the background from which I understood race having grown up in a relatively liberal Catholic family. I always had an understanding that it was wrong to discriminate against another person based on their race, their ethnicity, their religion, or really any other of the myriad factors that may present themselves. However, race was never a theme that we very explicitly talked about in my family. And it wasn't until my freshman year that I really began to critically approach my view on the world and how it impacts others. For this reason, on my first day, in this class, I was still relatively new to the idea that race is a social construct, but it's also one that impacts every facet of life for both me and for those of other races. At this point, I had spent a what I thought to be fairly significant amount of time, unpacking my inherent privilege as a white individual in America. Additionally, I had recently been introduced to the idea to the discussion about how when white people talk about race, and when they talk about issues stemming from race, they tend to center themselves in the conversation. And this is deeply harmful as it shoves out it crowds out the voices of those who have lived experiences with racism and the American political system.

As such, I wanted to approach this course from a very open minded and risk receptive perspective. I was hoping to learn to recognize the roots of my privilege and to truly understand how the American political system is set up to benefit the majority of white Americans and how this system consequentially actively oppresses groups of Americans such as the African-American community, the Hispanic community, and various other ethnic communities within the United States. I feel as though this class and the events of the past two or so years have played a very direct role in my understanding of race and politics. And in a lot of ways, they reaffirmed the idea that while I may have the benefit of not having to think about race, and how I will be perceived at all times, and how it impacts every choice I make in this world, there are millions of people who do not have that benefit. Instead of fighting for reform in the way that I believe it's needed, it is my personal responsibility to uplift the voices of those directly impacted, and to provide direct material support, whether it be through financial aid or through my presence at rallies in my support of various bills. And it is in this manner that I can be the most effective and respectful ally, because these individuals have experiences with racism that I never will and they understand its impacts and the ways that needs fixed in a way that I will never be able to really deeply understand.

I believed I had a very aware and good understanding of race and oppression in the United States. I've always understood that there is a racial divide and racial tension present throughout the states but I had not known that it had branched out into politics as well. One fact from the textbook that really shocked me was that in 2008, the US House of Representatives formally issued an apology for the government's participation in African-American slavery and the passing of Jim Crow laws. When reading up on that, again, the textbook made a very good point in saying that those two historical factors caused a great deal of loss and damage, including the loss of dignity and liberty for African-Americans. So with that, I was very shocked because it was in 2008 when they apologized. So it made me wonder why did it take this long for an apology to be issued?

I believe I do have a good understanding of race in the United States. But I did not really have a good grasp on American politics at the time but this class really opened up my eyes and I do have a better understanding on it now. So government is an important part of our country. I like to believe it gives us structure and stability. This course gave me a better understanding on how each part of our government works and how it affects race as well. Government is supposed to provide for the public good, and it's supposed to benefit society as a whole, rather than specific individuals or groups. Our government also has the responsibility to address issues and problems in terms of how they affect the well-being of our larger society. So when I used to think about race in the United States, my first thought would always go to discrimination towards black Americans, because it is what I've been exposed to the most. I've seen it with my own two eyes, various amount of times. But this class, made me realize that there are other minorities struggling in the United States. So for example, taking this course made me recognize, again, the struggle of undocumented immigrants. Many of these undocumented immigrants work in jobs, such as hotels, restaurant construction and agriculture. And a majority of them have put in blood, sweat and tears to make sure their life is better for them and their families. So although they are a really valuable asset to our economy, a large amount of Americans really dislike their presence in the United States. Because they are undocumented and they're unauthorized. So they believe illegal immigrants are taking jobs from legal workers and they also believe they're causing a lot of violence within our country. So that was just an example. But this topic made me open my eyes to that and that are many minorities going through hardships right now in the United States. Overall, this class opened my eyes to very serious problems occurring in the United States concerning race. So I really look forward to any future research I do on this topic and I plan to use what I've learned in this class to help educate anyone who's not really realized the racial problems occurring in the United States.

I think my thinking with race definitely has evolved since the first day. It is a course about thinking race more like an institution. Because in the beginning of this course, we talked about the founding fathers, and how they wanted to get free from Britain. And so, they did, they did by a revolutionary war to get Britain. However they caused is England terrorism, which is basically exclusion from other people, which were slaves and Native Americans, because they were focused on being free, civil liberties and having their own form of government. However, they did not allow blacks to also play a part in this new this new country, which was United States, they kept them institutionalized with slavery. And with other immigrants that come here, they keep one keep them institutionalized as well. So and also, you can see that like today, especially with the prison system. More African Americans, male and female, are the highest incarcerated. And so that shows that is really an institution they don't really, like care about the doubling of people who are African Americans or Hispanics. Because they fall in tension, you know, it is held people back.

They also did that with voting way back in in the reconstruction period, entering into the 1960s, they had this entire institution of Jim Crow segregation, to hold African Americans to hold minorities back from excelling and being the best in the United States. So it truly shows a separation that was all already there. Since the beginning of the founding of this nation. This nation is so institutionalized with race, they don't even want immigrants to become citizens. Now there are ways like giving people like a card or a green cards to get people ahead. But

even that took a lot of time for immigrants to get a citizenship. It's like, they're purposely trying to hold other people back based on race or based on ethnic background. I definitely think it's different in some urban cores is that when people talk about race, we talk about black and white, but they do not really talk about like, ethnicity is like where people are truly from. With race, you may see the black and white, you don't say this person is from like, maybe South Africa, or somebody like Zimbabwe or Kenya or Russia or like UK or Japan, like everybody's all focused on color, right?

Question 2: Given what you've learned in class, what do you believe it will take to have a productive, national dialogue on race in the United States?

Patience, patience and understanding. You know, what this class has taught me is that race in the US has been a long drawn out work. It's seeing many leaders come and go and work the hardest and give their lives basically for what they believe in. And it's still going on to this day. Personally, I know there's a lot of people that I don't agree with on the right. Those I don't even think are really nice people. And, you know, there are some people that I don't even agree with on the left as well. You know, I don't even fully agree with Biden, and some of his views, and I voted for him. But just because I don't agree with him and a lot of other people, doesn't mean I shouldn't listen to what they have to say. If I ignore what am I doing to help the greater good? I don't think that everybody on the right is racist. Same way, I don't think that everybody who's a cop is bad. But what needs to happen on both sides discussion? I feel like we're both for the same things. We just have different approaches and there are some specific people here that highlight the bad side of those groups so much and make them seem like the evil in this society. That it really is a detriment to the way that people think about them and it really bothers me that in the media, just keep going back and forth. That's not doing anything to help the situation, which is a situation that's been ramping since this country's birth. I mean, the moment that we're able to just sit down, not argue with each other, where they're insulting at least, and just talk. That's when I believe we can get something done in this country when it comes to race. We don't have to agree with everything we say. But we can agree to disagree. I'm thinking back to this video that I saw of author James Baldwin and he was speaking with this guy and they could not be more opposed to the idea of race in the 1960s. But they were able to discuss something and that's what we need in this country.

I believe it will take people putting their preconceived notions of what races and ethnic groups look or act like and really trying to understand their struggles with the community. Although it may be difficult putting those assumptions out into the open to be debunked, it may also help in having a truly open conversation. We have learned that the public opinion is comprised of many dimensions of American demographics, which include race and ethnicity, gender, age, region, education, socio economic status, and religious affiliation. We've also learned that our attitudes toward government also increasingly polarized, meaning that one is less likely be centralist or moderate. American society by large falls into two large camps, one that is both socially and economically liberal. And when it's socially economically conservative, you asked the question of given us environment, do you believe that polarization will continue or we will eventually move away from it? Also, what are the implications on race and ethnicity

today and for our future? So I said in my discussion board, that polarization in United States is going to be on the rise until there's not a middle.

I think that polarization will get pushed so far that as an independent, we have to pick a side. As we know, they're stereotypes for each political party things such as most minorities will vote Democratic and white Americans vote Republican. Looking at the rise of polarization. I feel as though it's more than race and ethnicity pushing us apart. I see a large group of African American men, women, including myself, that happen to be business owners that are now leaning more towards the right. This is because they benefit from the tax breaks that Republicans offer in comparison to Democrats. Not only that, they are business owners, but do not benefit from support programs such as in our income tax credit or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. I honestly think that the endgame of polarization is to demonize ethnicity or race that is not, quote unquote, where they should be. I see this oftentimes when I listen to people of color have conversations. There's a lot of judgment. One person of color will express that they voted for Trump and the next person of color will condemn them, make jokes or scream because they feel as though that is wrong. This class truly taught me that you have to focus on more than just that. I really wanted to focus on polarization because that is how the national dialogue will continue.

Given what I've learned about race in American politics, I believe more representation in government could benefit our country greatly. When researching representation in government, I found a chart by the Pew Research Center that showed the diversity for the Congress from 2019. So here are the stats: 76.5% were males 76.7 were white, 88.2% were Christian. Another interesting fact to note that we'll heard was there was only one black Republican House member and there is only one African American Republican senator, which is Tim Scott from South Carolina. So having representation in government has effects on our overall democracy. Seeing diversity in government shows that it can be an open and understanding system that everybody and anybody can participate in. With more representation in government, it can open up a dialogue on race in the United States.

Historically, in the past, government has mainly been all white and all male dominated. So it was hard to see how they could understand the hardships minorities have gone through. They could only put themselves in minority's shoes for so long, and most the time, they didn't even want to be put into those shoes. Shifting gears a little bit, more representation with the election of woman into office could also benefit our country. Having women in office can present new issues that haven't been recently discussed and they could present new ideas to solve these issues. So previously, when Donald Trump was president, people had a very hard time believing in his ideas and goals for our country because he had been known not to be in favor of particular races or ethnicities. It was very hard to trust and believe that he had everyone's best interests at heart. But now, today, the future is looking really bright. We have our first female, African-American and Asian-American Vice President, and there is a lot more representation being shown in every election. From the Pew Research Center again, just to show in 1965, there were five black U.S. House Representatives. And now in 2021, there are 57 representatives. So we're on the right track, we have a lot of work to go, but we're on the right track. So overall, more representation in government could certainly benefit and move

our country forward in the right direction. It can have citizens put more trust into the government if they see members who look a lot like them.

I learned the best way to have a productive national dialogue on race in the United States is to speak to those who you can get to directly. That is the best way to spread the word and improve racism in our country. Speak to those at the dinner table. Speak to friends. It may feel uncomfortable, but that is how changes may lead to actions that seem outside of your norm. Our country won't get anywhere if we don't speak on the civil injustice that is occurring today. And who better to speak to then to those who you live with or spend every day around? Because then, those people will tell the people that they see. Sooner or later the word will spread around. There'll be no change unless we speak on it. Time seems like they are getting worse. Some may argue they're not worse, but at least documented with video via our smartphones, in order to make the country a better place. When it comes to race, it all comes down to communication. We watched a video where an African American woman said she used to be scared to talk about racial problems. She said it made her feel uncomfortable. Now, she's on a TED talk, advising us to speak up, because it's absolutely necessary for a change. And it feels good to put it out there. And it's not just hidden. How do you think we got to where we are today? After the days of slavery and Jim Crow, thanks to Martin Luther King for speaking up, Malcolm X for speaking up. Before that, certain African-Americans, some of them thought they deserved to be treated that way. Therefore, you never know something until you're told otherwise. This goes for today. Many people don't understand that race is a problem in public schools, in the world of sports, music. It must be talked about.

This is a really hard question to answer because I honestly don't know what it will take to have a productive national dialogue on race in the United States. I think that we have had many leaders, activists, protesters, etc. speak on the issue of race in this country. We have seen many things take place to try to bring awareness to this issue. But there are people who are uneducated and ignorant, who don't want to listen, who I believe are the ones that are the problem. The people who are blind to the fact that they don't believe that there isn't a need to have a productive national dialogue on race. This national institution has raised at the core of every major problem. And of course, like it has to be stopped.

I think becoming educated, listening, and hoping to put a stop to the problem of race should could be a solution, challenging, and educating the youth to hope. The further mindset of all races shall come together because not only is there a problem within our nation, but there's also a problem within people's cultures and communities. Until the government officials and policy makers experience where people of color go through on a daily basis, things will not change. Chris Cuomo of CNN news was doing a segment on the police killings of four children who are people of color about two weeks ago, he stated that there is a national outcry. And it will not be heard until it is white people who are at the forefront of experiencing where people of color go through. I honestly think that he explained it best there is but there is no way of telling if this will be the reason for the national dialogue.