



Office for Teaching and Learning

Teaching on “Days After” Contentious Events

Introduction

Your Office for Teaching and Learning team recognizes that faculty and students at Wayne State University may need support in order to meaningfully engage in discussions around contentious and traumatic events. These conversations can be challenging, but with thoughtful preparation and empathic listening they can be transformative for instructors and students alike.

As [Dr. Hadley Dunn](#) points out, while it is important for us to recognize the events unfolding in the world around us, it is even more important to be cautious not to cause further harm. To that end, we have compiled a list of resources, pedagogy, and activities to support you in guiding students through controversial topics as we all attempt to make sense of current events. Each resource has a description to help you quickly find the most useful support for your classes and disciplines.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you through these challenging times. If you find you need more direct aid, schedule a [one-on-one consultation](#) with an OTL consultant. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you on your course design, reading lists, assignments, assessments, and activities.

Resources

Instructor Resource 1: [Teaching on Days After: Post Election](#)

In this PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Alyssa Hadley Dunn examines the 2020 election through her “Days After” framework. The framework contains critical education theory and real-world teaching strategies for discussing contentious events.



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Instructor Resource 2: [Synchronous Breakout Room Activity](#)

If you meet with your students synchronously using Zoom, offer options for how students can engage with discussions on controversial current events. This example offers 4 ways for students to engage in synchronous classes, but you might change these options based on your students and your class content. Be sure to refer to Resource 3 for tips on preparing for these kinds of activities. For more activity ideas, see [Resources for teachers on the days after the attack on the U.S. Capitol](#).

Instructor Resource 3: [Managing Difficult Classroom Discussions](#)

Indiana University's Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning guides instructors through preparing, executing, and following up on difficult classroom discussions. We recommend instructors consider modeling their own discussions around sensitive and traumatic topics using this process.

Instructor Resource 4: [Fostering Civil Discourse 2020](#)

This resource takes instructors through the steps of fostering discourse in a way that supports equity and social justice. Beginning with self-reflection and moving on to concrete steps to structure and facilitate these conversations, with sections focusing on important topics such as creating community guidelines and facilitating these discussions in the online environment.

Instructor Resource 5: [A Dozen-Plus Ways to Foster Educational Equity](#)

An Inside Higher Education list of 14 practices to foster broad thinking on how to initiate systemic change within our universities and departments. This resource is particularly useful for STEM fields as it promotes finding space for controversial conversations in Biology, Psychology, Engineering, and Mathematics.



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Instructor Resource 6: [Challenging Guidelines in Social Justice Education](#)

A journal article published in *Democracy & Education* that critiques common guidelines and traditional students dispositions through a framework of critical social justice pedagogy. The authors develop theoretical and practical guidelines that move educators and students towards a more open and inclusive classroom experience, while still practicing critical engagement.

Instructor Resource 7: [How to Be an Antiracist Educator](#)

Five guiding thoughts on how to execute anti-racist strategies in your teaching using history and literature as starting points for conversations on race. Excellent source of social science and humanities readings/contents on race to assign to ourselves and students.

Instructor Resource 8: [Implicit Bias Module Series](#)

Four interactive self-paced online learning modules to understand and identify implicit biases. Instructors could complete the modules themselves or assign parts of the modules to students as a way to prompt conversations around inequity.

Instructor Resource 9: [Recognizing and Combating Racial Microaggressions](#)

A self-paced online learning module created by the [Difficult Dialogues](#) team to help users learn how to recognize and combat racial microaggressions. Instructors could complete the module themselves or assign parts of the module to students.