

Diversity and Inclusion Grant for Literature
Final Report
May 14, 2019

Kevin Bourque, Prudence Layne, Erin Pearson and Scott Proudfit

1. Introduction

At its broadest articulation, our team's goal for the year was to "ensure that literature at Elon, as part of the core curriculum, takes advantage of [literature's] unique capacity to increase understanding of diverse perspectives, particularly those of under-represented and marginalized groups." After researching "best pedagogical and inclusion practices in literary studies," we would compile a working bibliography and resources, including sample assignments and classroom activities.

After considerable research in the field and a series of student focus groups, we developed a Guide to Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the Literature Classroom, attached to the end of this report; a faculty workshop for the literature concentration on diversity and inclusion, led by Kevin Bourque on April 15; and inroads for further work, which will ascertain that inclusion remains central to the literature requirement, and becomes a major way we conceptualize literature's contribution to the larger university.

2. The Guide

Our co-authored guide is divided into five major sections: first, information on how Elon students tend to think about diversity, including the kinds of assumptions they make, how best to reach them, and major themes emerging from student focus groups; second, best practices for handling sensitive topics in the classroom and defusing volatile conversations; third, inclusive course planning and text selection; fourth, some classroom activities and sample assignments; and finally, a working bibliography, including further reading on pedagogy, diversity and inclusion. The guide also includes, as an appendix, Nancy Chick, Terri Karis and Cyndi Kernahan's exceedingly useful overview of how students' feelings shift as they learn about race and racism. Team members worked on different sections, but editing and research was shared collaboratively, and each section is underpinned by significant reading in the field, including guides on facilitating difficult conversations, critiques of majoritarian institutions and norms, and best practices in pedagogy (see pp. 21 through 25 in the report for our works cited and working bibliography).

While the guide makes a host of recommendations, some recurring themes faculty have found most useful include:

1. The need to make racism, homophobia, ableism, etc. personal for students. Academic protocol emphasizes "objectivity, rationality, and intellectual thought and inquiry," but the way race, sexuality, gender, etc., are experienced "is highly subjective, is intense, relies on storytelling, and is

emotive in nature.”¹ Intellectualizing or speaking in abstractions can also compound the assumption that majority students are "exempt" from particular categories of experience: e.g., as unmarked categories, white students believe that race is only something people of color have to think about, and straight students fail to see how heterosexism has shaped their own identities, experiences and life choices. (Accordingly, whenever the conversation turns to race, all students' heads pivot to the lone student of color in the room.) The guide includes practical advice on how to help students understand that such systems affect us all: e.g., Prudence Layne's *Constructing a Racial Autobiography* assignment, which directs students to reflect on their "first encounter with race or [their] racial identity," then channels those contributions toward a larger, class-wide discussion.

2. The idea that students tend to conflate prejudice with racism, ableism, homophobia, etc., and the need to call their attention to how one involves individual people, while the other involves systems or institutions. (Language and literature themselves, as systems and institutions that channel cultural assumptions and norms, are a perfect place to make this distinction.)

3. How faculty should actually handle volatile conversations, including understanding the emotions of students, and how best to manage those emotions (pp. 7 and 19-20); teaching their students what constitutes appropriate language, and why (p. 3); personalizing the issues for both you and your students (2); and what to do in-class when students say offensive or ignorant things (4, 8).

4. The pressing need to consider how our own curricula normalize exclusion. In focus groups, students reported they only talked about diversity and inclusion in "minority literature" classes, and underscored a lack of intersectionality even in those courses. Too often, African-American authors were tokenized or expected to represent *all* diversity, and "minority authors" were only discussed vis-a-vis identity – e.g., while Wallace Stevens merits attention to form, Toni Morrison is only discussed in terms of race. (In this case, text selection doesn't much differ from a classroom experience where every white student looks at the sole student of color when race is broached). We need to rethink our own curricula, so that we're not normalizing exclusion by treating "minority writers" as add-ons to a universally white, straight and able-bodied canon.

3. Sharing our Findings

As stated, the guide was used as the foundation for a pedagogy training session, given to literature faculty in mid-April. Participants responded well to its recommendations, particularly the very practical advice it offers on classroom management. Team members also shared the guide with the members of the other English Department DIG team – Paula Patch, Margaret Chapman and Jennifer Eidum. Based on their recommendations, Kevin Bourque (as chair of the literature concentration) will participate in Racial Equity Institute training in August, to ascertain that diversity and inclusion remains central to the work of the concentration. We also restructured the guide and will make future revisions based on the feedback of that group, so that some of its

¹ Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 67.

recommendations skew less towards diversity (all identities are treated as largely equal and interchangeable) and more towards inclusion (some perspectives have been systematically excluded, and our goal is to foster social justice by re-centering those). Finally, this material will become part of ongoing trainings for the concentration. Next year's literature pedagogy workshops will include a special session on *Decolonizing Your Syllabus*, and the guide's recommendations will underpin a mandatory training session for new instructors of English 255. Finally, this work will continue to inform Kevin Bourque's 2019-21 CATL Scholar project on revising the literature requirement at Elon. As stated in the introduction, we expect diversity and inclusion to become a major way the concentration conceives of its mission, and articulates its value to the greater university.

Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the Literature Classroom: A Guide

Kevin Bourque
Prudence Layne
Erin Pearson
and Scott Proudfit

The following sections include information on how Elon students tend to think about diversity, and how to effectively meet your students where they are (p. 1); best practices for handling sensitive topics in the classroom and defusing volatile conversations (5); inclusive course planning and text selection (9); classroom activities and sample assignments (14); and further reading on pedagogy, diversity and inclusion (22).

1. Understanding Your Students

Elon is a majority white campus, in a majority white town; only 17% of the class of 2022 identify as people of color, which is an increase from previous years (e.g., 16.5% for the class of 2018; 13.1% for 2016). College may be the first time white students encounter racial diversity: American schools in recent decades have been largely resegregated, and “our public schools increasingly reflect enrollment patterns reminiscent of the 1950s” (Tatum 16). Because “meaningful opportunities for cross-racial contact are diminishing, especially in schools” (Tatum xi), your students may be grossly underprepared to address issues of diversity. Our political climate and media culture, in turn, may mean that they’re underprepared and emotionally exhausted, an especially counterproductive combination.

Remember that students in majority groups typically have little experience thinking about their own identity, or understanding that their identity has shaped their experience of the world. “Heteronormativity and cisnormativity,” writes Heather Killelea McEntarfer, “are in the air we breathe” (xii), and straight, cisnormative students rarely consider how such forces have affected them. Similarly, white students are largely ignorant of “how the social and economic benefits of whiteness shaped [their] value system, use of language, and perception of the world” (Tochluk 11). Whiteness, straightness, maleness, and so on, tend to be understood as “nothings” – unmarked, meaningless, undeserving of further thought. For this reason, ask your students to consider how race, sexuality, gender and class (among other categories) have affected all of us, not merely students of color, queer folk, women or the poor. Otherwise you’re reinforcing the idea that these are only “minority” issues, and the majority doesn’t need to consider them.

Keep in mind, too, that your students tend to think about racism, homophobia, sexism, etc., not as systems or institutions of power and oppression, but as wrongs perpetuated by individuals (in other

words, their first impulse is to think and talk about *whether someone is racist*, not about *how white privilege perpetuates racism*). The tendency to think about racism “only as discrete acts committed by individual people, rather than as a complex, interconnected system,” makes racism “virtually impossible for white people to understand” (DiAngelo 4). Intellectually, students may understand “that we are products of our social conditioning and escaping internalized biases and prejudices is impossible,” but at the same time “they have great difficulty entertaining the notion that they have personally inherited biases” (Wing Sue 13). Help students think about how individuals are the products of systems: e.g., asking “Is it possible for anyone born and raised in the United States not to inherit the racial biases of his or her forebears? Is it unfair for people of color to assume that most White Americans harbor biases and prejudices in a racial dialogue? Or are they generally correct in this assumption?” (Wing Sue 46).

Finally, students tend to confuse being anti-racist with being “colorblind” or “refusing to see color.” 73% of Millennials “believe color blindness should be an aspirational goal in society; 68% believe seeing race prevents society from becoming color-blind; and 70% believe they don’t see racial minority groups any differently than they see White people” (Wing Sue 78). You might help students understand how pretenses towards “color blindness,” or the refusal to acknowledge difference more generally, in fact upholds and maintains larger systems of oppression.

What your students want from you

In conversation with Elon students about navigating “difficult topics,” like race, gender, sexuality, class and politics, several themes emerged:

1. Own your own perspective, but remain open minded.

While you know what’s best for your own classroom ethos, students tend to believe it’s better for a professor to self-situate in relation to difficult topics, rather than attempting to maintain perfect neutrality. Explain what you believe, and why you believe it; use the opportunity to underscore how identity has shaped your worldview and experience. (This can be particularly powerful if you identify as part of a majority group, since students may not have considered majoritarian identity in these terms.) At the same time, don’t position your own beliefs as universal. Liberal professors, in the eyes of students, may tend to assume their own ideas are shared by the entire class. It may help to share your own worldview, then offer counterpoints or other ways of thinking about the issues. Because we tend to think about controversial topics as binaries – e.g., left versus right, liberal versus conservative – consider “unpacking” the issues as far more complex; students will be more willing to situate “somewhere in the middle” than with opposing or binary positions, and this positioning often leads to a more subtle understanding of volatile issues.

Be willing, too, to be corrected yourself. Remember that “all humans have prejudice; we cannot avoid it” (DiAngelo 19). We have all internalized homophobic, racist, classist and cisnormative ideas, simply because we live in a culture that is homophobic, racist, classist and cisnormative. Just for example, when I (Kevin) carelessly referred to people being “born male or female” in discussion, a trans student reminded me that no one is *born* male or female; gender is assigned to us at birth. Thank stu-

dents who correct you, and use the opportunity to show how all of us, yourself included, are conditioned to think in problematic or limiting ways.

2. Maintain focus on the purpose of the discussion.

Students expressed frustration that conversations about diversity and inclusion occasionally “de-railed” the classroom conversation. If you’re examining sexuality, gender, race or ability in a text, feel free to link the material to a contemporary context, but continually come *back* to the text. If you’re passionate about such issues, great! – but don’t let your own passion become the focus, instead of the literature or class objectives. Help your students see that literary study engages closely with language, and that identity is determined by language. You might also consider grounding the importance of such topics in terms your students will appreciate. Students with business backgrounds responded well to the idea that, because “you’ll come across people from all walks of life,” attention to diversity and inclusion will “prepare you for that life experience.”

3. Teach them how to talk about these issues.

Educate students on *how* to talk about these issues, and *why* we talk about them in the way we do. One student, just for example, initially found preferred gender pronouns “ridiculous” because no one had explained to her their purpose: they help ensure that trans students aren’t misgendered, shamed and made to feel unwelcome. Because students tend to misunderstand racism as something that “bad people” do, distinguishing between racism and prejudice can also help. Remind them that – as J. Kēhaulani Kauanui puts it – “racism is a structure, not an event.” Racism refers to institutionalized bias, a system of advantage based on race (Wellman 25); in turn, “stating that racism privileges whites does not mean that individual white people do not struggle or face barriers” (DiAngelo 24). Because everyone is socialized to have prejudices, “suggesting white people have prejudice” is not the same as “saying that we are bad and should be ashamed” (DiAngelo 20). It’s only “when a racial group’s collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control” that it becomes “racism, a far-reaching system that functions independently from the intentions or self-images of individual actors” (DiAngelo 20).

4. Understand their generational tendencies.

Your students are overstimulated, exhausted by information, and indelibly shaped by social media. Apathy, according to one student, becomes a defense mechanism: “our generation is just so overstimulated by opinions and *stuff*, literally just *stuff* all the time, it’s like friction on a surface, it just gets smooth.” Putting things in personal terms – for them and for you – can help. Understand, too, that in a classroom setting, you’re asking them to be vulnerable and to be OK with making mistakes, mindsets social media has trained them to *not* adopt. Attitudes that make for good classroom discussion – self-disclosure and the willingness to misspeak – can be fatal on social media, which too often functions as a theatre of public shame. In the words of one student, “people don’t want to help you learn; they want to shut you down.” Be patient with their reluctance to speak, and when they make mistakes, avoid the temptation to shame or to “pile on.”

5. Be kind, but don't coddle.

All students interviewed stated that, before potentially volatile topics are broached, the professor should have built trust and the classroom should feel as comfortable as possible. Know that this is their expectation, but remember that conversations about diversity and inclusion will likely be uncomfortable, no matter how they're handled or when they're introduced. As Robin DiAngelo iterates, white students have been socialized to *avoid* discussions of race, and that avoidance underpins white supremacy. (Just for example, one student I interviewed thought talking about race in *The Cultures of Country Music* was especially difficult because the classroom was nearly completely white – which surprised me, because we were talking about whiteness at the time. White people are not socialized to discuss race openly.) Because “a critical component of cross-racial skill building is the ability to sit with the discomfort of being seen racially” (DiAngelo 7), expect discomfort, and remember that discomfort is generative and good. As one student put it, “the most uncomfortable conversations are the best ones.”

If a student says something offensive in discussion, acknowledge it in class. If you wait to speak to the student outside class, you're missing a teachable moment. “There are eighteen other students in class that think the same thing,” stated one student. “They're not getting the message.” You're also implying that the speaker's feelings matter more than those silent students who've been marginalized or hurt. Disagree, point out why their language is problematic, and use it to gesture to larger systems: e.g., “you might think that, because we've been socialized to think in those terms.” You might also give your students a phrase to use when introducing potentially offensive ideas. In Amy Allocco's classes, for example, students say “Oops, ouch” before statements that might offend, to communicate “I know what I'm saying might be problematic, but I come with good intentions.”

Finally, don't automatically assume that students are silent because they don't want to talk about race, or ability, or class, or sexuality. Sometimes the students haven't completed the reading. Or they're tired. Or they don't know; they're confused, or still figuring it out. Or they don't especially care. “I'm more than happy to talk about race,” stated one student; “I just don't want to talk right now.” Sometimes students will be difficult to engage. That doesn't mean you're not doing your job well, or that they're necessarily resisting discussing difficult topics.

6. Consider how your curriculum might normalize exclusion.

While English majors discussed issues of diversity more insightfully than nonmajors, they also stated that diversity and inclusion only surface in “minority literature” courses – e.g., *LGBTQ Literature and Culture* or *African Literature*. This may in fact reinforce exclusion by framing “literature” and “minority literature” as separate categories. Remember to address race, sexuality, ability, class, etc., in “canonical” courses too, and discuss non-majoritarian authors in ways that don't pigeonhole them simply as “minorities.” One student stated, “every time I try to be ‘author bio,’ my teacher is like, ‘That's not relevant right now.’ But the second it's not a straight, white male, author bio becomes super-important.” Instead of always framing Toni Morrison “as a black writer” (DiAngelo 56), pay attention to her form, technique, craft and structure. Contrariwise, position canonical authors in ways that foreground their whiteness, or their straightness, or their ability.

Along similar lines, race is often the only form of diversity discussed, and blackness is asked to “represent” diversity; a single black author may be included to “offset” a semester of otherwise straight, white writers. Consider how including a single author of color, and only talking about race when it comes to that author, reiterates the idea that race is only a “minority problem” – not terribly dissimilar to white students turning to the lone student of color when race is broached in class discussion.

Finally, students don’t typically encounter a great deal of intersectionality, even in classes addressing “minority literatures”: courses devoted to race and literature don’t typically engage with sexuality, while courses about sexuality don’t think much about class or ability. Find more interesting and complex ways to think about identity; remember that queer approaches to straight authors are eminently possible, and that critical race theory can elucidate the work of David Foster Wallace or Charles Dickens, not just Zora Neale Hurston or Ralph Ellison.

2. Best Practices for Handling Difficult Discussions in the (Literature) Classroom

Conversations about diversity and inclusion can be difficult, but difficult conversations are worth having: evidence suggests that classroom discussions can be particularly effective in helping students engage meaningfully with issues related to diversity (Chick, Karis, and Kernahan 8), and by creating opportunities for students to engage productively with topics that are uncomfortable, we can help them understand the value of difficult conversations and give them tools for addressing these topics outside the classroom as well. The literature classroom, in turn, is a great place to engage in difficult dialogue; experts characterize literature as a “secret weapon” (Williams 175) against racism, with a unique capacity for giving students an “even deeper appreciation of the personal and contextual influences of race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class” (34). Reading literature exposes us to different perspectives and ways of interacting with the world—a terrific jumping-off point for conversations about diversity. Studying literature has been shown to promote empathy (Kidd and Castano 2013, 2017; Bal and Veltkamp 2013; Wehbe et al 2014). And the literature classroom is an environment where we’re thinking about language and why language matters, which allows students to think about how terminology shapes the way we experience the world (and can in turn provide ground rules for the way we discuss the world).

General guidelines for facilitating productive conversations

Consider setting ground rules for discussions in your classroom. This allows you to establish, from the beginning, what constitutes effective, respectful communication. It also helps you emphasize that the class represents a community, in which students may disagree with one another, but also are responsible to one another for classroom dynamics. Consider involving students as you determine your ground rules. Some instructors like to ask students what they think is most important in classroom conversations and build guidelines from the resulting conversation, which can give students a greater sense of ownership over the rules. Include your ground rules in your syllabus or on your website,

where students can easily refer to them. If conversations stray from the guidelines at any point in the semester, remind students of the ground rules that have been established.

These are some sample ground rules from the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Teaching and Learning:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views. (Don't just think about what you are going to say while someone else is talking.)
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
- De-personalize whenever possible.

Encourage people to use "I statements" and to speak to their own experience, rather than speaking for an entire group. Remember that academic protocol emphasizes "objectivity, rationality, and intellectual thought and inquiry," while the way race, sexuality, gender, etc., are experienced "is highly subjective, is intense, relies on storytelling, and is emotive in nature" (Wing Sue 67). Don't feel as though such topics need to be discussed in an entirely objective, abstract, businesslike or intellectualized fashion.

Make sure you or other students don't assume anyone can speak for an entire group, either. If there are members of a certain group present in a classroom, there can be a tendency for instructors or fellow students to turn to them and expect them to speak on behalf of an entire group. This tendency puts particular pressure on students who are in the minority in a given classroom. In these moments, it can be helpful to turn student attention back to the text at hand, asking them to find evidence from the literature instead of expecting answers from their classmates. Remember that you can always bring it back to the text if contributions are getting personal in a way that isn't productive.

Speak from your own perspective instead of in abstractions. If you identify as part of a majority group, demonstrate comfort engaging with these ideas, and be willing to self-position in relation to the conversation. Students will notice your discomfort, and will respond in kind. Remember that discomfort and avoidance in fact reinforce supremacy; Robin DiAngelo demonstrates how white fragility – white discomfort addressing issues of race, and the attendant refusal to address racism – works as "a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of white advantage" (2).

Acknowledge that the language we use matters (come back to the text if that's helpful), and use metacognitive learning to encourage reflection on the process and the difficult feelings that might come up (more in the following section).

Dealing with student emotions

Conversations about diverse experiences can raise a variety of emotions for students, especially when it forces them to reevaluate long-held beliefs about how the world works. When students from a dominant group confront systemic oppression or exclusion, for example, their own identity and worldview can feel challenged or overturned. Psychologist Janet E. Helms described the status of white people confronting previously unconsidered issues of racism as “disintegration”: “disorientation and anxiety provoked by unresolvable racial moral dilemmas that force one to choose between own-group loyalty and humanism” (185). Studies have shown that acknowledging these emotions and giving students tools for reflection are instrumental in helping students convert unpleasant or challenging reactions into meaningful learning.

Strategies for promoting reflection (primarily drawn from Chick et al.):

- Acknowledge early on what students might experience as they learn about these issues. You might consider using the document “The Process of Learning about Race” (from Chick et al., included as an appendix here) as a starting point, though it is focused on race rather than on issues of diversity more broadly.
- Encourage students to practice being comfortable with this kind of discomfort and to use that discomfort as a signal that something deeper is coming up that deserves investigation.
- Create opportunities to reflect individually (in a journal, blog post, or response paper) and in group discussion. Chick et al. found that students responded to their own emotions better when they understood that their fellow students were experiencing similar things.
- Consider how you can prompt or encourage the following skills, which Chick et al. found to support moving from discomfort to productive learning: “Several skills seemed to support continued movement toward deeper understanding, including articulating flawed self-assessments, seeing and naming what one didn’t previously know, self-knowledge, self-awareness of feelings, setting aside self-judgment, contextualizing information within a larger perspective, and tolerating discomfort.”
- Some of the following prompts (from Chick et al.) can be helpful for journaling or discussions: “For instance, students can be invited to notice whether they’re open or resistant to new information, how effectively they’re holding in awareness multiple or contradictory perspectives, or what leads them to feel overwhelmed or discouraged. They can be asked to consider both sameness and difference, or to think about how interpersonal racial interactions are related to the larger social or structural context. They can be challenged to imagine how racial disparities might be addressed, or what they could do to apply the information learned in class.”

Brandon Bell, Assistant Director of CREDE, offers the following as a strategy for dealing with students who feel uncomfortable confronting the ways they have benefited from historical inequalities. He emphasizes the difference between guilt (having done something you know is wrong) and shame (feeling badly about a situation, even if it wasn’t the result of your conscious action), and explains to students that it isn’t productive to feel badly about something they didn’t yet recognize or know about. Now that they do know, however, he encourages them think about what they will do with that knowledge.

Handling dissonance in the classroom

When someone makes an offensive comment, don't ignore it. As tough as it can be to acknowledge, that acknowledgment is crucial for creating a class environment in which students feel supported and willing to participate. That being said, there are strategies for dealing with offensive comment that focus on learning, rather than shaming the commenter:

- When someone uses an offensive term, take a step back and use literature to discuss why language matters.
- Educate students on the history of terminology, when possible; explain why even terms that were considered polite and respectful in the past may not be anymore.
- When possible, use close reading to start a discussion about the differences between terms. In my (Erin's) own classes, for example, I've asked students to think about the different implications of a formerly popular but now offensive term ("colored people" or "Chinaman," for example) and a currently accepted version ("people of color" or "Chinese person.")

When someone expresses bias or bigotry (drawn from Lee Warren and Diane Goodman):

- Deflect the dialogue into a conversation about larger views rather than one person's perspective. I.e., "Many people hold views like this. Why?"
- Repeat it back to them in paraphrased form, which can make the logical errors more obvious.
- Ask the person for more information about how they reached these conclusions, allowing you to reveal errors in analysis or incorrect assumptions.
- Play dumb—respond with questions like "I'm not sure how the person's sexual orientation related to the rest of your comment—did I miss something?"

When the conversation becomes too heated:

- Create space. Ask students to pause, think, and write about what they might learn from a particular disagreement.
- Call a timeout. If you don't feel prepared to adequately deal with an issue, acknowledge that you'd like more time to think about what has happened, and that you'll return to it in the next meeting.

See, too, Elon's *Guide to Difficult Topics and Moments*, which includes general guidelines and resources as well as links to further reading:

<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/catl/inclusiveteaching/how-do-we-teach/difficult-moments/>

3. Course Design

Ludwig Wittgenstein argued that philosophy contains no new truths, but merely reminders of things we already know. Philosophy should be a series of measuring rods, he wrote, which we take out every day to measure our ideas and actions against. Likewise, the advice that follows in this guide is not intended to introduce instructors in Elon's English Department, or elsewhere, to ways of infusing diversity into their course design they have never considered, but rather to remind instructors of best practices in English Literature course design committed to embracing "diversity" in text selection, pedagogical approach and practice. Below, then, is a short list of "reminders" about diversity that every English Literature instructor should consider when designing a course at Elon.

General Considerations

The following is a common list of identity categories to consider when selecting texts. Obviously for some texts (for example, "anonymous" texts), the identity categories of the author (or authors) may be impossible to determine. Nevertheless, in many cases many of the following categories are identifiable and are worth considering when selecting your required readings. These categories, in no particular order, include:

- Race
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Nationality
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Social Class
- Education
- Religious Affiliation
- Political Beliefs
- Language
- Physical and Cognitive Ability

Another important category to consider for an English Literature class when selecting texts is:

- Canonicity

Canonicity, however, is a consideration intertwined with all of the identity categories above. After all, an author's identity, based on any of the above categories, may have determined at a particular time whether that author's text was considered viable for adoption into the canon.

As a rule of thumb, if all of the texts for your class have been written by authors with the same identity profile (for example, neurotypical wealthy African American lesbians over the age of 60) you should be able to justify to your students and your colleagues why your texts have been drawn from such a narrow category of writers.

This guide cannot determine for each instructor the appropriate "balance" of texts in a particular course, one that adequately takes into consideration matters of diversity. The balance of texts for a class on Middle Ages Fabliaux, for example, will be completely different than the balance of texts chosen for a class on the Canadian Postmodern Novel. However, when designing any literature

course, instructors are encouraged to consider the narrowness or breadth of their selections based on the above categories and are urged to have some rationale for their selections.

Indeed, at some point during the term instructors should consider having a conversation with students about the relative “diversity” of the course’s text selections. It may be that not every class has been designed with the space or environment to encourage students to ask instructors about the rationale behind their text selection. Making time for this conversation is vital, as students’ concerns may otherwise go unaddressed, or students’ lack of consideration of their authors’ identities may go unchallenged. This does not mean that you must set aside an entire class period to justify why you are only teaching, for example, working-class Catholic Latinx poets. Rather, instructors are merely urged to make explicit to their students their own considerations of diversity in selecting the class’s texts and to further explain how the group of selected texts relates to the literary canon(s).

(Just to be clear, the above examples of “working-class Catholic Latinx poets” and “neurotypical wealthy African American lesbians over the age of 60” are meant to demonstrate that all categories of diversity must be considered in course design even if the selection may appear “diverse” at first glance. They are not offered to suggest a false equivalence between a course built around either of these designations and, for example, a literature course offering texts solely by “white male middle-class heterosexual Christians.” Due to canonicity: Among authors, not all identities are equal.)

Infusing Diversity into ENG 255: Topics in Literature

With an eye to selecting a “diverse” group of texts for an English Literature course, *Topics in Literature* would seem to be the easiest course to design. The designation “topics” is so open that instructors have tremendous freedom in selecting virtually any text they want, as long as these texts have some sort of relationship to one another in terms of theme, genre, form, period, etc. Not surprisingly, at Elon the topic chosen for an ENG 255 class often aligns with an instructor’s area of specialization. This is a strength of this course because it encourages the selection of a group of texts about which the student can become an “expert” in the relatively short space of time (often Winter Term) and the selection of a group of texts in which the instructor is passionately invested. At the same time, the freedom of this course’s open topic often leads to instructors choosing a quite-narrow category of focus: for example, *The Comedy of Manners*, *The Graphic Novel*, or *The AIDS Play*.

The pitfall of ENG 255, then, in terms of diversity considerations, is making sure the narrowness of the topic chosen is not used by instructors to justify ignoring the possibility of diversity in their text selection. For example, in teaching “The AIDS Play,” a short-lived genre of drama texts largely presented on stages in the U.S. between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, it certainly would be possible to teach exclusively the plays of gay white male middle- or upper-middle-class writers. Such a selection would accurately represent the “canon” of AIDS plays, from Larry Kramer’s *The Normal Heart* to Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*. Moreover, such a selection would match well the texts available in the small number of anthologies that exist on this topic, making text purchasing easy to arrange and inexpensive for students. However, the instructor for such an ENG 255 course must consider (based on the identity categories listed above) which authorial identities might be foreclosed

upon by such a selection, as well as how this might offer a less accurate picture of this genre than is possible to convey to undergraduates.

Resisting telling an easier, more uniform story of “the AIDS Play” may require research into texts that are less familiar to the instructor and, often correspondingly, less available in anthologies (or even in print). Once texts by atypical authorial voices have been identified within the genre of the AIDS Play, the next question becomes: how can we present these texts in conversation with the more canonical texts? Is it enough to have students read a single AIDS Play written by an author who is not a well-off gay white male? Should this “atypical” play be taught at the beginning, middle, or end of the class? What is the implication of each of these positions? Is it too much to have every canonical AIDS Play alternate with a play by an atypical AIDS Play author? Is this even possible?

If “diverse” voices are simply too hard to find within the narrow category of a particular genre, what would opening up the topic to additional forms do for the course? Does the course lose its coherence if, for example, certain class periods are spent examining art installations or dance performances on the topic of AIDS? “Balance” is again the goal here. Designing a successful literature course means avoiding uniformity, embracing continuity, and resisting a collapse into total relativity. The need may arise to brainstorm multiple course designs and then to consider what story each of these designs tells about the AIDS Play. (A recommendation would be to use scholarship to engage the absence or paucity of diverse voices using secondary sources and to design assignments that encourage students to engage silences and omissions.)

As mentioned earlier, there is not one right answer to the question of how to infuse diversity into the design of an ENG 255 class such as “the AIDS Play.” The important thing is that instructors go through the process of considering how diverse is the group of texts they have chosen, as well as how (and in what way) the course may be designed to reflect the most accurate depiction of their topic possible, a depiction that may not necessarily be captured in the canonized or anthologized texts most readily available.

Also mentioned earlier, instructors are urged to openly address their course design with their students at some point during the term. These discussions can help students understand the shape of the course, as well as to address any diversity concerns the students might have. In addition, these conversations may simply raise awareness (for students and instructors) of diversity issues that are not always at the forefront of a particular literary topic.

Infusing Diversity into English Literature Surveys (American, British and African American)

Infusing diversity into Elon’s English Literature surveys is both easier and harder than infusing it into *Topics in Literature* courses. After all, most survey courses are built around a particular anthology, from which the majority of readings are selected. In recent years, the editors of these large anthologies—whether they have edited *The Norton Anthology of British Literature*, *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature*, or virtually any major anthology—have been committed to opening up the canon to historically marginalized writers and previously unrecognized forms. That’s good news.

However, it is the job of the Elon instructor to keep up with these canon-expanding readings, which increase with every new edition of these anthologies. As surveys require broad coverage, many of the recent anthology supplements may not be texts that instructors studied in graduate school or in their ongoing research. None of us can be current in every text even within our particular area. This means that with each new edition of your chosen publisher's anthology it is worth doing some summer reading to see if any new supplements might fit your course's overall design and expand its scope in useful ways.

Another heartening aspect of addressing diversity in the design of English Lit surveys is that the scope of any literary survey is simply too broad to truly cover every essential text in a single semester. Once the instructor abandons the idea that students can read, in the space of three months, every canonical text in *British Literature after 1800*, for example, hopefully this opens the course design to the possibilities of creative picking and choosing. Whether a survey is organized by chronology, by theme, by form or genre, or by some combination of these, the goal is again to consider how to organize readings to achieve some balance. This may be a balance of canonical (anthologized) readings and "genre fiction" or other narrative forms (films, comics, paintings, etc.). Striking this type of balance may require readings that go beyond the anthologies. Another balance though, certainly, is achieved by again considering the diversity of identity profiles above. Particularly surveys that cover "early" periods of literature may lure instructors into easy justifications for selecting texts solely by authors with uniform backgrounds and identity profiles. However, as with ENG 255, the goal is for instructors to be able to offer to students and colleagues an argument as to why they have selected these particular texts and not others. When designing a survey, asking the key questions of how each identity category is being addressed to the best of the instructor's ability is always beneficial even if selections remain largely the same from year to year.

As always (and particularly with literature surveys), keep in mind that it is not possible to do all things in every course. The important thing is to have thought through your text selections in terms of the categories above and to have found some justification for the tough choices that must be made.

The teaching of the African American Literature surveys offer some similar, but also distinctive considerations. Inevitably, students will encounter and must engage with racial, ethnic, and other forms of diversity given the nature of the material. While *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* is commonly used in the earlier survey course, *African American Literature Before 1945* (and supplemented with other texts and materials), the later survey course, *African American Literature since 1945*, has been taught without an anthology, instead focusing on varied genres, modalities and themes.

We ask instructors to embrace diversity infusion throughout every course in the curriculum and to broaden and complicate both our own and our students' engagement with various intersections of diversity. Just like the earlier example of the AIDS play, it is insufficient to presume that the texts selected in an African American literature class must be necessarily written by African Americans. The African American surveys, like the other surveys, also allow instructors to consider issues of inclusion and exclusion through text selection, pedagogical approaches and practices. How, for example, might

James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* or Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven*, disrupt students' understanding of the construction of race and the people authorized (and authenticated) to write about the subject (or not write about it)? Depending on the depth to which instructor(s) will engage students in literary theory, what ideas might students extrapolate from Claudia Tate's *Psychoanalysis and the Black Novel* about canonicity in African American literature or Ken Warren's challenge to the field itself in *What Was African American Literature?* Furthermore, how can instructors select texts, themes and collaborate with both on-campus and off-campus resources to situate African American literature within the classical tradition, the other surveys, and world literatures?

Infusing Diversity into 300-Level Literature Courses

Many 300-level courses are by definition meant to expand the canon of readings that English majors, and Elon students in general, encounter: *World Literature*, *Native American Literature*, *Latin American Literature and Culture*, etc. At the same time, the challenges of infusing diversity into the course design of a 300-level Special Topics or Major Authors course at Elon are similar to those of ENG 255 courses. While there is great freedom in choosing the topics for these 300-level courses, the topics chosen are often quite narrow and aligned specifically with instructors' areas of specialization. A course, for example, may focus on the works of a single author, which would assure that the identity profiles of all the texts' authors are absolutely uniform. Even a course on a white, able-bodied, and presumably heterosexual author, however, should bring issues of difference into the classroom: race inflects all of us, and queer readings of putatively straight authors are very much possible.

Therefore, beyond the considerations for infusing diversity into 200-level literature courses outlined above, instructors for a 300-level course should pay particular attention to the selection of secondary criticism and theoretical readings that frame the primary-text readings. The assumption is that a 300-level literature class requires a great deal more of this type of context and interpretation, which of course offers more opportunities to diversify the critical approaches to the primary texts even if those texts appear fairly uniform in their authors' background or world view. In other words, a 300-level course on, say, William Shakespeare should no doubt include critical interpretations of this writer's plays and poems from a wide variety of theoretical positions (postcolonial, queer, cultural materialist, etc.) and, ideally, written by a selection of critics from diverse backgrounds.

Additionally (keeping with the example of the 300-level Authors course), instructors should consider ways of comparing and contrasting their chosen subject with additional primary-text readings that broaden the discussion. For example, a course on the plays of Edward Albee and Eugene O'Neill read within the context of psychoanalytic theory might give students short breaks from these white males that bring in diverse voices. Every few weeks, perhaps, a class might be spent reading a play by woman of color, for example, a writer who has been influenced or has been influential to the given authors or whose writing is similarly productively analyzed through the lens of psychoanalytic theory. As always the goal is to have a rationale behind the selection of readings and to make sure students recognize that even the most canonical literary texts are in a conversation with a wide and diverse spectrum of writers and critics, past and contemporary.

4. Classroom Activities and Sample Assignments

As potential models, we include here Scott Proudfit's first class meeting for *American Literature after 1865*; three classroom activities selected from Brookfield and Preskill's *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*; and a Racial Autobiography assignment developed by Prudence Layne.

Activity 1: Complicating Assumptions in *American Literature after 1865*

The first meeting of Scott Proudfit's *American Literature after 1865* begins with a slide show based on archetypes explored during the semester: the Gangster, the Cowboy, the Southern Belle, the Hippie, etc. Some of the images are straightforward, while others appropriate or adapt the archetype. For example, there is a billboard of the Marlboro man but also an image of two shirtless men dancing at a "gay rodeo," and Brando appears as the Godfather but so does Snoop Dogg from the album *The Doggfather*. Before watching the slide show, students write down three or four things they think are quintessentially "American." When the slide show is done, the students choose just one. In discussion, people explain and justify their choices.

Later in that first class, the students do a "blind survey." A series of statements is read. If the statement is true for the student, they raise their hand. Their eyes are closed. The instructor counts the answers and then the class looks at the data together. How many students out of 33 own a gun? How many have been to cotillion? How many have been on an Indian reservation? etc. The class talks about the results they were surprised by, and those they weren't surprised by. What did students expect to find in an average Elon classroom and then found (or didn't)?

This data is connected back to the slide show, and the class discusses diversity (visible and invisible), archetypes, and Americanness. The rest of the term, the class continues complicating stereotypes, archetypes and identities that emerge in the first class meeting.

Activity 2: Standpoint statements (Goodman 158-159):

Along similar lines, "a standpoint statement is a good way to begin a discussion with some structured personal disclosure. Students begin by writing down perhaps five demographic facts that define who they are. These might be their ethnic heritage, gender, age, place of birth or residence, sexual preference, or educational level." Students then write down "how these demographic factors have shaped their standpoint – their view of life and the preferred identity they present to the world." Finally, students consider three questions:

- 1) What parts of your standpoint do you think are shared by others with the same demographic characteristics?
- 2) Which parts of your standpoint are unique to you?
- 3) Of the demographic characteristics you mention, which are most important in determining your standpoint?

Students then discuss in small groups, where they read their demographics and responses, then report back to the class.

Activity 3: Start classroom conversations about the perspective of a text (Goodman 57-59):

Help students think through the ways literature – and language – construct identity or channel cultural assumptions by asking:

To what extent does the writing seem culturally biased?

To what extent are description and prescription confused in an irresponsible and inaccurate way?

To what extent are the central insights grounded in documented empirical evidence?

To what extent are the ideas presented [as] an uncritical extension of the paradigm within which the author works?

What experiences are omitted from the text that strike you as important?

Whose voices are heard in the text?

To what extent does this text challenge or confirm existing ideologies, values and structures?

Activity 4: The “believing game” (Goodman 134-136):

Help students rethink their own assumptions through “the believing game,” an activity where students agree to refrain from criticizing an unpopular perspective for five minutes (and in fact make every effort to believe it). Here are some of the questions people might ask to help them believe:

What’s interesting or helpful about the view?

What are some intriguing features that others might not have noticed?

What would be different if you believed this view, if you accepted it as true?

In what sense and under what conditions might this idea be true?

“Participants who are not able to answer these questions or to provide support for answers given in response to them must remain silent and attend to those who can muster responses. Sometimes unbelief turns into belief, at least for the duration of the discussion. More important, the habit of believing can help us take a more sympathetic stance toward controversial ideas and broaden our horizon of what is conceivable.”

Assignment 1: Using Autobiography to Explore Diversity, developed by Prudence Layne

For years now, I (Prudence) ha’ve used a racial autobiography assignment to prompt class conversations about race. I, too, participate in the assignment, sharing memorable and poignant personal encounters with students: e.g., as the only Black person living in the Faroe Islands at the time, having total strangers rub my skin to see if the brown would disappear. (Incidentally, it does not!) Inevitably, sharing my own anecdotes and stories open the floodgates for students when they

sense that their own experiences will not elicit explicit negative judgment from me (even if you're thinking OMG or WTH, if you can keep the look of shock off your face and keep engaging the student to analyze their experiences, then thought bubbles don't count!), and that our classroom environment (in all its forms) remains a space of exploration to foster learning.

I've also varied the prompt and used a service autobiography in a service-learning class, but it can be used to encourage similar conversations about broad diversities (gender, sexualities, class, religion, national origin and so forth). Included here are a sample prompt and rubric.

Although I present the assignment below for use via Moodle's Discussion Forum (you can adjust the settings to allow anonymity if you want), the assignment can be adapted for the physical classroom environment. You can, for example, allow the students to respond to the prompt in writing, omit their names from the submission, collect the responses, shuffle them and redistribute them so that no student is reading or sharing their own narrative. Depending on the level of the class, sequencing of the materials, class size and dynamics and so on, students can each share their stories in small groups or with the entire class. You can also create a hybrid: have students submit their autobiographies in advance of the class period and you can select some of them for classroom discussion. However, be sure to offer feedback to each student, especially the ones whose autobiographies may not be explored in class.

The Assignment: Guidelines

During this course, you will be required to participate in the Moodle Discussion Board Forums. In these forums, you can respond to some idea within the existing "thread," start a "new thread," or reply to the statements or ideas posted by one of your peers to an existing thread. Each discussion relates to some topic or issue covered in your texts and in our class meetings. You should read the relevant text sections or documents before you begin your discussion – as the quality of your response depends on your ability to incorporate new ideas and information into your response – and make it your own.

You must make at least two responses to each topic: an original reaction and a follow-up that considers your classmates' responses. It is up to you how many more times you respond to each. You can respond more than twice. During the course, you must participate in all assigned forums. All forums will remain open for the entire course – and you can add new responses to previous forums at any time.

Stagger your postings. You should check and respond throughout the assigned period of the discussion, not all at one time. Please recognize that forums will not work if everyone attempts to post at the end of the discussion period, so try to be among the first to get your ideas stated. If everyone gets some ideas stated early, it will be easy to respond to your peers with a second or third response!

Remember, these are not “pure opinion” responses, but opportunities to bring “informed discussion” to a major topic. Your grade will reflect how well you move beyond mere statement of your personal opinion, or restatement of the question or someone else’s ideas. Read the scoring guide/rubric. Stronger discussion responses are those that reflect the characteristics of the higher levels described in the guide.

Sample Prompt:

The *Constructing a Racial Autobiography* Assignment helps you assess the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors you bring to the course. Race is not about how we look, but about the meaning we attribute to those differences. It also involves “privilege” and the unearned benefits we derive from those characteristics we ascribe to race. It’s easy to become defensive when we confront these issues or to create excuses that allow us to live in oblivion and prevent honest engagement with ourselves: e.g., “I had to work hard,” “I didn’t own slaves,” “I voted for Obama (twice!),” “I love Oprah,” “I’m not racist because I’m Jewish, or Italian, or Black, or gay,” “I can’t own these privileges because I didn’t ask for them,” “I don’t see race,” “everyone will think I’m racist” or “I’m ashamed.”

Exercise: (Creating your racial autobiography) Describe your first encounter with race or your racial identity, the first time you became aware of race as a factor in your own life or in the world and describe some of the privileges, conscious or not, that you enjoy.

This is a critical reflection exercise in which students must engage some of the provided readings like Tim Wise’s *White Like Me* and Claude Steele’s *Whistling Vivaldi*. It is posted to the Moodle platform, so other members of the class can see the posts and are encouraged to respond.

Rubric for Discussion Board Postings and Participation

(Adapted from Steve DeLoach’s *Guidelines for Grading Discussion Board Forums*)

A = 90 - 100. Substantial, original contributions and postings that further the work of the class. Frequent, informed references to lesson material. Frequent interaction with students and instructor within sessions. Clear and fluent writing. Original, thoughtful analysis of materials. Two or more responses to others in a majority of DB threads. Responses are thoughtful and advance the discussion. Postings made in a timely manner (carefully staggered over the assigned period.)

B = 89 - 80. Some significant contributions that further the work of the class. Some references to lesson material. Some interaction with students and instructor. Clear and fluid writing. Completion of all assignments. Fairly substantial postings. Some analysis of materials. Two or more responses to others in about 40-50% of DB threads. Mainly thoughtful responses. Periodic interaction with classmates. Most postings made in a timely manner (generally staggered over the assigned period.)

C = 79 - 70. Some vague and summary references to lesson material. Few interactions with students and instructor. Inconsistent and/or unclear writing. Some assignments may be missing. Some vague

or summary references to materials. Short postings. Inconsistent and/or unclear writing. Only a few responses to other postings. Student meets the minimum requirements for responding DB posts, and comments were brief and did not demonstrate an understanding of the material (example: “good point”). Significant writing errors. Infrequent interaction with classmates and the instructor.

D = 69 - 60. No references in material. No interactions with students. Very brief statements. Significant writing errors. Minimal postings. No interaction with other postings. Student completed the minimum standards for the class.

F = 59 and below. Fundamental writing errors. Off-topic conversations. Abusive or inappropriate behavior. Several missing assignments. Majority of DB assignments not submitted. No interaction with other postings. Student failed to post any messages.

Appendix: The Process of Learning about Race

from Chick, Karis and Kernahan, “Learning from Their Own Learning: How Metacognitive and Meta-affective Reflections Enhance Learning in Race-Related Courses”

As part of this course, you will be learning more about race and racism. Generally, as people learn about race (an often sensitive and controversial topic), there is a typical process that unfolds. In this brief outline, some aspects of that process are explained, so you can identify them and reflect on the learning process within yourself and your classmates. Students usually find these ideas helpful because they can lead to better understanding of themselves, their classmates, and the process of group discussions.

What do students typically feel?

First, keep in mind that it is not always comfortable to learn about race and racism. You may experience feelings of anger, resentment, guilt, sadness, or helplessness. Indeed, you may get to a point in the semester where you feel like you simply do not want to learn any more about race or racism. The good news is that things get better. Students usually move beyond this point and begin to feel more positive and motivated about what they are learning.

Sometimes these feelings can lead students to question or feel hostile toward the class, the material, or the instructor. Again, these feelings and reactions are quite typical and can be used as opportunities to learn if they are openly discussed with the instructor or other students. Occasionally students may want to simply withdraw from the class (not speaking during discussion or not attending class), but generally these feelings are temporary, especially if the student discusses them with the instructor or with others in the class.

How (and why) do these feelings develop?

People of all races, whites as well as people of color, generally have a variety of reactions as they learn about race and racism. Obviously, this learning begins early in childhood, but as people develop and learn about race in a direct way (as part of a class, for example), they often experience new kinds of awareness. Listed below are some of the typical kinds of awareness:

- *Naïve/No Social Consciousness:* Very small children often have little awareness of social groups, but this naïveté changes quickly. By about age 3 or so, we can recognize racial differences, and as we get older, we begin to learn the stereotypes and codes of behavior associated with social groups. This learning happens as a result of socialization by parents, peers, education, mass media, etc.
- *Acceptance/Colorblindness:* As we grow into adults, we generally internalize the racial stereotypes and beliefs that are communicated to us through socialization (parents, peers, media, etc). Privileges of the dominant group are generally unrecognized, and most people are unaware of the ways in which racism negatively affects all of us—white people as well as people of color. From this perspec-

tive, racism is often viewed as relatively rare or isolated and as something we are not a part of, especially if we do not experience it and do not behave in openly racist or prejudiced ways.

- **Resistance/Seeing How Race Matters and Becoming Uncomfortable:** As a result of learning more about race and previously unrecognized patterns of racism, people sometimes experience a dramatic change in perspective. Earlier beliefs and ideas about race are questioned, and we may begin to feel more personally aware of or responsible for racism. As a result, feelings of anger (at ourselves, at the larger society, at friends or family) can arise, and some may feel isolated from others (friends, family, classmates) for pointing out or trying to confront issues of racism. People may also feel guilty or overwhelmed, and some may even wish they could change their racial group. Again, it can be difficult to manage all of these feelings of anger or guilt, especially if those around us who do not share our new awareness are not comfortable with our perspective.

- **Redefinition:** With continued learning, people generally become a bit more comfortable dealing with race and racism and may find it easier to discuss these issues with others— even those without the same level of awareness or understanding. Overwhelming feelings of anger and guilt seem to lessen. For whites, this can also mean less of a focus on targeted groups (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans) and more of a focus on white people and their role (contributions to racism, losses from racism, etc.). That is, whites may become less concerned with “helping” other groups and more concerned with “helping” themselves. In addition, whites may now find it easier to see both the positive and negative qualities of their own racial group. People of color may also seek out positive qualities of their racial group that are independent of racial stereotypes and beliefs (self-determined rather than determined by society), and they may explore their racial heritage and culture. During this time, it is not uncommon for people of color to spend time primarily with those of their own racial group, primarily for support in this self-determination, rather than with people from other racial groups. White people sometimes view this behavior negatively because they misunderstand it as “self-segregation.”

- **Internalization/Staying with the Unfolding Process of Exploration:** As learning continues, we may feel more comfortable incorporating our understanding of racism into everyday life. That is, it just becomes part of our “normal” or regular way of thinking and acting. For those who are white, this usually means not having to consciously think as much about sounding “racist” or behaving “incorrectly.” As a result, whites may feel more comfortable and less self-conscious around those of different racial groups. People of color may experience similar feelings of comfort and confidence, thus helping them to navigate outside their own supportive networks. For everyone, the challenge is to maintain new perspectives and understanding in the face of opposition by those who do not share this perspective and those who do not understand as much about race and racism in our society. As a result, the process is ongoing and is never really “finished.” It is also important to understand that feelings of guilt, anger, helplessness, and frustration will naturally arise as one gains greater understanding of such complex issues, but experience with such discomfort can lead to increased confidence about being able to work with and move through it.

Works Cited:

- Bal, P. Matthijs, and Martijn Veltkamp. "How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation." *PLoS ONE* 8(1): e55341. <<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0055341>>
- The Center for Research on Teaching and Learning at the University of Michigan. "Guidelines for Discussing Incidents of Hate, Bias, and Discrimination." Accessed May 11, 2019. <<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/respondingtobias>>
- Chick, Nancy L., Terri Karis and Cyndi Kernahan. "Learning from Their Own Learning: How Metacognitive and Meta-affective Reflections Enhance Learning in Race-Related Courses." *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 3:1 (2009).
- DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.
- The Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning at Elon University. "Difficult Topics and Moments." Accessed May 11, 2019. <<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/catl/inclusiveteaching/how-do-we-teach/difficult-moments/>>
- Brookfield, Stephen D. and Stephen Preskill. *Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2005.
- Goodman, Diane J. "Responding to Biased or Offensive Comments." Accessed May 11, 2019. <<http://www.dianegoodman.com/documents/RespondingToBiasedOrOffensiveCommentsexcerptarticle.pdf>>
- Helms, Janet E. "An update of Helms's white and people of color racial identity models." In J.G. Ponterotto, J.M. Casas, L.A. Suzuki, & C.M. Alexander, eds., *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 181-98.
- J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A structure, not an event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity." *Lateral* 5.1 (2016). <<https://doi.org/10.25158/L5.1.7>>
- Kidd, David Comer, and Emanuele Castano. "Different stories: How levels of familiarity with literary and genre fiction relate to mentalizing." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 11:4 (2013), 474-486. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/aca0000069>>
- . "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind." *Science* 342:6156 (2017), 377-80.
- McEntarfer, Heather Killelea. *Navigating Gender and Sexuality in the Classroom: Narrative Insights from Students and Educators*. Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 2016.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Why Are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations about Race*. New York: Basic Books, 2017.

Tochluk, Shelly. *Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk about Race and How to Do It*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.

Warren, Lee. "Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom." The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University. Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/catl/wp-content/uploads/sites/126/2017/04/Managing-Hot-Moments-in-the-Classroom-Harvard_University.pdf>

Wehbe, Linda, et al. "Simultaneously Uncovering the Patterns of Brain Regions Involved in Different Story Reading Subprocesses." *PLoS ONE* 9:11 (2014), e112575. <<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0112575>>

Wellman, David. *Portraits of White Racism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Williams, J. A. *Classroom in Conflict: Teaching Controversial Subjects in a Diverse Society*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Wing Sue, Derald. *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015.

Further Reading:

On selecting your texts

Meyer, Sheree. "Broadly Representative"? The MLA's Approaches to Teaching World Literature Series." *Pedagogy* 3:1 (2003): 21-52.S

Srikanth, Rajini. "Overwhelmed by the World: Teaching Literature and the Difference of Nations." *Pedagogy* 7:2 (1 April 2007): 192–206.

On queering the literature classroom

Borgstrom, Michael. "Queerness without Intimacy: LGBT Studies and the Lesson of The Hermaphrodite." *Pedagogy* 15:2 (1 April 2015): 303–329.

This article examines a central pedagogical dilemma within queer studies: with an increase in public attention to LGBT concerns (and an investment in the categories that comprise the LGBT rubric), how might we prioritize the complexities of queerness within a social context that tends to privilege discrete designations for identity?

Endres, Nikolai. "Queering Our Classrooms." *Pedagogy* 5:1 (January 2005): 131–139.

Jacobs, Denise. "Expletive Deleted: Teaching YA Literature with Gay and Lesbian Characters." *Pedagogy* 2:3 (1 October 2002): 413–415.

Winans, Amy E. "Queering Pedagogy in the English Classroom: Engaging with the Places Where Thinking Stops." *Pedagogy* 6:1 (1 January 2006): 103–122.

On race and ethnicity

Bollinger, Heidi Elisabeth. "Ranaway from the Subscriber": Teaching Slave Narratives Using Wanted Advertisements for Fugitive Slaves." *Pedagogy* 18:2 (2018): 375–385.

Goldstein, David S. "Page and Screen: Teaching Ethnic Literature with Film." *Pedagogy* 10:3 (October 2010): 562–567.

Courses on ethnic American literature can unintentionally reinscribe students' preconceptions and stereotypes about ethnic American subgroups or create the false impression that each ethnic group is homogeneous. A student with limited experience with people of color might think she now understands an ethnic group after reading an ethnic American novel, for example. By using fiction and non-fiction film, teachers can destabilize students' oversimplified views of ethnic groups and of the concepts of race and ethnicity themselves. The course described here started with Toni Morrison's short story, "Recitatif," which ingeniously leads readers to examine their own racial preconceptions. Then, novels (*Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich, *Sent for You Yesterday* by John Wideman, *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, and *Mona in the Promised Land* by Gish Jen) are paired with films to demonstrate that greater diversity exists within any ethnic group than between any two. Students also engage a few key articles about canon formation so they can understand ethnic literature in the context of American literary traditions. By the end of the course, students have a healthy uncertainty regarding race and ethnicity, their oversimplifications having been undermined by their work with diverse texts.

Helms, Janet E. "An Update of Helms's White and People of Color Racial Identity Models." *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling*, ed. Joseph G. Ponterotto, J. Manuel Casas, Lisa A. Suzuki, and Charlene M. Alexander (Sage Publications: 1995): 181–198.

Helms characterizes the different statuses or stages of racial identity in response to new information and experiences, focusing on the identities of white people and people of color.

Lassiter, Fran L. "Introduction: Encounter Tradition, Make It New: Essays on New Approaches for Teaching the Harlem Renaissance." *Pedagogy* 15:2 (1 April 2015): 353–358.

Nicholls, David G. "Teaching American Literature in Francophone West Africa." *Pedagogy* 2:3 (1 October 2002): 392–395.

On managing a diverse literature classroom

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Go Ahead, Speak for Yourself." *New York Times* (10 August 2018).
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/opinion/sunday/speak-for-yourself.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage> (accessed 8/20/18)

In this op-ed, philosopher Appiah lays out a concise, eloquent argument for speaking only for one's own experiences rather than as a representative for an entire identity group. In the process, he offers an accessible introduction to the concept of intersectionality.

Brookfield, Stephen D. and Stephen Preskill. *Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms* (2nd ed.). Jossey Bass: 1999, 2005.

This book offers thoughtful and comprehensive guidelines for facilitating effective classroom discussions. Most useful are the section on ground rules (pp. 52-56) and the chapter "Discussion in Culturally Diverse Classrooms" (pp. 124-147).

Chick, Nancy L., et al. "Learning from Their Own Learning: How Metacognitive and Meta-affective Reflections Enhance Learning in Race-Related Courses." *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. 3:1 (2009): Article 16.

This article discusses which strategies resulted in the most meaningful student development in terms of thinking about race in four different classes: in literature, psychology, and geography. It includes helpful information on what tends to block student learning in these areas, as well as techniques to facilitate the kind of metacognitive reflection that the authors found best supported learning.

Ellwanger, Adam. "No Exit: White Speech and Silence in Classroom Conversations on Race." *Pedagogy* (2017) 17 (1): 35-58.

Wray, Amanda. "Race, Region, and Ethos: One Teacher's Story of Racism in Two Classrooms." *Pedagogy* 17:1 (2017): 59-76.

This article explores the struggle to transport an ethos of white antiracism across different racial climates within two university contexts. The author analyzes the influence that students' home rhetorics of racism and their conceptualizations about "progressive" white identity have in (de)constructing a teacher's credibility to discuss racial identity and racism in the classroom.

On teaching experiential learning with attention to inclusion:

Goodwyn, Andrew, et al., eds. *International Perspectives on the Teaching of Literature in Schools: Global Principles and Practices*. Routledge 2018.

Hansen, Matthew C. "O Brave New World": Service-Learning and Shakespeare." *Pedagogy* 11:1 (1 January 2011): 177–197.

Jay, Gregory. "Service Learning, Multiculturalism, and the Pedagogies of Difference." *Pedagogy*. 8:2 (1 April 2008): 255–281.