TEACHING DURING ELECTION WEEK

Regardless of the subject matter, students bring their full selves and life experiences to the classroom with them. In acknowledging that this year’s election cycle brings with it a heightened sense of emotions amidst intense national discourse, we wanted to provide this opportunity for instructors to discuss navigating a classroom environment where students may simultaneously exhibit behaviors of jubilation, fear, anger and/or general disengagement and lack of focus.

Thank you to Drs. Kendra Steward-Tillman, Bridget Trogden, Crystal Thornhill, and Andrew Pyle for being on the webinar panel.

CLEMSON RESOURCES

Information about Clemson Votes and the “Clemson University Campus Democracy Plan” a broad-based, nonpartisan effort aimed at improving the democratic engagement of our student population—graduate and undergraduate—is located here. In addition to the first two goals of voter engagement and turn-out, this coalition has the goal of “increase[ing] democratic engagement and civic learning in our Clemson graduate and undergraduate academic curricula....In academic year 2020-2021, we intend that faculty of at least 100 courses have explicitly created voter education activities.”

Clemson Votes blog (for staff and faculty): https://blogs.clemson.edu/cudemocracy/

Voting and Elections: a Clemson Libraries LibGuide This guide connections to Clemson Votes and other resources and includes a page on media literacy with fact-checking information: https://clemson.libguides.com/voting/media-literacy

OTEI: Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation offers a broad array of services, including individually-designed consultation. Do you want a second eye on your teaching plans for next week, for discussion topics and questions, assignments, activities, and other teaching strategies? Request a consultation with our qualified staff.

RESOURCES:

ELECTION WEEK

1. How Faculty Can Prepare to Handle the Post-Election Classroom by Nancy Thomas, Tufts University and Cazembe Kennedy, Clemson University. This article supplies key insights and many links to useful resources on discussion, equity and racial justice, and research on campus climates.

The overall focus is on strategies that can be used to address students and their potential thoughts and feelings after the election. We talk about how as a faculty member, you can be political without being partisan, curbing students expectations about the election ending on "Election Night," talking with students about their post-election expectations (Would they rather have some small group discussions for a few minutes? A large group discussion? What might ground rules look like for political
conversation?)...Then we get into strategies to build class community like using daily icebreakers (my Google Docs/Sheets), humor (videos, memes, clips from movies/tv shows that can lighten the mood but also relate, making yourself available if students need to talk.

2. **After Election 2020: Moving from Reaction to Action** from U. Michigan’s Center for Research, Learning and Teaching. This article focuses on how to help students move from reaction to action after an election. It acknowledges that students need space to process their reaction and that once processed, we can help them channel their responses into action. The guide provides three key elements to help students move to action:
   1) acknowledging their feelings,
   2) connecting disciplines to broader social systems, and
   3) refocus and commit to civic engagement within their communities.

   See also [Preparing to Teach About the 2020 Election (and After)](#) and [Structuring Classroom Discussions about the 2020 Election](#)

3. **Facilitating Difficult Election Conversations** by James Madison’s Center for Civic Engagement. One topic, how to pose questions that allow students to express how they feel or what they are grappling with, provides useful examples that you can use.

4. **Teaching and the Election**, from the University of Oregon. This article starts with “Strategies for Student and Instructor Care” which is much appreciated. Strategies are suggested to help instructors, since:
   “Many instructors are already doing a tremendous amount of additional work, including additional care work, both within their teaching and potentially in their home lives. Some instructors also may be experiencing additional vulnerability in this political moment because of their course content and/or because they hold identities that are targeted in racist, homophobic, and antisemitic public discourse and action. While “self care” is encouraged verbally in many spaces, we hope to normalize attending to your own wellbeing in practice.”

**TEACHING FOR EQUITY AND TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING**

- See the articles above for links, as well as
- [Difficult Dialogues](#) (from Vanderbilt University’s CTL)
- [Making the Most of Hot Moments in the Classroom](#) (from University of Michigan CRLT)

**NEWS ARTICLES**

- [Avoiding Postelection Student Unrest](#), Colleges can help students deal productively with their disappointment and anger, regardless of the political outcome. By Debra Mashek.
- [Can Colleges Prepare Students for the Election and Its Aftermath?](#) by Beth McMurtrie and Beckie Supiano.