

Working to understand the ways oppression and difference (cultural, racial, economic, gender, differently abled, and otherwise) interact and reinforce each other is central to my approach to the classroom and research alike, and I am committed to teaching and researching in ways that actively seek to counteract and resist oppression of all kinds. I believe that every student should graduate college with an understanding of the relationships between power, difference, privilege, and marginalization and I orient my classes to helping students reflect on how these dynamics shape their own lives and the lives of others.

Inclusion of diverse voices is not an afterthought in my classes, it's central to the intellectual work we do. Given that much of what we do in cultural anthropology classes is work to understand relationships between various kinds of social difference and power, a more diverse classroom makes for richer and more challenging class discussions for everyone. The classrooms I've taught in at Indiana University, Butler University, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga reflect a broader trend toward more diverse college classrooms at the national level. I have worked closely with first-generation college students, non-traditional students returning to pursue their degree after years in the workforce, non-native English speakers, and students working full-time jobs, among others. In my courses, students from all contexts have the opportunity to voice their ideas and raise issues related to their personal experiences outside the classroom as well as their reactions to class materials. Through reflective writing assignments and corresponding class discussions, I encourage students to apply theories and concepts from class to their own lived experience and, in turn, to share how power and difference operate in their own lives. Working together to understand difference in a room full of people with diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences helps students understand material in a much more tangible and personal way. Working through these ideas as a class reveals time and again how everyone, including the instructor, can benefit from engaging with new perspectives.

Promoting inclusivity and creating the conditions for everyone to participate extends beyond an instructor's engagement with a diverse student body. Course design is a critical tool in this project, and I approach the materials and texts that I assign with care and reflexivity to ensure that students encounter a range of voices. In my Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course, we spend the first week of class discussing the history of the discipline, a conversation that largely centers around anthropology's complex relationship to colonialism and how early anthropology was a project primarily carried out by white Europeans and North Americans with the goal of studying different kinds of "non-Western" peoples. We explore how this history continues to haunt the discipline and discuss various challenges to this vision of cultural difference. Throughout the rest of the semester, I actively challenge the anthropological canon by including publications by scholars outside the mainstream of anthropology. For instance, students read Franz Boas alongside Frederick Douglass to understand changing ideas about race and culture in the late nineteenth century. Later on, we read excerpts from Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to discuss the politics of ethnographic writing and challenges to the genre. This effort carries into my other classes: in Environmental Anthropology, students read indigenous Peruvian novelist José María Arguedas alongside more standard anthropological writing on nature/culture dichotomies.

I believe that the classroom should provide students an opportunity to examine connections between their own struggles and larger social patterns and power dynamics. Yet bringing deeply personal questions and struggles into the space of the classroom requires structured discussions with rules to ensure students feel safe and respected. To ensure the classroom is the safe space it needs to be in order to have the challenging conversations around how our differences intersect with uneven power dynamics, I begin all my classes my collectively creating a class contract. I ask students to share what helps them learn and what in their experience creates productive and rigorous classroom discussions. Students offer what helps them to feel safe to speak up and what they think is acceptable in a classroom discussion. After an extensive and often lively conversation about classroom dynamics, we draft a formal contract, which all students and

I sign, vowing to be held accountable to and to hold each other accountable to this set of rules. I find that beginning the semester collectively crafting classroom guidelines encourages a safe and productive classroom environment.

My ongoing effort to develop greater awareness while maintaining my lifelong commitment to education involves recognizing and confronting my own biases and assumptions as much as providing a safe space for my students to acknowledge and wrestle with theirs. This is, undoubtedly, the work of a lifetime, but I am grateful for the opportunity that I have to begin the process.