How to Discuss/Evaluate Difficult Subjects in Your Class

1. Build an atmosphere that values input and that focuses on response and empathy
   a. Find how discussing and writing about difficult subjects fits into your pedagogy
   b. Students should be encouraged to talk about difficult subjects
   c. Want students look to each other to generate conversation

2. Model classroom feedback in class
   a. Begin semester playing out specific scenarios with students and having them react and interact
   b. Model with students what you value in these conversations and what you do not value

3. Never let bigotry go unchecked
   a. Vital for students to know that you will stand for marginalized populations
   b. When a student says something bigoted, don’t rip into the student. Turn into a teaching moment.
   c. Make your process reflexive.

4. Help students move past artificial takes and/or what they think you want to hear
   a. Difficult subjects can lead to “soft” takes. Tell students to take chances and show how their chances will be rewarded.
   b. Sometimes students will try and tailor their paper to fit your views. Spend time brainstorming with students or working with them one-on-one to have them generate original ideas.

5. Make students know you are grading their writing not their experiences
   a. Sometimes students equate their paper grade as an experience grade. Explain how they are not the same.