

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.