

Earth 194 DE: Readings in Geoscience DEI

Week One: Talking about Race/Racism

What I need to bring:

- Ipad with papers annotated
- These notes
- Copies of syllabus (printed)
- Printed copies of how [serial testimony works](#) (for those that want one)

Agenda:

1. Introductions

Say who you are, your pronouns, your department, etc

Ex: I'm Alexandra Phillips, but I prefer to go by Alex and I use she/her pronouns. I'm a postdoc in the Earth Science department and the instructor for this reading group.

- Attendance during introductions

Does anyone have any questions about the syllabus? Or concerns that they wanted to address?

2. Quiz Questions/Serial Testimony

Serial Testimony: Describe Serial Testimony

Has anyone done serial testimony before?

The idea is pretty simple - the facilitator poses a question, and each participant speaks in turn without reaction from other group members. Participants speak from their own experience and without reference to what anyone else in the group has said.

Participants don't change their answers after hearing someone else's. Serial Testimony does not aim to "solve" problems or create "dialogue" among participants. The purpose is not to "piggyback" off others' comments or to take sides, but rather to contribute one's own perspectives. When it's your turn you can choose to speak or to pass. After we have done one round, we will come back to those that have chosen to pass and ask if they're comfortable speaking.

Ground rules:

- Listen to each speaker in stillness
- Do not interrupt with comments, questions, or physical signs
- Concentrate on what others are saying before your own turn comes and immediately after your turn, tune back in, rather than wondering "how did I do?"
- In speaking, stay with your experiences and feelings and reflections, not your opinions.
- During your turn, do not refer to what others have said before you. Focus on contributing your own experience.
- Keep your comments within the time allowance.

- Use Serial Testimony to learn how to listen and reflect as well as to focus your speaking.

Usually the facilitator chooses to either participate always or not participate, and I have to follow the same rules as all of you. I'm choosing to participate, but I realize that my choice reflects power dynamics in this group and want to be conscious to say that I am not the authority figure here in what is right or wrong, I view my role more to help guide our discussion and have an additional perspective.

Give everyone a few minutes to recall notes or jot down new ideas if they didn't bring notes.

Serial Testimony Round One: Either Q1 or Q2

1. What are your personal goals for the course? How do they align or not align with the learning objectives in the syllabus? Note: the syllabus download link can be found at the top of the course page under "welcome."
 - a. *I obviously wrote the learning objectives, so I align well with them! But another one of my goals that is personal to me is to practice leading discussions, especially difficult ones like today's about race, so I can improve as a person and teacher. This is also the first class I have taught from start to finish that I have also designed, so I'm excited to see that implemented and get all of your feedback throughout the class.*
2. Looking at the syllabus, what week are you most looking forward to for the readings and discussion? Are there any weeks that do not interest you as much?

Serial Testimony Round Two: One of Q3-5

3. In your own words, how would you describe the differences between prejudice, implicit bias, racism, and systemic racism? How has your understanding or connotation of these terms changed over time? How did the required (and/or optional readings) change your understanding or connotations of these words?
 - a. *I define prejudice as an assumption based on someone's identity, which can be a good assumption or a bad one - while racism is any sort of policy or action that perpetuates inequalities and existing power dynamics based on race - systemic racism is the deeply ingrained prevalence of racist policies in institutions and places of power that cause our society to normalize racial inequities - I think of implicit bias as our internal set of prejudices and racism that we have subconsciously adopted based on society and culture. Over time as I learn more about racism and the history of racism, my understanding of these words has deepened and become rooted in historical context and others' lived experiences.*
4. From the readings, how do our societal and field-specific norms around discussions of race place people of color at greater risk for negative outcomes?

5. Consider the following statements and rewrite the one that best describes how you feel: I would rather not talk about race/racism; I am very uncomfortable talking about race/racism; I am usually uncomfortable talking about race/racism; I am sometimes uncomfortable talking about race/racism; I am usually comfortable talking about race/racism; I am very comfortable talking about race/racism. Then reflect and write using the following sentence-starters: The hard part of talking about race/racism is...; The beneficial part of talking about race/racism is...
- a. *I am usually comfortable talking about race/racism. The hard part of talking about race/racism is dealing with the guilt and shame of making a mistake in a public space. The beneficial part of talking about race/racism is that pushing through feelings of fear and discomfort offer the best opportunities to deepen my understanding about racism.*

Allow a minute for journaling/self reflection/walking break

3. Paper Discussion

- Dutt et al's first sentence states that the geosciences are among the least diverse in all STEM fields in the US (citing a reading we will cover later in the course) - what factors do you think specifically contribute to geosciences having less racial diversity than other fields like biology or chemistry?
- What specific issues do universities and departments, like Earth Science, have over other institutions in addressing racism?
- From the anecdote at the beginning of the Sue paper - how do you feel like the professor and students handled the situation? What could have been improved?
- Who was studied for the Sue paper? What did they find in their study across these different groups? (White students, students of color, white faculty, faculty of color)
- Under "What are characteristics of race talk" Sue et al outlines the patterns they have uncovered in discussion of race - do any of these observations particularly align with your own experiences or particularly stand out?
- Validation was a theme throughout both papers - how do our norms around race talk potentially escalate feelings of invalidation across different identities?
- Sue et al talks about the politeness, academic, and color-blind protocols that dictate when and how society talks about race - in your own words, how would you explain each of these norms?
- Can you think of any other "protocols" from your own experiences? Do you recall any instances of being in these protocols in social situations?
- Where does Dutt's paper either follow or push back on the academic protocol outlined in Sue? Is there currently space within academic norms to discuss race openly or only through academically accepted norms that promote further White power?
- From the readings, why is it important that institutions like universities talk explicitly about race? What do the authors argue are consequences to being "colorblind" about race?

- One notable spot - end of page 665 in sue “if racism is considered no longer a force in the lives of people of color, it allows Whites to maintain their innocence and naïveté while absolving them from taking personal responsibility to rectify injustices”