



## Introduction

*As we work together to decolonize the academy, the Anti-Racist Doctoral Program Student Committee at Pitt School of Social Work collaborated to create a set of guiding questions to review syllabi across our doctoral program. Though far from an exhaustive list, we hoped to create a beginning set of reflective questions that would serve faculty regardless of the class taught. These questions can be used by professors to help center the experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in both content and process and are informed primarily from the lived experiences of Black students. The questions demand a critical lens, intentional choices that limit violence in the classroom, and a commitment to incorporating the knowledge, scholarship, and experiences of BIPOC people consistently in the classroom. We share them here in the hope that they may be useful to others and inform similar efforts across social work classrooms.*

## Suggested citation (APA 7th Ed. format):

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## Anti-Racist Syllabus Review: Guiding Questions

These guiding questions are meant to address content in social work coursework that has been traditionally Anti-Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Additionally, it is crucial you review your syllabus for the inclusion of diverse social work theories, practice, and research.

1. How are you including critical theories in your course (e.g. Critical Race and Black Feminist theories)?
2. How are you including research, theory, and scholarship conducted by BIPOC scholars in your course?
3. How do you incorporate different approaches to social work practice in your course? For example, do you include content on African-Centered, Indigenous, or Eastern social work approaches (interventions)?

4. Are you including content in your course from scholars outside of social work that are Anti-BIPOC? Do you have content in your course that includes racial slurs or other offensive terms? If so, are these readings critical or could they be replaced with less offensive readings? If that is not possible, how are you preparing students for this and addressing it (e.g., debriefing, critiquing)?
5. How are health, child welfare, and other racial disparities taught in your course? Do you include any content on the role of systemic racism on these disparities?
6. Do you include content that addresses historical racism against BIPOC in the development of the field of social work and social welfare policies in the United States? Do you include a range of histories and the systematic role social work played in the racial and ethnic cleansing of BIPOC?
7. Some of our social work pioneers were Anti-BIPOC, how do you teach this and discuss its effects on the development of our profession? How do you explain the influence of racism in social work in the past and currently?
8. Do you include any content regarding historical research ethics violations and racism against BIPOC populations? How do you teach students how to accomplish research with BIPOC populations today in ways that acknowledge these past abuses of power and actively work to prevent them?
9. How do you teach students to address power and power differentials in research, particularly when teaching White students working with or planning to work with BIPOC?
10. How do you teach students to address and interpret racial and ethnic identity in research methods and analysis? For example, how do you help students understand and interrogate the common practice of “controlling for race.”
11. Do you include research that critiques mainstream viewpoints, acknowledging that these views are heavily influenced by a male, Euro-centric perspective? How do you encourage students to develop this critical practice and incorporate the aforementioned critical theories to support this practice?
12. Do you prepare in advance and subsequently debrief all students when content maybe (re-)traumatizing to students in your class? For example, presenting content to the class that includes lynching of African Americans. Do you debrief your students accordingly? What is your process? Do you have knowledge of resources to which you can refer students if they wish to debrief or process with someone outside of class?
13. How do you structure your class so that BIPOC students feel safe in class and can fully participate? How do you encourage all students to question mainstream viewpoints and theories? How do you structure your class and your relationships with students to support students who face systemic racism in the academy?

14. How do you manage difficult and sensitive conversations in the classroom, including those about race and racism in your class? What is your process for managing conflict between students or between students and faculty when it occurs?
15. How do you teach students about positionality and how to approach their research or practice given their positionality?
16. How do you grapple with your own positionality when teaching? When do you bring in guest experts?

***Please direct any feedback or suggestions regarding this resource to [SSWDSO@pitt.edu](mailto:SSWDSO@pitt.edu).***

