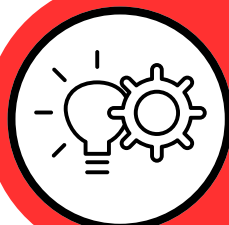


PREPARING FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION

NO MATTER WHAT YOU TEACH

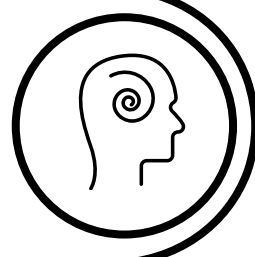


Have a Plan

Given that the United States is a democracy where a president is voted into office, we can all anticipate that one of the current candidates will win the highly divided election. There will likely be a diversity of student reactions regarding who wins, such as elation, disappointment, fearfulness, ambivalence, among others, or a mixture of emotions. Be mindful of how this prominent national event and related activities can impact student engagement in your courses no matter what you teach, and that your learners may need extra time to process all that is happening. Given the science behind how human brains work, learning in a heightened state of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty can be difficult.

Developing a plan for how to handle the day of and days following the election can help you feel more prepared when the time comes. Please note, however, that even the best laid out plans can take a detour, so being willing to adapt will be important.

Consider the Complexities



Observe how your students are responding to the election season. If you sense heightened stress, acknowledge it. Never force students to talk about it if they do not want to. Always implement classroom guidelines if dialogues arise. Many instructors have supported students in moments like these by implementing short, 1-2-minute individual written reflections allowing class members to consider how they feel with no expectation of sharing with the class, or anonymous polls where learners can select how they feel on a pre-determined scale. These activities can be conducted in courses of any size. Asynchronous polling can be used in online courses. Letting the entire class know about campus resources such as counseling services ([CAPS](#)) can also be helpful.



Read the Room

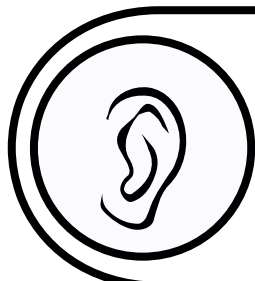
Consider making a statement to the class acknowledging that this has been a highly divided election season and normalizing that students might be experiencing a variety of emotions.

Acknowledge the Events



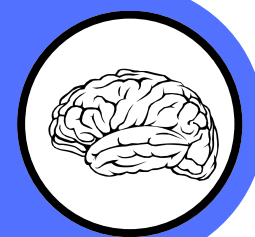
Given the diversity of political party affiliations and student reactions, this is a critical time to be a listener and to utilize trauma-informed teaching approaches, avoiding actions that can lead to increased stress and division.

Let Listening be Your Framework

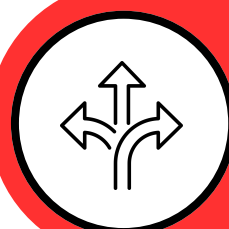


During election season the media can be overwhelming. Encourage students to take breaks from the news and social media and to also center on what they value. You can also model these behaviors and share the actions that you are taking for self-regulation.

Emphasize & Model Self-Regulation



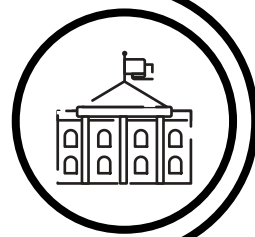
Avoid having major course assignments due around the time of the election. Having some flexibility is advisable, as students might have more difficulty attending to their classwork and other life matters. This season will pass.



Embrace Flexibility

Now is an opportunistic time to share ways that your students can get involved with American politics and engage civically to take future action. Let them know about the [Eagleton Institute of Politics](#), a campus resource.

Discuss Civic Engagement



Feel free to reach out to TeachingInstitute@rutgers.edu if you'd like additional support regarding teaching during the upcoming election.