#AejmcChats – Tuesday, November 16, at 7 pm CT/ 8 pm ET

Teaching Race – A Conversation with George Daniels (@BamaProducer) and Robin Blom (@RobinBlom), co-editors of new book Teaching Race: Struggles, Strategies and Scholarship for the Mass Communication Classroom

@AEJMC
Welcome! We will kick off this #AejmcChats in just a few minutes with special guests @BamaProducer & @RobinBlom where we will do a Q&A about Teaching Race. Follow along here and with #AejmcChats as we share the questions, answers & discussion.

@BamaProducer
We are excited to be on tonight with #AejmcChats talking about not only the book Teaching Race but an approach to teaching that is sensitive to diversity and inclusion. Glad @RobinBlom joined me in this project. #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
The @MacAejmc division has been around for 50 years and while Minorities and Communication focuses on racial and ethnic minorities, there are many other social identities linked to our Teaching Race #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
Most of the more than 3,000 members of @AEJMC are going to be confronted with a topic related to Teaching Race in their classroom at least once each semester. #AejmcChats @MacAejmc

Q 1 – Besides the title of this new book, what exactly is Teaching Race?
@RobinBlom
A 1 – Teaching Race for an educator happens when race is or should be part of a particular classroom conversation. That brings many considerations to the forefront because everyone brings their own experiences and knowledge (and misperceptions) into those discussions. #AejmcChats

Q 2 – Why did you guys decide to take on this project?
@BamaProducer
A 2 – Every year the @MacAejmc and many other divisions sponsor teaching panels at our conferences, but a lot of that wisdom doesn’t get shared beyond the conference. Teaching Race is the 4th installment in the @AEJMC Master Class Series #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
A 2 – I also wanted to work with @RobinBlom on a project. He’s such a prolific scholar. I’d seen his articles in JMC Educator. What a great partner in this adventure! #AejmcChats

@RobinBlom
A 2 – George was the first person I ever met at an AEJMC conference (Midwinter in Reno). Years later, he does research with my colleague Gabriel Tait, and I proposed to do a project together. I thought short conference paper; instead George suggested an entire book. 😊 #AejmcChats
The first thing that came into my mind after George proposed the idea: I can learn a lot. And it turned out to be a very immersive experience with many opportunities to talk about race and diversity with a wonderful group of scholars.

Yes @Gabriel_Tait is responsible for bringing us together. They have quite the diversity brain trust up there at @BallState #AejmcChats

We’re hoping to engage with folks like @TheProfSchwartz as we talk about how we tackle race in the classroom. That’s another goal of Teaching Race – starting a conversation. #AejmcChats

The Teaching Race book has three broad units: (needed) structural changes, positionality of faculty in the classroom while teaching race and diversity, and mentorship of students. #AejmcChats

In Teaching Race, we set you up for success if you’re from a racial minority group and you’re the teacher at a traditionally white institution or if you’re a white professor at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). #AejmcChats

Additional Inserted Question from @Carobella3: So glad you have produced this book. Can you give an example of how “Teaching Race” is something one does, even in course not related to race? #AejmcChats

Great question@Carobella3 – I teach media management, service learning and other skills classes and racial diversity always is a topic for an exercise or discussion #AejmcChats

It’s worth mentioning that in my introductory journalism class, the topic of racial diversity was front and center in our unit on journalism history as we looked at those who played a role in the practices of our profession. #AejmcChats

One reason is that many people are afraid to make mistakes or say “the wrong thing.” We have some authors talk about those experiences in the book. #AejmcChats

Yes, people are afraid they might say the wrong thing or use the wrong vocabulary. #AejmcChats

We have to create a safe environment for student and teacher to say the wrong thing, point it out,
regroup and keep on talking. Everyone has to have a thick skin when we’re talking about race, because it’s so personal. #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
A 4 – Earlier today I was watching a diversity training presentation produced by a colleague in the field of gender and race studies. The goal was to teach attendees about microaggressions. I’m not sure all of the trainers’ points would have been taken positively.

My point in sharing the diversity training example is that you as the instructor or the student have to prepare for the likelihood someone will make a mistake. In Teaching Race, you’re also teaching yourself (student instructor) to be resilient. #AejmcChats

@angiechuang
A 4 – One way to explain the fear that comes with talking about race in the classroom: Students (and faculty) will sometimes freely acknowledge the ignorance of math, or say they don’t follow politics closely, but it’s harder to say, “I don’t know much about race.” #AejmcChats

@danikathleen
A 4 – Also the foundations are missing for many people of all ages. Critical histories like those published in the #1619project literally didn’t mainstream for many until 2019. We have to build a foundation of knowledge with intention or that fear will always win.

@RobinBlom
It’s worth mentioning that the book contains 10 chapters with 10 perspectives from other scholars to discuss a topic from each chapter more in-depth, as well as an afterword. The book includes work from 24 #AEJMC scholars. #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
And we’re pleased to have participants from so many different racial and ethnic groups and different size institutions. Teaching Race contributors reflect the diversity of @AEJMC. #AejmcChats

Q 5 – As instructors, what do you find are the TWO MOST IMPORTANT things to remember when tackling race in the classroom?
@angiechuang
A 5 – 1. Acknowledge your own vulnerability and fallibility on a difficult and personal issue for many; 2. Be willing to say, “I’m not sure what the best answer or response is, but I’m going to work on it and get back to you.” (I guess 1 and 2 are kind of the same!) #AejmcChats

@MasBiswas
A 5 – 1) Offer context when introducing a topic on race and 2) avoid generalization. #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
Excellent points @MasBiswas Thanks for these suggestions #AejmcChats

@RobinBlom
A 5 – Everyone in the classroom is likely at different levels in their (mis)information level and they all have had different (mis)information sources. @angiechuang wrote in the book about the need for
students to unlearn misinformation. Very important lesson for educators. #AejmcChats

@miamoodyramirez
A 5 – When tackling race in the classroom, two of the most important things to remember: 1) set some ground rules and 2) recognize one’s individual biases. #AejmcChats

Q 6 – Do you think the race of the teacher makes a difference when talking about race or diversity?
@BamaProducer
A 6 – Yes, W.E.B. DuBois said the Problem of the 20th century was the problem of the color line. Well, it’s still a problem almost 22 years into the 21st century. As a facilitator in Teaching Race, your own racial/ethnic background DOES matter #AejmcChats

@MasBiswas
A 6 – It depends on the focus or orientation of the course; e.g. a survey course on diversity vs. an identity-specific course. A lived experience can be useful more than acquired knowledge through research. #AejmcChats

@angiechuang
A 6 – Yes, race of the teacher matters, as does their gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and more. It also matters that teachers of all intersectional identities need to be engaging on this topic (race) in the classroom. But we can’t teach as if we are identity neutral. #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
A 6 – As an African American male when Teaching Race, I have to go into the lesson knowing there are certain assumptions about my political position on issues of social justice or racial inequities. The key is to keep an open mind and do a lot of listening. #AejmcChats

@RobinBlom
A 6 – Absolutely. That is the main reason why we focused on the positionality of faculty as the core of the book. We included chapters and perspectives about minority and majority faculty at PWIs and HBCUs, including experiences of international faculty & biracial faculty. #AejmcChats

Q 7 – What are strategies you’ve found are most useful in teaching students about race?
@BamaProducer
A 7 – If it’s a diversity-centric class, start on the first day of class with setting up that safe environment. Teaching Race is 1) personal 2) political and 3) always changing. In skills classes not centered diversity, be prepared for controversies to pop up. #AejmcChats

@MasBiswas
A 7 – One of the strategies is to find an example for class activity with which generation Z can relate, such as web series on Instagram, streaming service programming, TikTok videos (of course in addition to news) #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
A 7 – One strategy is to use stories like #KyleRittenhouse trial and anticipate how the outcome will be discussed in class. What issues of race and privilege will need to be talked about when that verdict is
reached. Another opportunity for Teaching Race. #AejmcChats

@miamoodyramirez
A 7 – Students learn best from real-world experiences, case studies, current events and guest speakers from diverse backgrounds who share diverse perspectives. #AejmcChats

Q 8—So, what if things go wrong—what is the best way for a teacher to respond or recover?
@BamaProducer
A 8 – The worst thing you can do is not address it. Point out the situation if someone might have been offended or a statement was taken the wrong way. Don’t be afraid to re-visit the situation in a later class, after you’ve let things cool down. #AejmcChats

@RobinBlom
Thanks everyone. Looking forward to hearing your ideas about the book. One of our main goals has been from the beginning that we hope to continue the conversation long after this book has been published. #AejmcChats

@BamaProducer
Thanks @AEJMC for engaging with us tonight on “Teaching Race.” This has been a great discussion. We look forward to more dialogue in the months to come. #AejmcChats

@AEJMC
Thank you to our guests @BamaProducer, @RobinBlom, all of the Teaching Race contributors, and all of our participants for tonight’s #AejmcChats on the very important “Teaching Race” topic and book. If you missed it – just search #AejmcChats to see the conversation!

End Chat