



How Faculty Can Prepare to Handle The Post-Election Classroom

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After this historic and exhausting election ends, students and faculty probably fall into one of two camps: those who want to talk about it and those who do not. For faculty, this poses a dilemma. The election might be beyond the scope of the course content, or the professor might not feel ready or able to facilitate politically charged discussions. Faculty will also need time to process their own feelings about the election. And we know from our conversations with colleagues that they are already overwhelmed by the stress of the pandemic and how it has affected their teaching, student advising, and their personal lives.

While we empathize, we do not think that any professor can take a pass. In [IDHE's campus climate studies](#), students complained about professors who acted like nothing happened the day after a national event (an election) or tragedy (the murder of George Floyd). Students interpreted the professor's silence (or worse, a test or tough assignment) as insensitivity, indifference, or malice.

For the record, we share the students' expectations. The classroom is the ideal setting to break down polarization, tackle lies and misinformation, insist on standards and evidence, teach students to disagree without personal animosity, build mutual trust, and find common ground that can help build collaboration. Talking politics across disciplines is not only appropriate, it's the job.