



White Privilege: The Idea that Equality for All Exists in a “Veil of Ignorance”

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
International Baccalaureate (IB) Theory of Knowledge, IB Philosophy, AP Government and Politics; High School Level, 11th and 12th grade

Keywords: White Privilege; The Social Contract; The Racial Contract; The Veil of Ignorance; The Veil and Double Consciousness; John Rawls; W.E.B. Du Bois; U.S. Government; and Philosophy

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for the teaching standards used in this unit.

Synopsis: This unit topic will cover a Social Political view of inequity within our society. The idea of “White Entitlement” and inequity is demonstrated through the “veil of ignorance”, which is a concept introduced by the philosopher John Rawls. The unit will explore the idea that most white people live in a “veil of ignorance” and really do not understand the complexities of “White Privilege”, which means the inherent and unearned advantages that white people enjoy in society. White privilege is all encompassing, because white people control the political, societal, and economic institutions in the United States (US). The ideas of an egalitarian society are displayed in the Bill of Rights. These ideas do exist in principle, but not in practice. For the most part, history is filled with the conceptual visions of equality, where all people can coexist freely. Our absolute moral objective is to treat people equally and to deny no one their right to Life, Liberty, or Happiness. Yet, this utopian approach to society does not exist because the idea of freedom is corrupted by the philosophical concept of hedonism. What I mean is that our desires to gain the greatest happiness interferes with the goal set forth in many historical documents. There is the perception of equality, but that perspective is misrepresented by the practice of the people who control society.

I plan to teach this unit to eleventh and twelfth grade students.

I plan to teach this five-day unit in during the spring of 2020 Semester of my International Baccalaureate Philosophy Class.

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Introduction

Overview

The seminar *Frankly Speaking: White Privilege* assisted in developing the idea that all people have biases based on their race, class, culture, or situation. When these biases become institutionalized, they affect society’s ability to function equally. The social contract between the government and groups of people becomes one-sided. The social contract and racial contract became of the base of my unit, because both contracts have been damaged by the “veil of ignorance” that white Americans live under. The concept of a “veil of ignorance” by John Rawls led me to believe that most white people are oblivious to their advantages in society. I see white privilege as a hidden reality from them because it has always existed in their lives, and their lives remain unchanged by societal problems that affect others. The social contract is intertwined with racial oppression. This causal relationship extends white enfranchisement beyond the reach of other races in our society. The social structure is designed and put in place for white people to maintain power. This power has been institutionalized and the “veil of ignorance” has cast a shadow of bias that is woven into the framework of our consciousness. The State of Nature theory of John Rawls states that we all sit behind a “veil of ignorance” that keeps us from knowing who we are and identifying with our own circumstances in society. In this line of thinking if we are ignorant of our circumstances in life, we can be objective about how society ought to run. The Rawlsian theory would allow everyone to prosper equally under the social contract, but societies do not exist in a bubble and the veil of ignorance that exists today is in a different form than Rawls posits. His theory is fooling white people to believe that equality is for all, because our Constitution allows everyone to have equal opportunities for fairness. John Rawls’s social experiment demonstrates that if people do not know they have an advantage, they will not take advantage of others. The problem with this approach, however, is that whites hold the advantage, and use the idea of a veil of ignorance to continue to hold power. In practice the veil of ignorance is not used to show how society could be if everyone thought rationally about race and privilege. Instead, today it is used as a mask by whites for the sole purpose of maintaining the belief that everyone has an equal opportunity. In reality, whites refuse to believe or see the clear advantages they enjoy daily. Their veil of ignorance is the white privilege that has been institutionalized into the freedom they enjoy.

My unit is designed for two different IB Philosophy classes. The Political Philosophy unit will be designed around three readings we studied during the *Frankly Speaking: White Privilege* seminar. The first reading is “White Fragility” by Robin DiAngelo (2019). The idea that our society shields racial inequalities from white people led me to see that white people are blind to the inequalities that exist in society, and the only time they are truly confronted with these inequalities is when something major occurs,

like a shooting of a person of color by a white police officer. Our society masks inequity with political propaganda like patriotism, but that patriotism is biased toward white patriotism, and we only celebrate other cultural exploits when it is masked by the patriotic fever of sports. The second reading is *The Racial Contract* by Charles Mills (2011). *The Racial Contract* demonstrates that political and social philosophers set political theories that helped whites remain in power and exploit non-whites through political policies. The policies were intentionally placed within the social contract, and these policies guided our forefathers, and they remain in place within our government and our political system. The final reading was “Beyond white privilege: Geographies of white supremacy and settler colonialism” by Anne Bonds and Joshua Inwood (2016), which put together the idea of colonialism and settler colonialism that entrenched racism in the political, economic, and social fabric of the world. The three readings are different, but they all require that a person understand not only philosophical approaches to the problem of racism and white privilege, but also the political and historical foundations that solidified the domination of white privilege in America and other nations colonized by Europeans.

Rationale

I teach a unique high school subject, IB Philosophy, which me the opportunity to have open discussions, debates, and dialogues about unique topics, such as White Privilege. IB Philosophy has a core theme called Ontology. Ontology is the metaphysical idea of being human. The optional themes, such as political and social philosophy, ethics, and epistemology connect to the core theme of ontology. Each of these themes correlates in some way to the idea of teaching white privilege. Many of my students are people of color, and our student body is predominantly African-American, but our IB Program is predominantly white. Many of the African-American students understand that there is a bias that exists within our school that allows white students more privileges and more opportunities within the school. The students of color recognize that more teachers are white. They recognize that most of their IB and AP classes are taught by white teachers. They also understand that more students of color are sent to lockout and are suspended than white students. The social contract that exists in our school is geared toward the white student and provides fewer protections for students of color. For this unit I have chosen the idea of the veil of ignorance as my main theme. This theme, veil of ignorance, will be used to demonstrate contemporary and historical problems due to the existence of white entitlement and the lack of equality for people of color within society. My students will explore the lopsided political, economic, and social landscape that benefits one race over another. There are many aspects that students will be able to explore. They will investigate different political philosophers and their arguments that favor whites over people of color. They can research ethical problems and that exist within the legal decisions and congressional acts that favor whites over nonwhites. There is a causal relationship that exists between white privilege and continual lack of opportunities for nonwhites in America. The students will also look at the institutionalization of historical documents that set up an unequal system in America. They will also discuss a society that seems to show benevolence toward nonwhites, or a charitable ideology that is woven into the social welfare system set up by our government. The idea of white entitlement is in full display through court cases, including the battle to end affirmative action. This unit really allows the students to investigate our society now and in the past and review how philosophers helped to perpetuate the problems that remain relevant today.

Demographics

I teach in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at East Mecklenburg High School. The East Mecklenburg IB Program has 1,050 students in grades 9-12. East Mecklenburg has over 2,000 students with a majority of students in the 9th grade. Our school has a population of 52% African-American, 26% White, 16% Hispanic, and 4% other. I personally teach eleventh and twelfth grade IB students. My five IB classes have an average of 27 students and their ages range from 16-18 years old. My classroom is extremely diverse. My classes consists of African-American, Hispanic, African, Thai, Chinese, Swedish, and American-white students. The diversity within my classroom is truly demonstrated through language. A vast majority of my students are bilingual, and many of my student's first language is not English. The IB Program groups students by ability level and my students are academically high achievers and over 90% will go to four-year colleges.

Unit Goals

The goals for my curriculum are based on the IB learner profile and IB Philosophy curriculum. I want my students to explore the historical timeline of white entitlement and how European colonizers and settlers used the idea of the State of Nature to subdue a continent. I want my students to question the beliefs of these men and their theories of racial supremacy. My students must be able to research and analyze racial problems that exist in our society and develop real-life solutions to these problems. They must be able to identify egalitarian theories that claim that all people exist with the same values and then research current events and current political and governmental examples that contradict those egalitarian claims. The students should also be able to analyze readings and articles that illustrate the problems with white supremacy within our governmental structure that allows white privilege to exist. The final goal is to allow students to collaborate through small group activities in reviewing historical documents, Supreme Court cases, and videos about denial of voting rights that maintain white privilege in America.

Content Research: White Privilege

Overview of the Veil of Ignorance and the Double Consciousness of Black People in America

John Rawls, a 20th century American political philosopher, developed a theory of justice that utilizes the social contract of Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant. Rawls theorized that people should truly imagine that they are cooperative creatures, and being cooperative people, they develop a social contract that allocates basic rights and duties based on a mutual understanding of the social structure (Rawls 1971). The idea is that there has been a structure established by humankind that creates a rational policy of what is good and not good in society. But the idea of what is good is determined by the people in power, and those people in power set a standard that does not benefit all equally. Rawls believed if we could take away the distractions of race, class, abilities, and culture, we could rationally determine what is good for all, by disallowing bias to influence the decisions made to create a just society. John Rawls, in his book [*A Theory of Justice*](#) (1971) believed if society was formed under a “veil of ignorance”,

meaning if we could not see each other's physical traits or characteristics or our own, we could develop a system of justice that works for all equally.

However, this semi-utopian approach cannot work because our characteristics and traits are on display for all to see, and our biases exist naturally within the framework of the social contract. The theory, as I see it, does advance the idea of justice, but only if all people could suspend their knowledge of self and suspend their own human nature. In contrast, given the idea of white entitlement, the "Veil of Ignorance" exists as a tool for white people to use their entitlement to create a structure that replicates the idea of justice under a Constitutional idea of freedom and equality for all. However, this structure, replicated under the illusion of justice and equality is based on the power of dynamic of white privilege. All sources of equality, meaning laws and social structures benefit the majority, but limit the minority, even though the idea of justice and equality is written into the very document that guides our country and establishes our freedom, the United States Constitution.

W.E.B Du Bois's concept of the "Veil" is different from Rawls's "Veil of Ignorance." Du Bois, in the book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1982), saw the "Veil" as darker skin, which is the physical difference between black and white. He also saw that the skin color prohibited whites from seeing blacks as true Americans; they were black Americans, creating a "Double Consciousness" for blacks. The "Double Consciousness" led to the idea that black and American were not equal, and the inequities were institutionalized. The third concept of the "Veil" exists psychologically, as blacks see themselves as defined by white societal characteristics and traits. This means that whites have determined what blacks are, and blacks have allowed these characterizations to persist because they do not have the power to change them. Blacks realized early on that they are black in a white world, and they realized the problems that come with this realization. The Du Bosian "Veil" defines the soul of the black experience in America. The separation between what is white and good, and what is black is unequal. This inequality is always having to view the world through the eyes of others. Du Bois wrote: "One always feels his twoness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du Bois 1982: 2). Being black in America is the revelation that the human identity of self exists only through the eyes of others, and does not yield the freedom that exists within the social and political structure of America.

The concept of White Privilege has been institutionalized through the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, Supreme Court decisions, Executive Decisions, and other legal precedents throughout the history of the United States. The institutionalized racism that exists is hidden behind a veil of ignorance, which white people seem oblivious to but which exists like "an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" (McIntosh 1989). The abundance of opportunities that exist in a free society has a price for some, but is free for others. It is a system that rewards class, race, social identity, education, and inventiveness. Like the song says, "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere," except I am not talking about New York, New York, I am talking about America. The white European people who came here saw a statue and read these words "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." but Africans did not see these words, because they did not come of their own free will. Therefore, when we look at the Statue of Liberty, we look at it as a symbol of freedom for

whites. This is the institutionalized white privilege I am referencing. Symbols that represent our country's history of freedom and opportunity are limiting for people of color, especially African-Americans. If you were a white Western European, the Statue of Liberty is what you aspire to see and aspire to be, which is free. As Malcolm X stated in his "Ballot or Bullet" speech (1964), "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock, my brothers and sisters, Plymouth Rock landed on us" (Malcolm X 1964). The symbols of freedom and documents that represent American equality were founded on Compromises that legitimized the racist views of Americans and made African-Americans three-fifths of a human being.

The Declaration of Independence was heatedly debated because of the language Thomas Jefferson had originally added to the document. Jefferson accused King George III of "waging war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him and capturing and carrying them into slavery..." (Blackpast 2009). These words were removed because southern states would not sign or ratify this document. The idea of slavery was removed to unite a white revolution against the King of England, even though over 200,000 free and enslaved blacks fought against the British during the Revolutionary War. This history of black participation was forgotten by the 1876 Centennial celebration, where not a single African-American contribution was mentioned in establishing our nation (Ayres). The lens of white privilege magnifies the problems with the presumed history of America, because all historical documents that were used to found the United States of America create an illusion of freedom for all. W.E.B. Du Bois talks about the divide between races, sometimes invisible and sometimes physical (Du Bois 1982). The physical divide is chronicled in the 1857 Dred Scott v. Sandford Supreme Court decision. Scott, a slave, sued for his freedom because he had resided in New York for a period of time. Supreme Court Justice Roger Taney and the court ruled that slaves were not citizens, and therefore could not sue for their freedom. But Taney also stated that slaves were property, and thus slave owners property was protected under the Fifth Amendment and taking away property would be unconstitutional (Menand 2019). This court case is taught in US History and Civics classes throughout the United States, and has been taught in these classes for over a century. The physical reminder of this case on the black people of the United States is emphasized by the words of W.E.B. Du Bois' theory of "Double Consciousness." Du Bois's idea of blacks being "black" and being "American" is witnessed by the Dred Scott decision. Black students must be constantly reminded of the two worlds they live in, especially when studying American History. They are reminded that our nation treated them as property, their bondage led to a civil war, and they were treated as second-class citizens for most of their lives in America. Another physical divide is the Three-Fifths Compromise that stated that slaves would be counted as three-fifths of a person, or five slaves' equal three white people. This compromise, along with the Slave Trade Compromise are incorporated into every curriculum in the United States. The problem is that this uncomfortable part of history makes whites feel discomfort and blacks feel demoralized. The concept of privileges that whites have enjoyed and still enjoy is assimilated into every classroom as part of our history. The "Double Consciousness" of being black and American morphs into a hidden bias that people of color see through the eyes of a white world, a white history, and a white society. Our inability to understand or willingness to understand the depth of the prejudice that exists in society emphasizes the "Double Consciousness" that people of color must exist in.

The Black experience in America is different, and their view of being American is based on their experience. John Locke's *Tabula Rasa* states that we are a blank slate when born, and

our experiences give us knowledge. This concept of empirical knowledge or a posteriori knowledge demonstrates my point, that people of color, especially African-Americans, have only the knowledge of being a second-class citizen in America. Although the Constitution and subsequent Supreme Court cases have given an illusionary veil of equality for all, in reality our system is set up in favor of whites. Since the end of slavery, African-Americans have experienced a constant bombardment of de facto and de jure laws that have provided limited economic, political, and social advancement in society. The African-American consciousness has been filled with experiences that created a psychological advantage for whites. A psychological advantage that is not hidden, but is not truly recognized until pointed out by society. The “Double Consciousness” observed by African-Americans is so entrenched in society that real change is difficult to achieve.

The power dynamic of race has created inequities that exist in education, law, politics, and business. The concept of white privilege is evident in suspension rate of African-Americans. African-American students are suspended at twice the rate of whites and Hispanic students (Kamenetz 2018). The way students are punished in elementary, middle, and high schools is only part of the problem in education. African-American participation in higher education is down, especially for African-American men. The largest rate of difference occurs in graduate school, where African-Americans only make up 12.6% of all enrollments (Examining the Data Black Enrollment 2019). White advantage is verified by the incarceration rate as well. According to 2015 data, African-Americans and Hispanics make up 32% of the population, but constitute 56% of the people in prison (Criminal Fact Sheet 2019). These numbers, although staggering, are not surprising since 77% of African-Americans who are arrested cannot afford a lawyer, so they use court appointed attorneys. John Gramlich (2019) of the Pew Research Center, used data gathered by the National Association of Defense Lawyers to demonstrate that 98% of federal criminal cases are resolved by plea bargaining, meaning only 2% went to trial. The state trial rate is lower especially in Texas where only .86% of the criminal cases actually go to trial. According to John Gramlich (2019) of the Pew Research Center, the idea of going to trial and the Sixth Amendment is on the verge of extinction because people are not guaranteed the right to a fair trial, they are guaranteed the right to a quick plea bargain for a reduced sentence (Gramlich 2019).

Another area where white entitlement is apparent is in politics. Success in politics has alluded African-Americans until Barack Obama was elected President. That being said, throughout history only 154 African-American men and women have served in Congress since 1870 (Senate.gov). People of color have been underrepresented throughout all avenues of politics in the United States, in fact, the first African-American elected governor was Douglas Wilder of Virginia in 1990 and only two others have followed since (The Learning Network 2013). The final institutional control is represented in business. Of the 2,153 billionaires in the world, 13 are black and of the 607 billionaires in the United States, only five are black (Hill 2019). The economic disparity of wealth in America is staggering, but that is only a small picture of the white advantage in America. The “black dollar” which is a term used to talk about what African-Americans spend in the economy benefits white owned businesses. The “black dollar” has limited effect in the black community, where black owned businesses are rare. In fact, in Uptown Charlotte or near Uptown Charlotte, there are only 31 black owned businesses. The average black owned business nationwide averages \$58,000 a year, where white owned businesses average \$546,000 a year in total sells (Prosperitynow). Black spending in the

economy is 1.2 trillion dollars and their influence within the economy has risen, but their visibility within the boardroom or managerial positions within the largest companies in the United States is very low. Black Americans also have low representation in selling or advertising of the goods they purchase or services they use. The goods that did use African-Americans in their advertising early on were considered grotesque, stereotypical figures, like Uncle Ben or Aunt Jemima. These characters have had makeovers throughout the years, to decrease the racist characterizations that existed in the past. However, characterization or stereotypes of African-Americans are only part of the problems in American advertising. Today black millennials want more diversification advertising. Seventy percent of black millennials say they are more likely to buy from a brand that takes a stand on race-related issues. Research also indicates that nearly two-thirds of black millennials prefer to watch YouTube because they feel like black people have a voice (King 2017). The continuous “Double Consciousness” experience of the black person in American society continues to dissolve the “veil of ignorance” that white people live under in America. As more black voices are heard throughout society, the more change is possible, but this change will not be an easy transition.

The “Veil of Ignorance” that exists does not hide the race, gender, class, or culture of who we are. It does not allow us to work together to form a better society. I contend the “Veil of Ignorance” allows white privilege to exist because white people hide behind the veil. The veil exists because it is easier to ignore the problems in society than fix the problems and give up power. The power dynamic in America was put in place during the Colombian Exchange and has not decreased or diminished over time. It has been codified into laws, precedents, documents, and social contracts that limit the power of the minority and strengthen the power of the majority. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960 has brought change to America, but the change seems illusionary today, as blacks and other minority groups continue to live in a dualistic society that forces groups into a “Double Consciousness”. This consciousness in reality is irrational, because it flies in the face of the foundation of what America calls freedom. “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free, your wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” is a sonnet by Emma Lazarus (Lazarus 1883), and it talks about the idea of freedom and opportunity and safety. You see within our country, we were formed out-of-many different types of people, and those different types of people have rights. Because as a nation, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (s). Yet, the powers that conquered, displaced, and eradicated indigenous people, is the power that continues to manipulate, control, and institute new strategies of continuous control. White privilege is about power and control. White privilege has an institutionalized advantage that limits opportunities and continues to replicate itself through teleological ethics, which uses a perverse consequentialist view of morality. Miranda, Boland, and Hemmeler (2009) wrote that “Privilege is problematic (a) when it skews our personal interactions and judgments and (b) when it contributes to or blinds us to systemic barriers for those who do not possess a certain privilege, thereby creating or perpetuating inequity. In American culture, certain groups have the privilege of operating within settings—through no effort on their part—that are more conducive for their success, while others—through no fault of their own—find themselves in settings that make success more difficult,” (Miranda, Boland, & Hemmeler 2009: 71). As long as the laws that exist in the form of equality for all define the consequence of the action, the inequities of the

system will be masked under a “Veil of Ignorance.” Like the old African proverb states, “When white people say *Justice*, they mean *Just Us*” (Mills 2011).

Unit Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The first thing I would do before beginning this discussion is to send a letter home to parents to tell them that students will be discussing different types of privilege in class and it is a sensitive subject, but a necessary part of your curriculum for your philosophy or government class. The concept of White Privilege is a challenging subject matter that must be introduced overtime. Because white privilege is institutionalized, it is difficult for some students to grasp their own privilege, so you should start with the ideas of tolerance and work toward inequities that exist in society. A great way to begin the discussion is to always talk about your own privilege as an adult, a teacher, a father, a married person, or a single person. The idea of privilege is an uncomfortable concept for students, students may have varying emotions and may feel defensive, some may feel guilt, and you may even have students that might feel angry. Be prepared for tense discussions and be prepared for handling those moments, so it is really best that you prepare yourself to address student responses.

I will begin the Unit on White Privilege with the idea that equality for all exists in a “Veil of Ignorance.” Students will begin reading fifteen pages of a free pdf of the *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls. By reading the idea of the veil of ignorance, they will get a better understanding of the concept. Students will then begin to read the article “[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)” by Peggy McIntosh to get a better understanding of White Privilege. After students have become more informed about the veil of ignorance and white privilege, I want my students to come up with a definition of White Privilege. By allowing my students to first come up with their own definition of privilege, they can develop a better understanding of the inequity and inequality that exists because of privilege. Next, I want my students to be able to come up with their own examples of privilege that exist within their world inside and outside of school. After we give our examples of privilege that exists, we will come up with a classroom definition of privilege. The combination of Rawls and McIntosh will help students analyze the idea that if we could hide our race, class, abilities, and culture, could we really talk openly about justice, privilege, morality, and social issues that impact our society. My hope is that most will be skeptical, and question the concept, because our experiences and biases are set early in our lives. Students should look at this social experiment as a step toward understanding how privilege is embedded in America. The step toward understanding will be theatrically addressed through a “Privilege Walk.” The privilege walk is a set of questions that can be manipulated to fit your classroom dynamic. The privilege walk is an activity that allows students and adults to view the marginalization of society due to race, gender, sexuality, and social class. The Privilege Walk lesson plan comes from the Peace Learner Website <https://peacelearner.org/2016/03/14/privilege-walk-lesson-plan/> although you can also use the University of Houston Privilege Walk Lesson Plan as well. https://www.uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/resources/activities/pdf/privilege-walk.pdf. Both lessons were designed to show the inequities that exist because of race, gender, gender identity, culture, and sexual orientation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students are required to meet IB Philosophy Standards, IB Theory of Knowledge, and Advanced Placement Government and Politics Standards that are linked through Appendix I on the first page. Students must learn that White Privilege is an institutionalized problem in America, but also worldwide. The meaning of institutionalized is an established practice or custom that exists but is not really recognized. The United States has institutionalized white privilege throughout its history in documents, court decisions, de facto and de jure decisions and laws, and through economic opportunities. Throughout this unit, my students will explore historical, philosophical, political, and economical decisions that have increased the inequity within our society. My students will analyze historical documents that were influenced by philosophers that were biased toward white European imperialism, and those ideas infected the historical documents that influenced the foundation of our government. They will also focus on different readings and videos that demonstrate the institutionalized problems that white privilege has started, maintained, and increased over time. These readings and videos are designed to create opportunities for open and honest dialogue about societal problems that exist because of the institutionalization of white privilege in America. Students will also identify solutions that will help decrease the inequities that exist within our society.

Instructional Implementation

The unit of White Privilege will be designed to take 3-5 days. The unit is designed for IB Philosophy, IB Theory of Knowledge, and AP Government and Politics. I plan to teach this to my IB Philosophy class in the spring. The IB planning unit model requires the implementation of three or fewer related topics, and one global concept into a statement of inquiry that students will use throughout the unit. All of the IB concepts are explored throughout the IB program and the key concepts of IB are required to be used in all IB classes, so students hear and use these concepts in most of their classes. My IB structured unit will have a summative assessment tasks that are designed to measure the level of understanding of unit objectives, inquiry questions, and statements of inquiry. There will also be a formative assessment that is designed to generate data that will analyze the knowledge of the students and used to help adjust unit goals and objectives. If I synthesize the information in different ways, my students will be able to use this knowledge in creative activities.

Classroom Lessons/Activities

White Privilege Discussion Starters

- **Privilege Crumpled Paper Class Division Exercise:** Place a trash can in the front of the classroom. Have students crumple up paper at their seats. Students represent the population of our country. To get to the top all you have to do is be able to throw your paper wad into the garbage can from where you sit. The objective is to show that some people have an advantage and others do not. The students in the back will complain about the game, especially when you give the ones in front that missed a second chance and third chance to make it.
 - Extend the crumpled paper exercise by allowing the front three rows to practice first while the other students make four crumpled papers each. Have them put them into a box and then take them to the front rows for the

others to use. Any who complains from the back has to turn their desk around and face the opposite way.

- Ask students to answer these questions:
 - When did you first become aware of race?
 - Which part of the exercise resembled any part of your life, explain and give examples? If it did not, what gives you an advantage?
 - What can we do, as human beings to give everyone equal access to resources and opportunities?

- **White Privilege Glasses: Show the video [White Privilege Glasses](#)**
 - Watch the video in class and use the following questions to discuss with your class.
 - Questions: After video
 - What can people with privilege do that people without privilege cannot?
 - What is the cost of White Privilege for persons of color? What is the cost of White Privilege for white people?
 - How are issues like education, healthcare, poverty, housing, and economic status related to White Privilege?
 - How are societal challenges like drugs, crime, failing schools, high dropout rates, and food deserts related to White Privilege?
 - Why is it challenging white people to think about (and do something about) White Privilege?
 - When did you first realize you were white?
 - How do you see White Privilege demonstrated in media daily?

- **[The Privilege Walk](#):** The purpose of the privilege walk activity is a great way to learn and recognize how power and privilege can affect people's lives because people are not aware it exists or they are not aware it is happening. The purpose is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to have an opportunity to identify both obstacles and benefits experienced in our life. This activity can be highly sensitive. I would suggest you send home permission slips, just in case, because it is a sensitive issue.
 - Have participants form a straight line across the room about an arm's length apart, leaving space in front and behind.
 - Read the following statements, and have students follow the instructions given.
 - Each step should be an average length step.
 - No one is going to check up on you, so if you feel you qualify to take a step then do so, if not then you may stay where you are. You are the judge of what you should do.
 - Read the statements one at a time allowing time for participants to take a step.
 - Questions for the Privilege Walk - [See Appendix 2](#)
 - Debriefing questions: What is your "gut reaction" to where you find yourself at the end of this list of privileges? Are you surprised at where

you are? How does it feel to be in front? In the middle? In back? Did you come to any new realizations? If so, which one had the most impact?

- **[Second Treatise of Government and Slavery and Colonialism Graphic Organizer:](#)** [See Appendix 3](#) -- This assignment deals with John Locke's ideas that led to the idea that all people are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and property, but those radical ideas also provided the foundation for slavery and colonialism. This assignment will have students read different parts of the Second Treatise and find comments that deal with individual freedom or slavery and explain this relates to the denial of freedoms today in our society. The objective is to demonstrate that the documents used to develop our nation were not designed for freedom for all. The Graphic Organizer is provided.
- **[Institutionalization of White Entitlement in America through the Supreme Court:](#)** [See Appendix 4](#) -- This assignment uses the 10 Supreme Court Cases that preserved white entitlement in America. Students will read the cases and you use Oyez.com to find out the decisions and how they affected the United States. They will then decide how these cases have assisted discriminatory practices in America and assisted in causing inequity within the United States. The objective is to show how institutionalization of inequity within the court system creates a system of injustice that allows one group to remain more powerful than another group. The websites and Graphic Organizer are provided.
- Compare W.E.B. Du Bois's view of political equality discussed in W.E.B. Dubois on Freedom, Race, and American Modernity with John Rawls concept of the "Veil of Ignorance." Use the following excerpts from his book *A Theory of Justice*, link provided here: <https://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/chalmersk/econ184sp09/johnRawls.pdf> -- Have students create a chart or Venn diagram to compare and contrast the ideas of equality and how to achieve equality in America. Students will then choose a current issue in America and write a comparison of how each Dubois and Rawl would deal with and solve the issue. [Venn Diagram](#) IB Rubric [HL rubric paper 2](#)
- **Formative Assessment:** Students will read the following articles: "What Happens When You Educate Liberals About White Privilege?"; "Why do so many White People Deny the Existence of White Privilege?"; "Examining the Racial Gap in Graduate School Enrollments in the United States."; "Only 2% of Federal Criminal Defendants Go to Trial, and Most Who Do Are Found Guilty."; "Suspensions Are Down In U.S. Schools But Large Racial Gaps Remain." After the students read the articles and annotated, they will research the wealth gap in America between white men, white women, and minority groups in America. They will also research the inequity in criminal justice system and educational system in America and then write a 1,000 - 1,200 word in class essay on the following prompt: To what extent has, the history of America toward minority groups assisted the institutionalization of White Privilege in America? Students may use their notes, annotations, and research to help with their answers. IB Rubric for Essays [HL rubric paper 2](#)

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

Link to: [Philosophy and Theory of Knowledge Standards](#)

IB: Inquirers: Students will use their natural curiosity to acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research into the Human Rights Issue. Students will become independent learners and work within a group to actively search and share information.

IB: Knowledgeable: Students will explore concepts, ideas and issues related to Human Rights and show the local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

IB: Principled: Students will act with integrity, honesty while discussing, and researching Human Rights issues. Students should approach Human Rights with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. Students will take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

IB: Open-minded: Students will understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. Students need to be accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

IB: Caring: Students will show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others while studying and discussing Human Rights. Students will make a personal commitment to develop ideas or concepts and to act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

IB: Reflective: Students will give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They will be able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development throughout the Human Rights Unit.

Link to AP Standards: [Advanced Placement Government and Politics Standards](#)

Appendix 2

The privilege walk [complete]:

The typical classroom version of this activity involves between 10-40 participants. Throughout the privilege walk, the following statements are read by the facilitator and the participants are asked to take a step forward or backward based on their responses. This activity forces participants to confront the ways in which society privileges some individuals over others. It is designed to get participants to reflect on the different areas in their lives where they have privilege as well as the areas where they do not.

The following is the complete set of questions from the classroom version of this activity.

1. If you are right-handed, take one-step forward.
2. If English is your first language, take one-step forward.
3. If one or both of your parents have a college degree, take one-step forward.
4. If you can find Band-Aids at mainstream stores designed to blend in with or match your skin tone, take one-step forward.
5. If you or your family rely, or have relied primarily on public transportation, take one-step back.
6. If you have attended previous schools with people you felt were like yourself, take one-step forward
7. If you constantly feel unsafe walking alone at night, take one-step back.
8. If your household has or does employ help as house cleaners, gardeners, nannies, etc.; take one-step forward.
9. If you are able to move through the world without fear of sexual assault, take one-step forward.
10. If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one-step forward.
11. If you often feel that your parents are too busy to spend time with you, take one-step back.
12. If you were ever made fun of or bullied for something, you could not change or was beyond your control, take one-step back.
13. If your family has ever left your homeland or entered another country not of your own free will, take one-step back.
14. If you would never think twice about calling the police when trouble occurs, take one-step forward.
15. If your family owns a computer, take one-step forward.
16. If you have ever been able to play a significant role in a project or activity because of a talent you gained previously, take one-step forward.
17. If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence, take one-step forward.

18. If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food, take one-step back.
19. If you feel respected for your academic performance, take one-step forward.
20. If you have a physically visible disability, take one-step back.
21. If you have an invisible illness or disability, take one-step back.
22. If you were ever discouraged from an activity because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, take one-step back.
23. If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to fit in more, take one-step back.
24. If you have ever been profiled by someone else using stereotypes, take one-step back.
25. If you feel good about how your identities are portrayed by the media, take one-step forward.
26. If you were ever accepted for something, you applied to because of your association with a friend or family member, take one-step forward.
27. If your family has health insurance take one-step forward.
28. If you have ever been spoken over because you could not articulate your thoughts fast enough, take one-step back.
29. If someone has ever spoken for you when you did not want him or her to do so, take one-step back.
30. If there was ever substance abuse in your household, take one-step back.
31. If you come from a single-parent household, take one-step back.
32. If you live in an area with crime and drug activity, take one-step back.
33. If someone in your household suffered or suffers from mental illness, take one-step back.
34. If you have been a victim of sexual harassment, take one-step back.
35. If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one-step back.
36. If you are never asked to speak on behalf of a group of people who share an identity with you, take one-step forward.
37. If you can make mistakes and not have people attribute your behavior to flaws in your racial or gender group, take one-step forward.
38. If you have always assumed you will go to college, take one-step forward.
39. If you have more than fifty books in your household, take one-step forward.
40. If your parents have told you that you can be anything you want to be, take one-step forward.

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<https://edge.psu.edu/workshops/mc/power/privilegewalk.shtml>

Appendix 3

[John Locke's Second Treatise of Government](#) Chapter 3 State of War

Chapter 3 and 4 - Exploring Racism

The Section:	Find the comments on or about Slavery or denying of freedom -- Explain how this relates to the denial of human freedoms in our society today
Section 16: THE state of war is a state of enmity and destruction: and therefore declaring by word or action, not a passionate and hasty, but a sedate settled design upon another man's life, puts him in a state of war with him against whom he has declared such an intention, and so has exposed his life to the other's power to be taken away by him, or any one that joins with him in his defence, and espouses his quarrel; it being reasonable and just, I should have a right to destroy that which threatens me with destruction: for, by the fundamental law of nature, man being to be preserved as much as possible, when all cannot be preserved, the safety of the innocent is to be preferred: and one may destroy a man who makes war upon him, or has discovered an enmity to his being, for the same reason that he may kill a wolf or a lion; because such men are not under the ties of the common law of reason, have no other rule, but that of force and violence, and so may be treated as beasts of prey, those dangerous and noxious creatures, that will be sure to destroy him whenever he falls into their power.	
Section 17: And hence it is, that he who attempts to get another man into his absolute power, does thereby put himself into a state of war with him; it being to be understood as a declaration of a design upon his life: for I have reason to conclude, that he who would get me into his power without my consent, would use me as he pleased when he had got me there, and destroy me too when he had a fancy to it; for nobody can desire to have me	

in his absolute power, unless it be to compel me by force to that which is against the right of my freedom, i.e. make me a slave.

To be free from such force is the only security of my preservation; and reason bids me look on him, as an enemy to my preservation, who would take away that freedom which is the fence to it; so that he who makes an attempt to enslave me, thereby puts himself into a state of war with me. He that, in the state of nature, would take away the freedom that belongs to any one in that state, must necessarily be supposed to have a design to take away everything else, that freedom being the foundation of all the rest; as he that, in the state of society, would take away the freedom belonging to those of that society or commonwealth, must be supposed to design to take away from them everything else, and so be looked on as in a state of war.

Locke's Second Treatise Chapter 4 Slavery

Section 22: THE natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule. The liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it. Freedom then is not what Sir Robert Filmer tells us, Observations, A. 55. a liberty for everyone to do what he lists, to live as he pleases, and not to be tied by any laws: but freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power erected in it; a liberty to follow my own will in all things, where the rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to

<p>the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man: as freedom of nature is to be under no other restraint but the law of nature.</p>	
<p>Section 23: This freedom from absolute, arbitrary power, is so necessary to, and closely joined with a man's preservation, that he cannot part with it, but by what forfeits his preservation and life together: for a man, not having the power of his own life, cannot, by compact, or his own consent, enslave himself to any one, nor put himself under the absolute, arbitrary power of another, to take away his life, when he pleases. Nobody can give more power than he has himself; and he that cannot take away his own life, cannot give another power over it. Indeed, having by his fault forfeited his own life, by some act that deserves death; he, to whom he has forfeited it, may (when he has him in his power) delay to take it, and make use of him to his own service, and he does him no injury by it: for, whenever he finds the hardship of his slavery outweigh the value of his life, it is in his power, by resisting the will of his master, to draw on himself the death he desires.</p>	
<p>Section 24: This is the perfect condition of slavery, which is nothing else, but the state of war continued, between a lawful conqueror and a captive: for, if once compact enter between them, and make an agreement for a limited power on the one side, and obedience on the other, the state of war and slavery ceases, as long as the compact endures: for, as has been said, no man can, by agreement, pass over to another that which he hath not in himself, a power over his own life. I confess, we find among the Jews, as well as other nations, that men did sell themselves; but, it is plain, this was only to drudgery, not to slavery: for, it is evident, the person sold was not under an absolute, arbitrary, despotical power: for the master could not have power to</p>	

<p>kill him, at any time, whom, at a certain time, he was obliged to let go free out of his service; and the master of such a servant was so far from having an arbitrary power over his life, that he could not, at pleasure, so much as maim him, but the loss of an eye, or tooth, set him free.</p>	
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<p>Political Philosophers on Freedom</p>	<p>Amendments influenced by Locke' idea of freedom -- Supreme Court Case that protected human property</p>
<p>Locke: As I have shown, man was born with a right to perfect freedom, and with an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, equally with any other man or men in the world. So he has by nature a power not only •to preserve •his property, that is, •his life, liberty and possessions, against harm from other men, but •to judge and punish breaches of the law of nature by others—punishing in the manner he thinks the offence deserves, even punishing with death crimes that he thinks are so dreadful as to deserve it. But no political society can exist or survive without having in itself the power to preserve the property—and therefore to punish the offences—of all the members of that society; and so there can't be a political society except where every one of the members has given up this natural power, passing it into the hands of the community in all cases. . . .</p>	

Appendix 4

[10 Supreme Court Cases that preserve White Entitlement in America](#)
[Oyez.org - Supreme Court Case Information Website](#)

Supreme Court Cases that Preserve White Entitlement in America	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How did this case preserve white entitlement?2. Recent events (over the last decade) that deals with non-citizen rights or rights that are denied to minorities
1. Example Case -- Dred Scott v. Sandford	<p>The Supreme Court argued that slaves were not entitled to rights because they were not citizens and not entitled to protections under the Constitution.</p> <p>Asylum seekers being housed without due process or removed from the country to wait for a court date.</p> <p>Many undocumented are held and deported without a hearing, this is called “expedited removal,” which was created by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.</p>
2.	
3.	
4.	

5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Teacher/Student Resources

Basevich, Elvira. "W.E.B. Dubois on Freedom, Race, and American Modernity." *City University New York*, CUNY Academic Works, 2017, pp. 110–168.

This dissertation defends W.E.B. Dubois's philosophy of free and equal citizenship. Dubois defends black political empowerment and contradicts John Rawl and his idea that social order will lead to actually have a moral society with free and equal citizenship. This should be used with excerpts from Dubois's *The Souls of Black Folk* and Rawl *Theory of Justice*.

Canton, David, director. *White Poverty Privilege? Poverty and Addiction in America*. YouTube, YouTube, 20 Sept. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yC11011QF8w&feature=youtu.be.

This video shows the subtle way that white privilege allows for inequity within society. This Tedx also delves into the socio-economic problems caused by white privilege in America. This is great to use for homework for a broader perspective of white privilege and a way to reach students who are more visual or verbal learners.

"Criminal Justice Fact Sheet." *NAACP*, www.naACP.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/.

The fact sheet demonstrates the inequity within the incarceration rate in America. It can be used with the article about criminal defense in the United States.

"Examining the Racial Gap in Graduate School Enrollments in the United States." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 14 Oct. 2019, www.jbhe.com/2019/10/examining-the-racial-gap-in-graduate-school-enrollments-in-the-united-states/.

This article demonstrates the major gaps that exist at the Masters level and gives a glimpse of inequity within our educational system in America.

Gramlich, John. *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 11 June 2019, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/11/only-2-of-federal-criminal-defendants-go-to-trial-and-most-who-do-are-found-guilty/.

This article demonstrates the inequity within the due process system of the American Legal System, especially with the right to an attorney. This article details the plea-bargaining of African-American cases and the inadequacies of court appointed attorneys.

Greenwald, Robert, director. *Suppressed: The Right to Vote*. *Brave New Films*, 2018, www.bravenewfilms.org/suppressed.

The video looks at how minorities have limited access in many elections and how the powers of government continue to find ways to limit minorities in elections. The governor's race in Georgia is the focus of the film. Questions are provided with video to use with your class.

Hill, Selena. "Jay-Z Becomes Fifth Black Billionaire in the U.S." *Black Enterprise*, Black Enterprise, 8 Sept. 2019, www.blackenterprise.com/jay-z-net-worth-black-billionaire-list/.

The article looks at the number of black billionaires as compared to the number of white billionaires in the United States. Shows lack of wealth and economic strength of the African-American community within the United States.

Kamenetz, Anya. "Suspensions Are Down In U.S. Schools But Large Racial Gaps Remain." *NPR*, NPR, 17 Dec. 2018, www.npr.org/2018/12/17/677508707/suspensions-are-down-in-u-s-schools-but-large-racial-gaps-remain.

This article deals with wide gap between African-American involvement in higher-level high school classes in the United States.

King, Oona. "The Case for Diversity in Advertising." *Google*, Google, www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/diversity-in-advertising-black-millennials/.

This article could be used with the Black Billionaire article to show the power of the African-American dollar, but the lack of diversity in advertising in the US.

Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*. 2017, www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf.

This book is perfect, especially Chapters 3 and 4 to show the contempt for the colonized people of the world. These chapters also deal with slavery and lack of concern for freedom for all people.

Menand, Louis. "The Supreme Court Case That Enshrined White Supremacy in Law." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 25 June 2019, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/02/04/the-supreme-court-case-that-enshrined-white-supremacy-in-law.

Excellent article that shows that white entitlement begins and ends with the Supreme Court. It also show institutionalized domination within American society due to Supreme Court decisions.

Nomorerace, and Doomgazer. "What Is White Privilege, Really?" *Teaching Tolerance*, www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2018/what-is-white-privilege-really.

Informational article that shows the impact of white privilege. The article helps to define white privilege and also to demonstrate different ways white privilege exists.

"Race and Privilege: A Social Experience." *YouTube*, YouTube, Aug. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2hvibGdg4w.

This video is a great way to show the Privilege Walk demonstration.

Starkey, Brando S. "Why Do so Many White People Deny the Existence of White Privilege?" *The Undeclared*, The Undeclared, 1 Mar. 2017, theundefeated.com/features/why-do-so-many-white-people-deny-the-existence-of-white-privilege/.

The article deals with what privilege is, and why white people tend to deny its existence. But it also provides great research resources, such as *The Racial Contract* by Charles Mills.

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