



WABASH CENTER

For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion



Teachers of religion and theology

Blog Series: Democracy Matters In Teaching

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Even if the course is not intended for this purpose, students signal with their questions and participation, that they are thinking of the course materials through the lens of their own lives. Teachers cannot escape inquiries about events in the news which daily shake and effect lives.

Our classrooms are permeated with questions, concerns, and issues which arise out of that which grips the attention of our nation and the world. In this moment, we are gripped by Covid pandemic/endemic, Monkey Pox infections, Russia's war in the Ukraine, the prosecution of those involved in the U.S. Capital insurrection on January 6, global economic inflation, major shifts in legislation concerning women's reproductive health rights, routinized school shootings and failed gun legislation, marriage inequality debates, instances of abusive police power, privatized correction systems, climate change, immigration challenges - to name a few. And, we are aware that a society grappling with these kinds of political, economic, and civic issues are also then challenged by persons suffering with depression, insomnia, increased suicide, grief/loss, effects of domestic violence, increased drug addiction and abuse, exile into the prison industrial complex-to name a few. On any given day, and in any given class session, these issues are at play. Not anticipating conversations around these topics, ignoring the potential for these conversations and/or declaring that these conversations are "inappropriate," will only serve to further the suspicion that the scholarly discourses of

theology and religion are irrelevant, outmoded, and unnecessary.

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