

Dear Colleagues,

This morning I am writing in response to the needs of our students after Wednesday's ruling on Breonna Taylor's case (I could use many words here that would be inflammatory and inadequate). Given the protests across the country and our student demographics, I encourage you to take time before your classes this coming week to frame spaces in which your students can be present with how they are feeling and what they are thinking, particularly in terms of how they are perceiving their futures. Many of our students can see themselves in Ms. Taylor, a young Black woman serving others in many concrete ways and pursuing professional goals similar to those of our students wanting to make a positive difference and transform the injustice of our world.

Here, I offer a few suggestions for how you might acknowledge and honor Ms. Taylor's life and discuss the legal responses to her death. A brief list of John Jay support resources is included.

Attached you will also find a list of classroom discussion resources for self-education and further reflection. Two of our TLC staff members, Euxhenia Hodo, a graduate in our Master's Program in International Human Rights this past May and Jalessa Manswell, a Master's student in her final semester and capstone course in the same program, have offered their suggestions to share with students.

What and how you teach is largely your choice, and I respect that privilege. At the same time, our students need us to be open and aware regarding their identities and needs. When history repeats itself and we are implicated, traumatized, and present, I believe we have responsibilities to share our awareness and learn together what we can do to create healing and motivate justice. This email comes from these beliefs. Please use the information as feels appropriate to your own values and vision.

Teaching Suggestions:

Showing respect and grieving together:

- Design a moment of silence. In synchronous classes, this can be at any time during a live session that works with the lesson plan. For asynchronous classes, a moment of silence recommended to students to choose on their own time or the instructor can suggest specific date/time for those able to join, knowing they join their classmates in this moment.
- For those not wishing to participate or unable to, provide the option not to participate and encourage these students to focus on current assignments as they can.

Creating opportunities for discussion:

- Try offering a poll to ascertain the students' interest in conversation with same caveats as participation in moments of silence.
- Promise to post or share a summary of discussions if held.
- Ask students to submit anonymously their questions and concerns for discussion.
- Create a discussion board or other online protected channel for discussions (with ground rules about sensitivity of content and communication).

Considering needs for accommodation:

- Please refer to course policies and explain what specific flexibility for deadlines and participation is available for students who are unable to concentrate or be present with their work.
- Please be specific about how and where to submit requests for accommodation.

John Jay Student Support and Activism Resources:

- [John Jay Counseling Services Center](#) (please read the site carefully before making referrals) . For students needing emotional support as well as study and life skills assistance.
- [John Jay Africana Studies Links](#): an in-depth list of news and organizations related to “The broader mission of the Africana Studies is to engage in research, teaching and public policy that serve the needs of Africa and the African Diaspora.”
- Black Student Union (BSU)~The purpose of Black Student Union is to foster an environment whereby students can be introduced to black history, culture, and politics in order to provide a more complete sense of self-consciousness, education, black unity, and respect through participating in social and political functions on and off campus that provide enrichment and enlightenment. (no contact information available; students can check social media and college news)
- [The Future of Public Safety](#): livestream conversations with experts in law and police work about the changes needed to transform law enforcement. This series is recorded and runs through October 1.

Please be safe and well. Please take a moment to review the attached lists of resources.

Towards a more just and humane world.

Gina