

Defending Human Rights Amidst a Pandemic

with Hone Mandefro Belaye

Keywords: International student life, Immigrant experience, Advocacy, Intersectionality, Accessibility to information

Related Course Subjects: Diversity and the Contemporary World, History, Education, Sociology & Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Public Affairs and Policy Studies, Sustainability Studies, Communications, Journalism, Media studies, Human Rights Studies

Hone Mandefro Belaye unpacks the challenges international students and immigrants face in Canada. Moreover, he gives an insight into his experience as a Human Rights activist in his home country, Ethiopia, and what it implies to continue activism work in Canada.

Video URL

<https://youtu.be/uZHOODIvAK8>

Goals/Objectives

After watching the video, students will be able to:

- Understand the challenges faced by international students in Montreal.
 - Comprehend how the pandemic has impacted international and immigrant students.
 - Recognize how individual identity informs activism work across borders.
 - Identify the gaps in the university system that impact international students.
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About The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub

The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub is a student-led initiative to provide a platform for the community to collaborate and develop meaningful solutions to the systemic issues faced by underserved groups in academia. Our mission is to advance knowledge and understanding of these issues and provide a space to engage in research and learning that is open to all experiences each individual brings.

About the Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project

The Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project is a video library that showcases pre-recorded talks by local community activists, students and educators in Montreal and Canada and transforms them into anti-racist educational resources for the classroom. Undergraduate and graduate students from Concordia and McGill University created the content for these course packages. These resources exemplify the power of student leadership and their contribution to advancing antiracist education.

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Pre-Class Self-Reflection Exercise (Educators)

Fully engaging with antiracist pedagogy starts with self-reflection and accountability. **If you are familiar with antiracist education, you know that the best way to teach antiracist pedagogy is to model antiracist praxis and thought.** As such, we have developed a series of self-reflection questions for you to consider before integrating anti-racist educational materials into your classroom. The night before class or at least a few hours before class, give yourself time, without distractions, to reflect on the questions below - you can write them down or reflect on them with yourself paper free!

Be reflexive

- What does antiracist pedagogy or education mean to you?
- What is the relationship between your identity and antiracist work? How would you describe your role in antiracist work?
- How do you view the mutualistic exchange between yourself and your students? Do you adjust your teaching style accordingly?
- What is the difference between engaging with our repository as a knowledge exchange versus a knowledge extraction?

Be accountable

- To what extent have you engaged with antiracist or anti-oppressive education or philosophies within your life/work? Why or why not?
- What has the silencing or exclusion of another person or group looked like in the environments that you frequent? What have you done, or what could you have done to remedy it?
- Reflect on how you have engaged with literature, presentations and other forms of knowledge led by Queer, Trans, Indigenous, Black, Asian, and other POC in your academic, personal, or professional lives.
- What has been your role in disrupting and mobilizing against racism and oppression interpersonally or in the environments you frequent?

Guiding Questions

Before watching the video

Pre-Video Questions -Students

- What do you think have been the challenges that international students have faced during the pandemic?
- Do you consider that the support provided by educational institutions to immigrant students is sufficient?



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- What support system is for you, and what or whom does it consist of?
- Do you consider that international and immigrant students have access to the necessary support systems in a new country?

While watching the video

As you watch the video, take note of the following:

- Why and how do activism and mobilization forms change in different countries?
- Why are individual experiences in specific social movements, wars, and human rights issues valuable and informative?
- How has the COVID pandemic impacted international students' well-being and the legal status of international students in Canada?

After watching the video

Post-video Questions

- How can we individually support and stand in solidarity with international and immigrant students?
- What are examples of systemic barriers that international and immigrant students face in educational institutions?
- How do educational institutions benefit from a holistic and intersectional approach to support international students?
- Why is it important to improve and build more accessible support systems and resources for immigrants?

Assignments / Writing topics

- Write an autobiography/ Interview an international student/ immigrant in Montreal.
- Are you an immigrant or an international student? Write an autobiography

Taking Action

- Demand that universities and educational institutions provide more resources and support to international and immigrant students.
- Open the dialogue about systemic issues that immigrants face in Montreal.
- Reach out to grassroots organizations or nonprofits that support immigrants, and volunteer with them.
- Provide support to international students, which can look like sharing a meal with them, and provide information about resources in Montreal.

Student Group Reflection



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Anti-Racism Project – Video Library – Course Package

1. What is something new that your group learned or began to consider from watching the video?
 2. What type of educational videos on systemic racism would you like to see more of?
 3. How can you combat systems of oppression and exclusion in your individual lives?
 4. Why is having an anti-racist approach to your work/studies important?
 5. After today's exercise, write down two suggestions for your professor on making your class more inclusive.
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Thank you for implementing our resources and supporting anti-racism efforts in education. If you have any questions or feedback, please email us!



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