

**University of Northern Colorado**  
**School of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education**  
**APCE 623: Understanding and Counseling Diverse Populations**  
**Fall 2022**

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(In-person & Zoom available) **Class Meets:** Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> & Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>  
**Location:** Loveland Campus

**Course Description:** This course provides an examination of counselor training issues and skills relevant to working with diverse cultural backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on US minority groups; however, various multicultural groups will be discussed. This course is designed to sensitize students to concerns of various cultural groups, gain understanding of experiences of privilege and oppression, and develop a social justice approach.

**Required Text:**

Sue, D.W., & Sue, D. (2019). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Wiley & Sons.

**Read one of the following books:**

- 1.) Coates, T. (2015). *Between the world and me*
- 2.) Alexie, S., & Forney, E. (2008). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*
- 3.) Wong, A. (Ed.). (2020). *Disability visibility: First-person stories from the twenty-first century*
- 4.) Tammet, D. (2007). *Born on a blue day: Inside the extraordinary mind of an autistic savant*
- 5.) Chang, S. C., & Singh, A. A. (2018). *A clinician's guide to gender-affirming care: Working with transgender and gender nonconforming clients*
- 6.) Bayoumi, M. (2009). *How does it feel to be a problem?: Being young and Arab in America*

**Recommended Readings (optional):**

- Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W. J., Catalano, D. C. J., Dejong, K., Hackman, H. W., Hopkins, L. E., Love, B., Peters, M. L., Shlasko, D., & Zuniga, X. (2018). *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Routledge.
- Ratts, M., & Pedersen, P. (2014). *Counseling for multiculturalism and social justice, integration, theory and application*. American Counseling Association: Wiley.
- Ratts, M. J., Singh, A. A., Nassar-McMillan, S. C., Butler, S. K., & McCullough, J. R. (2016). Multicultural and social justice counseling competencies: Guidelines for the counseling profession. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 28-48.  
doi:10.1002/jmcd.12035
- Thomas, A.J. & Schwarzbaum, S. (2011). *Culture & identity: Life stories for counselors and therapists* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Sage.

**Course Content:** This course is designed to meet the CACREP 2016 standards for Social and Cultural Diversity (Section 2.F.2). The course introduces students to multicultural issues counselors face as a result of working with diverse populations. Students will be introduced to topics including oppression and

privilege, racism, discrimination, sexism, power, ageism, etc. Course material is intended to prepare students for the challenges of working in a multicultural society. To meet accreditation standards for counselor education programs, students who successfully complete the course must master the following knowledge and skill outcomes.

### **Knowledge & Skill Outcomes\***

Upon successful completion of this course students will understand the:

1. Multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.a). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion*
2. Theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.b). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion*
3. Multicultural counseling competencies (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.c). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
4. Impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.d). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
5. The effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.e). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
6. Help-seeking behaviors of diverse clients (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.f). - *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion*
7. The impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.g). - *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
8. Strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination (CACREP Standard: 2.F.2.h). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
9. Strategies for advocating for diverse clients' career and educational development and employment opportunities in a global economy (CACREP Standard: 2.F.4.g). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
10. Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for addressing career development (CACREP Standard: 2.F.4.j). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion*
11. Models and competencies for advocating for clients at the individual, system, and policy levels (CACREP Standard: 2.F.5.j). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion*
12. Ethical and culturally relevant leadership and advocacy practices (CACREP Standard: 2.F.5.l) – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion*
13. Cultural factors relevant to clinical mental health counseling (CACREP Standard: 5.C.2.j). - *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*
14. Diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) (CACREP CMHC Standard: 5.C.2.d). - *readings, class discussion, class activities*
15. Legislation and government policy relevant to clinical mental health counseling (CACREP CMHC Standard: 5.C.2.i). - *readings, class discussion, class activities*
16. Cultural factors relevant to marriage, couple, and family functioning, including the impact of immigration (CACREP MCFC Standard: 5.F.2.m). - *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*

17. Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients (CACREP Standard: 2.F.1.e). – *readings, class discussion, class activities, cultural immersion, cultural autobiography*

*\*The methods used to evaluate each Knowledge and Skill Outcomes are listed after each standard.*

**Counseling Psychology Profession Wide Competency (for Doctoral students)**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

ELEMENT 3A	An understanding of how their own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases may affect how they understand and interact with people different from themselves.
ELEMENT 3B	Knowledge of the current theoretical and empirical knowledge base as it relates to addressing diversity in all professional activities including research, training, supervision/consultation, and service.
ELEMENT 3C	The ability to integrate awareness and knowledge of individual and cultural differences in the conduct of professional roles (e.g., research, services, and other professional activities). This includes the ability to apply a framework for working effectively with areas of individual and cultural diversity not previously encountered over the course of their careers. Also included is the ability to work effectively with individuals whose group membership, demographic characteristics, or worldviews create conflict with their own.
ELEMENT 3D	Demonstrate the requisite knowledge base, ability to articulate an approach to working effectively with diverse individuals and groups, and apply this approach effectively in their professional work.

**Methods of Instruction:**

Students will engage in readings, didactic, and experiential activities geared toward integration and application of multicultural counseling and social justice knowledge and skills. Instruction will consist of lecture, small group discussion, experiential engagement and reflection.

**Professional Conduct and Ethics:**

All students are required to know and adhere to their respective professional association (e.g., ACA, APA) code of ethics. Ethical violations may result in failure of the course and possibly dismissal from the program.

## Course Requirements/Assignments

**INFORMED CONSENT:** One important aspect of the training of a future counselor is self-exploration and self-knowledge. This is achieved, in part, through self-disclosure in the context of an academic environment. Enrollment in this class requires that the you disclose to the professor relevant personal and family of origin information in selected assignments. By enrolling in this class, you agree to turn in assignments that include disclosures of personal information for self-exploration, and self-growth in partial fulfillment of the requirements of this class. I am bound by confidentiality rules as reflected in the ACA Code of Ethics. Discussions in this class will be conducted with respect, dignity and honesty, making it safe to participate in them.

### **ATTENDANCE AND ASSIGNMENT POLICY:**

Readings and classroom discussion are critical. Because of the interactive format, you are expected to attend ALL class sessions. Please notify me ahead of time (when possible) if you need to be absent from class. Being late, leaving early, or missing more than one class (3 hours) may result in a reduction of your final grade and/or may lead to an incomplete for this course. Incomplete is given only in cases of illness, death in family, or other extreme circumstances. All written assignments will be typed utilizing APA style unless otherwise specified.

**PARTICIPATION and INTRODCUTION (20 points):** You are expected to attend and participate in class discussions, small group discussions, and engage in class activities. Engaging in class discussions/activities will be assessed on the basis of sharing diverse perspectives, demonstrating respect for the beliefs of other people, and being able to discuss one's perspective in light of the assigned readings.

You also need to write an autobiographical paragraph related to an early experience of race, gender, ability, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. You will read the paragraph to the class as part of your introduction. This is an opportunity to briefly describe a personal experience that helps the class understand a small aspect of you.

### **Immersion in New Experience (Practicing Discomfort) (20 points):**

Choose a minority group of which you do not personally identify (e.g., BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), youth, people who have a disability, LGBTQ, etc.). Choose a group with which you are unfamiliar and that will challenge your learning. I encourage you to choose those experiences with the maximum potential for personal awareness, knowledge, and skills development.

The following are some possibilities:

- Attend a lecture that focuses on the racial minority issues and concerns.
- Make a tour of a racial community and provide a description of the community's environment including quality of homes, conditions of lawns, streets, sidewalks and behaviors of the people. In addition, notice the number of telephone booths, recreational facilities, pharmacies, medical clinics and any unique aspect(s) of the community you may observe.
- Attend a church service of a predominant racial minority.
- Take a tour at an on-campus diversity office
- Attend a festival celebration or a ceremony that gives you some ideas of the culture (e.g., Native-American Pow Wow, Pride parade).
- Commute using solely public transit for 2-3 days.
- Volunteer at the Arc for an afternoon.

### **Immersion Summary**

Students will write a 3-page reaction/reflection paper (not counting title page and/or references) using the following guidelines:

- Identify and briefly describe the experience.
- Identify and briefly discuss your personal objectives for the experience.
- Discuss your feelings AND thoughts about the experience.
- Discuss how your experience was supported/not supported by concepts in the literature (must include citations which means that there will be a reference page).
- Discuss in-depth the experience in terms of implications for multicultural counseling.
- Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and appropriately formatted using APA style. Good organization and appropriate grammar usage are required.

### **SMALL GROUP REFLECTIONS (20 pts total):**

Listen, watch and read the below links and write a paragraph of reflection for each. The reflection could include your take away of the material, something that stood out to you, something new you learned, etc. We will have small group discussions in class on your reflections.

- 1.) Listen to the following podcast of *Where should we begin, Season 5, episode 8*: You want me to watch the kids while you go out with other men?, where are they now.

<https://www.estherperel.com/podcasts/wswb-s5-episode8>

- 2.) Read the chapter that is included at the end of your syllabus: Doyle, G. (2020). *Untamed*. Racists.

- 3.) Watch these two short videos:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nmhAJYxFT4&list=PLzA29UGiZ\\_zoTGxDhl-Z41DYtXRCzzPs2&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nmhAJYxFT4&list=PLzA29UGiZ_zoTGxDhl-Z41DYtXRCzzPs2&index=2)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nmhAJYxFT4>

### **BOOK ASSIGNMENT (20 pts total):**

Read one of the following books and be prepared with the assignment listed below. During the first weekend of class, you will have the opportunity to discuss the book you chose, as well as hearing about the other books listed:

- 1.) Coates, T. (2015). *Between the world and me*
- 2.) Alexie, S., & Forney, E. (2008). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*
- 3.) Wong, A. (Ed.). (2020). *Disability visibility: First-person stories from the twenty-first century*
- 4.) Tammet, D. (2007). *Born on a blue day: Inside the extraordinary mind of an autistic savant*
- 5.) Chang, S. C., & Singh, A. A. (2018). *A clinician's guide to gender-affirming care: Working with transgender and gender nonconforming clients*
- 6.) Bayoumi, M. (2009). *How does it feel to be a problem?: Being young and Arab in America*

Write a 2-page reflection that answers the following questions about the book you chose:

- 1.) Describe why you were interested in this book.
- 2.) What are your previous or current biases towards this specific identity/experience?
- 3.) What did you learn?
- 4.) How can you apply this book to your work as a counselor?

**IDENTITY/CULTURAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY (20 points):** Students will write an identity and cultural autobiography, which will reflect what they have learned in the course and explore their identity and cultural socialization processes. Additionally, the paper should include identity development analysis, the impact of culture on their current functioning, behaviors, attitudes, and values, as well as the impact of culture on their views of mental health and counseling. Include, when relevant, oppression and resilience issues as well. **IMPORTANT:** The autobiographical chronological events are less important than the analysis of the autobiographical events, with proper use of conceptual ideas learned in class. Please use in-text citations and a reference page in APA style. The paper should be no more than 4 pages long, double-spaced, size 12 font.

**Assignment Summary:**

Assignment	Points
Attendance, participation & intro	20
Immersion in new experience	20
Small group reflections	20
Book assignment	20
Identity/cultural autobiography	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Grading Scale:**

<b>A</b>	93-100	<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>D+</b>	67-69
<b>A-</b>	90-92	<b>C+</b>	76-79	<b>D</b>	63-66
<b>B</b>	87-89	<b>C</b>	73-76	<b>D</b>	60-62
<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>C</b>	70-72	<b>F</b>	Below 60

**Late Work Policy:** Late papers will lose ½ letter grade for every 24 hours the assignment is late.

**University and APCE Policies**

**COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic is a complex, challenging, and fluid situation, which continues to evolve. UNC will follow applicable legal requirements and federal, state, and county public health recommendations and mandates in all decisions related to university operations. As of the writing of this syllabus, current UNC policies include the requirement that we all wear masks (regardless of vaccination status) in any indoor public space. One exception to this is “Individuals who are fully vaccinated and engaged in indoor instructional activity or laboratory work **and** can maintain at least 6 feet from the nearest person.” More info can be found at <https://www.unco.edu/coronavirus/>. I encourage you to check that page often.

Students who fail to comply with UNC's public health requirements, such as the use of masks and social distancing, will be reminded of current policy; students who fail to correct their behavior will be asked to

leave the classroom and may be referred to the Dean of Students office. The safety and well-being of our Community of Bears requires each of us to be prepared to do our part to protect the health of our entire campus community, as well as our friends, families, and neighbors. It is important that all members of the university community work together to do all we can to keep our community safe.

### ***Disability Resources***

It is the policy and practice of the University of Northern Colorado to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that present barriers to students' inclusion or to accurate assessments of students' achievements (e.g. time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, use of videos without captions), students should communicate about these aspects with their instructor(s) and contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) to request accommodations.

Office: (970) 351-2289, Michener Library L-80.

Students can learn more here: [www.unco.edu/disability-resource-center](http://www.unco.edu/disability-resource-center)

### ***Title IX***

The University of Northern Colorado is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Students who have experienced (or who know someone who has experienced) any of these incidents should know that they are not alone. UNC has staff members trained to support students to navigate campus life, to access health and counseling services, to provide academic and housing accommodations, to help with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware all UNC instructors and most staff members are required to report their awareness of sexual violence to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC). This means that if students tell an instructor about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, the instructor must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator, Larry Loften. Larry or a trained staff member in OIEC will contact the reporting students to let them know about accommodations and support services at UNC as well as their options to pursue a process to hold accountable the person who caused the harm to them. Students who have experienced these situations are not required to speak with OIEC staff regarding the incident. Students' participation in OIEC processes are entirely voluntary.

If students do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing this information to the instructor, students can speak confidentially with the following people on campus and in the community. They can connect you with support services and help explore options now, or in the future.

UNC's Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (ASAP): 24 Hr. Hotline 970-351-4040 or <http://www.unco.edu/asap>

University of Northern Colorado Counseling Center: 970-351-2496 or <http://www.unco.edu/counseling>  
UNC Psychological Services: 970-351-1645 or [http://www.unco.edu/cebs/psych\\_clinic](http://www.unco.edu/cebs/psych_clinic)

Students who are survivors, who are concerned about someone who is a survivor, or who would like to learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, can visit [www.unco.edu/sexual-misconduct](http://www.unco.edu/sexual-misconduct)  
Students may also contact OIEC at 970-351-4899 or email [titleix@unco.edu](mailto:titleix@unco.edu)

### ***Academic Integrity***

Students are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to grading consequences with regard to this course and/or university disciplinary procedures through the Dean of Students Office. More information about the academic misconduct process can be found in UNC's Student Code of Conduct (BEAR Code).

### ***Attendance***

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Each instructor determines the relationship between class attendance, the objectives of the class, and students' grades. Instructors are responsible for articulating their attendance policies and their effect on grades to students. Students are responsible for knowing the attendance policy of each course. Only the instructor can approve students' absences. Students are responsible for requesting such approval. In an effort to create inclusive learning environments, instructors should not require doctors' notes to determine whether or not to excuse an absence.

### ***Equity and Inclusion***

The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) embraces the diversity of students, faculty, and staff. UNC honors the inherent dignity of each individual, and welcomes their unique perspectives, behaviors, and world views. People of all races, religions, national origins, sexual orientations, ethnicities, genders and gender identities, cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, immigrant statuses, military or veteran statuses, sizes and/or shapes are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. Course content and campus discussions will heighten your awareness of others' individual and intersecting identities. For information or resources, contact the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, at 970-351-1944. If students want to report an incident related to identity-based discrimination/harassment, please visit [www.unco.edu/institutional-equity-compliance](http://www.unco.edu/institutional-equity-compliance).

### ***Food Insecurity and Basic Needs***

Knowing that food insecurity is experienced at higher rates among college students, UNC offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The Bear Pantry is located in University Center 2166A and is open for regular hours throughout the semester. Please visit [www.unco.edu/bear-pantry](http://www.unco.edu/bear-pantry) for more information. Students who face challenges (i.e., emotional distress, grief and loss, academic concerns, basic needs insecurity, navigating university processes) and believe this may affect their academic performance may contact Student Outreach and Support (SOS), which is part of the Dean of Students Office. SOS will help connect students with appropriate referrals based upon their needs. The Dean of Students Office can be reached at [dos@unco.edu](mailto:dos@unco.edu) or via phone at 970-351-2001.

### ***Land Acknowledgment***

The University of Northern Colorado occupies the lands in the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, Lakota and Arapaho peoples. The University acknowledges the 48 tribes that are historically tied to the state of Colorado. Thus, the land on which UNC is situated is tied to the history and culture of our native and indigenous peoples. UNC appreciates this connection and has great respect for this land. Additionally, the University community pays its respect to Elders past, present, and future, and to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. As part of the learning and reflection process please visit <https://native-land.ca/> or call the Office of Equity & Inclusion at 970-351-1944.

### ***Name in Use/Pronoun in Use/Name Change***

Some students may have changed their names to better reflect their gender identity or for other reasons. The process to request that the University change the name that appears on Canvas and on the course roster is available here: <https://www.unco.edu/registrar/name-change.aspx>



### ***Writing Center***

The Writing Center offers three kinds of sessions to meet your writing needs: In-Person, Email, and Zoom Sessions. Trained Writing Center Consultants can assist you with writing assignments from any course or subject. Even if you think your writing is pretty good, it's always nice to have another reader look over your work.

To guarantee a session time, make an appointment using our online scheduling system by visiting our website (below). We also have walk-in session times available during our scheduled open hours, Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm in the Writing Center, Ross Hall 1230 as well as walk-in sessions in the library (first floor) Monday – Thursday evenings, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

If your instructor requires you to visit the Writing Center, make sure to alert your Consultant, and/or check the box on the appointment form, and we will send an email confirmation of your session to your instructor. For more information, email the Writing Center at [writingcenter@unco.edu](mailto:writingcenter@unco.edu) or visit the website: [www.unco.edu/writing-center](http://www.unco.edu/writing-center)

**Changes to the syllabus may be made as the course proceeds.  
If this is necessary, these changes will be announced in class.**

## COURSE OUTLINE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignments DUE</b>
Prior to the first weekend of class		Sue & Sue Chapters 1-12. Paragraph of introduction. Small group assignment- completed reflection for the three prompts. Read chosen book and completed reflection for the book.
Oct.21	Introduction to the course, expectations, etc. Obstacles & Resistance Intro to Multicultural Counseling and Intersectionality	
Oct.22	Multicultural Counseling Competence Political & Social Justice Implications Culturally Competent Assessment	
Oct.23	Systemic Oppression Microaggressions Values & Barriers Communication Styles	
Prior to the second weekend of class		Sue & Sue Chapters 13-26. Immersion in new experience and reflection completed.
Nov.4th	Racial, Ethnic, & Cultural Identity Development Non-Western Methods of Healing Counseling and Race Counseling and Class (SES)	
Nov.5th	Counseling and Gender Identity Counseling and Sexual Identity Counseling and Age	
Nov.6th	Counseling and Disabilities Counseling and Religion Counseling Immigrants & Refugees Wrap-up	Autobiography completed.

## **Informed Consent**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Due to the complex, and at times controversial, nature of this course, I understand and agree to the following:

At times, controversial topics may be discussed in this course. My peers and I may experience reactions to these topics and may have already established opinions and values related to these topics. Although it is not necessary for us to agree with one another in relation to any controversial issues discussed in this course, I agree to remain respectful of my peers throughout the course.

This class will involve personal self-reflection related to examining my personal values, beliefs, and biases surrounding diversity issues. It is expected that I remain open to self-reflection throughout the course. The purpose of self-reflection is to prepare myself for managing reactions, values, and biases that may arise when working with diverse clients.

I am expected to participate in a meaningful and appropriate manner. Although talking about diversity issues can be difficult, I am expected to verbally engage in the learning process.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## racists

I was eleven years old when I started treatment for bulimia. Back then, the mental health world treated eating disorders differently than it does now. When a child got sick, it was assumed that she was broken. We didn't yet understand that many sick children are canaries in coal mines, passively inhaling toxins in the air of their families or cultures or both. So I was separated, sent away to therapists and doctors who tried to fix me instead of trying to fix the toxins I was breathing.

When I was in high school, a therapist finally asked my family to attend one of my sessions. After a few minutes, she turned to my dad and asked, "Can you imagine how you might be inadvertently contributing to Glennon's illness?" My dad became very angry. He stood up and walked out of the room. I understood why. My dad's first priority was to be a good father. He held so tightly to the identity of good father that he couldn't dare to imagine that he might in any way have hurt his little girl. In his mind, good fathers do not contribute to family dysfunction. They do, of course, all the time, because good fathers

are still human. In retrospect, I can see that our family had ideas about food, control, and bodies that would have been healthy for all of us to excavate, pull out into the light, and clear up. But my dad's refusal to look inward meant that I was on my own for a long while. Nobody else was going to turn their insides out but me.

**D**ecades after that day in the therapist's office, Donald Trump was elected president. A friend called me and said, "This is the apocalypse. This is the end of our country as we know it."

I said, "I hope so. Apocalypse means uncovering. Gotta uncover before you can recover."

She said, "Oh, God, not more recovery talk. Not now."

"No, listen—this feels to me like we've hit rock bottom! Maybe that means we're finally ready for the steps. Maybe we'll admit that our country has become unmanageable. Maybe we'll take a moral inventory and face our open family secret: that this nation—founded upon 'liberty and justice for all'—was built while murdering, enslaving, raping, and subjugating millions. Maybe we'll admit that liberty and justice for all has always meant liberty for white straight wealthy men. Then maybe we'll gather the entire family at the table—the women and the gay and black and brown folks and those in power—so that we can begin the long, hard work of making amends. I've seen this process heal people and families. Maybe our nation can heal this way, too."

I was adamant and righteous. But I'd forgotten that sick systems are made up of sick people. People like me. In order to get healthy, everybody has to stay in the room and turn themselves inside out. No family recovers until each member recovers.

Soon after that conversation with my friend, I sat on my family room couch and patted a spot to my left and one to my right. I said to my daughters, "Come here, girls." They sat down and looked up at me. I told them that while they were asleep, a man who was white had walked into a church and shot and killed nine people who were black.

Then I told my daughters about a black boy their brother's age, who was walking home and was chased down and murdered. I told them that the killer said he thought the boy had a gun, but what the boy really had was a bag of Skittles. Amma said, "Why did that man think Trayvon's candy was a gun?" I said, "I don't think he really did. I think he just needed an excuse to kill."

We sat with all of this for a while. They asked more questions. I did my best. Then I decided that we had talked about villains for long enough. We needed to talk about heroes.

I went to my office to find a particular book. I pulled it down from the shelf, came back to the couch, and sat between them again. I opened the book, and we read about Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, John Lewis, Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, and Daisy Bates. We looked at pictures of civil rights marches, and we talked about why people march. "Someone once said that marching is praying with your feet," I told them.

Amma pointed to a white woman holding a sign, marching in a sea of black and brown people. Her eyes popped and she said, "Mama, look! Would we have been marching with them? Like her?"

I fixed my mouth to say, "Of course. Of course we would have, baby."

But before I could say it, Tish said, "No, Amma. We wouldn't have been marching with them back then. I mean, we're not marching now."

I stared at my girls as they looked up at me. I thought of my dad in that therapist's office all those years ago. It was as if my girls had turned to me and asked, "Mama, how do you imagine we might be inadvertently contributing to our country's sickness?"

A week later, I was reading Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, famous essay "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and I came across this:

I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action."

This was the first time I had encountered language that defined the kind of person I was in the world. I was a white person who imagined herself to be on the side of civil rights, because I was a good person who strongly believed in equality as the right idea. But the white woman Amma had pointed to in that photograph wasn't staying home and believing. She was showing up. When I looked at her face, she didn't look *nice* at all. She looked radical. Angry. Brave. Afraid. Tired. Passionate. Resolute. Regal. And a little bit scary.

I imagined myself to be the kind of white person who would have stood with Dr. King because I respect him *now*. Close to 90 percent of white Americans approve of Dr. King

today. Yet while he was alive and demanding change, only about 30 percent approved of him—the same rate of white Americans who approve of Colin Kaepernick today.

So, if I want to know how I'd have felt about Dr. King back then, I can't ask myself how I feel about him now; instead I have to ask myself: How do I feel about Kaepernick now? If I want to know how I'd have felt about the Freedom Riders back then, I can't ask myself how I feel about them now; instead, I have to ask myself: How do I feel about Black Lives Matter now?

If I want to know how I'd have shown up in the last civil rights era, I have to ask myself: How am I showing up today, in this civil rights era?

I decided to read every book I could get my hands on about race in America. I filled my social media feeds with writers and activists of color. It became very clear very quickly how strongly my social media feeds shaped my worldview. With a feed filled with white voices, faces that looked like my own, and articles that reflected experiences like mine, it was easy to believe that, for the most part, things were fine. Once I committed myself to beginning each day by reading the perspectives of black and brown people, I learned that everything was, and always has been, quite far from fine. I learned about rampant police brutality, the preschool-to-prison pipeline, the subhuman conditions of immigrant detainment centers, the pillaging of native lands. I began to widen. I was unlearning the whitewashed version of American history I'd been indoctrinated into believing. I was discovering that I was not who I imagined myself to be. I was learning that my country was not what I had been taught it was.

This experience of learning and unlearning reminded me



of getting sober from addiction. When I started to really listen and think more deeply about the experiences of people of color and other marginalized people in our country, I felt like I did when I first quit drinking: increasingly uncomfortable as the truth agitated my comfortable numbness. I felt ashamed as I began to learn all the ways my ignorance and silence had hurt other people. I felt exhausted because there was so much more to unlearn, so many amends to be made, and so much work to do. Just like in my early days of sobriety from booze, in my early days of waking up to white supremacy, I felt shaky, jumpy, and agitated as I slowly surrendered the privilege of not knowing. It was a painful unbecoming.

Eventually it became time to speak up. I started sharing the voices I was reading, and speaking out against the racism of America's past and the bigotry and strategic divisiveness of the current administration. Every time I did this, people got pissed off. I felt okay about this because I seemed to be pissing off the right people.

Much later, I was asked to participate in an activist group led by women of color. One of the black leaders tasked another white woman and me with the job of planning an online webinar for other white women with the intention of calling them into the work of racial justice. Our mission was twofold: Begin educating other white women and solicit donations to fund bail and respite for black activists putting themselves on the line day after day.

The other white woman and I accepted the job. On our planning calls for the webinar, we decided that she would focus on the history of complicity of white women and I would focus on my personal experience as a white woman waking up to her place inside of white supremacy. I thought that if I explained to white women that the confusion, shame, and fear they would experience in their early days of racial sobriety were predictable

parts of the process of unbecoming, they would be more likely to remain in the anti-racism effort. Also, they'd be better equipped to confront their racism privately, instead of mistakenly believing that their feelings should be shared publicly. This felt important, because black leaders were telling me that the ignorance and emotionality of well-intentioned white women was a major stumbling block toward justice.

I knew what they meant. I'd seen it happen again and again. If white women don't learn that our experiences in early racial sobriety are predictable, we think our reactions are unique. So we enter race conversations far too early and we lead with our feelings and confusion and opinions. When we do this, we are centering ourselves, so we inevitably get put back where we belong, which is far from the center. This makes us even more agitated. We are used to people showing gratitude for our presence, so being unappreciated hurts our feelings. We double down. We say things like "At least I'm trying. No one is even grateful. All I do is get attacked." People become upset, because saying "I am being attacked" doesn't accurately describe what is happening. People are just telling us the truth for the first time. That truth feels like an attack because we have been protected by comfortable lies for so long.

We are dumbfounded. We feel like we are always saying the wrong things and that people are always getting upset about that. But I do not think people become upset just because we say the wrong things. I think people are upset—and we are defensive, hurt, and frustrated—because we have fallen into the trap of believing that becoming racially sober is about saying the right thing instead of *becoming* the right thing; that showing up is based in *performing* instead of *transforming*. The way we show up reveals that we haven't yet done the studying and listening required to *become* the right thing before trying to *say* the right thing.

We are mugs filled to the brim, and we keep getting bumped. If we are filled with coffee, coffee will spill out. If we are filled with tea, tea will spill out. Getting bumped is inevitable. If we want to change what spills out of us, we have to work to change what's inside of us.

"How do I enter the race conversation?" is the wrong question in the early days of racial sobriety. We are not talking about a conversation to enter publicly as much as a conversion to surrender to privately. Whether we are in it to perform or to transform becomes evident by the way we take up space. When a white woman who is unbecoming does show up publicly, she does so with humble respect, which is a way of being that is quiet, steady, and yielding. Not with hand-wringing shame, because self-flagellation is just another way to demand attention. She has feelings, but she interrogates them within instead of imposing them on others, because there is a deep understanding that how she feels is irrelevant when people are dying.

I planned to share all of this on the webinar. My hope was that it might prepare participants for the early stages of racial sobriety and that this preparation might serve the larger social justice efforts of our activist group. We sent the plans for our webinar out to the leaders of our group for feedback and approval. We made their suggested adjustments, then posted online about the seminar. Thousands registered. I went to bed.

The next morning, I woke up to a text from a friend that said: "G, Just checking on you. I'm watching what's going down online. Let me know that you're okay."

My heart sank as I opened up Instagram. There were hundreds—eventually thousands—of comments, many of them from people calling me a racist.

What I didn't know back then is that there are several valid

and contradictory schools of thought about how white women should show up in the racial justice movement. One view: White women—when accountable to and led by women of color—should use our voices and platforms to call other white women into anti-racism work. Another view: White women should only use their voices to point to people of color already doing the work. Those who subscribed to the latter philosophy were furious with me about this webinar.

*Why would you try to teach instead of pointing toward women of color who are already doing this work? Why would you take up space in this movement when so many women of color have been doing this work forever? You offering a free course is taking money out of black educators' pockets. Offering a "safe space" for white women to talk about race is wrong—white women don't need to be safe; they need to be educated. You are canceled. You are a racist. You are a racist, Glennon. You are nothing but a racist. Everywhere, the word racist.*

I was stunned.

I am not new to criticism. I am a woman who announced her engagement to a woman during a countrywide Christian speaking tour. I have been publicly ridiculed by and excommunicated from entire religious denominations. I'm used to the "other side" hating me; I wear that kind of backlash as a badge of honor. But friendly fire was new and excruciating. I felt idiotic and remorseful. I also felt terribly jealous of every single person who had decided to sit this one out. I thought of the quote "It is better to be quiet and thought a fool than to open your mouth and prove it." I felt defensive, hurt, frustrated, and afraid. I could not think of a single thing I was more terrified of being called than a racist. This was rock bottom.

Luckily, I am a woman who has learned repeatedly that while rock bottom feels like the end—it's always the beginning of something. I knew that this was the moment I'd either re-

lapse with a couple shots of self-pity and resignation, or I'd double down on my racial sobriety and carry on. I told myself: Breathe. Don't panic and flee. Sink. Feel it all. Be Still. Imagine. Let it burn.

Eventually, I started remembering.

Each night when I was growing up, my family would sit down on our basement couch and watch the evening news together. It was the time of the War on Drugs. I lived in the suburbs, but in the cities things were clearly terrible. The news insisted that crack was everywhere, and so were so-called crack babies and welfare queens. Night after night we watched young black bodies thrown to the ground, rounded up en masse, pushed into cop cars. After the nightly news, the show *Cops* aired. Along with millions of other American families, my family would sit and watch *Cops* together. Every night, I'd see mostly white cops arresting mostly poor black men. For entertainment. We would eat popcorn while we watched.

Thirty years later, after the Charleston massacre, my parents' rural Virginia town buzzed about how to respond to the racial issues agitating Americans' consciousness. A local church invited the community to come together and address it. My parents decided to attend.

They sat in a large room with about a hundred other white folks. A woman stood up to bring the meeting to order. She announced that she and a few other women had decided to respond by sending care packages to the predominantly black school across town. She suggested that they break up into groups and choose items to collect. The room exhaled in relief:

Yes! Outward action! Performance instead of transformation!  
Our insides are safe!

My father was confused and frustrated. He raised his hand. The woman called on him.

My dad stood and said, "I'm not here to make packages. I'm here to talk. I was raised in a racist southern town. I was taught a lot of things about black people that I've been carrying in my mind and my heart for decades. I'm starting to understand that not only are these lies, but they're deadly lies. I don't want to pass this poison down to my grandkids' generation. I want this stuff out of me, but I don't know how to get it out. I think I'm saying that I've got racism in me, and I want to unlearn it."

My father is a man who spent his entire career in schools championing kids who didn't look like me. He is a man who taught us every single day that racism is evil. But now my father understood that a person can be good and still be sick. He understood that there is such a thing in America as a highly functioning racist. He'd become humble enough to learn that we can be good, kind, justice-loving people in our hearts and minds—but if we live in America, we're poisoned by the racist air we breathe. He had dared to imagine that he played a role in our sick American family. He was ready to let burn his cherished identity of "good white person." He was ready to stay in the room and turn himself inside out.

I am a feminist, but I was raised in a sexist culture. I was raised in a world that tried to convince me through media, religious organizations, history books, and the beauty industry that female bodies are worth less than male bodies and that certain types of female bodies (thin, tall, young) are worth more than other types of female bodies.



The images of women's bodies for sale, the onslaught of emaciated women's bodies held up as the pinnacle of female achievement, and the pervasive message that women exist to please men is the air I breathed. I lived in a mine, and the toxin was misogyny. I got sick from it. Not because I'm a bad, sexist person, but because I was breathing misogynistic air.

I became bulimic, and it's taken me a lifetime to recover. Self-hatred is harder to unlearn than it is to learn. It is difficult for a woman to be healthy in a culture that is still so very sick. It is the ultimate victory for a woman to find a way to love herself and other women while existing in a world insisting that she has no right to. So I'm working hard at health and wholeness every day. I'm an advocate for women's equality because, at my roots, I know the truth. I know what my body is for. It's not for men's use. It's not for selling things. It's for loving and learning and resting and for fighting for justice. I know that every body on this earth has equal, unsurpassable worth.

And yet.

I still have the poison in me. I still have all the biases that were instilled in me for decades. I still struggle to love my body every single day. Fifty percent of all my daily thoughts are about my body. I still step on the scale to check my self-worth. Subconsciously, I would likely still judge a thinner, younger woman to be worth more than a heavy older woman. I know that often my knee-jerk reaction is not my wild, it's my taming. So I can correct that misguided first judgment, but it takes me a deliberate effort. We become the air we breathe.

When I was thirty-five, I noticed that the wrinkles on my forehead were deepening and I found myself driving to a doctor's office and paying hundreds of dollars to have Botox poison painfully injected into my forehead to make my face worth as much as the younger, smoother faces on TV. I quite literally knew better. But my subconscious did not know better. My

subconscious had not yet caught up with my mind and my heart, because it was (is still) poisoned. It took a conscious decision to stop poisoning myself. To stop paying to have misogyny injected beneath my skin. I am a fierce, forever feminist. But I still have sexism and misogyny running through my veins. You can be one thing, and your subconscious can be another thing.

I talk to women all the time about how the misogyny pumped into the air by our culture affects us deeply. How it corrupts our ideas about ourselves and pits women against each other. How that programmed poison makes us sick and mean. How we all have to work hard to detox from it so that we don't keep hurting ourselves and other women. Women cry and nod and say, "Yes, yes, me, too. I've got misogyny in me, and I want it out." No one is terrified to admit she has internalized misogyny, because there is no morality attached to the admission. No one decides that being affected by misogyny makes her a bad person. When a woman says she wants to work to detox herself of misogyny, she is not labeled a misogynist. It is understood that there is a difference between a misogynist and a person affected by misogyny who is actively working to detox. They both have misogyny in them, programmed by the system, but the former is using it to wield power to hurt people and the latter is working to untangle herself from its power so she can stop hurting people.

But then when I bring up racism, the same women say, "But I'm not racist. I am not prejudiced. I was raised better than that."

We are not going to get the racism out of us until we start thinking about racism like we think about misogyny. Until we consider racism as not just a personal moral failing but as the air we've been breathing. How many images of black bodies being thrown to the ground have I ingested? How many photographs



of jails filled with black bodies have I seen? How many racist jokes have I swallowed? We have been deluged by stories and images meant to convince us that black men are dangerous, black women are dispensable, and black bodies are worth less than white bodies. These messages are in the air and we've just been breathing. We must decide that admitting to being poisoned by racism is not a moral failing—but denying we have poison in us certainly is.

Revelation must come before revolution. Becoming sober—from booze, patriarchy, white supremacy—is a little bit like swallowing the blue pill and slowly watching the invisible, deliberate matrix we've been living inside of become visible. For me, the process of detoxing from booze included becoming aware of the matrix of consumer culture that brainwashed me into believing that my pain was to be numbed through consumption. Detoxing from my eating disorder meant seeing the web of patriarchy that trained me to believe that I was not allowed to be hungry or take up space on the earth. And detoxing from racism is requiring me to open my eyes to the elaborate web of white supremacy that exists to convince me that I am better than people of color.

In America, there are not two kinds of people, racists and nonracists. There are three kinds of people: those poisoned by racism and actively choosing to spread it; those poisoned by racism and actively trying to detox; and those poisoned by racism who deny its very existence inside them.

I've decided that the people who called me a racist were right.

And wrong.

I am the second type of person. I am a white woman who has come to the conclusion that the reason people call me a racist when I show up to speak about racism is that I am showing up as I am and I have racism in me. By what I say and don't say,

by the way I say it, people can see my inner racism on the outside. What they are seeing and pointing out is the truth.

Every white person who shows up and tells the truth—because it's her duty as a member of our human family—is going to have her racism called out. She will have to accept that others will disagree with how she's showing up and that they will have every right to disagree. She will need to learn to withstand people's anger, knowing that much of it is real and true and necessary. She will need to accept that one of the privileges she's letting burn is her emotional comfort. She will need to remind herself that being called a racist is actually not the worst thing. The worst thing is privately hiding her racism to stay safe, liked, and comfortable while others suffer and die. There are worse things than being criticized—like being a coward.

I am afraid to put these thoughts inside a book that will not be in people's hands until a year from now. I know that I will later read this and see the racism in it that I cannot see right now. But I think of the words of Dr. Maya Angelou: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." Doing our best now is an active thing, and so is knowing better. We don't show up and then wait to magically know better. We show up and then, when we are corrected, we keep working. We listen hard so we can know better next time. We seek out teachers so we can know better next time. We let burn our ideas about how good and well-meaning we are so we can become better next time. Learning to know better is a commitment. We will only know better if we continue unbecoming.

So I will commit to showing up with deep humility and doing the best I can. I will keep getting it wrong, which is the closest I can come to getting it right. When I am corrected, I

will stay open and keep learning. Not because I want to be the wokest woke who ever woked. But because people's children are dying of racism, and there is no such thing as other people's children. Hidden racism is destroying and ending lives. It's making police officers kill black men at three times the rate of white men. It's making lawmakers limit funding for clean water and poison children. It's making doctors allow black women to die during or after childbirth at three to four times the rate of white women. It's making school officials suspend and expel black students at three times the rate of white students. It's making judges incarcerate black drug users at nearly six times the rate of white drug users. And—because of my complicity in this system that dehumanizes others—it is dehumanizing me. The fact that the programmed poison of racism was pumped into us may not be our fault, but getting it out is sure as hell our responsibility.

So when the moment comes—whether it's about my family, my community, or my country—when the energy shifts to me and the question is asked of me: "How do you imagine you might be contributing to our sickness?" I want to stay in the room, I want to feel, to imagine, to listen, to work. I want to turn myself inside out to help clear our air.