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Our America

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### **Final Paper**

**What were some of the key sociological perspectives you learned about during the course, including class, race, and values?**

This class was a rewarding experience for me since it allowed me to connect with my classmates on a personal level while simultaneously giving me a thorough understanding of diverse sociological viewpoints, such as class, race, and beliefs. The lesson in which we investigated our lineage and looked at the elements that affected our ancestors' origins was one of the most fascinating. Given his Latin last name, our professor Nathaniel presented his unique family history-tracing process. He was able to throw light on his past using current technology, which aroused my interest in my own ancestry. I spoke with classmates during class about their ancestry, and I was interested by how different each story was and influenced by many different circumstances. I also learnt about the many viewpoints and ideas of my students, including one African American classmate's thoughts on living in this country. Such an experience would be unthinkable in my native Mexico, and I found it really helpful to extend my viewpoint on this subject in the Our America class.

I also gained knowledge on how social class affects both individuals and society at large during the course. We looked at the structural and cultural elements that influence social class and how

it affects people's access to opportunities and resources. This improved my comprehension of how a person's socioeconomic standing might impact their possibilities and way of life.

Another important subject we covered was race.

on the subject. We looked at how racism affects marginalized communities and how race is a social construct that affects people's experiences and chances in life. I learned more about the connections between race and other social identities, such as gender and class, through readings and debates.

The course placed a strong emphasis on values. We talked about how values are created by culture and society and how they might affect people's behavior and choices. This gave me the chance to consider my own principles and how my upbringing and cultural background had shaped them.

I now have a thorough understanding of sociological viewpoints and how they apply to daily life thanks to this study. It was a genuinely enriching experience that enabled me to engage with many viewpoints and widen my views.

**How did some of the events you learned about in US history reshape your thinking regarding race and society?**

The historical events I learned about have greatly changed how I view race and society. Although American history has always been a part of my life, Hollywood films and documentaries, which have a tendency to romanticize historical events and give a distorted version of truth, have had a significant impact on the way I view the past. But in the classroom, I developed a deeper comprehension of the events that the media did not always accurately depict.

For instance, I discovered that Manhattan's African-American community was buried there and was not well known until much later. I also learned that a whole neighborhood where African Americans, Germans, whites, and people from many other cultures coexisted was sacrificed in order to build Central Park. Seneca Village, the name of this neighborhood, was fully To make room for the park, it was demolished and moved. These incidents made me understand that a diverse group of hard-working individuals, including Latinos, Chinese, Italians, Irish, and Americans, laid the foundations of this country.

Through my research and conversations in class, I realized that while there are many important truths that need to be revealed, American history is not incorrect. It's essential to comprehend the entire history of the nation in order to fully comprehend the events that have been repressed or disregarded because they pertain to oppressed communities. This information made it easier for me to understand the challenges and injustices that minority groups had to endure while contributing to the creation of this country. My comprehension of race and society as a whole has become

Historical occurrences that were not extensively publicized or lauded in popular media had a significant impact on society.

**How did learning about things such as the 1619 Project, slavery itself, Jim Crow laws, Doctrine of Discovery, model minority, Immigration Act, immigration, and the Civil Rights Movement reshape your thinking about the United States of America?**

My perspective of the United States of America has been profoundly altered by what I've learned about the 1619 Project, slavery, Jim Crow legislation, the Doctrine of Discovery, model minorities, the Immigration Act, immigration, and the Civil Rights Movement. My education in the classroom has given me a more thorough awareness of the history of the nation, enabling me to respect its virtues and recognize its flaws.

The 1619 Project, which reexamines the country's past by examining the impact of slavery on American society, was one of the most influential ideas I learnt about. Through this study, I was better able to comprehend how slavery influenced the economy, culture, and social structure of the country. I discovered the transatlantic slave trade wasn't just a footnote in history.

My views were also influenced by the model minority myth, which presents Asian Americans as a prosperous and law-abiding population. I discovered that this myth is damaging because it downplays the hardships and prejudice that Asian Americans have experienced in the US.

Furthermore, the Immigration Act of 1965 was a pivotal moment in the nation's immigration laws, which in turn influenced the demographics of the United States. The law made me aware of the substantial contributions that people from Asia and Latin America have made to the nation and allowed for increased immigration from those regions.

The Civil Rights Movement was fascinating to learn about, to sum up. It helped me understand the value of group effort in bringing about change and the ongoing fight for racial justice.

**Discuss your newfound perspectives on the groups we covered in class (African Americans, Latino/a/x/ Hispanic, Asian Americans, Indigenous Peoples, and undocumented/ people Immigrants). How do you now see the importance of their contributions to the United States of America?**

I developed fresh insights on the racial and ethnic groups we studied in class, such as African Americans, Latino, Asian Americans, Indigenous Peoples, and undocumented/immigrant persons, as a result of the course. I was able to appreciate the significance of their involvement in influencing the history and culture of the United States of America after learning about their contributions to the nation.

I thought African Americans were a particularly noteworthy group. Due to the intense levels of prejudice and oppression they endured, African Americans made a huge contribution to American history, as I discovered via class discussions. I have a new respect for their struggle for civil rights and their tenacity in the face of difficulty. Their contributions to literature, music, sports, and art have had a significant impact on American society, and have helped me understand the significance of these fields. of appreciating their achievements and treating them with respect.

In addition, I developed a fresh appreciation for the crucial contributions made by Latino Americans to American history and society. They have been in the United States since before it was founded, and they have made enormous contributions to the economy, food, language, and arts. I discovered the accomplishments of people like Dolores Huerta, who co-founded the United Farm Workers Union, and Cesar Chavez, who battled for the rights of farmworkers. Their support of labor and civil rights contributed to the development of the nation.

In a same vein, Asian Americans have significantly enriched American society despite prejudice and persecution. I discovered about from class talks what the crucial roles played by Japanese Americans in the American military during World War II, as well as the significant contributions made by Chinese Americans to the construction of the transcontinental railroad. I also came to

appreciate the significance of respecting the various hardships and experiences of various Asian American communities.

My view of American history has also been widened by learning about Indigenous Peoples' contributions. I developed a fresh understanding of their history, culture, and traditions through class discussions. I learnt about the significant impact that Indigenous Peoples have had on the nation's development, including their contributions to agriculture, medicine, and the arts as well as their efforts to protect their way of life and the land on which they live.

Finally, it was eye-opening to hear about immigrants and those without legal status as well as their contributions to America. I improved my awareness of the problems individuals experience, from leaving their home nations to adjusting to life in a new location, and the hurdles they face. Despite these difficulties, they have made significant contributions to American civilization by working in the food industry, agriculture, and entrepreneurship.

The necessity of honoring and commemorating these groups' contributions to the United States of America was brought home by my newly acquired viewpoints on these groups. We must recognize and respect their accomplishments since their diversity, tenacity, and contributions have shaped American history and culture.

### **What has been religion's impact on American society?**

Christianity's influence on American society as the country's main religion is significant.

Christianity has been a crucial factor in defining the history of the nation, from its impact on politics to its contribution to the development of cultural norms and values.

The promotion of social and moral ideals is one of Christianity's most significant effects on American culture. The country's values, such as the emphasis on individualism, the value of

family, and the idea of the American Dream, have been impacted by Christian ideas and teachings. Many Americans also think that the nation's democratic institutions and legal system are founded on Christian ideas.

Politics in the United States have been significantly influenced by Christianity. Religious organizations, in particular conservative Christian organizations, have participated in a variety of social and political topics, such as campaigning for religious freedom and objecting to abortion. Pastors and other religious figures frequently take stances on divisive subjects, and this has contributed to the political discourse being shaped by Christian leaders.

Additionally, Christianity has had an impact on American culture, especially in the fields of literature and art. From John Milton's "Paradise Lost" to J.D. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye," many of America's finest works of art and literature have been influenced by Christian beliefs.

Overall, Christianity has made a big difference in American society, influencing its politics, culture, and values. Without a question, future generations will continue to be affected by it.

### **How did the museum visits add to your experience in the classroom?**

Museums offer a singular chance to develop a broader and more complex understanding of concepts addressed in class. Students can more thoroughly comprehend the context and value of the subjects they are studying by actually handling the relics, pictures, and historical objects that museums frequently present.

In many instances, going to a related museum helps improve class discussions. On the other hand, taking students to a museum before or after class might provide them a physical and visual knowledge of the content being covered. A more thorough and insightful understanding of

historical events and cultural phenomena can be gained from the descriptive writings and explanations offered by museums.

For instance, seeing a Civil Rights Movement exhibit in a museum can give a more concrete link to the fight for equality, especially for people who might not have had a personal connection to the events. Students can also gain a better understanding of the experiences of immigrants to the United States throughout its history by visiting an exhibit on immigration.

Additionally, museums provide a distinct viewpoint that cannot be adequately conveyed in textbooks or lectures. Students are able to consider what the artifacts meant to persons who lived in that era thanks to the tangible and emotional connections that the objects, pictures, and exhibits offer to the past.

In conclusion, museums are crucial for improving kids' comprehension of the subjects taught in school. Museums offer a more comprehensive, descriptive view of history through their exhibitions, which promotes contemplation and comprehension.

**Discuss how you see the church helping to implement racial justice and reconciliation in American society**

The church may play a significant role in fostering healing and peace amongst various racial and ethnic groups. This entails fostering forums for discussion and mutual understanding, aiding efforts to forge connections between various communities, and encouraging repentance and reconciliation. The church can contribute to the development of a culture of rapprochement and healing in American society by serving as an example of these beliefs and actions.

In conclusion, the church has a powerful opportunity to contribute to racial fairness and harmony in American society. The church may contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society for all by actively engaging in anti-racist activities and education, collaborating with community organizations and leaders, and encouraging healing and reconciliation amongst various racial and ethnic groups.

### **Sources:**

1. Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America by Juan Gonzalez - This book offers a comprehensive history of Latinos in America and explores the social, economic, and political forces that have shaped their experiences. It was also turned into a documentary film.
2. Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson - This book is a powerful memoir by the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been wrongfully convicted. The book explores the racial injustices in the criminal justice system and the urgent need for reform.
3. The Black Church in America: An African American Experience by Charles E. Booth - This book is a historical overview of the Black Church in America and its role in shaping African American culture, politics, and social movements.
4. The Making of Asian America: A History by Erika Lee - This book traces the history of Asian Americans, from their arrival in the United States to the present day. It explores the struggles and achievements of Asian Americans, as well as the discrimination and racism they have faced.
5. An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz - This book offers a sweeping history of Native American experiences in the United States, from pre-colonial times to the present. It challenges traditional narratives of American history and exposes the ways in which Native Americans have been marginalized and oppressed.
6. "The Heart of the Mission" by Cary Cordova - This article explores the history of the Mission District in San Francisco and its role as a hub for Latinx culture and activism. It also examines the challenges faced by Latinx communities in the face of gentrification and displacement.

7. "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates - This essay, published in The Atlantic, makes the case for reparations for African Americans, arguing that the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow continues to have profound effects on black Americans today. It is a powerful exploration of the ongoing impacts of systemic racism.