

Addressing Anti-Asian, Asian-American, and Pacific Islander Racism with Your Students

1. **Consider your own identities and positionality and practice self-care.**

Asian, Asian-American, and Pacific Islander instructors: Give yourself the grace to cancel class if you feel the need. It is your prerogative to share as much or as little of your personal experience with your students as you choose. Just like your students of color, you should not feel pressured to reveal your personal experiences of racism in order to educate White students.

White and non-AAPI instructors: Acknowledge what is happening. Don't pretend you or your students live in a vacuum. Not addressing it may protect your majority/White students from discomfort, but it harms your students of color, in particular your AAPI students, and puts more burden on your AAPI colleagues to address racism. If you check in with your minoritized colleagues, offer material support (for example, to cover their class if they need to rest). Go beyond checking in by proactively organizing in your department to ensure AAPI faculty are compensated for DEI work, advocating for diversity in hiring practices, and evaluating departmental climate for students and faculty of color.

- 2. Be the educator in the room.** Racism touches every facet of our lives. Be prepared to educate your students about the ways that racism shape the topics your course is studying, from chemistry to classics. This may involve first educating yourself, especially if you are used to thinking about racism in binary terms (Black and White), or if you have unexamined belief or biases about AAPI students as "model minorities". Non-AAPI instructors, you may need to prepare for class by reading AAPI authors and making sure you're informed about current events. Do not ask AAPI students or any marginalized group to speak to their experiences or represent for their whole race. Don't put the burden on AAPI students to educate others about race. Remember that international students may not be aware of the history or persistence of racism in America, so they may need some advice and resources to be informed.
- 3. Start on common ground.** Consider having all students do a reading before conversation to bring everyone to a shared understanding. Provide students with the tools they need to be able to have a productive conversation. Many reading lists are now available online, including [this resource](#) on the surge in anti-AAPI racism and attacks following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4. Check in on students' wellbeing.** A check-in can be as simple as "How are we feeling given what's been going on?" or as complex as retooling a whole unit to address racist attacks.

5. **Communicate your plans to students ahead of class.** Let students know beforehand that you will be discussing or addressing racism and racial violence—it gives everyone time to prepare. You could even have everyone bring in a poem, a quote, a piece of art that they find speaks to this time and start class with a reading.
6. **Be prepared for uncomfortable moments.** Have a plan for stepping in and preventing the conversation from doing harm to AAPI and other minoritized students if it moves in an unhelpful direction. Be aware that Carolina is a predominantly White institution (PWI) and as such your classroom may likely be majority White. Have a plan to ensure the conversation does not become only about processing White feelings about racism. Be transparent with your students about this as well. Collaborate with your students on a set of community discussion guidelines and ask them to agree to stick to those guidelines during conversations about racism.
7. **Follow up with resources.** Provide students with additional readings on anti-AAPI racism, allyship, and writings of AAPI scholars in your field. Consider instituting these resources and readings permanently in your course design, not only in reaction to instances of violent racism. Connect with campus supports like [the Asian-American Center](#) to extend the conversation, and create opportunities and incentives for your students to take part in their educational offerings.
8. **Support student wellbeing.** Offer flexible deadlines, excused absences, time to process, or other material support. Racism, just like COVID-19, is a global pandemic, and the flexibility that instructors showed in the face of the viral pandemic should also be extended to AAPI students who have been surviving a pandemic of racism for their whole lives. Remember that the intersectional oppression of AAPI students compounds these effects. Take students' whole identities and needs into consideration as you support them.