COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

**BRIDGING THE AMERICAN DIVIDE**

B8773

Fall A and B Term, 2018

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Purpose

Americans are a deeply divided people. The purpose of this course is to help interested Columbia Business School students gain a better understanding of the causes and consequences of the American divide—and what they might do to help bridge it.

Method

Class sessions will be devoted to topics exploring the causes and consequences of a divided America. These will be followed by a four-day visit to Youngstown, Ohio where students will be engaged in a variety of learning activities. These will include social settings as well as meetings with individuals associated with organizations whose fortunes have been changed by de-industrialization—manufacturers, unions, local government, and nonprofit service-providers. In addition, students will write a paper, not to exceed 10 pages in length, on a topic worked out with the instructors.

Requirements

Students must apply for one of the 20 seats in the course. As becomes a select group, students are expected to be prepared for and participate thoughtfully in all aspects of the course, including the seven class sessions at CBS and site visits in Youngstown.

Grading

Contribution to the learning process and the paper will be weighted equally in determining the final grade.

Schedule: There will be seven (7) 3-hour sessions at CBS and the four day field trip to Youngstown

Tuesday’s 2:15-515pm

1. Class 1, Sept 11,
2. Class 2, Sept 18,
3. Class 3, Sept 25,
4. Class 4, Oct 2,
5. Class 5, Oct 9,
6. Class 6, Oct 30,
7. Classes 7-11, Nov 2-6 in Youngstown,
8. Class 12, Nov 13th

**CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS**

Class 1: Introduction to the Course: Causes of the Great Divide

1. Setting expectations for the course and the trip
2. Student and faculty introductions

Reading:

 [“Class Interrupted: The Challenge for Professors Among a Partisan Divide—Keeping Things Civil” Laura Pappano, NY Times, Nov 5, 2017.](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/education/edlife/liberal-teaching-amid-partisan-divide.html)

“For Colleges a Rural Awakening” Douglas Belkin, WSJ, Dec 2-3, 2017

1. Causes of the Great Divide

Readings:

William Galston, “The New Challenge to American Democracy,” The Brookings Institution, October 2014; Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, Polarized America (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016, Ch. 1;

Richard Reeves, Dream Hoarders (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2017), Chs. 1-2.

Class 2: Globalization (Cause) and Xenophobia (Consequence)

Effects of competition from abroad, trade imbalances, the outsourcing of employment, and the rise of xenophobia in America.

Readings:

[Haskel et al, “Globalization and U.S. Wages: Modifying Classic Theory to Explain Recent Facts” Journal of Economic Perspectives, Spring 2012](https://sites.hks.harvard.edu/fs/rlawrence/JournalEconPerspectives.pdf);

[“Xenophobia in the United States” Tom Head, ThoughtCo, March 2017.](https://www.thoughtco.com/xenophobia-in-the-united-states-721483)

[“Too Many Americans Think Patriotism Means Racism and Xenophobia” Susan Raghunathan, The Nation, Sept 11, 2017.](https://www.thenation.com/article/too-many-americans-think-patriotism-means-racism-and-xenophobia/)

[“Transcultural Competence” Fons Trompenaars, Leadership and Change Magazine, 2016](https://www.leadershipandchangemagazine.com/dr-fons-trompenaars-transcultural-competence-reconcile-dilemmas-to-collaborate-and-innovate/)

Class 3: Technology, Automation, AI (Causes) and Job Loss Impacts (Consequence)

The longstanding debate over the relationship between technological innovation and the demand for labor, the potential impact of machine learning and robotics on employment in the US, and the impact of job loss on American communities.

Readings:

David Autor and Anna Salomons, “Does Productivity Growth Threaten Employment?” *MIT Working Paper*, June 2017;

[“Is Safeway Buyout a Reminder of a Painful Takeover Years Ago,” William Alden, NY Times, March 7, 2014,](https://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/03/07/in-safeway-buyout-a-reminder-of-a-painful-takeover-years-ago/)

“Safeway Buyout: Take a Trip Down Memory Lane,” Tom Gara, March 5, 2014. Wall St Journal.

Excerpts from The Impact of Losing Your Job: Unemployment and Influences from Market, Family and State on Economic Well Being in the US and Germany, Martin Ehlert, 2016, University of Chicago Press.

[“The Far Reaching Impact of Job Loss and Unemployment” Jennie E. Brand, 2015, Annual Review of Sociology, August 41: 359-375.](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043237)

[“First a Promise, Now, Layoffs” Ana Swanson, NY Times, Dec 23, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/22/business/economy/trump-steel-industry-layoffs.html).

Excerpts from Janesville: An American Story, Amy Goldstein, 2017.

[NY Times Video Documentary, “Inside a Steel Plant Facing Layoffs” 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000005007829/layoffs-steel-plant-rexnord-mexico.html).

Class 4: Legal and Illegal Immigration (Causes) and Community Tribes (Consequence)

Effects of immigration from abroad and migration within; winners and losers from changes in the American labor pool, and reaction from community groups.

Readings:

George Borjas, “Immigration and the American Worker: A Review of the Academic Literature”, Center for Immigration Studies, April 2013;

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Press Release, “Immigration's Long-Term Impacts on Overall Wages and Employment of Native-Born U.S. Workers…” September 21, 2016.

Excerpts from Political Tribes, Amy Chua, Penguin and Random House, 2018.

[“College Faculty Member Caught on Video Telling Asian Americans to ‘Go Back to Their Home Country’” Carol Kuravilla, Huffington Post, March 9, 2018.](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/college-counselor-asian-american-home-country_us_5aa02a5de4b002df2c60335c)

Class 5: a) Opiods Crisis; b) Race Relations (Causes and Consequences)

1. The causes and effects of the opioid crisis in American communities

[Reading: “The Poison We Pick”, Andrew Sullivan, New York Magazine, 20 February 2018.](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/02/americas-opioid-epidemic.html)

1. The complex reality of today’s racial landscape in America.

Readings:

Excerpts from So You Want to Talk About Race Ijeoma Oluo, Hachette Books, (2018)

[“Diversity and Authenticity” Katherine Phillips, Tracy Dumas, and Nancy Rothbard, HBR, March-April, 2018.](https://hbr.org/2018/03/diversity-and-authenticity)

Class 6: Preparing for Youngstown

1. Where are We Going? Understanding the history, demographics, economics, and politics of Youngstown and surrounding suburbs.

Readings:

[“Silicon Valley Toured the Heartland and Fell in Love” Kevin Roose, NYT, March 5, 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/technology/silicon-valley-midwest.html)

“A Glint of Hope Flickers in the Rust Belt” Patti Waldmeir, Financial Times, March 14, 2018.

1. Learning to Dialogue:

Readings:

(Case Under Development, Todd Jick): “The Battle of Ideas and Ideologies at Google: The Engineers Manifesto about Diversity and the Dialogue” to be published in 2018.

“The Email Larry Page Should Have Written to James Damore” The Economist, Aug 19, 2017.

Classes 7-11: Youngstown, Ohio

Depart Friday, November 2nd in late afternoon, returning Tuesday, November 6th in the evening.

Class 12: Wrap Up of the Course: Lessons Learned, Applications to You

Readings:

[“Our Newest Cultural Warriors: Activist CEO’s,” Aaron Chatterji, NY Times, March 5, 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/opinion/dicks-guns-walmart.html)

[“Leaders Can’t Shy Away from Sensitive Topics” Bill Boulding, HBR, March 13, 2018](https://hbr.org/2018/03/leaders-cant-shy-away-from-sensitive-topics-even-when-its-awkward)