1-24-2022

UMaine Office for Diversity and Inclusion_Spring Semester 2022 - here we come! Email

Anila Karunakar

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Hello Black Bears!

A hearty welcome to the Spring Semester of 2022. If you are like me then you welcome this year with a strong sense of cautious...umm...optimism. I mean, I was pretty optimistic until Omicron. What tipped the scale was the new Progressive Ad! The tongue-in-cheek tagline throws shade to folk who are 'turning into their parents'. First, what is wrong with that?! I’ll admit, I first laughed out loud. But then, I did not want to see it again. This advertisement, and others like it, reinforces ageism! It reinforces the brushing aside the mannerisms, the impacts, and even the visibility of our elders. We see these attributes reinforced in everyday culture where we are overwhelmed by youth, and youthfulness. We no longer see examples or hear narratives that support and honor the elderly. I hail from culture that equates age with wisdom, respect, and honor. Growing old is natural, and therefore so important to show how society can allow the flourishing and thriving of mature aged individuals. So instead of making fun of or discouraging or brushing them and their mannerism off, why don’t we honor our elders by gleaning from their life experiences and learning of their resilience. I must confess that there are some lessons that we can leave in the past - it can stay there - we honestly know better to do better!! We can leave that ideology in the past and make room for their brings in our lives. So, if we want a more equitable society, then that place must include individuals from all age ranges to be represented and supported together.

As you spring ahead into another year, we already have a few lessons we need to keep in mind. Wear your mask. Wash your hands. Be encouraged to get vaccinated. Be kind, be compassion to your elders. Give them dignity. (I mean, getting old, it's in your future as well!)

Please take a moment and scroll all through our amazing programs that are coming up THIS and NEXT week! Also, take note of the incredible ways we are highlighting and celebrating Black History Month starting February 1st.

Welcome to the Spring Semester 2022!
Anila

The Wilson Center was pleased to award UMaine's Graduate Student, Lakshya Bharadwak the Dorothy Wilson Peace Writing Prize. Here is Lakshya's essay:

Do Not Tell the Oppressed How to Seek Justice

At no point in history has justice been achieved without sacrifice and a collection of our unrelenting ancestors who detested subservience. As a descendant of brave Indian men and women who endured and often perished in the dark pits of British prisons on the Indian island of Port Blair, I refuse to rest until justice and peace are universally secured.

When Dr. King wrote in 1963 to his oppressors, he was not surrounded by luxury. He was writing from a position of extreme discomfort and lack of leverage in societal power dynamics. Above all, he was writing to justify his struggle to the oppressors who deemed the Civil Rights movement “unwise and untimely”.

Matthew Revitt <matthew.revitt@maine.edu>

Spring Semester 2022 - here we come!
1 message
UMaine Office for Diversity and Inclusion <Anila.karunakar@maine.edu> Reply-To: UMaine Office for Diversity and Inclusion <Anila.karunakar@maine.edu>
To: matthew.revitt@maine.edu

University of Maine System Mail - Spring Semester 2022 - here we come! https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ik=483c7a7ff8&view=pt&search=all...
When people content with the status quo of pre-Civil Rights United States were “lamenting” the demonstrations to end segregation, something that Dr. King addresses in his letter, Black and Brown bodies were writhing in pain from batons cracking against their skin, bones, skulls, and above all, their human identities. We live in a world that has been left to us by those men and women and ensuring just treatment for all is the only proper honor to their legacies.

“Justice delayed too long is justice denied.” Dr. King quoted this statement in 1963, but the relevance of his words shall never fade. As a financial economist in training, I study the time value of money and discount for the value lost due to lags in cash flows. If we are methodical enough to assign a cost to delays in cash flows, we must be humane enough to assign a cost to justice delayed.

Ronnie Long, a Black man, was imprisoned in 1976 after a trial decided by an all-White jury. The rape charges against him were found to be false after he had spent 44 long years in prison. The value of US$1000 at the current discount rate of 7% becomes, according to a Net Present Value calculation, US$ 50.95 in 44 years. Almost none of us would be interested in investing $1000 for 44 years to get a return of $50.95. Understanding this example, we can imagine how deeply traumatizing and irreversible 44 years in prison for a human being can be. This kind of profane delay, I state without any reservations, is justice denied.

Criminal justice reform has been an evergreen issue in not just the American, but the global political context. Living as an Indian in the United States, I often note flaws in the two justice systems by comparing them to each other. Of course, this method is not the most preferred one, but it gives me an angle that assists my comprehension of this social issue.

In the United States, the death penalty remains in the picture with over 2500 inmates on death row in 2020, according to Pew Research. I grant that certain crimes warrant the harshest punishments, but as long as the death penalty remains an option, there will always be a chance, statistically measured, of innocents being sentenced to death. As long as a corruptible and often failing governmental system can decide who lives and who dies, we cannot call the struggle of our ancestors a success.

Dr. King mentions how freedom is never voluntarily given and must be demanded without regard for whether a struggle is “timely” and acceptable to the oppressors. In my understanding, the oppressors do not get to dictate to the oppressed the terms of the struggle. Determining the proper course of a social movement is the prerogative of those who suffer from injustice.

Dr. King’s words apply globally. In some countries, governments have protocols for protesting, violating which can warrant jailtime. The curbing of free speech and individual liberties are systemic injustices that can only be fought with free speech and individual liberties. A struggle to ensure these elements of social justice cannot be bounded within a supposed protocol that oppressive entities stipulate.

As a Hindu, I often turn to the Bhagvad-Gita for wisdom and guidance. The Gita professes peace but encourages confronting evil so as to overcome it. Dr. King describes in his 1963 letter the first step of a social movement – identifying injustices. I connect with this letter spiritually owing to the faith that has nurtured me and my refusal to accept injustice because fighting it would be “inappropriate”. I will forever be grateful for my ancestors who were passionate in their love for peace yet firm in their resistance to hate. We shall attain peace in a civil manner, but on our terms.
## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>&quot;Holocaust Remembrance Day&quot;</td>
<td>North Pod</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 27, 29</td>
<td>Solidarity Meeting (BIPOC Support)</td>
<td>Union Rm 314</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Resilience and Empowerment</td>
<td>Multicultural Student Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Black Lives Matter Flag Raising</td>
<td>1st floor Union - near the Bookstore</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Snack and Chat: Jen Costa</td>
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<td>Decentering Whiteness: Sabrina Murray</td>
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<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Lunch and Learn</td>
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<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Know your Rights: Scan OMara</td>
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<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Trace the Line: Maine Business School</td>
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<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>The Hair Care Fair</td>
<td>Woolley Room DTAV</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Coffee Hour: OIP</td>
<td>North Pod</td>
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The University of Maine is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.
What is Zionism?

A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JEWS AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

LUNCH AND LEARNS ARE BACK!

January 26

11am-12pm

Location:

Multicultural Student Center,
Memorial Union room 314

With guest presenters
Isabelle Mehrhoff, Ma'ayan Weiss and Tom Pinette

Free Food
All are Welcome

The University of Maine is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Institution
JOIN US WEEKLY ON WEDNESDAYS AT 3PM IN THE RAINBOW RESOURCE CENTER (UNION 224) FOR LGBTQIA+ SUPPORT GROUP
Spring start: Jan. 26th
*On Zoom until Feb. 9th
For link email Julia Taner at julia.taner@maine.edu

This group is in partnership with the Office for Diversity and Inclusion and the University of Maine Counseling Center. This group is a private, non-confidential support group.

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Resilience & Empowerment

Let's talk about resilience as students of color and staff in an informal community space. Food provided with activities.

DATE: 1/27 / MULTICULTURAL STUDENT CENTER / TIME: 4-5 PM
Contact sabrina.murray@maine.edu for more info!

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ODI PRESENTS

Decentering Whiteness

A three-part conversation about whiteness, allyship, & identity.

Starting Thursday, February 3 at 3-4 pm
Multicultural Student Center

IF INTERESTED EMAIL
SABRINA.MURRAY@MAINE.EDU

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SCAN ME
SOLIDARITY MEETING

A SAFE PLACE TO FIND SOLIDARITY! A PLACE TO SHARE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER AS STUDENTS OF COLOR AT UMAINE

MEETING WILL BE HELD BI-WEEKLY IN PERSON STARTING 1/27/22 AT 5PM
SIGN UP VIA QR CODE OR THE LINK BELOW

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLEsdvD10ST-g3muzMPDwJpU65FgC90U8HNW99yu3V7aiLZTw/viewform?usp=sf_link

For more questions, please contact frank.wang@maine.edu

The University of Maine is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. Students should request accommodations at least one week in advance.
SNACK AND CHAT
(TEA AND BAKES)

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE KNEEL DURING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM?

JOIN US FOR AN INTENTIONAL DISCUSSION!

FEB. 2 AT 2-3PM
MULTICULTURAL STUDENT CENTER RM 314
SNACK & CHAT: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Conversation around protesting and interactions with the police with Attorney Sean O'Mara from Student Legal Services

Thursday, February 10, 2022
Multicultural Student Center (MSC) in the Memorial Union 312

This event is free and open to everyone
Food provided

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