

Cross Cultural Competency Micro Syllabus

Shreya, Declan, Snigdha, Raunak, Jake, Aryan

Description

Today's teach-in is going to cover a major topic that has been relevant for decades and is present now more than ever, specifically within the United States government; Media banning. Media banning is the general censorship of different media, including books, music, films, and other forms of outlets. Since Ray Bradbury's famous novel *Fahrenheit 451*, the topic of book banning (which has now stemmed into media banning), has been a controversial topic in the world of politics and everyday life. Media banning is an ever-important topic, as books, news outlets, social media platforms, etc. are how a majority of the world (particularly the youth) receives their news in the world of trends, politics, and much more. However, with the banning of media comes extremely dangerous consequences. Not only does it limit the sources of information people have, it influences what type of information they receive, i.e. whether or not they receive political news from a Republican or Democratic outlet. Hearing a story from only a single perspective deepens one's bias toward accepting that view as the full truth, potentially overlooking nuances, alternative explanations, and the complexities that multiple viewpoints might reveal.

Moreover, when it comes to the aspect of banning books, it disallows the world to convey certain themes and lessons that are important to society. Some examples of banned books are Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, despite its prevalent themes of self-discovery, inclusivity, and dealing with mental health, and George Orwell's *1984*, despite having important themes of tyranny, the abuse of power, and the importance of free speech. The government's ability to have a say on what type of media the American public consumes can have a tremendous impact not only on humanity's understanding of the world, but also on the political and religious landscape of the country.

While typically seen in books, some aspects of the government have now shifted into media banning, which over the past few years has become a significant topic for debate among Congress and the public. Although there are many negatives, media banning has resulted in some positive aspects, such as reducing misinformation and protecting people from hate speech. In today's teach-in, we are going to take a deeper dive into what media banning is exactly, how it has been implemented by governments, and the drastic impacts that it can have on society (positive and negative).

Explanation

As media consumption grows, from news channels to social media to literature, the spread of information becomes more reliant on these communication channels. As a result, having freedom of expression and speech, especially for students and in a college community, is

extremely important. Censorship in the USA is just as big an issue even with the First Amendment, but across the globe, there are more obvious and egregious forms of media banning that take place. Censorship takes many forms and can sometimes be hard to recognize, which amplifies the need for a Teach-In on the subject for the Rutgers community. Furthermore, leeway on laws and regulations regarding more modern forms of communication such as social media, have allowed new and more discreet ways of media banning to occur.

Media banning has become a major issue with significant events such as the elections coming up and is also a large issue with activist groups. For both examples, media banning can influence a singular group's decisions and change the course for groups as large as the entire USA. Realizing the impact and importance of the right to free speech and accessibility to all mediums of information will be one of the main goals of the Teach-In, as the topic goes unnoticed by many. Rutgers, in particular, will benefit from this Teach-In with so many students interacting with political debates, online forums, and discussions on media. As a university, Rutgers should also be taking a proactive stance in trying to ensure that all students are prepared for the future, and this Teach-In will educate students on everything dealing with media banning and help with media literacy.

Community Agreements

1. Respect others opinions
2. Be mindful of how we phrase things
 3. Be open-minded
 4. Be understanding
5. Be present (Stay off technology)

Texts

Source 1:

<https://www.cato.org/briefing-paper/shining-light-censorship-how-transparency-can-curtailed-government-social-media>

Jawboning, or the subtle censorship of media by the United States government known as censorship by proxy, is a large problem in the United States currently. As practiced today, censorship by proxy depends on secrecy and targets almost everything, from social media to service providers such as banks and law firms. Currently, critics offer two primary ways to address *jawboning*—First Amendment litigation and legislative prohibitions. However, the First Amendment litigation method would only work in the most shocking of government cases, and not on the most common method of censorship by proxy that the government uses—subtly threatening or encouraging third parties to suppress speech. On the other hand, some

policymakers encourage the legislative prohibition of censorship by proxy. However, this bill would need to be extremely broad to cover most of the censorship issues, and might censor *helpful* government speech in the process. The paper proposes transparency, which requires government officials to publicly disclose what they censor, which directly fights against *jawboning*, which requires government officials to work behind the scenes in order to censor the media. This would force the government to be subject to public scrutiny, leading to governmental censorship by proxy being deterred.

Source 2:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/2F40D0D66F6B0DE3E0D07AE127E725A5/S1598240800008900a.pdf/chinas-media-censorship-a-dynamic-and-diversified-regime.pdf>

The article talks about how China's approach to media censorship is evolving. Rather than blocking negative stories outright, the Chinese Communist Party is increasingly "guiding" media to shape public opinion. This softer approach isn't uniform: online media faces quicker censorship than traditional outlets because of its rapid spread, and local officials, particularly those seeking career advancement, are more inclined to hide bad news from their regions. Meanwhile, central authorities leverage media to monitor local governance. This results in a complex, adaptive system of media control that varies by platform and political motives.

Source 3:

<https://adflegal.org/article/censorship-incompatible-free-society/>

The article talks about how the growing threat of censorship from the government and private entities poses a significant risk to free speech in the United States. It highlights many different scenarios where individuals faced consequences for expressing their beliefs, including educators being punished for their views and counselors being restricted by state laws. The author argues that censorship does not eliminate harmful ideas and that open discussion is essential for discovering new things. He emphasizes the necessity of defending free expression as the cornerstone of a free society and he advocates for resistance against censorship.

Source 4:

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22914767/book-banning-crt-school-boards-republicans>

Vox's article, "*Why Banning Books is Back*", dives into the recent wave of book banning in U.S. schools, largely driven by conservative groups aiming to restrict access to books covering topics like race, gender identity, and sexuality. This movement is part of a larger pushback against critical race theory and other "divisive" themes, as some parents and political activists argue that certain books are inappropriate or harmful for young readers, claiming they're too

explicit or biased. However, critics of these bans see this trend as a form of censorship that deprives students of diverse perspectives essential for a balanced education.)