**Reflection Guide 1: Learning Context and Familiarity with Histories of Colonialism and Decolonization.**

(Please fill in the form, ideally in a different font colour—point form is fine)

**Name: Will Barlow**

**Pronouns: He/Him/His**

**Before taking this class, have you studied, talked about, or thought about the ongoing history of colonialism in any significant way (e.g. courses, family discussions)? Please share, even just in point form, your knowledge of colonialism and decolonization. In what ways have you been aware of the ongoing history of colonialism?**

Before taking this class, I have thought about, studied, and discussed colonialism in respect to the ongoing repercussions in both Indigenous and African American communities. From these discussions, thoughts, and learning I know that colonialism is a word that describes the takeover of the new world by European settlers. Additionally, colonialism encompasses the slave trade used by European settlers that displaced and enslaved generations of Africans in the United States. Decolonization is the idea of deconstructing the European takeover of the new world and elevating the voices of members of the communities that have been adversely affected by colonialism**.**

**What are some of your strengths as a student?**

I can think critically about concepts and ideas. I often pride myself on deriving original ideas and applying them in unique ways, and I consider myself to be a good writer.

**What would like to work on, improve, or build confidence with this term?**

Though I consider myself to be a good writer, I also consider writing a skill of mine that is under constant refinement. So, I would like to improve my writing. I would like to be less wordy and vague with my writing and I would like to be more direct and active with my diction. Since this is one of two of my in person courses this year, I would like to build confidence with speaking publicly about my ideas.

**How would you characterize your participation in classes? Are you comfortable sharing ideas? Do ideas come quickly or slowly? Etc.**

To characterize my in-class participation, I would have to use the metaphor of a diesel engine. A diesel motor requires some time to warm up, however when it becomes adequately warmed up it operates effectively. Like diesel motors, I take some time to manifest some ideas and become comfortable, but once I feel comfortable, then I feel as though I participate actively while being confident in sharing my own ideas. Similarly, my ideas tend to take some time to manifest within a discussion, so I typically don’t hop into the discussion right away.

**What do you foresee as some of the challenges of the coming term, returning to campus and (mostly) in person learning?**

The biggest challenge I foresee is dealing with the possibility of having to move our in-person discussion-based class to a completely virtual format. Personally, I am very excited about in-person learning, because I believe that in-person, face-to-face conversations are the epitome of human interaction. In this way I think that in-person classes raise the level of discussion versus their virtual counterpart.

**Are there ways that David can support your learning?**

I think that using Canvas to its full potential is the best way to support my learning. I know that it has its flaws and can be difficult to use, but at a minimum keeping assignments updated with correct dates is the most helpful aspect of this tool.

**In the first week, we will create a set of participation/community guidelines that will help in the assessment of participation and provide a guide to our responsibilities to one another. In addition to completing readings/viewings, and attending classes, and following health protocols, what sort of things do we need to do to create a productive learning space? Please share some ideas, or share things that we need to avoid doing. One common suggestion is ACTIVE LISTENING, for instance.**

One thing that I know is always difficult with discussion classes (I noticed this more in my first and second years) is a certain reluctancy among us introverts to share and contribute to discussions. This is especially true during the first few classes and even the first 10 to 20 minutes of class. It would be nice to have the opportunity to break the ice and get comfortable with each other. Some class time dedicated to introductions would be appreciated and I think it would help create a positive discussion and learning environment.