Multicultural America Journal

DAY1

I walked into the room a little lost as and unsure of what I was headed into. As usual I thought I should sit in the front of the class. Honestly, I was expecting one professor and one required textbook for this course. I was wrong but pleased with the way this course will be going.

I couldn’t say that I completely agree with that list we made in class. Sure, some of those attributes were probably more “American” than others like patriotism, but for the most part it just seemed we were listing traits of all humanity as a whole. I do feel that not a single attribute we may choose for Americans will be purely American. There is always an overlap with many different cultures and nations through the world. Well, this got me thinking. Maybe, the traits were so global because of the multicultural nature of America. There is just so much diversity that no matter what anyone named they might attribute their label of America with what they may label their own culture. For example, I said that America is religious. Obviously, America is religious. There’s an abundance of religious groups and individuals in America. There are also an abundant number of religious groups through the whole world. This trait is not exclusive to America. However, religion did spread the eastern hemisphere. Nonetheless, most things in America came from elsewhere. So, that’s what make America so multicultural.

DAY2

Anti-American pledge

After that discussion we had in class about the pledge of allegiance, I inquired some of my friends about what they thought of it. Their responses were usually similar to one another. Most of them said they had no idea why they were standing and reciting the pledge for their earlier years. They just kind of did it since they were told to. It got me thinking that this might just have been a brainwashing tool to instill patriotism in children from a younger age. Performing this act in larger groups like the classroom setting makes it seem so normal since everyone is doing it. It only seemed normal to me since I was participating in the group. An outsider may be able to acknowledge just how strange the sight of eight year olds standing and citing the pledge with their hand over their heart is. I’m not too interested in conspiracy theories and the like, this piqued my curiosity. So, I searched up some other opinions online. Some people have said that they didn’t know what any of it meant when they were reciting it as children but will never say it again in their later years since they simply don’t believe it. It’s been bothering me for a while how I’ve recited the pledge with no questions for such a long time without questioning it. It wasn’t until sophomore year of high school that I and four others refused to stand up for the pledge.

I didn’t feel as if I learned too much this class, but it did get me to think. I piqued my interest to understand how some people so obviously are oblivious to obvious satire. For example, this pledge was a form of satire. This new pledge was just a humorous expression of “American” values.

DAY3

10 reasons I’m proud/not proud to be American:

I’m disgruntled by the sights I’m noticing now as I’m driving home. All the advertising of the junk food and fast food restaurants stood like beacons through every intersection. The billboards also serve as a distraction for those daily commuters who go home every evening at five o’ clock. This was one of the things I just realized that make me say that I’m not proud to be an American. All this advertising is like companies competing over who can steal the most money from the people they advertise to. This reminded me of the time when I wasn’t even ten yet. I was just so intently staring at the TV after every jingle for the next new toy for that meal at McDonald’s or the new scooter that had just been introduced. It didn’t occur to me back then, but I do feel sorry for all those financially unstable families that have to deal with their kids being affected by these ads. These ads directed towards children are so disturbing. These kids had the weakest minds in their earlier years as they begged their parents for that toy they saw in that one ad that played ten times a day. The marketing values of America is what makes me not so proud to be American.

Right before dinner, I asked my brother what makes him proud to be American. He replied with a smile, “The music is great but the drugs ruin it.” He went on to explain the effect drugs had on these people that had so much money that changed them. He explained how most musicians and actors just lost their way in the presence of money that lead to their indulgence of drugs. I agreed with him as he kept explaining the availability of these drugs to anyone with money. In fact, they were so content with their access to illegal drugs, some artists sang about it.

DAY4

Howard Zinn

Logic of withdrawal

Some wars were not necessary for advancement of international relations. One such war was the Vietnam War. This war didn’t effect America whatsoever, but it decided that America should be affected by it. So, America voluntarily threw itself into war. Many lives were lost unnecessarily. It frightens me to recognize just how much power the government over its people.

After watching this video I picked up the book A Power the Government Cannot Suppress written by Howard Zinn as I was intrigued to further discover his views on such controversial issues.

Talk about some stuff from the book

DAY5

The American Dream

I wasn’t entirely sure what the American Dream was until this class. I came to know that it’s whatever you want it to be. This was the one time that I could be as greedy as I wanted to be. I wrote a list of all things that comprised of my American dream and compared them to some classmates and asked a friend outside of class for what their dream was. It seemed pretty universal that they didn’t really care as long as they had the possession of a lot of money. In fact, having the money itself would’ve given me everything I wanted to achieve my American Dream. My friend Stephen and I talked about the American Dream past just the money we both wanted. We came to agree on several terms. A private plane and a boat were on top of that list of possessions we desired. We also agreed on the fact that having an immense amount of money would alleviate any stress we’d be facing so we could just delightfully sail the seas in that boat.

Write about one of the articles:

DAY6

Room separated. Perfect man. Perfect woman

We live in a society that has developed social norms where some people may feel insecure about themselves. People have expectations of what it means for someone to be perfect. It’s a bit annoying to constantly remind myself that I shouldn’t be ordering two entrees at a restaurant because the first one wasn’t enough. Well, I just ignore the looks I get from the people around me and keep eating. I’m not overweight, so I don’t really understand what these scrutinizing looks mean. Then today we had a debate over the perfect man and perfect woman. I didn’t agree with most of these opinions that were up there. They were just so specific. Of course, as I did after every class, I brought up this topic with a friend of mine as we walked to lunch. We argued for an hour whether we’d think the perfect woman is either the same height or shorter than each of us. So, we eventually realized just how stupid this argument was and noticed the seven feet tall and wide images of models in front of stores. We both commented on the matter that maybe this was what society saw as the perfect man or woman. A man riding a horse in his polo shirt and striped shorts in his expressionless face was just a perfect display of social standards. Yes, these billboards and storefronts and these stores’ ads were what established social norms through social media and television. We shook our heads as I explained just how carefully crafted these images were. They were so crafted and artificial. My friend beside me raised an intriguing point, however. The perfect man and perfect woman were just all relative. It only depended on each individual’s perspective on the matter. So, we came to a consensus and sat down at SmashBurger with a beautifully crafted burger and delicious smash fries and talked about our fears of the next presidential election.

Write about one of the articles

DAY7

I believe the war on drugs has had a reversing effect on the communities riddled with poverty. This made these people paranoid even after their proven innocence. Cops have driven through the streets and stalked any suspicious activity and forced their authority with “probable cause”. This doesn’t entirely infuriate me, but it does confuse me to see cops accusing all those innocent people of drug possession. I knew someone who suggested that we lift the ban on all drugs. This matter is controversial, however. The problem with drugs is the quantity possessed, the actions of some individuals under the influence, and health effects. I began to question what would happen if the ban on all drugs was lifted. It’s just a thought that’s been in my head for the last few weeks.

I started taking piano lessons. I feel nervous since I’ll be starting them this weekend. It’s nice to have at least one hobby to get rid of the silence in my empty room. I’ve listened to countless piano pieces and thought they were amazing and said to myself, “I want to try and do that.” Well, I’m ways off now, but I’ll gradually improve with each lesson. I’m really looking forward to that progress.

Just like I’m looking forward to seeing some social problems being resolved or to reach a neutral stance. I talked to my two friends during lunch about homelessness and how people just begin to ignore the problem. These people were better off before and unfortunately face some kind of crisis may it be drugs, unemployment, or other disturbances in their life. They need help. Finding employment these days has become extremely stressful. I learned from one of my classmates that they have sent nearly 150 resumes before finally being accepted into one job. This is from someone educated. I just worry for those that are educated and homeless.

DAY8

It made me worried when we saw in the video that the police were prioritizing drug arrests and ignoring most other crimes. This just makes it sound like the rest of the crimes are somewhat excusable. They just prioritize drug arrests while letting the other criminals that are a threat to society roam the streets freely. It didn’t occur to me till later that this was the easiest way for the police to reach their arrest quota. In a bad neighborhood they could accidentally breach into a random house and end up finding illegal substances. This always bothered be though. It bothered me that the police worked to reach their arrest quota than to work to better their community. Then we see some cops abusing power and using excessive force. They are the few bad seeds in the force that give the rest of the cops a bad name.

I always wondered about the status quo method of handling work ethic.

DAY9

Lawyer Stuff

DAY10

White Slavery

Day 12

Immigration deportation

Day 13

Poverty

Poverty is just such a sad topic that seems to be an eternal situation we have to face. Some people just come to accept that others aren’t better off. Others, who aren’t in poverty, have other problems past worrying about having enough food or having a place to live. Bringing a child into the situation of poverty just makes the scenario worse. They didn’t ask to be born into this position in life. Their opportunities in life are taken away by this one aspect. Some of these children have so much potential to do so much more. They wouldn’t have had a problem with unleashing their potential if they weren’t born into such a disadvantageous life. I’ve taken most of the things in my life for granted. I couldn’t understand that some people had to live in these conditions when I was younger. As I grew older I tried being less greedy and began appreciating the comfortable life I’ve had. These kids in poverty though, have so much to worry about. I can’t imagine the amount of stress these kids face at such a young age. It was reassuring to see that some of those kids raised in poverty were given assistance from their school. Even with this little help they can worry less than before. The kids didn’t ask to be born into this household of poverty. It’s just disheartening to see all their dreams slowly getting crushed as their situation kept getting worse.

This class has started taking a 180 degree turn for me. We began talking about what our American dream was, and know I’m regretting having any dreams other than helping other people. I did say a large sum of money was a part of my American dream. This money can greatly help in reducing the intensity of the situation these families are facing. Philanthropist like Bill Gates have put their money to great use in charities to help those who don’t have the wealth that others do. It’s admirable to see someone donate so much of their money to charity. I hear people say that there’s a point where some people make so much money that at one point they don’t know what to do with it anymore. Why not donate to charity if they have so much money? It helps for the better cause than just sitting in their vault rotting away. We need better distribution of funds to assist families in poverty.

I’m learning a lot in this class. The harsh reality of this world is becoming clearer with every speech, documentary, and lecture we have. I was always naïve in thinking that these problems will gradually be solved by someone. Nonetheless, they linger in the households of the many around the world. In some countries it is worse than others. Poverty seems like a problem that won’t go away, but I hope we can lessen the burden that poverty causes to the many families at least one state at a time.

Day 14

Don’t trust anyone.

I learned a lesson that I’ve been taught my whole life this class. That lesson is to not trust anyone when it comes to business and money. People tend to get greedy and do what’s best for them. Often times, what’ best for them may be worse for everyone else as it may include maximizing profits for themselves and neglecting others. Money is a powerful thing. We all live for the monetary fulfillment that we hope for each day. I’m not talking about the five private jets and summer houses type of monetary fulfillment. The kind of money I’m talking of is the minimal difference from the next coworker who works right beside you. People get greedy and will do almost anything in this competitive world to gain that better wealth than the person next to them. They’ll lie, cheat, or even deceive to accomplish this feat. Money is just such a controlling aspect of humanity. Everyone wants it, but some people need it.

I was walking down the 16th street mall and saw a homeless man sitting by the wall of a building with a cup asking for money. I pitied his state as he had just faced the snowstorm last weekend. I was even more saddened when I looked into his cup as I offered some money. As I could see, all there was in the cup was pennies and dimes. I wondered, “Who walks past a homeless man and drops in a penny and leaves?” It just felt so demoralizing to see that people just let this happen. I felt so powerless not being able to do more than offer the little money I was carrying with me. Is it not crazy that it cost money for a human being to survive? We need money to live. Pieces of paper that only have value because we have faith in their value, and people who don’t have these pieces of paper whose value is backed by some compressed pieces of Earth can’t even have food when they’re starving. Honestly, it pisses me off. There isn’t much I can do about the matter of the monetary value of our currency, but there has to be a change in the system to help these people. They need help but, they’re ignored because of the state they’ve come to in life. I get infuriated when I learn of laws that are purely against victims of homelessness. They don’t have a home and now they are told they can’t stay on the streets. There has to be something right? Something we can all do to change this situation. I can only hope they can get help and not ignorance.

Money, money, and money. It’s the only thing most people even live for. Of course, they’ll get greedy. Everyone needs money to pay for their living expenses and occasionally buy something nice for themselves.