Politics in the Classroom:  
A Survey on College Students’ Comfortability to Share Their Views

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By
Ashley Rene Tuell
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Dr. Bethany Conway
Senior Project Advisor

Dr. Lauren Kolodziejski
Department Chair

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Abstract

The following study used theories of belongingness and spiral of silence to investigate students’ comfortability when sharing their political views in class. This study employed a survey distributed to a convenience sample of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students. The survey contained multiple choice and free response questions that encompassed political affiliation, willingness to share political views in class, and demographics. The results of the survey were interpreted using SPSS statistics software, specifically ANOVA tests and Fisher’s LSD. The findings of this study ultimately indicated that liberal students feel more comfortable sharing their views than moderates and conservatives. Findings also showed that liberals felt the highest sense of belonging and the least amount of social stigma when sharing their views in class. This ultimately illuminated the fact that Cal Poly is home to a minority of conservative students that do not feel welcome voicing their views. This warrants concern because we all benefit from discussing politics in class.
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Introduction

Political discourse is a part of everyone’s life and affects every American. We need political discussion in college. Research shows that political discussion in a college setting increases political participation both immediately and beyond graduation (Klofstad, 2015). Are professors and students encouraging this? Ever since the controversial 2016 presidential election, American youth have become more passionate about politics and started to participate more in the process. About 50% of Americans ages 18-25 participated in the 2020 election, which is an astonishing 11 points higher than the 39% who voted in the 2016 election (Tufts University, 2020). With increased involvement in politics comes increased discussion of them, and it is more important than ever to foster these healthy discussions in college classrooms. It is now the opinion of many that colleges need to “educate ‘the whole person’ in ways that connect individual well-being and self-interest to the public interest” rather than allowing professional development alone to take priority (De Groot, 2022, para. 6). In this way, it seems that developing citizens who consider their civic duty and civic identities in all areas of life is becoming a goal of higher education (De Groot, 2022).

This trend is met with stark opposition, however. In fact, topics of education are at the center of polarizing issues today. Many complicated controversies pertaining to education have arisen in recent years such as book bans, debates of teaching critical race theory, and whether mask mandates should take effect during COVID (Fay & O’Neil, 2022). Because of this, school leaders are reporting that these controversial issues of politics are...
interfering with schools’ ability to effectively educate their students (Fay & O’Neil, 2022). And meanwhile “students, more plugged in than ever, are often acutely aware of the social and political topics that influence their lives” (Fay & O’Neil, 2022, para. 2). While these findings mainly reflect K-12 classrooms, this applies directly to political discussion in the college classroom. College students are even more plugged into these issues because they are of voting age and can directly make systemic change. With politics central to the conversation of education, it is important that students feel comfortable voicing their political opinions and concerns in a classroom setting.

When talking about politics at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo specifically, there are some demographics to take into consideration. According to the most recent available data (from 2022), Cal Poly is roughly 49% women and 51% men (Poly View, 2022). The average age of Cal Poly students is 20.2 years old, and most students are from California, with only 17% of incoming freshmen being from out of state (Poly View, 2022). Ethnically, Cal Poly is roughly 51% White, with the Hispanic/LatinX population being the next highest at about 22%. Asian Americans make up about 14% of the student body with all other ethnicities coming in at below 8% (Poly View, 2022). So clearly, Cal Poly is a White-dominated school with other ethnicities coming in fairly underrepresented. When looking at national numbers, our nation is roughly 75% White, 14% Black, 19% Hispanic/LatinX, and 6% Asian, with all other races coming in at less than 5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Based on this, it is mainly the Black community that lacks fair representation at Cal Poly, but more diversity could be worked toward in general. As far as the general political climate is concerned, Cal Poly seems to lean liberal for the most part. Though student organizations may speak more to policy motivation
than affiliation percentages, there are 10 liberal student organizations on campus compared to 3 conservative student organizations (Huth, 2022).

Looking at faculty, the most recent available data from Poly Politics (2018) indicates that about 44% of Cal Poly faculty are registered as Democrats and 11% are registered as Republican, with about 22% not being affiliated. Comparing this to national numbers, 25% of Americans are registered as Republicans and 27% as Democrats, with 45% being Independents (Gallup, 2024). All of this suggests Cal Poly is a more liberal leaning school, like most educational institutions. This will be important to keep in mind as I move through this study.

The present study employed a survey distributed to a convenience sample of Cal Poly students. This study was guided by theories of belongingness and spiral of silence to investigate how comfortable Cal Poly students feel to share their political views in a classroom setting. In the end, this study found connections between the political affiliation of students and their comfortability sharing their views in class based on belongingness and social stigma.

**Literature Review**

**Belongingness**

Belongingness theory is vital to the study of college life and has been applied to studies of organizational socialization. For example, Nifadkar and Bauer (2016) examined the reactions of newcomers to the workplace when relational conflict with coworkers occurs, inhibiting information acquisition. Belongingness theory was developed by Baumeister and Leary (1995) as “a way to understand the fundamental role of interpersonal relationships in the lives of humans,” with the overarching tenet being that “individuals have a strong,
evolutionarily advantageous need to belong” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995 as cited in Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016, p. 2).

Their study collected data through internet-based surveys distributed to newcomers in the workplace and their supervisors. Ultimately, they found that “social anxiety negatively mediated the effects of relationship conflict” and that “relationship conflict with coworkers and information seeking from supervisors will be mediated by relationship building with supervisors” (Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016, p. 9). Important implications of these findings include the idea that relationship conflict may influence the information seeking behaviors of newcomers through the two mechanisms of building relationships with bosses and social anxiety around coworkers (Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016). This is important because it is linked to the socialization of newcomers in the workplace with the belongingness they felt with their coworkers and supervisors. These workplace dynamics can be applied to college classrooms as professors act as “bosses” and fellow students act as “coworkers.” College is essentially where students get set up for the workforce.

Another area of study that belongingness has been applied to is mental health. Vélez-Grau et al. (2023) conducted a study applying the concept of belongingness to suicide risk and mental health among youth of ethnic minorities. This qualitative study used focus groups of LatinX and Black adolescents to explore their perceptions of belongingness. The researchers found that these young people associated belongingness with caring, family, and fitting in, as well as feeling complete (Vélez-Grau et al., 2023). The participants “indicated that feeling misunderstood or not accepted by others led to isolation” and “feelings of burdensomeness,” and that they “would rather be silent than feel like a burden to others” (Vélez-Grau et al., 2023, p. 786). Though the sample for this study had a mean age of about 15 years old, it is important to focus on the
importance of belongingness for ethnic minority groups, since this is an important facet of political discussion at the college level.

Participants then connected these feelings of unworthiness and burdensomeness with thoughts of suicide. This is an important finding because it ultimately shows the importance of belongingness to young people and indicates that feeling a sense of belongingness could reduce suicidal thoughts among ethnic minorities.

In terms of the application of belongingness to politics, Jost (2017) identified “political ideology as motivated social cognition” (p. 170). This essentially means that grounding ourselves in certain political beliefs can help us reduce uncertainty and feel connected to each other. He goes on to suggest that political ideology “offers a sense of security, predictability, and control” and “a sense of identity, belongingness, and shared reality” (Jost, 2017, p. 168). This study highlights differences in how liberals and conservatives process the idea of belonging.

He found that conservatives usually possess stronger motives to “share reality with like-minded others,” especially with friends and family because they “provide social validation” and “reassurance and safety in the face of existential concerns” (Jost, 2017, p. 189). Conservatives also have less tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity than liberals (Jost, 2017). On the other hand, liberals tend to exhibit more open mindedness and integrative complexity and less cognitive rigidity (Jost, 2017). Liberals are also more likely to split amongst themselves into “identity-based subgroups” while conservatives keep a more “uniform agenda” (Jost, 2017, p. 188). These results represent a widespread population, as Jost used data from 181 samples across 14 countries. In a nutshell, it seems conservatives feel a strong need to belong within their own political party, but they are not as open to new ideas from the other side of the spectrum. Liberals
seem to be more open to ambiguity of ideas and are less rigid thinkers who don’t feel as much of a need to belong.

To further delve into belongingness theory in relation to politics, a study by Renstrom et al. (2021) set out to find out if young people are more likely to participate in political protests due to their belongingness needs at an individual level. They investigated this through an online survey distributed to over 2,000 participants ranging from age 16-80. In their analysis, they explain that their hypothesis was supported. Younger participants came out more likely to participate in political protests. More importantly, when they analyzed the group of participants in their early 20s, they found that those with a higher need to belong were more likely to protest compared to participants of the same age with lower belongingness needs (Renstrom et al., 2021). They also found that the older participants were less affected by belongingness needs in politics and it wasn’t a significant predictor for them. This is important given the age group examined in the current study. Clearly belongingness affects this group on a high level, especially in relation to political affiliation.

Based on all of this prior research, I predicted that my study would conclude that both parties are motivated by belongingness. But I hypothesized that conservative students would express feeling less of a sense of belonging when sharing their views in class. I think this is partly because of the mindset that Jost (2017) found in conservatives, because they are less open to ideas on the outside and therefore more likely to feel polarized from others with different opinions. Also, since Cal Poly tends to be more liberal, their belonging may feel even more threatened.

**Spiral of silence**
Spiral of silence is also an important theoretical lens through which we can view political discussion. Spiral of silence was investigated by Lin et al. (2022) as a possible explanation for missing ratings in recommender systems. They start by defining the theory, which was originally developed by Noelle-Neumann (1974). It states that “people are less willing to express their opinions if they perceive that they are not supported by the majority opinion,” which “results in a spiral process in which the majority opinion receives growing popularity while other opinions are gradually pushed back” (Noelle-Neumann, 1974 as cited in Lin et al., 2022, p. 2935). This eventually leads to “a steady phase, when only the hardcore people remain to speak up for minority opinions and the majority opinion ultimately becomes a social norm” (Noelle-Neumann, 1974 as cited in Lin et al., 2022, p. 2935).

Going back to their study, Lin et al. (2022) conducted an experiment using data sets of test ratings that are missing at random. They did this experiment to find out why recommender system users often don’t show their ratings. They highlight that recommender systems are based on users’ individual tastes and that these users aren’t isolated, but heavily influenced by opinions of the public (Lin et al., 2022). In the end, their findings indicated that “users will perceive the opinion climate” and that those “users who are supported by the majority opinion will be more and more likely to show their ratings” (Lin et al., 2022, p. 2945). These findings are very important as they show us that the spiral of silence manifests even in the tech world, which is thought to be more or less objective. The desire of humans to fall within the majority clearly manifests through all industries, and college is a time when there is extra added pressure to conform.

Another area of study that the spiral of silence theory has been applied to is online surveillance. Stoycheff (2016) conducted a study investigating whether a hostile opinion
climate would reduce people's willingness to speak out online, as well as whether government internet surveillance makes people less likely to disclose political views. These questions were tested using an online survey. Ultimately, this study found that knowing about government surveillance does not directly affect one’s willingness to speak out, but whether the person feels the surveillance is justified does have an effect. Basically, a “negative relationship between perceived climate of opinion and willingness to speak out” exists, which is “strengthened when individuals perceive surveillance and believe that such surveillance is justified” (Stoycheff, 2016, p. 305). These findings are important because they provide an initial insight into how perceived surveillance may be a contributing factor to an online spiral of silence. (Stoycheff, 2016). It is fascinating how many layers there are to the spiral of silence theory ever since the age of social media has been introduced.

The spiral of silence theory has also been applied to politics among young people. Bäck et al. (2019) conducted a study on people’s willingness to share their political opinions via social media in Sweden. Based largely on the spiral of silence theory and rejection sensitivity, they hypothesized that varying social characteristics related to belongingness needs affect who will share their political views online. They used both a representative survey sample (nearly 2,000 respondents with an average age of 24) as well as focus groups (60 Swedish residents aged 16-25) to investigate this claim. Their hypothesis was supported in the end, they found that less rejection-sensitive people are the most vocal about their views online. They also found that younger people tend to be more afraid to share opinions, especially online where there are no bounds to the audience (Bäck et al., 2019). This is an important finding because it shows that the spiral of silence theory manifests in the context of politics among young people and causes them to fear sharing their views.
Diving further into the spiral of silence in relation to politics, Masullo and Duchovnay (2022) conducted a study investigating self-silencing around political topics among Americans. They hypothesized that people not only assess their community and the media/society when deciding whether to self-silence, but also individual participants in the conversation. Their study was conducted through in-depth interviews with 56 Americans aged 18 and up who live in politically divided areas. 36 participants were Democrats, 11 were Republicans, and the remaining 9 were independent. They found that self-silencing in politics is a complex and multi-faceted issue that depends heavily on context such as how well one knows the people in the conversation and what topic is being discussed.

Three types of self-silencing emerged in their analysis. The first is total silencing, which is just complete avoidance of political discussion. Misrepresentative self-silencing occurs when someone lies about their views or pretends to be neutral when they really have an opinion. Selective self-silencing is when people remain silent in certain situations and speak up in others. They found selective silencing to be the most common form, since it is “generally a state – enacted dependent on context, situation, or others’ behavior” (Masullo & Duchovnay, 2022, p. 612). I think this study really helps illuminate the different reasons and styles in which self-silencing can occur in politics.

Based on this prior research, I continued to predict conservative students would be less likely to feel comfortable expressing their views in class because they likely feel their opinion is outnumbered in the context of Cal Poly. Because of the political distribution of Cal Poly students, it is likely that liberal ideology has become the status quo (according to the spiral of silence theory). Therefore, it can be predicted that only the “hardcore” conservatives will still be willing to speak up, and this ideology has faded into the background.
Method

The present study employed a survey distributed through Qualtrics to a convenience sample of Cal Poly students. The survey contained 27 multiple choice questions and 5 free response questions concerning demographics, political affiliation, and how welcomed and comfortable they feel to share their views. The survey received 225 responses.

Data Set

The sample contained mostly liberal arts students (60.4%), but there was at least some representation for each college, the lowest being the architecture college (1.3%). The sample was predominantly white (59%), as was to be expected at Cal Poly. 15.4% of the sample was LatinX, with all other races coming in below 10%. The participants were overwhelmingly female (66.5%), with males coming in at 25.6%. The remaining participants answered “nonbinary” or “prefer not to say.” About 60% of the sample was either 18 or 19 years old, with the remaining 40% ranging from 20-25.

Variables of Interest

The variables of interest for this survey were mainly participants’ political affiliation and their comfortability sharing political views in class. Other important variables were whether talking about politics in class makes students feel a sense of belonging and whether they fear social stigma when sharing their views.

Analysis
To analyze the results of this survey, the data set was imported into SPSS statistics software. In SPSS, ANOVA tests were used to interpret the difference across groups, and post-hoc tests in the form of Fisher’s LSD were used to interpret the final results.

**Results**

One-way ANOVA revealed that a student’s political ideology was associated with their comfort sharing political views in their major classes, $F (2, 217) = 24.74$, $p < .001$. Fisher’s LSD revealed that liberals ($m=3.45$) felt more comfortable sharing their political views than both moderates ($m=2.85$) and conservatives ($m=2.20$).

Further, one-way ANOVA indicated that a student’s political ideology was also associated with the level of belongingness they feel when sharing their political views in class, $F (2, 215) = 11.97$, $p < .001$. Fisher’s LSD showed that liberals ($m=3.82$) gained more of a sense of belongingness than both moderates ($m=3.33$) and conservatives ($m=2.58$).

Finally, one-way ANOVA revealed that a student’s political ideology was associated with fear of social stigma when expressing them, $F (2, 215) = 15.01$, $p < .001$. Fisher’s LSD indicated that liberals ($m=3.78$) feared social stigma when expressing their views less than both moderates ($m=4.57$) and conservatives ($m=4.98$).

**Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate an unfortunate trend that conservative students at Cal Poly tend to feel that their views are not welcome in the classroom. They do not feel comfortable sharing them, and are unlikely to gain a sense of belonging by doing so. They fear social stigma at a higher rate than moderates and liberals. Liberals were most likely to feel comfortable sharing
their views and get a sense of belongingness from it, and least likely to experience social stigma. This was all consistent with my hypotheses prior to running the study, but it is still unfortunate to find that certain students feel isolated due to politics. These findings are likely the result of conservatives having a more rigid and uniform set of beliefs that are less likely to evolve (Jost, 2017) and the fact that their political affiliation makes them a minority at Cal Poly.

These findings are important because now that we have the information, Cal Poly can start doing more to increase open political dialogue in the classroom. If teachers and fellow students are aware that conservative students often feel this way, change can start to be made one person at a time. In the end, we all benefit from discussing politics in the classroom as it increases our participation in the political process later in life (Klofstad, 2015). Therefore, it is very important that we are all a part of these conversations.

One limitation of this study is that the sample size of 225 students isn’t big enough to truly represent the entire Cal Poly student body. Also, it would have been ideal to have an equal number of participants from each political party, so that each party could be analyzed with the same accuracy. Finally, an overwhelming amount of responses came from liberal arts majors, and it would have made the results more representative of reality if I had an equal amount of responses from each of the Cal Poly colleges.

In terms of further research, it would be interesting for someone to investigate what type of self-silencing is most common at Cal Poly. The three types identified by Masullo and Duchovnay in their study were total self-silencing, misrepresentative self-silencing, and selective self-silencing (2022). I would predict that misrepresentative silencing would be the most
common, since college students are fairly opinionated, and likely just feign neutrality when they fear it will result in isolation.
References


Appendix A

Tuell Project Survey Flow

Block: Default Question Block (33 Questions)

Page Break

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Start of Block: Default Question Block

Consent

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT:

“POLITICS IN THE CLASSROOM: A SURVEY ON COLLEGE STUDENTS’ COMFORTABILITY TO SHARE THEIR VIEWS”

INTRODUCTION

This form asks for your agreement to participate in a research project on political views. Your participation involves answering questions on your political affiliation and how comfortable you feel sharing your views in the college classroom setting. It is expected that your participation will take approximately 10-20 minutes. There are minimal risks anticipated with your participation. You may personally benefit from this study and others may benefit from your participation. If you are interested in participating, please review the following information:

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND PROPOSED BENEFITS

• The purpose of the study is to find out how welcomed students feel to share their political views in their college classes and what factors contribute to this.

• Potential benefits associated with the study include becoming more aware of where you stand on the political spectrum and why you do or do not feel comfortable sharing this in class. Findings of this study could contribute to
developing a more welcoming environment for political opinions for all in Cal Poly classrooms.<br>

YOUR PARTICIPATION ● If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey of 27 multiple choice questions and 5 free response questions centered around your political views, how comfortable you feel sharing them in the classroom, and your demographics. ● Your participation will take approximately 10-20 minutes, and this will be the only session or time commitment involved. ● If you decide to participate, as an incentive, there may be an extra credit opportunity if you are a Cal Poly student. Extra credit is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of individual professors. It is recommended that you check with your professor to see if (and to what extent) extra credit is being offered. If credit is used as an incentive by professors, it will be offered for all student study participants. The amount of extra credit granted is up to the discretion of the professor giving the extra credit. If you do not wish to participate in this study, an alternative form of equivalent credit (both in terms of effort and amount of extra credit) will be offered to non-participants. This alternative form is also at the instructor’s discretion. Students who would like the extra credit should follow the link at the end of the survey to provide their name, class, and instructor’s name to confirm participation. Student data recorded for the extra credit will not be linked to their survey responses in any way. PROTECTIONS AND POTENTIAL RISKS ● Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research, refusal to participate will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue your participation at any time. You may omit responses to any questions you choose not to answer. ● There are minimal risks anticipated with your participation in this study. ● Your responses will be provided anonymously to protect your privacy. RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION ● If you should experience any negative outcomes from this research, please be aware that you may contact Campus Health & Wellbeing (wellbeing@calpoly.edu, health@calpoly.edu), Ashley Tuell (atuell@calpoly.edu), or Dr. Bethany Conway (baconway@calpoly.edu) for assistance. ● This research is being
conducted by Ashley Tuell, a student in the Department of Communication Studies at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please contact the researcher (Atuell@calpoly.edu). If you have concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Michael Black, Chair of the Cal Poly Institutional Review Board, at (805) 756-2894, mblack@calpoly.edu, or Ms. Trish Brock, Director of Research Compliance, at (805) 756-1450, pbrock@calpoly.edu. AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE If you are 18 or older and agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by completing the attached survey. Please retain a copy of this form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

0 Yes 0 No

Q1 Are you a student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo?

0 Yes
Q2 What college do you belong to at Cal Poly?

- Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences
- Architecture and Environmental Design
- Engineering
- Liberal Arts
- Science and Mathematics
- Business

Q3 How far along are you in your undergraduate career?
Q4 Where do you place yourself on the political spectrum?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
Q5 If you consider yourself Independent or Other, do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or the Democratic Party?

- [ ] Closer to Democratic Party
- [ ] Closer to Republican Party
- [ ] Neither
- [ ] Prefer not to state
Q6 Please select the response that best reflects your feelings about the following political organization: Democratic Party

- Dislike a great deal
- Dislike a moderate amount
- Dislike a little
- Neither like nor dislike
- Like a little
- Like a moderate amount
- Like a great deal
- Don't know
- Prefer not to state
Q7 Please select the response that best reflects your feelings about the following political organization: Republican Party

0 Dislike a great deal

0 Dislike a moderate amount

0 Dislike a little

0 Neither like nor dislike

0 Like a little

0 Like a moderate amount
Q8 When it comes to politics, people often place themselves on a liberal to conservative spectrum. Which of the following best reflects where you would place yourself?

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate/Middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
0 Conservative

0 Extremely conservative

0 I haven't thought much about this

Page Break

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Q9 How often do politics come up in your class discussions?

0 Never

0 Rarely

0 Sometimes

0 Often

0 Very often
Q10 How comfortable do you feel sharing your political views in your major classes?

- Extremely uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Extremely comfortable

Q11 How comfortable do you feel sharing your political views in your GE classes?

- Extremely uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
Q12 How welcomed do you feel your political views are in your major classes overall?

0 Somewhat comfortable

0 Extremely comfortable

Q13 How welcomed do you feel your political views are in your GE classes overall?

0 Completely unwelcome

0 Mostly unwelcome

0 Somewhat welcome

0 Mostly welcome

0 Completely welcome
Q14 How welcomed do you feel your political views are by your professors in major classes?

0 Completely unwelcome

0 Mostly unwelcome

0 Somewhat welcome

0 Mostly welcome

0 Completely welcome
Q15 How welcomed do you feel your political views are by your professors in GE classes?

0 Mostly welcome

0 Completely welcome

Q16 How welcomed do you feel your political views are by your fellow students in major classes?

0 Completely unwelcome

0 Mostly unwelcome

0 Somewhat welcome

0 Mostly welcome

0 Completely welcome

Page Break

Q16 How welcomed do you feel your political views are by your fellow students in major classes?
Q17 How welcomed do you feel your political views are by your fellow students in GE classes?

- Completely unwelcome
- Mostly unwelcome
- Somewhat welcome
- Mostly welcome
- Completely welcome
Q18 I am worried that if I voice my political views, I will experience social stigma.

0 Completely welcome

0 Strongly disagree

0 Disagree

0 Somewhat disagree

0 Neither agree nor disagree

0 Somewhat agree

0 Agree

0 Strongly agree
Q19 I am worried that if I voice my political views, they will be met with disapproval.

0 Strongly disagree

0 Disagree

0 Somewhat disagree

0 Neither agree nor disagree

0 Somewhat agree

0 Agree

0 Strongly agree

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Q20 Talking about politics in the classroom allows me to connect with my fellow students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q21 Talking about politics in the classroom allows me to connect with my professors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
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</table>
Talking about politics in the classroom makes me feel a sense of belonging.
Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Page Break

IntroOE Please take some time to write in your responses to the questions below.

Q23 What do your professors do to make your views feel welcome?

Q24 What do your professors do to make your views feel unwelcome?

Q25 What do your fellow students do to make your views feel welcome?

Q26 What do your fellow students do to make your views feel unwelcome?
Q27 Are there certain political topics that make you nervous when they come up in class?

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Q28 Age

0 18

0 19

0 20

0 21

0 22

0 23

0 24
25 or older

Q29 Race

White

Black or African American

Latino/a or Hispanic

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Not listed ____________________________________________
Q30 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Nonbinary
- Not listed
- Prefer not to say

Q31 What was the approximate total annual income of your parents’ household last year from all sources before taxes?

- Less than $15,000
- $15,000 to $24,999
0 $25,000 to $49,999

0 $50,000 to $74,999

0 $75,000 to $124,999

0 $125,000 to $174,999

0 $175,000 or more

0 Don’t know

0 Prefer not to state

End of Block: Default Question Block