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June 2019

# PAYCE stories

## educators' toolkit



This toolkit provides educators with insight into the PAYCE exchange program, performed across seven Palestinian and U.S. universities and colleges from 2017 to 2019. An archive of lesson notes, assignments and guidelines serves educators of virtual exchange classrooms with a base for their own adaptation.

# PAYCE stories educators' toolkit

June 2019



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*Palestinian American Youth Civic Engagement (PAYCE) is supported by the Stevens Initiative, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, with funding provided by the U.S. Government, and is administered by the Aspen Institute. The Stevens Initiative is also supported by the Bezos Family Foundation and the governments of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates.*



Stevens  
Initiative

  
THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

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## **about PAYCE: Palestinian American Youth Civic Engagement**

[Palestinian American Youth Civic Engagement \(PAYCE\)](#) brought together Palestinian and American university students in a shared curriculum to inspire productive, effective, and positive civic engagement. Housed at Al-Quds University, PAYCE included students from Palestinian programs Al-Quds Bard, Al-Quds American Studies, and An-Najah National University. United States campuses include Drake University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), University of Hartford, and University of New Hampshire – Manchester. Palestinian American Youth Civic Engagement (PAYCE) is supported by the Stevens Initiative, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, with funding provided by the U.S. Government, and is administered by the Aspen Institute. The Stevens Initiative is also supported by the Bezos Family Foundation and the governments of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates.

There were three principal components of the program. Podcast workshops were held in Des Moines Iowa and Amman Jordan, where Palestinian and U.S. students worked together to learn to create podcasts focused on youth civic engagement. Participants brought their skills to their home campuses, where they helped peers produce and publish their own podcasts. The second component of the program involved synchronous virtual exchange between Palestinian and U.S. students through classes at the participating institutions. The third component of the program involved the creation of this Educators' Toolkit, to make PAYCE methods and materials available to classroom teachers.

You can explore the three seasons of podcast episodes generated as part of PAYCE program on Spotify, iTunes and Google Play. Access to all PAYCE materials is at [www.paycestories.org](http://www.paycestories.org)

## **framework**

- FAQ
- lesson planning notes
- notes on a syllabus
- virtual exchange tech notes

prepared by Victor Eno, Ph.D.

## **frequently asked questions for student participants**

*This was the text that PAYCE used to describe the program to potential participants in podcast workshops that were held in Des Moines, Iowa and Amman, Jordan. This provides an overview of some of the initial goals of the PAYCE program, and how the PAYCE team tried to communicate those goals to potential participants.*

### **What is PAYCE?**

The Palestinian American Youth Civic Engagement project (PAYCE) connects Palestinian and U.S. university students to compare ideas and experiences about civic and political engagement in their societies. The project is supported by the Stevens Initiative, which is an international effort to build global competence for young people in the United States and the Middle East and North Africa by growing and enhancing the field of virtual exchange: online, international, and collaborative learning.

### **Who is participating in PAYCE?**

Students from two Palestinian universities and four U.S. universities are participating. At each university, there is a lead faculty member teaching a course in political science, or sociology, or another field. Students from the Palestinian university courses will be matched with students from a similar course at one of the U.S. universities.

### **Who are the PAYCE professors?**

Dr. Mostafa Elostaz (Human Rights), Al-Quds/Bard College

Dr. Victor Eno (Political Science), Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Dr. Katharine Owens (Political Science), University of Hartford

Dr. Stephen Pimpare (Public Policy), University of New Hampshire

Dr. Mohammed Sawalha (Linguistics), An-Najah National University

Dr. Dan Terris (American Studies), Al-Quds University

Dr. Darcie Vandegrift (Sociology), Drake University

## How will students from the Palestinian and U.S. universities connect with one another?

The connections will be built using on-line technologies. All students will participate in live, on-line conversations using a platform called "Zoom." Students will also exchange ideas in writing asynchronously (not at the same time) using a platform called "Canvas."

## What is civic engagement?

Civic engagement is the process of participating in your community or society in order to effect positive social change. This can mean participating in traditional politics, or working with an NGO, or being active in a social movement, or many other ways. Civic engagement can mean from working on a very specific issue, such as gender equality. Or it can mean trying to make fundamental change to improve prospects for everyone in a society. [Refer to Readings in Syllabus]

## What are some differences and similarities between Palestinian and American societies when it comes to civic engagement?

This is exactly what PAYCE is designed to explore, so you will find this out in your readings, podcasts, and exchanges. But there are some obvious starting points.

The United States is a sovereign nation with a constitution and a system of government with a long history. Palestinians live under the Palestinian Authority, a governmental structure set up after the Oslo Accords between Israelis and Palestinians. Ultimately, Palestinians also live under the authority of the Israeli military. These two different structures mean different opportunities for civic and political engagement.

There are similarities as well. In both societies, many observers have argued that there has been a decline in civic engagement among young people in recent years, in part because young people are discouraged about politics as an avenue for positive change. It will be interesting to find out whether you and your counterparts believe that this is true.

## What are the goals of this exchange?

1. To increase students' knowledge about the way government and civic engagement work, both in a different society and in their own;
2. To better understand the ways that young people choose to act in public life, through collecting and disseminating stories about civic engagement (through producing podcasts);
3. To improve skills of intercultural communication among participating students;

4. To disseminate the stories about civic engagement to others in Palestinian and U.S. society

What are “skills of intercultural communication”?

These are the speaking and listening skills that allow you to increase understanding and knowledge of people from societies and cultures very different from your own. The idea is that when people have greater skills for intercultural communication, they are also better able to break down barriers that divide people. [Refer to Reading suggestions in updated course syllabus]

What will be produced in PAYCE?

PAYCE students will create podcasts featuring the voices and stories of young people who are getting involved in their societies. Sixteen students participated in a two-week workshop at Drake University in January where they received in- depth training about podcast production. Those PAYCE Fellows will take the lead in helping other students in PAYCE courses conduct interviews and edit the stories for podcasts. The podcasts will be publicly available.

What is the schedule for the live on-line conversations between the Palestinian and U.S. students?

Each pair of matched courses has a different schedule. Ask your PAYCE professor.

What will happen during the live, on-line virtual exchanges?

The exchanges will be moderated by two PAYCE professors, one from a Palestinian university and one from a U.S. university. Students will prepare with short readings or listening to podcasts in advance. They will share ideas and experiences about civic and political engagement.

What are the ground rules that we should observe in virtual exchange?

- 1) Follow the guidance of the faculty moderators. It is important that only one person speak at a time, and that everyone listen closely.
- 2) Respect time limits for speaking. There will be a lot of people on the line, and not so much time. So try to get right to the point.
- 3) Speak from personal experience. The exchanges will be more meaningful if students get to know one another. It is easier to get to know one another through stories and experiences, rather than through general political statements.
- 4) “Assume positive intent.” Other students may say things that hurt your

feelings in some way. But try to remember that what you hear may not be what the other person wanted to say. Start by assuming that the speaker is trying to be positive. Try not to jump to conclusions. Ask questions of clarification.

5) Use the on-line exchanges as an opportunity for learning, not as a place to win an argument. Try to understand why someone holds a certain belief, rather than trying to convince them that they are wrong.

prepared by Victor Eno, Ph.D.

## lesson planning notes

### **Lesson Plan for Teaching Civic Engagement and Cross-cultural Communication through Virtual Exchanges**

*The PAYCE program afforded Palestinian and American college students the opportunity to learn about civic engagement and cross-cultural communication. This learning experience was implemented through virtual exchanges that connected two Palestinian institutions in the West Bank -- Al-Quds University/Bard College in Abu Dis (Jerusalem), and An-Najah National University in Nablus -- with four U.S. partner institutions -- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, the University of Hartford (Connecticut), Drake University (Iowa), and the University of New Hampshire, in real time using the Zoom video conferencing platform.*

*This Lesson Plan provides a snapshot of the experiences we gained and best practices we can share with educators, scholars, researchers, interested organizations, and others engaged in civic engagement projects that aim to broaden the perspectives of students across continents and time zones on issues and discourses related to national and global politics, international relations, international economic relations, the different contexts of history and culture, etc. The virtual exchanges not only provided students the venue to learn and share perspectives but also motivated them to become more proactive participants in the political processes in their countries including projecting their voices on hot-button contemporary issues, voting during elections, and policy advocacy, etc. The exchanges, along with other elements of our project such as the podcasts, enhanced the global citizenship competencies of participants.*

In general, the virtual exchange sessions involved synchronous pairing of two undergraduate classes (in some cases graduate classes participated) across the United States and the West Bank. The highlights were:

- Pre-planning before start of session entailed having students on both sides do an assigned background reading on cross-cultural/inter-cultural communications. We also shared, and required students to review, a guidance document that we produced that featured frequently asked questions for both faculty and student participants in a civic engagement project. (The frequently asked questions document is attached here).
- At the beginning of the first synchronous session, students introduced themselves to include their classification, majors, their institutions, etc. Faculty on both ends took turns to moderate the sessions. Each pair did a number of sessions that varied from four to five; the frequency or timing of sessions related to the course and time constraints that faculty faced in their different campus. The material/issues on which the sessions were based were organized within the PAYCE Modules in our course syllabi.
- An important pre-requisite for the success of virtual exchange was the cooperation of the information technology units in our institutions (on the U.S. side); on the Palestinian side, students had to connect to the platform individually from different places due to the time difference that did not allow their gathering in a classroom or laboratory. The U.S. students, mostly based within the Eastern Time Zone, could gather in classroom rooms and labs equipped with computers but for Palestinian students it was already night-time and classes had ended.
- The virtual exchanges certainly experienced technical challenges. We attach here a best practice template that should be helpful for those thinking about adopting and replicating the synchronous exchanges in their classrooms or other settings.
- Each session was focused on discussion of specific topics; however, faculty provided some flexibility in allowing time for students to share personal experiences and perspectives in civic participation as well as the different contexts and constraints related to youth political action across the different political environments, the U.S. vis-à-vis the Palestinian Territories.
- Some of the sessions were devoted to exchange of ideas and learnings from shared readings on selected topics provided by faculty on both sides.
- We include here summaries of a sample of the virtual exchanges (at the end of each summary are reflections on lessons learned and insights for those wishing to adopt or replicate this important work in the future).

prepared by Jens Haendeler

## notes on a syllabus

*Each PAYCE faculty member taught one or more courses in which youth civic engagement was an important topic or theme. Courses were in different disciplines, including political science, sociology, law, and other fields. PAYCE classes were paired one-to-one: one Palestinian class with one U.S. class. Within the context of those classes, students participated in synchronous virtual exchanges, and often asynchronous exchanges as well.*

*Faculty members took different approaches to introducing issues of civic engagement, in the context of their own work and perspectives. These notes on a syllabus represent the thinking of one PAYCE faculty member who taught in fall 2018. The contents of the PAYCE courses represented the particular ideas and perspectives of the teaching faculty. Those perspectives and ideas varied considerably, and did not reflect the an ideology for the PAYCE program as a whole, or for the program's organizers.*

*These notes provide a useful window into how one faculty member framed his students' participation in PAYCE and issues of civic. Engagement more broadly.*

Preliminary notes on the syllabus for the fall 2018 "Public Space, Culture & Identity" class at Al-Quds Bard College

A syllabus is a blue-print for a classroom agreed upon in between students and teacher. And while it might become less rigid as the class progresses it does function as an ideological and intellectual framework that dictates, to some degree, the structure of the classroom in opening up and/or foreclosing certain ways of thinking and working. The PAYCE exchange program—in which our "Public Space, Culture & Identity" class participated in—saw an exchange in between two classes at Al-Quds Bard and at the University of New Hampshire. Beyond the question of (a)-synchronicity—the temporal component of assignments and classroom material—an urgent political inquiry emerged when constructing the syllabi: the question about the (a)-symmetric nature of any exchange. Although of course any exchange is never truly symmetric, the PAYCE exchanges, conducted specifically in between American and Palestinian classrooms, were embedded within a structural asymmetry produced by "the colonial present" that required a careful analysis of power relations.

The acronym PAYCE stands for Palestinian American Youth Civic Engagement. While civic engagement can be more broadly conceived as materialized agency of collective and/or public power aiming to add to, rethink or undo policy and politics, it was also crucial for us to critically interrogate the position the program assumes of its participants. The *civic* has its roots in *civis* (*the citizen*). Here it is that the asymmetry of

the exchange program becomes most obvious: while the history of citizenship in the US is framed as one of rights, protection, inclusion and empowerment, the history of citizenship in Palestine is also the history of state violence, displacement, exclusion and disenfranchisement since 1948. Many of our classroom's Palestinian students have therefore a different understanding of the concept of citizenship and the civic and, in many cases, do not hold citizenship.

In Palestinian communities therefore the foundation on which the idea of civic engagement is based is not only different from a US context but constitutes a faulty assumption in the first place. This realization though, can be made work to our advantage if critically interrogated and materialized in classroom discussions as part of the progressing syllabus and in a comparative manner with US counterparts.

A collective engagement in between students and teacher with questions raised about the ethics and politics at work (readiness to oppose censorship and assumptions about faulty symmetry), the funding sources of the PAYCE project and the question of institutional extractivism (it was decided to publish all class- room generated contents under a creative commons license) has been what made it worth for our class to participate in PAYCE. Most importantly, decisions about participation were continuously discussed and degrees of complicity measured collectively by the students and the teacher throughout the project. Any student had the right to intervene, renegotiate and draw a line in regards to participation.

Two of the five basic rules that opened the syllabus for our "Public Space, Culture and Identity" class were: "The right to leave and step out. At any time" and "No Penalties/Punishment" for doing so. The rules did not only apply to the physical exit from the classroom but also in regards to our participation in PAYCE and applied to both students and teacher. A penalty-free route to withdrawal from any (a)-civic engagement process had to be at the bottom of any endeavour and was aiming to constitute, as far as possible, a safe space for students to experiment and learn.

Paolo Freire in his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* coined the term *conscientização* to refer to the processes of "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality." A debate between students and teacher around in how far, in what ways and as to whether at all to participate in any given program was therefore at the foundation of our "radical" *conscientização* classroom. The answers to these questions would undoubtedly vary not only depending on geographical location of the participants but also the prevailing political climate within which the class would be conducted. Although the simple opening up of these questions within the classroom itself was already a worthwhile undertaking from our classes' point of view it were the openings and the momentum for further critical interrogation into the systems at work that our students used to challenge prevailing power relations and that (hopefully) created a lasting effect onto the university.

prepared by Victor Eno, Ph.D.

## virtual exchange tech notes

*With synchronous virtual exchange, technical challenges are persistent. Here are a few small lessons learned from the PAYCE synchronous exchange experience.*

The PAYCE project used Zoom as a platform for conference video calling in virtual classrooms.

When preparing for a meeting or live class session on Zoom, please do the following to make sure you get the best connection):

Join a Test meeting to make sure that your computer is properly configured (you may need to download a small bit of software: Join a Test Meeting?  
<https://zoom.us/test>

- Connect via a computer not via smartphone or tablet
- Use earbuds or headphones rather than your computer's speakers and microphone
- If possible, connect via a hardwired ethernet connection rather than WiFi

Find a quiet room away from noise and distractions

- Don't sit with a light source or window behind you so that you can be seen on camera

## **Lesson notes**

- Lesson notes on virtual exchange UNH / ANNU
- Narrative notes of AQU/FAMU Virtual exchange session 02/26/2018
- Notes for replication of experiential learning activity

prepared by Victor Eno, Ph.D.

## **Lesson notes on virtual exchange UNH / ANNU**

During one of the virtual exchanges during Spring 2018 between University of New Hampshire students in Dr. Stephen Pimpare's class and An-Najah National University students in Dr. Mohammed Sawalha's class, the topics discussed included: meaningful photos from each participant's life, brief descriptions of the schools that the participants attend, and the hopes and fears that participants had for the video sessions. The discussion itself highlighted the different realities that Americans and Palestinians face. Many American participants showed photos of joyful aspects of their lives such as their families, their pets, and peaceful nature scenes while in contrast, most of the Palestinian participants showed photos of the security checkpoints they see every day, territory that has been taken from them, attacks at their universities, and the security barriers visible from their home balconies.

A topic as seemingly innocent as a photo from each of their lives revealed just how different their experiences overall were, as well as how certain experiences such as enjoying family and nature were universally positive and joy-invoking for all participants engaged. The student participants in the virtual exchange all seemed to take the exercise very seriously. They were active participants ready and willing to share about their lives and viewpoints, even though in some circumstances it required a little prodding to get students to respond by asking them more about certain experiences, etc. The content of the exchange was very relevant and of high quality because of how authentic the experience was and the moderation helped keep everything on track.

The exchange was moderated by Dr. Stephen Pimpare. He introduced the participants to different topics, kept the discussion moving along, clarified the possible meanings of what each participant said in case there were any misunderstandings, and asked relevant questions to prompt participants to reveal additional insights about their experiences and their lives. Dr. Pimpare was able to

accomplish these tasks without drowning out the voices of the students and he remained very fair and understanding throughout the exchange.

**Lessons learned and insights for faculty wishing to adopt and replicate virtual exchange:**

Lessons to be learned from this exchange are quite simple: if you give students the space to be themselves and to tell their own accounts, along with a basic outline of what a discussion should cover and the occasional prompt, they can have very rich and powerful discussions. Faculty could create guidelines for the discussions that highlight what student participants should and shouldn't do during discussions to standardize how participants are treated throughout the experience. These guidelines would also make the exchanges flow more naturally and efficiently without compromising the very human element of face-to-face video conferences.

Also, before and after the virtual sessions, it is a good idea for faculty to highlight what will be discussed and to prepare students accordingly for the exchanges. The UNH-ANNU exchange also included an opportunity for participants to process the stories they shared as well as decompress from the seriousness of the topics discussed. It would be helpful for all exchanges to include this time for processing following the Zoom session. Furthermore, video exchanges could be improved by giving students the opportunity to lead certain parts of the session by asking questions about each other and their different experiences. This element of the sessions at FAMU helped make the dialogue more personable and valuable for the participants, and can be replicated in future exchanges.

*-With contribution from Jeffrey Simmons*

prepared by Victor Eno, Ph.D.

## **Narrative notes of spring 2018 Virtual exchange session 02/26/2018**

This video documented the virtual exchange session/interactive dialogue between Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) students in Dr. Victor Eno's American State & Local Government class and Al-Quds University (AQU) students in Dr. Dan Terris' American Studies class. The session was moderated by Dr. Terris with assistance from Dr. Eno and PAYCE student fellows, Alexis Jones and Jeffrey Simmons. The session started with the discussion of the Parkland school shooting (which occurred on February 14), and students noted that the event had become an occasion for youth activism and that youth from Marjorie Stoneman High School and other youth have come together to advocate for gun reform legislation. Dr. Daniel Terris showed a video to give context to the discussion.

Dr. Terris asked FAMU students if any of them has been involved in the issue, have thoughts about it, or anything the Palestinians students should know. The first FAMU student stated he did not think Florida politicians would do anything in regard to gun laws until it personally affected them in some way. Dr. Terris then asked if the student thought the young people would be able to successfully generate change in regard to gun laws as opposed to their predecessors, and the student said he was optimistic and believed the young people would be successful in their activism efforts.

Another student said she was one of the FAMU students who went to the Florida Capitol to lobby and she knew that a lot of the Marjorie Stoneman High School students (who travelled all the way from south Florida to Tallahassee) visited state legislators to speak about the issue and the legislators refused to speak to them. Another student said she believed the issue of mental health is often brought up in those cases and that she essentially does not believe it is the underlying issue— rather, the main issue is that gun laws need to be stricter.

An Al-Quds student weighed in and stated the politicians seem to be motivated by the Second Amendment right to bear arms in the U.S. Constitution and not the current experiences of the people whose interests they represent. Next, Dr. Terris showed a podcast excerpt that interviewed three activists who have been involved in the aftermath of shootings of young African-American males by the police. He stated that part of the podcast is about the incidence of police shootings and the other part is the process of activism, the personal toll of activism, and the tactics and strategies they used to generate change and awareness.

The podcast featured Nate Hamilton who is the brother of a victim of a police shooting and he discussed tactics he used to generate awareness. Hamilton felt his city's Chief of Police portrayed his brother in an unfair manner and as a result he wanted to change the narrative and took extreme measures to do so. He built a makeshift coffin and sent it to the Mayor's office with the demands that the Mayor make the Chief of Police rescind false statements made about his brother and talk about how the police department can be held accountable, live up to its core values, and receive adequate training. He also shut down fire and police commission meetings because they failed to address the issues affecting the community and did not use its power over police rules and practices to reflect community concerns and interests.

At the end of the podcast excerpt, Dr. Terris asked FAMU and Al-Quds students if the tactics used by Hamilton resonated with their experiences. The first FAMU student believed the tactics were extreme but gave an instance of peaceful protests she and her classmates wanted to partake in after the death of Trayvon Martin. They wanted to wear t-shirts and walk out of class, but school administrators gave serious threats that they would be kept from graduating if they did either. The student said the high school students today seem to be in a more tolerant environment in regard to activism which makes it easier to express themselves. She detailed an instance where she witnessed a family tell their experience with gun violence to legislators during a legislative session. College students present were crying, but the legislators were stoned faced. She related back to an earlier point made by another FAMU student that the legislators may care only if they are personally affected or if they are running for re-election.

Dr. Terris then posed a question to Al-Quds students in regard to the risk Palestinians take in becoming activists, expressing their opinion, or resisting. An Al-Quds student said she believed their situation is different because they are under Israeli occupation and that even if they partake in nonviolent protest their risk level is very high. They can be arrested, beaten, injured, or killed by Israeli soldiers. She said anyone who wants change has to be willing to pay the price.

An Al-Quds student said young people use Facebook to protest and when they do, they are sometimes falsely accused of making inflammatory statements even if the comments are nonviolent. Moreover, social media pages of young people are monitored by Israeli and Palestinian authorities, and people can be at risk for putting even mild opinions on social media sites. A FAMU student pointed out a harmful

narrative that circulated on social media and Fox News that Marjorie Stoneman student activists are actors paid by the Democrats and anti-gun activists which put those students' lives in danger. They got death threats by people who do not want gun control legislation. The student also stated she thinks it is only a matter of time before there is a violent clash between those who want gun reform and those who do not.

Another FAMU student said affiliation with certain human rights groups like Black Lives Matter puts certain people under surveillance by intelligence community agencies, but she recognized that punitive consequences for activism may be higher for Palestinian youth than for American youth. The student also claims Florida Governor Rick Scott only decided to act on gun reform because of his then-upcoming U.S. Senate bid.

*-With contribution from Natalie Alexis*

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## **curriculum worksheets and lesson plans**

### comic-making worksheets

This curriculum walks you through the steps of creating comics of political documents. It is most suitable for high school and college classes. Use it to invigorate your courses with active and engaged learning. Follow the directions on the sheet to have your student's break down a complex political document by creating a comic of the text.

### Lesson Plans for Podcasts

These curricular guides can assist you in using the PAYCE podcasts in your classroom. They are for educators, most suitable for high school and college classes. Use them to invigorate your courses with active and engaged learning. Follow the directions on the sheet to have your students listen to a podcast, reflect on its meaning, and discuss important relevant themes.

### COMIC-making to Explore Foundational Political Documents

*This curriculum walks you through the steps of creating comics of political documents. It is most suitable for high school and college classes. Use it to invigorate your courses with active and engaged learning. Follow the directions on the sheet to have your student's break down a complex political document by creating a comic of the text.*

#### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Break difficult political text into manageable components [Analysis: taking apart]
- Translate a portion of a foundational political document into visual imagery [Application: Making use of knowledge]
- Consider the meaning and purpose of foundational political documents [Synthesis: Putting together]

#### Faculty preparation

The faculty should prepare by considering the document closely beforehand. Students will work together to separate a foundational document into manageable components, but the faculty should think about how best to guide them. Some elements of a document will lend themselves more to comic-making than others. When considering the US Declaration of Independence, for example, the list of grievances against King George are especially apt. For the US Constitution, the Preamble, as it is more conceptual, may be more difficult to translate than the Articles and Amendments. The difficulty of translation can influence how much of the text each student is given, so that the assignment is equitable. As a faculty member, think to yourself how you might translate a portion of text into a comic. Be prepared to help students who have difficulty thinking this problem through.

#### Activity

- Divide the class into pairs. Each pair will be responsible for a portion of the document.
- Work as a class to break the foundational document into components so that each pair has a roughly equivalent task.
- Each student pair should then make an outline of their portion of the document, with the following considerations in mind:
  - What is the core message of this passage?
  - Consider how much space you might need to tell the “story”.

- What are the most important things to include?
- What can be left off?
- Think visually. Can you show the concepts with a combination of pictures, symbols, and words? You don't need to make it elaborate—stick figures are very effective.
- Sketch some ideas. Use a combination of words and images to tell your story. Look at them and discuss with your partner. Are the symbols you use universal?
  - A good way to test its effectiveness is to ask another student group to look at your sketches and then share the main points they take from the piece.
- Make a draft of the whole comic with a pencil.
  - Evaluate with your partner.
  - Are your ideas coming through?
  - Is the layout cramped in any place?
  - Could you make changes in spacing to fit it better?
  - Is anything extraneous?
  - Is anything missing?
- Make final edits.
- Rework your draft into a final copy. Use pencil to draw it, and then copy over with a fine tip pen. Once the ink dries, use an eraser to remove pencil marks.
- Share the final copy with the class. Combined, they make a comic of the document.
- Review the document as a whole to better understand the political concepts and ideas presented in the document.

### Critical thinking questions

1. Who is the audience for the document? Why was it written?
2. What is the core message of the document? Does the document make a request? Define a governmental system? Argue in favor of a policy or program? How do the components of the document contribute to or define the core message?
3. What does this document reveal about political power in your system?
4. How does the document define rights and responsibilities?

### Cross cultural application

- Have students working cross culturally create comics of similar foundational documents from their own countries or territories.
- Use the resulting comics to compare a foundational document from your system to that of another country.
- Consider how the systems might differ.
- Consider how the rights and responsibilities are different for citizens of different places.

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE podcast: Phenomenal Woman

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820319-phenomenal-woman>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Alexis Jones' podcast delves into what motivated Dionna Langford to run for Des Moines, Iowa school board. The youngest African-American woman to serve in Des Moines, Dionna offers an enthralling narrative of real-life obstacles she faced when deciding to run. She also describes how they have helped to shape her perception of what changes need to occur to repair and rebuild Des Moines. Jones is a recent MA recipient from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. Langford's story gives hope in a world full of opportunities in which women are told how to present and carry themselves.

**Keywords:** race, culture, sexism, women's rights, gender, racism, equality, youth, activism

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Identify some of the events (both positive and negative) which have influenced Dionna's experience at work [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Differentiate between overt and covert prejudice [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how Dionna's identity as a woman and African-American has affected her interactions with her constituents [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Phenomenal Woman podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses and submit one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions as a large group.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Race and gender are two social identities that impact everyone's experience in life. Dionne describes being treated differently because of these social identities – what are the examples she shares?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Farms, Feminism, and Organizing

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820316-farms-feminism-and-organizing>

**Description:** Ash Bruxvoort is a young adult active in a local Democratic Socialists of America party and the Iowa Women, Food, and Agriculture Network. PAYCE Fellow Majd Aburrub (Al Quds-Bard) considers what we can learn for ourselves by following Ash's example of solidarity and helping others. Ash's superpower is her concern for the question: "How can I help bring out what makes that person special and draw their attention to it?"

**Keywords:** politics, organizing, youth, engagement, career, empowerment, leadership

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Consider the ways Ash engages in politics and in her community [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare the different ways people engage in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider what support is necessary to foster political engagement from all citizens [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Farms, Feminism, and Organizing podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Political engagement isn't always about running for office. How does Ash's friend describe her (Ash's) work in politics?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is political organizing? What does Ash see as the important work of organizing?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE podcast: Dear Future Generations

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820304-dear-future-generations>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Afnan Abbasi (Al-Quds Bard) profiles Des Moines children's rights advocate Jill Applegate. Jill is motivated to fight for children who are vulnerable because they lack a voice in the political process. The podcast focuses on how Jill became politically active and decided to focus on the issues of children. Afnan reflects on Jill's story with a commentary on children's human rights and the ways that we fall short in our obligation to future generations.

**Keywords:** politics, children, human rights, representation, youth, empowerment

**After completing this activity, students should be able to:**

- Identify why it is important to support the rights of children [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider why children may be underrepresented in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Evaluate how societal factors might influence when and how children are represented by politicians [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Dear Future Generations podcast at <http://paycestories.org/>
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Jill talks about sometimes being judged or doubted given that she works for children's rights but has no children. Have you ever encountered a similar situation, with people considering you "not qualified" to have an opinion on an issue?
  
2. Discuss the difference between being a member of a group and an ally to a group. Why might allies have an interest in an issue that doesn't personally impact them?

3. Jill works so that political candidates include children's right on their agendas. Are there similar organizations functioning within your community or state? (If you're not sure, Google it). Who do they support? What issues are important to them?
  
4. PAYCE fellow Afnan Abbasi argues that these issues involve children's basic human rights and therefore, require our commitment and dedication. Are these rights framed as human rights in your community? Why or why not?
  
5. Why might politicians overlook the welfare of children? Do class, race, or other factors come into play? Do politicians often consider the needs of the non-voting population?
  
6. Explain Jill's quote, taken from the late Senator Paul Wellstone, "We all do better when we all do better." What resonates, or fails to resonate, with you about this quote?
  
7. Do you feel as if you're treated as a child or an adult when it comes to political matters?
  
8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics on this or other issues? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: The Change You Want to See

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820887-the-change-you-want-to-see>

**Description:** PAYCE fellow Fatima Hashem (An Najah National University) connects the lines in the story of Drake University student and school board member Josh Hughes. He does the hard work of serving on the school board because of his "original motivator": his identity as a gay teen and his commitment to fighting for public education. He advises young people to do self-care because their voices are needed. There will be times when it's hard to keep going, but that motivator will be what makes it all "make sense." Fatima challenges each listener to decide: "When will you make that journey into yourself?"

**Keywords:** politics, organizing, youth, engagement, career, empowerment, leadership

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Identify what motivates individuals to become politically active [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare the different ways people engage in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider what support is necessary to foster political engagement from all citizens [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to The Change You Want to See podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Take notes of your answers and be prepared to present your answers to the class.
- Share your findings and answers for the class

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Josh felt his school board did not understand the value of programs he experienced as a student. How might his perspective about education be different from older representatives in their 40s, 50s, or 60s? What do you think young adults bring to the table?
  
2. What strategies (from political parties, from communities) might increase political involvement from young people?



7. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not? If so can you identify a level and position that might be a good entry point for you into politics?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Your Vote is Not a Chocolate

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820368-your-vote-is-not-a-chocolate>

**Description:** Project Vote Smart is a Des Moines, Iowa based organization that uses volunteer power to create a database of transparent information about candidates and politicians all across the United States. Peter McLaughlin, Vote Smart's Director of Elections and Candidates Research, explains why nonpartisan research is his passion and vital to American democracy. His story is told by PAYCE Fellow Rana Rishmawi (Al-Quds American Studies) who warns that voting, unlike shopping, requires research in order to avoid a bitter outcome.

**Keywords:** politics, voting, candidates, bias, information, engagement, leadership

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Describe how Vote Smart approaches voter information and what information they provide about candidates [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider why every candidate might not be in favor of a project like Project VoteSmart. [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on why unbiased political data is so important to our political systems [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Your Vote is Not a Chocolate podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What does Project VoteSmart do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why is it important that they are politically nonpartisan?



8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Finding Your Way in Politics

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820873-finding-your-way-in-politics>

**Description:** Peter McLaughlin serves as the Director of Elections and Candidate Research at Project Vote Smart in Des Moines, Iowa. Based on this interview with Peter and PAYCE colleague Rana Rishmawi, PAYCE Fellow Justen Norcott (University of New Hampshire) shares how Peter's political upbringing influenced his commitment to non-partisan research. The story concludes with Justen asking Peter for advice about crafting a career in politics. A passion for research shapes Peter's current work, his enrollment in Drake University's MPA program, and future plans.

**Keywords:** politics, voting, candidates, bias, information, engagement, leadership, truth

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Describe how Peter McLaughlin approaches voting and his work in political information-sharing [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider whether our society teaches citizens to be engaged in politics. If so, how is this achieved and is it effective? [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on why political engagement is hard to achieve. [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Finding Your Way in Politics podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. How does Peter describe his first experience voting?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How do people get educated about our political system? Have you had classes in civics? If so, what did you learn from them? Did they include information about being an active participant in the political system?

3. Do you feel that education in your community adequately prepares people to vote or participate in politics? Why or why not? Is this coincidental or intentional?
  
4. Peter describes political rhetoric as heavily polarized. What is his strategy to combat the heated debate that often ends in unproductive discussions? What would you recommend?
  
5. Facts are McLaughlin's main focus in his work for Vote Smart. What is the importance of facts in political rhetoric? How can they inform political decision making?
  
6. McLaughlin warns about rhetoric being taken for granted. What are his arguments about the importance of comparing what candidates say and how they act once elected?
  
7. McLaughlin recommends political open-mindedness. How might acceptance and open-mindedness become difficult when engaging with politics?

8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Don't wait your turn

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820860-don-t-wait-your-turn>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Hala Jaffal (Al Quds-American Studies) profiles Abshir Omar Mahamed, a 2017 Des Moines City Council candidate. She highlights Mohammed's inspiration for civic engagement from a young age. He describes the anti-Muslim racism he faced and the important ways his campaign changed the conversation about the city's priorities.

**Keywords:** politics, candidates, bias, activism, engagement, leadership, youth, refugee, African American, Muslim American, Islamophobia

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with Abshir's political journey [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Describe how different identities might shape our involvement in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how the involvement of diverse participants can change the political conversation [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Don't Wait Your Turn podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. How has Abshir Omar's background affected his campaign and his engagement in politics?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE podcast: Our City Needs to Have Important Conversations

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820839-our-city-needs-to-have-important-conversations>

**Description:** How does racism shape the realities of public education in the United States? PAYCE Fellow Ala' Hamamreh (Al-Quds American Studies) talks to Des Moines Public School Board member Dionna Langford about her efforts to address race and class inequalities in her district. They talk frankly about the problem of white progressives needing to examine their own racism for the District to serve all children.

**Keywords:** race, culture, education, equality, leadership, schools, representation

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Identify some of the ways our education system may include bias against communities of color [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Reflect on different experiences in primary educations [Analysis: taking apart]
- How might our education system reflect larger issues and conflicts in society around race and class [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the [Our City Needs to Have Important Conversations](https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820839-our-city-needs-to-have-important-conversations) podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses and submit one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions as a large group.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What does Dionna mean about over-identification of black students for the special education system and under-identification of black students for gifted programs? How does this compare to your own experience in your home community?
  
2. As Dionna notes during the podcast, she has faced covert racism many times during her tenure. This is often a result of unintentionally offensive remarks that are based on conventions or stereotypes about the kinds of kids who go to certain schools. Do such ideas or prejudices exist within your community?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE podcast: The Kids are all right, right?

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820858-the-kids-are-all-right-right>

**Description:** PAYCE fellow, Juli Dajci from the University of Hartford worked with Jill Applegate to discuss a non-profit organization she is a part of that speaks up for kids in a tough political environment. Jill Applegate is a program manager for the organization “Every Child Matters” in Des Moines, Iowa. As the president searched for an organizer to represent the presence of every child in Iowa, Jill was selected to fulfill this civic duty. Although many may consider themselves politically apathetic, Jill states that we have a duty to each other and to work on behalf of one another.

### After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Identify how Jill works within the political system to change policy for children in Iowa [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider the different roles one can play in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on how engagement and apathy influence our political system [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

**Keywords:** politics, representation, youth, empowerment, legislation, advocacy, apathy

### Activity

- Listen to The kids are all right, right? Podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What is a non-profit organization? How might they engage in the legislative process? Describe the legislative work of a non-profit organization with which you are familiar.



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: PB&J

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820837-pb-j-phoebe-and-justice>

**Description:** Sitting down with Phoebe Clark, PAYCE Fellow Meredith Howe (University of New Hampshire) learned about activism in Phoebe's life. Clark, a senior at Drake University, spoke about the time she and friends disrupted a Republican event, her views on "diversity of tactics," labels, and how she began to look positively at activism after disillusionment.

Songs credits: Greg Atkinson "Crick's Unnecessary Children," Parvus Decree "Into Oblivion (Partially Recomposed)," Broke for Free "Night Owl," Transpanda "Thunder Panda," Lonely Punk "Easter Island" – all music from FreeMusicArchive.org

**Keywords:** politics, youth, empowerment, non-violence, anarchism, advocacy, activism, LGBTQ

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify how Phoebe and her friends engage in political protest [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider different forms of engagement [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on the value and effectiveness of different kinds of political engagement [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the PB&J podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Describe the steps of Phoebe's protest. What were her stated goals? Do you believe she was effective?

2. What is “Diversity of Tactics”? What you think about this strategy for engagement?
  
3. Were you aware that the British suffragettes used violent tactics at times? Does this change the way you think about that movement?
  
4. Compare and contrast the strategies of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X for addressing civil rights change in the United States. What parts of their strategies were effective or ineffective?
  
5. Do you believe “the threat of violence is necessary” for social change? Or that “when all forms of peaceful protest have failed” that violence is necessary? Discuss how this may or may not be effective to social or political movements.
  
6. What other forms of activism has Phoebe engaged in? Which forms seem most effective to you?

7. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Making local change

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820869-making-local-change>

**Description:** Marlu Abarca is a Los Angeles native who moved to Iowa for college in 2010. After moving to Des Moines in 2014, she has gotten involved in civic engagement through local non-profits, like Al Éxito!, volunteering at Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs, and a full-time job at the Des Moines Public Library. PAYCE Fellow Genesis Buckhalton (Drake University) describes how Marlu focuses on local change to bring cultural awareness and to represent the Latino community in Iowa.

Song credit: "Flauta" from Miente, miente, que algo queda by los tu.l.a. At Free Music Archive.

**Keywords:** inequality, politics, youth, empowerment, Latinx, activism, local, gender, racism, immigration

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify Marlu's experiences with working locally on the issue of Latinx culture in Iowa [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider the pros and cons of different levels at which people may engage with politics (local, state, national, international) [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on the value and effectiveness of political engagement at different levels [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Making local change podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Marlu talks about societal expectations centering not just on her gender but also on her income, her family background, or her sexuality. Do you feel societal pressure to be (or not be) a certain way based on your own life details and experiences?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.





prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Demand Your Rights

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/820308-demand-your-rights>

**Description:** Join PAYCE Fellow Jeffrey Simmons (Florida A&M University) as he profiles Abshir Omar Mahamed, a 26-year-old Somali refugee and Muslim, who made the bold decision to run for the Des Moines City Council. Although Abshir did not win the council seat, he felt his campaign made changes in Des Moines. Abshir's story is one that relates to any young person who wants to see their political goals realized. We all have diverse backgrounds, and we all face hardship, but that does not mean that we can't make a difference in our communities.

**Keywords:** politics, candidates, bias, activism, engagement, leadership, youth, refugee, African American, Muslim American, Islamophobia

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe Omar's life experience and political engagement [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider why young people may or may not get involved in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how diverse political engagement can change political rhetoric and in turn, policy [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Demand Your Rights.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. What is Abshir Omar Mahamed's background—what drew him to becoming engaged in politics?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What issues is Abshir Omar Mahamed fighting for in Iowa?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: The Road Less Traveled

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825729-the-road-less-traveled>

**Description:** Latinx advocate, Marlu Abarca, beat the statistics that “under 10% of first generation college students of color graduate in four years.” In this episode, PAYCE fellow Noura Abu Ghosh from An-Najah National University interviews Marlu about her own experience with race, her community involvement, political activism for the Latinx community, and her aspirations to run for city council.

**Keywords:** ethnicity, family, activism, politics, engagement, race, immigration

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify how Marlu’s family and identity shaped her [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider how identity might provide a conduit to community or political engagement [Analysis: taking apart]
- Evaluate the value of different kinds of political engagement [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the [Road Less Traveled](#) podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Marlu states that fewer than 10% of first generation students of color graduate college in four years. Does this statistic surprise you? Why or why not? What might be the factors contributing to this phenomenon?



6. Marlu says, "Although it is a lot of hard work, at least someone can see that someone else has done it, so they can too." How does seeing people who look like you in positions of power or leadership impact your own consideration of such roles?

7. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: I Could Add Value

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825666-i-could-add-value>

**Description:** In this podcast story, PAYCE fellow Kelanie Crosswait shares Drake University student Josh Hughes' passion on public education issues. Josh's political journey began with involvement with the school newspaper as a senior in high school at the age of 17. He worked on issues related to the legislative session, such as school funding issues and the effects it had on rural schools. By the age of 18, Josh was running his own campaign for the school board election. His experience as the youngest member on the board adds value and impacts the future of other students. He reminds others to find what truly interests you to get involved and to use that as your motivation.

**Keywords:** politics, candidates, youth, activism, engagement, leadership, youth

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe what motivated Josh to get involved in politics [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Identify how young adults can get involved in politics, regardless of age [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how each of us might engage in our community [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the I Could Add Value podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection question

1. How do you define political engagement?
  
2. Engagement among young adults is increasingly common. Why do you think younger generations are becoming more active in their communities?

3. Josh describes what motivated his political journey, channeling his frustration toward running for the school board election. Can you think of a time where public leaders or decision makers did not listen to a cause you cared about? Did this motivate you to do something about it?
  
4. Josh quotes Hillary Clinton's concession speech: "Fighting for what is right is always worth it." These words inspired him to recommit to his cause. Are you willing to fight for something that matters even you lose?
  
5. After listening to this podcast, are you inspired to get politically active? If so, how might you make a change in your community?
  
6. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Who was the First Woman President?

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825766-who-was-the-first-woman-president>

**Description:** Social norms shape the way we identify ourselves, but that is not necessarily the way it has to be. Reeda Alji from Al-Quds Bard and Pheobe Clark from Drake University shed light on social norms, such as the norm that American Presidents have always been males because “that’s just the way it has been.” This episode reflects the similarities and differences in Reeda and Pheobe’s experiences in their communities around gender and identity. Reeda invites others to question their identities and whether or not they are determined by the rules of their society or by the formation of one’s own beliefs.

**Keywords:** identity, society, social norms, activism, engagement, youth, feminism

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify social norms in Reeda’s and Pheobe’s community [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare their experiences with your own or those of friends from different communities/religions/backgrounds [Analysis: taking apart]
- Evaluate the sources of our identities and how they are shaped by society [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Who was the first woman President? Podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What is a social norm?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What kinds of social norms do Pheobe and Reeda experience? How are they different? How are they the same?

3. Social norms can be different in different cultures and countries. What kinds of social norms exist in your society based on gender? What about the social norms surrounding other identities, such as ethnicity, class, region, religion, or others?
  
4. Have you reached the point in your life where you have questioned your social identity? With which groups do you identify?
  
5. Reeda muses whether Phoebe's identity is determined by the unwritten rules of society or whether she will create her own identity according to what she believes. How do you think Phoebe has forged her own identity? How have you forged your own identity?
  
6. Phoebe finds that people take on the mantle of a political identity as a social identity and use that to both find people who think as they do and to distinguish themselves from others. Do you use a political identity as a part of your social identity? Why or why not?
  
7. Reeda describes how shaping identity is not always a conscious choice, but instead determined for many by their religion, culture, family, and society. She asks "how far are we willing to go in abandoning our true selves for the sake of being accepted by others?" Answer Reeda's question for yourself.

8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.





8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: I Truly Love My Community: Young Adult Immigrant Activism

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825747-i-truly-love-my-community-young-adult-immigrant-activism>

**Description:** Kenia Calderon is an activist and recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) living in Des Moines, Iowa. Drake University student Genesis Buckhalton profiles Calderon for this episode of PAYCE stories. As a student at Drake, which is often a major stop on the Presidential campaign trail, she was able to ask questions important to the undocumented community. She was galvanized to mobilize her community and build relationships to fight anti-immigrant legislation. Her love of her community drives her to put herself at the forefront of activism.

**Keywords:** immigration, DACA, activism, engagement, youth, Latinx, politics

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify what Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival is in the United States and how it may affect the lives of immigrants [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Evaluate the pros and cons of welcoming immigrants into American society [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how traditional political engagement can contribute to political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the [I Truly Love my Community: Young Adult Immigrant Activism](https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825747-i-truly-love-my-community-young-adult-immigrant-activism) podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival?
2. How do immigrants contribute to their communities? The George W. Bush Center's Debunking Immigration Myth's webpage is a helpful resource to learn about immigration in the United States: <https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/resources-reports/reports/immigration.html>



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Disability, the University, and Occupation

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825743-disability-the-university-and-occupation>

**Description:** Harhash is an Al-Quds Bard student who is disabled. Storytellers Shadi and Yousef interview Harhash, who is the head of the Disabled Committee at AQB, which seeks to improve accessibility for disabled people at Bard. Painstakingly, Harhash advocated for railings and other facilities, including fighting to have an elevator placed on the campus so that he could have access to classes. He finds, however, that the University does not always take the problem seriously. Harhash believes that the barriers to change stem from a broader disregard for disability rights in the Palestinian community. As a Jerusalemite, Harhash believes that Israeli efforts to accommodate disabled people should be extended to Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. He notes that occupation negatively affects the circumstances of disabled Palestinians.

**Keywords:** disability, activism, youth, engagement, politics, local

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify the actions Harhash has taken to improve the situation for disabled individuals at his University [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Evaluate how working at the micro level can influence political or social change [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how different kinds of political engagement can contribute to political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast [Disability, the University, and Occupation](https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825743-disability-the-university-and-occupation).
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. How has Harhash worked to change the landscape for disabled students at his University?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Was Harhash successful? Why or why not?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## **PAYCE PODCAST: A Florida conversation on gun violence in schools**

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825741-a-florida-conversation-on-gun-violence-in-schools>

**Description:** Gun violence in America creates trauma through school shootings, police killing men of color, and gun homicides. This episode was created just after the Parkland School Shooting and legislative advocacy to address the issue. This conversation reflects the raw urgency of this time. Dekywan Debose (Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University) presents a radio essay in which he reflects on an interview with Florida teacher Miss Leon. Their discussion is a teacher's musings on gun violence in schools including the idea of arming teachers, school shooter motives, and parents' role in prevention.

**Keywords:** policy, gun control, education, America

### **After completing this activity, students should be able to**

- Identify examples of and policies about gun violence in the United States [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare experience regarding gun violence with those expressed by Dekywan and Miss Leon in the podcast [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider examples of youth engagement in politics and in communities [Analysis: taking apart]
- Contemplate the variety of solutions offered within this podcast [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]
- Consider the support necessary to foster political engagement from all citizens [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### **Activity**

- Listen to the **A Florida conversation on gun violence in schools** podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses and submit one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions as a large group.

### **Critical thinking and reflection questions**

1. What examples of gun violence does Dekywan give?

2. In the United States, gun legislation and gun violence are often hot topics. Dekywan highlights the importance of making schools a safe place. In your community or state, has there been any legislation enacted on gun violence?
  
3. Gun violence is a complex issue with difficult solutions. As a student, what do you think of Miss Leon's proposal that teachers carry guns? Should teachers have that responsibility?
  
4. Miss Leon mentions that parents and school mental health services play a part in preventing school shootings. Can you think of other members of the community or institutions that play a role in resolving this issue?
  
5. After listening to this podcast, do you have a different understanding about the issue of gun violence? What impact has this issue had in your community? Compare your thoughts with those expressed in the podcast.
  
6. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: One Minute of Norms

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/825754-one-minute-of-norms>

**Description:** Raneem Ghareeb describes the negative stereotypes about young adult Palestinians. She and her team profile one of the artists, Zeina, who created an art/film project designed to challenge gender inequality called One Minutes of Norms. The artists placed a sign featuring a controversial statement in a public space, then filmed reactions to it. The controversial statement calls out gender oppression in the Palestinian community. It was an experiment that, although imperfect, presented feminist commentary and challenged norms. The artists believe that art opens dialogues necessary to create change. Zeina and Afnan, the artists, are also PAYCE Fellows whose stories are found in the series.

**Keywords:** activism, youth, engagement, politics, local, advocacy, norms, sexism

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify the actions Zeina and Afnan have taken to engage people at their University [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Evaluate how working at the micro level can influence political or social change [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how different kinds of political engagement can contribute to political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast One Minute of Norms at <http://paycestories.org/>
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Zeina and Afnan describe creating a sign that says, "Society that oppresses will never be liberated," posting it at their University, and filming the reactions. Describe what they say are the goals for this political action.

2. Zeina and Afnan relate a story about two girls and a guy making fun of the sign together, describing this as the women “normalizing sexism.” Have you been in a situation where women seem to be normalizing or contributing to sexism? Discuss.
  
3. One way to approach political change is to focus on close changes—like posting a sign on campus to encourage discussion—does this seem like an effective approach for political action?
  
4. Have you taken part in political engagement at the school or town level to improve a situation? Have you seen others do this at your school or in your local community? Please share with the group.
  
5. How might small changes contribute to moving the needle on issues?
  
6. How effective do you think work like Afnan and Zeina’s is? What other ways can people engage in a political issue?

7. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## **PAYCE PODCAST: Poverty in Palestine: Radio Essay and Making a Change**

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/828191-poverty-in-palestine-radio-essay-and-making-a-change>

**Description:** In this audio essay, PAYCE fellow Noura Abu Ghosh (An-Najah National University) talks about many issues related to economic struggle and poverty. The Israeli occupation overshadows all conversations about poverty and can never be ignored. She outlines the economic challenges faced by college students and their families as students search for a career. She also describes how Islamic charity reduces public manifestations of poverty.

**Keywords:** poverty, activism, youth, engagement, politics, local, advocacy, norms, sexism

### **After completing this activity, students should be able to**

- Identify issues of poverty and challenges around education and employment in the West Bank [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Evaluate the different ways communities might approach a problem like poverty [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how different kinds of engagement (from students, from groups, from religious organizations) can contribute to change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### **Activity**

- Listen to the podcast Poverty in Palestine: Radio Essay and Making a Change.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### **Critical thinking and reflection questions**

1. How do you define poverty?



8. Noura ends her essay on a positive note and focuses on the idea that “making a change is possible.” Do you sense the same attitude in your community?

9. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Not Your *Habibti*

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/828193-not-your-habibti>

**Description:** Huda and Lara from Al Quds Bard interview storytelling activist Yasmeen Mjalli. A Palestinian raised in the United States, Yasmeen moved to Ramallah after college. Yasmeen challenges the prevailing sentiment that women's rights cannot be talked about under Occupation. To combat the harmful effects of gender harassment, she performs an art project called #NotYourHabibti. She feels that women are seen as possessions in Arab culture rather than subjects in control of their bodies and stories. In contrast to #metoo, where women share their own stories of harassment, she invites women to tell her their stories. She believes this is the only way these stories will be told given the cultural constraints. While some women are hesitant, many also share with her. Yasmeen collects these stories, turning them into an art exhibit that has toured globally.

**Keywords:** #metoo, culture, sexism, women's rights, gender, equality, activism

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe Yasmeen's experiences in Palestine and her response to these experiences [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare Yasmeen's experiences with your own or those of friends and family [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how #notyourhabibti reflects the way that marginalized groups are treated across societies on a range of issues [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Not your *Habibti* podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. What does *habibti* mean in Arabic?
2. Street harassment is common in many societies. Through collecting stories, Yasmeen Mjalli describes the experiences of women being harassed in Palestine. What does she say is the most common issue that women report? How does this compare with your experiences?

3. Do women experience sexual harassment or aggression in your society? If so, what form does it take?
  
4. Now let's think more broadly. What other groups (women, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ, etc.) might experience harassment or aggression in your society? What form might this kind of behavior take?
  
5. What does Yasmeen mean when she says she found herself embracing the Palestinian ideal of being a woman "despite herself" and doing everything "as if she didn't exist"? How did it impact her attitude and behaviors?
  
6. Can you think of examples of marginalized groups in your society changing their behavior in order to avoid negative responses from others?
  
7. What did Yasmeen decide to do in response to this situation? How do marginalized groups in your society use alternative forms of engagement (the arts, political channels, social media, networks, interest groups, etc.) to respond to society and attempt to change things?
  
8. What has been the response to Yasmeen from women in Palestine? Do you have examples of how people within marginalized groups in your society might take a similar approach?
  
9. Yasmeen describes how the occupation is emphasized as the primary political issue in Palestine and that she sees this as a strategy to avoid addressing any other social issues. Do you see examples of some issues being sidelined in this way in your society? Why do you think this is the case?
  
10. Is it ironic that Yasmeen's solution is to tell these women's stories, rather than empowering them to tell their own stories? What are the costs and benefits of each approach?

11. What does this podcast reveal about political power in Yasmeen's society and your own?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Reflection on my dream to become a teacher

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/828194-reflections-on-my-dream-to-become-a-teacher>

**Description:** Myqueal Lewis (Florida A&M U) presents this moving radio essay about his aspirations to become a teacher. He thought of many pros and cons of pursuing this profession, but recent gun violence has raised new questions. This thought-provoking podcast combines personal reflection and interview with a high school gun control activist. High schoolers are standing up to demand change to protect their lives. Having adults who support young activists is a big motivator. Myqueal concludes that a high school student he interviewed, Makaela, gives him an important perspective on activism.

**Keywords:** engagement, politics, advocacy, policy, gun control, education, America, career, youth, politics, life choices

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify how Myqueal experiences the gun debate through events like the Sandy Hook and Marjorie Stoneman Douglas shootings [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Evaluate the different ways communities might approach a problem like poverty [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how different kinds of engagement (from students, from groups, from religious organizations) can contribute to change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast Reflections on my dream to become a teacher.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What examples of gun violence does Myqueal give?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## **PAYCE PODCAST: Representing the people left out-- A young adult campaign to be Alderman**

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/828198-representing-the-people-left-out-a-young-adult-campaign-to-be-alderman>

**Description:** Hassan Essa ran for office as a young adult. In this episode, PAYCE Fellow Hannah Curran of UNH Manchester interviews Essa about his earlier political activism, his campaign, the connection between poverty and politics, and his political activism as a young adult. Coming from a low-income district, neighbors took him seriously as a candidate and appreciated the fresh perspective. Essa describes how poor people are harmed when politicians leave them out of policy agendas. Though he didn't win, he shifted the talking points within the city to focus more on poor people's issues.

**Keywords:** politics, representation, youth, empowerment, legislation, advocacy, apathy, poverty

### **After completing this activity, students should be able to**

- Describe Hassan's engagement in politics and his campaign for alderman [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Analyze the ways politicians target their messages to the groups that vote most often (older, white, affluent) [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on how engagement from broad and diverse groups can impact our political system [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### **Activity**

- Listen to the Representing the people left out: A young adult campaign to be Alderman podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses and submit one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions as a large group.

### **Critical thinking and reflection questions**

1. What is an alderman? Does your town have equivalent elected positions?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Unheard Palestinian Stories

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/828200-unheard-palestinian-stories>

**Description:** Salina from Al Quds-Bard interviews the founder of a campus club, Unheard Palestinian Stories. She and her classmates describe how it is difficult to tell one's story in Palestine. Founder Baha' Ebdeir created the organization to find beauty in the pain through giving space to tell stories. However, he and the club ran into a challenge. There were plenty participants who wanted to speak, but fewer attendees wanted to listen. Why don't attendees feel curious about what others have to say? Club members think that this is because of the current social context of living in an oppressive society where screaming feels like the only option. But how do you create a space for listening when so many are hungry to share their stories? They explore the idea that "listening is not a privilege, it is a responsibility."

**Keywords:** listening, society, norms, sharing, representation, youth, empowerment, Palestine

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe the experiences of Unheard Palestinian Stories club members [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare the experiences of Palestinian culture to American culture in regard to both sharing and listening to one another's experiences [Analysis: taking apart]
- Reflect on what it might mean to be in a society where being open about one's feelings is unacceptable [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast [Unheard Palestinian Stories](#).
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. A concept central to this podcast is that of an oppressed society. What does it mean to live in an oppressive society? How do you define it?

2. Salina explains that in the Palestinian society, people feel the need to express their thoughts but not listen to others. Is this concept relevant in American society?
  
3. What oppressed groups in American society may also be experiencing this kind of inability to share their stories? Have you witnessed groups feel the need to talk more rather than listen to one another?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Salina states that “listening is not a privilege, it is a responsibility.” What does she mean? Do you agree?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What might this story imply about how to improve the culture of listening to one another? What barriers may prevent people from listening to one another?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How can this story help students both share with and listen to one another? Has this story caused you to evaluate your own actions?

7. How might being in an oppressed society keep people from demanding their political or human rights?

8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Apathy and Social Media

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/828202-apathy-and-social-media>

**Description:** Is social media an alternative to political apathy? PAYCE Fellow Taylor Zitkus worked with a University of Hartford class to explore student apathy and also new forms of political expression on social media. Taylor argues that social media counts as political engagement because it is a way to become educated, connect with others, and express important views.

**Keywords:** participation, engagement, politics, America, youth, activism, social media

Suitable for use in classes including: Politics, American Government, Media Studies

**After completing this activity, students should be able to:**

- Describe social media and its role in politics [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare individual students' experiences with social media and political apathy and or engagement [Analysis: taking apart]
- Assess the effectiveness of social media to get young adults engaged politically, while examining the steps they can take to further their online presence to become educated about political topics [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the [Apathy and Social Media](#) podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses and submit one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions as a large group.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What is social media? Name three examples of social media platforms that you use.
2. Political apathy among youth is common. Compare the attitudes towards politics from the students in your group to those in the podcast. What are the commonalities? What are the differences? Do any of the podcast comments stand out to you?

3. Does your attitude towards politics align with the students in the podcast, or is it different? Has social media contributed to shaping your views? Elaborate.
  
4. What does this podcast identify as the role of social media in politics for young adults? Explain three ways you can get involved politically through social media.
  
5. Taylor emphasizes the way social media can educate the general public about politics and shape their opinions. Do you think social media has this potential? Why or why not?
  
6. Taylor alludes to the fact that bias can present a problem for “getting the whole story” from social media. How can you recognize if bias is present in the social media sources you follow? Why is it important to view a variety of sources to acknowledge and recognize bias?
  
7. What impact, if any, do you think social media will have on the future of politics?
  
8. Do you feel empowered to engage (through social media or other means) in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Palestine not Pakistan

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/885573-palestine-not-pakistan>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Raneem Ghareeb begins her podcast with the sound of an Israeli checkpoint, then pivots to humor through the voice of an American PAYCE colleague. Raneem's profile of social entrepreneur Lama Amr reveals a common frustration the two share: meeting people who confuse their home with Pakistan or who know nothing about the Palestinian situation. In this light, Raneem considers how her podcast's subject, young adult Lama Amr, uses her voice to inform the world. A social entrepreneur, Lama has launched projects to support innovation and crowdfunding in Palestine, including Bir Hakaya and Build Palestine. Connecting with youth all over the world, she works to make things happen. Her successes do not make her immune from the daily problem of checkpoints and occupation, but she believes these setbacks make her more creative. Raneem connects Lama's efforts to disseminate diverse stories about Palestine, seeing her as a model to follow to create change.

**Keywords:** engagement, politics, advocacy, policy, Palestine, social media, youth

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe how Lama Amr uses social media to raise understanding about Palestine globally [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare the ways social media can build connection or divisiveness [Analysis: taking apart]
- Evaluate how social media might impact social or political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast [Palestine not Pakistan](https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/885573-palestine-not-pakistan).
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. How does Lama Amr use social media to connect youth?



8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Art Became my Voice

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/885560-art-became-my-voice>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Renad Manasra profiles 20 year old Jordanian-based artist Lina Abojaradeh. Moving to Jordan from the United States was a significant change for Lina, but she found her voice through art. A Palestinian born in the United States, Lina has never visited Palestine. She can't. However, she uses her talent to share her feelings and hopes about Palestine. Lina found inspiration from other Palestinian artists and began to see art as a tool to advocate for causes important to her. She seeks to make Palestinians more relatable and human to inspire action. Learn more about Lina in episode 307 created by PAYCE Fellow Hannah Curran.

**Keywords:** engagement, advocacy, activism, art, politics, communication, resistance, Palestine, human rights

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe the way people engage in politics [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare ways of engagement, considering art as a means of resistance [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how conventional and unconventional forms of political engagement might empower people politically [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast Art Became my Voice.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What kinds of work does Lina produce?



7. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.





prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: A Passion for Women's Empowerment

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/890052-a-passion-for-women-s-empowerment>

**Description:** Ala' Hamamreh is one of the founders of Shaghaf Foundation, a Palestinian NGO dedicated to projects in digital media and social entrepreneurship that create empowerment for young women. In this episode, PAYCE Fellow Fadi Abushanab profiles Ala's work. Ala' explains the work the organization has done and the changes it has brought her personally. Ala' and Fadi challenge the conventional definitions of politics by talking about both the desire to end Israeli occupation and to change Palestinian society with a shift of consciousness. Ala' Hamamreh served as a peer facilitator in Amman 2018 and was in the first cohort of PAYCE Fellows in Des Moines.

Music by ShareAlike creative commons music, Jahzzar, "Traveler's guide".

**Keywords:** activism, engagement, empowerment, entrepreneurship, advocacy, norms, sexism, human rights

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify the actions the Shaghaf Foundation supports [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Evaluate how working at the micro level can influence political or social change [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how different kinds of political engagement can contribute to political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast [A Passion for Women's Empowerment](#).
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What might be the benefits of supporting female entrepreneurs in Palestine?

2. What did the founders of Shaghaf Foundation hope to achieve?
  
3. What kinds of projects do they support?
  
4. What sort of representation and media content does the Shaghaf Foundation hope to support?
  
5. What issues and causes are most important to Ala'? How does she hope to support these causes?
  
6. Does supporting female entrepreneurs seem like an effective way to engender political change? Why or why not?
  
7. Ala' says "the most meaningful political change happens not through political institutions but despite them." What do you think she means by this? Do you agree? Why or why not?

8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.





prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Productive Aggression

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/890067-productive-aggression>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Maddie Bjork explores the issue of women's empowerment through the story of Ruba Ahmad. Ruba uses her anger and passion to create change and bring into sharp focus what she sees as imperatives for women and refugees. Ruba and Maddie discuss Ruba's work as a policy assistant at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, wearing the hijab, and the need to elevate the voices of women refugees.

**Keywords:** culture, sexism, women's rights, gender, equality, religion, human rights

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe Ruba's experiences channeling her passion into "productive aggression" [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare her experiences with your own or those of friends and family [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how groups (women, refugees, others) can be empowered or not empowered by policy choices [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Productive Aggression podcast <http://paycestories.org/>
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. How does Ruba describe her challenge in trying to channel her passion into "productive aggression"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Have you ever felt your passion for a topic or issue overwhelm the message you're trying to share? Discuss.



8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: The Conflict Makes Us Creative

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/894518-the-conflict-makes-us-more-creative>

**Description:** Lama Amr takes what she calls “weird paths” to find a way forward for a better world. Working with colleagues, she is a social entrepreneur who has founded organizations BirHakaya and Build Palestine. Her innovations include reorienting her thinking about Israeli checkpoints and choosing an unexpected college major. PAYCE Fellow Darrien Alexander Fordham explores a series of choices that have led Amr to educate and create change in Palestine and beyond.

Music from bensound.com “When in the West” by Blue Dot Sessions.

**Keywords:** Palestine, social media, youth, career, leadership, youth, life choices, engagement

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe Lama Amr’s journey in deciding a career path [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider how non-traditional avenues might influence understanding [Analysis: taking apart]
- Evaluate how “soft” forms of engagement like going abroad or sharing voices and stories can impact social or political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast The Conflict Makes Us Creative at <http://paycestories.org/>
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. Describe Lama Amr’s path to discover her career.



8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE PODCAST: Addressing Women's Challenges

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/895234-addressing-women-s-challenges>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Genesis Guzman begins her podcast episode with a dramatization of negative messages girls receive before turning to Ala' Hamamreh's story. Ala' is one of the founders of Shaghaf Foundation. Experiencing the limitations placed on girls as a child, Ala' noticed these limits and challenged them. The Shaghaf Foundation holds panels and activities to inspire women for change. Ala' notes that women in both Palestine and America face challenges because of the stronghold of patriarchy. She believes that economic independence for women is the first step, which is a primary goal of Shaghaf Foundation. Genesis finds hope through Ala's story.

**Keywords:** gender, activism, engagement, empowerment, advocacy, norms, sexism, human rights

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Identify Ala's experiences and how they influenced her work today [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare how women face similar challenges in the United States and Palestine [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how engagement can contribute to political change [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the podcast [Addressing Women's Challenges](#).
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together.

### Critical thinking and reflection questions

1. What experiences did Ala have as a young woman and how did they inspire her work today?



9. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: From Burden to Success

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/895238-from-burden-to-success>

### Description:

Youth is sometimes seen as a problem that society has to “deal with.” PAYCE Fellow Abdullah Hamdan created this episode to refute this mistaken framework. He explores the story of Jordanian young adult advocate Youssef Qahwaji. They discuss the summer 2018 peaceful protests in Amman and the personal story of Youssef overcoming failure. Failure brings positive growth and enables you to value success in life. The podcast ends with Abdullah’s vision for youth in the future in his community.

**Keywords:** politics narrative, youth engagement, life choices, failure, success

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Consider examples of youth engagement in politics or in communities [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare the way people of different ages engage in politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider what support is necessary to foster political engagement from all citizens [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the From Burden to Success podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. Is participation from youth a challenge or an opportunity? Give examples to support your claim.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How have youth engaged in politics in your community?



8. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Unconventional Politics to Change the Narrative

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/895240-unconventional-politics-to-change-the-narrative>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Hanan Zahran talks to Omar Hussein about his perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and how he moved from the U.S. to Palestine. Hanan describes Omar's work in "unconventional politics" through his job as a liaison to international visitors and his workplace. He describes why he chose this form of advocacy given the context for Jerusalemites. Omar expresses his hope for Palestine and his hope for the future. Hanan asks listeners: What can you do?

This podcast contains audio of violence that may be unsuitable for some listeners.

**Keywords:** unconventional politics, narrative, youth, politics, life choices, engagement, career

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe Omar's background and the type "unconventional politics" he pursues [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare the way people engage in conventional and unconventional politics [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how providing a narrative about everyday life serves as "unconventional politics" [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Unconventional Politics to Change the Narrative podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. Give examples of the ways Omar engages with his community through "unconventional politics"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is gentrification?



9. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.

## PAYCE Podcast: Try it, you will find yourself

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/906325-try-it-you-will-find-yourself>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Aya Anwr explores what started development worker Youssef Qahwaji on his path. When he was thirteen, he had the chance to participate in a Jordanian UNICEF workshop that expanded his horizons. Seeing things from a different perspective, this was a turning point in his career. Aya describes how she can identify with Youssef's story and the insight she draws from his advice.

**Keywords:** career, leadership, youth, politics, life choices, engagement

### After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Describe Youssef's path to discovering his career [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Consider the factors influencing how one determines a career path [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how different forms of engagement might empower people politically [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the Try it: you will find yourself podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. How does Youssef describe the path his life has taken?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is his advice for discovering one's passion in life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Do you feel pressure to select certain majors or careers? Are you free to pick any path? Why or why not?



prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.





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## PAYCE Podcast: Crack the Walls

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/215436/906346-crack-the-walls>

**Description:** PAYCE Fellow Zeina Melhem shares the story of how Ruba Ahmad advocates as a hijabi woman to effect change. Ruba describes her ability to break down the public/private dichotomy as a way to “crack the walls.” Her work with refugee women is discussed as helping others “use their power” as Ruba admires their capacity to face challenges.

**Keywords:** culture, sexism, women’s rights, gender, equality, religion, hijab, refugee, human rights

**After completing this activity, students should be able to**

- Describe Ruba’s experiences as a young female in the political sphere [Knowledge: information gathering]
- Compare her experiences with your own or those of friends and family [Analysis: taking apart]
- Consider how groups (women, refugees, others) can be empowered or not empowered by policy choices [Synthesis: putting together and Evaluation: judging the outcome]

### Activity

- Listen to the [Crack the Walls](#) podcast.
- Form small discussion groups and answer the critical thinking questions. Write up your responses, preparing one response per group.
- Rejoin the class and discuss the questions together

### Reflection and critical thinking questions

1. How does Ruba feel her gender and age influence the way she is treated in meetings?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does she describe her decision to wear a hijab? Does this resonate with you? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What do you think about the right to wear religious symbols publicly?



9. Do you feel empowered to engage in politics? Why or why not?

prepared by Katherine Owens, Ph.D.