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Taking on the Challenge: Teaching Banned and Challenged Books as a Citizenship Tool

Ell C. Rose

Swarthmore College

Thesis for Special Major in Educational Studies and Political Science

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Introduction

One of my greatest takeaways from my undergraduate education is that the synthesis of theory and practice is equally important and difficult to put into action. After years of reading educational theory that praises culturally responsive pedagogies, celebration of marginalized identities, and robust and honest depictions of history (Muhammad, 2023 Kumashiro, 2000, inter alia), I am faced with the reality that these pedagogies cannot always be implemented as written without immense political pushback, or even punishment, from schools, districts, or governments. The subjects that I teach—English and Social Studies—are among the most politicized, where I will often find strict constraints, whether administratively or socially imposed, on what I am able to teach and how. Politicized topics such as Critical Race Theory, LGBTQ+ identity, and Social-Emotional Learning may be welcome in some classrooms, but they are shunned in others. As someone pursuing a Special Major blending my Educational Studies with Political Science, I am not only driven to incorporate the so-called “political” material that I believe ought to be taught in schools, but I am also fascinated by the politics of politicization itself and what people and institutions choose to do and feel motivated by when they politicize curriculum. Furthermore, I want to take advantage of my understanding of the political climate to bring quality literature and important history to students, even if the material in question is labeled as “political.” To explore the possibility of discussing political topics in a context that would otherwise disapprove, I created a semester-long high school History or Humanities elective curriculum about banned books: exploring why people feel motivated to challenge books, what makes a book unfit for the school context, and which books are ultimately challenged or removed.

Definitions

There is often confusion around the terminology used around book banning efforts. The usage of this terminology can vary from context to context including across sources cited in this section, so I have synthesized those works into my own definitions that draw clear distinctions between different intents, outcomes, and consequences. I will be using terms in the following ways:

Term	Definition
Challenge	Any effort to remove a book from a place students can read it, including a school or public library, a classroom bookshelf, or curriculum. Challenges can be brought by anyone: individuals, school board members, state legislators, and more.
Ban	A successful challenge. If a book is banned, its removal has been explicitly mandated by a governing body such as a school board or state or local government, usually one with enforcement power that has enumerated penalties for noncompliance with the ban. For the purposes of this discussion, this will include cases where books are removed from circulation for further review, even if not permanently banned.
Removal	The act of books being removed from shelves, regardless of intent, motivation, or rationale. This includes, but is not limited to, the consequences of bans. Cases where books are removed out of an abundance of caution or fear will be labeled as removals, not bans, as they did not result from the specific institutional process of banning. That said, they may be described as “de facto bans” due to their similar consequences. PEN America defines some of these as “wholesale bans,” referring to instances where libraries were shut down altogether to avoid the risks and cost associated with operating a library under strict censorship laws (Meehan and Friedman, 2023).
Censorship	Any act where the consequence is a lack of access to a substantial portion of literature on particular themes. I know that this is a word that is often used with political motivations, and I do not deny that my own biases will inform when and how it is invoked. As a person who personally believes that removal of access to literature on thematic grounds is unacceptable, I do not hesitate to call even supposedly unintentional acts with this outcome “censorship,” and I acknowledge that others may construe the definition more narrowly.

Historical Book Bans

While much is unique about present-day book bans, the practice of censorship or banning of text goes back centuries. So long as ideas can be expressed, there have been efforts to prevent their expression, with some of the earliest documented instances of book bans occurring in the Roman Empire in the first century (“Bannings and Burnings”). Since the beginnings of widespread consumption of texts with the invention of the printing press, many censorship efforts have been religiously motivated, with many of the efforts in the first few centuries coming from the Catholic Church. Some commonly-banned content included translations of the Bible, teachings contrary to the Church (such as heliocentrism or, eventually, evolution) and, parallel to modern efforts, works that were perceived to be immoral or inappropriate for Christian consumption, most famously in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a list of books that Catholics were forbidden from printing or reading (“Bannings and Burnings”). As the Catholic Church’s power waned, however, religious censorship did not disappear: instead books were banned on grounds of immorality or inappropriateness, although no less influenced by Christian values, perhaps most prominently seen in the controversy over teaching evolution in schools in the early 20th century. In the last century there have also been more overtly political acts of censorship, such as prohibitions on Communist materials in the United States during the Cold War and Nazi book burnings (Davis, 2023). The presence of book bans has varied throughout history, arising when the political and cultural climate enables certain ideas to be perceived as threats, and subsiding during more peaceful times (“Bannings and Burnings”).

Book Bans Today

Book banning has returned to the American political forefront in the 2020s after having a limited presence for decades. It exists now as part of a greater right-wing surge to bring conservative Christian values into American public schools (Pappano, 2024). This movement can be traced to 2020, where the COVID-19 pandemic, the brutal killing of George Floyd, and a presidential election all compounded to create a tense and emotional political climate. The left-wing gains on these issues made in 2020 and 2021—mask mandates and lockdowns, protests and legislative changes, and the election of Joe Biden as President—led to right-wing individuals and groups attempting to resist the cultural and political shifts that seemed to be underway. As the pandemic that was once front and center became a more minor point in the American political and social landscape throughout 2021 and 2022, the energy once dedicated to resisting government efforts to reduce spread of COVID-19 found a new home with other right-wing efforts of the day.

Groups that originally organized against school mask mandates, such as Moms for Liberty, have now turned their sights towards other so-called “parents’ rights” issues, such as “inappropriate” literature on school library shelves (Pappano, 2024). Among certain themes of literature, targets of these far-right groups also include “Critical Race Theory” curriculum, “gender ideology” (and other “woke ideologies”), and social-emotional learning, all of which are believed to be part of a left-wing agenda to radicalize and indoctrinate children (Pappano, 2024, pp. 5-7). In conjunction with this push away from the inclusion of certain concepts in public school contexts is also a seemingly-paradoxical push away from public schools themselves: many people who support these radical changes in school climate are also proponents of “educational freedom,” the new euphemism synonymous with the equally-euphemistic “school choice,” which calls for the reduction in neighborhood schools (Pappano, 2024, p. 8). Often,

these school-based efforts exist in conjunction with broader social and political movements founded on the same ideologies, but in recent years, the school-based efforts have ceased to be local matters and have become battlegrounds for organizations and movements to proudly wage culture wars with national implications. Furthermore, some of those involved in school-related movements do so disingenuously, using the movement for broader political purposes without much consideration or care for the impact in schools (Pappano, 2024).

Present challenges, restrictions, and bans on books are the product of a unique political climate that brings identity politics to the forefront. Since 2020, the number of book challenges has grown significantly, with more book challenges reported in the final three months of 2021 than had been reported in the entirety of 2020 (Rehn, 2023). 2023 saw an uptick in challenges, and a sharp increase in public libraries in particular, compared to the previous year (American Library Association). Part of this surge is due to books being increasingly removed in large numbers. There are a couple explanations for this. First, it is becoming more common for challengers to ban several books at once rather than targeting a specific text (American Library Association). This also means that today's bans are highly localized, with a large portion of the bans and challenges being initiated by a handful of districts and states, and with many originating from a few large organizations like Moms for America. Over three quarters of the districts that saw any bans at all banned under 20 titles each, while the most prolific 5% of districts each banned 100-300 titles (Meehan and Friedman, 2023). Second, districts are increasingly willing to remove large swaths of banned and challenged books from libraries and classrooms to be reviewed, often leading to a de facto ban due to a lack of urgency to review the books for reinstatement (Meehan and Friedman, 2023). Books are being challenged at rates unprecedented in recent history, and they are being challenged in unprecedented numbers as well.

There are clear themes in the books challenged and banned in the U.S. in the present day. Of the 874 unique titles banned in the second half of 2022, PEN America found that the most common theme among those banned was violence and physical abuse, appearing in 44% of titles (Meehan and Friedman, 2023). After that came health and wellbeing of students (38%), grief and death (30%), race (30%), LGBTQ+ matters (26%), sexuality (24%), and sexual taboos, such as abortion or sexual assault (17%). However, this list does not tell the whole story: of the 11 books banned by ten or more districts, ten were written by women or nonbinary people, four authors were people of color, and four were LGBTQ+ people. Furthermore, the books banned from July to December 2022 do not represent the total array of books that have been removed from shelves. Many of the most contentious titles of previous years, such as *All Boys Aren't Blue*, met widespread bans in prior years, and most districts have either already banned the book or do not intend to.

Sometimes, mass censorship can occur without legislators naming a single book. There is a trend of local and state policies banning books on vague thematic grounds, such as Missouri's law stating that librarians and teachers providing "explicit sexual material" to students is a misdemeanor (Meehan and Friedman, 2023). Other common categorically banned content includes "pornography" (the provided examples of which seldom adhere to any widely accepted legal definition), "obscenity," and material "harmful to minors" (Meehan and Friedman, 2023). Without clarification or a defined threshold for when a book is unacceptably explicit, school officials are removing books from shelves without specific challenges to avoid legal consequences or social backlash, as occurred in Florida after the passage of the "curriculum transparency" law (Pappano, 2024, p. 50). Simply existing in a national culture of school censorship also has tangible effects on what is made available in school libraries: some

librarians, even outside of districts where book challenges are taking place, are hesitating before purchasing books with “controversial” material for their libraries, worrying that even if their district has not experienced any bans, that they may do so soon (Pappano, 2024, p. 55). These forms of “soft censorship” also make it more difficult to understand the full scope of censorship, as there is no paper trail of which books are removed without explicit challenge (Pappano, 2024, p. 55). This means that there are likely many more books removed from shelves than are documented in traditionally available book challenge legislation trackers.

Legal Standing of U.S. Book Bans

Often, book banning efforts will raise constitutionality questions. The established constitutional right to free speech and expression is often at the heart of debates over curriculum and school conduct cases, as these First Amendment rights are often interpreted to protect the right to give and receive information, including in schools. Proponents of book bans argue that there is no free speech restriction at play, while opponents argue that intentional removal of content from a school amounts to a limitation of First Amendment rights. The existing legal landscape for book bans is nonetheless complex and lacks a clear set of guidelines for districts and states to follow, and the venue for censorship (e.g. removing a book from a public school versus a public library, or removing a book from curriculum but not a library) can also substantially change the legal question considered.

On its face, the First Amendment’s free expression protections may not seem to pertain to book censorship at all; after all, reading is an act of receiving information, not spreading it. However, many have argued—and many judges have been receptive—that in order to protect the rights of free speech and a free press, there must also be a right to receive the information that is

given via such expression and publication (*Board of Education v. Pico*, 1982). To ban the *consumption* of an idea wholesale would amount to banning the *expression* of the idea, because the power of the expression comes from the fact that people who want to listen to the ideas are able to do so (Kim, 2022). Essentially, it is argued in book banning cases that to tell someone, “you are welcome to write a book about sexuality, but no one in this government-run school will be allowed to read it,” amounts to unconstitutional censorship of the author, and therefore the book must be permitted for consumption.

The case most crucial to assessing the constitutionality of book bans today is *Board of Education v. Pico* (1982), in which an effort to remove certain books from public school libraries based on their content was deemed unconstitutional. In this case, it was determined that while school boards do have a legitimate interest in promoting good values, the promotion of those values cannot override the First Amendment responsibilities of schools. As a result, *Pico* is often lauded as a major victory against censors, although the nuances behind the primary holding make it difficult to apply as precedent. The Court only reached a plurality opinion of four Justices in *Pico*, leading to substantial ambiguity about its implications for future cases. The plurality viewed school libraries as special places where First Amendment protections required more deference than in other parts of the school, and they argued that the right to receive information protected controversial content in libraries. However, several Justices argued against the existence of an expansive right to receive information whatsoever, raising the question of, for example, whether or not a library could be sued for not *adding* books upon request. Others simply argued that schools, and libraries by extension, have an obligation to instill proper values by limiting exposure to inappropriate texts. Others still rejected the notion that the courts should be involved at all in what was, to them, obviously a matter of local politics (Kim, 2022). As

such, without a clear majority opinion, *Pico* is not the free speech titan that many make it out to be.

Furthermore, even if *Pico* is to be taken at face value as a case denouncing book bans, there remain limitations to its utility in the broader censorship conversation. First, as the case specifically focuses on public school libraries and the special purpose it holds as a space of student agency and discovery, its specialized reasoning does not necessarily apply to other venues of censorship (Kim, 2022). The plurality in *Pico* declined to comment on how the ruling would impact curriculum, although it is unlikely that those cases would be treated identically to library cases due to their emphasis on the library's unique role (Pappano, 2024, p. 63). Students do not have the same level of agency in the classroom, and it is likely that some jurists who agree that there is a right to receive information in a library may not believe the same about a classroom. Second, the school board in *Pico* made a clearly ideological decision about which books to exclude from the library, and it was that *ideological* decision that was struck down. Several similar cases brought in the intervening decades have reiterated this point that beliefs alone are insufficient reasoning to censor a book. However, the 11th Circuit ruled in *ACLU v. Miami-Dade County School Board* (2009) that books could be constitutionally removed if they contained factual inaccuracies. In this case, the challenged book's "inaccuracy" was a positive depiction of life in Cuba, a less-than-objective matter that does not bode well for future texts accused of spreading misinformation (Kim, 2022). With these two matters and more due to ambiguity in the ruling and limited scope, *Pico* provides an abstract support for students' literary agency, but does not provide much of a concrete legal foundation to support that agency when it is under attack.

That said, *Pico* still holds power in the book challenging debate. For example, when the Tennessee Senate took up a bill (HB 1944) focused on censoring “pornographic or obscene materials,” legislators appeared “willing... to consider applying criminal consequences to educators and librarians” and ignore “the fact that the law sought to censor and limit access to books with racial and LGBTQ+ themes” (Pappano, 2024, p. 49). However, it was the question of constitutionality that made the body ultimately vote to effectively kill the proposal (Pappano, 2024). Despite its flaws, it does stand as the most relevant precedent to this discourse, and it ultimately did result in a finding against a book ban. As such, as much as it cannot be relied on exclusively, it remains a valuable tool for the anti-censorship side, especially as pro-censorship groups have even less legal precedent on their side.

Why Banned Books Curriculum?

Due to the complex and tense social, political, and legal climate around censorship and ideology in schools, I believe that it is important to not only bring challenged literature, but bring conversations *around* challenged literature to the students themselves. Not only is it an important conversation to have with future voters and citizens as they develop their own stances on the important issues of their time, but it is important to acknowledge them as stakeholders at the center of a major political debate. Bringing this literature to them in a tense political moment *without any pressure to adopt any particular stance* is an important way to preserve their agency over their own education and to provide all the necessary information for them to be informed and thoughtful citizens. By the end of this course spotlighting banned books, they should have the ability to articulate their own stance about what kinds of books, if any, should be censored in

schools as well as opinions on how, when, and why controversial material should exist in the classroom.

The Banned Books course is interdisciplinary in nature and is structured around three case studies of banned or challenged books and their historical context, whether that context be when the book was written or the era in which it is set. First, students would investigate a classic example of censorship—Nazi Germany—through a reading of *Maus*. Then, looking to the U.S., they would study the rise in authoritarian action due to the “threat” of Communism in the 1950s, paired with Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. Finally, they would investigate present-day efforts to prevent “indoctrination” of students through Critical Race Theory and LGBTQ+ representation while reading George M. Johnson’s *All Boys Aren’t Blue*. Incorporating substantial historical education into analysis of banned literature is essential as “how a book is received or understood is often subject to the historical moment,” and a modern analytical lens may not be sufficient to understand why a book causes, or caused, controversy (Pappano, 2024, p. 56). As a passionate teacher of both English and History, I believe that neither can truly exist without the other: all literature is enriched by conversations around historical and cultural context, and all historical and cultural information is enriched by an understanding of the written works created in and around the studied event.

Importantly, I am not creating this curriculum to teach students to feel a certain way about book bans: it would be ironic, and in many school contexts unproductive at best, to promote a specific political stance *about* the promotion of specific political stances. My goal is to provide information and support students in drawing their own conclusions, acting as though they were individuals hired by a school district to review materials that had been challenged, reading as though they were to advise the district on whether or not they ought to be removed

from school libraries. This curriculum aims to support students in developing citizenship skills, not specific opinions: students will learn to research, think critically, cultivate nuanced perspectives, and develop solutions, all of which will serve them in their adult political lives regardless of their beliefs. Furthermore, by approaching the issue of book bans head-on and not shying away from the fact that some books may have content that would be upsetting or uncomfortable for students, this curriculum can negate allegations of “indoctrination” via literature by plainly stating that they are to read everything critically (Pappano, 2024). If the discussion centers on *why* something could be dangerous to experience without context (for example, sexual experiences depicted in *All Boys Aren't Blue*) or what political themes exist in the book (for example, censorship in *Fahrenheit 451*), then the curriculum will not gloss over nor praise the controversial material in ways that could more easily be deemed “indoctrination.” As such, despite some political risk remaining, I believe that highlighting the fact that the literature covered in the class is banned has the potential to be a positive strategic choice in bringing these texts to students, especially those in districts that are not banning the literature altogether but would generally disapprove of them as required texts.

My development of this resource does not only involve me teaching banned books: rather, it also forces me to consider how to teach controversial material in ways that do not spark controversy. My goal is not to create the most radical, progressive curriculum for the most radical and progressive school, but to create a curriculum that would be seen as acceptable by students, parents, and administrators of diverse backgrounds. To succeed in this effort, I must have a deep understanding of the politics of book bans and challenges, which I gained through a combination of law reviews, scholarly works in Political Science, and synthesis of reports on book challenges. Only once I gained a sense of what causes books to be banned, who bans books

and why, and, conversely, what enables books to remain on the shelves, could I move on to developing a curriculum informed by those findings.

Curriculum design

I used elements of Backwards Design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) and Gholdy Muhammad's Five Pursuits (Muhammad, 2023) to design my curriculum. Backwards design involves planning learning goals first, followed by methods of assessing learning goals, and finally filling in the individual processes that will help students achieve understanding, and helps me work from an idea to specific methods of approaching it. Rooted in the traditions of Black literary societies, Muhammad's Five Pursuits—identity, skills, intellect, criticality, and joy—are incorporated into every level of curriculum development to break down barriers to traditional education in relation to, but not exclusively to, racial injustice. Since I began this process with specific educational goals and takeaways, as opposed to a school requiring that I build curriculum around a specific reading list or historical theme, Backwards Design fit intuitively and helped me plan the overall arc of the semester. I used this framework to determine book selections to fit my learning goals, develop large assignments that will summatively assess students' grasps on said goals, and plan out key topics.

On the unit level, I considered the Five Pursuits. In a course that relies so heavily on discussions of heavy topics and identity in relation to books, and inherently demands a series of critical conversations about injustice, both within and surrounding the books, to incorporate Muhammad's pursuits was an easy decision. To teach a course on banned books without identity, criticality, and joy would be a disservice to the educational material. It would also run the risk of creating a dangerous environment for students who are being exposed to heavy material without

joy, and they would learn about judgments on their identities without opportunity to engage critically and reinforce their pride. As such, I followed the Five Pursuits to ensure that along with the reading and writing skills and development of their literary intellect that are inherent in all English classes, they will also engage with their identities, express and experience joy, and approach the entire class through a real-world-informed critical lens.

Inherent to my teaching style is also an emphasis on individual inquiry, project-based learning (Bruner, 1960), and Universal Design for Learning (Meyer et al., 2015). At the lesson and assignment level, each of these guided me, ensuring that students have agency in their learning at every turn. This agency is academic, providing them with the opportunity to pursue whatever sparks their intellectual curiosity, but it also relates to accessibility, in that they can choose the path where they are challenged but not disabled (using the Social Model sense of being “disabled” by one’s environment) in their access to the material. Furthermore, as the intention of this course is to maximize student agency in developing beliefs about banned books, it is more necessary than ever that I remain cognizant of my biases and be deliberate in not promoting any particular political viewpoint beyond basic human respect for all. Student agency was also incorporated throughout each of the more global planning stages, just as the other frameworks sometimes informed individual lessons. While each method seems most applicable to me for a particular stage, they all undoubtedly surfaced at appropriate times at each stage of the process.

Development of learning goals

Following the first step of the Backwards Design process, I outlined the major learning goals that I thought were essential for this course to run successfully. However, I felt that in this

course, given its uniquely challenging (a)political objectives, it would be as important to outline strategy goals for the *execution* of the course as it would be to outline more traditional goals for the course content. As such, I developed two lists, content goals and execution goals, to shape the development of the curriculum itself:

Content goals:

- Identify historical trends in book banning efforts
- Identify common themes in banned literature
- Synthesize similarities and differences between censorship efforts throughout history, as well as censorship efforts depicted in literature
- Develop a personal philosophy about access to controversial literature

Execution goals:

- Present a multifaceted narrative on banned books, resisting the single anti-censorship story
- Enable a welcoming exploratory environment where students are encouraged to take a stance that is authentic and grounded in their own beliefs
- Present a diverse set of texts and examples of censorship from across the political spectrum

Through the lens of achieving these goals, I moved on to select texts and methods of assessment for each text-based unit.

Book selection

The first step I took in building this curriculum was selecting books. Originally, I planned to write a year-long curriculum including five books, each of which focused on a different commonly-banned topic (sexuality, race, LGBTQ+ identity, political dissent, and violence), and it was through this lens of making sure to highlight specific common themes among banned books that I compiled a list of books to choose from. In between creating this list and making selections, I reduced the timeline to a single semester with three books, in part because I felt it would be best to plan a shorter class more thoroughly, and in part because I was reminded in reading my book list that many of these issues overlap within a single book and it is not necessary to have five books—or a full year—to cover five themes. I also realized that the books I wanted to highlight were each a product of a specific era of book bans. Inspired by this pattern, I decided to expand the discussion of cultural context already planned for the course into full historical and present-day case studies guided by literature: it became a social studies course with literary context, rather than a literature course with historical context. Ultimately, I selected the following three themes. First, the class reads *Maus* by Art Spiegelman to introduce them to a historic example of drastic censorship in Nazi Germany. The graphic novel format of the book also provides a soft introduction into the course and sparks conversations about visual representation of difficult themes, making graphic content into literal “graphic” content. Then, they read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury as the guiding novel for discussions about the Cold War era as well as the theme of political dissent. Finally, they read *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson to engage with present challenges around Critical Race Theory and LGBTQ+ issues, also touching on the themes of race, sexuality, violence, and LGBTQ+ identity.

Maus is well-situated as the introductory text for the course. As a graphic novel, it provides a soft landing place for students as they begin the semester, requiring less time and energy to read the words themselves and freeing up that time to have additional important conversations about content. As students shake off the rust of the summer or winter break, this book will not tax them to the point of needing to sacrifice other elements of the course. The graphic novel format not only makes the book more efficient to read but can also serve as a hook for the course, bringing student buy-in and excitement about the topic. Despite being written later, *Maus* also pairs well with an exploration of censorship in Nazi Germany, which is a relatively straightforward case study to begin the year. I believe there is also political merit to this: by starting the year with a non-American example that is (more or less) universally acknowledged as a dark moment in history as it can set the tone that discussions of censorship in 2024 do not inherently have to be partisan. However, the very same universality is a drawback in that the students' first impression of censorship is a clearly negative example, when that is not the overall goal of the course. That said, Nazi censorship will provide an opportunity to discuss the silencing of marginalized voices *outside* of the contemporary context, which will help to provide a comparative dimension later on in the course. The final two reasons for including *Maus* are about the book itself. For one, it has been banned for nudity and (in other parts of the world) Nazi imagery: this leads to conversations about whether or not it was *truly* banned for those reasons, and also whether or not problematic imagery presented negatively (like a swastika in an overtly anti-Nazi book) should be treated as dangerous exposure. Second, by being a graphic novel, the more violent and explicit portions of the book can be received differently than if they were written, which will be discussed in class. It provides another dimension to receive

literature, and the experience of seeing versus reading can continue to be explored throughout the course.

Fahrenheit 451 works well to deepen the conversation about book banning, and to introduce American book banning, for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the premise itself is that all books have been banned and are burned upon discovery, with their possessors facing harsh consequences. This helps to make an overt connection between the author's political commentary and contemporary cultural events. It also presents such a stark and extreme version of book banning that it is not essential to draw direct comparisons between the book's premise and present-day challenges, continuing to reinforce the notion that the class was not created to indoctrinate or promote a specific political stance. It allows the conversation to begin in a non-threatening hypothetical, rather than a partisan reality. Second, the book is the quintessential "product of its time." It will provide a valuable lens into historical censorship—especially that of the 1950s—and can initiate conversations about how that differs from present-day censorship. It will also provide a path to discussing the manners with which information is communicated: this book demonstrates the importance of a physical, burnable object in the historic form of censorship, while today's digital reality results in different challenges and benefits. Finally, it grants an opportunity to look at the use of technology in the book that supposedly recounts events of the present day (being placed "after 2022") versus the technology in our actual reality, and the similarities and differences between the real and hypothetical 2020s can also provide insights into the ways that information was expected to spread in the future, including what the author portrayed as a threat.

All Boys Aren't Blue is worthy of study in a class about banned books for many of the opposite, and complementary, reasons to why *Fahrenheit 451* ought to be included. In many

ways, it is the quintessential banned book of the 2020s: it is a memoir by a queer Black man, engages with sexuality and sexual violence in somewhat graphic but relevant ways, and often reads like a left-of-center manifesto. It is overtly political in advocating for certain futures, giving the reader things they should believe in, and engaging with concepts like Critical Race Theory by name. Analysis of this book enables discussions about the topics that are currently at the center of book banning conversations and will allow students to engage with whether or not those topics are worth banning. Important to consider when teaching this book, however, is that by nature of discussing the topics that currently result in bans, the class will discuss things that relate to students' personal identities. It is essential that there are strict instructions and processes in the curriculum to ensure that those conversations are handled cordially and with baseline respect for one another. Doing so in a way that does not overly support the messages of books like *All Boys Aren't Blue* will be difficult, since the goal of the class is not to take a stance but to allow students to develop their own, but it must be done for student safety.

Unit development and the Five Pursuits

Using the books and full-semester goals determined above, I then planned individual units. Following Muhammad's theory, I developed unit goals pertaining to the Five Pursuits: identity, skills, intellect, criticality, and joy. Each unit has a number of goals associated with each pursuit, although these lists are non-exhaustive: these were broad goals that I used to guide my development of the units, but do not represent the full scope of engagement with each pursuit in the final product, which is much more robust.

	Unit 1: Nazi Germany and <i>Maus</i>	Unit 2: Cold War and <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	Unit 3: Present day and <i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i>
Identity	<p>Understand the power of students as changemakers</p> <p>Connect to a story worth telling</p> <p>Reflect on family stories and histories</p> <p>Learn about the experiences European Jews and other persecuted groups before, during, and after the Holocaust</p> <p>Learn about the identities associated with persecution in Nazi Germany</p>	<p>Understand the position of students during the Cold War</p> <p>Identify personal connections to censorship and silencing</p> <p>Connect to the experiences of students during the Cold War</p> <p>Learn about identities of people who were censored during the Cold War</p>	<p>Understand the role of students in present-day political discourse</p> <p>Make (dis)connections between families depicted in the story and one's own</p> <p>Question and critique one's own beliefs</p> <p>Strengthen and enhance political identity</p> <p>Learn about Black and Queer experiences</p>
Skills	<p>Critical thinking</p> <p>Analyze literary text and images</p> <p>Synthesize historical evidence into themes</p> <p>Make connections between text and historical subject matter and context</p> <p>Storytelling, including visual storytelling</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Presenting</p>	<p>Critical thinking</p> <p>Compare and contrast historical and cultural climates and policies</p> <p>Make connections between text and the context in which it was written</p> <p>Write a formal analytical text</p> <p>Write a comparative analysis</p> <p>Research</p>	<p>Critical thinking</p> <p>Analyze literary text</p> <p>Develop political strategies, including compromise and discourse</p> <p>Connect text to its historical, cultural, and political context</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Write a policy</p> <p>Apply knowledge from prior units</p>

Intellect	<p>Read <i>Maus</i></p> <p>Identify major elements of Nazi ideology and censorship</p> <p>Learn about the Holocaust</p> <p>Compare censorship efforts across different locations and times</p> <p>Explore the impact of visuals on storytelling</p> <p>Engage with form and structure of graphic novels</p>	<p>Read <i>Fahrenheit 451</i></p> <p>Learn about the Cold War</p> <p>Learn about Soviet and American censorship during the Cold War</p> <p>Analyze similarities and differences between American and Soviet censorship</p> <p>Determine the impact and effectiveness of American suppression efforts</p>	<p>Read <i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i></p> <p>Assess political climates and contexts</p> <p>Learn about present day book bans and challenges</p> <p>Synthesize diverse political and cultural perspectives</p>
Criticality	<p>Assess the legitimacy of censorship justifications</p> <p>Acknowledge the harm of Nazi beliefs and actions</p> <p>Understand the power and control derived from cultivating a single story</p> <p>Unravel problematic narratives through storytelling</p>	<p>Assess the legitimacy of censorship justifications</p> <p>Consider consequences of censorship</p> <p>Determine reasons for limiting information access during tense political events</p> <p>Analyze the relationship between power and access to information</p>	<p>Assess the legitimacy of censorship justifications</p> <p>Critique different approaches to book exposure in schools</p> <p>Evaluate (un)importance of reading difficult or uncomfortable text</p> <p>Analyze acts of structural resistance, defiance, and joy</p>
Joy	<p>Share a story</p> <p>Explore multimodal expression</p> <p>Connect to family history</p> <p>Create art</p> <p>Choice</p>	<p>Choice</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Purpose through persuasion</p>	<p>Find solutions to pressing issues</p> <p>Discuss and debate</p> <p>Hold agency over one's own beliefs and how they are shared</p>

From these goals, I outlined the semester into daily topics based on guiding questions before developing lesson plans (See Appendix A). In the creation of these unit plans, I found

myself using two distinct strategies across the three units: for the two history-based units, I was comfortable outlining an honest and accurate account of history, including matters that might be seen as political. In this case, this comfort is rooted in the fact that the Holocaust (barring denial) and the Cold War are not at the core of political controversy in 2024. While there are certainly ways that they could draw controversy, there have not been the same right-wing efforts to omit critical details from their histories in the same way as, for example, slavery and the Civil War or the arrival of Christopher Columbus. However, the same was not true for the present-day unit: given that teaching about present-day controversies has the potential to draw the very controversy that it describes, I focused on supporting students' agency in the classroom and minimizing the teacher's presence. I focused exclusively on the political science side of book bans: who is banning them, why they want to ban them, and how and where these bans are put into effect. I was extremely hesitant to contribute any tone to this exploration, even though I was willing to present the actions of Hitler and McCarthy as unequivocally negative. This difference also manifests in the structure of the unit, featuring fewer lectures and more discussions than the other two so that there is less information provided in a top-down capacity. Similarly, since the present-day book contains explicitly political material and vivid depictions of harm, more of the unit is focused on enabling students to share their experiences reading a book that may be uncomfortable to read. The curriculum is also built to support them in developing opinions about whether or not it *should* be read, rather than treating the text as a piece of inherently valuable literature. These differences felt necessary to preserve the political flexibility of the course.

Lesson development

For each unit, I developed one inquiry-based sample lesson (see Appendix B). In order to showcase a variety of lesson types, I also made sure that each lesson focused on a different part of the unit: historical and cultural context, book analysis, or the final project. The first is a history lesson from the *Maus*/Nazi Germany unit, a jigsaw in which students explore different examples and eras of Nazi propaganda (see Appendix B, Lesson 1). The second is a book-related discussion from the *Fahrenheit 451*/Cold War unit, in which students create and begin to fill an inventory of text examples that mirror historical events and themes (see Appendix B, Lesson 2). The third is the very last lesson of the class: an activity using their final projects from the *All Boys Aren't Blue*/Present Day unit in which they attempt to pass their own book-related policies in a model congress context (see Appendix B, Lesson 3). For each one, I prioritized supporting student inquiry and discovery, enabling them to be agents of their own learning.

Conclusion

This curriculum aims to strike a balance between overt political activity in the classroom and a complete removal of all topics deemed “political” from curriculum. In an age where so many aspects of pedagogy, curriculum, and educational institutions are politicized and scrutinized, it is becoming increasingly difficult to simply “avoid politics” and still feel that one is presenting a robust and informative curriculum in good faith, especially in literature and history contexts. In this exploration, I hope to have found an answer to the question, “what if school was *political*, but not *politicized*?” This curriculum clearly does not shy away from political topics in and of themselves—they are the backbone of the course’s content—but there is room to disagree, to formulate independent and contrary opinions, and to explore one’s own

identity as it pertains to the political topics at hand. Through the lens of three different books and three different eras of American censorship, students are provided with the opportunity to wrestle with difficult political questions, hopefully supporting them in developing a nuanced and independent perspective on the censorship of the present day.

This curriculum exists as a proof of concept for threading a difficult political needle. However, there are some outstanding questions that remain. First, there is the question of whether or not this curriculum can ever be truly nonpartisan. It would take great tact to present this curriculum in a way completely devoid of the teacher's own ideologies, although I remain concerned about whether or not presenting two historical eras that are generally seen as negative—the Third Reich and the McCarthy era—in concert with the modern day will inherently make the presentation of the modern day negative as well. While I set out with the goal of not only focusing on right-wing censorship, I found that difficult to achieve, since many of the high-profile censorship events in recent history have come from the right. In implementation, it would be important to consider this bias in the structure of the curriculum and consider ways to balance it out in an effort to restore some neutrality.

Second, it is important to consider the safety of marginalized students in the class, but balancing a welcoming classroom environment for marginalized students with creating an environment where specific ideologies are not promoted is often easier said than done, especially in an environment that intentionally promotes discussion, dialogue, and engagement with ideology. Student safety must not be compromised under any circumstances, but the more challenging question lies in which forms of student discomfort are productive and worthwhile and which ones are purely harmful and alienating. The success of this balance will ultimately fall to the strategies of the individual teacher, but future iterations of this curriculum may benefit

from guidelines about how to navigate that difficult task. This curriculum takes on a major challenge of teaching in the 2020s in a new way, and with that comes challenges and difficult questions, but hopefully also provides a blueprint to gracefully navigate a difficult climate without curricular compromise.

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Appendix A

Curriculum Calendar

The following grid contains daily lesson topics for each unit. Each table contains a different unit, and they are listed chronologically. Each grid should be read as a calendar, with each cell containing a day's lesson. Each day's cell contains a topic and a method of conveying that topic. Common educational acronyms and terms such as KWL (Know, Wonder, Learn chart), jigsaw, and HW (homework) are used for readability and conservation of space. Most interactive lectures could be substituted for passage reading or other forms of conveying large amounts of information at once.

Unit 0: Welcome and Introduction to Course (1 week)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Welcome activities/ice breakers	Discussion: why read books to learn history?	KWL and interactive lecture: introduction to banned books	Discussion: (why) is it important to learn about banned books?	Research activity: investigation of the politicization of books

Unit 1: Nazi Germany and <i>Maus</i> (4 weeks)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Interactive lecture: the Third Reich (focusing on government and WWII)	Interactive lecture: the Holocaust	Presentation: memoirs and intro to <i>Maus</i> Discussion: why tell your own story? HW: book 1, ch. 1-2	Jigsaw: Nazi propaganda (see Appendix B) HW: book 1, ch. 3	Continue activity (propaganda gallery walk) HW: book 1, ch. 4-5

<p>Book discussion: analyzing imagery; ch. 5 comic as justification for present-day bans; difference in experience between consuming text and graphics</p> <p>HW: book 1, ch. 6</p>	<p>Discussion: how do censorship and propaganda work together? Why do people in power benefit from censorship?</p> <p>HW: book 2, ch. 1</p>	<p>Interactive lecture: Nazi censorship, book burnings, role of students in censorship efforts</p> <p>HW: book 2, ch. 2</p>	<p>Jigsaw: spotlight research on an author or text banned in Nazi Germany</p> <p>HW: book 2, ch. 3</p>	<p>Continue activity (presentations of research)</p> <p>HW: book 2, ch. 4-5</p>
<p>Book discussion: compare bans in Nazi Germany and present-day banning of <i>Maus</i>, both in the US (nudity) and abroad (Nazi imagery); Is <i>all</i> exposure to Nazis dangerous, even if it's critical?</p>	<p>Introduce writing project: comic strip/brief graphic novel on a story you think is worth telling</p> <p>Think, pair, share: what is a story you want to tell? Who is a person whose story you want to tell? What's something you wish everyone understood?</p>	<p>Discussion: how Spiegelman tells a story, and how he uses graphics</p> <p>Reflection: what will you do to share your story in a compelling way?</p> <p>Outline work time</p>	<p>Discussion: how Spiegelman includes/omits details and consider timeline</p> <p>Individual work: choose what details to include, when the story starts and ends, what order to tell events in</p> <p>HW: work on prose narrative</p>	<p>Narrative independent work day</p> <p>HW: work on narrative</p>
<p>Writer's workshop: peer conferences on narrative</p> <p>Discussion: how will graphics contribute to the story?</p> <p>HW: finish narrative draft (due at EOD), start graphics</p>	<p>Graphics work day</p> <p>HW: work on graphics</p>	<p>Graphics work day</p> <p>HW: work on graphics</p>	<p>Graphics work day</p> <p>HW: work on graphics</p>	<p>Graphic novel gallery walk</p> <p>Graphic novel due at classtime</p>

Unit 2: Cold War and <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (6 weeks)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Interactive lecture: how did WWII end for the Allies, and how did their relationships evolve in the coming years?	Small group research and report: communism vs. capitalism	Interactive lecture: intro to the Cold War and the role of censorship	Discussion: intro to the book and why/if it's important to read, what is expected from a book about book burnings HW: pp. 1-9	Interactive lecture: American beliefs and fears in the 1950s HW: pp. 10-21
Book discussion: initial parallels between the Cold War and the book; inventory creation (see Appendix B) HW: pp. 21-29	Interactive lecture: McCarthy and McCarthyism, and who was targeted HW: pp. 29-39	Primary source analysis: climate of information during the Cold War HW: pp. 39-45	Interactive lecture: FBI involvement in censorship HW: pp. 45-60	Discussion: to what extent were the censorship efforts of government officials justified, both at the time and in hindsight? HW: pp. 60-65
Book discussion: what can we learn about the past from Bradbury's depiction of the future? What can we learn about hopes and fears from the time? HW: pp. 67-76	Small group research: what was happening while Bradbury was writing <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> ? HW: pp. 76-89	Primary source exploration: how was daily life impacted by censorship during the 1950s? HW: pp. 89-106	Brief lecture and activity: how were schools affected by censorship during the 1950s? HW: pp. 107-115	Brief lecture: First Amendment and blacklisting Game: Constitutionality 4 corners HW: pp. 115-124
Book discussion: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> as an allegory; how does the inclusion of purely fictional details affect our experience of the story? HW: pp. 124-133	Interactive lecture: Soviet Union Activity: Soviet literary comparison inventory HW: pp. 133-138	Brief lecture: Soviet censorship Jigsaw: Soviet censorship over time HW: pp. 138-147	Discussion: comparison between Soviet and American censorship HW: pp. 147-158	Primary source analysis: reception of <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> in its time

Book discussion: legitimacy of reasons <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> was banned; connections to content of book	Introduce writing project: comparative essay on <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> and American or Soviet Cold War censorship Instruction: how to write a comparative analysis Select American or Soviet censorship to focus on	Group work: comparing to and adding to inventories with people who share your focus	Work day HW: work on comparative analysis	Work day HW: work on comparative analysis
Writers' workshop: one round with a peer with the same topic, one round with a peer with the opposite topic HW: work on comparative analysis	Work day HW: work on comparative analysis	Work day HW: work on comparative analysis	Writers' workshop: peer editing HW: work on comparative analysis	Work day HW: work on comparative analysis

Unit 2: Present Day and <i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i> (7 weeks)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Discussion: takeaways from historical examples of censorship	Discussion: what topics are controversial right now? How are the books banned these days related to it? How does <i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i> relate? HW: author's note and introduction	Brief lecture: what is Critical Race Theory (CRT)? What <i>isn't</i> CRT? Discussion: how will we handle controversial topics that are important to people in the room? How can we engage in political conversations with respect for differences and common humanity? HW: ch. 1	Discussion: why might it be important to read books about other peoples' experiences? Why might it not always feel right? HW: ch. 2	Interactive lecture: present day book bans examples HW: ch. 3

<p>Book discussion: the role of intended audience and its impact on the text; effects of non-chronology on reading experience</p> <p>HW: ch. 4</p>	<p>Discussion: experience of reading slurs in ch. 4</p> <p>Interactive lecture: history of laws around vulgar speech</p> <p>HW: ch. 5</p>	<p>Small group research: laws prohibiting teaching certain topics</p> <p>HW: ch. 6</p>	<p>Brief lecture: climate around discussing politics in the classroom</p> <p>Small group discussion without teacher: what is it like to disagree with your teacher politically?</p> <p>HW: letter and ch. 7</p>	<p>Discussion: to what extent does banning a “political” book increase or decrease the politicization of the classroom?</p> <p>HW: ch. 8</p>
<p>Book discussion: how does it feel to read an overtly political text? How does it feel to read parts that are politicized but not inherently political?</p> <p>HW: ch. 9</p>	<p>Interactive lecture: the who/what/where/when of book ban legislation; how local and state laws are passed</p> <p>HW: ch. 10</p>	<p>Discussion: preparing for things that hurt to read, and whether or not they are worth reading</p> <p>HW: letter and ch. 11 (provide content warning for sexual assault)</p>	<p>Discussion: how much should students be protected from difficult truths?</p> <p>HW: ch. 12</p>	<p>Discussion: what role should sexuality and romance play in young adult/high school novels? Do they belong in books at all? In high school texts?</p> <p>HW: ch. 13</p>
<p>Book discussion: what is the overall tone of the text? Does the fact that certain parts are more positive or negative than others affect their appropriateness?</p> <p>HW: ch. 14</p>	<p>Brainstorm: What kinds of legislation would keep <i>All Boys Aren't Blue</i> out of schools?</p> <p>HW: ch. 15</p>	<p>Individual project: find a piece of book ban legislation and create a mini-presentation</p> <p>HW: ch. 16 and afterword</p>	<p>Continue project</p>	<p>Continue project</p> <p>Presentations</p>
<p>Book discussion: is this book worth reading in a high school class?</p>	<p>Introduce writing project: policy pertaining to the banning or protecting of books</p> <p>Discussion: in what cases should books be kept out of schools? In what case should they be protected from removal efforts?</p>	<p>Instruction: how to write a policy</p> <p>Discuss: how can beliefs be formulated into an actionable plan?</p>	<p>Instruction: policy structure and elements</p>	<p>Research and discussion: what do lawmakers consider when writing a policy?</p> <p>HW: start policy outline</p>

Policy outline work day HW: work on policy outline (due at EOD)	Writers' workshop: find loopholes in peer policies HW: revise outline, start policy draft	Policy work day HW: work on policy	Policy work day HW: work on policy	Policy work day HW: work on policy (due at EOD)
Model congress using policies (see Appendix B)	Continue model congress	TBD/buffer	TBD/buffer	TBD/buffer

Appendix B

Lesson Plans

<p>Lesson 1: Propaganda and Censorship (Nazi Germany and <i>Maus</i>)</p> <p><i>At this point, students have learned about the Holocaust and have begun reading <i>Maus</i>. This is their first serious dive into historical censorship. This corresponds with Week 1, day 4 in the Nazi Germany and <i>Maus</i> unit calendar.</i></p>	
Lesson objective:	Students will analyze the evolution of Nazi propaganda over time.
Assessment and definition of success:	Report to peers Thoughtful written answers to comprehension questions Informative gallery walk presentation
<p>Day 1 Lesson Procedure</p>	
<p>Radical do-now (journal prompt): Why do you think people manipulate each other? Have you ever been manipulated? Have you ever manipulated someone?</p> <p>Introduction: what is propaganda? 1-2 informative slides</p> <p>Preview instructions: 2 slides</p> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be broken into 4 groups and assigned a section of this resource on propaganda from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. (https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/home) ● Each group will read their section. You can decide if they read together or by themselves, or they can decide. ● Each group will write down answers to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What kinds of messages were being spread during your era? ○ How much freedom did people have at the time? ○ How did German life at the time affect what was in the propaganda and how it was used? ● Redistribute students into new groups of 4 that contain one member of each group. ● Each student will summarize their reading group's discoveries to their new small group. Make sure to inform them that they will be doing this in advance so that they all feel accountable to remember their group's information. ● Small groups will discuss and write down answers to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What about Nazi propaganda was consistent across different eras in Germany? ○ What changed over time? 	

Day 2 Lesson Procedure

Radical do-now (journal prompt): What did you notice about how the Nazis worked to manipulate people's feelings? How do you think it would have felt to live in that time if you didn't agree with Nazi ideology?

Preview instructions: 1 slide

Activity:

- By themselves, students will look back through the section they read and select a propaganda poster that is interesting or worth talking about.
- Students will analyze their poster, documenting what they notice and what interests them.
- Students will search their section for historical context and will draw connections between the poster and historical information.
- Share takeaways in a gallery walk where students display the posters and explain their thinking.

Lesson 2: Historical connections in *Fahrenheit 451* (Cold War and *Fahrenheit 451*)

At this point, students have some limited context about what the Cold War was and have read just the first 20 or so pages of Fahrenheit 451. This is their first book discussion day, and it is setting up a skill that they will be able to use to prepare for their final project of the unit.

Lesson objective:

Students will make connections between the first few pages of Fahrenheit 451 and the Cold War.

Assessment and definition of success:

Creation and starting development of comparison inventory, including additions from peers

Lesson Procedure

Radical do-now (journal prompt): Why do you think people manipulate each other? Have you ever been manipulated? Have you ever manipulated someone?

Introduction: what is propaganda? 1-2 informative slides

Preview instructions: 2 slides

- Radical do-now (journal prompt): What was at least one interesting thing you noticed from the start of the book?
- Preview instructions and inventory example: 2 slides
- Activity:
- In notebooks, section out at least 3 pages that can be turned into the inventory. If preferred, this can be done digitally on a word processor.

- Make two columns (or a table digitally), with the first labeled “Quotes from Fahrenheit 451” and the second labeled “Historical Connection.” Make sure to title this inventory in a way that is clearly related to the US, as they will make another one for the Soviet Union later.
- Recap for students that you can cite a quote in brief by writing “[first words of quote]...[last words]” (pg #). This will save them a lot of time.
- Give students 10 or 15 minutes to review the pages that have been read already and challenge them to find at least 3 historical connections. Transcribe quotes into the first column, and then explain the similarity to history in the second column.
- Regroup and have all students share out at least one finding, and have everyone else copy down the finding if they did not already have it.

Lesson 3: Model Congress (Present day and *All Boys Aren't Blue*)

At this point, students will have finished reading All Boys Aren't Blue, have considered present-day actions around banned books, and have developed a policy proposal that reflects their beliefs about book access in schools. This is the final activity of the unit, as well as the final activity of the semester.

Lesson objective:	Students will collaborate with peers to pass legislation that aligns with their beliefs about book access in schools.
Assessment and definition of success:	Advocacy for one's own legislation, regardless of outcome Demonstrated willingness to negotiate and compromise Completed written reflection

Day 1 Lesson Procedure

Radical do-now (journal prompt): Write about a time you felt ignored and a time you felt heard.

Recap: How does Congress work? 2-3 informative slides

Preview instructions: 1 slide

Activity:

- At random, students are organized into groups of 3, these are “committees”. They must work together to create a single policy out of their submitted policies that 2/3 of them would be willing to vote for.
- If they are successful, the bill “passes committee” and the whole class will vote on it. If not, the bill does not “pass committee” and they do not present a bill to the whole class.
- Committees nominate one person to present their bill to the whole group. Nominated students have 2 minutes to pitch the bill to the class.
- The whole class votes on each bill. Any bills that get a 60% majority pass and are “enacted.” Any that do not are saved for the next day.

Open-ended journal reflection to write down whatever they think is important to remember for tomorrow

Day 2 Lesson Procedure

Radical do-now (journal prompt): If your bill passed, what helped you collaborate and compromise with people? If it didn't, what do you want to change about your interactions today?

Activity:

- Committees whose bill did not pass (either because it never left committee or because it didn't receive a full body 60% vote) go back to their groups and decide what they are going to change to be more successful today. Committees whose bills were enacted disperse among the other groups to advise as non-voting members.
- Process is repeated, hopefully with some new bills being passed through committees. Bills that pass committee need to meet the 60% threshold as before.

Final journal reflection: What did it feel like to negotiate? To have your bill pass/not pass? What made things easier? What made things harder?