### Generic Resources for Engaging Critical Theory

#### The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism

It’s an expensive book, but every team should have one. At almost 3,000 pages, it’s a reference guide for EVERY possible criticism or theory ever introduced to debate and beyond (identity, performance, and the rest). It includes excerpts of articles from canonical authors in the field, definitions and explanations for each theory, and a cross-reference guide that shows how the academy has responded to each critique.

#### Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory

By Peter Barry

This is a more digestible book for students wanting to learn about specific critiques and theories. While it’s not as comprehensive as the Norton reader, it covers the most popular positions in debate and is more descriptive and accessible.

### Resources for Exploring Identity in Debate

#### Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race

by Beverly Daniel Tatum

Beverly Daniel Tatum, a renowned authority on the psychology of racism, asserts that we do not know how to talk about our racial differences: Whites are afraid of using the wrong words and being perceived as "racist" while parents of color are afraid of exposing their children to painful racial realities too soon. Using real-life examples and the latest research, Tatum presents strong evidence that straight talk about our racial identities-whatever they may be-is essential if we are serious about facilitating communication across racial and ethnic divides. We have waited far too long to begin our conversations about race. This remarkable book, infused with great wisdom and humanity, has already helped hundreds of thousands of readers figure out where to start. As brief conversation with the author which answers many questions I had before reading the books: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec97/vol55/num04/Why-Are-All-the-Black-Kids-Sitting-Together%C2%A2-A-Conversation-with-Beverly-Daniel-Tatum.aspx>

#### Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul

by Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

Part manifesto, part history, part memoir, it argues that we live in a country founded on a “value gap”—with white lives valued more than others—that still distorts our politics today. Whether discussing why all Americans have racial habits that reinforce inequality, why black politics based on the civil-rights era have reached a dead end, or why only remaking democracy from the ground up can bring real change, Glaude crystallizes the untenable position of black America--and offers thoughts on a better way forward.

#### Privilege, Power, and Difference

by Allan G. Johnson

Mike Bietz strongly recommends this book. It’s brief, accessible, and written in a conversation style while examining systems of privilege and difference in our society.

#### Dismantling Racism

by Joseph Barndt

Daryl Burch suggested this book for young students looking to explore the way racism works and how everyone can participate in resisting it. In this book, the author addresses the "majority," the white race in the United States. Racism permeates the individual attitudes and behavior of white people, but even more seriously, it permeates public systems, institutions, and culture. This book does not intend to attack or to produce guilt, but its message is tough and demanding. It begins by analyzing racism as it is today and the ways it has changed or not changed over the past few decades. Most important, the book focuses on the task of dismantling racism, how we can work to bring it to an end and build a racially just, multiracial, and multicultural society.

**Blacks In and Out of the Left (The W. E. B. Du Bois Lectures)**

by Michael C. Dawson

The radical black left that played a crucial role in twentieth-century struggles for equality and justice has largely disappeared. Michael Dawson investigates the causes and consequences of the decline of black radicalism as a force in American politics and argues that the conventional left has failed to take race sufficiently seriously as a historical force in reshaping American institutions, politics, and civil society.

### Cites Referenced as Possible Topic Arguments

#### Under the Heel of the Dragon: Islam, Racism, Crime, and the Uighur in China

by Blaine Kaltman

#### The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination

by Robeson Taj Frazier

#### Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope

Calvin L. Warren

### Q&As from the Presentation

#### Q1.

Sometimes when my teams debate or I judge a team reading an identity based argument that personally relates to their lives, it feels as the teams we are debating imply that voting against them is in a way devaluing their lived experience. How should we handle this?

A1. In an argument context, it’s important to make a distinction between critiquing one’s identity and critique the “politicization of identity.” While this isn’t a universal belief, in my opinion, the debate should never be a referendum on one’s specific identity or lived experience because of the risk of collateral damage and emotional harm. A person’s specific experience is also not contestable or debatable. However, none of this means that those discussions of identity can’t be valuable as a method or as a broader impact focus. Arguing that my identity informs my argument is distinct from making my identity the argument. Here is a resource that articulates the difficulty in delineating the two approaches: <http://www.alcoff.com/content/chap2polcri.html>.

A2. In all debates, things will be ‘lost in translation.’ This could be a problem with how one team delivered the argument or how the other team received the argument. For example, I’ve had novice teams come back upset after a round because a team accused them of “breaking the rules” and being “cheaters.” After a few questions, it becomes obvious that they simply lost on a “conditionality bad” argument. Perhaps the team that ran the theory argument delivered it poorly and called my novices cheaters, or maybe my team just ‘heard’ that because of the emotional investment they had in the round. Similarly, teams who run and have to respond to identity argument often misinterpret what the debate is about. I think having conversations with your students about this possibility along with reinforcing the goal of being “comfortable with discomfort.”

#### Q2.

Can students engage in identity arguments without forcing opponents to divulge personal "stuff?" Or vice versa. How can a kid who has real problems talking about their personal lives engage without being (de facto) forced to discuss things going on in their lives, their upbringing, etc?

A1. Yes. I think debating the question of whether identity should be disclosed or made visible IS a way of engaging identity debates because it doesn’t deny one’s identity, just the political decision to forefront it.

A2. Yes. Possible arguments might come from incorporating queer theory or disability studies (forced outing, passing, trigger warnings, authenticity testing/policing, invisible disabilities, etc.). As it regards to discussing ‘real problem,’ I’d also encourage exploring the ‘optimism/futurism good’ and ‘wounded attachment’ arguments. Here is an excerpt from Eve Tuck and K.W Yang on the problem of pain narratives:

Damage-centered researchers may operate, even benevolently, within a theory of change in which harm must be recorded or proven in order to convince an outside adjudicator that reparations are deserved. These reparations presumably take the form of addi- tional resources, settlements, affirmative actions, and other material, political, and sovereign adjustments. Eve has described this theory of change as both colonial and flawed, because it relies upon Western notions of power as scarce and concentrated, and because it requires disenfranchised communities to position themselves as both singularly defective and powerless to make change (2010).

….

Academe’s demonstrated fascination with telling and retelling narratives of pain is troubling, both for its voyeurism and for its consumptive implacability. Imagining “itself to be a voice, and in some disciplinary iterations, the voice of the colonised” (Simpson, 2007, p. 67, emphasis in the original) is not just a rare historical occurrence in anthropology and related fields. We observe that much of the work of the academy is to reproduce stories of oppression in its own voice.

#### Q3.

What literature should we suggest our debaters (or us) read to gain a better understanding? Where should the starting point be?

A1. In addition to the reading material above, I think an exploration of the LD Philosophy resources (available on the NDCA website) is useful. There are a ton of digestible videos online that explain different theories and critiques (The School of Life, Wireless Philosophy, etc.)