

COMMON RESISTANCES TO SYLLABUS TRANSFORMATION

1. The “great books” (or the important books in my field or discipline) will be neglected or somehow diminished in their importance.
2. Adding one or two books or theoretical approaches at the end of the course will be sufficient. The students will then at least be EXPOSED to other works or approaches.
3. If we start with a work by or a theory about people of color, then students will have a distorted sense of what the real issues are or what is really significant.
4. I always raise issues of race, class, gender and ethnicity in my classes. But FOCUSING on women of color or a particular ethnic group is too narrow.
5. There are only a few Black students in my classes, and only a handful of Latinx students. Therefore, the need to include material on people of color is not that great at my college/university or in the classes I teach.
6. Including content on people of color changes the entire structure and content of my course. Plus, I don’t know all the material that’s out there. Won’t the students think I am a charlatan or incompetent? I am also not convinced that the scholarship on people of color is rigorous or apolitical.
7. What’s wrong with the WEST?!?!?!?
8. If we use race, class, gender, or ethnicity as categories of analysis, aren’t we leaving out a lot, and aren’t we calling attention to problems unnecessarily?
9. We don’t have the faculty of color to teach these courses, and students of color complain about white faculty teaching material on people of color.
10. Where is the scholarship? All that I find is in obscure places or in journals I don’t respect.