INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL BIAS

Objective: Students will identify their own biases and where they come from.

Summary: Students are presented with photos of various people whom they may or may not know and asked to rate their level of trust for each. They evaluate how their personal biases affect their ratings.

Aim: *How does bias affect whom I trust?*

Materials: 5 diverse photographs of notable, but not necessarily recognizable people in print (mount each photo on a different colored paper to facilitate identification during discussion), same 5 photos in digital format for projection, projector, masking tape or magnets, 5 rating tags for each student numbered 1-5 (print #1 in a different color).

LESSON VOCABULARY

bias n. prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair

objective adj. not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts

Do Now: What is bias?

- Set the DO NOW timer for 5 minutes.
- Give each student five labels pre-numbered 1-5.
- Ask students to write their names in the provided space on each of the 5 labels.
- Ask them to define, in writing, the word bias on the back of label #1.
- When the timer goes off, ask students to share their definitions with the rest of the group. Solicit examples of where and when bias can be found in the community and world.

Main Activity: *Whom Do You Trust?*

Part One: Expressing Gut Responses
- Be sure to pre-arrange the 5 photos on the board in the front of the room.
- Tell the class that this part of the activity is going to be done in silence.
- Direct the class to keep any prior knowledge about the photos' subjects to themselves. Tell them that if they know something about one of the photos they will have an opportunity to share it later in the class.

- Provide each student with masking tape or magnets and ask them to rate the five photos from 1 to 5 based on whom they trust the most. They should do this by sticking the label on the board next to the pictures they wish to rate. #1 should be placed next to the photo of the person they trust the most, #5 next to the person they trust the least.
- If asked to explain further, simply repeat the directive, "Rate the photos 1-5 based on whom you trust the most". Allow the students to work from their own understanding of the word "trust".
- Direct the students to take note of the choices they are making as well as the choices they see their classmates making.

Part Two: Discussion
- Use the visual of all the students' ratings on the board to lead a discussion.
- Ask students about how they made their choices.
- Ask students to identify any trends in the ratings and two identify their causes.
- Ask students which life experiences may have affected their level of trust for each of the photos' subjects.

Part 3: The Reveal
- Using the projector, go through each of the photos with the class and reveal the identity of each subject. If there are students who know something about the photos, allow them to share with the information with the class.
- Lead a discussion about how having more information about the subjects might or might not have changed the students' ratings.

Processing Questions:
➲ *What feelings or opinions came up when you saw the choices of your classmates?*
➲ Do you think there were any signs of bias in the choosing of the photos presented to you?
➲ *Why is it important to consider our own biases?*
➲ *When in your life do you find yourself exhibiting bias?*
➲ How did learning more about the people in the pictures change your opinions of them?
➲ *How can you use this information in your life?*
➲ *Why might we be talking about bias in a Global History Class?*

Closing option 1*: Whip-Around*

What is one way that understanding your own biases can help you in life or in studying history?

Closing option 2

Remind students that bias affects the choices that we make and the way that we respond to other people (be they familiar, famous, or historical).

Cab driver | New York City | 2004