



WABASH CENTER

For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion



The Rachel Dolezal story

Nyasha Junior, *Temple University*

Blog Series: Race Matters in the Classroom

June 18, 2015

Tags: racism | anti-racism | embodied teaching

The Rachel Dolezal story is all over the news.

The story is a horror show for many reasons, but as Dolezal was an African-American Studies instructor at Eastern Washington University, her story brings up important issues of race in the classroom.

It has me wondering how my colleagues think about and handle these issues.

- What does the Dolezal story bring up for you as an educator?
- What assumptions do your students make about you based on your body?
- What assumptions do students or other scholars make about you and your work? (Women scholars do feminist work?)
- How much do you reveal to your students about your identity?
- How does difference (race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, sexuality, etc.) affect what you teach? How you teach?
- Are you a role model? Why or why not?
- What strategies do you use to prepare your students to address issues of difference? Code of conduct, trigger warnings?
- How much do you reveal about your relationship (or lack thereof) to the course material?
- Do you have to be *x*, or practice *x*, in order to teach *x*? (Can a Jewish scholar teach New Testament? Or a straight scholar teach queer theory?)

We invite your comments and responses.

We also invite blog entries for Race Matters in the Classroom. Blog ideas and entries may be sent to: Paul Myhre (myhrep@wabash.edu) at the Wabash Center to be considered for posting in this blog space.

What questions about teaching does the Rachel Dolezal story raise for you?

<https://wabash.center/2015/06/the-rachel-dolezal-story/>