

Lesson 1

What is Your Idea of Professionalism?

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OVERVIEW

Future Callings seeks to help students understand the professional world they may enter into through uncovering the professional problems faced by alumni. But what does it mean to be professional and where do our ideas of professionalism come from? This lesson seeks to answer those two questions.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Students will understand that their idea of professionalism is mass produced.
2. Students will understand how white supremacy shapes our idea of professionalism.

MATERIALS

1. [Julia Evetts, "Professionalism: Value and Ideology," *Current Sociology*, 61, no. 5-6 \(September 2016\): 778, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392113479316>.](https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392113479316)
2. ["Is Professionalism a Racist Construct?" video](#)

ACTIVITIES

FOCUSED FREE-WRITE

Ask students to respond to the following questions:

1. What is your idea of professionalism?
2. How do you define *professionalism*? What has impacted your understanding of what it means to be a professional and what professionalism looks like today? Does this definition differ from previous generations? If so, how? Think about your guardians' or teachers' perceptions of professionalism.

READ: "PROFESSIONALISM: VALUE AND IDEOLOGY"

Ask students to complete the reading and answer the questions below. After students have responded to the guiding questions, you may want to unpack the reading for students in the form of an online lecture and post it to whatever platform you are using.

Guiding questions for this reading:

1. Who decided what professionalism is?
2. Why did they decide that is what professionalism is to be?

If you decide to do a video lecture, unpack the following ideas for students:

1. That the idea of professionalism is mass produced
2. That the idea of professionalism is a Eurocentric, Anglo-Saxon ideal
3. Professionalism may not be about how well you participate in a capitalist system founded and maintained via oppression
4. The economic and sociological breakdown
5. Difference between organizational and sociological professionalism
6. Who gets to manage individual autonomy and what you are to do within the profession

WATCH: "IS PROFESSIONALISM A RACIST CONSTRUCT?" (9:30-27:53)

Guiding questions for the video:

1. What stood out to you the most in the video?
2. According to the speakers, what are some of the tactics/characteristics white supremacy culture uses to affect the US workforce?
3. What do you think about the points about productivity?
4. How do we refute the narrative of impostor syndrome?
5. How do you think professional traditions/standards affect American society?

FOCUSED FREE-WRITE

What resonated with you the most in either the reading or the video?