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First Impressions

Alex DiBlasi '19



How often do we judge people right upon meeting them? Here at Govs, it happens all of the time. Whether it was on your first day of school or the last semester of your senior year, you automatically assess a person who you just met. Whether it is their looks, athletic abilities, voice, or intellect, we innately critique them on their first impression. Parents frequently remind us of the importance of making a good first impression on a person because it will stick. But, how long does it actually take to form a first impression? According to a study conducted at Harvard University, "it only takes seven seconds for you to make a first impression on another human being, only seven seconds." This minuscule amount of time can determine if somebody likes you or not and eventually, if you get hired or remain unemployed. So, let's start it from the top.

When you meet a person, the first thing you do is introduce yourself.

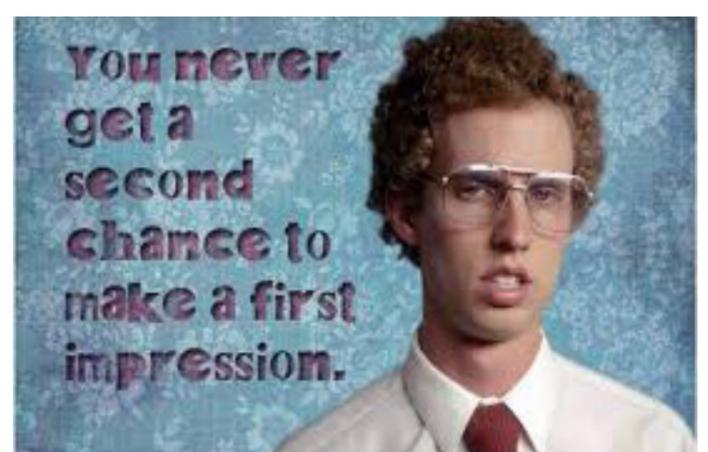
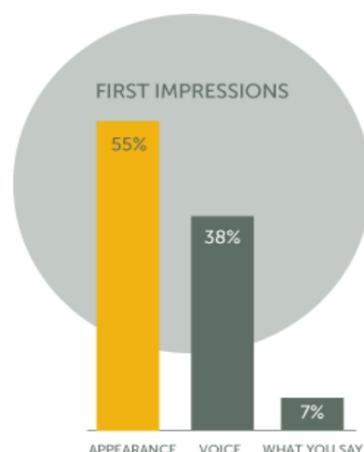
"Hello Mr. Jones, it is nice to meet you. My name is Alex." Saying this will take around 4 seconds. There are only 3 seconds left for you to make a positive first impression.

The Harvard study states that "38% of what makes up a first impression is how you sound and 7% of a first impression are the words you say. So all together, only 45% of a first impression has anything to do with the words coming out of your mouth." Therefore, less than half of your first impression is related to what is said. So, what about the remaining 55%? Well, it is all visual. It's the way your hair looks, the clothes you wear, your posture, and if you make eye contact. The majority of your first impression has to do with the way you carry yourself and not with the words

you say. According to the Harvard study, "not only does it only take seven seconds to make a first impression, they also found that on average, it takes meeting that same person seven more times to change that first impression that you made on them." I guess the lesson here is that the world can be a superficial place. As carefully as you choose your words, be sure to look the part as well.

There are many tips out there on how to make that positive impact when you meet someone for the first time. Smiling is the most recommended suggestion because it immediately puts people at ease. I guess the cliché, "smile and the world smiles too," is pretty accurate. Another hint is to be yourself because then you will be more at ease and so will the other person. That does not mean if you are slob, it is fine. Just be a confident

person. Interestingly, it was not until post World War II that research began on how people develop first impressions. A study was initially conducted so social psychologists could understand what drives prejudices. They wanted to be able to predict discriminations and future genocides. What they concluded was that people immediately judged others on two factors-- whether they had a warm personality and if they appeared trustworthy. Inevitably in life, you will often be in pursuit of making a great first impression. Whether it is a date, a job interview, or meeting your significant other's family, these first encounters are extremely important. Be sure to put some extra thought and preparation into meeting someone for the first time because as we know here at Govs, it will go a long way in the end.



So, How Did You Two Meet?

Interviews with faculty couples

Kyra Steck, '18

McLains:

The McLains first met in college, where they lived on the same dorm floor during her freshman year and his sophomore. After playing on the same coed intramural floor soccer team, they went to the campus bar, "dominated the foosball table" and ended up being best friends! After 34 years of marriage, they now work together at Governor's - Mrs. McLain as a biology teacher and Mr. McLain as a history teacher. They enjoy working at the same school because they both know how time consuming the job can be, and understand that they can "go for days without really getting a chance to talk" because of what it means to be a faculty member at Govs - whether it be late dorm duty, coaching or "whatever other things make our days long."



Golds:

The Golds definitely have the most exciting and distressing first date story. The two met at a wedding of a mutual college friend, where Mr. Gold asked Mrs. Gold if she wanted to go out on his boat the next day. Mrs. Gold agreed, deciding to bring friends along because, "I didn't want to be stranded out in the middle of the ocean alone with him in case it didn't go well." While in the middle of the ocean, they hit a "MAJOR" storm with "Thunder! Lightning! Blinding rain!" Mrs. Gold confesses, "I thought our first date was going to my last date...ever!" After surviving the storm, Mr. Gold took her out to dinner and married her a year later. They've now been married for 28 years! While both working at Govs can sometimes mean a lot of work



talk, they love living in such a great community that both their sons could be a part of. For them, "date night" can sometimes mean going to a game or an on campus event, and they suggest students looking for good on-campus date ideas join them!

Ms. Finch and Mr. Werner:

Ms. Finch was actually best friends



with Mr. Werner's sister for more than 30 years before the two met at her Easter brunch! He then took her out to dinner in Boston, which Ms. Finch says gave a "highly favorable first impression." The feeling must have been mutual, because they've now been married for almost 17 years. Because they don't share the same last name, it can sometimes take students a bit to realize they're married. Ms. Finch remembers how one student, as a senior, created a list of things he wished he knew as a ninth grader, and included Mr. Werner and Ms. Finch's marriage on the list! Another time, Ms. Finch mentioned in class that she had been at the airport

with Mr. Werner. One shocked student asked, "What were you and Mr. Werner doing at the airport together?"

Mr. Robertson and Ms. Slater:

Mr. Robertson and Ms. Slater met while working at an environmental education center in New Hampshire - Mr. Robertson's first job after college. He described Ms. Slater as "a little goofy but cute". Their first date was climbing Crooked Mountain (though Ms. Slater thinks it might have been dinner at a Chinese Restaurant), and Mr. Robertson says they "began the hike as friends but were in a relationship by the end." This July marks their 23rd wedding anniversary! Mr. Robertson obviously no longer works at the environmental education center. He works as an English teacher, whereas Ms. Slater works as a history teacher and the school archivist. Mr. Robertson enjoys working together at Governor's, because, "it's nice to share a life together in all ways. We have a lot of common ground through work, family and our past together."



The Best Albums for Valentine's Day

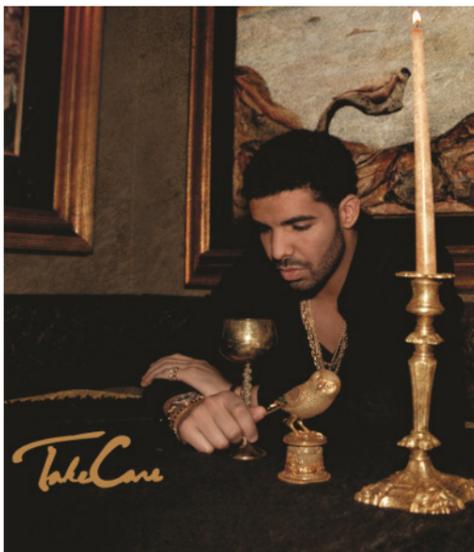
For every mood and status.

Eric Miller, '18

Valentine's Day is an emotional holiday. By emotional, I don't mean necessarily happy or romantic, but also their exact opposites, and everywhere in between. I've compiled a list of albums for the most common moods brought about by February 14th.

The Sad Boi™ Album:

Take Care, Drake



The Strong, Independent Woman Album:

Lemonade, Beyoncé



Recently Single (Sad):

Melodrama, Lorde



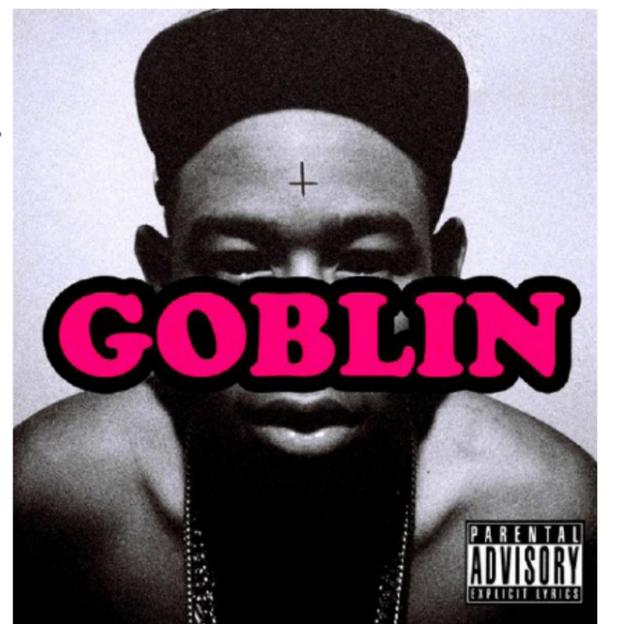
Recently Single (Angry):

Speak Now, Taylor Swift



Forever Alone and Angry About It:

Goblin, Tyler, The Creator





LOVE SONNETS



Nastasya Woodcock, '18

Your heart draws me close like a cold summer's night.
 Your hand pulls me near like the wind far away.
 Your breath appears in the dark winter light,
 And your smile makes it seem like the day.

Our fingers intertwine as we laugh.
 Our heads fall back as the sky takes our sound.
 Our grins split and mine falls into half,
 And our happy haze is no longer profound.

I pull away for I have no more glee.
 My smile melts like ice in the spring.
 I push you far, far, far away from me,
 And I hasten away, disappearing.

I loved you oh so much, I loved you not.
 I ran away, but love is ne'er forgot.

Sorieba Fofanah, '18

As I gaze into his golden eyes
 Love radiates from my warm soul
 Lips brush mine as we soar through the skies
 Our passion seizes me; losing control

Muddled thoughts pierce my mind
 Love and trust, yet I feel petrified
 Our destiny; our fates intertwined
 But, is this a dream? And I'm the one denied?

A thousand years I could spend with those suns
 Amidst his presence we've conquered all realms
 Still, fear's bullet shoots forward like a gun
 And have basked in our forest of elms

There and then, I grasp our youthful joy
 Our autumnal love can never be destroyed

VALENTINE'S DAY INTERVIEW WITH GOVS HUNK CAM GAGNON



Depends on how long you've been with your special someone. If you've been with them a couple weeks, go for something light like chocolate or a teddy bear; couple months maybe a modest piece of jewelry; if over a year, you should be buying them pretty nice things for Valentine's Day.

What are you getting for your special someone?

I'm gonna keep it simple and go with chocolate covered strawberries.

Is Valentine's Day an essential holiday?

I'm gonna go ahead and say no.

Anything you wanna say to all the single ladies out there on Valentine's Day?

It's a bummer, I'd be happy to help you guys out but I'm not a single man out there on Valentines Day. But if you're looking for a man, Quinn Stott is a catch. Tell him you're looking for something special and Quinn will be your guy.

Do you have a special lady in your life?

Yes.

Where or how do you find love at Govs?

Honestly, love first starts at a school dance. After that, you're moving on.

(Me: You mean emotionally?)

No, to like the track, the turf, wherever. Then, before you know it, it's a nightly Frost thing.

What is your ideal Valentine's Day date?

Probably some Chipotle and after that...maybe some ice-cream...maybe go back to my place, watch some Netflix...chill...

What's the average price range fellas should find themselves spending?



What's Galentine's Day?

"Oh it's only the best day of the year. Every February 13th, my lady friends and I leave our husbands and our boyfriends at home, and we just come and kick it, breakfast-style. Ladies celebrating ladies. It's like Lilith Fair, minus the angst. Plus frittatas."

-Leslie Knope, *Parcs and Recreation*



Ice Fishing

Eric Miller, '18

After a tumultuous morning of car troubles, it looked like our ice fishing trip would not happen after several weeks of hype. Deflated and tired, the would-be fishermen drowned their sorrow with McDonald's and memes. Justin Reed and Otto Laakkonen spent the money they had brought for the host of our trip, Clay. After about an hour, however, we were cleared to continue to the lake to go fishing. This was bittersweet news for Otto and Justin, as they would not be able to pay the fee they had committed to. Luckily, through what can only be called divine intervention, an ordained minister sitting behind our table handed us twenty dollars to pay for them both. As we were waiting for Dr. Palmer to meet us in Rochester, New Hampshire, I decided to capitalize on the newfound energy of the group in the form of three interviews. Here are their stories.

Interview Subjects:

Justin Reed
AJ Sample
Kyra Steck

Have you ever gone fishing before, if so, did you catch anything?

Justin: Yes, I've been deep sea fishing with Mr Pirie last year; I caught haddock and cod, I also caught a large amount of bass and rainbow trout.

AJ: Yes, I went fishing with Chester [Cheung], and I caught a striped bass.

Kyra: I went fishing when I was like four, we were on a boat I stole a boy's fishing rod, I didn't have any bait, but I felt like a sav.

Do you think you're going to catch anything?

Justin: I believe I will catch many things today. With God on my side.

AJ: Yes, I definitely will catch a fish today.

Kyra: I think I'm catching something, and I'm gonna be super pumped but it'll end up being a piece of trash or something.

What was it like to meet Jesus?

Justin: It was really crazy. It was insane, it was a wonderful experience. And I'm actually in full belief that we met a real incarnation of Jesus.

AJ: Humbling, very humbling.

Kyra: Felt really blessed, made me want to go back to the church. He said it's all about me and him.

Although we only collectively caught one fish, our experience is one we will not soon forget.



Why did you come on this trip?

Justin: Because I wanted to try ice fishing because I've never gone ice fishing.

AJ: To rip darts and catch dank fish.

Kyra: Adventure. When else am I going to get the opportunity to go ice fishing? I'm also secretly crunchy.

Secretly is an understatement.

I Don't Need a Reason

Amy Liu, '19

I don't really know why I do it. Why I willingly get slammed onto the mat repeatedly, sprawl until my hips are bruised purple, and sprint to the point where I feel the need to throw up. I guess, in a way, working hard is addicting. Wrestling, to me, was never something I chose to do in order to prove something. Actually, it kind of started as a dare.

When I came to Govs as a new sophomore, I had always told myself I would play hockey. But in the fall, my friend jokingly told me I should join the wrestling team. He didn't actually think I would do it. I thought how hard could it be? I mean, it's just a bunch of sweaty guys who think they're hardos rolling around on mat in a singlet, right?

I really thought I was going to die on the first day of practice. I could do 2 push-ups on a good day, and I think we did 60 that day. I didn't really know anyone on the team either, so I kept to myself most of the time. There was this one senior though, who would always ask me how I'm doing. He was pretty much my only friend and I kept going to practice because I felt like I would let him down if I didn't. Until, one day, he quit.

I was heartbroken.

The only person I was capable of talking to had quit and I had no idea why. He was good at wrestling! If he's good and he quit, then why am I here? There was no way I would finish wrestling season. I told myself I would have to quit after practice.

But I didn't. The wrestling team was intimidating as it was, and the idea of quitting scared me. But another part of me just didn't want to. There was something calming about wrestling. Weird, I know. Wrestling is everything but calming. But it felt good to stop thinking about outside problems and just put in hard work for 2 hours every day. So I kept wrestling and soon noticed some mixed behaviors on girls who wrestle.

I think it's weird when people come up to me and say that they think it's so cool that I'm wrestling as a girl. I never really thought about it that way. It was never my intention to make that statement. I understand that girl wrestlers can be a controversial topic. Some wrestlers are concerned that beating a girl would make them look like assholes, but losing to a girl would make them look weak. Some are concerned that girls just don't have the same build as guys and therefore make an unfair match.

But I can only hope that it is those people who support women's wrestling to the point where there are enough women wrestlers to make a girls' team.

I've been told before that I'm brave for joining the team because the idea of wrestling someone of the opposite gender seems uncomfortable. This thought never crossed my mind, because when I step onto the wrestling mat the only thing on my mind is that I'm ready to take someone down. What I see before me is not a boy or a girl but an opponent, and my only wish is that this thought and feeling is reciprocated.

I'm glad I've kept wrestling. I've been able to grow as a wrestler, physically and socially. I love my teammates and coaches, and now understand the strong bond that the team holds. Each member on the team is a friend to me, and I am grateful for the amount of support they give to me. I love and keep wrestling but I don't really know why. Maybe it's the team spirit or maybe it's the competition. Maybe it's the satisfaction when you finally get your hand raised after all the hard work you put in. But in the end, I don't really need a reason to wrestle. I just want to.



JUDGE JASON

VICTORY AT ALL COSTS

Jason Ho, '19

For the longest time, critics predicted that Donald Trump's political incorrectness would bring about his downfall. As the president wraps up his first year in office, however, it appears that far from hurting him politically, Trump's fiery rhetoric on national identity and immigration might have catapulted him into the White House.

Those who followed Donald Trump's campaign would have immediately noticed the nationalistic overtones of his rhetoric. From

campaign slogan or any of its variation (Make America Safe Again, Make America Strong Again).

Of course, Donald Trump's controversial rhetoric on national identity does not stop here. His comment about an American-born judge being "Mexican", as well as his feud with a Muslim Gold Star family, are well-known to all. Yet behind all these widely-publicized bluster, real policy statements could be overlooked. During a rally in Ohio two months before the election, Trump

people of other nations" most likely alludes to the migrant labor coming from Latin America. The juxtaposition of "American hands" with foreign hands has a two-fold significance as well. It could refer to the increasing competition between American and immigrant workers, which had been depressing wages especially among low-skilled jobs. A second, more sinister interpretation would be that those "hands of people of other nations" seek to defile and distort America from within while under the pretext

unaccustomed to change. According to Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, while immigration provides long term benefits to the economy and society, in the short run "the more diverse the group around us, ethnically ... the less we trust anybody, including people who look like us. Whites trust whites less. Blacks trust blacks less, in more diverse settings". Needless to say, men tend to be less generous or trustful when a large segment of society does not look or talk like them. Donald Trump sensed the racial tension that inevitably came with greater diversity, and offered an appealing alternative to many discontented voters. Trump's rhetoric exalted national unity and sought to regain for each citizen a sense of community. "At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United

States of America," he declared in his inaugural address, "and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other."

According to a pre-election study by Adam Bonica, a political scientist from Stanford, the strongest predictor of Trump support is the statement "people living in the U.S. should follow American customs and learn English". Nearly 9 in 10 Trump voters believed in this assertion. No other statements about the economy or social issues could garner as much support among the sixty-two million "forgotten men and women on America". Chauvinist and radical his language might be, Trump was ultimately successful in his bid to be president. His rhetoric, more than anything else, sent him victorious.



the very beginning, Trump had built his candidacy on a platform of nativism, nostalgia and hardline nationalism. Seeking to capture and combine these powerful emotions, Trump's iconic slogan "Make America Great Again" became the preeminent motif of his campaign. These four simple words reverberated powerfully with voters. They provided an alternative to what America should strive to be — one based on an illustrious past rather than an uncertain future. In Trump rallies across the country, MAGA banners and hats blanketed entire audience stands; the words presented in all caps and stylized in a classic serif typeface. Trump ended both his presidential announcement speech and his inaugural address by uttering the phrase "Make America Great Again". In fact, one would be hard-pressed to find an event in which Trump spoke yet did not utilize his

told his supporters that he wanted an "extreme vetting" procedure which "makes sure that we're only admitting those into our country who support our values and love — and I mean love — our people". Trump's words here could be interpreted as nothing other than a direct repudiation of multiculturalism. If one assumes that different cultures have different sets of values — which is generally the case — then "only admitting" those who "support our values" would mean that only immigrants who wish to integrate are welcome. This resembles nothing like the political consensus of the past fifty years which celebrates diversity more and deems assimilation a relic of an intolerant past. In the same speech, Trump declared his hope that "American hands will rebuild our nation. Not the hands of people of other nations". Although Trump did not specify, "the hands of

of "rebuilding our nation". As one would expect, critics were quick to denounce Trump for what they felt was bigoted and xenophobic rhetoric.

Whether Trump's opinions were actually hateful is open to debate, but his rhetoric was politically sound. Unlike prior elections, the 2016 presidential vote is in many ways an extension of a bitterly fought culture war that has been engulfing America for the past several years. While voters remained concerned over traditionally important issues such as the economy and health care, the question of American national identity had the country's preoccupation. Rapid demographic changes agitated many working-class whites, who feared that desperate migrants willing to work for pennies would take their jobs. Increased racial diversity in certain localities has also unsettled those who were



This Week in Politics

The Current Events Club

Police Shooting in Southern Los Angeles

Last Sunday, 16-year-old African-American Anthony Weber was fatally shot by a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy. The police have stated that Weber was armed and that a bystander must have taken the gun from the scene after the shooting. No gun has since been found. Family members and neighbors are speaking out in protest, stating, "We're not going to keep getting shot down" and asking "Where's the gun?" They believe that until evidence is shown, Weber should be presumed to have been unarmed. Many activists also mention that less than one mile from Weber's shooting, Carnell Snell Jr. was shot and killed by the police less than two years ago. This, to many activists, seems to be another case of an unarmed black man being killed by law enforcement.

Tax Cuts Already Making an Impact According to Trump

In a recent tweet, President Trump stated that "4.2 million hard-working Americans have already received a large Bonus and/or Pay Increase because of our recently Passed Tax Cut & Jobs Bill." The Trump Administration claims that companies such as American Airlines, Disney, and AT&T have already given \$1,000 bonuses to their employees. Many argue, however, that this is a very small percentage of their total tax cuts and still benefits the corporations over the individual. Proponents of the Tax Cut & Jobs Bill would argue that this is just one example of how tax breaks for corporations can help workers.

Mirai Nagasu sets American Figure Skating Record

Olympic figure skater Mirai Nagasu became the first American figure skater to perform a triple axel during a Winter Olympics. She is one of only three figure skaters to do this in an Olympic Games. A triple axel is an extremely rare jump which requires three and a half rotations to be made mid-air before landing. Her nearly-flawless routine, which scored a 137.53, was a personal-best.

The Tricks

Jin Zhu '18

How my understanding of Dr. Daniel Amen's neo-psychology changed my life

For centuries, psychiatrists have been guessing about what's wrong with their patients. They dismantle dreams and piece them together in a way that is understandable to both the patient and themselves. I wish life was so simple and so reasonable to all of us. Those same psychologists spend a large amount of time realizing that brain function does not circle around any big, long, offensively protruding object in one's dream, and, in the meantime, discovering that they cannot rule out the possibility that life, in fact, is all about answering the call of our ancestors.

Dr. Daniel Amen, however, argues in his TED Talk that psychology should not be the only medical profession that does not look at the patient. After brain scanning thousands of his

patients for brain activity, he finds out brain activity is key to unlocking human behavior. Any form, literally any form, of irritability, depression, memory problems, or dark and violent thoughts are typically linked to abnormal activity of the patient's brain. In an age of processed food, unavoidable radiation, and football frenzy, our brains are prone to misshape—some due to physical harm, others due to usually a significantly baleful event in one's life. To bring one's brain back into normal function and improve one's quality, one has to seek treatments.

Here the event gets tricky (this is the part that has confused generations of psychologists). Diseases with similar outlooks and symptoms may be vastly different, and require dramatically different treatments. For ex-

ample, depression may cause either extremely high activity or low activity in the brain. Offering wrong medication on the patient, who will then criticize psychology as a pseudoscience. To protect the reputation of psychology and demonstrate to the public its value, Amen's proposal calls for an integration between neuroscience and theoretical psychology.

Of course, not everyone has the privilege to visit his/her renown brain rehabilitation programs, so after listening and re-listening to his TED talk, I purchased his ten times New York Times Bestseller, *Change Your Brain, Change Your Life*, in which he records his past cases, the scans he conducted, the treatment prescribed and the significant change after a period of time. That offers

a guideline to self-diagnosis based on his proposed "four circles" that contribute to brain health—biological(how your body functions), psychological(how you think), social(social support, connections), and spiritual(your sense of meaning and purpose). He also divides ADD, Depression, Anxiety and TBI into multiple lucid categories, allowing readers to truly understand their situation. Amen himself doesn't usually recommend working backward from symptom to identification for fear of prescribing the wrong drug, but no one can be blamed for self-prescribed abuse. By meticulously examining his classification of mental illness and one's own symptoms, one might reverse the helpless condition with a blend of luck and self-awareness.

But, in reality, like a second class made-up fairy-tale, it actually works. I used to experience some noticeable dip of emotion in my days, because certain negative things stuck in my mind for a little bit too long. After listening to Amen's advice and switching my carbohydrate heavy diet to a protein central one, taking a few pills of supplements per day, and bantering with my friends more frequently, my life shows remarkable improvement. I am now much calmer, sleep much better and have a much easier time academically. For me, psychology is now as real as the lunch I have finished, the sports I played, and the complicated relationships I have cultivated.

Hope you will find your own way in and out of it, too.

Senior Sliding

Kyra Steck '18

I'm probably the last person you would expect to senior slide, and for good reason. A lot of my time at Governor's has been wrapped up in my thinking about what homework I have that night, when my long-term assignments are due, and what breaks I have during the day to get work done. I've gotten so good at being work obsessed that the idea of blowing off assignments or not studying for tests feels inherently wrong for me to do. But I want to do it - so much so that I asked my friends to remind me that I'm a second semester senior anytime they hear me stressing about work. To be honest, I am probably more stressed in my attempt to chill out than I have been as a hardy. So why try at all?

Often, senior sliding is associated with laziness, with unmotivated kids who know these grades don't count for college and can't find the energy to care anymore - and yes there is definitely some truth in that. As someone whose been wound up about college since, like, middle school, knowing that my grades this semester

aren't included in my applications is a relief. However, the root of senior sliding (at least for me) isn't laziness - it's the changing of priorities. Think about it like this: imagine there's a Tuesday night basketball game, but also a psych test the next day. First semester Kyra would go back to Moody, make a study guide and spend the night memorizing the different neurotransmitters in the brain. Second semester Kyra, though, is going to the basketball game, spending the night with O.C. and my Moody girls, looking at my psych notes for maybe a half hour and then winging it on the test the next day. My new schedule has nothing to do with motivation or drive, but the recognition that I only have so much time left at Governor's and I need to make the most of every day. I'm going to let go of the pressure and instead appreciate the aspects of Govs I am going to miss the most.



The Denial of Racism:

A Response to “Universality of Racial Bias”

Tianyu Fang, '20

During my internship in China last summer, I worked with colleagues who were mostly natives that had never lived abroad. As a student who had recently returned from the US, there were three questions that I was frequently asked. My friends would begin with, “have you dated American girls?” Then, “do you live close to the Silicon Valley?” And finally, “is there racism in the US?” I would gently decline to comment on the first question, explain that it would take an equivalent amount of time to travel from Boston to San Francisco as from Beijing to Singapore, and give a firm “yes” to the last one. “Thanks God there’s no racism in China,” most would reply with relief. I would laugh, and sigh. “Really?”

Now, not only do I have to ask my friends in China to think again, but also those who have lived in the racially diverse United States for years. In an op-ed published in the Governor’s latest issue, the authors criticized a student’s comment on China’s racial tension at the Academy’s Open Mic session on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The critique, however, failed to address the core problems of racism in contemporary China.

In 2016, Chinese detergent company Qiaobi delivered a video commercial in which a Chinese woman shoves a Black man in the washing machine with the brand’s detergent pod in his mouth. Moments later, as a light-skinned Chinese man comes out from the washing machine, a smile appears on the Chinese woman’s face. The commercial was so blatantly racist that it sparked criticism from

English-language social media platforms. However, when foreign media outlets reached out to the Chinese producer of the ad, the sales agent “rejected accusations of racism, claiming that the ad was ‘kind of fun’ and ‘didn’t even notice [the racial angle]’” according to a report from the Los Angeles Times. The reaction of the sales agent did unfortunately resonate with a significant portion of the Chinese public.

The MLK Day opinion piece focused on China’s current microaggressions targeted at foreigners and non-Chinese immigrants in China. The authors attributed the Chinese public’s racial stereotypes to China’s historical conflicts with other nations, and China’s “long isolation from the rest of the world”. While this construal is partially true, the historical contexts do not justify the nation’s ignorance on racial issues. Certain events in US civil rights history can be used to argue against such justification: the slavery of African-Americans, the Japanese-American internment, and the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. These timestamps in American history have demonstrated historical contexts of ignorance about race similar to those in contemporary China. However, landmark Supreme Court cases, including *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954), and *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898), are examples of political activism and protests against racial discrimination that are evidently absent in Chinese history after the Communist takeover.

Non-Chinese persons in China are not given the opportunities to address these problems. The

country does not have a significant foreign-born population and it has followed very strict immigration laws that provide immigrants with very few ways to naturalize. In contrast, Japan, which the opinion article concluded as a country where “foreigners were prohibited to enter certain stores,” provides more pathways for foreign-born immigrants to achieve permanent residency and naturalize.

The authors concluded that China is moving towards racial equality by demonstrating the popularity of President Barack Obama and Kobe Bryant. The major flaw of this argument is that the authors chose two non-Chinese celebrities that have achieved success outside China to illustrate their point. A better question would be, could a person from a minor ethnicity – for instance, a Kazakh Chinese or a Uyghur Chinese – gain enough popularity to become China’s leader, without their ethnicity being denigrated? The reality is, not only does China not have a democratic election system for individuals to become politicians through popularity, but not one member of the Politburo – China’s central leadership committee – is an ethnic minority.

The article has also neglected the institutional discrimination against China’s native ethnic minorities. Domestically, although China labels itself as a multiracial nation composed of fifty-six ethnic groups, the majority of its 1.4-billion inhabitants are of Han descent. The Uyghurs – a Turkic ethnic group that are primarily Muslim – make up approximately 46% of the total

population of Xinjiang, China’s territory bordering Central Asia. Because of the Muslim religion that they represent and several past occurrences of Uyghur individuals involved in terrorist activities, the Chinese government began to see the ethnic Uyghurs as a potential security threat. The local governments have set up security checkpoints in Uyghur enclaves, requiring residents to present IDs at public spaces. Uyghur citizens in Xinjiang, in contrast to their Han counterparts, were also restricted from visiting their relatives in Central Asia, as local police seized their passports for “security concerns”. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, a document published by the US Department of State, pointed out that employers in Xinjiang often discriminated Uyghur job applicants by directly stating that Uyghurs “would not be considered for employment”. The report also concluded that “the [Chinese] government downplayed racism and institutional discrimination against minorities”.

However, unlike in the United States where such systematic racial discrimination would spark debates nationally, online comments on ethnic issues – especially criticisms – are often subject to either direct censorship from the local police, or self-censorship from the website owner in an attempt to prevent penalty from the government. In a blind spot of China’s internet censorship, netizens – who were mostly ethnic Han Chinese – made remarks that were mostly “virulent and derogatory, equating Islam with terrorism, calling it an ‘evil cult’ and Muslims ‘dogs’ and ‘leeches’” according to a

report from Human Rights Watch. Moreover, peaceful critics of China’s discriminatory policies towards ethnic minorities have been silenced, including ethnic Uyghur economist Ilham Tohti, who was sentenced to life imprisonment for “promoting separatism”.

I want to conclude my article with an ancient Chinese anecdote about a thief who wants to steal a beautiful bell. The thief decides to break the heavy bronze bell into pieces to carry it back home; when he hits the bronze bell with an iron hammer, it produces a loud crashing sound that attracts passersby from far away. As the thief becomes nervous of being caught, he covers his own ears with his hands and pretends that the sound is inaudible. So my advice to those who deny the presence of racism in China is rather simple: stop holding your own ears and pretending the circumstances have been improving. China needs to face reality: the problems can never be solved by ignoring and denying them; the only solution is to confront, acknowledge, and address the matter in question.

The Governor
2017

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