So You Want To Talk About Race Discussion Questions

1) Please introduce yourself and briefly share your experience with watching Ijeoma Oulo’s Google Talk on her book, *So You Want to Talk About Race*.

2) Oluo states that one of the main reasons why it is so difficult to talk about race is because “we are deliberately denied the tools we need to talk about it.” She then defines race as “a system of power…designed to benefit some at the expense of others.”

What other subjects are we denied the tools to talk about?

What systems of power are in place that deny these tools? Which group(s) then become silenced, and which group(s) benefit from this silence?

In what ways are we denied these tools? How is our inability to talk about these subjects perpetuated?

Finally, what similarities and differences exist between these systems of power? How do they overlap with race as a system of power?

3) Oluo goes on to explain that although conversations about race do not regularly occur out in the open, we are in fact constantly interacting with race on a daily basis, due to what she calls a “white default” within our society. Not only does this white default define everything from our holidays to what is considered professional, but it also instills within us harmful messaging about Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

In what ways have you witnessed or experienced this white default at UCI? Are there other “defaults” that exist within UCI? If so, what are these defaults, and what groups are being forced to navigate around them?

How has UCI made an effort to reduce the negative impact of these defaults? Can the same approach be applied to tackling the white default as it exists within UCI?

4) *So You Want to Talk About Race* was published in 2018. Do you feel that as an individual, you are more comfortable and/or better equipped to talk about race than you were two years ago? If so, what are some of the tools or experiences that have helped you?

Do you feel that over the past two years, UCI has improved in initiating and facilitating conversations about race at the university, school, and department levels? In what ways has UCI improved or fallen short?

What lessons from Oluo’s talk can we apply to ourselves as individuals, and to our broader UCI community, to continue to normalize and destigmatize conversations about race?