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## The Latino South: Race and Racialization

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# THE LATINO SOUTH: RACE AND RACIALIZATION

by  
Brittany Marion Brown

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford  
May 2019

Approved by

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ABSTRACT  
BRITTANY MARION BROWN: The Latino South: Race and Racialization  
(Under the direction of Simone Delerme)

Taking into consideration the South's historic black-white racial binary, this multi-media research project documents the place-specific experiences of 23 Latinos living in Oxford, Mississippi, using anthropologic methods. A [digital archive](#) accompanies the written thesis. Through interdisciplinary methods, this research examines and seeks to understand how the Latino community is conforming to or challenging the staunch view of race and identity in the U.S. South, where race is and has always been at the forefront of culture and society. Through knowing the history of race in the South and understanding the black-white racial binary, the presence of Latinos is creating space for a "separate" or "third" racial or ethnic category in a region so invested in the construct of black or white. Based on their experiences, the U.S. Census data, and other case studies about Latino migration and settlements in the South, the conclusion can be drawn that race is slowly becoming less stagnant and more of a spectrum to measure one's identity; however, these interviews show how Latinos are racialized in social, academic, and personal settings by people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. No one group is immune to receiving or distributing racialization; however, for those who do not explicitly identify or fit into the racial categories of black or white, racialization becomes ubiquitous.

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## INTRODUCTION: “WHAT ARE YOU?”

Growing up, there were often times I would question my racial and ethnic identity. I was born in Chicago to an African American mother and a Puerto Rican father, and my mother and my younger brother moved to Mississippi when I was three years old. Most of my life and upbringing has been in Mississippi, and I am proud to be from the South, in the resilience of communities of color and the welcoming, hospitable nature of the culture, among others; however, being raised in the South has come with its challenges, especially pertaining to race and ethnicity. As I grew up in Mississippi, I found it increasingly challenging to explicitly identify my own racial and ethnic identity, especially when it came to completing forms about race and demographics: “Check the box which best identifies your race. Choose only one. African American, Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, Pacific Islander, Asian.”

I had always known my father was Puerto Rican – it was something my mother ensured I knew and was proud of. I also had always known that I was African American – I was mostly raised around my mother’s side of the family, so I never questioned my identity as an African American. As I progressed through school, fellow students would pose questions, such as “What are you?” “Are you mixed?” “Where are you from?” “Are you black?” “Are you white?” “Are you Mexican?” and the list goes on and on. Among my family, those were questions I never had to answer, but in school, I began to doubt my own racial and ethnic identity. Am I black? Am I Puerto Rican? Am I Latina?

I quickly created an answer for my curious peers: “I’m biracial. My mom is black, and my dad is Puerto Rican,” I’d often say. Then, students would follow up with additional questions, such as “Do you speak Spanish?” and “You don’t look black.” Throughout my life, I’ve faced a constant flurry of questions and assertions about my racial and ethnic identity, and this propelled me to do some research – to come prepared with answers to questions before they could even be asked. In this, I discovered that “Hispanic” and “Latino” are, in fact, not racial categories but ethnic groups, and one can be both African American and Latino. The two are not mutually exclusive.

I also discovered that I was not the only one facing these questions in daily life, and people were genuinely curious about my racial and ethnic identity. My own experiences with racialization and feeling the need to conform to the South’s black-white racial binary propelled me to seek out Latino students on the campus of the University of Mississippi, who may have also experienced similar events and questions throughout their life while living in the South. Was this common for Latino students to feel unsure about their racial and ethnic identities? How do Latino students fit in to the black-white racial binary, or is a new “racial group” being created through discourse? This research, “The Latino South: Race and Racialization,” documents and archives the stories of Latino students at the University of Mississippi who may have faced the same questions as me their entire lives. Through this research, I explore how our simple existence and presence is affecting the view of race in the South and, ultimately, in the United States.

Taking into consideration the South’s historic black-white racial binary, this multi-media research project documents the place-specific experiences of 23 Latinos living in Oxford, Mississippi, using anthropologic methods. A [digital archive](#)



accompanies the written thesis. I focus on students attending the University of Mississippi, where the Latino student population is small, and where there is even less of a visual presence of Latino culture on campus. Through interdisciplinary methods, this research examines and seeks to understand how the Latino community is conforming to or challenging the staunch view of race and identity in the U.S. South, where race is and has always been at the forefront of culture and society.

Initially, this research was going to examine how an increased Latino population is affecting the idea and institution of race in the U.S. South, where racial hierarchies are still maintained to some degree in different facets of society. To explore and analyze this, I collected and analyzed experiences of Latino students on campus and how Latino students at the University of Mississippi identify racially and ethnically. This is to better understand how Latinos are impacting the South's historic black-white racial binary. In many areas of campus life, Latino students are overlooked, from academia to socio-cultural activities, and through semi-structured interviews, I discovered the lack of visibility and representation was a feeling many Latino students at the University of Mississippi had experienced since youth:

*“Growing up, going through history class, you learned about the American ideals of race – so white versus black – and I didn't fit in any of those. I was really confused. In the first grade I asked my teacher ‘where do I fit in?’”<sup>1</sup>*

The interviewee contributed her perspective as a woman of Puerto Rican and African American descent and a native Alabaman who spent much of her upbringing in Mississippi. Though just one perspective, this quote represents the complexity and

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<sup>1</sup> “Semi-structured interview 8.” Interview by author.

ambiguity of racial categorizations for Latinos in Mississippi. Where do Latinos fit in the South's racial hierarchy or racial binary? – in the South where race operates in its dual function of white or black.

## SECTION I: METHODS

This research is based on ethnographic research methods that include semi-structured interviews. I began by analyzing U.S. Census data about Latino migration to the U.S. South, specifically the north Mississippi region, which encompasses Oxford. The data provides context to better understand the patterns of migration and settlement. In addition, case studies and literature about race and racialization in America, specifically in the South and about people of Latino heritage, were reviewed to provide further understanding and historical research on the experience of Latinos in the South. Finally, I conducted extensive interviews with 23 University of Mississippi students of Latino heritage.

These semi-structured interviews with Latino students at the University of Mississippi serve as a case study for the experiences of Latinos in the South. These interviews help us understand how students' ethnic and racial identity have been affected by the black-white racial binary in the South and the region's long history of racial tensions, conflict, and violence. I conducted a total of 23 interviews with University of Mississippi undergraduate and graduate students. The average length of the interviews was 31 minutes, with the shortest interview being 12 minutes and the longest interview being 69 minutes. I interviewed 7 males and 16 females. All interviewees were born and raised in the United States and/or Latin America, including Alabama, California, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Mexico, Oklahoma, Peru, Tennessee, Texas, and Venezuela. When asked about their heritage and nationality, students

responded with a variety of identifiers, including African American, Belizean, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Native American, Nicaraguan, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Spanish, Venezuelan, and white. The research questions listed below guided the semi-structured interviews and probed the students' identities and experiences living in the South and attending the University of Mississippi. In the questions, I chose to specifically adhere to the term "Latino" because it is in the thesis' title; however, I did ask students which term they preferred to be identified as, and I also styled "Latino" as "Latino/a/x" in my questions to promote gender and LGBTQ+ inclusivity throughout interviews.

#### Research Questions

1. When were you born?
2. Where are you from/where did you grow up?
3. Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
4. How has your experience been at the University of Mississippi and while living in Oxford?
5. The U.S. Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
6. What are your parents' nationalities? Do you identify with your parents' nationalities?
7. How do you identify racially? Why do you identify this way?
8. Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x?
9. Studies show that the Latino/a/x population is growing in the U.S. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?
10. How do you maintain your Latino/a/x culture while being a student at the university?

11. What are some challenges you face at the university and in Oxford as a Latino/a/x student?
12. Has anyone ever inquired about your race or ethnicity? How do you respond to these types of questions? If no one has ever asked, how would you respond?
13. Have you experienced assumptions about your character because of your perceived race/ethnicity?
14. Do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn? If no, why not?
15. How important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino/a/x culture?
16. How does the university and the community cater to the Latino/a/x population?
17. How does the university and the community omit the Latino/a/x population?
18. How do you view race in the U.S., in the South, and in Oxford?
19. How do you perceive the Latino/a/x population affecting the idea of race in the South?
20. What types of challenges have you encountered as a student because of your Latino/a/x identity?

## SECTION II: NEW DESTINATIONS

One of the most notable demographic shifts in the last few decades is the migration and settlement of Latinos in non-traditional destinations in the U.S. South. These settlements are much smaller than the communities that formed in traditional gateway cities; however, the rate of population growth and community formation is what sets these settlements apart. Hence, it is speed, not size, that is defining Latino population growth in southern states. In addition, the consistent growth in population of Hispanic and Latino people in the South set the precedent for further changes in racial constructions and demographic shifts.

This racial demographic shift is also occurring in the state of Mississippi, a non-traditional destination for Latino immigrants. To put this into perspective, during the 1990s, the Latino population increased by nearly 60 percent, and in 1990, nearly 90 percent of Latinos lived in only 10 states, with “California and Texas alone accounting for 54 percent of all Latinos in the United States.”<sup>2</sup> Figure I shows the change in the Latino population in some of the traditional settlement states between 1990 and 2010, and figure II shows the ten states, most of which are in the South, with the fastest growing Latino population between 1990 and 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> Lichter, Daniel T., and Kenneth M. Johnson. “Immigrant Gateways and Hispanic Migration to New Destinations.” *International Migration Review*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2009, pp. 496–518. *JSTOR*, doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2009.00775.x.

Figure I: Change in the Hispanic Population, 1990-2010

Traditional Settlement States<sup>3</sup>

	1990	2000	Change (%)	2010	Change (%)
California	7,687,938	10,966,556	43	14,013,719	28
New York	2,214,026	2,867,583	30	3,416,922	19
Illinois	904,446	1,530,262	69	2,027,578	32
New Jersey	739,861	1,117,191	51	1,555,144	39

Figure II: Change in Hispanic Population 1990-2010

Ten Fastest Growing States Between 1990-2010<sup>4</sup>

	1990	2000	Change (%)	2010	Change (%)
North Carolina	76,726	378,963	394	800,120	111
Arkansas	19,876	86,866	337	186,050	114
Georgia	108,922	435,227	300	853,689	96
Tennessee	32,741	123,838	278	290,059	134
Nevada	124,419	393,970	217	716,501	82
South Carolina	30,551	95,076	211	235,682	148
Alabama	24,629	75,830	208	185,602	145
Kentucky	21,984	59,939	173	132,836	122
Minnesota	53,884	143,382	166	250,258	75
Nebraska	36,969	94,425	155	167,405	77
United States	22,354,059	35,305,818	58	50,477,54	43

Figure III: Latino Population Change, 1990-2010<sup>5</sup>

	1990	2000	2010	Change (%)
Lafayette Co., Mississippi	203	427	1,073	151

Mississippi experienced its own small demographic change during that same time period. According to 2018 estimates, Mississippi census data shows that the state population is 57 percent white, 38 percent black, and 3 percent Latino, and the Latino

<sup>3</sup> Report no. Summary File 1. Pew Hispanic Center.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Report no. U.S. Census Data. Social Explorer.

population in Mississippi has increased over the last two decades.<sup>6</sup> The 2000 U.S. Census Bureau shows the population of “Hispanic or Latino (of any race)” people was only 1.4 percent – only 40,000 people of the state’s overall 2.8 million population.<sup>7</sup> On the campus of the University of Mississippi, the student population is somewhat reflective of the state’s current, overall racial and ethnic demographics, with the student population at 74 percent white, 12 percent black, and 2 percent Latino during the 2018-2019 academic year.<sup>8</sup>

Although drastic population growth of Latinos has been observed in the South recently, this wave of Latino migration to the South is not unusual. Beginning in the twentieth century, the Latino population in the South began to increase along different trends at different times. In the 1900s and 1920s, Latinos migrated to Mississippi for the availability of agricultural jobs, such as cotton planters in the Mississippi Delta; furthermore, the Bracero Program attracted Mexican and Tejano migrant workers to the Mississippi Delta region between the 1940s and 1960s, and in the 2000s Latinos immigrated to Mississippi finding clean-up job opportunities following Hurricane Katrina.<sup>9</sup> Hispanic and Latino migrant workers contributed to the reconstruction of the

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<sup>6</sup> “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Mississippi; UNITED STATES.” *Census Bureau QuickFacts*, United States Census Bureau, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ms,US/HSD410217](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ms,US/HSD410217).

<sup>7</sup> “U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.” *American FactFinder*, U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Oct. 2010, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

<sup>8</sup> “Fall 2018-2019 Enrollment.” *Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning at the University of Mississippi*, 2018, [irep.olemiss.edu/fall-2018-2019-enrollment/](http://irep.olemiss.edu/fall-2018-2019-enrollment/).

<sup>9</sup> Hayden, Bridget Anne. “The Genesis of a New Ethnic Group? Meanings of Latino/Hispanic Identity in South Mississippi.” In *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi: The Twentieth Century*, edited by Barbara Carpenter, Shana Walton, and Mississippi Humanities Council, 333-337. University Press of Mississippi, 2012



South following Hurricane Katrina, and a visible population trend was seen in Laurel, Mississippi, a southern Mississippi city.<sup>10</sup> From employment opportunities in construction and poultry to restaurants, the range of jobs offered reason for Latino people to migrate to the South.

In retrospect, many agricultural workers were transitory laborers that followed the harvest for maximum profit in the 1900s while others stayed within the region and started families. An effect of this can be seen in the Latino population in Memphis, Tennessee. More Memphis-born Latinos are the cause for the growing Latino population than Latino immigrants, contributing to the overall diversification of the city of Memphis.<sup>11</sup> A reported 81,481 Mississippians self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, which makes up nearly three percent of the entire Mississippi population. From 2007 to 2011 approximately 50 percent of the foreign-born population in Mississippi were from the Americas, which include many Latin American and Caribbean nations.<sup>12</sup> In 2008, approximately 25,000 undocumented immigrants worked in the construction, poultry, and service industries.<sup>13</sup>

To put all of these statistics in perspective, in 2003 Latinos became the largest minority group in the United States, surpassing the African American population, and the Latino population is expected to be nearly 30 percent of the American population by the

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<sup>10</sup> Marcello Ballvé, "Latinos in Mississippi: A Force for Reconstruction," *New America Media*, September 12, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Charlier, Tom. "Shelby County's Population Growing Older, More Diverse, Census Estimates Show." *The Commercial Appeal* (Memphis), June 26, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Green, John J., Lynn C. Woo, and Cliff Holley. *Mississippi Mosaic: Exploring Racial and Ethnic Diversity*. Report. Center for Population Studies, University of Mississippi. March 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Ballvé, "Latinos in Mississippi: A Force for Reconstruction."

year 2050.<sup>14</sup> The growth is imminent and interconnected; additionally, my semi-structured interviews have shown a common theme across immigration to the South: there is a personal connection to someone, either a friend or family member, who lives in the southern region of the United States. Thus, social networks or chain migration is an important push-pull factor in the migration of Latinos to the US South:

*“When we first moved to Mississippi, it was because of a job. We were in McAllen, Texas when I was eight months old. At eight months old, my Dad had a first cousin in Mississippi. It was planting trees, and that was my dad's first job. That's why Gloster was our first beginning in the United States, and my dad took the opportunity to work with his cousin.”<sup>15</sup>*

This is an excerpt from an interview with a Latina student at the University of Mississippi. Both of her parents are from Mexico, and she was born and raised in the United States and has spent most of her life and upbringing in Mississippi. She was born in Texas and migrated with her parents to Gloster, Mississippi, a small town in the southwest region of the state. Her experience, similar to many immigrants, immigrant families, and children of immigrants in the South, portrays the personal connections pre-developed with family, which ultimately influenced her family's decision to move to Mississippi, a non-traditional destination for Latino migration.

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<sup>14</sup> Rumbaut, Rubén G. “Pigments of Our Imagination on the Racialization and Racial Identities of Hispanics and Latinos.” In *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, edited by José A. Cobas, Jorge Duany, and Joe R. Feagin, 17. Paradigm Publishers, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> “Semi-structured interview 7.” Interview by author.

*“My mom started a restaurant back in 2001, and I think then I was like five [years old]. I grew up in the restaurant – a Mexican restaurant. I grew up in that restaurant, helping my mom, so it kept us busy. We [the family] really didn't have time to socialize outside of [that].”<sup>16</sup>*

One interviewee not only had the personal experience of migrating to Mississippi because of familial connections, but also her family opened a Mexican restaurant in the small community. Her story exemplifies the connections that Latino migrant families establish within small southern communities to uphold economic stability and placemaking in a town and region with little to no Latino population or influence.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., “Semi-structured interview 7.”

### SECTION III: THE CREATION OF “LATINO” IN THE U.S.

When thinking about race, it is important to understand the biological fallacies of its existence. What we know as “race” today is largely an effect of sociopolitical boundaries with “dominant and subordinate groups,” and the present-day function of race exemplifies its evolution in the United States and its effects from a “long colonial...national era of slavery and...white supremacy.”<sup>17</sup> At its most fundamental level, the creation of race was based upon the ideology of separation according to physical characteristics. Race is a product of history. It is a product of constructed power hierarchies and social status differences believed to determine the superiority of certain people against the inferiority of other groups of people.<sup>18</sup> The idea of race thrives on the subjugation of people deemed inferior within “the centuries-old white racial frame” of white versus non-white.<sup>19</sup>

Rubén G. Rumbaut explains in *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences* the long process to creating adequate identifiers for Spanish-speaking people and people of Latin American descent in the United States. Although the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” are common today to describe a person’s

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<sup>17</sup> Rumbaut, Rubén G. “Pigments of Our Imagination: On the Racialization and Racial Identities of ‘Hispanics’ and ‘Latinos.’” *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, by Cobas José A. et al., Paradigm, 2009, pp. 15–36.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Rumbaut, Rubén G. “Pigments of Our Imagination on the Racialization and Racial Identities of Hispanics and Latinos.” 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> Cobas, José A., Jorge Duany, and Joe R. Feagin. “Racializing Latinos: Historical Background and Current Forms.” In *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, 12-13. Paradigm Publishers, 2009.

ethnicity and/or race, that in itself is “an act of homogenization,” or the process of making uniform, and dissipates the cultural and racial diversity among people of Latin American descent.<sup>20</sup> Latin America is a region composed of the South American continent, a collection of islands, and an entire section of the North American continent; therefore, to homogenize the descendants of this region is to ignore the cultural and racial diversity among Latino people, and Rumbaut asks whether there is a “‘Latino’ or ‘Hispanic’ ethnic group” – one that is “cohesive and self-conscious, sharing a sense of peoplehood?”<sup>21</sup> The answer is no: “‘Latinos’ are not a homogenous identity and should not be presumed so.”<sup>22</sup> The term “Latino” cannot be used to describe a separate racial group, but for many Latinos, there is no other racial category to properly and accurately describe their race. According to a 2015 study by the Pew Research Center, nearly 67 percent of Latinos say being Latino is “a part of their racial background.”<sup>23</sup> Although “Latino” is federally identified as an ethnicity, not a race, 37 percent of Latino respondents for the 2010 census “selected ‘some other race,’ with many offering write-in responses, such as ‘Mexican, Hispanic, or Latin American.’”<sup>24</sup>

The fluctuant history and nature of Latino identity categories reveals the complex history behind ethnic identifiers for Latinos in the United States. As history reveals,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Rumbaut, Rubén G. “Pigments of Our Imagination: On the Racialization and Racial Identities of ‘Hispanics’ and ‘Latinos.’”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Gonzalez-Barrera, Ana, and Mark Hugo Lopez. “Is Being Hispanic a Matter of Race, Ethnicity or Both?” *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 15 June 2015, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/15/is-being-hispanic-a-matter-of-race-ethnicity-or-both/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/15/is-being-hispanic-a-matter-of-race-ethnicity-or-both/).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Gonzalez-Barrera, Ana, and Mark Hugo Lopez. “Is Being Hispanic a Matter of Race, Ethnicity or Both?”

Latinos have been misrepresented by the U.S. Census Bureau for decades; furthermore, for many decades, Latinos were not recognized as a separate ethnic category. This furthered the confusion around the difference between race and ethnicity, and Latinos were unsure of the difference between the two. During my interviews, I explored how one student views herself through the lens of race and ethnicity, and she admitted her confusion of the two terms:

*“I didn't realize until I got to college that people considered [race and ethnicity] two different things. Race hasn't always been a thing that I've personally spent a lot of time dwelling on. It's only come to my attention like the last four years that they are separate concepts to some people...I don't think I'm educated enough on it to really have my own opinion on [race and ethnicity].”<sup>25</sup>*

The year 1930 was the first time a racial category for a specific Latino population was included on the Census: Mexican.<sup>26</sup> In decades following, until 1980, Latinos were “classified as ‘white’” until the year 1980, when the census offered a “Hispanic identifier.”<sup>27</sup> The new term “Hispanic,” based on language, was soon followed by the term “Latino,” based on geography, and it created a new ethnic category.<sup>28</sup> In addition, since 1980, race and “Hispanic origin” have been exclusive of one another, allowing participants to select their race and whether they have Latino roots, and since 2000,

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<sup>25</sup> “Semi-structured interview 1.” Interview by author.

<sup>26</sup> Rodríguez, Clara E. “Counting Latinos in the U.S. Census.” In *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, edited by José A. Cobas, Jorge Duany, and Joe R. Feagin, 40. Paradigm Publishers, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Rodríguez, Clara E. “Counting Latinos in the U.S. Census.” 40.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 41.

census participants have been able to select one or more races, expanding the understanding of intersectionality and malleability of the social construct of race.<sup>29</sup>

Latinos were once identified as white in America, but today there is greater recognition of Latino as a separate, homogenous identity.<sup>30</sup> The creation of the label, Latino, evolved over time through the systematic internalization and racialization of Spanish-speaking people, from the language used in the U.S. Census Bureau to recent legislation and rhetoric surrounding the Latino population. There are different racial groups within the Latino population; however, simply because of the ability to speak the Spanish language or having parents from Latin American countries, this ethnic group is often considered a separate racial group. This fosters the creation of a new racial category and the rejection of not only identifying the labels as ethnic markers, but also the recognition of a third, wholly new race in the South's historic black-white society. The following excerpts from semi-structured interviews display how Latino students at the University of Mississippi identify racially and ethnically.

*"I'll say Hispanic and White. I'm not sure. I mean when I think of race, I feel like just a group of people who have similar characteristics, so I would just opt for Hispanic versus being more specific, for example, like Mexican."*<sup>31</sup>

*"I would consider my ethnicity...the same thing as I say for my race. I'm Black. I'm Puerto Rican. I'm Black American."*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Gonzalez-Barrera, Ana, and Mark Hugo Lopez. "Is Being Hispanic a Matter of Race, Ethnicity or Both?"

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Rumbaut, Rubén G. "Pigments of Our Imagination on the Racialization and Racial Identities of Hispanics and Latinos." 17.

<sup>31</sup> "Semi-structured interview 16." Interview by author.

<sup>32</sup> "Semi-structured interview 1." Interview by author.

*“[For] my ethnicity...my parents are from Belize...it will be believed to be American since I was born in America...Racially, I identify myself as a Latino American. It's who I am. Literally, I don't want to lie about who I am. I don't want to say I'm Caucasian when I'm not really not.”*<sup>33</sup>

*“That's kind of a hard question because like whenever you fill out those forms about race, I almost never know what to put because I really identify by my ethnicity, which is Hispanic. Then, race – it's white, Black, Asian, and most of the time, I've put white because I don't know what else. I don't really identify myself as Black or Asian, so I just put white because I feel like that's the closest thing because I'm not sure where I fall into.”*<sup>34</sup>

Each interviewee, all Latino students at the University of Mississippi, has a unique heritage, some with Caribbean and Central American roots, and others with Mexican roots; however, each person struggled to definitively choose one racial category to identify with. Many combined their Latino ethnicity and nationality, while acknowledging the effects of assimilation, to choose a racial identifier term.

A case of the systematic racialization that Latinos face in the black-white South is exemplified within legislation in the state of Georgia. According to Cobas, Duany, and Feagin, racialization is defined as the following:

*“The racialization of Latinos refers to their definition as a ‘racial’ group and the denigration of their alleged physical and cultural characteristics, such as phenotype, language, or number of children. Their racialization also entails their*

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<sup>33</sup> “Semi-structured interview 4.” Interview by author.

<sup>34</sup> “Semi-structured interview 19.” Interview by author.



*incorporation into a white-created and white-imposed racial hierarchy and continuum, now centuries old, with white Americans at the very top and black Americans at the very bottom.”*<sup>35</sup>

As a result of legislation passed in Georgia, the Security and Immigration Compliance Act of 2006 (SB-529) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011 (HB-87), Dominican and Guatemalan immigrants in the Atlanta-Metro area faced greater challenges and legalized discrimination simply based on their Latino identities in the South.<sup>36</sup>

Browne and Odem correlate Atlanta’s increased Latino population, a nearly 800 percent increase over the last two decades, to the transformation of the “‘cradle of the Civil Rights Movement’ into a multiethnic and multiracial city that has experienced particularly strong ‘Latino backlash’ at the local and state levels.”<sup>37</sup> SB-529 and HB-87 identify Latinos as “two-dimensional...with a homogenized ‘Latino’ category as one axis and an illegal/legal distinction as the second axis.”<sup>38</sup> For example, the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act requires the following:

*“contractors and subcontractors doing business with the state to ensure that all of their workers have legal authorization to work; denies tax-supported benefits, including health care, to adults who cannot prove their legal residency;*

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<sup>35</sup> “Introduction: Racializing Latinos, Historical Background and Current Forms.” *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, by Cobas José A. et al., Paradigm, 2009, pp. 1–14.

<sup>36</sup> Browne, Irene, and Mary Odem. “Juan Crow in the Nuevo South? Racialization of Guatemalan and Dominican Immigrants in the Atlanta Metro Area” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 9, no. 02 (2012): 321-37.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Browne, Irene, and Mary Odem. “Juan Crow in the Nuevo South? Racialization of Guatemalan and Dominican Immigrants in the Atlanta Metro Area”

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

*prohibits employers from claiming as a state tax deduction wages paid to undocumented workers; requires police to check the legal status of anyone who is arrested for a felony or for driving under the influence of alcohol, and to report any undocumented immigrants to immigration authorities; and authorizes the state to work with the federal government to train Georgia law enforcement officers to enforce immigration laws.*”<sup>39</sup>

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act allows the following:

*“state and local police to verify the immigration status of certain suspects and penalizes people who knowingly transport or harbor ‘illegal immigrants’ ... requires private employers to verify the legal status of their employees and empowers the public to sue local and state officials who do not enforce state laws aimed at unauthorized immigration.*”<sup>40</sup>

Primarily, legislation of this type further homogenizes Latinos into a third “race,” outside of Black or White while dissolving the myriad cultural differences among not only Guatemalans and Dominicans, but also other Latin American immigrants and people whose appearance subscribes to the “typical” Latino phenotype. Due to the implications of these laws, Latin Americans, specifically Guatemalan and Dominican immigrants in Atlanta, faced restricted access to basic resources such as healthcare, housing, and education; furthermore, Latinos and Hispanics in Atlanta were subject to increased

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Browne, Irene, and Mary Odem. “Juan Crow in the Nuevo South? Racialization of Guatemalan and Dominican Immigrants in the Atlanta Metro Area”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

surveillance from their employers, law enforcement officers, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from the ever-present black-white racial binary in the southern metropolis of Atlanta, the creation of a third “race” – Latino – is slowly gaining popularity from laws such the aforementioned examples, and this pattern is seen throughout the South as more Latin Americans immigrate to and contribute to the Southern economy, typically non-traditional gateway cities for immigrants.<sup>42</sup> More importantly, the rhetoric and practice following laws such as observed in Georgia create a context for the discussions: Who is Latino? What does a Latino person look like, talk like, or act like? In other words, how are we continuing to racialize Latinos in modern-day legal and governmental processes, and how is this affecting non-Latinos’ understanding of race and identity? In this case, Atlanta serves as a microcosm for the South in that race still affects everyday life through, but not limited to, social interactions and statewide legislation. Because race is so deeply anchored in the South, today there is still a need to racially define groups of people based on appearance and other characteristics of a population’s identity. The passing of the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act of 2006 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011 fostered an environment of fear of immigrants in Atlanta, and it stereotyped Hispanic and Latino people as, “...illegal, Mexican, unwanted.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Browne, Irene, and Mary Odem. “Juan Crow in the Nuevo South? Racialization of Guatemalan and Dominican Immigrants in the Atlanta Metro Area.” 321-37.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 333-34.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Despite the construct and role of race in the South, Latino people do not have one specific phenotype, language, or culture; for example, there are people from Latin America, or with Latino heritage, who speak pre-Columbian, indigenous languages; and there are Latin Americans and Latinos with blonde hair and blue eyes who would be racialized as white, and other Latin Americans and Latinos with brown skin and curly hair who would be racialized as black in the American South. Altogether, these observations suggest the pliability and ambiguity of race in a region almost blindsided by the construct and hierarchy of race. Furthermore, Latinos cannot be identified as one race because they do not share a cross-cultural homogenous identity.

## SECTION IV: INTERVIEW ANALYSES

Throughout a total of 23 semi-structured interviews with University of Mississippi undergraduate and graduate students, I found that each student has a unique story about their family's history, cultural practices, and experiences with racialization in the South and on the campus of the University of Mississippi. The students' stories ranged from their discussion about being a DACA recipient in the Trump era, to immigrating to the United States and navigating the new classroom setting as children, to proving themselves as Latino although phenotypically appearing as a white or African American person, a form of racialization. Each student's story represents just a small facet of what Latinos face in the U.S. South and is meant to serve as a case study for the experience of Latinos in the United States.

Ashlynn Principe, a senior International Studies and Spanish student, grew up in a military family. Her father, a native of Puerto Rico, served in the Air Force throughout her childhood, and Principe grew up spending much of her childhood with her African American mother and the maternal side of the family. Principe was born in Alabama and spent her upbringing in Florida and the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and she said she only decided to attend the University of Mississippi for the international studies program. However, Principe quickly noticed the racial stratification in the small north Mississippi town of Oxford, where the University of Mississippi is located:

*“Oxford's a funny place... I think I think one of the...funny but like the more curious things, and I guess I might have to do something with my whole military*

*background and moving a lot. The military is very diverse, so even when I was in Montgomery or Panama City, I've always been around more or less a blended population. Oxford is like the whitest place I've ever been.”<sup>44</sup>*

Principe said her race is important to her and is “always hyper-aware” if she is “the only person of color in a room.”<sup>45</sup>

*“I think race is important to my identity because it's my family and like the traditions we have and whatnot. They're all very related to our race, so I can't really separate the two. Whenever I think about my family I instantly think about our race, so it's important to me because I think it is such an integral part of like my family and how we operate.”*

Principe compared her family's culture and tradition to her family's racial identity, connecting the two factors and their role in racial formation. However, as a multiethnic woman, Principe acknowledges her perceived racial ambiguity but still identifies as a person of color. She and her family experienced a wave of uneasiness when she first visited the university with her family.

*“When we'd go out to eat and everything, [my parents] kind of looked at each other, and they looked at me and they're like, 'is this the 1950s? What is going on here?' Everything seemed fine. There wasn't really any overt like racial tensions going on, at least not to me at the time...It definitely took some adjusting to. I have a pretty light-skinned complexion, but I know I'm a person of color...and there were often many times, especially in big lecture classes, where I would be*

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<sup>44</sup> “Semi-structured interview 1.” Interview by author.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

*[the only] racially ambiguous [person] in the class. I was always very aware of those situations. Oxford is cool, but it was an acquired taste as they say.”<sup>46</sup>*

However, Principe’s childhood and sense of identity formation was especially unique because she grew up and socialized more with her mother’s family rather than her father’s family. This was simply due to proximity and closeness of her mother’s family to where they lived.

*“I mean I guess I feel ‘more black’ than Puerto Rican, and I think it does have to do with contact because my dad’s side of the family, they’re in deep South Florida or in Puerto Rico. We have not been back to Puerto Rico. I think they took me when I was like two, and I have no memory of that. I never really spoke to that side of the family.”<sup>47</sup>*

Principe’s feeling of connectedness to her black culture rather than her Puerto Rican culture was also exasperated by her father’s decision to not speak Spanish in the home. Principe said he only spoke Spanish on the phone with his brothers and refused to teach her the language. As a child, Principe’s father was bullied for his ability to speak Spanish and could be a connector as to why he decided to not pass the language on to his daughter. Principe and her father had a discussion about why he decided to not teach her the language as a child after she performed poorly on an assignment in Spanish class. Principe told her father:

*“I’m Puerto Rican. I’m supposed to know [Spanish] ...It should be my blood...My family knows, and I don’t like [how] I’m not a part of that. I don’t even feel*

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<sup>46</sup> “Semi-structured interview 1.” Interview by author.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

*connected to my own family. We never really got far enough talking about it for him to ever go into any detail about like why he never taught me [Spanish] because it would just end up in fights, but this time he stopped. [He said] whenever he moved [to the United States' mainland], he didn't know any English...Being a 12-year-old, skinny Puerto Rican kid in middle school, he got teased and bullied a lot, and I didn't know that. Whenever he was trying to learn English, he tried to stop speaking Spanish altogether and bury that part of his life, except when he was talking to family...He basically stopped speaking Spanish around the time he moved here...The only time that I would even hear him speak Spanish was whenever he was on the phone with his mom, his dad, one of his brothers, or sisters. He didn't really speak [Spanish] around me.”<sup>48</sup>*

However, Benjamin Payne, a junior public policy leadership major, has a different story. Payne was born in Metairie, Louisiana and raised in New Orleans. However, the year 2005 changed his life.

*“After Hurricane Katrina, my family moved to Ridgeland, Mississippi. I lived there from about fourth grade to the present, and then [I’ve] been in attendance at the University of Mississippi for the last two and a half years.”<sup>49</sup>*

Payne has spent most of his life in Mississippi, raised by a Cuban American mother and a white father, and he identifies racially as white and ethnically as Latino. He said that most people racialize him as white because of his appearance, but Payne is adamant about informing peers of his Cuban heritage, a part of his identity he’s proud of.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., “Semi-structured interview 1.”

<sup>49</sup> “Semi-structured interview 2.” Interview by author.



*“I think people are aware that I'm white just by looking at me, but I'm always forward that I'm Cuban. I really can't say that I have [faced any problems at the University of Mississippi]. I think it's primarily because I don't look Latino, so that's not what people initially assume when they speak to me or when they meet me...I think people ask once I tell them that I'm Cuban because if it comes up in a conversation, they're like, 'oh, you're white.' I'm like, 'no, I'm Cuban, actually.' Then I explain my family heritage, where the lineage comes from, when my grandfather came to United States, and that whole story.”*<sup>50</sup>

Payne maintains a well-balanced academic and social life. As a member of the Trent Lott Leadership Program, the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors college, and the Center for Manufacturing Excellence, he upholds a superior grade point average, but Payne is also involved in multiple service-based and leadership-based student organizations, such as Ole Miss Ambassadors and The Columns Society. He plans to attend law school one day, but throughout all of this, Payne said school, his parents, and his grandparents are the most important aspects of life. He comes from a tight-knit family, who always emphasized the importance of school and identity.

*“I think race is a really important part of my family. My grandfather has always emphasized that my middle name is 'Eduardo Gutierrez.' It's very important to him. If you asked my mother what my name is, she'll say 'Benjamín.' She won't say Benjamin. Family's always been a really important part of essentially any major celebration. So just in August we had my grandfather's birthday and we have a big extended family...Not to long ago I was speaking one of my aunts*

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<sup>50</sup> “Semi-structured interview 2.” Interview by author.

*about how lucky we are to have like a strong Hispanic family because it's just different. It's different than how my white friends grew up, essentially. They don't have the same big family celebrations, and it is really an important part of our family's culture, I would say.*"<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, Bianca Martinez's experience with racialization has been entirely different. Martinez is a sophomore biology major and the daughter of Mexican immigrants. Martinez was also born in Mexico and came with her parents to the United States as a child. She is a recipient of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) highlights the specifics of the federal program:

*"On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that certain people who came to the United States as children and meet several guidelines may request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal. They are also eligible for work authorization. Deferred action is a use of prosecutorial discretion to defer removal action against an individual for a certain period of time. Deferred action does not provide lawful status. You may request DACA if you were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012; came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday; have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time; were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS; had no lawful status on June 15, 2012; are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate*

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<sup>51</sup> "Semi-structured interview 2." Interview by author.

*of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.*”<sup>52</sup>

According to a 2017 study by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Martinez is one of 793,000 to ever have been a recipient of DACA since the program’s inception in 2012; however, “MPI estimates about 915 people on average will fall out of DACA status each day beginning March 6, 2018,” and this has led to much uncertainty and worry in Martinez’s life.

*“Because the [University of Mississippi] doesn't offer scholarships for DACA students, it's kind of hard for me to pay tuition on time or pay tuition at all because one semester I didn't do that. I wish they would do more and be better at that and try to get more outreach or something like that.”*<sup>53</sup>

Her family moved to Itta Beena, Mississippi, a small town in the Delta region of the state, when she was young to be closer to family and to secure job opportunities, and Martinez sometimes considers being a student at the University of Mississippi to be “isolating.”<sup>54</sup>

*“Well, there's not that many Latinos here, so it's not easy to relate to people. You can't talk about similar experiences to someone without feeling a connection or something like that...I think [my race is] something that just stands out, like my*

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<sup>52</sup> “Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).” USCIS, 14 Feb. 2018, [www.uscis.gov/archive/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca](http://www.uscis.gov/archive/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca).

<sup>53</sup> “Semi-structured interview 3.” Interview by author.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., “Semi-structured interview 3.”

*skin tone. It's kind of a sensitive topic in the U.S. My race is a pretty big part of me. It's the first thing you notice.*"<sup>55</sup>

Regardless of Martinez's identity status a DACA recipient, a child of Mexican immigrants, and a Mexican immigrant herself, she still finds difficulty in specifying her racial identity separate of her Latina ethnicity.

*"It's kind of weird because when [I'm] signing documents without asking whether you are you Hispanic or Latino – and then they will be like, 'are you white, black or native American?' Every time I hit like white and Native American they'll be like, 'so what's your Native American social security number?' And then I'm like, 'oh, I don't have one.' So I guess I'm white. So that's what I usually just put."*<sup>56</sup>

Brandon Tzib, born in Oklahoma and raised in Mississippi, is currently studying nursing and graduates in May 2019. Tzib's unique identity sets him apart as the son of Belizean parents. However, while growing up, he often wanted to minimize his identity.

*"At first, I didn't really acknowledge my culture because, honestly, I really wanted it to be 'better.' I wanted to let people know that I wanted to be the same as everyone else. When they look at me and they see 'oh, he's low class,' that's why I had that mentality of motivation to try and be better than that person. I know it was kind of selfish, but at one point, I just came to realization. It's not who I am. It's about doing what I can to change the world. So, I embrace the culture and where I'm from and because when I tell them people, they are fascinated to hear about it. That brought me more joy to talk about it, so I embrace it."*<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> "Semi-structured interview 3." Interview by author.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., "Semi-structured interview 3."

<sup>57</sup> "Semi-structured interview 4." Interview by author.

Tzib's experience with wanting to minimize his identity is similar to that of Collin Rivera, a senior journalism student at the University of Mississippi. Rivera was born and raised in Tampa, Florida and is of Irish, Spanish, and Puerto Rican heritage. Like Tzib, Rivera wanted to blend in racially with his majority peers in grade school.

*"The high school I went to, I would say there was maybe four percent minorities that went to my high school. The rest were predominantly white... When I was in high school, I was very sports-driven, so all I cared about was sports. I played soccer for 14 years, so that was really taking up the majority of my time, and then I was involved in the newspaper. I was the sports editor for my high school. I mean sports was just 24-7, so really didn't have anything else to think about. I was bullied quite a lot, especially in my freshman and sophomore year. I don't know if it was racial-based...but I guess you could say [I was] just trying to fit in, but I was really just trying to just get through the years. I was looking mostly forward to college."*<sup>58</sup>

Rivera equates his Latino identity to the ability to speak Spanish.

*"I think racially I typically do [identify as] white just because I'm not Spanish-speaking. I think that's one of the biggest drawbacks for me is that I think if you're [Latino] you have to know at least some kind of Spanish. Whether you can understand if someone's talking to you and you may not be able to speak it or you can speak it fluently. I think that's a major key."*<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Semi-structured interview 5." Interview by author.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., "Semi-structured interview 5."

However, junior journalism student Enjoli Henderson cannot fluently speak Spanish but still identifies as Latina. Henderson is the daughter of an African American man and a Mexican American woman. She fully acknowledges all aspects of her race and ethnicity, and in fact, she notes that she notes her ethnicity is “Hispanic” and her race is “black and Mexican.”<sup>60</sup> Although she takes pride in her race and ethnicity, Henderson has experienced people attempting to discredit her identity based on her inability to speak Spanish.

*“[People will] ask me, and they’ll assume I’m Dominican or something because I don’t ‘look that Mexican.’ But I’ll tell them ‘yeah, I’m Mexican.’ Then they’ll ask me, ‘do you speak Spanish?’ I’m like, ‘no.’ They’ll [say], ‘oh, you’re not really Mexican,’ and I say, ‘well, I think I’m Mexican.’ I’m pretty Mexican, so I just tell them a little bit about me, my family, and how they got here.”<sup>61</sup>*

Henderson was born and raised in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region, and as a woman of color, she has also endured stereotypical comments about her identity. She said people have called her “crazy” or assumed she has an “attitude” after she discloses her Mexican identity.<sup>62</sup> Henderson also said most of her friends identify as black, and in those settings, she identifies as black, too.

*“Sometimes I do feel like I identify more as black than Hispanic only because a lot of people can’t tell I’m Hispanic, but then some people say they can. My mom, she’ll catch me, when I tell somebody I’m black, she’d [say], ‘you’re Mexican*

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<sup>60</sup> “Semi-structured interview 6.” Interview by author.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., “Semi-structured interview 6.”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

*because I had you. You're Mexican too.' Most of the time, I feel like identify more as black, especially in the South because it's like a big black [population]. All of my friends are black, so it's like I am black. I'm just light-skinned to them. They don't really see me as [Latina]...so I do consider myself black most of the time.*"<sup>63</sup>

Gabriela Altieri, a senior political science student with Puerto Rican parents, conflates her racial and ethnic identity in a manner similar to Henderson's. Altieri was born in Memphis and raised in Mississippi, and although she is proud of her Puerto Rican identity, she still identifies as white "on paper." Still, she acknowledges a difference between being "Puerto Rican white" and "American white."<sup>64</sup>

*"I guess racially I'm white, but I don't really identify with like the white American culture. I normally just say I'm Puerto Rican, and that just kind of like sums it all up...I don't have this strong history in Mississippi or in the United States, so I guess that's why I don't identify as white. But technically on paper I am white...I guess based on America's history, I don't identify with the white experience, but also a lot of times I do get mistaken as being white because also I'm from Mississippi. I was born and raised here, and I have a little bit of a southern accent. I do identify with being southern also, so that's kind of like a jumbled mix.*

*I don't know because obviously I'm not black, and I also don't look indigenous.*"<sup>65</sup>

Altieri is often racialized as white in her day-to-day life, and as a freshman living in close quarters in a traditional residence hall, she experienced questioning about her race and ethnicity.

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<sup>63</sup> "Semi-structured interview 6." Interview by author.

<sup>64</sup> "Semi-structured interview 8." Interview by author.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., "Semi-structured interview 8."

*“One time, I was in Crosby [Residence Hall], and there was a [community assistant]. She was African American, and she did not believe that I was Latina. She made me take my hair out of my hat and prove that I was Latina, but she felt my hair. She was like, ‘you have white hair,’ and I was like, ‘this is the hair that grows out of my head. I don’t know what you want me to do.’ She made me speak Spanish, and I was like, ‘okay, but no, because I don’t have to prove to you that I am who I am.’ That was kind of awkward, but also, I knew that she wasn’t coming at it from a place of malice. She had never met anyone that was ever from Puerto Rico...I think it is kind of difficult to explain because a lot of people view race and ethnicity as the same thing. I have to explain. My ethnicity is Latina or Puerto Rican, but my race is white. It just doesn’t click.”<sup>66</sup>*

For Jade Orellana, a senior integrated marketing and communications student, the need to prove her Latina identity was ever-present, similar to Altieri’s experiences with racialization. Orellana has a Salvadoran father and a white mother, but people often racialize Orellana as white, not only because of her physical features, but also because her father worked a lot and was not often able to participate in school and social functions with Orellana.

*“For me, [race] definitely is [important] because for the majority of my life my dad was always working...my mom’s white with red hair. She’s definitely very white. She was the one that always came to my school stuff or little parties or whatever. Every time people saw my mom, they just kind of assumed that I was white throughout my life, especially in Mississippi with a lack of [Latino]*

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<sup>66</sup> “Semi-structured interview 8.” Interview by author.



*population. Most of the schools I went to didn't really have [Latino] people. When I told people that I was [Latina], no one believed me, and that was something that I didn't really think that much about. I kind of started identifying as white – not that I didn't believe that I was [Latina] – but I kind of thought that because I didn't look [Latina], I wasn't. Coming into college and everything, I realized that I can have multiple identities kind of exists with each other, and I don't have to identify one way or the other because definitely people told me that I wasn't [Latina] or that they didn't believe me until they saw my dad.”<sup>67</sup>*

Lydia Ramirez,<sup>68</sup> a California-born, Mexican American woman, acknowledges the dynamics of race and ethnicity now since moving to Mississippi. Ramirez is a doctoral student at the University of Mississippi and attended Hispanic-serving institutions in California for her bachelor's and master's degree. Mississippi has been a cultural adjustment for her.

*“[Race] is very important to my identity, and I think that sometimes that's between both like what society tells me that I look like and how my race impacts the way that the world sees me...So I think from that perspective, yes, race is very important to my identity...When we think of race, we just think, ‘this person looks a certain way, and that's what their race is,’ but like sometimes there's so many different components that we don't think about, like the culture that comes with that race or the food or all of these things...I think being in Mississippi made my race even more salient because I [am] being identified by others. The question I*

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<sup>67</sup> “Semi-structured interview 11.” Interview by author.

<sup>68</sup> “Semi-structured interview 9.” Interview by author. This is an alias and is not the subject's real name. The subject asked to not be identified by name.

*get here the most is, 'where are you from? What are you?' Sometimes I just want to be like 'I'm human,' but it's very important for people to know because they're trying to determine who you are. Then they're trying to put you in a box, which can be very uncomfortable at times. Why can't I just be me? But it's like a sense of we were trying to understand where you come from, where do you stand, and obviously to make some assumptions based on what my race is or what my ethnicity is. Moving to Mississippi, it has made myself more questionable.”<sup>69</sup>*

A similar theme is seen in Ingrid Valbuena’s story. Valbuena was born and raised in Maracaibo, Venezuela, and she moved to Mississippi to attend the University of Mississippi for her bachelor’s degree and is currently earning her master’s degree from the university. The function of race, ethnicity, and identity operates differently in her native South American country, and like Ramirez, Valbuena did not begin to question her own identity until she moved to Mississippi.

*“I guess [race] wasn't really important when I was in Venezuela because everyone there is kind of like the same. I don't know. It's just not defined when you're growing up, and you're either lighter-skinned or darker-skinned, but either way, we're all kind of a mix between native, slaves, and European ... There's always this conversation of race. I never thought about race until I was coming to Mississippi, and my friends were like, 'oh, people are racist there.' And I was like, 'oh no, no.' I got to [the University of Mississippi], and through classes, through friendships, through involvement, I feel like [race has] become a really big conversation that I am a part of because I am a human being here, and race is*

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<sup>69</sup> “Semi-structured interview 9.” Interview by author.

*a big deal...I guess the first thing that made me think is where do I fit in? Up until maybe two years ago, the phrase 'people of color' was never something I had heard or used. Now I guess it's like a part of who I am, what it is, something that I like. I feel like that's where I fall under.*"<sup>70</sup>

Juan Riojas is a sophomore public policy leadership and Arabic student. His dad is in the military, so he calls many cities his home as a result of moving a lot as a child; however, he is firm in his identity as Mexican American. Riojas' father is Mexican American, and mother is Native American and white. Riojas said most people assume he is white until he tells them his full name: Juan Ramón Riojas.

*"I generally go by J.R. instead of Juan Ramon, but when people ask what J.R. stands for, I say 'Juan Ramon.' They go, 'whoa, what are you?' And so I say, 'I'm Mexican American.' And they're like, 'but you look so white.' And I'm like, 'yeah, my dad is a first-generation American.' It becomes uncomfortable sometimes. I can generally shrug it off though...[When I lived] in San Antonio, people wouldn't even think twice about it. They know, Latino Americans comes in all shapes, sizes and colors, but being here, you don't have many people who are around any type of Latin American...There are times people will just say something that's particularly ignorant...They'll make stereotypical like assumptions about what I like to do. They'll even say, 'do you play soccer?'"*<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, Riojas believes the more Latinos move to the South, Mississippi in particular, the more people's perceptions of Latinos will expand. Comparing his

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<sup>70</sup> "Semi-structured interview 10." Interview by author.

<sup>71</sup> "Semi-structured interview 14." Interview by author.

experience living in San Antonio, Texas to living on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, he experienced more questioning about his identity as a person in Mississippi than in Texas.

*“Well, as the Latino population begins to grow, they are going to definitely just have to have conversations about our [Latinos’] role in society. Especially our role in the Deep South, I think it's going to be difficult to break stereotypes, um, because people here just have not been confronted with many Latin Americans, Latinos at all. In their mind, there is still this kind of myth or legend of what a Latino should look like.”<sup>72</sup>*

Julio Cazares is a first-generation Mexican American and is currently attending the University of Mississippi School of Law. Born and raised in Holland, Michigan, Cazares lived in North Carolina to obtain his bachelor’s degree and studied abroad in Spain. Because of the beauty of campus and how Oxford, Mississippi reminded him of his hometown, Cazares decided to enroll in law school at the university but said he still experienced culture shock.

*“[Growing up], I was definitely around all Latino people mostly and some African Americans. Holland is very much like Oxford. It's very white, so I grew up in a very segregated neighborhood...I knew [Oxford] was going to be culturally different. I just wasn't prepared for how culturally different it would be and how intense it would be.”<sup>73</sup>*

For Cazares, like other interviewees, he sees no separation between his race and ethnicity. For him, Cazares’ Mexican American identity is his race.

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<sup>72</sup> “Semi-structured interview 14.” Interview by author.

<sup>73</sup> “Semi-structured interview 15.” Interview by author.

*"I don't want to, and I can't really change who I am. It's the first thing people see about me. It's another thing that I've really grown to love and accept, and I didn't use to as a child. Now that I'm an adult, it's become important to me...My ethnicity is Mexican American. I mean I would see my race as being Mexican obviously, too. Mexican culture is so unique. It's kind of hard to separate my race from my ethnicity."*<sup>74</sup>

Cazares also mentioned how his identity was often questioned as a result of living in Mississippi, also like many other interviewees; however, Cazares also mentioned how the idea of race in the South is stagnant.

*"I was at the Grove one time, and someone was like, 'what are you?' I was at the bar and [it happened] again. I just I feel like when alcohol is involved here, people feel a lot more comfortable just blurting things out that they probably wouldn't say normally because it's never come up on campus. It always comes up in social settings...Everything is very much about duality here. It's just like everything is a black and white issue, and nothing's outside of that...I would view race as a concept that's definitely changing...I think that's interesting seeing how people are finally realizing that because I feel like minority communities have always recognized that, but in the South I think it's still very much a duality... Well, it seems like the majority of people don't think about it here. And when you try to talk about it, they get very uncomfortable."*<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> "Semi-structured interview 15." Interview by author.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., "Semi-structured interview 15."

## SECTION V: CONCLUSION

Even today race is still an influential factor upon populations and establishments in the U.S. South. With the increased immigration of Latinos to the South have come innovation and change, although history shows this change has not always come easily. From the observance of statistical U.S. Census data reflecting population growth of Latinos in the South created a question for research: How are Latinos affecting society in the South – through race and migration?

Through semi-structured interviews, this question was explored, based solely on the experiences of Latino students at the University of Mississippi. Most interviewees mentioned, in some capacity, how Mississippi and the South made them second-guess their identities. Although race and ethnicity are not interchangeable, the common person, like all of the interviewees, use the terms synonymously. Throughout the interviews, the students furthered the notion that race is not real, but rather a continuation of “the centuries-old white racial frame” of white versus non-white.<sup>76</sup>

Through knowing this history of race in the South and the presence of the Black/White racial binary, the presence of Latinos is creating space for a “separate” or “third” racial or ethnic category in a region so invested in the construct of black or white. This research examined just a small sample of Latinos in the South, but it sought to expose and tell the stories and experiences of this small group of people.

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<sup>76</sup> Cobas, José A., Jorge Duany, and Joe R. Feagin. “Racializing Latinos: Historical Background and Current Forms.” In *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, 12-13. Paradigm Publishers, 2009.

Based on their experiences, the U.S. Census data, and other case studies about Latino migration and settlements in the South, the conclusion can be drawn that race is slowly becoming less stagnant and more of a spectrum to measure one's identity. Not one single interviewee could answer the questions about their race or ethnicity without contemplating the meaning of the two term and the terms' relationship with and effect on their Latino identity, specifically in the South. Race is a spectrum used solely for informational purposes and has no real scientific effect; however, these interviews show how Latinos are racialized in social, academic, and personal settings by people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. No one group is immune to receiving or distributing racialization; however, for those who do not explicitly identify or fit into the racial categories of black or white, racialization becomes ubiquitous.

After conducting this research, it is both comforting and troubling to know that I am not the only person who has had to answer questions about my identity, or prove my existence, my entire life. It is comforting because it is reassuring to not be alone in this racial "middle ground" in the South, but it is troubling because society is still attempting to place people into cookie-cutter categories that were never reflected the belief that the United States is a "melting pot." "The Latino South: Race and Racialization" delved into the establishment of race, ethnicity, and the action of racialization and found that race and identity is still transforming, even today, and it will continue to do so until race, as we know it today, is no longer existent.

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## APPENDIX

Ashlynn Principe

- Brittany Brown: [00:00](#) We're recording. Um, so I'm going to jump right into the questions. I'm looking at the questions on my laptop, so not like ignoring you or anything, but, um, my name is Brittany Brown. Today is October 23rd 2018 and we're currently in studio one and this interview will serve as data and more information for my thesis project, which is titled the Latino South Race and racialization. So we'll go ahead and get started. Are you 18 years or older?
- Ashlynn Principe: Yes, I am.
- Brittany Brown: Can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Ashlynn Principe: [00:36](#) My name is Ashlynn Principe.
- Brittany Brown: When were you born?
- Ashlynn Principe: July 1, 1997.
- Brittany Brown: [00:51](#) Um, and where are you from and where did you grow up?
- Ashlynn Principe: [00:56](#) So I always kind of pause on this question when people ask me because I'm, I'm a military child, my family, my dad specifically is in the Air force. So we moved around. I was born in Montgomery, Alabama. I consider my childhood being in Panama City, Florida. And then I moved to Gulfport, Mississippi when I was around like 12 maybe, maybe. No, I think it might've been younger. So kind of the south, the coast.
- Brittany Brown: [01:30](#) Have you lived on the coast since you were about 12 or younger?

- Ashlynn Principe: [01:34](#) Yeah. How old was I in 2007 maybe. It was like nine. Yes. So I've, I've lived in Gulfport since however old I was in 2007.
- Brittany Brown: [01:45](#) So you explained explain why you moved from Panama City and so forth. But what about here in Oxford? Like what brought you to Oxford. Obviously the school, but like what attracted you to the university?
- Ashlynn Principe: [02:00](#) In high school, like senior year I didn't really have a plan. I knew I wasn't going to join the military and I doubted I would be jumping into the workforce. I was like okay, I have to go to school, what am I going to do? So I think I was mainly like following the money, like where am I scholarships going to take me and um, and then like what major do I want to do? And I've always been interested in like history and like social, cultural, whatever. So, um, whenever I found the Croft Institute for International Studies that didn't see any other in state programs like it and I saw a very prestigious and whatnot. So, um, when I applied and I got in, I was like, well it looks like I'm going to Ole Miss and that's it. Like that's it really, it was just Croft that brought me here. Really my major
- Brittany Brown: [02:48](#) Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
- Ashlynn Principe: [02:53](#) Um, I think so. Like it isn't really something that I think about everyday, but I think race is important to my identity because it's, I feel like my, my family and like the traditions we have and whatnot, they're all very like related to our race. So I can't really separate the two. Like whenever I think about my family I, I like instantly think about our race. So it's important to me because I think it is such an integral part of like my family and how we operate.
- Brittany Brown: And how has your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?
- Ashlynn Principe: I'm good. Oxford's a funny place, um, whenever people would ask me about Oxford whenever I first moved here, like, oh, how is it? I'm like, oh, it's

small, you know, it's, it's whatever. And I think I think one of the maybe not funny but like the more curious things I, and I guess I might have to do something with like my whole military background and moving a lot. Like, you know, the military is very diverse so like every, like even when I was in Montgomery or Panama City or whatever, like I've always been around more or less like blended population. So Oxford is like the whitest place I've ever been and whenever my parents and I came up here for the first time for orientation, we came here for the weekend. We did, you know, did the whole orientation thing. When we'd like go out to eat and everything, they kind of looked at each other and they looked at me and they're like, is this the 1950s? Like what is going on here? I was like, hey, I didn't know. But I mean, everything seemed fine. I mean, there wasn't really any overt like racial tensions going on, like at least not to me at the time. That was before the whole state flag thing got brought up and and whatnot. But yeah, I mean it's, it's definitely, it definitely took some adjusting to, like, I don't, I have a pretty light skinned complexion, but I know, I know I'm a person of color. I'm not sure if it's immediately obvious at least from a distance to other people, but I can always, I'm always hyper aware of if I'm the only person of color in a room. And there were often many times like that, especially like in classes, like big lecture classes where I would be, or at least, you know, unless there was somebody else that was, I don't know, sort of racially ambiguous like myself in the class too. Like I was always very aware of those situations. So, I mean, Oxford is cool, but it's, it was an acquired taste as they say.

Brittany Brown:

And what is your major and your classification and involvement that you'd like to share?

Ashlynn Principe: [05:53](#)

Um, so I am an international studies major. I'm a senior. Um, notable involvement. The only club I've been in like all four years and been like the most active and not, not super active, but just the most out of all of them was um, the Vietnamese Student Association. They recently changed their name to Vietnamese American Student Association to be

more inclusive. I'm not at all Vietnamese. Um, I've just had friends I think like every year one of my friends has either been president or on the executive board cabinet, so I've just always been in that club. I mean, but I've been involved in other clubs like Rebels Against Sexual Assault. Um, I was in BSU for a little while. I'm technically part of the Latin American Student Association Organization, but it's not, it's not a super active group. And like it, like when somebody says something in the group chat, like everybody, like hundreds of people sees it, see it, but nobody really says anything. So I mean I don't really ever mentioned it, but yeah. So I guess I guess VSA would probably be the most prominent organization I'm involved in.

Brittany Brown:

And what do you see yourself doing or pursuing in after graduation?

Ashlynn Principe:

Um, I'm not sure. So like I haven't had any internships yet, so I'm kind of looking to maybe do that over the summer or something. Like I'm, I don't, I don't believe I'm naive enough to believe that I'm going to immediately find a job in my field as soon as I graduate. Like I'm sure I'm going to have some sort of, I dunno, intermediate period where I'm like just kind of trying to find my footing. So I'm trying to look for internships in my field, preferably. I don't know, I think I'm interested in maybe like criminology, but also I'm interested in like history and maybe like working for the Smithsonian or maybe I want to work for a study abroad company. I don't know. I'm not sure yet.

Brittany Brown: [08:05](#)

what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?

Ashlynn Principe: [08:12](#)

I guess right now, like school is a big priority. You know, I'm a senior, I'm trying to, I'm trying real hard to graduate, um, friends and family, like thankfully I've always had like a really strong support system in both of those fields. So like they're always going to be a big priority for me. So yeah, really at this moment like school, family, friends and right after graduation, uh, work or finding work that'll be a big one. But for right now

		I'm just kind of keeping my head down and trying to graduate.
Brittany Brown:		The US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity is two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Ashlynn Principe:	<a href="#">09:12</a>	I didn't realize until really I got to college that people considered them to different things. Like I said, race wasn't, hasn't always been a thing that I've like personally, like spent a lot of time dwelling on. I mean, so it's only come to my attention like the last four years that they are separate concepts to some people. I mean, and I, I understand, I don't really have, like, I don't think I'm educated enough on it to really have my own opinion on like, oh, like this is race and this is not race, it's ethnicity, but from my understanding, I would consider my ethnicity, I would say the same thing as I say from my race. I'm, I'm black, I'm Puerto Rican. Like I'm black American. I'm Puerto Rican I guess.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">09:59</a>	And what are your parents' nationality and do you identify with their, with their nationality?
Ashlynn Principe:	<a href="#">10:05</a>	Right. So my father is from Puerto Rico. He was born and raised there and he, him and his family came to the mainland of the United States. They moved to Florida when he was 12 and then my mom was born and raised in Gulfport, Mississippi. So she's American. She's a black American.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">10:26</a>	And do you identify with their nationalities?
Ashlynn Principe:	<a href="#">10:29</a>	Yes, fully. Like I, I'll just say like half and half just to keep things simple. Like I'm half black, I'm half Puerto Rican. Simple.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">10:39</a>	Um, how do I identify racially and why do you identify this way?
Ashlynn Principe:	<a href="#">10:44</a>	Yeah, I identify, uh, the same as my parents. You know, black and Puerto Rican. I do think that a lot of times I identify more with my mom's side of the family just because I grew up around them more so. I mean I guess I feel more black than Puerto Rican and I think it does have to do with like that contact



because my dad's side of the family, like a lot of them, they're in deep South Florida or in Puerto Rico and um, I, we have not been back to Puerto Rico. I think they took me when I was like two and I have no memory of that so I never really spoke to that side of the family. And then, uh, my dad's side in Florida, like they were so far away so we would go there maybe like once a year and I was like maybe around the holidays and I mean that was it and not everybody can make it during that time of year. So I just didn't really have as much time with them. But my mom's side of the family, like I grew up around them my entire life. Even whenever we lived in Montgomery, in Panama City, we would make trips to go all the time multiple times a year and I'm an only child but I am so close with my mom's side of the family and my cousins, they're like, I almost consider them my, I dunno, 11 brothers and sisters. So yeah, I still identify as black and Puerto Rican but I feel more connected to my mom's black side of the family.

Brittany Brown:

Do you consider Puerto Rican a separate race?

Ashlynn Principe: [12:33](#)

I'm not sure if I consider it a separate race. I do think, well I guess I don't know. Honestly I think it is its own separate category because like the cultures are different, the people are different. Well when I say that people are different. I'm not saying like all Puerto Ricans, all black. I'm thinking about my family specifically. Like they're very different. So like, I do consider them to be separate, but I don't know, like I guess, yeah, yeah. And there, there are differences, being Puerto Rican and being black, but definitely related. I mean not just because I am both but I don't know. I think that the experiences of really um, minorities to some degree, especially in the United States and especially in the south United States are connected.

Brittany Brown:

Do you identify as Hispanic or Latina?

Ashlynn Principe: [13:53](#)

This is another one of those terms that I, uh, only recently maybe like in the last two years, like saw coming and into like, I dunno, debate mainly online, um, that these were like two different concepts and

frankly I'm still a little confused myself. I'm like, what are the distinctions and there isn't really like a single voice dictating like this is Hispanic, this is Latino, Latina, like, and this is why they should be separate. I think I've heard like Hispanic, it's like all Spanish speaking countries. So it wouldn't include Portugal, but I know some people include Portugal and saying like Latino is because it's part of Latin America. So I'm not, I'm not really sure for me, for my own purposes, I would consider myself both. Like I use them interchangeably. I'm both. But I know that it is like, I dunno, a debate out there, but I don't know, I'm just like with my dad's side of the family, I'm not as connected to the Hispanic, Latino, Latina community. So I'm, I feel like I'm not really taking an active part in that conversation. So I couldn't really, I dunno, contribute to saying like what is and what isn't, you know what I mean? But for me, I'm both.

Brittany Brown: [15:20](#)

According to scholars and people who of research race, Hispanic is identified as people who come from Spanish speaking countries. So then it's like all of Latin America, Spain, but people argue whether or not that includes Brazil and being Latino refers to people from Latin American countries. So that includes Brazil and includes all of Central America and the Caribbean. And some people even argue whether or not, that includes like Haiti or like the other islands and countries that are in there that may not be predominantly Spanish speaking, but that does not include a Spain, Europe. So it is a separation, although people use them interchangeably. Technically they don't mean the same thing. And in my research project, I'm just using the term Latino, so, but yeah, that was kind of, you know, part of the research is trying to figure out, you know, what do people prefer to use Hispanic or Latino. Um, and so onto the next question. Studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?

Ashlynn Principe: [16:40](#)

I hope, I hope that it'll make race relations better. Um, so like my mind instantly jumped to like, I

dunno early, like eastern and western European immigration back in the, you know, I'm not even going to try to remember those years. But you know, back in the day whenever they were all coming into Ellis Island. And so I always like how it was a big, you know, controversy then especially I think it was like more someone that eastern European started. I'm like, oh, like who are these? And they were really discriminated against but as more and more came, like just became normalized and like, you know, nobody was tripping over it after a while. And I, I hope that the same thing happens with the Hispanic population, but then I also know that just looking like historically, the Hispanic population at least I think the ones that are being more discriminated against in like are the victims of discriminatory like race relations in the US right now are people of color. But like I'm thinking like skin color, African Americans have been here for x 100 years and we're still discriminated against. I mean, yeah, things have gotten better since the 1800s, but it, you know, we still have big problems in that community. So I don't, I don't expect them to go away because I think, I think there's always going to be that racism against people of color, especially whenever it's more like I dunno pigmented because I don't know like eastern Europeans, like nobody in America, like there's white American. Nowhere were like, oh well I'm from, I don't know, I'm from Romania. I'm from like your white is what most people think. Like there's not really a distinction. Like you could say you're European all day, but like as far as far as most Americans are concerned if you're European, you're white. No other discussion needs to be had about it. And as far as other races, like for Asians, like you can say you know, your whatever, like Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese. I don't think a lot of Americans even know about like the islands, like Malaysia and Indonesia or whatever. Like you're going to be like, oh, like well you're Indian, you are just Chinese. Like all those other races aren't gonna be kinda like erased excluding you're going to be just discriminated against against for, I dunno, whatever. Like that larger category of Asian. I think the same thing will always, or at least for a very

long time, will also happen with blacks and Hispanics. So I mean, I hope, I do think, I do think things will get better since the population is probably, I think it's like the fastest growing right now, but I don't expect them to like, I don't know, to be super great anytime soon, just like it's taken all these hundreds of years just to get where we are and uh, other communities are better but not where it needs to be.

Brittany Brown: [20:06](#)

And how do you maintain your Latino culture? Being a student here?

Ashlynn Principe:

Um, so like I said earlier, I am part of a LASO, a Latin American student organization, which truly doesn't say too much since I don't think the group is that active, which that's fine. Um, but I know I try to like cook Puerto Rican foods as much as I can in my house. I actually made some with my parents two weeks ago. It's like this, a pork shoulders, like really crispy skin falls apart. It's super good. And uh, I know like my dad said that they would eat it a lot around Christmas, so I call him some time. So um, I try to like, I really do try to like cook foods mostly and then, you know, every now and then I'll listen to music or like find a show in Spanish on Netflix. But I think the one thing I do the most is like cooking or I'll like ask him whenever I go down to visit my house, I'll ask him to make me some toast, donuts and like, am I in, make sure to make the sauce and I'll like bring it back up here and eat that. So food is my outlet.

Brittany Brown:

And what are some challenges you face at the university and in Oxford as a Latino student?

Ashlynn Principe:

Um, okay. I'm going to bring this back to food again. There is not any time like I can't get Puerto Rican food. I can't get Caribbean food period really anywhere in the state of Mississippi, like at all. There's one restaurant that I know of and I've been living in Mississippi since like 2007. There was only one restaurant that I know of for sure that has Caribbean food. I think it's a Dominican restaurant. It's not Puerto Rican and it's in Pascagoula and that's on the coast and I mean, and that's like an

hour away from my hometown. So it's not like I can go there all the time anyway. All the other like Hispanic, Latino restaurants are all Mexican. So that's annoying and I mean I guess it is a struggle and it's annoying. It's really frustrating. And um, then here at the university and then just like, I mean I faced this problem everywhere else in my life too. Like I don't really know that many other Hispanic or Latino people. Like none of my, like any of my, none of all of my friends that speak Spanish or like are trying to learn Spanish. They're all like other students in my Spanish class and they're like white and black. And I think I've, I've seen like maybe two or three like Asian students that were also studying Spanish and that's it. Like none of them are native speakers or anything, so I don't, it's just like the lack of, or at least as far as I've seen, it's just like the lack of presence or maybe representation, but I just don't see that many people either. And if I do then they're workers, which I think kind of contributed to that whole 1950s vibe that my parents were picking up like four years ago whenever we first came here. So I mean that's a struggle and especially since I'm trying to learn Spanish, like it's, it doesn't make it easier if I can't like have that contact with people who speak the language and people who are like a part of that culture I can't really like top into that. Like I can with my mom's side of the family and like with other black students, like that's fine, I can get into that very easily. But as far as sharing your experiences and relating to other Hispanic students, if I can't find them, I mean it's gonna be a little hard to do that.

Brittany Brown:

And has anyone ever asked about your race or ethnicity and how do you respond to these types of questions?

Ashlynn Principe:

Oh yes. Every day of my life. Oh my God. Yeah. I think almost any time I've ever met anybody, like I can't think of a single person that I have in my life besides my family that hasn't asked me like, oh, like what are you like as far as like race. But they don't say like, what are you worried that like, what are you like? Well I'm a girl, Ashlynn like, but I know

what they're getting. I mean it's, it's an annoying question. It's not really one that like offends me because I mean I understand like genuine curiosity, but like I always get that question like what are you? And they're like, oh, are you mixed? Like what are you mixed with black and white? Sometimes I'll just get a bunch of, like, suggestions, like they'll like throw up, are you French? Are you Indian or Arabic? Are you this, are you Chinese, are you Filipino? Like all types of stuff. Um, and I'll just be like, oh no, like I'm black and Puerto Rican. That's it. Cool. Whatever. And sometimes they'll ask like, oh, like, like which ones, which ones, which like, is your mom black is your dad black. And they'll just. And after that then they're like satisfied. Like, oh, okay, cool. Whatever. And that's that. But I've been asked that my entire life, like all the time.

Brittany Brown: [25:44](#)

Have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your race?

Ashlynn Principe:

Yes. Um, I've like, I've had times where I'll bring up like, okay, yeah, I'm black and Puerto Rican. They're like, oh, you must, you must have rhythm and you can dance to. And I'm like, no, I mean I guess, yeah, sure. But it hasn't, doesn't really have anything to do with, I don't know, like my blood. I've been called like spicy or feisty. That pisses me off. Like, that's annoying. Uh, but I think that's more related to the Hispanic side. Um, what else? People have said oh, I bet you got an attitude like, oh, Hispanic girls are crazy. I don't know. Sometimes I'll say I'm Puerto Rican. It's like they don't hear me or they just ignore. They're like, oh yeah, like, yeah, you Mexican girl, like I get called Mexican all the time, like if I don't specify as Puerto Rican than they instantly assume I'm from Mexico, which is also irritating and just like erases how many other Spanish speaking countries in the world. I don't know. But uh, yeah, I think it's just like mainly like stereotyped will get thrown at me. Like, Oh, you must be this. You must be that just because

I'm black and Puerto Rican. I'm like, well, I'm not so carry on.

Brittany Brown:

Do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you, how did you learn? And if no, why not?

Ashlynn Principe:

I'm, I am not fluent. I am learning right now. Um, my dad, you know, he grew up in Puerto Rico. It's his first language and when he came here, when he was 12, um, he didn't really know any English at all and so he had to like learn just by being in school and he never taught me. And for like years and years I had this big grudge against him for not teaching me because I, it always, I always felt like my Puerto Rican miss was like invalidated because I couldn't speak Spanish. And anytime we would go to my grandma's house, excuse me, I'm like, everybody would be speaking Spanish. I'm like laughing and like, you know, having a grand old time and me and my mom because she didn't speak Spanish either. Like we'd just be sitting there looking at each other, like twiddling Artha of like, okay, we all know what's going on and you know, and he would just be like, oh, well she said this, ha, cool, whatever. And I just felt really excluded from my own family and I just. And I just, I didn't feel like a real Puerto Rican and, we talked about it a few years ago. Like whenever I decided to come to Oxford and do international studies major, I'm like, okay, I'm majoring in Spanish or whatever. Um, and he, he would say like, oh yeah, good to work on your Spanish then and then we'd get into these fights with my, well I wouldn't have to work on my Spanish if somebody had taught me. And it started off as like teasing, joking first, but it gets into like a really serious fight really, really quickly and one of these times. So like we just never really tried. Like even in high school whenever I was learning Spanish, if I needed help with my Spanish homework, I didn't come to him because we'd get into like screaming matches and I don't, I don't know, I'm not really one to like scream at my parents. So like it never ended well. So one of the times, I think it was probably one of the last times we got in a fight. Um, I was like, well, why? You know, why didn't you teach me like you, I'm

struggling so much. I think it was like after I had done really badly on a test or a paper, I was like, I'm struggling so much, you know, I just like, feel bad about myself. Like, because, you know, I'm, I'm trying so hard and I'm, I'm Puerto Rican, I'm supposed to know, like I'm supposed like real Puerto Rican to know this, like it should be my blood. So, you know, all my ancestors on my family knows and I don't like, I'm not a part of that. Like I'm just, I'm just here, like I don't even feel connected to my own family. Like, you know, and I was like getting all emotional and he and he like stopped and, and he like kind of told me because this is, he never really, we never really got far enough talking about it for him to ever go into any detail about like why he never taught me because it just end up in fights. But this time he stopped and he was saying whenever he moved here, because I didn't know that he didn't know any English whenever he moved here. Um, you know, being a 12 year old, skinny Puerto Rican kid and like middle school, like he got teased and bullied a lot and I didn't know that anyway, so he, whenever he was trying to learn English, like he, he kind of just like tried to stop speaking Spanish altogether and Kinda like bury that part of his life except for like when he was talking about family because um, you know, because he didn't want to be teased and sorry. Anyway. So he basically stopped speaking Spanish around the time he moved here, like as much as he could. And I never really picked it back up and honestly like growing up, the only time that I would even hear him speak Spanish was whenever he was on the phone with his mom or his dad or one of his brothers or sisters and like, so he didn't really speak it around me. Of course, like honestly, there wasn't really much Spanish music going on in the house or like any Spanish movies playing, like really again, like I think the big, the biggest reason that I'm so connected with food is like the main connection I had to my Puerto Rican heritage was when he would cook, which is rare because he's a dude also. He's in the military and he got deployed and I didn't live with him for like a good five years because he was over in the Middle East. But that was like my main connection back to Puerto Rico was whenever



my dad would cook because Florida, we didn't go there very often, like I said. So, um, so that was it. And um, and so now that I am learning Spanish, like I'll call him and um, and so like in my Spanish class right now we have to do like reports of articles every day and, and, uh, it's like, I don't know, anywhere between a minute or three and we're just like speaking in Spanish, cool. Whatever. And so everyday after Class I'll call my dad and um, and all like give him the report or the article and then we'll like get off topic and start talking and everything. And really up until a few weeks ago when that started, I had never had like a conversation with my dad in Spanish ever. So this whole, like new, healthier part of our relationship is very new and um, I'm happy about it. So that's, that's mainly what I'm trying to maintain and like learning right now is like, you know, my classes, then I'll try a new recipes and I tried to like watch the youtube videos in Spanish and sometimes I'm like I don't know what that is so I'll switch back to English or I'll like watch movies and listen to music. But mainly I'm trying to build a, like a whole other side of a relationship with my dad at this moment. But then I dunno, I still get kind of sad sometimes because like ever since he told me about that, sometimes whenever I'll talk to him all I have like a on or a question about something I'm doing academically. What's Spanish, like, he'll just kinda remind me. He's like, you know, I'm not really competent my Spanish anymore because he stopped speaking. He really doesn't speak it that much unless he's talking about family, which is really only his brother right now because my grandma died. So he's like, I don't really know any of these, like big words because he didn't go to college. Well he went for a semester or whatever because the military is paying for it, but he had military career so he didn't really do that so he, he just doesn't feel like really confident to like help me. He was like, you know, my Spanish is the only, like at like a seventh grade level because then we moved here and I was like, dad, it's fine. So I dunno, it's, I was developing this inferiority complex about my real "Hispanicness" but at the same time I didn't know that my dad had one too. And he in my eyes, he is like a real Puerto Rican

born and raised and I don't know. Anyway, yeah. That's how I'm maintaining my Spanish.

Brittany Brown: [35:03](#)

When you were talking about your dad and being bullied at school, you got really emotional. Was it emotional for you because your dad had to deal with that or because of the bullies you never had a chance to learn Spanish

Ashlynn Principe: [35:19](#)

Both. I think I was, I was, and I am upset because, you know, one, I've always looked up to my dad like, you know, like this big, you know, my dad's talking about superhero. Like I, I almost, I didn't think I had seen my dad cry like maybe three times in my life. Like, so he was like, you know, always at like strong, tough, like untouchable figure. So when he told me when he told me about that, you know, he got upset too and it just made me so angry, you know? And bullying in general like makes me so angry. But then like I, I've never really had, thankfully I've never really had anybody close to me have like experience like that. But to find out that my dad did like, I don't know, it just, it really bothered me. But then I was also kind of like mourning the loss that it eventually had on me decades later because I do think that, you know, that was a big part of why I didn't learn so then I know and effected him and in turn affected me. So I think I was, I was sad both for the fact that he had to deal with that and then I know so many people in the US like from other countries are not even just like Hispanic and like lion and countries, like all these countries, like they get bullied for their cultures and their heritage and like speaking these other language and it's so stupid. It's so stupid. But I dunno, I think, I think that it was such a personal experience. It just, it, it really upset me. Yeah. I'm sorry. I'm like talking. I'm forgetting what I said right before. So I'm sorry if I'm not completely answering these questions, but you know, I'm sad for both of us honestly.

Brittany Brown: [37:33](#)

So you kind of touched on this a little bit and you know, what you were just saying, but how important you feel the ability to speak Spanish? How is it to the Latino culture?

Ashlynn Principe: [37:43](#)

Um, I think like if I were to get on a plane tomorrow and go to, I don't know, like Spain or any, any Spanish speaking country I could get by definitely like, you know, fend for myself. I mean, I, I did, I studied abroad last semester in Spain and you know, it was fine. Like I got by and I did learn a lot while I was there. So I don't think I have to too much trouble like communicating with other people. I think. I think my biggest barrier would be like connecting like on a more personal level with people because like my Spanish, it's, I dunno, I, I think I was talking to my professor the other day, uh, like I lived with a host family when I was in Spain and sometimes, and then they were like really, really nice. And over dinner every night we'd watch the news and um, and I understood what was going on in the news, I could like, okay, that's crazy, like whatever, but then they'll like sit around and talk about it and that's, and I have all these opinions, I feel like I'm a very, like, outspoken, opinionated person most of the time. But like I couldn't express what I wanted to say and in Spanish really, like, and it was frustrating. I felt like, I dunno, like this is how babies feel like they have all these ones and they can't like tell people. Like I, I felt like trapped. I feel trapped in my own mind a lot whenever it comes to Spanish. So like, yeah, basic conversations like I dunno, like where's the bathroom? Like how much does this cost? Like, yeah, like that's fine, I can do restaurants and other spaces. But as far as like having like more personal conversations, I feel like my whole personality is different in Spanish just because I can't say what I want to say. Like I'm not, I'm not sarcastic and Spanish because I don't know how to be, you know, I'm not probably not very funny in Spanish because I don't know how to say what I want to say. I mean, I'm, I'm functional. My Spanish is functional. It's not a, it's definitely not fluent yet.

Brittany Brown: [39:54](#)

How does the university and the community cater to the Latino population?

Ashlynn Principe: [39:58](#)

Um, so I know LASO throws a Latin night at one of the bars on the square, the lyric, the lyric. I think they do it. I'm not sure if they do it once a semester

or once a year, but I know they do that in a lot of people usually come out, but I think that's the only event of theirs that I've ever heard of. But it does seem pretty popular. So that's, that's cool or whatever. Outside of that, uh, the modern languages department does cafe de los Lunes and it's supposed to be a space where a professor in students and I guess really anybody can come and practice their Spanish and like a casual, like cafe setting a somehow it seems to always be scheduled when I have class every year. So I haven't, I've only been to two in all four years I've been here. Um, but other than that I'm not really aware of much of a Latino community or any like events catering to that community in Oxford.

Brittany Brown: [41:19](#)

How does the university and the community omit or forget about the Latino population?

Ashlynn Principe: [41:24](#)

I think it's that lack of representation. Definitely. Like, I mean I've been here for four years, I mean, not that I'm like, you know, actively like stopping people in the hallways and she's like, Hey, do you know any events or anything? But, you know, I haven't, you know, looking for these events and I haven't found any. Um, I do think that raises a problem. Like it's probably because they're not, they're like, they're, I feel like if you want, I guess it's one of those cases if you want somebody know you have to do it yourself when you know I'm about to graduate and I did it. I don't really think I have time to. But. So I'm thinking back to VSA, Vietnamese student association. I'm in. I can't think of anything else outside of just that club that caters to the Vietnamese population or like the Asian population in Oxford and they did it themselves. Like they've been here for a few years and that's it. It's them. I mean they're, they're, they're a pretty good presence now. But they did it themselves and I don't think, I can't think of anything the university does for them either. So really. And it's the same thing with Hispanic community, like LASO. It was barely a thing and outside of that, and maybe like a week of movies in Spanish also thrown by like the modern languages department in conjunction with a few other departments. I know croft supports it and

I don't know, the honors college supports it outside of like little things like that. There really is just, there's nothing, there's nothing there. So it's, I think it's not going to come from that, from the administration at this point. I think the students have to do something about it themselves, which is a little sad. I think if the university is going to claim to be like this open, diverse, accessible place for everybody, then you should be catering to everybody. I don't think that they're doing as much as they can to achieve that goal.

Brittany Brown: [43:38](#)

How do you view race in the US, the south end here in Oxford?

Ashlynn Principe:

Um, race in the US. I think it's, I feel like a lot of people see it as black, white and other, um, just because I guess those have been like the two, like the biggest, like racial tensions historically. So then I think all other races get kind of put to the wayside. I mean the Hispanic population is obviously getting more and more attention in the news because of our president. But I'm like, I feel like all the other, I mean, but still, I don't think that any other group of peoples really gets too much attention when they do. It's like discriminatory. I mean I think it's a factor of like an eye and that does, that goes for the south and Oxford too. Like I think it's viewed very like black, white and then. Oh yeah, the others in all aspects. I mean, and I think it has a lot to do and not even like with population because all these other groups of people like their populations are growing in the US. It isn't just black wide. There are others, they, you know, they do matter. They do have communities and spaces and businesses and they are contributing here, you know. But um, I think it's just like lack of knowledge and it is like a representation because like for a lot of people it's kind of out of sight, out of mind. You don't. If it's not like always being talked about, like, or in your face, you're not going to think about, I don't know what I'm saying here. For example, I don't know why I keep going back to Asia, but um, I used to like be a big library nerd and, or, and I'd always be in the library, like back in elementary school when I had time to read for fun and I found this like

autobiography, I remember what it was called but you know, and I just started reading it without like looking at what it was about and it was about the Japanese internment camps in World War II. I had no clue this happened. Nobody told me and nobody told me in an official setting until my senior year of high school. And I think I found that book in seventh grade. I'm like, why is nobody talking about this? Like nobody, nobody says anything. It's not like, I mean it's available knowledge but it isn't widely known. And I think as far as race relations, like I feel like the reason or like one of the big reasons why there is so much discrimination intention is because nobody really knows or tries to find out about each other. That sounds like super. Like, I don't know, humanitarian, holistic, but it really is like a lack of Information and then, I mean, and speaking of information, I mean we're, we're like in this like big, like fake news and like mistrust of information era, which is super dangerous for so many reasons, but it really is contributing to all this like xenophobic, racist, like all the, all this bigotry. It's just a lack of unbiased factual information about each other. And that's why race relations across the board in the US, the south and Oxford, um, are kind of terrible. I mean, and it doesn't even have to be like an everyday thing, like Oxford doesn't have the KKK in the circle every day, but I mean, I don't know the race tensions, the racial tensions are still there every day. Like mean we have a confederate statue right there. It doesn't have to be like an overt like people with Tiki torches, you know, in the streets doing stuff for it to be a problem.

Brittany Brown: [48:10](#)

So how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the south?

Ashlynn Principe: [48:24](#)

I hope that the increase or like, yeah, just the increase or the increased presence, not just increased population, increased presence of Latinos in the south does make it a more welcoming and diverse place. Do I expect it to be like met with open welcome arms like that? No, just like I didn't, uh, for it as a whole in the country, uh, in our earlier question, but I, I would hope that, you know, if the south is supposed to be like this really like Bible

thumping, like very welcoming, hospitable place, then she didn't act like it and you know, love thy neighbor. So I, I would hope that that's what happens in that we do start embracing and making this out the more diverse place because I think outside of Florida, the south is very black and white in the minds of a lot of people. And I mean I guess it also depends on what you're considering the South. I know like Georgia has a big, or at least Atlanta, it has like a big Asian population but then if you like considered Texas the south, which it the south, when you think of the south you don't really think Texas. I mean that has a big Hispanic population obviously. And then Florida, but all the other states, like I think people still see it as very black and white and I dunno, I think it should diversify and I would hope that it does soon and it's not like a big problem.

Brittany Brown: [50:17](#) Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about it I didn't touch on or ask you?

Ashlynn Principe: [50:28](#) Mm. Can't really think of anything right now. Honestly.

Benjamin Payne

Brittany Brown: [01:09](#) All right, well we'll go ahead and jump right into the questions. Um, I have about 27 questions for you. Um, but to start off, can you spell your first and last name for me please?

Benjamin Payne: [02:03](#) Benjamin Payne

Brittany Brown: And what is your major and classification?

Benjamin Payne: I'm a public policy leadership major. I'm a junior from Ridgeland, Mississippi.

Brittany Brown: [02:18](#) And Are you 18 years or older?

Benjamin Payne: Yes.

Brittany Brown: Okay. Um, where were you born?

Benjamin Payne: [02:24](#) I was born in Metairie, Louisiana.

- Brittany Brown: [02:27](#) And where are you from? Where did you grow up spend most of your childhood?
- Benjamin Payne: [02:31](#) I spent half my life in New Orleans on like the outskirts of New Orleans. And then after Hurricane Katrina, my family moved to Ridgeland, Mississippi. I lived there from, I think it was about fourth grade to the present and then been in attendance the University of Mississippi for the last two and a half years.
- Brittany Brown: [02:46](#) Um, so that kind of answers the next question as to what other places you have lived. So you've lived in the outskirts of New Orleans. How did you move from New Orleans originally? Hurricane Katrina? Correct. Um, did your family have deep roots in the New Orleans area?
- Benjamin Payne: [03:04](#) My grandfather came to United States from Cuba right after Castro took power and originally he lived in Miami, Florida, so we have like a, a cluster family there. Then he moved to get out of school at LSU to get his engineering degree because it didn't transfer over when he immigrated. So, um, he studied at LSU and then moved to work at Entergy nuclear power corporation and then my mother grew up there and then, so we've had some family in the New Orleans area. My father grew up in Florida and then he moved to a New Orleans to work at the same job as my mother did. So, um, New Orleans not, not particularly. We still have some family there. Uh, but our families kind of scattered all over the southeast.
- Brittany Brown: [03:42](#) And how was that process, if you can recall a movie from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to originally and kind of resettling?
- Benjamin Payne: [03:49](#) Sure. Um, so I remember that, you know, for a while my parents were going back and forth looking for a new place to live. We would stay with my grandparents, that was fine because like, I just spent a lot of time with them. But when we finally moved, um, it was, it was not a difficult adjustment. The school I went to, I went to a private Catholic school and it was like a small class, so it's really easy to get



to know the other students and the families are very welcoming there. Um, so in, in the neighborhood we moved in, I had friends as well and like the neighboring area, like, you know, like adjacent to my home. So it wasn't too hard and meeting new people, um, my parents had a good position, they liked their job and then my sister liked it there. So I'd say it was a pretty smooth transition.

Brittany Brown: [04:23](#)

Um, and is your race and important part of your identity?

Benjamin Payne: [04:29](#)

Absolutely. Um, I think race is a really important part of my family. Uh, my grandfather has always emphasized that my middle name is Eduardo Gutierrez. It's very important to him. If you asked my mother what my name is, she'll say "Benjamin" and you know, she won't say Benjamin, but we've always grown up. Um, and family's always been like a really important part of essentially any major celebration. So just in August we had my grandfather's birthday and we have a big extended family. Um, there are like four or five brothers and sisters and they all have kids. So it's interesting. Every woman in my mother's family's name is Maria. So there's the first Maria and her mother's name was Maria. Then here's her older sister Maria. There's my mother, Maria Rosa, her sister Maria Vivian, and then her other sister Marie Adrianna. And then Sergio is my grandfather's name and my uncle's name. So, um, we have all the Marias and the Sergio was, is kind of a joke, but they all have family and it's a lot of fun. Um, I've always been very fortunate, not to long ago I was speaking one of my aunts about, um, how lucky we are to have like a strong Hispanic family because it's just different. It's different than how my, you know, my white friends grew up essentially, they don't have the same, uh, like big family celebrations and it's, it is really an important part of our family's, a big part of our culture I would say.

Brittany Brown: [05:35](#)

And your grandfather, that's your mother's father?

Benjamin Payne: [05:38](#)

Yes, that's my mother's father. Um, he. And then he was married to Maria. Maria died of breast cancer

and then he remarried to Sue, I don't know Sue's maiden name, but yeah.

Brittany Brown: [05:50](#)

Okay. Um, and how has your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?

Benjamin Payne: [05:57](#)

Um, I've loved it. It's a great community. Um, there are definitely challenges. And a large, you know, a very prominent, persistent issue has been race on this campus and it's been something that I've been aware of my entire time here. Um, my freshman year I lived with my best friend from high school who's an African American student and we lived in Stockard Hall and just my experience in contrast against his really shows the issues of race, like just on this campus. Um, a lot of it comes from ignorance, but some of it comes from like a darker place. So one day we were all hanging out in Stockard and um, Josh was in the room and these kids from California were there and when, you know, basic freshman year conversation like, you know, why you choose ole miss. And they said they chose almost to get away from the n-word. And we were shocked because Josh was in the room. They said that point blank and like I couldn't understand. They thought this was a place that you could come and like racism was tolerated. That that was something that just, you know, could be easily communicated to other peers. And that was just so disgusting to me and my friends, you know, because we have always had friends of different ethnicities and whatnot. And it's just a normal part. But to hear other people have such a different view is very difficult. Um, but for myself it's been pretty smooth. Most people are like excited to hear that I'm up like a Latino descent, like when they hear I'm Cuban they think that's interesting. They want to know more about it. Um, but I, I can't really say, but as far as being like a Latino in Oxford has been totally fun.

Brittany Brown:

You've already told me your major classification. Tell me about some of the other notable involvement that you participate in.

- Benjamin Payne: [07:26](#) I'm an Ole Miss ambassador. Um, I worked with the Columns Society organization. They're like the host for the university. Um, I'm a member of the honors college, the Trent Lott leadership program and then the center for manufacturing excellence program. And within those I just do different things. Like on November the second I'm eating with the secretary, the secretary of the veteran's association, um, and that's through PPL and then through the CME, right now we're working on a project where there's a group of students working together to create like a packing process for [inaudible] It's a special needs facility in, where is it? Senatobia, Mississippi, so that taking up a lot of my time working on the factory floor, but between giving tours and then working different columns events, I'd say that's probably where a lot of my time goes. And then the special programs
- Brittany Brown: [08:11](#) Once you're done with school, with what type of industry do you see yourself working in or what would be the dream job?
- Benjamin Payne: [08:18](#) Um, so the more I've been at college and been exposed to different opportunities and possibilities and right now I'm pretty sure I want to go to law school. That's kind of the goal. So, um, you know, after your senior year what direction your I plan to apply to multiple schools and the senior year I see pursuing that. And then once I get into the law program, I'm sure I'll have a more set idea of what type of law I want to practice.
- Brittany Brown: [08:38](#) What are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
- Benjamin Payne: [08:43](#) Um, school is definitely a huge one. My parents and my grandparents, they always emphasized how important the opportunity is and not to waste, you know, privileges that we have. Um, I'm very aware, like I'm very privileged and a lot of the sense of things I get to enjoy like, you know, going to the University of Mississippi and enjoying this incredible education that I have and you know, being able to have a car and like a place to go to sleep and, you know, whatnot. So I really, I really

consider those values. Can you repeat the question?  
I kind of got lost my ramble.

Brittany Brown:

Most important aspects of your life right now and why.

Benjamin Payne:

I say my friends are definitely important one. Um, the friends I've made through this special programs, friends I made from high school to now my girlfriend Stephanie, an important part of my family. Of course I've always tried to call my parents at least once or twice a day. Um, I'm staying in contact with my sister, she's moving to Memphis soon. So I'd say that's pretty important part, but just like daily routine. Um, I really enjoy giving tours for the university. It's a really fulfilling experience and I enjoy connecting with people from different areas, kind of trying to show them, you know, the positive things, the opportunities to university holds. The Columns Society takes up a good amount of time. It's fun to give you, you know, playing that role we get to meet with alumni or donors or whatnot. Um, and then I really enjoy the, the manufacturing community just because like I hang out with a lot of the engineers, accountants and business students. They all have very different personalities so it's kind of cool to like interact with different students that environment.

Brittany Brown:

[10:01](#)

Cool. Um, so now we're going to get more into like the questions that will focus on what it means to be on Latino student here. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What do you consider your ethnicity to be?

Benjamin Payne:

[10:17](#)

So my ethnicity is, um, I'd say Cuban American. I have stronger roots in like my Cuban heritage I do in anything else. And then the further back, if we trace it, um, were, were like Spanish. So we have family who lived in Spain. We have over from the Basque region, um, we don't really know specifically how far back, but we know part of the Gutierrez family, that's where our name or it's like stems from. But um, my grandfather was always

very adamant about making me understand that was a Cuban American.

Brittany Brown: [10:42](#) Um, and what are your parents' nationality and do you identify with that?

Benjamin Payne: [10:47](#) Sure. So my father, um, I guess you could say is American as White, Caucasian. Um, grew up in Florida and then as far as he knows, his family came back from England I believe once upon a time. And then, um, my mother's family, she's full Cuban, parents grew up in New Orleans. Um, does that answer the question?

Brittany Brown: [11:03](#) Do you identify with your parent's nationality? Which identity do you more so I guess like select on the census or on a job application?

Benjamin Payne: [11:12](#) I would always say I'm white and then like Latino, Hispanic. I'm Caucasian, Latino.

Brittany Brown: How do you identify racially?

Benjamin Payne: [11:23](#) I would say I'm Cuban. Whenever people ask, you know, if that ever comes up in conversation, I'm very forward with that. I think people are aware that I'm white, you know, just by looking at me, but I'm always like a forward Cuban.

Brittany Brown: [11:33](#) And why do you choose to identify this way?

Benjamin Payne: [11:36](#) Because it's, it's, it's part of who I am, it's part of my, you know, who I would identify with part of my history and my heritage, my family. It's something I'm proud of.

Brittany Brown: [11:44](#) And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?

Benjamin Payne: I would probably say Hispanic.

Brittany Brown: Studies show that the Latino is growing in the United States. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?

Benjamin Payne: [12:00](#) I think with all things, people who have like any like racist or ignorant views just haven't spent

enough time with people with Hispanic, Latino people. Just out of curiosity, can I ask, can I ask you a question? What are you using like Hispanic Latino in this project?

Brittany Brown: [12:16](#)

I'm using the term Latino because the project is titled the Latino South, which I'm going to stick with that. So I'm just going to stick with Latino throughout the language I'm going to use. But that's part of the project, kind of seeing which term do you prefer Hispanic or Latino.

Benjamin Payne:

But I think the more people interact with people like, you know, Latino families just going to see that they're just normal just like everybody else. And I think racial tensions will improve on that front. Um, I think we'll see a lot more of like, what's the term I'm looking for, interracial marriages. I think that's going to become like fairly normal. Um, so I'm excited. I'm excited to see what the future holds. I know some publications talking about how more and more Latinos are like becoming present in the United States, like via population wise. I think it's really interesting.

Brittany Brown: [13:01](#)

And um, how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?

Benjamin Payne: [13:07](#)

That's a good question. Um, my mother likes to challenge me to speak Spanish, so does my grandfather whenever I talk to them. Um, I'm, I try to practice as much as I can. Um, I like to keep up with current affairs. I'm interested in like foreign policy, so I always want to know what's going on with, you know, Cuban relations with the United States, what is doing right now through all doing right now. I'm, I'm interested as well with immigration situation going on at the border in Mexico right now.

Brittany Brown: [13:36](#)

And um, what are some challenges or have you ever faced challenges at the university because of your Latino identity?

Benjamin Payne: [13:43](#)

Um, I really can't say that I have. I think it speaks primarily because I don't look Latino. So that's not

what people initially assume when they, like they speak to me or when they meet me, but when I forward it, you know, just the majority of the time people are interested in more so than discriminatory.

Brittany Brown: [13:58](#)

And has anyone ever required inquired about your race or ethnicity? How do you respond to these questions? And if no one has ever asked, how would you respond?

Benjamin Payne: [14:07](#)

I think people ask once I tell them that I'm Cuban because, you know, if it comes up in a conversation, they're like, oh, you know, you're white. I'm like, no, I'm Cuban. Actually. Then I explain just my family heritage, um, where the lineage comes from when my grandfather came to United States, that whole story and people, I don't think people know a lot of, so I'm not sure if there's a large Hispanic presence on campus. I know maybe three or four. Um, so I think people are just kind of interested as like how did we come to the United States and for us to understand the history of, you know, the Cuban missile crisis in the embargo and Castro coming into power. So that's something that kind of all jumbled together. It's like a topic they want to know more about, I guess you'd say.

Brittany Brown: [14:42](#)

So what is your grandfather's story of him as you know, him immigrating to the U.S.?

Benjamin Payne: [14:46](#)

Sure. So, um, he and his wife were pregnant with their first child and the communist government essentially takes over and it's essentially taking away people's property, people's rights and saying this is sent by the government now, and he knew that was gonna be a problem and it's going to limit opportunity and he wanted to leave to try to go the United States somewhere that was more free, that didn't have all these, you know, suppressing religion, suppressing ideologies and whatnot. He was educated so he understood what was going on and he had like a clear stake; I wouldn't say he had a stake in the routine prior to Castro that tasted his rule of power because he was just as cruel, but I don't think he appreciated the whole communist

mindset, the whole ideology that followed it. So he came to the United States and it was really difficult time. Um, because Castro, the Cuban government were trying to get Cubans back into Cuba who had left. Um, you know, it's a big deal because he had a several, essentially cut all ties to his family there. It was very hard for him to communicate with them for a long time. He was involved in trips going back to Cuba to bring people out. That was something that he did and he doesn't like to talk about that very much because I understand that it's a very stressful time. It's, I can imagine it was very difficult. Um, but he will talk about, you know, his story getting here. The situation where they came here, they had literally nothing. My grandmother was pregnant with her first daughter and how difficult that was. Um, just trying to get his education again because it didn't transfer over. Just how that really puts a strain on his family. They all lived in a very small house his entire life. And then after he was able to get an engineering degree back, he was able to provide for them, but they had a big family. They had five individuals, you know, first generation Americans. So they had to work really hard. So that was a big thing that he always wanted me to recognize how fortunate I was and what it means that, you know, people work so hard so I can be here.

Brittany Brown: [16:27](#)

Um, do you speak Spanish?

Benjamin Payne:

Very little.

Brittany Brown:

And how did you learn the little Spanish that you speak?

Benjamin Payne: [16:35](#)

My mother – so it's a shame. Um, when I was younger they spoke Spanish to me all the time because we lived very close to my grandparents and they said it where I can understand it. But when I went to elementary school, you know, English is the focus English, just the focus, English grammar, English writing, English speaking. So, um, when I got into high school I took Spanish for I think three or four years. So I spent a lot of time with it then. Well, we've traveled abroad to Spain, so when I was there for a long period of time I was speaking



Spanish, my relatives there and I took I think three semesters of Spanish in college and then I've been to Mexico a couple of times and I've been to like other Spanish speaking countries just to, not for the sake of learning Spanish, but I've been able to practice it there. So I would say like if you dropped me in the middle of nowhere, probably hold my own, but I wouldn't say I'm great at grammar is tough.

Brittany Brown: [17:22](#)

Um, and have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived race?

Benjamin Payne:

Can you elaborate on that question?

Brittany Brown:

So you've said many times in this interview that when people see you, they just assume that you are a white male. Um, and has anyone ever maybe assumed or anything about you or say things to you because of your perceived identity?

Benjamin Payne: [17:44](#)

Um, the one thing that I can think back to you recently, and I guess this is, this relates more being a white male than being a Cuban male, but I'm, someone saw that I was in three special programs and someone's like, Yo, you know, blah, blah blah. And they're just like, oh, he's just seemed like a white male. Like he's afforded that opportunity and um, or he's had like different opportunities to advance himself than other minorities and whatnot. And I was offended because my grandfather, you know, he's always stressed at heart. He had to work in a country that didn't particularly care for Cubans when they first came. Um, and it was kind of disappointing to hear that someone just like assumed I was white and that's why like I've had all the opportunities I've had, you know, if that makes sense.

Brittany Brown: [18:21](#)

Um, how important do you feel the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?

Benjamin Payne: [18:27](#)

Oh, it's, it's, it's essential. It's everything. I'm embarrassed when I, like I try to like converse with someone who's a native speaker and I really just

like can barely hold my own and speak very slow and I can see how important it is to communicate on an authentic level with someone in their native tongue or the comfort that that brings. And how would that kind of grounds you into your family more so than anything and family's really important, at least in my opinion.

Brittany Brown: [18:50](#)

And you did say that when you were younger, your parents and grandparents would be speaking to you in Spanish. Would you try like reciprocate those efforts or was there a time when you tried to suppress this, you know, your ability to speak Spanish because of attending school?

Benjamin Payne: [19:06](#)

When I was young, I never had a dislike for Spanish. I don't think it was something that was really present in my life for majority of, like my elementary, middle school years, but in high school my mom, like every morning she tries to speak Spanish to me, like, you know, just like over breakfast on the way to school because she really thought it was important. So I was taking Spanish classes at the time, like I was actually having to learn the language and she felt that it was really important. I know she was really excited that I studied Spanish in college and she really wanted me to go study abroad. So it is something that like I've always had an interest in. It's difficult. So I would say that I haven't been fully, you know, fluent in Spanish because I don't know, the language is hard. Um, but I. Today I hardly use it unless I'm conversing with my grandparents, but I'm happy to try. I'm willing to, you know, do the trial and effort what it takes to try to fumble through, trying to learn

Brittany Brown: [19:55](#)

If you could go back, is that something you would try to place more emphasis on learning how to speak Spanish as a child versus trying to learn it later?

Benjamin Payne: [20:04](#)

Absolutely. Because um, other family members on mother's side also had kids and one family in particular really emphasized the importance of Spanish and other kids are fluent in Spanish and

they're like in ninth or 10th grade. But, you know, I'm really jealous of that. I wish. I wish that that was me. I wish my parents would've tried harder, not tried harder, but just, you know. Yeah. I don't know, you know what I mean? I guess I'm saying like, just for the sake of the interview, can you really emphasize by having a white father, you know, it didn't help because he didn't know any Spanish. My mother definitely did. I just mean she's fluent even today. Um, so one person would be trying hard with Spanish. That person could really contribute. And my father was, my father was never like, hey, Spanish is important, you know, like, you don't need to know that. He always saw the importance of Spanish, my mother's family, uh, to the importance of my Cuban identity. So that was something that he was always encouraging about, but he just couldn't contribute to, um, but at the same time, like in school, um, I, I guess I can, I, I have like, I can pronounce Spanish words better than other students could. So teachers would like it when I would read, I would get more attention for that reason just because I had more of like an accent I guess you'd say when I spoke I can roll my r's and whatnot. Um, so it's definitely something that's always been encouraged but just not always provided that I could pursue it.

Brittany Brown: [21:23](#)

Okay. And how does the university and the community cater to the Latino population?

Benjamin Payne: [21:28](#)

I think they do a pretty good job as far as I can tell. There are a lot of different organizations on campus for Latino students. Um, we have like a Latino heritage month where there's different movies or different events that go on that kind of focus in support Latino heritage and history and culture. Um, I have different friends who were involved in some of these programs and they seem really like, they, they feel included, they really enjoy it as far as I can tell. Um, but I guess directly I have not been involved in those clubs as like a member, so I couldn't say, but I've been to the events and I've been able to interact with other students who are Latino on campus and they feel pretty welcomed I would say.

Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">22:04</a>	Um, and do you feel the university omits the Latino population on campus?
Benjamin Payne:	<a href="#">22:12</a>	I don't believe that they do it on a conscious level, but I think the students do. I wouldn't say the university. I think the faculty and staff are great. I think they're very aware of the importance of diversity in an educational environment because she wanted them to perspectives. But I'm not sure if the students are, um, you look at, you know, fraternities and it's essentially all white males and it's not that I think that they're trying, they're working to exclude the Latino population. I just don't feel like they feel included or their presence just isn't there because it's not something that their friends would want to do, but I'm sure for the students who are, they, I'm sure they have a very different perspective than what I'm conveying. But I think, you know, if you look at certain organizations, there's definitely not as many Latinos represented, I don't want to say it's deliberate, but I'm sure it is recognizable.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">22:58</a>	Um, and how do you view race in the US in the south and in Oxford?
Benjamin Payne:	<a href="#">23:04</a>	Sure. I think race is very difficult issue. I think a lot of people are afraid to talk about it on all levels because it's very sensitive and it's easy to upset someone, but I think it's something that needs to be talked about on the entire United States scale. I think there's a lot of polarization in a lot of different ways. I think in general terms, race relations have improved as far as on like a, it's an individual basis, but nationwide they're just huge thing so it'll explode on social media about, um, you know, one or two people who do these really like atrocious things and they garner a lot of attention, which they should because I think that helps educate people. But, um, it's, I guess that's, that's a tough question. That's a very difficult question. I see racism in Oxford, Mississippi. I hear about it very often and it's really upsetting. Um, it's definitely still prevalent and it's definitely prominent in certain areas more so than others. But if you look like I was recently in San Francisco and race just seems to be like, it's

such a diverse city, you know, everywhere you look you'll see people of different ethnicities and that's really cool they are all interacting together, but here in the south it's very different than that. Um, I think the groups, you know, I don't want to say self-segregate, but they definitely don't mix like they do another part of the United States. So the south definitely suffers from a lot of, um, ignorance, miscommunications, bias, um, you know, discriminatory practices, I wouldn't say none of them are supported by the government, but I feel like individuals do support discriminatory practices and maybe their own businesses or whatnot, which is a real. It's hard to read and hear about. I'm at the university. It's definitely a hot topic right now. Um, there's been a lot of things going on from Ed Meek to, you know, a couple of years ago people put a noose on the James Meredith statue, like how does that make any sense? Like where does this come from, who is supporting these views. But it's definitely not prevalent on our campus, but I think it's a pretty low. I don't want to say it's prevalent. There is an issue of racial discrimination on our campus, but students, I think a lot of students are working to improve this culture in, to improve the campus so that students feel welcome here, which is really exciting. It's exciting to see. It's exciting to see dialogue taking place and even if people are trying to push back, at least it means that they're listening to some degree

Brittany Brown: [25:29](#)

How do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the south?

Benjamin Payne:

I think they can add another dynamic. Let me think. Can you repeat the question one more time?

Brittany Brown:

How do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the south?

Benjamin Payne: [25:51](#)

So you look at, I think it's La Casa de Gloria on highway seven, the Latino Church. Every time I passed it, I think that's really cool. Um, I think it's awesome that there's a community of Latinos who come together to worship together in a place that they feel is really central. It's a community that they

can kind of support, but I'm not sure how many people go there or what the, what the rates are, but you wonder how many go to other churches as well and if their presence is accepted or you know, how well they've been integrated into these communities. Um, but at the same, you know, then you go to maybe like Taco Shop on university. It's very, I wouldn't say it's different than a lot of the other Hispanic restaurants in town or the Latino restaurants in town, but it feels a lot more authentic and you see a larger presence of Latinos because it's such a small place, but every time you go, um, it feels like a place where the community gathers to some degree and I'd like to see more of that. Um, as Latino presence continues to increase in southern communities, I think it'd be really exciting to see them essentially establish their own roots in different areas. Like in Jackson, where I'm from, I would not say there's a very large Latino presence. There are very few stores that cater to them, but the more that come, the more opportunities it offers to individuals to whites or not just whites, it's white, black and anyone. Any ethnicity to interact and to, you know, have a more one on one interaction with Latino community to learn about their values for their customs and traditions. And in a sense, you know, making it more normal. Normalizing that.

Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">27:20</a>	Are there any other points that you would like to discuss?
Benjamin Payne:	<a href="#">27:29</a>	No, not that I can think of.
		Bianca Martinez
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">00:00</a>	I'm recording now. Today is November 30th and we are in Bishop Hall and I am interviewing Bianca Martinez for my thesis research titled at the Latino South Race and Racialization. To get started, are you 18 years or older?
Bianca Martinez:		Yes.
Brittany Brown:		And can you state and spell your first and last name?

Bianca Martinez:		Bianca Martinez.
Brittany Brown:		And when were you born?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>00:29</u></a>	November 12, 1997.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>00:31</u></a>	And where are you from and where did you grow up?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>00:34</u></a>	Oh, I'm from Itta Bena.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>00:38</u></a>	Yeah, when you can say like where you, where you are, where you're from and like where you mostly spend most of your childhood?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>00:45</u></a>	Okay. I was born in Mexico and then I moved to Itta Bena, Mississippi and I've lived there for most of my life.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>00:53</u></a>	What brought your family from Mexico to Itta Bena?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>01:07</u></a>	I think just a better life, a better opportunity. Um, they're really low key about like some things because I think it was pretty bad and they don't want to talk about it.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>01:20</u></a>	Like the move was pretty bad or like the reason for moving? Okay. And what about it'd be like, what was there?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>01:28</u></a>	Oh, I had family in Itta Bena and they were able to secure my parents' jobs. They're cool.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>01:35</u></a>	And have you ever lived in any other places?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>01:37</u></a>	I've lived in Dallas before. I lived in need to be, but that was short and we moved back and forth between, but we like stayed in. It'd be enough like after I was five, five and then in the state.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>01:53</u></a>	And then what brought you to Oxford?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>01:55</u></a>	Um, college I applied here and this is the one, the university that I got the most aid from. So.

Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">02:01</a>	Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">02:07</a>	Yes. Um, I think, um, it's something that just stands out, like the skin tone and um, I don't know, it's kind of a sensitive topic in the US and so I think, yeah, my race, it's pretty big part of me. Like it's the first thing you notice,
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">02:44</a>	And um, how has your experience been at ole miss and living in Oxford?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">02:49</a>	Um, it's been a kind of isolating but it's, it's okay.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">02:56</a>	Isolating how?
Bianca Martinez:		Well there's not that Latinos here, so it's not easy to relate to people. Like if you want to talk about like some goofy thing your parents did at home or something, they can be like, oh yeah, that's funny. Or something like that. I don't know. You can't talk about similar experiences, someone without feeling a connection or something like that.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">03:20</a>	And um, what is your major classification and some notable involvement that you have on campus?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">03:26</a>	Oh, I am a biology major. Um, and I am in between my sophomore and my junior year and uh, some activities I do on campus. I am vice president of SASI. Uh, I'm part of or college Dems. Um, yeah, that's it.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">03:48</a>	Okay. And um, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">03:56</a>	Right now is trying to, uh, finish school because of the uncertainty of what might happen for me in the future. It's important for me to finish school. So I have a future secure before in case something happens
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">04:15</a>	So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?



Bianca Martinez: [04:25](#) Latino, Hispanic, right. I actually don't know the difference between like the ethnicity in. Could you explain it? I guess Latina and Hispanic.

Brittany Brown: Okay. And um, how do you identify racially?

Bianca Martinez: [05:09](#) Racially. Oh, okay. So it's Kinda weird because when you're signing like documents and stuff without asking you are you Hispanic or Latino? And then there'll be like, are you white, black or like native American? And every time I hit like white and native American, they'll be like, oh, so what's your native American social security number? And then I'm like, oh, I don't have one. So I guess I'm white. So that's what I usually just one.

Brittany Brown: [05:44](#) What are you parents' nationality and do you identify with their nationality?

Bianca Martinez: [05:49](#) Oh, they're Mexican and I'm also Mexican born like them.

Brittany Brown: [05:54](#) And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latina?

Bianca Martinez: [05:58](#) Latina.

Brittany Brown: Is there a reason?

Bianca Martinez: [06:04](#) Latinos are in the US. The definition is different. Like, because Latinos can be like part of Latin descent in a way, and then Hispanics are like, but the definition is different in the US. So Latinos refers to like, like the, the country you were born. Right. So I think it will go with Latina.

Brittany Brown: [06:39](#) And so studies show that the Latino population in the US is growing. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?

Bianca Martinez: [06:56](#) In the south it doesn't seem to be something that is becoming acceptable as fast as like cities with higher Latino, Latina, Hispanic populations. Um, but I'm hoping that Latinos will gain as much recognition as other like majorities.

Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">07:23</a>	And how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">07:30</a>	I try to cook as much Mexican food as I can and if I know someone that is Latino or speak Spanish, I try to communicate with them in Spanish or tell them to talk to me in Spanish because I want to keep it up because I don't use it as much.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">07:51</a>	And um, has anyone ever asked you about your race or your ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these questions?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">07:58</a>	Um, yeah, a lot of people asked me and I usually just say I'm Mexican.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">08:04</a>	In what way do they ask you what type of questions?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">08:07</a>	Oh, they're like, oh, are you Hispanic? I'm like, yeah, or are you Mexican? I'm like, yeah.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">08:15</a>	And have you ever experienced or has anyone ever assumed, assumed something about you because of your race?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">08:22</a>	I've had some off the wall, like questions about if I was like Asian or something like that. I don't know, like that's a one time, one time I went to this VBS camp with this, with this white church and this boy was like, are you black? And I was like, no, stop. But yeah, that happened.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">08:49</a>	And do you speak Spanish? If. Yes, how did you learn?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#">08:53</a>	Yeah, I speak, I speak Spanish. I learned, um, well I was born in Mexico, so I learned, I already knew some Spanish and then when I moved here will communicate with my parents is the only way I could keep it up. So yeah.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">09:08</a>	And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?

Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>09:12</u></a>	Um, I think it's important to keep our, like Latino culture in the US and we shouldn't be ashamed to use it in public or anything. So yeah, I think it's important.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>09:28</u></a>	How does the university and the community both cater to and omit the and Latino population?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>09:37</u></a>	Okay. Uh, I think on campus they do try to make an effort, um, like during Hispanic heritage month to like they hold events. But I think that they also don't do very well of trying to reach the audience and don't even try like this is for because like the, there isn't much Latinos here and no one is gonna. A lot of white people aren't going to be interested in that. And so if we had more Latinos, more people would come to those events and bring more people because I been to them and they're not that like grand, I don't know. They don't seem as grand as they should be.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>10:32</u></a>	And um, how do you view race in the US? And the south and here in Oxford
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>10:38</u></a>	I feel like it's really sensitive topic, um, but it's a topic that must be talked about if you put people of color in a room, they can easily talk about race because they can easily talk about what things we've faced and I think people shouldn't be afraid or they should just listen and just listen. And I think that if they actually listen and are open minded about it and relations would be better, race relations will be better in the US.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>11:16</u></a>	And how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of racing yourself?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>11:21</u></a>	How do I what? Sorry?
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>11:22</u></a>	How do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the south?
Bianca Martinez:	<a href="#"><u>11:27</u></a>	Okay. Um, I think the south is starting to cater more to the Latino population, like in our grocery stores or it's like a small Hispanic section and, and um, but I don't think they know a lot about like the actual,

like hurdles that we have to jump through to actually like be comfortable in the society and they haven't been able to do that as like they don't like, for example, the paper that I just wrote or not, I wrote that definitely broke. I'm like, a lot of people are talking about DACA now because someone mentioned it and because no one talked about before and I wish more people would come out and talk about things like that and we would have better relations

- Brittany Brown: [12:40](#) What type of challenges do you face as a Latino student here?
- Bianca Martinez: [12:55](#) There's a lot of isolation being isolated. I also, um, because the school doesn't offer scholarships for DACA students, it's kinda hard for me to pay tuition on time or pay tuition at all because one semester I didn't do that and so I wish they would do more and be better at that and try to get more outreach or something like that,
- Brittany Brown: [13:30](#) And um, are there any other things that you'd like to discuss? Any of the topics that I didn't ask you?
- Bianca Martinez: No.
- Brandon Tzib
- Brittany Brown: [00:00](#) I'm now recording and today is December first and I am interviewing Brandon for my honors thesis research titled Latino South Race and Racialization. So we'll go ahead and jump right in. Are you 18 years or older?
- Brandon Tzib: I'm 18 years older.
- Brittany Brown: Okay. And can you say and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Brandon Tzib: [00:23](#) My name is Brandon Tzib.
- Brittany Brown: [00:29](#) Okay, and when were you born?
- Brandon Tzib: [00:32](#) I was born in July 13th, 1994.

Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">00:36</a>	And um, where are you from and where did you grow up?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#">00:39</a>	I'm originally from Claremore, Oklahoma, but, um, I did most of my childhood in Pontotoc, Mississippi.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">00:46</a>	And when did you, when did your family moved from Oklahoma to Mississippi?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#">00:50</a>	Um, why? Uh, they moved from Oklahoma to Pontotoc when I was two months old and the reason they came to Mississippi was my uncle was a pastor, so my dad wanted to move with him as well, not the same building but, you know, I moved to the same place.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">01:07</a>	And um, so you've only lived in Oklahoma and Pontotoc?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#">01:11</a>	Yeah, I guess I still claim Oklahoma even though I haven't lived there that long, but yeah, Pontiac I will claim as my home.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">01:18</a>	Okay. And uh, what brought you from Pontotoc to Oxford?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#">01:23</a>	Um, well at the time I was picking colleges and I've always followed the footsteps of joining the bandwagon of becoming a Mississippi State fan and by my senior year I decided to get more depth into finding college. So Ole Miss was the first one that accepted me, so I just like, let's go for it.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">01:43</a>	Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#">01:50</a>	Um, honestly it's half and half. Yeah, it is important. But then again, uh, I see no reason, uh, I've always grew up in a Christian home so mom always taught me that everyone is equal, so I just look at everyone based on their heart and not by skin.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#">02:07</a>	Cool. And how, how has your experience been at Ole Miss and living in Oxford?

Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#"><u>02:12</u></a>	Uh, it's been pretty great so far. Um, I've always been an energetic person outside of a class and doing serious work with school and stuff. Um, Oxford has been a great, great time for me, especially with football season while the success, what we had in the past couple of years.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>02:31</u></a>	What is your major classification and some notable involvement that you have on campus?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#"><u>02:37</u></a>	I was a nursing major. Um, I guess you could say still is. I'm trying to wait to get into the program which requires a bachelor's degree accelerated program, but right now officially it's a psychology major with a minor in Spanish.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>02:53</u></a>	And um, what is your classification and then maybe some things you were involved in on campus?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#"><u>02:58</u></a>	Uh, I'm a senior or I guess you could say fifth year. Um, my involvement on campus, uh, I worked for the Turner Center, the campus recreational, building a, I'm a facility manager there. At one point there was a transfer mentor group where transfers came to a university and I will help out with that one. I'm also, I was part of the BSU. I was part of the oldest ultimate Frisbee club team. Um, I believe that's it so far. W
Brittany Brown:		What are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#"><u>03:33</u></a>	The most important one's to graduate, that's the most important one. Um, and yet after that next semester I'll try to do my best to find a job so I can have it lined up after graduation. Right now at this point is just a setting a goal or plan on finding a job is the most important aspect right now.
Brittany Brown:	<a href="#"><u>03:51</u></a>	Okay. And now we're going to get into some more questions about race and identity. So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Brandon Tzib:	<a href="#"><u>04:02</u></a>	So, um, my ethnicity, um, my parents are from Belize, so you know it's starting to become a

popular place to tour. Um, but for my ethnicity it will be believed to be American since I was born in America.

Brittany Brown: [04:19](#) What are your parent's nationality and do you identify with your nationality?

Brandon Tzib: [04:28](#) Uh, my parent's nationality, like I said before, they're from Belize so, uh, they're Belizean or I guess in the term as um, the people I believe they call themselves Belizean. Um, the, um, do I identify with my parent's nationality? Uh, yes.

Brittany Brown: [04:47](#) And, um, for people who don't know, like where is Belize and what is the culture of Belize like?

Brandon Tzib: [04:53](#) So, um, normally, um, people won't know where Belize is at or what Belize is, uh, normally, um, if you pick out a, a Spanish culture place like Mexico, everyone knows it automatically. Literally it is right below Mexico. Literally. It's right below Mexico. And was the other question. I'm sorry, what is the culture like? So what I found out the culture in Belize, um, it's an English speaking country. Uh, there's a, there's a couple of Spanish places where, or places that they speak Spanish and where my dad is from, uh, San Pedro. They speak Spanish and Creole there. So just a mixture of languages. Also there's broken English called Creole. So my mom grew up in a place where English was just spoken. Dad grew up in a place where he spoke more than two languages or two languages. My dad speaks of course English, Spanish and Mayan, which is an old language that is really hard to learn.

Brittany Brown: [06:00](#) And how do you identify racially and why?

Brandon Tzib: [06:08](#) Um, racially I identify myself as a Latino American. And why do I identify this way? Um, it's who I am. Literally, I don't want to lie about who I am. I don't want to say I'm Caucasian when I'm not really not.

Brittany Brown: [06:24](#) And do you identify as Hispanic or Latino? And do you have a preference of term? Why? Why not?

- Brandon Tzib: [06:31](#) I'm a, I consider myself both because I say I'm Hispanic. Uh, yes because I'm from a Spanish cultural place. Um, however a Latino, I see Latino as someone who's born in America or who's born from a different place who speaks the language, English. And that's also from another Spanish speaking country.
- Brittany Brown: [06:59](#) Studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations was viewed in this country?
- Brandon Tzib: [07:09](#) I actually did a research paper on this a couple of weeks ago. Um, I, from what I've gathered and in my opinion, um, yes, um, the Latino population will increase by a lot. Um, this is just based on what I read on the Internet, but by 2060, the population will be increased by 43 percent. So, uh, honestly I think, I think there'll be a way it can affect the whole United States because, you know, we're overpopulating too much and it's just hard to get money to build construction on houses and stuff. So, uh, I still think it's a good thing that we're growing, but yet, you know, give time for the other people to come, you know.
- Brittany Brown: [07:58](#) How do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?
- Brandon Tzib: [08:03](#) Um, at first I didn't really acknowledge my, my culture because, uh, uh, honestly I really want it to be the better. I wanted to let people know that I wanted to be the same as everyone else, like, you know, when they look at me and they like, oh, he's low class and that's why I had that mentality of motivation to like try and be better than that person. I know it was kind of selfish, but like at one point, um, I just came to realization was like, it's not who I am it's about, you know, about doing what I can to change the world. So, um, yeah, uh, I embrace the, uh, the culture and where I'm from and because when I tell them people are fascinated to hear about it, so that kinda brought me more, uh, more joy to talk about it. So I embrace it. Um, so if people come up to me and ask what are you, yeah, I find that kind of rude, but then again, you know, it's, it's a



cool way for them to know what I am that. You typically don't get the, like the normal answer like Mexican or Spaniards. So when I tell them I'm a different type of race or I guess you could say a nationality, um, they will be like, oh, what's that? You know, they bring up all these questions, then you start talking about the culture and the place that they've never heard of. So that brings more people to attract and I just find that pretty cool.

Brittany Brown: [09:26](#)

And are there any other ways that you hold onto your culture? Maybe like through language, food?

Brandon Tzib: [09:32](#)

Um, yeah. So, uh, like I said earlier, um, when I tell them that Belize is not only a Spanish speaking country, but like, the most dominant language is English. Um, they start, they start asking me questions where, where'd you learn Spanish and all this stuff. So I learned Spanish in high school and so, uh, now that I've gotten a little better at it now between that gap between senior year and I say sophomore, junior year in college, um, I never really spoke the language Spanish that much. So when I decided to become a Spanish minor, I'm like, that's where I decided I'm starting to embrace it. I was starting to talk about Belize. I'm starting to talk about all the culture because in Belize we have the food is what I love the most. We have carne asada which is like thin steak and then with cilantro on top. And uh, we have flour tortillas homemade instead of corn tortillas, like the people in Mexico, uh, we also have Johnny Cake, which is like a sour dough bread. There's just many terms for it. But other than that, um, I do like the culture yet and haven't visited yet. I would like to go.

Brittany Brown:

Do you cook any of the foods?

Brandon Tzib:

Uh, normally I, to be honest, I don't cook it at my house because I don't have the materials. Uh, wish I knew the proper term for the equipment they used that my mom uses the kitchen. But, uh, every time I go to the house I always tell her, make me a batch of flour. Homemade tortillas or, you know, et cetera.

Brittany Brown: Um, and earlier you said when people look at you, they see you as a lower class. Why do you say that? What are some things that you've gone through that kind of brought you to that conclusion?

Brandon Tzib: [11:18](#) Well, I mean like, I mean back then when, I mean, of course our generation is still evolving. How we see each other. Back then, you know, it was, it was a really crucial time for racism. So I figured when they look at me or not, when I figured out when I um, experienced that they look at me and uh, of course, yeah, they say certain things, but like I really don't take it as an offensive way because like I said, my parents are uh, we come from a Christian home and like my mom and dad are very humble so they really don't let stuff like that and get to their ego. So like for me just growing up and watching them having to face that, I just want to be able to back them up. Like, Hey, you know, just grow up, don't. If you don't have, you don't, if you don't have nothing, nice to say, don't say it at all. So I just think people just need to mature up a little bit and just worry about what they need to worry about. So when they look at us, I just feel like we're just a normal family, you know, just trying to make it, trying to turn dirt into diamonds, you know. So,

Brittany Brown: [12:21](#) Is that something you would experience like in Pontotoc?

Brandon Tzib: [12:25](#) Well, there wasn't that many racism in Pontotoc. We do have, I would say is, but like there, there are a couple of people that are conservatives that think about or how they see racism differently. So, um, we do, we do try our best to get along with everyone even though we may see a fake smile or a fake personality based on how we hear, hear rumors about someone, but yet like we're still, like I said, we still treat everyone the same no matter how hard they judge us or how bad they talk about us, you know, we're just worrying about how we're going to make it through the next day.

Brittany Brown: [13:02](#) What are some challenges that you face at Ole Miss in Oxford as a Latino student?

- Brandon Tzib: [13:11](#) I haven't really faced any challenges that would, uh, impact on my nationality. I'm speaking, uh, besides nationality, the only challenges I face is just having to get past a certain class, like having to pass a certain class or having to go to a or what I'm going to eat the next day, you know, just, just surviving by your own, with a part time job, paying bills or working in another job is really stressful, but yet you're really putting yourself out there and be like, you can actually do this, you know, you actually got a second job so you're actually making it or making somewhat use of it because you only do college one time.
- Brittany Brown: [13:59](#) Has anyone ever asked you about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these questions?
- Brandon Tzib: [14:05](#) Uh, yeah, like I said earlier, um, they look at me and they ask me, hey, what are you, because I look at you, you don't look Mexican or I look at you, you don't look Hawaiian or et cetera, et cetera. So I tell them, I was like, uh, I'm just from Pontotoc. Um, I was born in Oklahoma, et cetera, where I'm from, I tell them where I'm from, um, I tell them where my parents are from and, you know, they get, they get, uh, they get happy or they get interested and want to know what. So, uh, because they tell me I was like, you don't have, you don't have the accent or et cetera. So I'm like, you know, it's pretty cool, you know, English was the first language I learned. My parents thought it was a good idea because since back then we were struggling so they wanted me to, uh, me as the oldest child, they wanted me to succeed and help them out in the long run, which I will. So, and then that's where I picked up the language and then of course Pontotoc is still a little small country town. So I kind of picked up on the southern accent a little bit. So it's pretty cool how I can communicate with others.
- Brittany Brown: [15:12](#) And do people typically like assume like what your race is or anything? I know you said like people say you don't look Hawaiian or you don't like Mexican. How do people typically ask you? What are you,

where are you from, where you really from, like what do people normally do?

Brandon Tzib: [15:28](#)

So a perfect example will be if I'm getting to meet someone so if I go up to someone like earlier I think two months ago I went for, I went to a conference for work and Alabama and I met some people and you know, just getting to know some things, you know, one of the questions would be like, where are you from or you know, uh, how are you or et cetera? And one of the questions was, as I was introducing myself, uh, he asked me, where are you from? I told him. I always start out whenever they asked me where I'm from, I always start out. I'm born in Oklahoma. I did most of my childhood Pontotoc, Mississippi. My parents are from Belize so that way it saves them another question to ask. So I just go ahead and tell them right off the bat and then that's where they ask me. Always I either get it, I've heard of that place before, or I've never heard of that place. Where is that? So I go into detail like where it's at, uh, what's, what Belize is then, um, and then they tell me it's funny because they always asked me. Sometimes they're like, well, you know, it's like you look, you look Hispanic but you can't really tell, you know. So just going off, I hate to say this again, but like stereotypical on how Hispanics dress sometimes, you know, like I said, our generation is evolving. Um, you know, sometimes I just dress what I dress. I mean, yeah, picked it up from, you know, all the kids around me from school, but, you know, I just dressed whatever. I think it's cool to me like, oh, I like this hat or I like those jeans or shoes. So I just put on whatever I put on and then, you know, it's still funny to me that people still see how we were, what we were, how we look, you know, still brings up a pick, a stereotypical idea of like, oh, I wonder what he's so and so it Mexican so, so I just go off and tell them and then no matter if it hurts me or not, I just go out with a smile.

Brittany Brown: [17:20](#)

Have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character? Has anyone ever stereotyped you or assume something about you because of the way you look?

Brandon Tzib:

[17:32](#)

Not that I've thought of. I haven't faced a situation like that so far, um, I'm blessed to have all these friends who think that we're all equal. So it's kind of cool because I've had all these friends so I have yet to encounter a situation like that in a long time. But back in, uh, I want to say my fifth or sixth grade year, uh, I did have an encounter with a girl who will not, who I will not name, but she always used to call me shrimp. So based on, you know, my height and stereotypical how Hispanics are. So that really got me, that was my first encounter of having to deal with the situation of someone actually picking on me. So I don't know if it was because of my race or it could have been to someone who was not Hispanic and a small person. So having to deal with that. I cried. Of course, you know, that was my first encounter. So I went and told my mom and my mom is really, uh, she really hates stuff like that. She don't want other people to get. She hates bullies basically is what it is. So I mean, no matter what color you are, if you're bullying somebody else, you know, we, you know, we won't allow that to happen because we want kids to succeed and stuff like that. And that's where depression and stuff like that happens. But we don't want to get into that though, but um, yeah, so I told my mom and mom came up to the school and told the teacher and so after that ended and so that's where I found out, like I got people that care for me even though my mom's my mom, but, you know, there was other people around me. It was like, hey, we need to help you out. We don't want nothing bad happening.

Brittany Brown:

Do you speak Spanish? If. Yes, how did you learn?

Brandon Tzib:

Uh, I do speak Spanish. I'm still working on it. I'm not fluent yet, but I'm still trying to roll my "R's" still can't do that. Well I picked up the language Spanish in the household, you know, uh, basically in the house. Mom and dad would speak Spanish to each other and of course they will speak English to us, me and my other siblings, my brother and my two sisters. So like I've said I'm the oldest. So they wanted me to speak English. So in Tenth Grade, in 2010, uh, joined the Spanish class, uh, ended up becoming either VP or treasurer for the Spanish

club, I can't remember. And so, um, I ended up doing pretty well in that class, came up with an A and then after that I've spoken the language. Of course I speak it sometimes with my parents, you know, just to, you know, have fun with it. And of course, uh, like I said, my uncle was a pastor, came here, so he, uh, he opened up a Spanish church. So that's where I started going to church, but for me it was hard because like I didn't know the language so I would just basically sit in the church just sitting there. So, uh, that's when I came to realization when I found out in Spanish is important. Uh, I told my mom was like, I need to start going to a church where I know the language. Uh, so, uh, I went to a church First Baptist and then I started getting to know more because mom wanted. It was best for me and of course, you know, I needed some Jesus, so, you know, I had to catch up on all that stuff. So it was hard translating a couple of Bible verses. I just repetitively learned back in the church that my uncle taught, so I just, you know, I knew about, I didn't know what it was saying, so I knew the certain word like Genesis and so and so I just remembered a study that because that's what I learned. And then when I got to college I made it my minor and started learning. So I'm making it better. Hopefully, uh, you know, I can help people out, which is a good thing for jobs too.

Brittany Brown:

[21:12](#)

So, um, you said you're the oldest of your siblings, your younger siblings? Do your parents them or were they just pretty adamant about not teaching you all Spanish and wanting you all to be fluent in English?

Brandon Tzib:

[21:27](#)

Um, so um, since I've been away from home because of college, I've actually gotten to know how they're, how they're going through their lives or how they're living because I'm not there to see them grow, so I really don't know how they learn Spanish, but they do. They don't speak it a lot like me since I know the language mostly, but they, my brother, he's right where he just don't want to learn it. So, which is a good thing, you know, he makes his own choices, but maybe one day he'll um, he'll learn it just for fun or something, just pick it up a

little bit of my sisters that they do tend to pick it up a lot more because they're always with my mom. So mom is always speaking in Spanish on the phone because she's like, she's an interpreter so whenever they're with her she's always on the phone and speaking to somebody in Spanish. So I'm assuming that's how they picked it up. So mom, my sisters would like play around with each other and just say a couple of Spanish words and you know, to us as well.

Brittany Brown: [22:26](#)

And you said your father speaks Mayan as well. Do you know any Mayan or do any of your siblings?

Brandon Tzib: [22:33](#)

Um, uh, it's a funny thing. I looked up a, I used to have the sheet back in the day when I was young. I had a sheet where my dad told me some basic Mayan words, but I don't have that sheet anymore. I lost it. So Mayan was just never an interest in me. But whenever Mayan is spoken from my dad, he only speaks it to his brothers. So out of his six or seven brothers, he, uh, they only speak Mayan to each other whenever we're around, it's like, it's like we have a little click at the house. We had the people who speak to Mayan here and of course mom is helping me, uh, speaking Spanish and then of course my siblings speaking in English. So it's Kinda like having three languages in the same house. So, um, I try to learn it, but it's just a difficult language is just so hard. You have all these pauses and in like each sentence. But at this point I really don't want to learn it.

Brittany Brown: [23:48](#)

And how important has the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?

Brandon Tzib: [23:55](#)

At first it was difficult because, um, I would, I would try to pronounce the words and they will keep asking me why, what were you trying to say? And I'm like, trying my best. So even if I can't roll my R's, they still get the full letters, the association for it. So I try my best. Like, uh, what's the, what's the word? Like? Like perro, I can't say the double R in that word. I can't trill R's no matter how hard I've tried to get on Youtube, roll my r's. It's still can't do it. But now I can go up to a Mexican

restaurant and even though like I said, Hispanic, Hispanic, we like, we look and show this family, say hey, we're in the same boat. Uh, we like speak Spanish to each other. So at first when they used to do that to me, I'll, I'll be like, just a typical hola and now they look at me. I keep, I can keep a conversation going on there, but there are some words that I really don't know yet to complete the sentence. So I just tried try my best to let them know how I'm saying or what I'm trying to say.

Brittany Brown: [25:00](#) So. And I'll combine the next two questions. How does the university and the community both cater to and omit the Latino population?

Brandon Tzib: [25:10](#) So, uh, I noticed that in March. Was it March? I want to say it's March that we have the Hispanic heritage month. I don't know if it's march. Could Be September, I should say. I'm still trying to embrace the Hispanic culture and learn more, but uh, yeah, I think that's pretty cool. Uh, they have a thing called the Latin club. I want to say it's a Latin club where, um, we have, uh, they have tons of Hispanics just joined a club and don't have to be Hispanic. They can be Brazilians or a Cubans or anybody that speaks the language Spanish or somewhat close to it and joined the club and you don't have to be Hispanic to join the club. There are a Caucasians, African Americans, Chinese, et cetera, et cetera because it's a fun club. Um, they do host parties at the lyric, the Latin party. Those are pretty fun. Basically it's just a party where you just go in, you can learn the Latin dances as basically Spanish music party. Um, I think that you never see helps out with that because we want, want all sorts of ages and races come to the university. Um, I think that's just pretty cool.

Brittany Brown: [26:22](#) How do you view race in the US? In the south and here in Oxford?

Brandon Tzib: [26:28](#) I would say in the south this is a pretty difficult, um, yeah, there are still some towns, there are still some people that, um, that are racist. Um, but yet, uh, like I said earlier before, we just need to mature up and, you know, just worry about what they need to



worry. And um, I mean there are some instances if we're on their property without knowing and they tell us some to get off, you know, we will, but they don't have to use a certain term to identify us to leave. At Ole Miss, uh, I see it as a big problem still with African Americans and racism. Uh, I still, I still see that as big of a big deal as them trying to take the statues and stuff like that. So I try to help out my friends, you know, that I tell them like, I'm always gonna be there for you, you know, and uh, what, uh, in the United States, you know, they're still, they're still trying to build a wall, which, you know, um, I don't want to get into politics, but, you know, it's just, it's just a difficult time for, for each race to be honest. We, we each have our own situations.

Brittany Brown: [27:50](#) And um, how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the south?

Brandon Tzib: Honestly, I don't see it being a big deal. I just see us working hard. I just see a lot of people. Honestly, I don't see the, uh, Latino population that's a big deal that I've encountered or experienced or seen. I just see us all together working, to be honest, we're always working, to be honest. I really don't see nothing, but other than that, I mean we're just, we're just here trying to live in south. I enjoyed the south, I love the south. It's just a just a country, country-mannered place.

Brittany Brown: [28:43](#) And are there any other topics or points that you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you?

Brandon Tzib: You did wonderful.

Brittany Brown: Okay. All right.

Collin Rivera

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Alright, recording. Today's November 27th and I am interviewing Collin Rivera today for my thesis research title, the Latino South Race and Racialization. I'm going to go ahead and get started. Are you 18 years or older?

Speaker 2:		Yes.
Speaker 1:		Okay. And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:25</a>	So Collin Rivera.
Speaker 1:		When were you born?
Speaker 2:		I was born in 1996. July twelfth.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:38</a>	Alright, and where are you from and where did you grow up?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:41</a>	So I'm from Tampa, Florida and I've grown up in Tampa, Florida my entire life.
Speaker 1:		So you never lived in any other place?
Speaker 2:		Never lived any anywhere else. Kind of moved around locally in the Tampa area, but we've always stayed locally like overall. So.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:57</a>	So what brought you from Tampa to Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:00</a>	Really, they approached me, the journalism program, they, they sent me a bunch of forms. I got a handwritten note from Dean Norton just saying, you know, if you're interested and set up a meeting, give a, we'll give a tour and everything. I took a tour here, uh, because I was originally looking at University of North Carolina, University of Georgia and I believe University of Florida kind of, um, and so really what drew me here was the class sizes were very small for the journalism programs versus the other schools. And really the out of state tuition wasn't as bad as the other ones would be like North Carolina was near the 70 grand range. Georgia was near 60 grand so that, that helped factor in a lot of decision making. So that I would say mostly why I came here was the faculty in the people that approached me.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:57</a>	Is your race and important part of your identity? Why or why not?

- Speaker 2: [02:09](#) Yeah, I think that as I've become older, I think it is, you know. On my mom's side mostly they're white ethnicity, you know, being from, from Ireland main region. But on my dad's side, they come from Cadiz, Spain, so they're, they're very proud of being from Spain. And my grandfather, who's my dad's dad at the time, he was from Puerto Rico. So his mom and his dad, his mom was from Spain and his dad was from Puerto Rico. So they take huge pride, obviously from a Latino standpoint. I mean, holidays were probably the biggest things for me. I mean, you could think of any kind of meal for, for the Latino community and that's literally what we were having. So I think that as I've grown older it's become a lot bigger deal obviously, you know, um, my religion being Catholic is huge and the Spain community and um, yeah, I would just say as I've grown older it's become more pressing issue I believe.
- Speaker 1: [03:16](#) How has your experience been at Ole Miss and living in Oxford?
- Speaker 2: [03:21](#) I would say, you know, um, just because of, I guess the, the level of the question if I'm looking from a Latino standpoint, um, there really hasn't been any presence. Um, you know, besides I would say, you know, restaurants and, you know, some events and parties, there really hasn't been that much exposure. Um, I would say it's been overall pleasant, you know? Um, definitely like I said, you know, before I was light during the winter seasons, like I get really white, so like it doesn't really show, but um, when I'm in Florida, like you can tell like, oh yeah, this kid's definitely either Puerto Rican or some kind of Latino. Um, but I'd say overall I haven't had any, any main issues living in, in Oxford.
- Speaker 1: [04:11](#) And uh, what is your major classification and some notable involvement that you had? One?
- Speaker 2: [04:16](#) Yeah. So I'm a senior broadcast journalism major sports emphasis and the most involvement I've done is, is NewsWatch and Rebel Radio. Um, I have a sports talk show that's two hours to two days a week

		for rebel radio and then on the sports director for NewsWatch.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:36</a>	What are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:42</a>	I think that, um, one thing that I've noticed, especially this past year, his family's very important, um, lost my grandmother this past spring and unfortunately I wasn't able to go down to see her before she passed. So I would say the biggest aspect that's important to me is, is just appreciating life. I've become more familiar with, you know, don't work too hard because at the end of the day your health is most important and if you're not alive to work then it doesn't matter what kind of work you're doing. So, um, I've, I've tried to find a balance of enjoying the little things, enjoying life, family moments, stuff like that versus just work, work, work and, you know, try to try to pay bills, student loans and stuff like that.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:28</a>	And so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity is two different things. Um, what is your ethnicity? What do you consider?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:37</a>	Yeah, on the, on the census, I typically will put Latino. On standardized tests, I would typically put Caucasian, not really sure why that was probably just because I was in high school, you know, being the knucklehead that I was. Um, but typically on the census, I like to put Latino just because I think that that in more, if they get more data from, from people and my grandmother would kill me if I, if I didn't put that on the census.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:06</a>	Was there a reason? Like why in high school...
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:10</a>	Yeah. You know, growing and learning, understanding. Yeah. So the high school I went to, I, I would say there was maybe four percent like minorities that went to my high school. The rest were predominantly white. Um, you could think of the most stereotypical like rich white, upper class student body is pretty much what I went with. And um, when I was in high school it didn't really affect

me too much. I mean I was, I was very sports driven so I cared about was sports. I didn't really care about anything else that was going on. Um, so I guess that's kind of why was such a knucklehead. I mean I only focused on sports. I played soccer for 14 years, so that was really taking up the majority of my time. We, we would practice Monday, Wednesday, Thursdays, and then we'd have a game on Saturday and Sunday. So literally that's, that's pretty much what took up my time. And then I was involved in the newspaper. I was the sports editor for my high school. So yeah, I mean sports was just 24/seven, so really didn't have anything else to think about.

- Speaker 1: [07:21](#) So in a way where you like I guess like trying to blend in and just dedicate yourself to sports?
- Speaker 2: [07:29](#) Yeah, high school was definitely tough for me. Um, I was, I was bullied quite a lot, especially in my freshman and sophomore year. Um, and I don't know if it was, you know, racial based or because you know, I was very goofy looking kid, you know, I had a, I was very, like I said, soccer oriented. So anything, any haircut, Renaldo had or Messi had. That's kind of haircut I would have because one, it's just, you know, you look really good in it when you have a soccer jersey on the uniform on. But um, yeah, for, for whatever reason was, was bullied a lot in my freshman or freshman and sophomore years of high school. Junior year I kind of just started sticking up for myself and I was, I pretty much had enough. I, I've fortunately had good enough, um, teachers that actually cared about how I was doing outside of classes. So, um, that helped me a lot. But I guess you could say, you know, just trying to fit in, you know, I guess you could say blend in, but I was really just trying to just get through the years I was, I was looking mostly forward to college. Um, I grew up on FSU football with Bobby Bowden and um, I grew up on Georgia football as well. And so that was really like one of the main things because Georgia was my top school, like I was, I was determined to go to the of Georgia. And then when I found out, you know, it's going to cost all this out of state tuition, I wouldn't have the scholarships that

I needed, it just wasn't gonna happen. So during high school, that's mostly what I was looking forward to this college. I wasn't, I wasn't too focused on blending in. I was just looking to get out of high school more so.

- Speaker 1:            [09:14](#)            In college, have you found your experience be different or fulfilling?
- Speaker 2:            [09:20](#)            Yeah, I think, I think with college I've, I've found the right niches. I think that, you know, it's a little bit easier I would say, and in a sense to find who you can hang out with, um, because, you know, it's with high school there's the social norms, like, oh, you gotta be you gotta be doing this in order to be with this college, it's a little bit more different. Um, there's still that, that perspective obviously no matter where you go, I mean even in the workplace that's going to happen as well. So I would say it was easier in college, I've definitely enjoyed college a lot more than high school. Um, but yeah, I would say was, it's been easier in college than it has in high school because my high school is like a very narrowed version of, of like the race issues that like owned is, that is, that is pretty much my high school. But just more like specific driven. So.
- Speaker 1:            [10:17](#)            And uh, what are your parents' nationality? Do you identify with their nationality?
- Speaker 2:            [10:22](#)            Yeah. So, um, during the World Cup, I was huge into Spain, like I love every, every bit of Spain. Um, whenever my mom will make international trips because she sees sometimes has, I think it's every four years they go on a major, like city trips. And so she went to Madrid and I was like, well, you gotta get me something from Madrid because that's one of the places I haven't been to. I've been to Italy and Greece, but like I've been dying to go to Spain, like um, whether it be Barcelona or Madrid. Um, as of right now, because like I said, my grandma passed this past spring. She was from Cadiz, so like I want to see where she grew up. Um, the records are all there and everything, so I really just want to see where she grew up, the kind of city that's like

because it's a port city, so I'm very interested to see, see how that is.

Speaker 1: [11:16](#) And you said one of your parents is a Spanish and the other is Irish?

Speaker 2: [11:21](#) Yeah. Um, I definitely don't identify as an Irishman whatsoever. Um, I think that's more so my mom is just because her last name was Tune. She obviously married into Rivera and Tune is just a very, very Irish heritage name and pretty much the backstory with them is I think they immigrated in the early 1900s versus my dad's family. They integrated in the 1930ish region. So, um, yeah, I don't really identify as, as an Irish. Um, I definitely feel like if I went to Spain I would fit in a lot better there or even go to Puerto Rico. I'd fit a lot better in there than I would in Ireland. I, I just really haven't had any big interest in Ireland.

Speaker 1: [12:15](#) How do you identify racially?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think racially I typically do white just because I'm not Spanish speaking. So I think that's one of the biggest drawbacks for me is that I think if you're Hispanic you have to know at least some kind of Spanish, like whether you can understand if someone's talking to you and you may not be able to speak it or you can speak it fluently. I think that's a major key. Um, one of the things I've been trying to do is, you know, is get Rosetta stone, like try to learn Spanish. I tried to do it here, but with the language program, like they're so fast paced, like I could understand it on paper because like I did Latin for four years in high school so I could read Spanish. Like if somebody wrote out what they're saying to me, I could typically get four to five words out of the sentence. But I'm orally, I can't, I can't understand unless it's spoken to me really, really slow. So racially I usually do white, um, and Tampa, you know, I guess it's not a to racially driven city, you know, you can, you're fine. Whoever you are in Tampa. Um, but yeah, I would say typically white just because I can't speak Spanish and that's a big piece to me. If I can speak

Spanish then I think I would be able to, to be labeled as that.

- Speaker 2: [13:43](#) Um, I do Hispanic more so I'm just, because once again, the whole going back to Spain, Puerto Rico. Um, I used to be huge, like Puerto Rican roots back in the day I would say probably my middle school years just because of my, my grandma was relatively younger than what she was because she passed when she was 85 years old. So I'm doing my math. She was relatively in our seventies, mid seventies, so she still was able to move around. Um, she would show me all the kinds of stuff that my grandfather did. And um, the interesting thing I guess with my family on that side is that everybody could speak it fluently and then like the, my dad was the cutoff point because they believed that in order to make it in this country you need to speak English versus, you know, you're just going to only speak Spanish. And they thought that was a major disadvantage. So whenever, you know, somebody speak into my dad and in Spanish he knows exactly what they're saying. He can't speak a lick of it because he wasn't taught it, but he knows, he knows what they're saying. So I typically, I went a little off the road there, but I typically will, will do Hispanic. Um, I guess it, it kind of just depends on the situation. So
- Speaker 1: [15:10](#) Is there a reason that you use the term Hispanic more so in identifying yourself rather than Latino?
- Speaker 2: [15:17](#) Yeah. Um, I think it's more so I just think that this is probably my brain, just being ignorant, just Hispanic and I typically just tie Hispanic, Hispanic, Spanish. So once again, I may show just how much, you know, we're, it's, I have, um, I just haven't, you know, I've noticed when I've gone to different events in Tampa and stuff that the Latino community has different kind of culture than Hispanic and I think that one thing that I've noticed is that they're coming closer together as, as time has gone on, but I don't think there's really any, any reason for it. I would say Latino just as much as Hispanic.



- Speaker 1: [15:59](#) So like the correlation that you have is correct. So Hispanic, it does refer to Spain or Spanish speaking people and Latino refers to people of Latin American descent. But that's interesting that you say like in Tampa there was a separation between Hispanic and Latino. A lot of times people use it interchangeably. Could you maybe talk about that a little bit because you're only the second person I've talked to from Florida and I feel like that's like an entirely different demographic of people.
- Speaker 2: [16:26](#) So I'm a perfect example. You know, you probably the person you already talked to from Florida, if you go to Miami and then you go to Tampa, totally different spectrum because obviously the Cuban community is huge in Miami versus Tampa. It's kind of a melting pot. You get Puerto Rican, so you get people from Spain that have immigrated over and then you get the Cuban immigrants as well. So one of the biggest things that I notice his food was a, was a real thing that I grew up on and like anybody knows Latino and Hispanic food can be very different. Um, so one of the things that I noticed, it's really not that they would differentiate from themselves, but once again you would know like in Tampa, you would know if you're Latino or if you're Hispanic, just because of maybe of how you dress or once again with just like in English there's, there's different slanes in terms. So, um, they, you would be able to tell with that. But yeah, I'm, I'm surprised that you haven't gotten as many answers that, that there are different because I'm personally think that they are. I can notice it so different and like where the people come from, where their roots are or can you give me more examples of like the cultural difference in like how they dress, but like,
- Speaker 2: [17:50](#) yeah, so in, in my personal experience I've noticed with Hispanics is that Catholic, you know, religion has been pushed really, really hard on. I can't speak for the Latino community because obviously I wasn't raised in that, but I feel that with Latino, you know, just going off the history that I've learned in, in Latin America is it's very, you know, listen to the arch bishop and everything like that. In the church

versus Cat Catholicism, it's a little bit different because you're pretty much given the lesson and the lesson you have to pass on to everybody else. And I think that with the Latino community, religious wise, they feel more. I'm looking for the term of they, they need to go more to church versus Hispanics. They love church but it's not, it's not the number one like driving a pressing issue for them. And I think that that's one of the biggest things that I've noticed culturally. And then I would say, once again, the food is huge, whether it be the way black beans are cooked, I mean that could be a totally different thing whether they're, they're sauteed or they're cooked for hours on end. I mean that's the kind of things that matter and um,

- Speaker 3: [19:15](#) you know, I think that
- Speaker 2: [19:17](#) I can't personally speak for, for how they dress differently, but one of the things that I would notice like in Tampa is that Hispanics would typically dress the term, I guess higher end. I guess that's the term I would be looking for versus Latino would be more of the middle class type dress. So that was, those were kind of the biggest things I've noticed in Tampa. So.
- Speaker 1: [19:45](#) And we'll go ahead and move forward with the questions. Yeah. So studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations in this country?
- Speaker 2: [19:57](#) Well, I think it's really interesting because obviously we already know about president trump. We already know about the caravan that's going on. I think
- Speaker 3: [20:04](#) that
- Speaker 2: [20:05](#) we are at a pivotal time and I think it's very interesting that you and me get to experience this at such a young age to at least say, you know, we remember when this happens, we remember when that happens. I could say that this is the, the civil rights type movement back to Chavez for the Latino

community that this is as big as I would say that scenario with, um, with the immigration that's going on. And I think that how it'll affect the race is I think race relations will. Well, I hope so. I hope that they will be good. Um, it's interesting to see once again coming from Tampa, the relations here in the south and how the south is a perfect example where the, where the nooses were put up on the state capital. Um, I've never seen that before in my life, like in Tampa and we've never had any issues like that when the whole, I think it was last year when all the confederate statues were going to pull down, like Tampa Tampa just pulled.

Speaker 2: [21:13](#) There's down like nobody protested, nobody care. And they were like, yeah, take the, take the statue down. We don't care. Me Personally, I didn't even know there was a confederate statue like in front of, in front of the, uh, City Hall. So I think that the way it'll affect race is that we'll see the population continue to grow. But race relations I think will be very interesting within, I would say two and a half, three years is what is what we'll see. It'll either be positive or it'll, it'll get worse. So there really isn't an in between on that.

Speaker 2: [21:56](#) Yeah. So one of the biggest things is what I do is food again. Um, I'll make plan a lot. Um, I enjoy those quite a bit. And anybody from the Latino community knows that if you make plantations properly, they're really, really good. Um, and then soccer soccer's a huge thing for me. Um, I typically will watch La Liga soccer, which is the Spain, Spain League of soccer. So that's where Messi plays, that's where Rinaldo used to play, but Real Madrid, Barcelona, those are like the teams. So that's about as best as I can do. I'm here at Ole Miss, I know there's some parties, but um, you personally know me that there's too much, there's way too much work schedule for me go into to have time to do that kind of stuff. So what are some challenges you face at the university?

Speaker 2: [22:55](#) Yeah, I think this is what I said earlier is where there isn't much presence here. You know, I think that it's one that I could, you could say as a country

has been overlooked severely, is that there's, there's this minority that's here, but they're not being acknowledged and I think that the Latino community, I think also the, the Arabic Muslim community as well as one here that has not been acknowledged whatsoever. So I think that, you know, some of the challenges that I face is what if I wanted to have a Thanksgiving where I, you know, I have a Moho pork or something like that and I'm not able to fly back down to Tampa. I need to have it here. There really aren't a, there really aren't platforms for me to go with that. I would say as a university they need to step up to the plate with that, but once again they may not even know that it's going on because the Latino community is so overlooked.

- Speaker 1: [24:01](#) And. Has anyone ever asked you about your race and ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these questions if they do or not?
- Speaker 2: [24:09](#) Yeah, I think that it's very interesting. Minorities will actually ask me where I'm from because once again, if it's not the winter months they'll see my skin color in the last they'll go, are you from Mexico or are you from Puerto Rico or Dominican Republic? Any of those. And I go, no, I'm Puerto Rican and in Spain. And so typically it's, it's very ironic to see that minorities will ask versus if it's whites, I think you know, I'm at that stage of a, I pass as white so they would just seem that I'm white.
- Speaker 1: [24:44](#) And how do you, how do you respond to those questions? I guess how to say it might make you feel to kind of acknowledge like white people assume that you're white because you're white passing, but then minorities. I guess in a sense, can you kind of look at you and know, hey, there's something else.
- Speaker 2: [25:00](#) Um, I think it's, I think it's interesting to attention of detail is the biggest thing that comes to my mind is that minorities have a huge attention to detail when it comes to meeting people versus white people. I don't know if it's just on how they're raised or if it's

just been passed down for so long. It's almost as if they're too busy to acknowledge any kind of history that you have culturally wise. If it's not, their culture doesn't really matter. So I don't know if, if that's the case or not. Obviously I'm speaking on a huge, broad term, but me experience wise, I, I appreciate it when I'm asked because I just think that, you know, unless I'm wearing a soccer jersey, typically white people won't ask, oh, are you from like if I'm wearing a jersey or you have family in Spain, that's usually the, the open to conversation versus if I'm, if I'm in Tampa for example, um, you know, have, it could be the littlest thing and can be shopping at a, at a store. And they'll be like, oh, you know, you gotta you got some dark skin to you are you from so and so. And I'll be like, yeah, my, my dad's family is from there. So.

- Speaker 1:            [26:23](#)            And um, have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived race and ethnicity? Stereotypes are.
- Speaker 2:            [26:32](#)            Yeah. Um, I guess in, in high school I had, I had the typical strawberry joke, um, which was obviously a huge stereotype of owing and working on strawberry field because I was so dark. Like, I mean I was, I was pretty dark as, as a kid because once again, like I said, I played soccer for like five, six days out of the week. Okay. So, um, it's, it's pretty much a Florida stereotypes. So a lot of the Latino community will work in strawberry fields pretty much all year round because it's the best paying job, but they can typically get. And so because they work in a field, because Florida is like 95 degrees year round, is that their skin color gets so dark that you can easily identify like, yeah, they work in a field somewhere. So in high school, and this goes back to my freshman and sophomore years, is that as, especially when I'm like, that was the number one stereotype that you played soccer.
- Speaker 2:            [27:35](#)            Yeah, yeah. I would just play soccer and you know, when, when it's 95 degrees out, like of course I'm going to, I'm going to be getting darker. I don't, I'm one of the one things that like I first realized when I was like, Oh yeah, I'm definitely like Puerto Rican

or Spanish is I would not get sunburned. Like I would just get darker. That's, that's how it worked. I would occasionally get like peeling on my nose and stuff, but this would never get sunburn my arms and like, so yeah, it was, it was really just in high school. Um, college once again, I think it's just the visible. I have not acknowledging the Latino community and I think, you know, once again us being, I guess you could say fortunate enough to see all the race issues go on here for four years at Ole miss has been very um, black versus white, not just minority versus white.

Speaker 2:

[28:35](#)

And I think that's one of the biggest issues that, you know, the Latino community wants to speak out, but who's listening? That's the biggest thing. So personally I haven't had any issues in university, but I think that's also because they're not acknowledged much. So do you speak Spanish? I, you talked about this a little bit earlier. If yes, how did you learn? If no, why not? Yeah, so I'm pretty much at the, I wouldn't even say kindergarten level of Spanish. I wouldn't know, you know the words for door and yes and no. And Hello? Goodbye. Good morning. So I know those I can't structure, you know, if I want to say something and passive voice or active. I can't do that yet. Um, but I can read Spanish. That's one of the things because obviously learning Latin for I did four years in high school and I'm almost at year two here at Ole miss. That's almost six years of Latin. I can pretty much read anything in Spanish. Like if I was given desk, Pacino, like on a piece of paper I could easily understand being being a set on paper, but orally is, is the biggest thing that I, I challenged with.

Speaker 1:

[29:47](#)

And why do you not speak Spanish? Just like you can tell that story again. I'm your father. And then you talked about earlier.

Speaker 2:

[29:53](#)

Yeah. So when my dad's mom and father immigrated here to, they originally went to Ellis island. They did the oh gee way of, of coming, coming through the, uh, rather than going to Miami at the time because I don't think they had it at the time for, to go through my butt. Went through Ellis

Island in like the 19 thirties, late twenties. And um, they eventually migrated down to Tampa and one of the biggest things that, this was more my dad's mom is that she thought that the best way to get a job in the future is, yeah, you gotta you gotta learn English. Like you can't, you can't just keep speaking Spanish and not understand anybody that speaks English to you. And so my dad's, my dad was like the cut off point where, you know, if he wanted to learn Spanish and wanting to speak it and by all means we'll teach you, but otherwise, you know, you're just gonna learn English. And so after that, I mean my dad couldn't teach it to me and my brother. So we were kind of the cutoff point, which kind of sucks because I wish I would have not been the cutoff point. So I could speak it and pass that down, but yeah, that's, that's the main reason why I'm not able to speak Spanish right now. So,

Speaker 1:                    [31:16](#)                    and how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?

Speaker 2:                    [31:21](#)                    I think it's huge. I think that you, you think about once again with, with white people, they've got their, their slain in English and their slain in Spanish. I mean just in any culture, you know, when I went to Italy and Greece in Greek, I mean people were, were speaking slain and they would be laughing and it'd be like, Oh, you don't understand, it's a slang term. And they would try to say it in English and then I'd finally piece it together and it's an Italian was the same way. Um, so it's just like any culture, you know, I think it's, once again, it's an, it's an inclusion type thing. And in today's society, almost everybody, every country, almost every country can understand English. If it's spoken to them, they may not be able to speak it back, but they'll know what you're saying. Versus, you know, when you speak Spanish here, some people will be like, I don't know what they're saying, like it will sound like just like Charlie Brown where they're just murmuring and you have no idea what they're saying. So I think it, I think it's huge.

- Speaker 1: [32:24](#) And um, how does the university have catered to and will combined 22 and 23 catered to an emit, omit the Latino community?
- Speaker 2: [32:34](#) Yeah, I think that as the community, the best thing that I've seen is they give venues for, for events and that's about it. I'm one of the most striking things is if you ever get spare time, like just spend about two and a half hours at elegant bay or any other Mexican restaurants and just listened to the workers talking to each other and none of the customers now what people are saying, the majority of them, some of them do because they're, they're able to speak Spanish, but most of the people can never. I can never understand what they're saying. So I think that that's the biggest, um, like the question says, you know, um, it, uh, to the community is that there really isn't any integration where you're allowed to, to flourish as a minority here in Oxford that I've noticed versus, you know, really anybody you can be from, you could be a white guy from middle of nowhere, Canada and you could probably fit in just fine here versus, you know, if you're, if you lived in California whole life and you're dominant in your dominant language is Spanish, you come here, it's gonna be hard.
- Speaker 2: [33:50](#) It's probably going to take you at least a year to get integrated with the right, the right niche. So I think that's the biggest struggle that the university has. How do you view rates in the US? The South? Yeah. So in Oxford, I think that it's almost like a rubber band that hasn't snapped yet almost. Um, I think that in the 19 sixties it was obviously snapped when, when James Meredith came onto campus and you know, people, people died literally just for a guy trying to go to a public university. So I think that as of right now, I think it's, it's a little bit of hidden racism in my mind. I think it's the, it's the smile and wave, but then behind they're like, oh, it's that person. So I think that's the problem in Oxford and I think that could, can honestly be the problem in the south.
- Speaker 2: [34:54](#) I think Alabama is definitely a little more blunt about it. I'm not that Mississippi is, and I'm not



trying to knock states by one another, but I think in the south it's, it's very interesting because I have, I have people that I know that are older and they don't see a problem with the confederate flag or they don't see a problem with the statues and they're like, it's piece of history and you know, they only counterargument I give is I'm like, yeah, the, you know, the Nazi flag was part of history, you know, Germany's not out here flying that publicly. So I think that in the south people are just hanging onto stuff they don't need to hang onto. And I, I once again being from Tampa, you know, that may be just my viewpoint versus somebody who's lived in the south their whole life and that's just what they believe.

Speaker 2:

[35:50](#)

But I mean, I've, I've voted for the flag and taken down on campus. I was like, who cares? I'm like, why does it need to be up? It's, I'm not from Mississippi. It's got the confederate symbol on. I'm like, I don't, I don't see the, I don't see why it can't be taken down. Like it's obviously going to offend people, but in the US is very interesting. Um, just because you look at obviously the presidency that's going on right now. Um, it's, it's very, very interesting because it's just, it's just more disappointing because you look at, you know, you go to other countries and there's racism and other countries too. I'm not going to the gate and say other countries are perfect, but it's just very disappointing when you, when you talk about, you know, home of the free home of the brave and, you know, you see, one of the things that struck me, you know, my dad's police officer is the security guard that got killed in Chicago.

Speaker 2:

[36:55](#)

I mean this guy literally pins down the shooter and the police officers end up killing the security officer instead of, you know, saying good job, like a job. And because, you know, I, I purely believe in a, in a city like Chicago is because of his ethnicity. And I think that there's too many turning of, of the heads and I think it's because it makes people uncomfortable. But when you see multiple, multiple black people getting gunned down by police officers or really just anybody at this point, um, the

school shootings, you know, you, it's hard to turn and I, when, when all this stuff is going on and I think that it comes down to parenting in my opinion. I think that, you know, yes, you've got to be like, if it falls on, on who leads us in the presidency, but I think the only way it changes is at the local level is if parents teach their kids like, hey, it doesn't matter if you're, you know, Purple Light Barney the dinosaur or, or any skin color doesn't matter.

Speaker 2: [38:05](#) You know, you just treat people with respect. You'll get respect back. And I think that the race issue here is that there's not respect. There's not that I give you respect and get respect back. It's the, it's the past history of, Oh, you know, I watched a season of Narcos, so the Latino community, it's just a bunch of drug smugglers or I watched 12 years a slave. So, you know, they've endured enough. They're obviously very privileged now in today's society, the black community. So I think that there's too much of, of holding onto legacies and past issues for people on all these levels. Local, south, regional and um, and nationally to, to, to just make a change. And I think that's like, you know, tying back to earlier in the interview, I think it's going to be very interesting with them two and a half to three years to see where this country's going to go, whether we're going to have.

Speaker 2: [39:08](#) Because I don't think I could be totally wrong, I don't think the race issues are going to get any worse. I think it says worse as it could possibly get. Once again, you know, crossing my fingers, you know, probably could get worse, but you know, it's either going to stay as bad or there's going to be improvements. And I think that, you know, people have to look in the mirror and see, you know, how do you treat your neighbor and you know, if you're not even treating your neighbor right then that's obviously one of the first steps you need to make to change. And how do you perceive the Latino population?

Speaker 2: [39:46](#) Yeah. So tying back to my, my home state of Florida is the huge stereotype is that, you know,

people boil will come on rafts from Cuba or wherever. Especially when you know, um, Castro. I almost signed mous, blanked on his name, Fidel Castro and his family were in rural. That was the huge stereotype is um, people are washing up ashore from Cuba and I think that in, in this, in the state of Florida is the stereotypes need to be changed. Have they just work in strawberry fields or they work in any kind of field and that's all they do. I think that, you know, anybody that knows that the Latino community is very, very welcoming and they're, at least from my personal experience that they are built strictly on respect. Like if you give them respect to get respect right back, if you disrespect them, you're going to get disrespect right back.

Speaker 2:

[40:49](#)

So I think that, you know, how their population will affect the idea of race is that once they are acknowledged enough, because you know, I saw, I saw today on, I think it was NBC need the image of, you know, this Latino woman and her children getting tear gassed at the, at the border, you know, those are the kinds of things where it almost, you almost have to show those things in order to wake up. I mean, one of the perfect examples was the holocaust going on in world war two. Literally the white population didn't think it was happening here in America until, you know, we had to have generals go, now you're going to film this. So people can realize like, hey, this happened. Otherwise it will be for a forgotten. I think that with the Latino community is when you see these images, you need to acknowledge what's going on and then you need to. You need to treat them just as, as any other person and in the US that has just as just as many rights as, as they do. So once you, once you treat, you know, respect with respect, I think that's when you'll see change.

Speaker 1:

[41:56](#)

And um, I already asked you about challenges and we'll talk about that again. Are there any other points or topics that you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you?

- Speaker 2: [42:06](#) Um, I mean, not off the top of my head. I just think that, you know, with the Latino community and, and everything that's going on, I think that one of the interesting things for me is that I don't know if it's, I don't want to just call out one party, but I don't know if it's just the Republican party because me, like me personally, I am a Republican, but I am not the Republican Party that is of today. I guess you could say the Republican Party that, that I believed in was more so way back in the day like Abraham Lincoln when Lincoln was first made. Um, those were kind of the morals that I stand on. So I think that the Republican Party is, is
- Speaker 2: [42:59](#) too focused on an agenda in getting votes. And I think that with the left, it's not so much slander, but I think that with reporting the facts, a lot of people don't believe the media because they'll screw up a poll. Like they'll say, oh, this Democrats supposed to win this state. And then when they don't, people are like, oh, how am I supposed to trust this network? You know, you said you were going to win that state. They didn't. And so I think that one of the biggest pressing issues is that people need to believe in, in the media and
- Speaker 2: [43:39](#) it's not just one mediating and don't just watch CNN or don't just watch Fox News. You know, you've gotta you've gotTa, you gotta read multiple outlets on one issue. So if I wanted to read about the, the caravan going on, I'm not just going to read it from the Washington Post. I'm going to read from all outlets. And I think once you gathered the information, you can give yourself the right, the right attitude of, okay, I know what's right from wrong. And obviously with what's going on is wrong. Because I mean that's how I was raised. You clearly would know what's right and wrong with how you're raised, but let's just say political issues, um, like the Mike espy and Cindy Hide Smith election going on right now. You know, I think it's very interesting if you don't gather your information, a lot of people will just be like, yeah, I'm just going to vote for city heitzman just because that's the way state has always voted.

Speaker 2: [44:37](#) But I think it's very interesting too to see there. There's been a pendulum swing of Atlanta. People are starting to wake up in Canada, their own info versus just listening to whatever the president has to say or whatever. Congress, SSA there, they're listening to more outlets and I think that's a positive step, but very a very concerned with the Hispanic community. And I don't want to say more concern than the black community because the black community is struggling much more, but they're at least getting coverage, I guess you would say the only coverage that Latino community is getting is at the border pretty much essentially. So I would say that, you know, there's

Speaker 2: [45:24](#) the way to wrap it up, I guess, is that all minorities need to get pressing issues because if a minority killed a white person, that would be all over the place. Um, perfect example. I'm thinking of the Iowa student. She got killed by a minority and that was all over the news. Like everybody was like illegal immigrant. You see him, you need to get rid of him. And um, but you know, there's, there's probably a white person, I just killed the Latino as I said this sentence and nobody cares. So I think that that's one of the biggest issues from, once again, local level. If you just treat others how you want to be treated, if you're raised the right way, then I think changes can be made

Speaker 1: [46:04](#) right.

Enjoli Henderson

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Okay, here we go. Um, so my name is Brittany Brown. This is just for the record, my name is Brittany Brown and I'm a senior in the honors college and I'm doing my thesis research. I'm in the title of my project is called the Latino South race and racialization and basically I'm just interviewing a lot of students here at the university who identify as Hispanic or Latino and I'm just seeing how um, how these students identify racially and how the increased presence of Latinos is like affecting the idea of race here in the south. Um, and today's date is October 22nd and it is now 2:20. So we'll go

ahead and jump right into the interview. Are you 18 years or older?

Speaker 2: [00:43](#) Yes, I am.

Speaker 1: And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: Enjoli Henderson

Speaker 1: when were you born?

Speaker 2: I was born July 28th, 1998.

Speaker 1: And where are you from and where did you grow up from?

Speaker 2: The coast of Mississippi. I grew up in, in which is on the coast.

Speaker 1: [01:10](#) And were you also born in Pass Christian?

Speaker 2: [01:12](#) Yes.

Speaker 1: Um, what other places have you lived in?

Speaker 2: Just Oxford because of school.

Speaker 1: [01:23](#) What motivated you to come to school here?

Speaker 2: [01:32](#) Um, my sister came here before I did. She was like four years older than me, so I've visited a lot when she lived here and I really liked it. It felt a lot like home when I came up here. So yeah, I really liked it more than any other place in Mississippi.

Speaker 1: [01:50](#) Is Race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?

Speaker 2: [01:54](#) Um, I would say yes because like sometimes people can tell I'm like mixed and sometimes people can't and I feel like when they can tell it, like they see me differently and like they talk to me differently. So yeah, I think it's important. Well, yeah.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:16</a>	In what ways do people see you differently or talk to you differently?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:20</a>	Um, well when they like asked me they'd be like, are you mixed with something? And I'm like, yes. And I tell them and then like they start asking me like a bunch of questions, but like if they think I'm just like black, they're just, you know, just talking to me like normally. Yeah, it's really good.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:36</a>	And how has your experience been here at the university and living in Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:41</a>	Um, it's been cool. Uh, there's a lot more stuff that they do with like Hispanic and Latinos and I think that's pretty cool. Like I never experienced like this much [inaudible] like they have like the whole Hispanic heritage month and that's pretty cool. And yeah, it's just, it is different though because there's not a lot of, you know, not even black people. So being Hispanic is like different appear but it's not like an outcast or anything.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:10</a>	And what is your major and your classification? Notable involvement?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:15</a>	Um, my major is broadcast journalism. I'm a junior and I worked for rebel radio, um, last year and I felt like I did other stuff but I can't remember right now but I definitely did other stuff.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:32</a>	Um, and what are the most important aspects of your life right now? And why the most common
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:37</a>	important definitely school because I'm a junior so it was getting pretty real and getting internships and I just got a dog so my dog is pretty important.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:48</a>	Um, and so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:57</a>	See, that's a good question because I ask like as my sister that all the time, like what's the difference between race and ethnicity and the way I was told, I

		believe my ethnicity is Hispanic and my race is black and Mexican.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:17</a>	Um, and what, um, what are your parents' nationality? Do you identify with your parents' nationality?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:23</a>	My mom. Well, I recently found out my mom is Spanish and Mexican and my dad is African American and I identify as both. When people ask, I'm like I'm half black and half Mexican.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:37</a>	How do you identify racially and why did you identify this way
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:42</a>	racially? Um, I do identify as Hispanic because like, you know, when they asked you online like are you Hispanic or black? They don't really have the option to choose like both. So I just do Hispanic and I do that because I think like, I dunno, like if you are Hispanic, that's just what you are, you know, and I am in like there's like a lot of like black and Hispanic mixed people and they just identify as Hispanic. So yeah, that's why.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:11</a>	And do you prefer the term Hispanic or Latino? What do you use when you're describing yourself?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:16</a>	Oh, I use Hispanic because that's just like what my grandma says and my mom says. But they do use Latino sometime but I just say Hispanic.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:28</a>	Okay. And studies show that a Latino population is growing in the United States. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:40</a>	Hopefully I hope it affects it in a positive way. Like people become more like open to like learning new traditions from Hispanic people because as you said like it's, they're becoming more popular in America and I just hope it doesn't go down hill. It goes like appealing. Like we just learn more. Like I think people should learn Spanish like that. She'd be like a second language to everybody because it's just like, you know, the way of life and people want a



		better life and they come here for that, so we should treat them better.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:17</a>	How do you maintain your Latino culture? Mom? Being a student here.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:21</a>	Oh, I cook Mexican food for my friends all the time. Um, we celebrate Cinco de Mayo. Um, yeah, that's really it. I try to watch like Mexicans shows on Netflix or Spanish shows. I try to like keep myself up today. I called my grandma at the time just to talk to her, but yeah, mostly food.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:41</a>	And um, what are some challenges you face with the university but because of your Latina identity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:48</a>	Um, well some people are still racist out there, but that's really, I haven't really come into contact with many, but it happens in like, I'll hear some people conversations about Mexicans and they won't know I'm Mexican so I just sit quietly and don't tell him that I'm Mexican, but that's the most that's ever happened.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:11</a>	And has anybody ever inquired about your race or ethnicity and how do you respond to these types of questions?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:19</a>	Inquire, like asked me. Um, yeah, they'll ask me and like, they'll assume I'm like Dominican or something because I don't look that Mexican, but I'll tell them and be like, yeah, I'm Mexican. And then they'll ask me, do you speak Spanish? I'm like, no. And then they'll be like, oh, you're not really Mexican. And I'm like, well, I think I'm Mexican, you know, I'm pretty Mexican. So yeah, just tell them, you know, a little bit about me and my family and how they got here.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:48</a>	Is that a, um, a question that you're frequently?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:52</a>	Yes, very frequently.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:55</a>	About how often?

- Speaker 2: [07:56](#) I'm almost every person after I tell them I'm Mexican, they're like, oh, so you speak Spanish? And I'm just like, no I don't.
- Speaker 1: [08:03](#) And what is the, what is the story of your family and how your family ended up in, on the,
- Speaker 2: [08:09](#) um, well, my, on my grandma's side, they, I know they lived in like Oklahoma for a while. So like she's like generations down from when they came to Spain. But she still has family over there that she goes and visits and then my grandpa, his parents came from Mexico. They went from Mexico to California and I guess my grandma moved to California also, like when she was young and they met there and then my grandpa, his job got moved to the coast and so my mom went to the coast and met my dad.
- Speaker 1: [08:47](#) Okay. Um, have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your race?
- Speaker 2: [08:54](#) Yes. People say I'm crazy.
- Speaker 1: [08:57](#) They'll be like, oh, so you're crazy. You're like, yeah, I have an attitude and I'm just like, no. I mean like, you know, Mexicans or Hispanic people, they do have like attitudes but not everyone's like that. And the next question was, do you speak Spanish? You already said that you don't. Why do you not speak Spanish?
- Speaker 2: [09:17](#) My grandma and Grandpa, they had my mom and one of her sisters and they were really young when they had her in. It wasn't a very good like house to raise kids in. So they would talk Spanish and they didn't teach them Spanish because they talk Spanish to each other. So they wouldn't know what they're talking about. So my mom never learned it and so when I was born, um, I didn't learn it either. Yeah. Because my mom didn't know.
- Speaker 1: [09:45](#) Um, and how does the university and how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture? Ugh.

- Speaker 2: [09:54](#) To some people is very important. Like they won't spell thank you. Like you're not Mexican because you don't speak Spanish, but um, yeah. And there's different types of Spanish. Like my grandma, she tells me her experiences with Spanish and like how, you know she's had like trouble and like she's just gone through like things because of speaking Spanish. So it think it's really important.
- Speaker 1: [10:19](#) Yeah, that's important to you. But how does it make you feel that you don't know how to speak Spanish?
- Speaker 2: [10:27](#) It makes me feel like I need to learn. Like I plan on learning. It's just like such a hard language to learn. But I do want to learn so I'll be able to say like, yes, I can speak Spanish.
- Speaker 1: [10:39](#) And how does the university and the community cater to the Latino community here?
- Speaker 2: [10:45](#) I think I do good. They put on a lot of, like things for Hispanics, like they have like, like my Spanish teacher would tell me about like movies, daily show and like groups, they would have just like talking. I never went but I would like to go. But yeah, they do good. A good job. Um, a lot of the Spanish teachers tried to really get us to go to the things and stuff.
- Speaker 1: [11:13](#) How do you feel the university and the community kind of like forgets or omits the Latino community? Um,
- Speaker 2: [11:23](#) I don't know. There's, it's like really southern appearance, you know, so it's like I always think of food with like nationalities or you know, like barbecue was like a big thing here and I just think like they can't have like more, you know, like Mexican or Hispanic stuff, you know, like more authentic food or like just stuff to like include, you know, that race.
- Speaker 1: [11:50](#) And um, how do you view in the US in the south and in Oxford. So going from large to small
- Speaker 2: [11:59](#) basically. How do you view race? Like white? Yeah, like how do you,

Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>12:07</u></a>	I mean just, it's an open ended question like just how do you see race, what is race
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>12:14</u></a>	living in the south races like very important like you know, the whites are like up there like, and then the black people, it's just like, I don't know how to explain it but it's just like white people like to me is like you have to like look not like look out necessarily, but like just be cautious of the white people and then the black people, we just, I feel like we're still like cautious about, you know, where we go and like if there's like a lot of white people like you know, you don't see a lot of black people in that area and yeah, just like that. Like, yeah. Okay.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>12:54</u></a>	And how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the cell?
Speaker 3:	<a href="#"><u>13:02</u></a>	Um,
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>13:04</u></a>	I think the Latino population is very big in this house. So it's like, I feel like it's like whites against blacks and Latinos or minorities against whites, but also black people are like a way, like do certain things that Mexicans or Hispanics don't. So it's like three different things like races against each other and I feel like black people and Hispanics should just come together instead of like being like rude to each other. They. Yeah, that's it.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>13:45</u></a>	Yeah. So you can't really say that you ever faced any challenges or problems because of your identity as a Latino student here?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>13:58</u></a>	No, I don't think so.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>14:00</u></a>	And um, so earlier when we were talking about like what do you consider your race and your ethnicity to be? So, um, you said you always change Hispanic, right? Um, do you consider yourself to be black or African American as well or is it just one or the other for you?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>14:19</u></a>	Um, I consider myself to be black as well. But like in certain situations like I will, like for jobs I'll say I'm Hispanic because I feel like it's important for

them to know that I'm not just black, I am also Hispanic. And then like when they see me, I feel like they'll know like, okay, he's Hispanic, but she might be like black as well.

- Speaker 1: [14:37](#) Why do you feel it's important for them to know that?
- Speaker 2: [14:40](#) Um, obviously like the race, Ej issue in the south, people will do, like discriminate a lot against like black people. So sometimes I try to use like being as an advantage or cause I know a lot of people try to get like multiracial, multicultural in their businesses. So I do say, you know, I'm Hispanic to get some variety.
- Speaker 1: [15:05](#) Um, do you feel like you identify stronger with one group or the other or is it the same for you?
- Speaker 2: [15:14](#) Um, sometimes I do feel like I identify more as black then Hispanic only because like a lot of people can't tell on Hispanic. But then some people say they can. And my mom, she'll like catch me. Like when I'd be like, when I tell somebody, oh, I'm black, she'd be like, you're Mexican because I had you, you're Mexican. I'm like, okay, yeah, I'm mixed. But I do most of the time feel like identify more as black, especially in the south because it's like a big, like blacks, black people, like all my friends are black so it's like I am black, like I'm just light skinned to them. They don't really see me as Hispanic and like it's just hard to like, there's not a lot of like Hispanic things to do out here in Spanish people. So I do consider myself like black most of the time.
- Speaker 1: [16:09](#) Was that something that your mother really instilled in you growing up? Like you have a black father but your mother is Mexican and like you're Mexican too. Was that always an ongoing thing?
- Speaker 2: [16:23](#) Not really. I just kinda like, I really just grew up in like new, you know, my dad's black, my mom, I didn't when I was younger I wasn't sure like what my mom was. I thought she was Asian. I don't know why I thought she was Asian. So yeah, she

didn't really like put it in my head, you know, like he's black year makes a Mexican. It was just like, I am what I am.

Speaker 1: [16:44](#) Do you ever feel like, like you said, like you are what you want, like I am what I am, but was that something that you ever thought about? Like what am I. and before people started asking like, what's your, what you see is, or what your identity.

Speaker 2: [17:02](#) Yes. I would ask my mom a lot. Like when people started to ask me, I was like, I'm not really sure, like I need to ask my mom. So I started talking to my grandma and my mom a lot about like, you know, what we really are and that's how we came to find out. Like we're really like Spanish and Mexican so, and I just found that out later this year. So yeah, it's the older I get the more I want to know more about like what I am. So yeah.

Speaker 1: [17:31](#) Is there anything else that you want to talk about that

Speaker 2: [17:35](#) I think that was pretty much it. Yeah, talking about Spanish. Yeah.

Speaker 1: [17:39](#) Okay. Alright.

Fernanda Diaz

Speaker 2: [00:00:03](#) And so today is November fifth and we are located in Bishop Hall doing an interview for my honors thesis research title of the Latino South Race and racialization. Um, so to start off, are you 18 years or older?

Speaker 1: [00:00:19](#) Yes. Twenty one.

Speaker 2: [00:00:22](#) And um, can you say and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 1: [00:00:26](#) Maria Fernanda Diaz

Speaker 2: Where did you grow up?

Speaker 1: So I'm from Gloster, Mississippi. I wasn't born there, I was born in Mcallen, Texas, but we moved to Mississippi when I was eight months old. So I claim Mississippi. I am from Mississippi. Gloster, Mississippi is like a 900 population. It's very tiny. So I very much was sheltered, grew up not very much community. Um, we did have like one community, it was to our church, so we built a friendship through that. Um, and it wasn't until we started school that we started to kind of socialize more, but my mom, I don't know if like when to stop. I'm really good at like keep talking. Okay, Gotcha. Okay. So because of the, um, kind of socialization, what happened was my mom started a restaurant back in 2001 and I think then I was like five fact check. And so I grew up in the restaurant as a Mexican restaurant. I grew up in that restaurant helping my mom, so it kind of kept us busy so we really didn't have time to socialize outside of. Once we got older, we did dance piano, I did cheer and so like my socializing was in school, but after school I came home and worked with my mom.

Speaker 2: [00:02:47](#) Perfect. I'm going to ask where is Gloster? What is it near?

Speaker 1: [00:02:55](#) Okay. So Gloster is in Amite County. It's the fourth district of Mississippi. I found that out because I voted today. Happy Tuesday. Um, and so it's the fourth district of Mississippi. It's in the corner. It's not the coast, it's inland. Um, if you were to bring in Louisiana, we're about an hour from baton rouge. I'm the southwest. Yes. Southwest. So from Oxford you take 55 down. Um, and then you take highway 24 and it southwest from Jackson for in front of half. Yeah.

Speaker 2: And what other places have you lived in?

Speaker 1: Well, I am. It's always been Gloster. Um, I think if you could say when I first, when we first moved to Gloster, we were in the city limits, but then we started out in a rented house and then it wasn't until I was 13 that my family officially bought a house because the first house they tried to buy got sold to us rotten, um, because of the ignorance because we

were second generation Americans and they kind of saw the opportunity to sell them that rotted house because in theory the house was rebuilt, um, and noted to be 25 years old. But what was 25 years old was the brick that surrounded the 100 year old wooden house. So that got messy real fast. When my mom, they didn't like carpet. So they tried to rip up the carpet and there they discovered the rotted wood in Florida and you can't live in that. And then slowly they took out more pieces of the wood and there was no floor. It was beams on the floor. And I remember that being a lot of my early childhood, just that house because that house, one area was livable. We would have our Christmas there, but besides that we lived in a camper that we had to buy because of this rotted house and they went through the whole court process. My mom she was a very intelligent woman. She went to our town hall and found the house where it was a picture of it a hundred years ago and it can't be 25 years old if it's on a school, like a geo map of 100 years ago.

Speaker 1:

[00:05:30](#)

So when to court won the case with that money, they were able to pay off the lawyers. And um, we started the mall. My mom started the business, I'm rented the house. My Dad got his first job because we were, we were in the camper and my dad wanted to see a boxing match. And my mom was like, okay, well let's see what we can do to get this boxing so it doesn't work this way. But they didn't know. And they asked the cable man. They asked could we get cable for one day to watch this match? And the man said, yeah, why not? So he connected the cable and he asked my family what did they do, what, um, what, what, what did they do? And he offered my dad a job. Um, when we first move to Mississippi, it was because of a job. We were in Mcallen, Texas when I was eight months old at eight months old. My Dad had a first cousin in Mississippi. It was planting trees and so that was my dad's first job and that's why Gloucester, it was our first beginning in the United States and my dad took the opportunity to work with his cousin and um, yeah, that's how we ended up in Gloster. But then the situation in that working environment is not a working environment. It's the exploitation of



workers and it's not livable. My, our family didn't grow because the chemicals for the planning or too strong and the families that we're trying to have families were coming out with missing fingers and just not healthy children. So my mom got scared and didn't want to have more kids after me because my dad started working there. So when we came to Mississippi, the family kind of stopped because in the working conditions they couldn't continue to have more kids.

Speaker 1:                    [00:07:32](#)                    So that affected our family tree? No, she didn't. She, it was just my dad and she worked. Um, she just was at that point I think taking care of my sister and I and because it was my dad's first cousin would stay close to the wife of my dad's first cousin, but just relationship wise and you know how family goes, like one person's good at something. It became to where like my mom's cooking, she opens, she owns a restaurant, her cook is pretty bomb. So this lady discontinued liking her because of this level of, you know, back then like woman cooking mit, like basic household stuff. So there was that competition. So distance. And then my dad quit that job. We tried to buy a house. It was rotted, came back, regroup camper, met this man, gave my dad his first job, which I'm through cable.

Speaker 1:                    [00:08:34](#)                    He's still same cable company and still works there. Have used to be bell cell and then like net sell and I think now it was trust cable and I think now now it's trust cable. So he's been there for like three different names and ages and we're like that. And then so yeah, money wasn't sufficient with the cable jobs and my mom opened the restaurant with the restaurant. We started building income with the income. You're good Mexican food. It's in Gloucester and it's a pretty big hype where we're from all the way to like Jackson because people were always coming in and telling us, hey, we heard about this place and it used to be very traditional chiller and the whole whole Shebang. I remember like having to mix the eggs and make them fluffy and they had to be perfect, but because the culture differences, it wasn't selling because um, they just didn't know what it was.

- Speaker 1: [00:09:38](#) And, and that's okay. Like it's, it's a difference. We were in south Mississippi. I mean, it's all right. And so my mom accommodated to what they wanted and our best sellers get this. Our shrimp and steak and hamburgers. Literally, we've been motivated, the, I'm not motivated but changed the menu to where we have a side that says on the Mexican side, so it's kind of turned into this like cross cultural thing and there's um, oh, so for starters, Mexican loaded fries never in my life when you probably see that in Mexico, it's Cajun fries with steak, cheese, onions and grilled steak. And you can get shrimp on there, you can get crazy. And so, yeah. So like I tell you, it's just been a cultural mix and my mom instead of being stubborn and wanting to keep them anyhow it is, it's been modified and now we have an official on the Mexican side.
- Speaker 1: [00:10:37](#) And so back to the original thing, like age of 13, week finally got her house back in town. And um, yeah. So I don't know where the next question can lead to here. So why Ole Miss? I guess because my mom heard that ole miss was the best school you can send your kids to college and that is why I'm here because it is the best and it has proven to be. So there's a lot of people that they don't like almost, but it's, it's like either you like it or you just didn't fit into it and that's why you don't like it. Like there's no real reason why no one doesn't like Gomez. I think it's more of like the ones that couldn't make it don't like it. And that's okay with me. Like I like it, but that's why I will miss because my mom heard that that's the best school to go to in Mississippi.
- Speaker 1: [00:11:38](#) Honestly, no, not until I got here. Did I realize because my name, you look it up, Maria Fernandez vs. it's 100 percent Hispanic, like there's some culture going on. So like from the minute it's just how I was raised. I was raised first and foremost loved by and a daughter of the king. That's our member. My mom always telling me that. So from the beginning that was instilled the religious side of who I am and my identity. Um, second came like feminine femininity. I don't know how to say it properly. Femininity. I remember one time I, the

bread man that delivers to my mom for the restaurant, he said he delivered the message that I was playing football, um, with like the rest of my class, boy did I get in trouble that day. And so like basically it was just very traditional upbringing from my mom's side of like what a woman should be like and how she should carry herself.

Speaker 1: [00:12:46](#) So then it came in, but what I think I got from my Hispanic heritage, if you will, is the food, the language especially because I would spend summers with my grandmother from the second grade to the fifth grade the whole summer so I could learn Spanish. I learned Spanish first, so it was always there. It was important. It was to be embraced, but it wasn't something to set me apart. And I think that's really important of how my sister and I grew up. It was never something to be of a conflict. It wasn't like because you're Hispanic you have to defend yourself. It was more something where we embraced it. Like that was just who we were and if anything added value to my sister and I as individuals because we had a second language or first language, second being Spanish. I mean English, what we learned.

Speaker 1: [00:13:42](#) But it becomes your first because that's what spoken here. Um, the language. I still go down Jackson Avenue listening to my. I'm like, what'd you call it? It's my favorite. Um, but it was never. I think I will tell you though, uh, the first time I realized that I was different was I private school all my life because the public school wasn't good where we're from, it's just no. And um, my mom to scare it was a scare tactic basically if a public school versus private because I'm, I really don't, I don't, that's a whole nother topic. Maybe it'll come up again, but I'm. So it was like I was, I think five and we went to my friend's house and she asked me, she is um, she goes, why are you brown? And I was just like, I, I didn't answer my best friend. She was like, just like, what are you saying?

Speaker 1: [00:14:47](#) Like just go, go to your room or whatever, but she was like two or three, I think she was three and my friend and I were six years old and she was three.

So I realized then that there was a difference but it wasn't in my own home that the difference was um, presented. It was once you go out and you start seeing how other people see people's differences. So yeah, at the university I, it is 100 percent what you think, like it's your experience is what you make it because just because of how I was raised, I've never seen it as like, because I'm Hispanic, I can't do this or because I'm Hispanic, I can do this. Um, I know I went to a basketball game one time and I met a friend through my Spanish class, but he had Hispanic friend and the Hispanic for him when he saw me, he tried immediately to like start talking about, oh, this and that.

Speaker 1:

[00:15:57](#)

And being Hispanic and like it's so hard and the people. And I'm like, what are you talking about? Like it, I think it's, I think it's just the attitude that you start with, if you have a defensive attitude, you will be met with defense on the other side too. So it's all about how you present yourself and just from my upbringing, I never saw it as like because if, until you look in the mirror are you fully aware of what you're looking at? And I see people through when we get all religious on you, but I see people literally through how we're told to see each other as souls, as children of God. So I don't see you as what your outer is, Icu from how you talk, what you present yourself and I will accommodate to you of how you're speaking to me. I won't be rude, but I'll just continue our conversation. So it's 100 percent how you present yourself to what is happening. So.

Speaker 1:

[00:17:06](#)

Gotcha. So I'm a junior, so my third year risk management insurance, um, double major managerial finance. We'll find out after next semester if I keep that double major. Um, I am treasurer. This is my second year for the core team of CCM. Of the Catholic campus ministry, so at St John's evangelist, our church and then our ministers, a vd Diana Costa, also Hispanic and I'm just noting, just done another. And so I'm on the core team. Second year as treasurer, I'm with rebels for life. My freshman year I was the secretary. Sophomore year I was the um, which vice president this year. I'm the president. I'm in five now. That does not buy

better. It's all these Greek letters are mixed me up, but it's, I'm guessing game of edify. Maybe it's the, um, it's more like a community donation drive one. I'm, I'm an Alpha Kappa Psi, the business fraternity and that focuses on basically preparing us for the professional world. Um, recently I joined gamma iota sigma. It's a, an insurance group, so that's basically setting us up so we can speak with, um, they host lunch. And so that's a big thing that they bring in companies. We talked to them for like future connections. So basically like they set you up with the opportunity to meet people that can hire you later. Like when companies. Yeah. And then I think that's the last one. Yeah, that's it.

Speaker 1:                    [00:18:54](#)                    Important aspects of your life right now to find the most important aspects. Like what do you mean? Like what do I find important right now? Right now you got me at a great time. It's been a rollercoaster ride with my faith life in college. Um, because of all the different things you can get into in college, you really start to know yourself and I'm at a point where I'm trying to decide in the Catholic church or the Catholic religion, they call your vocation and your vocation is basically how in your life are you going to walk and grow with God and in what you're doing? And this happened to me last year. I thought there had to be like an either or either your career or your growth and spiritual life. And it happened again this year because just October we really need a break before Thanksgiving break for whoever's listening and in charge of that we need a break.

Speaker 1:                    [00:20:01](#)                    So I'll tell you, it was rough for me and I was talking to my priest about it and he was saying that that's not how it's supposed to be. Like your career is supposed to be able to let you do what your ultimate call as a human is to love and serve God and it's not an either or like that's the lies that you hear, like your calling should be able to reach that goal too and it's not like you don't have to go. It can be in like small things that you do. It's like just a conversation with someone or hearing them or just being the light and sharing the knowledge that you know and understanding of your relationship with

gun and I think that's huge right now for me is getting the balance of my spiritual vocation and prayer life and meeting that with my career that I hope to get from Ole miss. So it's like falling. Finding the balance and being in peace.

Speaker 2: [00:20:58](#) I'm going to get more into questions about race. So Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?

Speaker 1: [00:21:11](#) You say? It's like when they start trying to divide everything. I'm like, can you define that? So could you give me like, just so I know I'm picking the right thing, can you give me or we could even google it, like what is like race ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [00:21:27](#) Okay. What I'm trying to figure out what to see.

Speaker 1: [00:21:32](#) Could you give me then maybe like how if I were to fill it on and reform, what are my options, race options and then ethnicity,

Speaker 2: [00:21:40](#) would it be like black, white, Asian, and then within the, within the parentheses of white and black, I don't know if you've ever seen this. They'll say non Hispanic, Latino

Speaker 1: [00:21:53](#) ethnicity part.

Speaker 2: [00:21:54](#) No, that's right. And then ethnicity, would it be like, um, basically Hispanic, Latino or Hispanic? Latino and race would be black, white, both nonsensical Latino. Um, Asian. Um, and then other basically. So like I said, there's no right or wrong answer. What I'm really trying to figure out this question is do people consider a separate race? What, what, when, if you're filling out a form and they were like, what is your ethnicity? What do you normally say? Or if somebody asks, what is your ethnicity, what do you normally say?

Speaker 1: [00:22:31](#) I've looked this up because it makes me mad, not mad, but I don't get why they do this because white, non Hispanic, Hispanic, black, Hispanic, non Hispanic, us, Hispanics, we got a great. We're a happy medium. We were not why people love us.

Black people love us because we are in between and. But that's not how it should be. Like I am Hispanic, like it's not an in between, but it's not its own thing either. It's, it's, it's aggravating because it's like, okay, so I'm white, Hispanic, not Hispanic because there's a difference. Apparently I've. This is why I've looked it up and I think it's more aggravating that until the government system quit seeing it as an issue, it's going to continue being an issue as long as there's still these senses as were. And the thing is, if we're going to go into how this started, like when, especially in the United States, in my town, Louisiana, there's a prison called Angola prison.

Speaker 1:

[00:23:45](#)

Angola is a country in Africa. The place was called Angola because of the plantation that this is how wrong it is. The plantation is called Angola plantation because of the area in which they brought out the people from Africa to exploit them and work them as slaves. So therefore we now have the Angola prison. Okay? So when you get into where you take the people from their country to exploit them and use them for your own means to an end is when you're starting to get into the whole human rights. And again, that's a loaded conversation. But until our government discontinues as seeing individuals as this, we're not advancing. Because

Speaker 1:

[00:24:38](#)

if you think about how the United States started, we needed workers. So they got people from Africa, they brought them here. Okay? You're still seeing a individual as a means to an end. What you can get out of them. You're us census bear. I sound ignorant when I try to read US Census Bureau. Um, that is, that's like still. And I know why they do senses and they try to see the demographics and that goes into what we're learning in insurance. Like how much they charged geographically. Like everything affects everything. But because they kept doing that, it's still picking up people in sensitive areas as to what do you identify yourself as? And that's just. I mean, let me read the question again. What is your ethnicity? I mean, I'm Hispanic. My family came from Mexico. My parents are from Guadalajara, Mexico. My Mom's from Finland. My Dad's from

San Miguel. Okay. And I was raised private school. I was, I guess.

Speaker 1: [00:25:49](#) Well my sister and I, we actually talked about this a semester if you want to think about it and I guess I'm being made to think about it right now for the sake of research people respected my family and my sister and I in our town because first we did not let ourselves get advantage because it's small, small place. There's only one real estate agent whom, which we took to court. So that's how you get your name known in a small town. Um, further than that, my family started a business. They were respectable. They didn't get anybody's business as long as you don't mess with our family. We attended private school because we had the means to afford it. Our very first private school, my mom taught Spanish, my mom didn't know that if you taught Spanish, your kids get to go for free to school. They were charging my mom too for my sister and I had to go to school because they didn't let her into that little detail. So still using my mom services? No, no, no. My bad. Recap what it is. You get paid and your children can attend for free. They weren't paying my mom at all teaching Spanish, teaching Spanish. She was teaching high school level Spanish. So basically using her for what she knew. So

Speaker 1: [00:27:22](#) anyway, we left that school and my mom started her own business, made income for our family and the way we held ourselves and the way my mom required my sister and I to hold ourselves is how we got respect in the school that we went to the private school we went to, um, the organizations we went to because we behaved ourselves in that manner. They didn't, we didn't. Okay. Another one we had didn't hang out with the other Hispanic families around, um, but because we weren't allowed to even go out, like I said, we were very sheltered. We were in school church activities, but then we came home and worked. We didn't give people the chance to make an idea of us and what quote Unquote Hispanic people are because we represented ourselves in a respectful manner and my mom raised us that way. Um, so to go into the white,



Hispanic or not Hispanic, if you want to think about it, fine.

- Speaker 1: [00:28:33](#) We went to private school. We associated with white people. We were seen as white people. Someone even told my mom, my mom has a lot lighter skinned than I am. I'm like, uh, oh, this is what maybelline says. I mean, covergirl, covergirl says I'm out. Um, but my mom is more of a wider complexion. When she tans, she gets read, she doesn't Tan. And I always thought that was funny because I don't look like my mom in that way. I look like my dad because he's more darker skinned. Um, whew. Okay. Can feels. But I don't think I'm an emotional person. It wasn't expecting this to happen.
- Speaker 3: [00:29:37](#) Take your time, take your time.
- Speaker 2: [00:29:40](#) Does this does happen with students I'm interviewing. They really realize, you know, it hits you.
- Speaker 1: [00:29:52](#) I guess that's why we have research. So I guess that's my answer. We were kind of made to fit in. Yeah. We were made to fit into what was the usual around because it wasn't until college that I really learned what the day of the dead was like even to embrace like the music. I guess.
- Speaker 2: [00:30:35](#) Is there a reason why we're getting sad now? We're just getting emotional. Wouldn't say Sarah just getting emotional. Just thinking about.
- Speaker 1: [00:30:44](#) Because it's not welcomed. Like it really isn't. It's not because it's not the usual way of doing things because of, I guess what you call the south. But I don't think about it until I think about it like right now. Um, but it's, it's the whole idealization of what you're supposed to be. And I definitely think my family bought into that. Um, and, but that's, that's the thing. The United States was founded by pilgrims and it's wrong to say that there's one certain way and one

- Speaker 1: [00:31:39](#) that one certain way and if not, you're considered outcasts or you're considered your own ethnic group. And I think in college I realized that I was more so sheltered and required, not required, but like in efforts to survive, um, how mean people can be you conform to the norm. And, and I've made Hispanic friends here in college. Um, you know, his, his, uh, Nelsey. I met her in my accounting class. You, Brittany even I met you in Spanish. Um, it wasn't until I came to college that I really made Hispanic friends because I could, because I lived in a dorm, I met an apartment. I don't go home to the usual seeing that home, but also like, that's not my parents fault because the Hispanics that were in Gloucester, it's just not the life. My, it's not Hispanic, it's not, it's not Mexican culture. So my parents didn't want us to relate with that.
- Speaker 1: [00:32:59](#) So in where I'm from, the Hispanic culture is Hispanic and I hate to say it, but it's Hispanic ghetto because they like art. You are a US census, black or white, you choose and that was the culture where I was from, you were black or you acted as the idealization of what white private school is and that's what I came to be and it wasn't until I came to college. And now that you talk about it, do you realize what situation you're in? Um, so, and like that's the thing though, I understand like you get your politicians and you get your government officials and there is a way to act professional, but there's a way to act as a human and respect each other's cultures and differences to come together for the good of each other in that using each other. Based on those differences
- Speaker 2: [00:34:12](#) and um, the business that you talked about that your dad used to work for it, the tree planting company, was that a job or company then? Mostly Hispanic people in foster. Your 400 percent. Is that company still in Gloucester today or are there agriculture jobs that still kind of circulate around? Gloucester is mainly, I guess pushed forward by a Hispanic workforce or.
- Speaker 1: [00:34:39](#) Yes, because what it is, my parents are here legally. We are 100 percent legal, but that's not the same

situation for every family that's in that business. Um, and it's, and you know, here's the horrible thing, the man in charge is Hispanic, so Hispanic people exploiting Hispanic people. So it's, it's the idea that people don't respect people and the what is to be human. And, and like I just said, it's Hispanic man guarding this. My mom had to translate one time a man got bit by a snake and he, what they do is they make a trip, it lasts about a week. They go up to the forest and they're literally camping out and they're not allowed to come back until like a week. And then it's like a week full of work. Come back one day's rest to see your family go back for weeks, day of work.

Speaker 1:

[00:35:40](#)

And this man got bit by a snake. And um, I don't remember if it was a broken, no, it was a broken ankle was broken. It wasn't a snake, it was broken ankle and my mom was asked to translate for him that his ankle was broken the night before when in reality that ankle had been broken for three days and untreated. But because of our situation and the fact that that was the only way we were making income, my mom had to try and she doesn't forget it. She's to this day and talks about it had to translate what they asked. But I was in, I was at the dollar store and I think I was in the seventh grade maybe. And I saw the truck that is for that company. And I remember just like my mom telling me all the stories. And here we go again. Once I started, it's hard to stop. We're going to push through. Okay. I saw the workers come out. I felt so bad because my family was there and it's horrible that people still treat people so inhumanely because their situation. And I was like, I was really young so I couldn't see how my dad, like, it literally stains their skin and blue right

Speaker 1:

[00:37:25](#)

from the chemical that they use and this group of workers came out from the trucks that they were working with or whatever, ticket, like some snacks or something from the dollar store. And I remember I was standing behind the line and the man went to pay and like their skin was literally blew from the chemicals. But. And that's what burns me up when they say that illegals are coming to take jobs. No

people don't take jobs, people are offered jobs because they want basically free labor. Asked my mom who didn't get paid for teaching Spanish because they want cheap labor. These jobs are offered, the ones that their family succeeds and we can get an education and become successful people from other countries. That's not Canada because Canadians are white. So no one ever talks about the Canadians. But because of the caravan from Guatemala, Guatemala, that they're about right now that are even making campaigns for stop the train vote Republican. What the hell is that? I understand. I understand maybe they need to do a judicial review of the anyway, but my point is we don't take jobs. People don't take jobs, people are offered jobs, people are recruited, people are interviewed. There's no such thing as taking jobs. Um, lost my train of thought here. But yeah, no, it's, it's messed up completely out of your parent's nationality. I'm 100 percent Mexican people asked me, what are you Mexican? Um, if asked if. Okay. And that's the thing, like

Speaker 1: [00:39:32](#)

I should know better

Speaker 1: [00:39:34](#)

if asked differences, race, ethnicity, nationality. It's just like, I don't care. Like if someone asked me, I'm Hispanic, my family's from Mexico. I don't say I say it how it is because that's what we are. And so like, it's kind of aggravating to me that I don't know the difference. Like nationality, what do you mean the country, if people asked me where you're from and we get that a lot. I'm like, where are you from? Gloucester? No, no, no, where are you from? And I'm like, okay, my, my parents are from Mexico, but I was born and raised here. Where are you from? Where did, where did y'all learn? Because as far as I know the Indians were here first. We all came and settled, but you can't. That's where you, you answered ignorance, people with peace and you, you understand what they are asking you, so you choose to not answer in a mean way and I just told them my family is from Mexico, but yeah, so I, I wouldn't asked. I know what they mean and sometimes I make a joke about it now I'm like, you want to know like where I'm from or we want to

		<p>know where I'm really from, so I try to approach it with humor and a piece of heart that sometimes they're just ignorant and then you can't fix stupid sometimes and I've honestly, unless I'm filling out something I haven't been asked, it's more of like, where are you from</p>
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:41:20</a>	racially?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:41:25</a>	<p>I mean I am what I am. I'm not white. I'm not black. I'm Mexican. I'm the culture. I'm my parent's perseverance to make it in the United States. Like I'm not white, I'm not black. I am Mexican and the culture and love and food that comes from that. I'm not gonna sit here and say I'm white, Hispanic, like, get off, like, no, I say I'm a Latina and if you want to go into that, I think we're going to answer. No, I don't have any black descendants. They're all Mexican or my mom's side actually did a, I'm one of those ancestry and it was like Spaniard because that's where the wider completion comes from. Um, it's like the Spaniard side and my dad, they're all brown. They're all from Mexico. I don't know. Um, but as far as I know, there's no like, afro black mix, but I just, I've never said that out loud. That's the first time I've ever said that out loud, but because I don't know, our family just chose not to really look into it. So yeah.</p>
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:42:48</a>	Is there a reason why you prefer the term Latino?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:42:51</a>	<p>Um, because instead of sate Hispanic, I can give you my Spanish Latina and then that's another conversation. Oh, you speak Spanish. I'm Latina to me seems more powerful than Hispanic.</p>
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">00:43:10</a>	Um,
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:43:12</a>	<p>that's. I like, I just, I feel like there's a power to say Latina versus Hispanic because it's acknowledging that I am a woman, my descendants are from Mexico and I have that extra oomph to my person. So.</p>
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:43:30</a>	<p>And um, so studies show that the population is growing in the United States. How do you think this</p>

will affect the way race and race relations are viewed in the country?

- Speaker 1: [00:43:39](#) We're going to get better food and pretty brown babies. I had a friend come up to me at the circle. Um, she said, oh, guess what? I have a boyfriend now. And I'm like, oh, really? And she had, she said, he's Hispanic. I said, of course we're the most lovable, awesome variety there is. Of course he's Hispanic. I said, just don't tell me his name is one, just give me a little more variety. Um, I think it's a beautiful thing that there's an expansion of culture because the south has, you know, southern comfort food. But if you take in the culture of dance, the music, the soul, I know we have blues, Mississippi, God love it, but mean if you bring in the culture, the peer culture, that's where you get a love of what a culture is when people aren't trying to be what they're not when you don't have, because white people, you have quote unquote trashy white people, you have Class II white people, there's all kinds of people in every culture and it just depends on what you choose to embrace, I think.
- Speaker 1: [00:45:02](#) And with these, with the expansion of the Hispanic culture coming slash, if it's even coming up, it just depends on how people choose to see it and what light they want to see the university. Um, Spanish classes I made sure I got into Spanish courses, um, because I wanted to incorporate Spanish speaking into my week because I don't get to even my sister and I, we don't speak Spanish together because it's not strong. So we, it's almost like a discomfort because we don't know how to pronounce it that well and that sad. Um, so yeah, I incorporate Spanish classes, um, those that do know Spanish, I'll talk to them in Spanish sometimes. Um, what number were we on? Second read through it again? 17, 16, 17. Okay. Um, last. So Latin party. I'm just go into events that the Spanish groups host and funny. Hi.
- Speaker 1: [00:46:24](#) Didn't want to join the last oh, group because that's where I think we go wrong when you try to set yourselves apart and make groups. So I myself just didn't want to do that. I attended events but I didn't

want to. I try to go to Guffey. Um, but I think I just kept walking. I thought I grew up. I think I just kept walking and that's like I said, freshman, sophomore year I was still living in the idea of private school and I didn't want to set myself apart by joining a group like that. Um, because when you form groups is when you have the opportunity to start seeing differences and I guess I was still blind to it. Um, so keeping in the culture, Spanish classes, learning a lot. They have a great faculty and staff that teach us about the Latin American culture and I've learned so much through taking Spanish classes. So I think that's a main way how I've incorporated my culture as a student classes. And um, what were some challenges you face as a university in and aspire as a Latina? Um, challenges?

Speaker 1:

[00:47:49](#)

I think maybe the biggest challenge are individuals that are close minded. Um, that's always been a challenge. Close mindedness. I think that's, that's it because because of how I think about who I am, I don't really face too many challenges because I don't come at it defensively. I'm more open ended to what people present, but I've had, especially my freshman year, just people that I knew to not try to talk to them because they didn't want to speak to me because of how I looked or the color of my skin. So if anything, just individuals but you're gonna have that everywhere. We just have the opportunity to meet a lot of individuals are age in college, so it is harder because I'm just, you can tell like whenever people just don't, like the discrimination is almost very evident but funny now that we're getting older, all of our people from church, all of our friends have found someone Hispanic and my sister and I were the only Hispanic people at our church, the only two girls and they tried to date us before, but we were always like school first.

Speaker 1:

[00:49:07](#)

We're not dating yet and I think it's funny how like all the teams have ran half Hispanic girlfriends slash fiances now. Um, so it's like, I think my sister and I were definitely like a breakthrough in because we were successful in our schools. My sister was Valedictorian. I was seven out of 29. But because I don't know, I liked to have fun. I like to be social

and school was first, but I definitely didn't stress out as much as my sister did. But I got like prom queen. I was class president. I'm class favorites a lot I'll most likely to succeed. Voted, I was voted here, we got a new headmaster my senior year and they called and asked if one person could get so many awards and um, my Spanish teacher slash year book later I was in your book, told him that if my name slash the person's name was on the award, they were to receive the award to not try and take away what they were rightfully voted for.

- Speaker 1: [00:50:26](#) And the next day I realized that that person was me and I got awarded hall of fame even for my high school. And yeah, it was because all the upbringings of how my mom and dad raised us to be respected, respect people because you want to be respected and a lot of people don't learn that in college you see how many people don't learn that and you're just faced with each individual that you come across. But that's where you choose how you manage the conversation because you can easily just walk away and say, I'm not participating in this [inaudible]. You don't have to be anywhere. You don't want to be. So, um, yeah,
- Speaker 2: [00:51:16](#) your race or your ethnicity and your identity. If so, how do you typically respond to these questions?
- Speaker 1: [00:51:22](#) Um, like I mentioned earlier now with the sense of humor for a little while, I think my sophomore year I'm aggravated, but then I kind of like found the positive. People are curious because I'm different. They want to know where I'm from. They want to know because people tell me that I don't look Mexican. When you first met me, did you think I look Mexican?
- Speaker 2: [00:51:47](#) I can't say that she looked Mexican because you can't look at somebody and know what their nationality is that you were Latina. I could just say, oh, because I am like, he or she is Hispanic or Latino or whatever. Like I can't look at you and say she's Mexican. You couldn't be from growing up.



- Speaker 1: [00:52:05](#) All right. So you knew something was going on. Yeah, I lot of times though I get that I look like I'm from the Philippines so I'm just like, no, Mexico. Um, so yeah, it's definitely, if it sparks curiosity in people because of where we are geographically because there's not that many Hispanics. So how I see it, people want to know people are curious and that's your, that's your time, that's your highlight moment to be the light, be the quote unquote good Hispanic of what you want. Each individual represents their culture and I choose to represent mine with dignity, respect, and I tried, I need to be more knowledgeable slash am learning how to correctly answer these questions. Um, so I answer them to the best of my ability first with humor, like give me a guess or do you think I'm from? So I asked them first, where do you think? And I let them kind of. So I kind of make a game out of it, like you tell me first and then I go into like the details of where I'm from and our story and how we're here. So with humor, lightheartedness, and a piece of heart that I am a daughter of a king,
- Speaker 2: [00:53:30](#) she mentioned that some people think you're from the Philippines because the Philippines was colonized by Spain. So the standards were there, there were native people there. So we kind of, there's a connection. So a lot of people, I've heard people have Filipinos like the Hispanics of Asia, they were like rolling by saying for theory long time. So there's some Spanish influence in their culture and the way they look. So. And have you ever experienced any assumptions or stereotypes or anything like that because of your race?
- Speaker 1: [00:54:08](#) Oh, for sure. You see people and it's like that first five second judgment. Well, I have gotten many first five second judgment because I'm 14. I'm a very petite Hispanic Latina walking around here in big city of Oxford. Um, and until you say yes ma'am. Yes sir. Thank you. All. Have your polite inquiries do then they see you in another light. Literally I have so many times seeing after I speak, then do their faces soft and then do they invite in conversation, but until their prejudices and judgments go away, are they open to experience a

conversation with Maddie for men? So yeah, for sure. Assumptions every day. I'm just just being what I am. But like a day you, I sometimes forget until I looked down at my hands and I'm like, oh, I got a new tan line here. And Oh my favorite is when I see a super, super tanned girl with blonde blonde hair.

Speaker 1: [00:55:25](#) I'm like, whew, thank goodness I don't need to get a spray tan. Like they want. People want the tanned skin. They want the long eyelashes, the bold brows that you and I both rock, they want the bold lips, thej Lo booty, the, they want everything that we are without being what we are. And you can't have that. Sorry. So yeah. And with these features of like eyebrows or like whatever, like then it's like, oh, I wish I had your brows or something. But yeah, assumptions until a conversation that started and you meeting of minds is what a conversation is. Then do you get the respect that you give?

Speaker 2: [00:56:15](#) Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:56:17](#) Si. Seniorita. I learned at home for Spanish. And then, um, after learning Spanish I think I don't, I can't give you an exact day or year, but I learned Spanish and then my mom invested in a phonics program. Um, and she basically hired a babysitter. She was our babysitter because my mom started the business. Okay. So I was five. I started the business. I was five. My mom needed a babysitter for us. She found a great student that she was teaching at the school and she gave my, um, my mom gave her a job and she taught us phonics so that we wouldn't have an accent like Sophia but Ghana. And I really wish I did sometimes I even one time youtube, how to have a Spanish accent. It was an epic fail. I, it didn't stick and I at one time had a country accent while I lived in Gloucester, Mississippi.

Speaker 1: [00:57:22](#) But because I'm not around the country, folk have econ nation, my country accent has gone away. I have this, I don't think I have one anymore, but because I'm in, I'm able to enunciate my words, how I read them and how I learned through this phonics program when I was younger. So I have lost my

		country accent because I'm not around it. I'm also, like I said earlier, I spent my summers with my grandmother, um, the whole summer and basically learn Spanish or don't speak because no one knew English and I remember we would come back and my sister and I would be speaking Spanish. Oh my gosh, we don't remember a Spanish. I mean, we don't remember English. Um, yeah, yeah, that's it.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:58:10</a>	That's how I learned Spanish and English to Spanish. Your first language. Yeah. Yeah. And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:58:22</a>	So in my life and myself
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:58:23</a>	speaking for the Latino culture, what have I seen her have you seen feel personally? Not necessarily speaking for it gets
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:58:35</a>	very important. If you add, that's an asset to a person. You even get paid more if you're bilingual. It's something that should not be hidden. If your parents have the ability to speak Spanish, it is a shame the students that I have met that come from a Hispanic or Latino background and they don't speak Spanish. I actually met a Colombian this summer and he was very enthusiastic about the fact that I spoke Spanish and he went on and on about his mom spoke Spanish and we talked one time and his dad actually, um, left for business and when he came back, the daughter was speaking Spanish. The Dad was infuriated that the daughter learned Spanish because he couldn't communicate with his daughter and he for for fade, for forbid forbidded for, for boat, I think it's for bone. He for bug the mother to teach the youngest son Spanish.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:59:41</a>	So the youngest son does not know Spanish, the daughter and the mother do and they weren't allowed to learn Spanish. But here's the sad thing, when they go to go visit Colombia, the son cannot speak with his family and it is a huge disadvantage that if you know a language, you do not embrace it because it's a difference. We thrive in differences and I think people are more scared of differences

than they are accepting, but it's no one freaks out if someone's speaking French at the store. Everyone starts turning heads. If you're speaking Arabic, if you're speaking in Spanish, oh, they're talking about me. Um, people are more scared of what they don't know. Then embracing the differences and it starts with families. If that's important. If you're from another culture and you don't speak about these differences, especially how you're going to raise your kids, that's where problems start with families because with families, you raised the kids, the kids turn into adults, the adults go into the world.

Speaker 1:

[01:00:50](#)

You don't start from where it begins. We're not going to fix anything. So I think it's important to speak Spanish if you have it or whatever language you speak. Learning University population, first of all, they let you run out the lyric and have the last. So biggest event, um, they allow you to do within reason. Your party. I'm the university allows groups. The university permits Gfi. The slowness to meet the university has no restrictions. As long as you meet policy, it's open, it is open and caters to whatever you want to do here. And there is no. No because of your ethnicity race. There's not one unless you make a no, because of the way in which you approach the individuals that you're seeking permission for. If they see that this is disruptive, it's not for the good. You don't have a good light for what you're trying to do.

Speaker 1:

[01:02:05](#)

Again, you're going to be denied. But as long as it's like to build community, it's how does the university and community cater. It's a community. How are you presenting your culture? What do you want from your community to serve you? And I think it does a pretty good job. And then how do you feel the university and the community omit the Latino population? Um, I didn't do recruitment, but I can probably guarantee you there's a lot that goes in that in the Sorority, fraternity life of Ole Miss. I am a bystander to that because I did not brush in anything. Um, I think that's where you start making your divisions with the idealized image that you want your group to portray. So if said individual doesn't meet the criteria that the group wants, that's

when you get your chances to be omitted from a group because there's criteria, there's qualifications in this idea of what you want and that even goes into. But I've heard so much stuff. I just fit. I've heard so much stuff from like sororities, like not letting a girl in because her instagram isn't. What's the word? It's um, when you make your instagram a certain theme, it's whatever. If you're instagram isn't good enough, you're not pretty enough. You don't look this way. Your family doesn't make this much income. You get admitted when you start making

Speaker 1:

[01:03:56](#)

how, how can I phrase my thought? You start getting omitted whenever you start looking to fit in to the group that is formed. Once you try to start making your way into a group where you don't belong because they see an idea of what they want their group. That's when you get admitted, and I'm sorry, but there are differences. There are people that form groups compared to what they want to socialize with and that's where you get these fraternities and Greek associations because they want to socialize with a certain status of money, look and that just money look and where you come from. So they make groups and that's where they cast you out. How do you view race in the US, the south and here in Oxford in the US as a country as a whole, depends on our leaders right now. Um, we have a lot of prejudices that will only grow if it doesn't stop. I, I see it heading south. I'm fast just because of the campaigns that I've seen the campaigns. Uh, I, you know, what I would've liked. I liked to say I'm Republican because it's a conservative viewpoint in religious standards, but I can't tell you I voted for trump because

Speaker 1:

[01:05:35](#)

I had to sit in economics class 2015 my junior year of high school with the teacher that didn't teach us but showed us campaigns of Donald Trump of make America great again. Build a wall and keep illegals out to where my professor, my teacher told me that illegals come here to scrub toilets and in which I said, my family is a family of immigrants. I did not appreciate you saying that we come here to scrub toilets because never in my life has my family or me scrub the toilet. And that was a huge issue because

as a junior in high school, having to stand up for what my family came here for terrible. Um, 2015 only got worse because said person got elected. Now we have campaigns have stopped the caravan. But I mean like, come on, um, race in the south. That just goes back to my initial response. It depends how you represent yourself, what you want to be seen as the respect you give. And in Oxford I've only been treated fairly. I can say in, um, Oxford, I pay with the same green money. I welcome when I come in, I say thank you. When I leave very respectable because I come, I worked with the public so I know what it is to deal with the public. Working with the public, with my mom's restaurant, very experienced in the public. Um, so Oxford as a community, I don't see an issue the US, it needs some help right now.

- Speaker 2:            [01:07:25](#)            Number 26 because I already asked that question. I just have not gotten an edited my question earlier. What are some challenges you face? But um, are there any other points or topics that you discuss that I didn't ask you?
- Speaker 1:            [01:07:38](#)            Um, I guess it's more like inner reflection points of whenever I decide to if I am made for them family life. If I decide to like what from here, if I decide to make a family,
- Speaker 1:            [01:08:01](#)            am I going to be more embrative with my own culture? Because besides food and the language and music, I was not immersed in my own Mexican culture. So it's just kind like me as an adult, where am I going to choose to enlighten the kids that will one day become adults and what am I going to bring to this country? So I think that's just more of a self reflection. I think we can all ask ourselves that. What's the, what's the tomorrow? Are we all building? So I think that covers it. Okay. What I think about is most sad is like my coming, that the reason why we're all here is because we were all seeking something that our country wasn't able to give us. My family came here because the government in Mexico, you can't make a living, so they came here for a living.

Speaker 1: [01:09:00](#) They're very first program in this game for religious freedom. If we all asked everyone, why are you here? I think everyone should be able to answer why their family and where do they start because there is such thing as white privilege because along the line they forgot what brought them here, what their family brought them here for. And we can all go back and trace back. Use Ancestry.com if you want to, but we can all trace back. We did not all start here in the United States and we all need to come together and build a better United States and that is all.

Gabriela Altieri

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) I'm recording. So today is November 28th. Uh, we are located in the student media center. And Bishop Hall, I'm interviewing Gaby Altieri for the purpose of my honors thesis title, the Latino Style, race and racialization. Alright, so we'll jump right in. Are you 18 years old or older?

Speaker 2: 21 years old.

Speaker 1: And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:23](#) Gabrielle Altieri

Speaker 1: When were you born?

Speaker 2: March eight, 1997.

Speaker 1: And uh, where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2: Okay, so I was born in Memphis, Tennessee. Uh, because my parents lived in Hernando, Mississippi. I was born three months early, one pound, 11 ounces. Um, so I lived three months of my life in the hospital in Memphis, but then I lived for the next three years in Hernandez and then my dad's job got moved to brand or like the Jackson area. So we live in brandon now. And um,

- Speaker 1: [01:07](#) have you lived in any other places beside, besides Fernando and now I'm a Mississippi girl. What brought you from Brandon to us for?
- Speaker 2: [01:17](#) Well obviously school almost was the only place I looked at to go to school. Um, so yeah, I visited, I toured here my junior year and I fell in love like once you come and take a tour here and you're going to come here. That's. Yeah. So,
- Speaker 1: [01:31](#) and is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
- Speaker 2: [01:38](#) I guess I would say more ethnicity and less race. Um, just because like growing up, like going through like history class and stuff like you learned about like, like the American ideals of race. Um, so like white versus black and I didn't fit in any of those. Um, so I was really confused, like in the first grade I asked my teacher, I was like, I don't like where do I fit in? And she was like, well, your people weren't here yet. No, it's like, okay. But I just didn't know what to do. Um, so more ethnicity, like more of my white cultural background. Being Puerto Rican, um, is more of a like every day important thing in my life. I should probably stop clicking this button, um, and less of like race because race is subjective basically wherever you go. Because like in Puerto Rico I'm considered white, but here I'm not considered why? So yeah. Interesting.
- Speaker 1: [02:38](#) Can you talk about maybe some personal experiences you've had with like being here in the states, you're considered white, but back on the island you're, I mean, I'm sorry, not considered white and on the island you're considered, have you had any personal, I guess encounters or experiences with that?
- Speaker 2: [02:54](#) So basically I was very confused when I was in like elementary, um, because like you fill these forms out, like for the Mtt, which is like Mississippi curriculum test or something, it's like the act, but for like elementary school, I don't know, you fill out these forms and it's like your race and it had white,



black, other. So I was like, okay, I guess I'm other. And then my, I would come home and my parents were like, no, you're not other, you're white. And I'm like, no, I'm not. I'm not white. Like I'm not like my best friend Joe. Like I'm not her. And so then we had to like go through this whole thing and basically like I had to like learn I guess like what I was um, because I always just saw myself as Puerto Rican. Obviously that was an option on the paper.

Speaker 2:

[03:36](#)

Um, so yeah, I think that is kind of difficult. And then also just like, um, like in Puerto Rico it's like, it's kind of just like a melting pot. And so because of the history of Puerto Rico, so like slavery happened in Puerto Rico hundreds of years before slavery even happened in the United States. And so by the time slavery was happening in the United States, everyone in Puerto Rico's already mixing and so everyone is just kind of like a whole bunch of just stuff. So like in Puerto Rico we consider ourselves white, African and indigenous and we don't really like, like now there's like ancestry.com and you can like see like I'm 25 percent Irish and whatever like that. It's not a thing in Puerto Rico, like everyone is Puerto Rican, you're white, black and indigenous. And that's just how it is. And like I'm considered why because I'm like fairer, but like my cousin who's like a few shades darker than me, it's like considered three Ganja, which is like mixed I guess.

Speaker 2:

[04:44](#)

And then I also have cousins that are like black, so, but here they're not considered black. Well because they've come and visited me and people are like, like some of my black friends are like, oh yeah, no, they're not black. And I'm like, they're the same skin color as you like, yes, they're black. And they're like, no, because in their mind black means African American. But in Puerto Rico black is like your skin and not necessarily like your culture because we all have the same culture and hear the phrases have different cultures. Like black food is way different than white food. And like black music is everything. Why Music? But in Puerto Rico it's like you all have the same culture, that same food, the same like religion, like education, history,

you're just different shades. So I. But I think that's difficult with like any place where there's a lot of people coming from different places because like in the United States we have literally people from everywhere. So it's hard to like mix like that. I don't know now, what is the term that is used in Puerto Rico to identify someone who is mixed or would you say about it? Yeah. Um, or they didn't say like, um, like Mestizo is like more of a South American, but yeah, I'm Puerto Rican. Yeah. Yeah. And um, how long have you,

Speaker 3: [06:10](#) your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?

Speaker 2: [06:13](#) Um, it's been really cool. I like, and Brandon, I'm one of like very little amount of Latinos in my hometown at all. Um, and here there's a lot more Latinos here. Um, so I really liked that. And also like in my home, I'm Catholic, so my hometown, we don't even have Catholic church in my hometown, so we have to drive 20 minutes to go to church and hear this Catholic church right by the school. That's really nice. Um, I don't know. I love will miss. I would live in Oxford forever if I could. So yeah, I love it here. And what is your major classification and some involvement? Yeah. Um, okay. So I'm a political science major with a double minor in Spanish and journalism. I'm a senior. Oh Gosh, I cannot, I do not want to graduate. It's fine. Um, my involvement, um, I'm a member of Alpha Omicron Pi Sorority. I was their vp of chapter development. Um, I'm also on ASB. Yeah. What's your position in? I'm on the board for Cross cultural engagement and inclusion. Cool. And um, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why? Oh Gosh. Um, I guess. Oh Gosh, I don't know. Um,

Speaker 2: [07:38](#) I don't know, I guess, uh, well right now I'm really like Thai, struggling to balance like going to school and applying to law school. Um, so that's, I guess an important aspect of my life. I don't know. I guess, I don't know. What do you mean by that? Like what's most important to you right now? What's most important to me right now? Getting into law school,

that is the most important thing to me right now. I mean obviously like health and whatever family, you know, that stuff's important. But yeah, my goal right now is to get into law school and I'm not more

Speaker 1: [08:11](#) a few questions about your identity. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity. It's two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [08:19](#) Uh, so I'm Latina or a Puerto Rican or now they use lots. Um, so yeah.

Speaker 1: And what is your parents' nationality do you identify with your nationality?

Speaker 2: So my parents, this is kind of weird, just Puerto Rico is owned by the United States. Um, so technically their nationality is American, but I think they would more identify as being Puerto Rican. Um, and yeah, I do identify like if someone asked me like what are you? But also I hate that, but someone does ask me what I am versus I am human and then I say I'm Puerto Rican. I'm. So, yeah, I definitely do identify with their nationality.

Speaker 1: [08:59](#) And um, how do you identify racially and why?

Speaker 2: [09:03](#) Um, so I guess racially I'm white but I don't really identify with like the white American culture. Um, so I normally just say like I'm Puerto Rican and that just kinda like sums it all up. Um, because yeah, I don't really identify as like, like my family hasn't been here for years and like I don't know, like I don't have this strong history and Mississippi or in the United States. So I guess that's why I don't identify as white because. Yeah. But technically on paper I am white. So

Speaker 1: [09:42](#) um, you know, there was some type of demographic form put in front of you. You have to pick one. But like the options were the typical options you'd like white, black, Hispanic Slash Latino, Asian, native American, you know, what would you typically be?

Speaker 2: [10:03](#) I would normally pick if they were all in a group like that I would pick a Latino or Hispanic. Um, but

now I know like on a lot of the forums it's like white, non Latino and then white by itself. And then there's another column that says what's your ethnicity? And that's when you can put Latinos. So that instance I would put white and then Latino. Yeah.

- Speaker 1: [10:24](#) But you feel that you're strong more strongly identify with Being Latina? What?
- Speaker 2: [10:30](#) Yes. Just, yeah, I guess based on like America's history, I don't know. Yeah, I don't identify with like the white, like experience, but also a lot of times I do get mistaken as being just like normally white because also I'm from Mississippi. I was born and raised here and I have like a little bit of a southern accent. Some people would say, some people say I don't tell, who knows, um, but I do identify with being southern also. Um, so that's kind of like a, like a jumbled, I don't know, math, I don't know. Um, because like obviously I'm not black and I'd also don't look indigenous. Um, even though I do have indigenous people in my family, I don't look like, like I like Indian, like a lot of South American people look Indian. I didn't look like that. So I do get like mistaken as being, um, like white American I guess. Um, but I guess it's different in whatever circle I'm in because like if I'm in a circle of like, like here, don't miss like my sorority sisters, I'm not like the Alexa, I'm Latino there, but in like a group, like we have a lot families that we're friends with and like the Jackson area and we're all from different Latin American countries. Then that aspect, how it'd be white. So I guess it just depends on the group of people I'm with.
- Speaker 3: [12:07](#) Yeah. Like your experience I guess with like your race fluctuating simply by what group you're in, do you think that plays into the idea that race itself is a social construct? Like race isn't really real? I totally agree. Yeah.
- Speaker 2: [12:23](#) Yeah. Racist literally made up in my opinion. Um, because I think more people identify with the way they were raised, like their culture. Um, whereas like their race, like it's just something that, it's like a

phenotype. It's just genetics because I identify as being Puerto Rican, not because of my blood is Puerto Rican, but because I was raised in a Puerto Rican household. Um, whereas like I know one of the families I babysit for and my mom's are friends with their, it's a Colombian woman and her husband is white from Philadelphia, Mississippi and their kids identify as Columbia and they are not just Colombian Colombian Pan American, but they identify as Colombian because of the way their mom has raised them and they speak Spanish and so I think it more determines based on your culture. But yeah, I think it is like race is just because like what are you going to do?

Speaker 2:

[13:28](#)

Like go up to someone and be like, no, you're not tan enough so you're not Latina. Like my mom is really pale and blonde and she's 100 percent Puerto Rican. And so I think that's also like kind of the like ignorance I guess of the American culture is that it has to do with like a lot of media and representation because like in media, like do you think of a Latino, you think of like Sofia Vergara and Jennifer Lopez. And then if for a guy you think of like George Lopez and like not every Latino looks like that at all. So trying to break through that and show people that I guess is important and it shows that like your ethnicity is most socially, being Latina is way more important than your actual race and you identify as Hispanic or Latino. I do Latina. Um, just because, um, in my, like, I don't know, I've always just been Latina and also from this is from my parents. Hispanic was a word that was created by the US government, um, to mean Spanish speaking and it doesn't really encompass our whole culture and also like technically Hispanic means Spanish speaking. So that means people from Brazil or not Hispanic or Latino. So having to like, I guess. Yeah. But yeah, Latino.

Speaker 1:

[15:00](#)

So a study showed that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?

- Speaker 2: [15:09](#) I think it definitely will affect it immensely. Um, because while that's a really good question. Okay. So, um, are like as Latinos, our demographic, it's very strange to the US political system. I like wrote a paper on this earlier, so I'm like going crazy now. Um, we are like generally very like religious being Catholic, conservative, um, but then we normally end up voting Democrat, um, because of the history of the two parties and like the way the immigration system is working on right now, Republicans aren't really a working forest there. So, uh, yeah, so I think that will change the whole way politics in this country will work because a lot of Cubans are republican because of, um, like Ronald Reagan helped. Oh, like liberate Cuba. And then also JFK did the Bay of Pigs and that ended horribly for Cubans, so they don't really trust the Democratic Party.
- Speaker 2: [16:24](#) Um, so yes, but back to race relations, I just got on politics. That's fine. Um, I think historically like where Latinos ended up going as an major majority like black neighborhoods, um, and so a lot of people are mixed like Latino and black. Um, and I feel like that will change, that has changed the race relations in the US and it will continue to keep changing the race relations. Um, because Latinas, most Latino at all attentive people in our countries, we tend to mix more than in the United States and so we don't really like when you like to like date someone or marry someone. It's not like, oh, he's black or he's white just like he's a cool guy. And so like breaking down this racial barriers and then obviously you have kids who are products of the interracial or inter ethnic marriage or relationship and so those kids will be mixing, their kids will be next and the would like to just like fall completely.
- Speaker 2: [17:31](#) Um, I also think it will change like the culture of the United States, um, being that like all, like even with music and stuff you hear like a lot of artists are like collaborating with Spanish artist and like we're very tight knit market to like advertise to like create things for. Because we consume a lot of media. Like we're the number one people that go to the movies in case you didn't know. Um, and so I think

the whole like identity of racism in this country, it's going to start changing with more Latinos coming. Yes, and how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student? Um, I guess, well it's like my everyday life. I don't really like think about maintaining it just because it's like I've had to do it my whole life. I'm like in my hometown there's no Latino. So having to like continually continuously like remind yourself like, like you are awesome and you were Latina, like you can kill it.

Speaker 2:

[18:41](#)

And also just like not being afraid to talk about it. Like I talk about Puerto Rico to everyone. Um, even if they get an order with me I don't care because it's like something important in my life and the people that I'm really close with here and like really good friends with, they like hearing about it because they know that it's like something really important to me. So yeah. But I guess just like I called my parents a lot and that's like our, like Latino culture's a lot different than American culture in the sense where we're very close with our families. Um, and so a lot of my friends, like they don't call their parents for like weeks and over here calling my mom like six times a day. Um, and that's not weird to me at all because that's just how I was raised. Um, and like my parents come in for everything, like if I have like pneumonia, my mom's, she's here.

Speaker 2:

[19:33](#)

Um, so I guess just like keeping close contact with my family. Um, and then my aunt, she only lives 45 minutes away, my mom's sister and Hernandez. So I go see her a lot too, I guess. Yeah. And um, what are some challenges you face as a university? As a Latino? Um, I just think lack of representation on our campus for, sorry, my eyes itching, um, for Latinos as a whole is something that I have seen and that's kind of why I joined the ISP board for inclusion and cross cultural engagement. Um, because a lot of where like one of, I think we are the smallest minority demographic on this campus and so it is hard to find people to go out for like orientation leader or like columns and stuff like that. Um, and so and also we don't have like a strong alumni networks like the black alumni network.

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">20:30</a>	<p>They have a very strong alumni, um, and we don't really have as many, um, like Latino alumni and also a lot of our alumni are not from Mississippi and so they leave and they don't really come back to like contribute to the university. Um, and that way. But I just think yeah, like lack of representation and also just like, like I would have loved to take like a Latino studies class and we don't offer that here and because there's not like a demand for it as much. So I guess like trying to recruit more Latinas to come to school here, it would be really cool. Um, but yeah, and I think also just like people not really knowing like a lot of people don't even know where Puerto Rico is on a map or like that it's owned by the United States, not that we're a part of the United States that we are owned by the United States, um, in like the political atmosphere of that and also just like, um, especially with the, our current political administration and our president. I'm feeling as though the, a lot of people on this campus don't want Latinos here and they don't want immigrants here is kind of disheartening because people are very vocal about it and they don't take the time to like realize or understand exactly what,</p>
Speaker 4:	<a href="#">22:00</a>	um,
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">22:02</a>	<p>like we go through as a culture, um, because we, like we are parents are completely different culture then what we're going through now. And so having to navigate that is very difficult. Um, because like my parents, they took the act but it wasn't called act was called the college board. And like, it's not like your score matter anything you got, you went and took it and if you pass it you went to college. And so like me even applying to school was like completely out of the spectrum of my parents and both my parents are college educated, but their application whole process was different, like scholarships and stuff. Like in Puerto Rico, most people automatically get the pell grant because of the territory status. Um, and so like me having to find scholarships and like fun and my, like college education, like my parents had no idea what to do. I fill out the FASFA every single year by myself. Like I just, it's a lot different than like some of my</p>



friends who their parents went here and they have like a connection here and stuff. Um, but yeah, I guess just like informing people, teaching people like being open and also like realizing that when someone asks you like, Oh, are you Mexican? Or like, do they eat this in Puerto Rico? Like having to think like, okay, they're not coming most of the time they're not coming from a bad place. They're coming from a place of like, they just don't know. And so like educating them and helping them learn will help them then educate someone else if they hear something that's incorrect. So yeah.

Speaker 1: [23:39](#) And um, has anyone ever asked you about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond

Speaker 2: [23:46](#) to these questions? I guess like my whole life and also especially when I'm with my parents because my parents have accents. So yeah. So it's, I guess different for every person. Um, so like I remember as like, I'll guess I'll go to the university, um, one time I was in crosby and there was a ca and she was African American and she did not believe that I was Latino. Um, so she made me take my hair out of my hat and prove that I was Latino, but she like felt my hair, but she was like, you have white hair. And I was like, this is the hair that gets into my head. I don't know what, like lte want me to do, I don't know. And so she made me like, she was like, well, speak Spanish for me. And I was like, okay, but no, because like I don't have to prove to you that I am who I am.

Speaker 2: [24:40](#) Um, so yeah, that was kind of awkward. But also I knew that she wasn't coming at it from like a place of malice. You really just didn't know. Um, and she had never met anyone that was ever from Puerto Rico or that was Latino that probably wasn't like South American. So, um, yeah, I think it is kind of difficult to explain because a lot of people view race and ethnicity as the same thing. And so what I have to explain, like my ethnicity is Latino or Puerto Rican, but my race is white and they're just like, it just doesn't click. And I'm like, okay, what? Like if I'm like, then. So then I'm like, if I'm like two shades darker than you, but all my parents or why,

but I'm just darker, what would you say? And they're like, your wife. And I'm like, okay, so am I like white?

Speaker 2:

[25:35](#)

Meaning European? My, like majority of my heritage is from Spain and Italy, so I'm technically white, but my ethnicity is Latino. And they're like, they just don't get it, but it's fine. I'm a lot of people also like trying to make comparisons, which is like natural for the human brain. Do you always like see something and you want to compare it to something that, you know, to make it easier for you to learn? Um, so a lot of people will come up to me like, oh, do they have tacos in Puerto Rico? And I'm like, no. I'm like, do they eat spicy food? You must love spicy food, like you're Puerto Rican. And I'm like, no, I don't. And so like, but then I just teach them like, no, we are an island so we eat a lot of fish and we don't eat a lot of like spices because like those plants don't grow in Puerto Rico, like in the, like in the soil there's like no.

Speaker 2:

[26:33](#)

And um, but also I think yeah, just having to explain that to people. Um, but I think it's becoming like less frequent also because I'm becoming more vocal about it so people don't have to ask anymore. I already just tell them. Um, and also like with more Latinos coming in, media and music and people were like listening, like on top 40 and like bad money's coming up and they're like, what? These guys were in Puerto Rico. Oh my gosh, Gabby, like whatever. Um, so it's like, I guess getting better now. Um, but also within the own, like Latino community. Not Personally, but I know my mom, she's very pale and so like a lot of people will not, like Latinos will not think that my mom is Latina until she starts speaking Spanish. And then they're like, oh shit, you know, so [inaudible] like one time we were in the supermarket and they were talking about like this getting, I like she doesn't know what she's doing and my mom just started to like, look at me and then we started speaking in Spanish and you could see the faces of the people in there. And I was like, yeah. So even in our own culture, um, people have these preconceived notions of what a Latina is. So yeah,

- Speaker 3: [27:57](#) it is anyone at breaks. Um, have you ever experienced any assumptions or stereotypes about your character? Because of your perceived race, I guess the example that you gave me.
- Speaker 2: [28:06](#) Yeah. And also just like when I, like I was talking to this guy and he was an exchange student from Italy and he was like, Oh, you're Latino, like your spicy. And I was like, I'm, I'm not a food sir. So No. So like a lot of people think like, Oh, you're Latina, you must be really loud, you must have 60 uncles, you must like all live in the same house and like smell like too late. And I'm like, no, that's not true. Um, and also I think like growing up people just assumed that like my parents were like less educated than they were. I'm sorry, I'm like, my one time in the first grade I was taken out of my regular classes and my like advance, we call them venture. It is like critical thinking or something, um, classes. And I was putting an English learning class because they assumed that I didn't speak English well because we had filled out a form and we said that we spoke Spanish at home.
- Speaker 2: [29:17](#) And so they assume that I didn't speak very good English and they took me out of my, like rigorous, like because I'm really, I really liked to read and write and so I was in a, like a higher level English class, um, and they took me out of there and put me in the English learning class. But I thought everyone went to an English learning class. I had no idea as naive. And so my mom came to eat lunch with me in the cafeteria one day and I was like, oh mom, that's my English teacher. And Mom was like, that's why your English teacher, that's not mistaken. And I'm like, no, no, she teaches me English. And Mom was like, what do you mean she teaches you English? And I was like, English, like, like she has little Dora flashcards and we are like, say like his and cat and backed and almost like what?
- Speaker 2: [29:59](#) And they took me out of my class without telling my parents. So then my dad had to go to the school and they assumed that my dad would be, I guess like in a construction uniform. Um, and my dad

wears a suit to work every day. He works for them, a superior of narcotics and he was going to court that day, so he really was like in a suit and um, they would come out and check and not see anyone that they thought fit the description of a Latino Dad. And finally when I was like, oh, are you looking for. And they were like, Whoa, frank lte area. My Dad was like, that's me. And they assumed that it wasn't him because of the way he was dressed. Um, and they assume that, like they said to my dad, they're like, well, when people go back to their home country, they lose their English, so we need to like make sure that she's having good English.

Speaker 2:

[30:52](#)

And my dad was like, um, what she really needs is a Spanish class. So like if you have a Spanish class, I'll be great. She does not need the English class. And so that was like, I guess the first time people were like made assumptions about me and my family, I guess. Um, but also people just like assume that, um, that like my parents are not here legally, um, which they were born in Puerto Rico, so they are automatically US citizens. Um, whether it seemed like the kids that I babysit her illegal, um, and I'm just like, one, why would you even ask that? So their business and second like take a history class. Um, so yeah, I think and also like going into um, restaurants and stuff have we, like, especially now I guess because of our political climate, I don't know, I'm like if we speak Spanish a lot in the restaurant, people will stare at us and like look like upset that we're speaking Spanish.

Speaker 2:

[31:54](#)

And like one time a waitress came over and asked us to be quieter. Um, and so then my mom like went off on this lady rightly so. Um, so yeah, I guess more now and then also people also like assume your political affiliation and like the way you're going to think about everything based on your race or an ethnicity and people don't really understand that. Yes. Like maybe generally everyone, like who is a certain race or ethnicity votes this way are things this way, but we're all individuals. So like you can have your own thoughts also. So yeah. Do you speak Spanish? If. Yes, how did you learn? Yes. So I do speak Spanish. I'm not as well as I

would like to, but I do, um, my parents taught or we spoke Spanish and English in our house, like simultaneously. Um, and when I was younger I gravitated more towards English just because like that's where all my friends spoke and everything around he was in English but then in high school like middle school and high school I started speaking more Spanish and now we mostly speak Spanish with me and my parents.

- Speaker 2: [33:00](#) Um, yeah, it is a learning process. Um, but yeah.
- Speaker 1: [33:08](#) And which line would you, would you, would you say you learned first? You said it was kind of simultaneous under the house?
- Speaker 2: [33:14](#) Yes. Um, it just depends on like certain words. Most of my like, like thoughts and southern English. So I guess like I am a stronger English speaker for sure. Um, and English would be considered my first language because it was my better language, but I did learn them simultaneously. So there were some words like I've went through my whole life and I didn't know the word in English because it's just, we always said it in Spanish. So, um, yeah.
- Speaker 1: [33:43](#) And um, what is do combined? Twenty two. Oh, sorry, 21. How important is the ability to speak Spanish in the Latino culture?
- Speaker 2: [33:53](#) Um, I think it's important, but it's not completely 100 percent, like necessary. I'm like, a lot of kids that I know are like slash babysit. I babysat a lot of Latino children. Um, they, not all of them speak Spanish and I don't think it's anything bad, um, because also like we are becoming a more globalized world in general. So like a lot of their family and friends also speak English even in the country that they live in. Um, and I don't think it's that important to like, it's important I guess like if you're speaking to like your grandparents, um, because like my grandparents didn't know any English except for my grandfather because he was in the military, um, but my other grandparents didn't really know that much English and so it's important

for me to be able to communicate with them in Spanish. Um, but the Latino culture as a whole?

- Speaker 2: [34:51](#) No, I don't think so because you can be 100 percent Latino or Latina without speaking of lick of Spanish because the culture is. And just the language, it's the food, it's the people, it's the dancing, it's the feeling that you get when you see someone from your same country and you're like, oh, we have this in common. Um, so yeah, no, I don't think it's like end all be all. But I do think it aids in your ability to connect with the people with, within your culture. And I think it also aids in the, I guess like your acceptance of other people in that culture. Like, like a lot of my mom's friends, like they want their daughters to speak and their sons to speaking English or Spanish because they want them to be able to go back to their home country and be able to speak with their family. But also I do know a lot of Latinas that their parents didn't want them to speak Spanish at all because their parents were ridiculed for their accent and they didn't want their kids to learn Spanish because they wanted their parent, their kids to be like 100 percent American and not really anything else. Um, so yeah.
- Speaker 1: [36:03](#) Um, and so for somebody to come by in 22 or 23, so how does the university and the community cleaner too and omit the Latino population?
- Speaker 2: [36:12](#) Um, I think there, there's not a lot of catering to you, um, with us just because we're like, you're stronger in numbers and we don't really have a lot of numbers to back us up. Um, but I don't really necessarily think the university like purposely omitted us from anything. I just think that we have not made our presence known enough on this campus so that they start to pay attention. I think now it's happening more. Um, especially like with the boyfriend, collision cross culture engagement. Like we work a lot with the CICC II and they have done a lot for, especially for Hispanic heritage month. I'm like, I was a panelist on a panel for Latinas, that whole mess and like there was like a lot of movies and like panels and discussions and stuff. So that was really cool to see because like out

of my whole four years of school, like that was the first time that I saw like a big push to represent our culture here on this campus.

Speaker 2:

[37:20](#)

Um, but also I think they're like, I feel like there needs to be like a, I don't know, maybe I should do this, like part of the alumni center, like reach out to like Latino Alumni. Um, because we are very passionate people and I think like if we start getting these people involved, we will like be able to create a whole community of Latinos at Ole Miss. I collect old books because I'm a nerd and I was going through and I saw, and one of the yearbooks, like 83, there were six people here from Puerto Rico in 1993, like who would've ever thought until I found these people on facebook, like a psycho. Um, and I messaged them and they were like, oh my gosh, that's so crazy. Like, this is so cool. I haven't been back to almost since I graduated. And like two of these women now now came back for homecoming.

Speaker 2:

[38:17](#)

And like I got to meet them. They met my family and randomly my, one of my mom's cousins dated this other lady's cousin. So like they knew each other and they didn't realize it. That was Kinda cool. Um, so yeah, I think like getting our alumni involved and like engaged would be really cool. But I don't think the university tries to purposely omit us from the population or the conversation because also it's very different. Like I guess being at Ole miss and I guess being at a different school because almost has a whole history of um, like racial imbalance and injustice. Um, but mainly within the white and black experience and so they really haven't had like to address a lot of racial or ethnic issues with any other kind of culture because we haven't had that long of a history here.

Speaker 2:

[39:15](#)

And how do you view race in the US in the south and here in Oxford. And I think I'm in the US broadly. Um, race is like white and black and then like everybody else has just clumped up. I'm like, is that another. I guess, um, but I think in the south in particular because of her history, race is a lot more taboo to talk about, um, because like, but also I think it's bad for like northern states to try to forget

the fact that they also have a history of racial injustice in their states. But obviously the south is way more. Um, so in the south it's like a lot more difficult I think to like talk about race because people are scared to say things or they're really, really impassioned and they are not scared at all to say things. Um, and so I think people don't want to offend anybody else when they're talking about it.

Speaker 2:

[40:22](#)

Um, and also like I feel like people, it's just like no one wants to talk about it and that's like, that is not gonna help the issue at all because communication is like what's going to help this racial issue and also like, like in more northern states like you see like white and black people, Latino and Asian, black and Latina like holiday eating and mixing and hanging out and whatever. And in the south it's not like that at all. Like my school was like a public school and a pretty 50 slash 50 like town, like 50 black, 50, white and then like negative one, everyone else. Um, but in our school, like when you would walk into the school, you would come in and there was one side of the school was like where the car riders got dropped off and the other side was where the bus has got dropped off.

Speaker 2:

[41:12](#)

And if you were white you were just standing by the where the car's got dropped off. If you were black you would just stand by where the buses got dropped off and like if you would sit in the cafeteria, all the white people would sit together and all the black people sit together and it was like no one was telling and he wants to do that. It was just like people did it and no one talked about it and no one thought it was like weird. And that was in my head. I'm like, I'm looking at it and I'm like, this is weird. Like why are we just, why don't we all just sit together as a class? I don't know. Um, and so it's a lot like, I guess like defacto and people I think about like their parents. Like I know my next door neighbor, he was black and his dad was like worked in the bureau with my dad is crazy because they moved there from Ken and we had no idea they were moving in and then we saw them moving in and I was like, Mr Eugene, like what do you live here now?



- Speaker 2: [42:07](#) And it's funny now because now they're like Carpool and we have a bromance is whatever. But my neighbor Marcus, he dated a white girl and it was like the talk of the town because he was black into white and his parents were terrified for him to go and meet her parents. And her parents were terrified for her to come meet his parents. And it was like, and they ended up breaking up, but they were really cute couple and like, but it was like everyone talked about it and I am, I just saw that as like why I was there needed to talk about it. They like each other and that's cool. Like if you're going to talk about it like, hey, they're dating. That's so cute. Yeah. But people were like, oh my God, like she's white and he's black. And she had blonde hair and blue eyes like white, you know? And so that was like, I think it's a lot different, um, like in the south versus in the US because like I went and visited my cousins that live in Boston and in their school, it was amazing. Like there's kids there that speak Portuguese and Mandarin and Spanish and English and there's white kids and black kids and Asian kids and kids from like the Middle East and Australia. And I was like,
- Speaker 2: [43:24](#) what? Like if only this was like a Mississippi. Um, but yeah, I think we can't really move forward if we don't address the past. And I feel like a lot of people want to put the past under the rug and not talk about it. Um, I think it's kind of like,
- Speaker 2: [43:43](#) it's awkward to talk about race obviously, but it needs to be done and I think it's, I don't know, I find myself like kind of like in a limbo, like middle area because I can talk about it because I don't have any. Like, especially in Mississippi, like I don't have any familiar tie ties here. My family was not here during the civil war or during reconstruction or civil rights movement. So I am looking at it from like a completely unbiased perspective I think. Um, and so I just like, people have, I think like too much like reservations about talking about it because like say like their great grandfather, like thought in the. I don't really, no that's horrible. How long ago? Cause I do know how long ago that was their great, great, great grandfather fought in the civil war and

this person might end up getting a black girl and like him thinking in the back of his head like what would my family, you know, like that is like a really big loaded like issue.

Speaker 2:

[44:48](#)

Um, but yeah, so I think it's very difficult to talk about but also needs to be talked about and it shouldn't be difficult to talk about because it's literally a made up thing. I'm okay in Oxford. I think it's a lot different because we're at a college campus. Um, so I feel like a lot of people are like, like freedom and liberal. I liberate liberation from their parents, you know? So I think a lot more people are like exploring different things, whether that be like drugs and alcohol and stuff or like dating outside of their race. I think that they would have never done in their hometown. Um, so I think that's really cool. Um, and then Oxford, I think it's more of like the Ole Miss Family, whereas like, I don't know, I don't see like a lot of people at least like students being like really concerned about people's races are.

Speaker 2:

[45:47](#)

But I know like a lot of alumni, like you go on game day and you see like, like Colonel Reb and like confederate flags everywhere and you're like, oh, okay. Like, then you have to think like, wow, this is almost like, this is what this school is kind of like revolved around. And so then you have to think like, wow, these people that are bringing all this stuff like they're donating to the university, which means meaning they have power here, which meaning, which means like a lot of the things that a lot of students want to change on this campus is really not going to get done because they don't have the financial backing to support their deals. And so yeah. And um, how do you perceive Latino population affecting the idea of race? Um, I think it definitely will affect the idea of race in the south, just being like, we're new to this area because are new to the United States, but particularly with the history that the south has of segregation, we're new to that.

Speaker 2:

[46:48](#)

Um, and so a lot of people, like when my parents came here, a lot of people didn't know where to put

them, like what box to put them in. So my parents just was like, well, thrown out the boxes or we're just going to make our own new box. And that is like how they got around and succeeded here. Um, but the idea of race right now, it's definitely like white and black and I feel like now at a lot more Latinas and other cultures, a lot of Asians, like in the delta, like have a huge rise in population are coming to the south and uh, specifically Mississippi because that's where I'm from. So that's what I need to talk about there. We're changing the idea of race because we're breaking down, in my opinion, a lot of those barriers. Um, especially when it comes to like relationships, whether that be like a dating relationship or like a work relationship or a friendship like we, like from our countries, our home countries, um, the idea of like being friends with a black person or a white person.

Speaker 2:

[47:54](#)

It's like, that's not a thing. Like you don't go around saying like, oh, I have a black friend. Like, no, you just, I have a friend. And so going, like, I know my mom found it difficult. I get her work when she first started she would go out to talk to people and she wasn't wide enough for the white people, but she wasn't like a minority enough for her black coworkers. And so I guess people judged her. Um, and so like she's very fair. So they're like, oh, that's a white lady. And then the white women would be like, oh, but she has an accident, you know, so. But then once they get to know, they got to know her, they're like, this is a really chill lady. And I, my mom has brought together a lot of women in her work that probably would not have been friends, um, because she had this kind of outsider perspective.

Speaker 2:

[48:42](#)

Um, and so I think that's important too, like, so that um, we are changing the idea of race and like, I know like my dad is a lot more. I'm darker skinned than me again, especially then my mom and like one day at work someone was talking, um, and this was like when he was training in the academy, I think someone was like laughing at the joke and it was a black man and my dad was like laughing with him and the black. I looked at him like, why are you

laughing with me? Like, you know, you're not one of us. And my dad was like, I'm Brown. Like I'm definitely not one of them. So, you know, and the guy was like, oh yeah. And so like my dad has also helped bring that change into his work too. Um, I think it's important.

Speaker 2:

[49:33](#)

They both worked for the state of Mississippi. They worked for a public good, which is the whole state. And so getting their ideas of race, I'm like integrated into the state is I think really cool and like, I know like they have like a lot of people have seen them in their jobs and wanted to like be like them. And so like now there's way more Latinos that work for the state now than ever. And like a lot of them put on their application. Like I saw Frank Altieri at a conference and I was like, I want it to be like him or like they're like Wendy, she works in our community and we see her, like doing good for everyone, not just her own culture. And so we want to be a part of that change. And so I think, um, yeah, I think we really will change the way racist here and also just the way like, um, like our culture is viewed.

Speaker 2:

[50:31](#)

Like when my parents came here, there was like no, like any kind of remnants of any kind of failure that was remotely Latino. Now there's like 20,000 Mexican restaurants everywhere you go. Um, so I think it would definitely affect that, like the consumer and the political nature of the south, which will also affect the way people are treated because once you let your voices be heard, um, whether that be like voting or marching or whatever, um, people start to listen and once they realized like, oh, there's a growing number of Latinos in this area, like those are my constituents. I have to serve these people to the whole makeup of the community will change. Um, and I think also like in general, our generation is a lot more, like we're a lot more open. Like I don't know, like I've never seen except for Marcus his case, but that was mostly like older people gossiping in our town. I'm like, we don't really look at, like when we're dating, we're like, oh, I have to date someone who's white or someone who's Latino or someone who's black or

whatever. So I think that like our generation is a lot more open. So we will contribute to like the racial barriers being broken down.

Speaker 2: [51:52](#) Um, challenges or were there any other points or topics that you discuss? You know, you're pretty thorough. Um, yeah, I just think that by our population is growing and so people are going to start having to listen. Um, because we are voters and we are consumers and so by our population growing, we will be able to change the makeup of this place that we call home because a lot of Latinos we identify, yes, we identify with our culture, like me being Puerto Rican, but I also identify as being from Mississippi and I am southern and like 100 percent. And so having to balance that and like not be afraid to say like I am 100 percent Puerto Rican, but I'm also 100 percent mississippian and southern and being proud of that. Um, I know a lot of Latinos that I talked to are thinking the same thing. And so just getting people on board with that idea that you don't have to be just one thing. He can be tons of different things. Yeah.

Lydia Ramirez\*

\*This is an alias and is not the subject's real name. The subject asked to not be identified by name.

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) You're recording. Okay. Alrighty. So today is November 28th and I am interviewing Lydia Ramirez for my honors Thesis Research, titled The Latino South Race and Racialization. We'll jump right in. Are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:22](#) Lydia Ramirez

Speaker 1: [00:30](#) and when were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:32](#) I was born August eighth, 1989.

Speaker 1: [00:37](#) Cool. And where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:40</a>	So I'm from Bakersfield, California, which is Central Valley of California and that's where I grew up as well.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:48</a>	And have you ever lived in any, any other places?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:51</a>	I have. I lived in Mexico for a bit when I was 13. I almost lived there for a year and then the rest of my life is in California.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:04</a>	And what brought you from Bakersfield to Mexico and what part of Mexico?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:09</a>	So I lived in Sinaloa and Michoacan, which is, I'm originally where my parents are from. So I am Mexican American and they were both born in Mexico specifically and senior law and when I was 13 they wanted us to buy us, I mean my siblings to go to Mexico and study there for a bit. And so, um, we were there for almost a year and then we moved. I don't, we never really moved there. We, it was like, we visited there for a year and then came back.
Speaker 1:		And did you also go to undergrad in Bakersfield?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:50</a>	Yes. So my Undergrad and my Grad school is from Bakersfield. And then now I'm here.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:56</a>	And what brought you here?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:00</a>	What brought me to Mississippi? Oxford, Mississippi. So, um, I came to Oxford, Mississippi to pursue my doctorate degree in higher education. Um, all of my life and education is from California. And I felt as though when I was looking into a graduate program, I really wanted it. I wanted it something to be. I'm very different than what I was getting in California. It wasn't that it was a bad, the same, but I really wanted something, especially if I was staying in higher education, I wanted something that would allow me the, the, uh, ability to learn something different in and out of the classroom and at the same time be able to hopefully bring that back to the state of California.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:55</a>	Is Race an important part of your identity? Why or why not
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:06</a>	so, it is very important to my identity and I think that sometimes that's between both, like what society tells me that I look like obviously, and how my race impacts, um, the way that the world sees me, the, uh, the other way around, if that makes sense. So I think from that perspective, yes, race is very important to my identity. Okay.
Speaker 1:		And um, how has your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?
Speaker 2:		Do you have a more specific question?
Speaker 1:		Just totally open ended it role in comparison to where you're from.
Speaker 2:		So obviously I'm from Bakersfield, California in California is known for being the melting pot, hopefully if the world just kidding. Oh, the United States, but um, so there's a lot more diversity, visual diversity and beyond, but specifically I think, um, I went to a Hispanic serving institution, so there was at least 25 percent Hispanic students or students who identified as being Hispanic at my institution. So there was a lot of people that look like me, um, when we look. So I have a background in psychology and when, uh, you look at like success and what that looks like in perspective to like race and ethnicity. Um, the research talks a lot about how it's important for us as even humans to see people who look like us where we are, are trying to go. So if I see a professor who is Hispanic or Mexican or whatever I identify with, even if it's beyond race, then I'm more prone to believe that I can to be in that place. That's not my reality here. I'm meeting people who I can't, who look like me, who are, even though that's not important in the great picture, it's important for that ask, that psychological aspect that it's sometimes very difficult to, um, continue to be connected to that part of myself. Um, especially with like food and all of. Because I think when we think of race we just think like, oh, this person looks a certain way and

that's, that's what races. But like sometimes there's so many different components that we don't think about, like the culture that comes with that race or the food or all of these things. All of these, it's almost like a tree. I'm going to give you a metaphor. I'm, here's the tree of my race. And then the roots. We don't really think about where the roots came from. And so for me, um, I think being in Mississippi brought made my race even more salient because it was, it was like what I was being identified by from others. Like people are constantly. The question I get here the most is like, where are you from? What are you, who am.

Speaker 2:

[06:31](#)

Sometimes I just want to be like I'm human, but it's very important for people to know because they're trying to, um, determine who you are and then they're trying to put you in a box which can be very uncomfortable at times to be like, okay, why can't I just be me? Why can't I just walk around and be like, oh, I'm Lydia, nice to meet you and that's who I am. But it's like a sense of we were trying to understand where do you come from, what do you stand by? And obviously make some assumptions based on like, what my race is or what my ethnicity is and what all of these components, um, which is human nature to try to understand others. Um, I just think here, moving to Mississippi, it's made a lot, a lot of my self more questionable, I guess you could say, um, as opposed to in, in California, it was just kind of you were there and I'm sure I got like, Hey, what are, like, are you Mexican?

Speaker 2:

[07:38](#)

Are you this? Or even not that, whatever. But it didn't happen as often as here. And sometimes I think about like, well, is it, I'm an education obviously, so is it because there's not that many people who look like me, so people are trying to understand, okay, like there's this foreign looking person to this place, so I need to know what they are. It's a very interesting. But it's been a, for the most part, a positive experience. And I don't know if that's because I've, um, I've intentionally made it into, into a positive experience. Yes. Does it get exhausting at times to be like, why do I have to answer this question? But I'm also being in



education, it has given me a challenge outside the classroom that allows me to view race, ethnicity, culture, and all of these different components are these identities in a very different way.

- Speaker 2: [08:37](#) And it allows me to, working in the field that I do, um, I have a student contact on a daily basis. So being able to, um, educate those individuals so that these questions are either asked in a more sensitive way or I'm not asked at all or maybe not make assumptions based on someone's race. Even if they, whether they identify with it or not, because I think we have this mentality that, oh, that's your race, so you must identify with no, like if I wanted to identify with another race, that's my right as a human to identify with whichever race I would like to or if I was biracial, like I get to decide which race I identify with. So it's kind of those components, but it's been. So I've taken something that may be at the beginning made me feel I don't want to. It's hard to identify what it made me feel.
- Speaker 2: [09:42](#) I don't think. I think at times it did make me feel a little uncomfortable because it was like, well, why is this, why is this so important for people to know what my race is and how it would happen at the very bare beginnings of a relationship where it's like, hi, nice to meet you. I'm so and so. What, what are you. It was almost like the followup to my introduction. Um, so, but then I realized like how much good I could do from being able to educate students that like maybe you don't ask what are you, maybe you asked like do you like what race do you identify with or identify with this, what do you identify with and things like that. So,
- Speaker 1: [10:30](#) and this question is worded towards undergrads. What is your major plus patient and notable involvement, but what are you studying? What year in your program argue and what are you involved in on campus?
- Speaker 2: [10:46](#) So I am currently, this is my third year in the PHD program and I'm studying higher education and student personnel and then involvement on campus. So my job, my graduate assistantship keeps me

very, very busy. Um, but I am involved in Bgsa which has been a great organization to be part of and I've been, I'm a member since like the first semester I was here. Um, and it's been a good. Other than that, like I've done orientation, I did orientation this summer, which was in a very rewarding experience. Um, what else? Yeah, outside of my graduate assistantship. Um, those are the two things that I really like enjoyed doing outside of it.

Speaker 1: [11:42](#) And now kind of more into questions about your identity white. No. One more question, sorry. What are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?

Speaker 2: [11:51](#) Oh, aspects. Like what, what do you mean by what's most important to you right now? Right. I think, I mean obviously, um, my spirituality, like I'm religious and I'm a believer, I'll put it that, so like that's a very um, important part. And then I think secondly would be family, like being a daughter and a good sister. Hopefully a good daughter too, but like being um, a supportive family member for my family and then obviously a student and um, being a student affairs professional I think um, is also very important. That kind of encompasses like all of the different things that I do on the daily basis and how those feed into those big ones.

Speaker 1: [12:47](#) And I'm now more into questions about your use and your identity. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity? What do you mean? Two different contents, so concepts, ethnicity are not the same. People use them interchangeably, but they are two totally different constructs. I'm in races more so of the construct and ethnicity is more real according to the research and everything. Um, so what do you consider your ethnicity to be? Oh Gosh, that's a very hard.

Speaker 2: [13:22](#) I don't think of. I'm going to answer it more. I don't know if it's gonna I don't think it's going to be a question. I don't think of ethnicity as much as I

think about my race. Like I think maybe I'll answer it by giving you an, like an umbrella of the identities that I identify with. So like when it comes with, when it comes to the argument of like Hispanic or Latina, um, I think people tend to separate those two. I identify with both, but I also understand the history of where those two components come from. Like I am Hispanic because I, you know, I'm a descendant of a Spanish speaking country, which is the, his Spanish Spanish part. And then I'm also, I'm Latino or Latin x and those components we can go on for days about that, but I'm in identifying in that is like the Latin America part.

- Speaker 2: [14:32](#) So I mean I don't, I don't necessarily get asked much about in the way of I density what my ethnicity is. I tend to be asked what is my, what is your race, what are you. And honestly I answered that based on maybe how I feel on that day, but so I will say like, Oh, I'm Hispanic or I'm Latina. And sometimes it depends who asked to like are they going to. Am I going to go into full detail and explanation about what I'm, what I am referring to? Or is this just like in passing and I'm just going to. Is it this is going to be a full on educational conversation or is this like. Yeah. I identify with Being Hispanic, Latina, Latinex and Mexican American. So I don't, I don't necessarily know
- Speaker 1: [15:28](#) how to answer your question, if that makes sense. How do you identify racially? What is your voice? What is my race?
- Speaker 2: [15:37](#) A little bit of everything. Apparently according to 23 and me, I'm just kidding. What is my race? Oh Gosh, Mexican, I guess, but then I would also argue that that's leaning more into my ethnicity. Um, my race is human.
- Speaker 1: [15:59](#) Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino and you have a preference of either term why?
- Speaker 2: [16:06](#) No, and I think that's going back on like the aspect of like Hispanic identify with Hispanic because even my first language is Spanish, so I'm a

descendant of a Hispanic speaking country and then with Latina it's in La is still in La, considered Latin America, so I identify with that and then the Latin x aspect of course comes with trying to be, take away the gender aspect. So like I will in. I typically encourage myself to be more inclusive by saying, oh, I'm allowed to next instead of Latina or specifically gender, putting a gender into the identity is spent essentially.

Speaker 1:

[16:53](#)

And so studies shown that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country? Can you repeat that question? A study showed that the Latino population is growing in the United States. How do you think this will will affect the way race or race relations in this country and it is number 15. I know sometimes things are easier to understand what,

Speaker 2:

[17:28](#)

how do I think it's. It will affect. I mean obviously as one aspect develops others. Well I think eventually hopefully I'm alive by this time but like eventually no, I think it raises a very interesting factor to think about because it almost puts you in like these little islands like you are this race and you are this race or this race and that's when we run into a lot of historical conflicts but I'm in the. But I think with hopefully as the Latino, because this is not specific to like does this include like just look like. I guess I have a lot of questions within that question to answer your question, but specifically I think I hope that as that aspect grows, so does the actual like Biracial, so that the biracial aspect, I don't think. I think we're very good at compartmentalizing racist into one race. Like if you are, and I think by racial identities have only like much recently I guess been um, something that people have began to identify with. So like, you know, I'm half white and half, I'm not personally, but I'm saying like if someone's half white, half Latino or Latina or lefty next, like at what point does that become its own race to the point where there's so many different races. It doesn't really matter what kind of race you are because technically

- Speaker 2: [19:30](#) if we're being, I guess technical in the race aspect, like I can identify as being one or the other or not identifying as being the other. So just because the Latino pop. I guess my question is like if the Latino law to next population is growing, is that just a one race thing or is that a. does that also affect. I don't think one can change without the other. So if that changes so well, the other one's changed. So I think hopefully the goal is it'll give us a more diverse population instead of like taken away. Because the way, the question, maybe I'm picking up the question, the way the question is structured is that will all become at some point that will be the only race.
- Speaker 1: [20:24](#) No, no. So by 2015 I did not. Yeah. So like by 20, 50 Latino's are expected to be the largest country will be a majority minority country. So with the increased population, how do you think just the increased presence of Hispanics and Latinos affect the way race operates and race relations and how people operate with each other?
- Speaker 2: [20:55](#) That's not what I got from that interpretation. I guess. How do I think it'll affect everything?
- Speaker 3: [21:03](#) Mm.
- Speaker 2: [21:05](#) Let me think about this one because now I'm stuck on the other conversation. So let me just swerved. Um, in 2015 you said, or 50 because 2015 already passed. Did they say how much it's increasing, right?
- Speaker 1: [21:30](#) It doesn't say. Um, um, the last time I looked at the demographics and looked at the, I'm like, what is expected from the Census Bureau? Um, the main thing I can remember was that was mind blowing, but they were even saying but like 20 slash 20 or something that, uh, like the country, I think the country is now almost one third Hispanic or Latino and that's in any case whether one parent is of Hispanic or Latin American, just saying whether blow, whether you're a great, great, great grandparents,

- Speaker 2: [22:03](#) great. Just as a variable, not whether both parents are from Mexico and American, but just as a very wide umbrella term of the ethnic group. This will be the largest minority
- Speaker 1: [22:19](#) by 2050 and America will be a majority minority country by 2015. So the whites will be like the minorities,
- Speaker 2: [22:29](#) we'll all just be minorities. I mean I think of obviously it just erases a very interesting factor and I could go on for days on both sides of the argument of like whether it's good for us to continuously need to make this because I think a lot of decision making goes, is affected by race, especially in certain avenues. I will say that. Um, so I think like, hopefully since it's going to be a place with more obviously like policy is going to have to change if I'm not only necessarily because of that aspect, but the aspect that there, it's going to be more like you just said, like minorities will be the majority. So hopefully
- Speaker 2: [23:39](#) I guess it's, for me it's more of a hope not necessarily, um, like how I, it'll affect it. But the hope is that it'll affect it in a more positive way where obviously changing. We're not doing a really good job currently at matching our policies are matching like how we work as a nation based on our population. I will say that. And so I think I hope that as things progress and I guess things change, so will everything else to fit the needs of [inaudible] those needs are going to be very different versus, you know, depending on what people identify with.
- Speaker 3: [24:24](#) Take you out.
- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) I went on circle, so yeah, I'm done. Yeah. So number 16, how do you maintain your Latino or Hispanic heritage while being a student here and living in Oxford? Um, uh, how do I, I don't know that I've done a very good job at it. Obviously being Latino, Latina, Latinex. Um, how do I do this?
- Speaker 1: [00:54](#) There are several different components about being Latina that impacts like the way I do things on an

everyday basis. I mean obviously culture is culture, so there are a lot of things that I didn't know. Being back home, things were so much more accessible like the music, like even down. It sounds so, so interesting because I never really thought about it. Like even down to like what I eat, how I eat, the food, the, the music that I listened to or like the music that truly gives me joy and fulfillment to my, to my soul. I guess you could say it's a really weird concept because like I said, it wasn't till I come pre completely, like extracted all of the, like I guess I didn't appreciate how much I had. You don't appreciate what you have until it's gone. So like now that those components are out of my life were not as accessible. Like something as simple as like going somewhere where you can find authentic. Like I mean authentic, like not, I mean we have some restaurants here but like purely authentic food and like how that, so directly linked to Hawaii identify as a person, race, ethnicity, all of these different concepts. Um,

Speaker 1:

[02:23](#)

it has been very difficult for me here. Like even when I'm like, oh, I want Mexican. Something as simple as like, I just want Mexican candy, like great reese's pieces, you know, crunch, all that is great. But I just sometimes want to mess up on or the clean or you know, like you're probably talking about. But like something so simple that I took for granted because you can go literally like across the street from my house and they had a whole aisle of just pure Mexican candy. They had a section. And even then I was like, okay, look at this small section. But now that's like the one, at least I had a section, you know, or like things like ingredients that you really don't think about like that you used to cook food. Like I found myself almost like lost at times in like okay I need this specific seasoning for this specific dish that I have no idea where to buy.

Speaker 1:

[03:32](#)

And I think like there's, do you know that the one that got it was like on the corner before you turn into campus Wank, I'm probably talking too much about this, but there was a like little shop and they literally sold a lot of the things that. And it was out. I mean it was pretty authentic, like, and it's gone,

like it's no longer like it's closed. They ran out of business and things. So like what I used to get there, like the Taco shop, some of it they have but they're, they don't have such a huge section as they did. And so you all like I'll find myself like when I go home, like I'll try to stock but I can't, I can only stock for so long. So or like, so the way that I try to do it here is like finding those places and you know, I was just in Texas for a week so I stocked up on some things and then I brought him over. Um, so like bringing stuff over, he is one of the ways that I maintain that, but I don't know how that links directly to me because I can't get it here. But I'm also like music, just like a, sometimes in my office I'll be listening to, you know, Mexican music or like the music that reminds me of home or like, you know, just big home as in like with my parents. Um, so I guess that's one way that says that's it. That's all I got.

- Speaker 2:            [05:13](#)            Say Food, things like that. Um, and what are some challenges you face in Oxford University and as a Latina Hispanic woman?
- Speaker 1:            [05:29](#)            Oh Gosh. I think, you know, I've thought about this question, not specifically like asking myself, but like I think about it, I'm not constantly. I thought about it a lot more at the beginning when I got here specifically because it did feel like in trying to find my community, it was very hard, um, to be able to find people who got it. Like I will never know what it's like to be a white person. I will never, like, I can't, no, I can try to.
- Speaker 3:            [06:09](#)            I'm like,
- Speaker 1:            [06:13](#)            you know, walk a day in their shoes or I can try to be, I can try to understand, but I can't ask someone to truly understand what it's like to be me and look like me and go to a school in the south like the University of Mississippi. Just like I can't do that. Vice versa with someone else. Like I'm like take someone's identities and walk with those identities in this, in this place. And I think at the beginning it was very difficult for me to understand that concept of like, you know, why people identify that the way that they identify. Like here, um, a lot of, there's a



huge emphasis on efforts of like the concept of black and white because of the history of the state of Mississippi because of the history of this institution and what that means. There's, there's a lot of conversation, there's a lot of communication on the black and the white. I don't want to call it an issue, the black and white conversation. We'll, we'll call it. And I think because, um, there's not a lot of Hispanics. Like I, I, one of my things is like data, it's really weird and I looked at our numbers and obviously there's like 600 in total Hispanic, Latino students at this institution in comparison to the 25,000 that go here or 20,000, whatever. That's nothing, you know, that's not even a thousand students. So I think,

Speaker 3: [07:59](#)

um,

Speaker 1: [08:01](#)

like things that are impact, that impact my community are impacted me as a person. They're not ignored, they're just not at the forefront. Um, which is fair as a, you know, I'm obviously, I'm going into higher education and I understand from the other perspective and that's what becomes sometimes hard. Like I straddled the line between I'm a graduate student, but I also have a role that gives me also a little bit of the, not administrative but more on the other side of that, of the aspect of higher education. And so from that aspect I get how like the biggest focus should be getting students to be here in order to match the demographics of the state. So obviously like in I was talking to a friend from another back in California and their, their thing they were talking about like, oh my institution doesn't do a very good job at recruiting black students.

Speaker 1: [09:06](#)

And I like it dawned on me for a moment that like an institution, like a part of the responsibility is attempting to make it a more diverse environment, welcoming and all that. But at the same time recruiting based on. It's like convenience, convenient sampling. Oh, surprise. I remember that. It's like convenience sampling, like these you're gonna recruit where it's more convenient. If I'm making efforts to recruit, if I'm putting investing,

you know, a thousand dollars to recruit people who already live in the area, then that's what, that's where I get more for my bank. Then recruiting students who I may get one or two who live in that area. So in that concept, if it was, I'm trying, I try to understand it from the concept of the student. Like it makes it very difficult at times to like feel as though it is like a place where I belong in a place that welcomes my culture and my, um, I guess ethnicity, but like if most importantly like my culture and who I am as a person in celebrating that and being able to say like, I can go to this space or on this time during this time we have this which helps me celebrate a little bit of a culture which makes me feel welcomed at this institution.

Speaker 1:

[10:40](#)

I since then have like worked on being better about like, you know, my responsibility and taking action and getting involved. And I'm surrounding myself with people and you know, attempting, like going out and eating authentic food a little more often or like and things like that. So it's just very interesting. And has anyone ever asked you about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these types of questions? Um, I think I like covered it a little bit earlier, but like, um, it just also, I think it's depends a place they ask like, you know, obviously, and you can tell the difference between like I want to know because I'm curious and I want to know because I just don't feel like I'm a fan of the thing that you are about to tell me or whatever. Um, so it just, um, obviously it depends. But like most I do at the beginning I did get, this is a question I get asked the most here and like I said, it depends on the day, but like for the most part, like

Speaker 1:

[11:58](#)

depending on what they ask before, you can tell whether they mean race or ethnicity and I will answer so. So like, I mean I identify with being, sometimes I also talk about like what do you mean specifically? And they'll elaborate on what they're wanting to know and then I'll have the conversation of like the difference between Latino and Latina and let the next. And I'm just always, I feel like every opportunity is an opportunity to educate, but people need to want to know of course or want to learn,

um, or like sharing like me being Mexican and I'm Hispanic. So it just depends. And have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character? Has anyone ever to stereotype you in a way because of your perceived identity race? Oh yes, many times actually. But um, what are some things that people say or my character? Um, I guess like not necessarily like my character, but like I'm obviously I was here during the time of our last presidential election, so there was many times that I'm

Speaker 1: [13:34](#) individuals who were running for office. Obviously at that level we're saying things and um, we're making comments of um, that were really directly correlated to some of the identities that I hold. So sometimes when I would say like, Oh, I'm Latina, they would ask like, oh, so like what are, like, what else are you, which they were getting at like, are you from, you know, Brazil, are you from else? Like what, like way or they wanted me to get more in you essentially know what they're asking. But then eventually when it was like, Oh, I'm Mexican, a lot of the stereotypes or comments or questions that were directly coral are directly linked to what was saying being said in the media about Mexican people. And um, mainly very directly linked to immigration. I was being asked those questions and it was very interesting to watch,

Speaker 1: [14:44](#) you know, like 18 year olds like connect. Okay. So like they are, she is a Latina, specifically she's Mexican and uh, this is being said about Mexicans. Then she must add a medically fit, fit that aspect. So like I would get asked like if people knew I was Mexican, they'd be like, so are you illegal? Or like, are your parents illegal? Are you undocumented? I would get asked that question so much, especially during that time to now, not so much, but, or they would ask like, did you immigrate to Mississippi? Like with any, like completely taking apart the fact that like I've been in California, you know, and so it was very interesting even sometimes like, um, I'll get it.

Speaker 3: [15:34](#) Um,

- Speaker 1: [15:36](#) people will say, Oh, I already knew that. And I was like, well how did you, how did you know, because that's very, it's a very specific thing to know. And they're like, well I could tell in your voice that you were enough from, from here. And I was like, from like where he's from here. And so we'll go into deeper conversations of like whereas from here what is here and they'll be like, well, from the United States and I'm like, Oh, I'm from California. And so it's just kinda like taking those stereotypes and like trying to educate them about like, just because a person sounds is or identifies with a certain identity doesn't mean they fall under that. They're not all the, all the same I guess you could say. And so it's just interesting.
- Speaker 2: [16:23](#) Do you speak Spanish if guests, how? If no, why not?
- Speaker 1: [16:28](#) I do. I am fluent in Spanish. It's actually my first language. Um, how did I learn my parents speak Spanish, so, um, and it was my first language. So
- Speaker 2: [16:40](#) there you go. And how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the culture? Gosh, you're getting in deep here.
- Speaker 1: [16:48](#) Um, I think it's obvious. It's very important. Um, I think sometimes a little too important. Okay. No, that sounds right. Not too important. It's just I think people are judged based on their ability or inability to speak Spanish and being, it's like almost like a rating. I'm like the Latino Latin x culture has a lot of different aspects that go into this. Like you must in order to have your Latino card, you must fit this category. And I struggle with that a lot because especially even with Spanish, like if people
- Speaker 1: [17:37](#) don't speak Spanish then that automatically almost makes them less Hispanic. Like you're not like the Times I've heard people use the term, you're not a real Hispanic because someone doesn't speak Spanish or doesn't speak Spanish fluently. Um, is one too many and I think it's almost like this aspect of like if you don't fit this category then you must not telling other people how they should or should

not identify. I struggle with this concept. So yes. Um, it, I think from that perspective it is very important. Um, but I could go on for days of like, you know, why,

Speaker 2: [18:23](#) why other things were linked to that. But yes, the university and our combined 22 and 23. How does the university and the community catered to and omit the Latino population? Wait, what did you say about 20, 23? I'm combining the questions. They're essentially the same question. It's just one is looking at how the university community,

Speaker 1: [18:50](#) I mean there is an extensive. These types of things regardless of the population is an ongoing process for any university. I think specifically, um, this is a much newer focus for the institution, but I do see how they're trying. I mean, even if like it's baby steps trying, they're still trying, like even the aspect of celebrating Hispanic heritage month and I've participated in some of these, some of those events, but like I'm not, every institution has a Hispanic Heritage Committee or Hispanic heritage celebration and I think even the, the mere start that they, you're trying shows that at least they recognize, okay, we have these students and obviously there are things that are important to them and how can we as an institution attempt to help with that. Um, and I've asked some of the questions of like, you know, having Spanish speaking orientations and things like that, but like I think there's, it's things that the institution has tried from my understanding has tried in the past but is not as successful and things. So, I mean obviously they're attempting to do things for this population. But, um, and with everything, it's going to be a hidden minute. Some things are gonna work here. Something's going to work on California that don't work here. So like, um, but I think that they're trying, I see them trying, um,

Speaker 1: [20:34](#) um, omit.

Speaker 2: [20:37](#) They're trying. How do you view race in the US in the south and here in Oxford?

Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>20:51</u></a>	I think race is very important to the US. Um, I don't know about the south, but I know that it, I mean Oxford brings people from all over, but uh, is it majority mississippians? I would think right in Oxford, I would assume so, yeah. So if we're making an assumption based on if this is a place in Mississippi, um, I have not, I've visited areas in Mississippi and I get some very interesting questions around the state of Mississippi. So I think that race is very important to the south and to Oxford.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>21:41</u></a>	And how do you perceive the Latino population of 50? The idea of race in the south. So just the mere presence of Latinos who don't fall into the dichotomy of black and white affecting the way that racial dichotomy operates.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>22:01</u></a>	Well, hopefully it's affecting it in a positive way to determine that. It's more like there's more. I think sometimes there's like a blinded aspect that it's only, it's only black or white and you fit into one or the two categories and that's not. Obviously, that's not the reality of what we constituents the race aspect, so hopefully,
Speaker 4:	<a href="#"><u>22:30</u></a>	um,
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>22:32</u></a>	it will lead to a more positive outlook in being, in focusing equal attention to all.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>22:42</u></a>	I already asked you about challenges. Are there any other points or topics or things that you'd like to talk about that I did not ask you?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>22:51</u></a>	No. Is there any other topics you would like to talk about?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>22:55</u></a>	No, I think that's good.
		Ingrid Valbuena
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:00</u></a>	Okay, go ahead and get started. I'll be looking at the questions here. Um, so today is November sixth and we are currently in the library conducting interview for my thesis research titled The Latino South Race

and Racialization. Um, are you 18 years or older?  
And can you stay in spelling your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:22](#) Okay, my name is Ingrid Valbuena. I was born September 29th, 1996. Okay.

Speaker 1: [00:36](#) And where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2: [00:39](#) So I am from and grew up in Venezuela.

Speaker 1: [00:44](#) And um, what other places have you lived in?

Speaker 2: [00:46](#) So I lived in Chicago all of my life until I graduated high school. I've lived in Oxford, Mississippi ever since.

Speaker 1: [00:54](#) And um, what brought you from Venezuela to here?

Speaker 2: [00:58](#) So I graduated high school in my parents and I always talked about the opportunity of studying, doing college abroad. Um, so I applied for Ole Miss, I want an interest in the IMC program in that I just knew my senior year that I was going to study at Ole miss

Speaker 1: [01:16](#) How did you hear about Ole miss all the way in Venezuela?

Speaker 2: [01:21](#) So I had an advisor connect it to the extracurricular English classes that I was taking a and her job was advising students to study abroad, um, and she knew I was wanting to study integrative marketing communications and at the time Ole miss was the only university that offered that program as an undergraduate program and it also had a scholarship for internationals, so applied to other schools. But this was a program that I was most interested in and even though I had never been to Oxford or Mississippi, that's how I got into it.

Speaker 1: [01:57](#) Awesome. And is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?

- Speaker 2: [02:03](#) Um, I guess it wasn't really important when I was in Venezuela because everyone there is kind of like the same. Like, I don't know, it's just not defined when you're growing up and you're either like lighter skin or darker skin, but either way we're all kind of a mix between native, you know, natives, slaves in European, like the people that came. So like, you know, there are some of my friends that were, you know, they were Italian because after World War Two, their grandparents moved here, so they were like Venezuelan, Italian or they were finished Spaniard. Like their closeness to that other side of the world was much more like it was closer, closer I guess. Then like I guess mine would be because I just know my grandparents and great grandparents is like Venezuelans. But then when I came to ole miss, I guess I don't, I don't wanna say it's like from day one, but it was always a conversation.
- Speaker 2: [03:03](#) There's always this conversation of race. I never thought about race until I was coming to Mississippi and my friends were like, oh, people are racist there. And I was like, oh no, no. And so then I got here and like through classes, through friendships, through involvement, I feel like it's become a really big conversation that I am a part of because I am a human being here and race is a big deal. But also like, you know, made me wonder, it should have and shouldn't have been a big deal where I'm from too. Or is it just different? I don't know,
- Speaker 1: [03:36](#) you know. And um, how did that impact you? Like coming from a country where there was really no, I guess the large distinction in rates versus coming to the United States and especially in the south and then even more so here in Mississippi where race is very important.
- Speaker 2: [03:57](#) I guess the first thing that made me think is like where do I fit in. And you know, and that's, you know, up until maybe two years ago, the phrase people of color was never like something I had heard or used. Um, but now I guess it's like it is like, it is part of who I am, what it is, something that I like. I feel like that's where I fall under. But it also



made me realize that just because race wasn't a big deal or it wasn't a constant conversation where I'm from doesn't mean they shouldn't have been because just because I'm not white doesn't mean I can't be racist or my peers, my family, the people that look like me can't be racist. So I think it's, it has, it has affected how I think it's made me more understanding and definitely made me understand things that I had, could have gone my whole life back home without even considering. So in that aspect I feel like it's been pretty positive not only on me but in my family and my friends because I'm like so much more aware of the differences, how they're good and how their bad and how to be more respectful.

- Speaker 1:                    [05:01](#)                    Okay. And um, how has your experience being in university and living in Oxford?
- Speaker 2:                    [05:08](#)                    It's been great. Like I love, I love the university. I had a really great, like, overall experience. I mean, I'm still here, I'm a Grad student now, but I feel like my favorite part of it is that these conversations about race inclusion, diversity, detention, how do we fix it? It's so constant that I instead of, instead of pushing me away, kind of pulled me in and it made me understand these topics. Uh, and I also think that I was very lucky that I ran into the people that I ran into at the time that I ran into because I've had a great experience. I've been involved in, you know, almost everything that I've wanted and like I feel like I am much more ingrid now that I was four years ago and will be more ingrid in two years. Like it is, has been a really great place. I think that I've been really lucky. Another, that's not everyone's experience, but that has been my hope that it's, it is more and more people have that experience like that because I feel like I have both learned a lot and gone through a lot. But I've also really thoroughly enjoyed it and like have had really good stuff happened to me.
- Speaker 1:                    [06:17](#)                    And what is your major classification and some notable involvement that you have on campus?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>06:24</u></a>	So I'm doing a masters of Science and integrated marketing communication, so in and I graduated with a bachelor's in the same thing. Um, and while I was here I was an orientation leader. I did rebel radio, had shows. There was a marketing director, I was in the column society. I, um, yeah, I was, I was in a Sorority, I was in, I was vice president of Alpha Macron Pie. Um, but yeah, I think those are pretty good. Very stuff.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>06:55</u></a>	Okay. Uh, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>07:01</u></a>	Right now I guess is family, friends and education. Like I have only gotten in closer for my family the older I get, which I'm, I love it. Like it's, I don't know what's making me thing this way now. And it's not that I didn't think of before. It was just more permanent now. You good? Recording. Okay, cool. And
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>07:24</u></a>	you were talking about the most important aspects of your life, right where you left off?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>07:29</u></a>	Yeah. Yeah. Let me start again because I remember I said, you know, whatever I said family, friends in education, a family because I feel like the older I've gotten, the more, the closer I am to my family. I've always been really close, but, you know, being away grows heart, you know, that this cheesy phrases of just like I love my family and I hate that I have them so far away. But I love that it's made me appreciate them a lot more friends because after four years here, my friends here are family and like just continue growing those relationships. I'm lucky that so many of them are still here. I'm lucky that so many of them get to come visit. So that's always just kind of like what makes life worth living and then education because that's what I'm here for and it's just kind of like, I feel like these two years that I have left for me to buckle down, get serious about what I really want to do with my life and like, you know, in a work aspect. So, um, you know, no more involvement in mind. No more like kind of things within the school that I wanted to achieve, I want to

achieve outside of the school, so I feel like those are the most important aspects to me right now.

- Speaker 1: [08:39](#) And so the US Census Bureau, now we're going to get some more questions about race and identity of the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 2: [08:54](#) I think of my ethnicity as Venezuelan, Latin, Hispanic, but it's only because I was born in Venezuela, Latin because Venezuela is in Latin America. And then Hispanic because I come from a culture. Let's speak Spanish. Nothing beyond. That's the three.
- Speaker 1: [09:12](#) And uh, what is your parent's nationality and do you identify with your nationality?
- Speaker 2: [09:16](#) Yes, my parent's nationality of both penicillin. My parents like, uh, both my parents were born in Venezuela. I was born in Venezuela. So yes, even though I don't live there anymore, being Dennis Olan as something that's never done that.
- Speaker 1: [09:31](#) And do you have a family? Your parents still live in Venezuela? Are they, do they live in the United States?
- Speaker 2: [09:36](#) They live in Miami. They moved during my junior year of college. Uh, yeah, my mom, my dad and my sister all moved.
- Speaker 1: [09:45](#) Okay. And um, how do you identify racially and why do you identify this way
- Speaker 2: [09:51](#) racially? I think it would go back to just being Latin and Hispanic. Um, I think a long time ago I looked up the definition of these and oneness geographically based and the other one is language base. Um, so I don't know if like you can't use them interchangeably because you can be Hispanic and not be Latin and you can be loud and not be Hispanic because you can be from Barcelona and be Latin, speak Portuguese and you can be from Spain. Susannah should not be a lot. And so I guess

		whenever people ask me what my race is, I answer Latin and Hispanic.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">10:24</a>	And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latina? Do you prefer either term?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">10:29</a>	Identify as both. I think Latin, it's just more because I, you know, even if I don't know, the majority of us speak Spanish and like, but the majority of us, our culture is similar and I don't know, I feel like that is heavier than just the language that I speak.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">10:46</a>	And do you prefer the term Latin overlap? Dina, don't mind. And a study showed that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race and race relations with you to this country?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">10:59</a>	I think hopefully it would make it less polarized, but I know that in some extent it has nothing to do with that. I think it will make people realize that it's not only to. That it is kind of more of a spectrum that we're continuously going to mix in. That there are some important things that we all should know in order to be more respectful, but that these things that make us different students separate us. I feel like that's a lot into one sentence, but I feel like it's a little bit of the gist of what I feel like this is going to bring.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:31</a>	Right. And how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student at Ole Miss?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">11:39</a>	I continues to speak to my parents, but I think a big thing is food and just the way that I and my friends are super used to by now and it's like, you know, I am, I cannot say how to. You're not hug you because where I'm coming from, we kiss each other on a tick every time we see each other. Uh, you know, I feel like I am an awful cook. But the way that I cook, the way that I do almost everything in the kitchen is how I learned it from my family. So like that is just like, that's where you learned are from. How do you unlearn that? Like that's just how I do it. Um, and that thing just continuously. Like if people are around me and they see that my dad's

calling me, they're not going to expect me to speak English.

Speaker 2: [12:24](#) They're not going to expect me to, you know, there's never a line between like, oh, here I am doing my culture and here I am not doing my culture is everywhere and it's just a part of who I am and for some of my friends that has been something they've learned or they asked me like, oh, how was that? What was that about? Or something like that. But with time they just know they just learn about something new before. And what are some challenges you faced with the university as a Latina? I guess just like going straight on into, you know, realizing their race is such a big deal and like understanding it and like I'm really glad that I was never like, oh I want to ignore this and never do this and never learn about this because it's scary and overwhelming and it's not that I was like leader of the pack let me talk about these things.

Speaker 2: [13:14](#) But it was always definitely curious and I was always lucky that like a lot of my friends didn't look like me. Not only in the fact that they were, you know, they were not Latin, but there were also other cultures that I was able to learn from above the culture of Mississippi and other culture in school and like all these things that they were nice enough to explain to me and talk to me about, like, it's actually my freshman year when I didn't know. So asking these questions were my way of knowing. Um, but I think other than that, like it's just, you know, you're just not everywhere. Not everyone looks like you. Not everyone comes from the same culture as you. So it's hard to run it to the people that like you see in, you already know the things that you're like, Oh yes, my family.

Speaker 2: [13:59](#) That's that too. Or Yes, but I think throughout the years I found more and more of those people because number one, I think one of those people came here, but also they are here. They're not hidden. They're just like doing their own thing. So like, unless you go and do their own thing, you know, you don't sound like they're like, hi me, be friendly. That's not how it works. You just have to

find common connections and then be like, Oh yes, let's do that. Or like even there's a guy in my grad cohort that's in California and he's like a third generation Mexican American and first day of Class I was a first version he talked to and he was like, Oh, you know, we started speaking Spanish. We Dr our families and like, you know, it's just simple, it's easy. Comes in like. And then once you have that, like first connection, it makes making other connections so much easier. And um, has anyone

- Speaker 1: [14:52](#) ever asked you about your race, your ethnicity and how do you typically respond to those questions?
- Speaker 2: [14:58](#) A lot of people ask me where I'm from because they know I'm not from here. Um, and I just answer, um, I guess after for like, you know, the longer you're here, the more you get asked that question and then we're like, ah, there, there's more to me than where I'm from. Um, and sometimes it's just people that are your friends that are you just getting to know them. So I feel like it's a case by case basis. I will always say where I'm from, I will always answer questions. Not a disrespectful person, but I definitely have learned to stand my ground where I feel like where they're going. It's not something that I'm comfortable with talking about, but it doesn't happen very often.
- Speaker 1: [15:39](#) And you said people can tell that you're not from here. How would you say people can tell that?
- Speaker 2: [15:45](#) Because I'm not white and like, you know, I have my skin is like the color that it is and like my eyes are dark and my eyebrows are thick and like in my hair is like mainly a hot mess. So that's my responsibility. But like, you know it's dark and like, you know, if you see me on the phone with my parents, I'm not going to be speaking English. So like I feel like people can look at me and maybe they won't know I'm Venezuelan, but they will know I'm Hispanic and Latin and that's fine.
- Speaker 1: [16:15](#) Have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your identity?

- Speaker 2: [16:20](#) Yes. I feel like a lot of people think that I'm Mexican and that's a common, I feel like that's common for a lot of Hispanics and a lot of Latinos, like you just, that's just what they know, what people know the most. Um, so I've had people just kind of assume that I'm going to correct them and that's fine. Like, um, and then not very often, but a lot of my fame and my friends' families may ask me about immigration status and stuff like that. And I generally just answer honestly, I don't have like, I guess my situation is not as, I don't wanna say dramatic, but I'm saying like I'm complicated or hard to explain and like, but I feel like I wouldn't like to be asked that question if I didn't want to answer it. So sometimes I'm just kinda like, is it really your business? You know? But yeah, I think that's, that's it.
- Speaker 1: [17:22](#) What do you think gives people, I guess like the place or the authority and really asked you like what your immigration status is because you can ask anybody what their citizenship status is regardless of what they look like. So what do you, what do you think it is really causing that are causing adults or your friends' parents? I guess like Middle Age folks to ask you that?
- Speaker 2: [17:46](#) I think it's definitely the versus the minority in the sense of like they belong here. You don't belong here even though that doesn't stand any ground. Um, and I think definitely the political climate, like I mean it's a constant conversation in the news, positive or negative. So people that maybe thought about it but wouldn't ask now feel like they can ask because it's an issue right now and they may have develop opinions about it based on news coverage and stuff like that. So I feel like that is why people feel like, number one they can ask and number two they should ask and like all this kind of things.
- Speaker 1: [18:31](#) Um, and do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn?
- Speaker 2: [18:35](#) Um, yes, my native language is Spanish, so since I grew up in Minnesota, that was my first language

and then while I was growing up, I learned English as a second language.

- Speaker 1: [18:43](#) Um, and how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
- Speaker 2: [18:49](#) I feel like it's super important, um, but I feel like it's not what makes you Latin. I am, I speak Spanish because I grew up in a Spanish speaking country, so it'd be really weird if I didn't because that's how we do things, you know? Um, but I think a lot of it is, is maybe not the language as a whole, but the things that come with the language, um, that are very, very important. So like the closeness to your family, uh, the food, the music, all those things are just as important as language to me.
- Speaker 1: [19:25](#) And how does the university and the community cater to the Latino population?
- Speaker 2: [19:29](#) They do so little that I. Oh, I don't even know, you know, like I remember my freshman year, I made my first friends through laso. Uh, and that was really hard for, to find people. Like none of them were men as well, but a lot of Ecuadorians, a lot of Colombians, so it was really nice to just be around that group of people. But I don't know if that's been the case for new latins coming in. Um, so it, because I know it's an organization that depends on the amount of Latin Americans and Hispanics at the school house and if that number doesn't grow, how can you expect Lasa to grow? Um, but in terms of the community, I don't think I've ever noticed anything that's specifically catered to Hispanics and Latins at all
- Speaker 1: [20:23](#) and kind of following up. How does the university and the community or the Latino population,
- Speaker 2: [20:31](#) I guess by not like, like by not seeing it represented anywhere is hard for you to like picture yourself there or like feel like you can do certain things that other people may feel like they can do it and only because they have the confidence but because they see people like them on those kind of places.



- Speaker 1: [20:53](#) And um, how you view race in the US in the south and in Oxford
- Speaker 2: [21:00](#) I guess in the world is just race is just what you were born into a in, you know, it can be a big part of your identity. I think it just depends on a case by case basis, how you grew your life. I think in America is something that is very important and that it's people shouldn't ignore, it should be talked about. Talking about is good. Talking about things. It's got being open minded and trying to understand things is even better. You should do it about not only race but everything. Be Open minded and learn and like don't expect people to have to explain everything to you. Go and look for that information. And I think in Oxford is like, it's incredible. There's like Mississippi small town, you know, all the reputation that comes with that. But it is a place where this conversation is alive and I feel like the more things happen, the more like momentum it gets. And I was like I don't want that to die. I don't want that to knock into any happening because there's, I've seen so much change in my four years here and I want you to see more in the two years that I've left here and the future that I come back and I just want to continue seeing change and I think that, you know, don't sleep on Oxford, Mississippi. I feel like real changes happening and I feel like that's good.
- Speaker 1: [22:25](#) How do you perceive the Latino population? A thickening of the idea of race here in the south?
- Speaker 2: [22:32](#) I guess like the Latino population is growing a lot in the south, like maybe because we think of Latino population with think like big cities like New York or we think of California, we think of the border, but like there is such a big Hispanic and growing population in the south that I think, you know, I think it's gonna. I don't think it's going to complicate things in a bad way. I think it's going to complicate things in the sense of like people are gonna realize how similar southern hospitality culture in Latino culture are and I think it's going to complicate things in the sense of like, people aren't going to get along, you just have to open your mind

and not have this like window that you see the world through that pain salespeople, people as bad because that's not what it is. Um, so I don't know.

Speaker 2: [23:20](#) I feel like in my really, you know, in the, in the aspect that I want to be very optimistic. I want them, I want these two groups of people to find that common ground because that was a big part of how I found almost to be comforting because people were really, really nice and people were like, you know, come to my house eating my food. Like this hospitality thing. It's like seeing my, my family is like that. And on my family's like, you need anything come, like, eat my food. You can say my place. Like it's, it's very welcoming and like kind of like expects nothing in return. Um, and I would hope for that to be a good thing. And um, is there anything else or any other topics or points that you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you? Oh, thanks. I hope I explained myself well enough that you listened to this and you're like, oh yeah, that's what she was referring to because I can be like, just too many words. So little time. You know, what does the new meme, it's like I have two brain cells. Me Today.

### **Jade Orellana**

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) I am now recording. Okay. So today is November 28th. I am interviewing Jade Orellana for my thesis research titled The Latino South: Race and Racialization. So jump right in. Are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:21](#) My first name is Karyssa Orellana but I go by Jade.

Speaker 1: And when were you born?

Speaker 2: Um, I was born March 29th. A 1997. I'm an aries.

Speaker 1: [00:40](#) and where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2: [00:44](#) Well, I am from, I was born and say there for kind of a pretty, a big part of my childhood that um, you

know, the developing years. Um, I was born in Escondido, California, which was right outside of San Diego and I lived there for about four years. So I mean I kind of grew up, you know, speaking that way, um, being around a lot of diversity and a lot of difference. And then, um, when I was, I think it was right after my fifth birthday or something, um, we moved to Forest, Mississippi, which is kind of in the middle of nowhere so we could be closer to our family. Um, and I spent a few years there and then the rest of the time, um, I think two years later we moved to Brandon, Mississippi. And then I've lived there for, um, until now when I moved to Oxford for college.

Speaker 1:            [01:34](#)            So what brought your family like from Forest to Brandon?

Speaker 2:            [01:41](#)            Well, um, the reason that we even moved to Mississippi in the first place is because, um, my dad's family is and also El Salvador, so I wasn't really going to have a chance to be that close to him anyways because at that point I was an only child. And so my mom was like, well, I mean I want her to be a part of my family as well because all of them live in Mississippi at the coast. Um, so she was like, well, I want to be close enough. So we moved to forest and um, my dad had a job lined up with someone from my mom's side of the family's a business that they owned. Um, and then from forest, um, we moved to Brighton because my dad had another job, prospects lined up, so it was more of job stuff, but we tried to stay the Mississippi area to be closer to family. So.

Speaker 1:            [02:24](#)            And what brought you from Brandon to Oxford?

Speaker 2:            [02:27](#)            Well, um, majority of people from my high school kind of chose to do like community college or um, you know, other universities. But um, I'm a first gen college student so I didn't really have that much bringing me in big set for me to go to a four year. Um, my parents really pushed for me to go to a two year college. But, um, I really didn't want that. I wanted a change of scenery. I wanted something different. So I just kind of decided that it was time

for me to push myself to something better. Not that no tear isn't a bad thing or anything, but I wanted something bigger and better for myself. So I pushed myself to come here

Speaker 1: [03:08](#) and um, so is race an important part of your identity. Why or why not?

Speaker 2: [03:15](#) Well, for me it definitely is, um, because for the majority of my life, um, you know, my dad was always working and he's the, he's a Hispanic one, um, and my mom's white with red hair and all that. So she definitely very white. Um, she was the one that always came to my school stuff like any place or little parties or whatever. Um, and so every time people saw, you know, my mom, they just kind of assumed that I was white and it throughout my life, especially in, um, in Mississippi with a lack of, you know, Hispanic population, there was some. But most of the schools I went to didn't really have Hispanic people, especially in brandon. Um, when I told people that I was Hispanic, no one believed me. And that was something that I didn't really think, you know, I didn't really think that much about.

Speaker 2: [04:06](#) And I kind of started identifying as white. Not that I didn't believe it, but that I was Hispanic, but I kind of thought that because I didn't look Hispanic, I wasn't. And um, so, you know, coming into college and everything, I realized that I can have multiple identities kind of exists with each other and I don't have to identify one way or the other because definitely people told me that I wasn't Hispanic or that they didn't believe me until they saw my dad. Then even then they were like, well, you're still white, you know, so it was kind of invalidating. So I still, you know, with race, I definitely make that a huge part of my life because that's still my culture even though I was raised white and in America. And that wasn't like I wasn't surrounded by Hispanic culture all the time. So.

Speaker 1: [04:52](#) And um, how has your experience been at ole miss and living in Oxford?

- Speaker 2: [04:58](#) Well, for me, um, I think it also, I think for me like whiteness has kind of like a subconscious thing. Like whenever I came here, I saw kind of how like white people, you know, they went to Sororities, they went to parties and this and that. And I kind of thought that in order to be accepted here I kind of had to fit into that. Um, so my first year, even though like I was the most sociable, I made the most friends, like I didn't keep many of those friends and I didn't keep many of those memories as well as I did later on in life. Like later on in college when I branched past that and got involved with other organizations. But, um, yeah, I definitely pushed my. I tried to push myself into a box that everybody else fit into even though I identified separately and I didn't see people like me. I saw people from the same types of backgrounds, the same beliefs, same system that, um, and I didn't really agree with that and I didn't realize how miserable I was until after I left. And, you know, even though I still do enjoy, you know, being in a sorority and all that, I just realized that it was kind of toxic for me because I was trying to be something that I wasn't and you know, keeping my race in mind, like I didn't think that that side of me could flourish in that.
- Speaker 1: [06:13](#) So what is your major classification in some notable involvement?
- Speaker 2: [06:19](#) Um, okay. So I'm in integrated marketing communications major. I'm, I have a minor in general business and gender studies, which is a huge reason that, um, I kind of, you know, identify as a feminist and stuff more in depth. What was the other part of that question?
- Speaker 1: [06:37](#) Major classification in any notable way.
- Speaker 2: [06:40](#) Oh, okay. So I helped found a feminist, which is feminist empowerment at the University of Mississippi and I'm currently the president now. So, um, it's been here for four years. Um, I'm also a part of A. I'm an ambassador for the school of Journalism. I'm mean, I wish I had my resume with me because I have a lot of stuff that I'm in. Um, a

few of the most important thing, most important, I was a senator, um, for the associated student body. I was a part of this, the inclusion and cross cultural engagement committee. Um, I've also kind of here and there, but involved with, um, US Democrats. Um. Oh Gosh, I'm already forgetting rebels against sexual assault. Okay. I'm forgetting most of them, but pretty much that pretty much the political groups that are more left leaning on campus I've probably been involved with at some point. So.

Speaker 1: [07:43](#) And so now more questions about your identity. And so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [07:54](#) Um, my ethnicity, I guess I would say I guess I would have to identify as white because my skin is white and I do appear white. Um, yeah, I guess that's the simplest answer.

Speaker 1: [08:09](#) And um, what is your nationality do you identify with your nationality?

Speaker 2: [08:15](#) Um, so I am, even though I'm am American, I do identify as Salvadoran, um, at least half Salvadorian. I'm because I have visited the country and I do know some parts of, you know, I knew a lot about the culture, the background, um, you know, I've kind of lived it for a little while and um, you know, I'm close to my family members, so I only say that, you know, it's a part of it and insists considering, you know, I, I'm close with my dad. I do consider that even though he can't, you know, teach me the entire culture. I do identify with that.

Speaker 1: [08:52](#) And how do you identify racially? Do you identify

Speaker 2: [08:56](#) this way? Um, I definitely identify as Biracial, uh, because I think that, like I've said before, that it's super important to not put people into those kind of boxes. Um, because I know a huge thing I struggled with, which really isn't a huge. I know that a lot of people don't really struggle with it is um, you know, whenever you have to fill out like forms about your race and stuff. I know for me they would usually,

like on computers and stuff, they would only allow you to click one. And for me, I was always like, okay, what do I pick Hispanic too, I pick white, which wasn't, doesn't really seem like a huge thing, but like it was kind of a lot of internal conflict. So I'm glad that they've added like Biracial, multiracial, um, to those [inaudible] identify with that now. So, and do you identify as Hispanic or Latina and you have a preference of term lie?

Speaker 2:

[09:48](#)

Um, I don't really know honestly. I guess anything that kind of gives me like the notoriety, um, because I know Central America is kind of like a weird in between little category anyways. So, and because I'm, you know, American, um, I dunno, I kinda just say I'm Hispanic or Latina, I just kind of say it even though I know that there's definitely a difference, but I just catch myself saying that about myself sometimes. So. And so studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations in this country? Um, I definitely think that there will be more Latina Latino representation in the media, in Congress, in local politics. Because, you know, if you look at the statistics of, you know, how many Hispanic people in there are like in the state around, um, I mean even if you look at, um, you know, labels and stuff that had Spanish underneath it because it's like a huge language now.

Speaker 2:

[10:53](#)

I'm, a lot of people here are bilingual for that reason because it's like a huge, it's a huge part of our culture now. People don't want to, you know, necessarily believe that. But it is and I think that in the future I think that more people will be pushed to learn Spanish because it is very useful. Um, and that, you know, Hispanic people will be pushed to represent their people. And what are some challenges you face at the university as a Latino student? I guess I'm not enough representation because I know that history months on campus, I know that, I know that you've pushed for, you know, getting that organized. But I guess because of the small percentage, they think that, you know, the ones here aren't as concerned with us being represented in any form. But I think that that's

completely not the case because there are a lot of Hispanic people, um, if you, if you just look solely at the numbers, then obviously you're going to think there's not a lot here, but there are more and there are a lot of the people that are here want to represent themselves more on campus.

Speaker 2:

[12:02](#)

And how do you maintain your being a student here? For me it's more of um, I guess social. So social media is like a huge part of being in college and I'm kind of like establishing yourself. I definitely make sure to follow like Hispanic and Latina activists, um, journalists that kind of report on central and South America just so I can kind of keep in the know. Um, and I definitely eat a lot of Hispanic food. So. And has anyone ever asked you about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these types of which I'm usually, people don't ask me when they see me, but when they read my name, specifically my last name, that's when they asked me. Um, wait, what was the rest of that? Sorry. How do you typically respond to these questions? Like what is your race? What are you?

Speaker 2:

[12:59](#)

Oh, well, usually when people. I'm kind of notice because of my last name, that's when I kind of get excited and I'm like, okay, well I'll tell you about me because I love to talk about my dad's background, my background, like the love story of my parents and all of that. I think that it's, I think it's like once people you know, asked me, um, they're usually a lot more interested in their life. They want to know more once I tell them. So. And what is your parents? Well, my mom is from Pascagoula, Mississippi and my dad is from El Salvador and my dad had to leave El Salvador because I'm in the eighties. There was a war there and he was old enough to be drafted so he had to um, what the caravan is doing now. He kind of did that. Um, he kind of did that.

Speaker 2:

[13:50](#)

Um, I guess migration to Mexico for a few years. I can't remember if he moved from Mexico to California with immediately or if he moved back to El Salvador and then went to the United States. But



he, um, he did. He did migrate illegally, but he went to, uh, to California. He learned English, all of that. Got a job, all that, um, and my mom just on a whim because my grandparents had moved out there just for a little while because they had property out there, uh, before it got super expensive. Um, she wanted a change of scenery. So she moved out there and my mom was working at a pet boys and she was a cashier and my dad came in to get, I don't know, some cars, some either, something for his car or whatever. And they asked my mom for a number and then as soon as that was, you know, the rest was history. So I think it's really crazy because if my mom wouldn't have made that decision to move out there, my dad, you know, had been drafted or if he stayed in El Salvador, I wouldn't be here. So. And um,

Speaker 1:

[14:52](#)

how has that realization been or journey band with your father knowing that he immigrated to the United States and wasn't originally documented? Or was that something that you've ever had to talk about with people or with your family, especially considering the current state of how immigrants are?

Speaker 2:

[15:12](#)

Well, there's definitely, um, growing up in Mississippi and having a dad who is brown and who is bilingual but has a thick accent who looks Hispanic, who, you know, his name is Jose. I'm, he's all the things that, you know, people, you know are racist against. So, um, my mom has stood up for him, which is good, but we do have a lot of republicans that identify, like, identify people that identify with, you know, Republican in my family and associated around my family. And I think that it's definitely caused kind of an issue because he can't vote. He only has permanent residency so we can't vote. But I know that he wants to vote a certain way because that's in the best interest of him. So I think we've had to talk about it before. I've had, I helped him a study for citizenship test before, but again, whenever you're someone who didn't go to college and you're an immigrant, you don't have citizenship, um, it's hard to study for that citizenship and also maintain a full time job and

support a family. So I think he'll get it eventually. But for now, um, I've had to help him study for it and you know, I've had to realize how difficult that process is and how, you know, oppressive. It kind of is. Um, yeah, I think that's pretty much all I have to say about that question

- Speaker 1:            [16:36](#)            with your father being a permanent resident, a citizen, his deportation, deportation, something that your family worry about. Well, I, I,
- Speaker 2:            [16:48](#)            I know that definitely worried about it because I definitely think that, um, with the kind of, the way that ice officials act and how they just completely disregard the actual law. Um, I definitely am scared that sometimes my dad will be targeted even though he shouldn't be affected by that. I still think that they'll override the law and just, you know, send him back home even though he's been here for decades, just because he is Brown and he speaks Spanish and he's had tons of friends being sent home, deported. Um, so I definitely am scared because there have been a lot of raids. Uh, there was one point where there was a, there are rates close to my home and um, tons of millions of people that my dad knew talk to all the time. Um, you know, they were ripped away from their families and so I'm always scared that that's going happen. Um, even though, you know, he says that he's not going to. And my mom and other people were like, no, he's fine. Like he's not going to. I just definitely have like a deep feeling in my gut that they're going to completely override the law and just, you know, send them back home.
- Speaker 1:            [17:52](#)            And what about being in spaces with your mom or being maybe the biggest basis with both your father and your father and your mother, your father? You said multiple times it's Brown. And speaking of that, you said your mom, like white woman with red hair, how was that situation or like play out if you're in public with both of your parents or maybe if you're with your mother or your father and like you said you needed to take after either one too strongly. You have fair skin, dark hair. Not right here. And I

really brown skin and kind of like in the middle. So that been,

- Speaker 2: [18:23](#) um, I definitely think that whenever we're all together, I think now it's changed. Whenever I was younger I kind of didn't really pay attention to that, but I've definitely, you know, my mom has had to stand up for my dad sometimes. I know that whenever he first came to Mississippi he did face some racism from a lot of people. Sorry. Um, but, so it's, it's good that she has a sharp tongue and that she's willing to stand up for him and that, um, once, you know, I was born and, you know, my siblings were born and they saw how long my dad was in it for the long run with my mom. Um, that, you know, the rest of our family kind of sticks up for him and stuff. So I'm sorry, I forgot the question again.
- Speaker 1: [19:12](#) Oh yeah. Being in Mississippi and coming from a biracial family.
- Speaker 2: [19:17](#) Well definitely whenever I'm with my, just with my mom, I feel like I do get a little bit more respect. Everybody's like, Oh, you look just like her and they're so sweet and all this and that. And I felt like sometimes when I'm with my dad there's some people who either talked about data a little slow because, you know, it takes them, sometimes it takes them a little while to like translate things. And I totally understand that because he's got, you know, both of those languages in his head. Um, or, you know, I think I've, I think I've seen, you know, I've heard people talk about him, you know, heard stories of people talking about him or talking to him certain ways. I'm not necessarily when I've been with him, but um, I know that he's been pulled over by police for no reason before, so thankfully I wasn't there because I would've said something myself. But um, but yeah, definitely I can see the mistreatment on one side even though my dad has definitely, um, he hasn't done anything wrong. He hasn't broken any laws or anything. So
- Speaker 1: [20:15](#) do you speak Spanish? White? Sorry? Have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character? Has anyone ever stereotyped you or

anything like that because of your perceived race?  
Well,

Speaker 2:

[20:26](#)

definitely, uh, I guess not because I'm white passing, so I think that some people think they're, you know, they can comfortably say stuff around me because I've had tons of, where white people are comfortable around me and they say certain things and they don't realize like the background that I come from. Um, but then once they realized that they kind of keep their mouth shut. Um, but yeah, I definitely have. I guess people assume that they can say things around me because I'm whining that I'd agree with the majority opinion of why people. But that's not the case. What are some things that people have said around you? People have, there's definitely a lot of people who, uh, that I've just met who just kind of openly talked about, you know, being republican or supporting Republican values or that I should, um, but then they don't realize the extent of how certain things have affected my family.

Speaker 2:

[21:18](#)

Um, and how that kind of opinion kind of affects my dad and a not so positive way. So yeah, definitely people have, they feel like they're comfortable enough to say either like racist comments or, you know. Yeah, definitely racist comments around me. I'm just little subtle things here and there. I'm just about people that have passed by or whatever, but obviously they don't know my background until I tell them, but people who know me well, they'll never say stuff like that around me. And do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn? Why not? Well, whenever I was younger, um, and I lived in California, um, there was definitely, there's a rich Hispanic population there, um, especially where we lived and stuff. I know that I remember in the apartment complex that we lived, there was a biracial, it was a black and white family above me, um, and there were a lot of Hispanic people that lived around, so I know that I definitely grew up with people like different people have different backgrounds and stuff, so, um, I know that I went to daycare when I was younger and my mom tried to teach me a little bit of

his, like of Spanish here and there, so I knew like a lot of the basics I probably knew kind of like intro level Spanish stuff, not sentences, but I could speak a lot of phrases I knew like parts of my body colors, all this basic stuff that three, four year old should know.

- Speaker 2: [22:42](#) Um, but then after that we moved to Mississippi and my dad worked full time, so I kind of lost all that. So now I, I don't speak Spanish and it's kind of hard for me to pick it up, but I'm very motivated to learn. Would you say the main reason why you weren't taught Spanish as it was because your father was working? Yes, my mom was a stay at home mom for the majority of my life whenever I was younger and I was an only child. She worked at the daycare that I had care at and I was there from like an infant to like, by the time we've left California, moved to Mississippi. So yeah. Um, she obviously she doesn't speak Spanish so she couldn't really teach me, but she tried as hard as she could to teach me some, but once you know, I was, I didn't keep on that and I just went to a public school. I couldn't, I didn't learn, I didn't keep that knowledge and I kind of lost it, but it required to work so many hours. Um, so he, I know that he works mostly like I guess I guess the term would be like vocational jobs, like hands on jobs. Like I know that he operated his current job, he operates cranes and stuff. Um, so I think it's stuff like that. It's not, it's stuff that comes with training but not with necessarily like an educational background.
- Speaker 1: [24:04](#) And how do you feel? Um, I guess having the opportunity to learn Spanish, you know, because your father was working.
- Speaker 2: [24:12](#) Yeah, I think it definitely sucks because now I know that it would be so useful and it's so much harder now because when I was a kid I soaked up everything. Um, and so it was so much easier for me to learn then. But now, you know, I don't have the time. I'm scared that it'll, you know, it'll affect my gpa, all that stuff. So, um, I think that I just kinda need to go back to that and learn on my own time where I'm not stressed out about it. I think that

definitely would help a lot, especially because now, you know, I've got to be applying for jobs soon. Um, it would definitely help to be able to speak Spanish, but I'm not holding it against myself because I have the rest of my life to learn. So.

Speaker 1: [24:51](#) And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino community?

Speaker 2: [24:55](#) Oh, it's definitely really critical. I know that whenever I went to, I went to El Salvador for a few weeks. I'm with my dad and I was alone. I was 10 years old and I did not speak any Spanish at all and it was so difficult to communicate to my family. Um, I kind of had to, they knew some English phrases I knew like some things, like we kind of had to write stuff down or I had to get my dad to translate. I'm also had um, my tio and he actually lived in Florida for like 12 years, but he went back to um, I can't remember why, but he went back to El Salvador and he spoke English so he helped me out but my cousins couldn't speak, but I want my, I had a, I have cousins my age, so when I was there I was 10 and I had a 13, 15 and 17 year old cousin. We were all girls and so I wanted to hang out with them, but it was so hard to communicate. So I think that that would have known Spanish would've made the experience a lot better. Cause even my takeaway, like I didn't know, I didn't learn Spanish. I there. So you can't learn it in two weeks, but I didn't really pick up that much. So yeah,

Speaker 1: [26:11](#) I'm going to combine question 22 and 23. Um, but how has the university and community cater to and only made it to the Latino population?

Speaker 2: [26:22](#) Um, I definitely think that I'm Spanish. I think that with the amount of Spanish classes and with them kind of pushing Spanish is like a general, like language to take. I think that that's kind of like a little bit of representation because I know most people think that Spanish is like easy or whatever and that's what they take instead of German or Chinese or Japanese. Um, but I still think that we're not represented in like the amount of like history classes we have on campus. Like there's not, um, if

you look at the amount of like American history classes, which I know we're in America, but I know what I was looking through courses. Um, there was like only one for Latin American history and I guess also with, you know, gender studies classes there. I haven't seen one that's specifically around like, you know, Latin American or you know, like Latin American women's movements or something like that.

Speaker 2:

[27:15](#)

Um, so yeah, I definitely think that representation in classes like is there but not there in terms of like history and stuff. And how do you view race in the US in the south and here in Oxford? I definitely think I'm in the US. There are definitely like definitely the marginalized communities that have been marginalized are still marginalized and nothing's really changed with that. People want to act like this because there is an existing slavery or exclusion acts that everybody's equal. But that's not the case at all. Um, I think definitely like in the south having darker skin affects the way that you're treated by police treated by the law treated by um, you know, jobs pretty by everything and people act like that to not still prevalent, but it is. Um, and definitely an Oxford. I think that there's a little bit more tolerance, but there's definitely not, um, on campus, just because, you know, people of color have positions on campus or are more popular or whatever doesn't mean that, that the surrounding families of color have been treated well because I know specifically there is a huge issue with um, low income housing around this area and how, um, they're not, they're definitely not treated well and that they're not catered to still just because they have those low income housing doesn't mean that they're actually being helped at all.

Speaker 2:

[28:47](#)

So how do you perceive the and Latino population affecting the idea of race here in the south? I definitely think that with the amount of Hispanic people just making things work. I'm taking the jobs that people say that they want, but they don't really want. Um, I think that there's a rich kind of culture down here. People don't realize that, like the reason that we have these Mexican restaurants, the reason

that we have like, you know, other restaurants working well, the reason that we have, you know, our farms working well is because we have Hispanic people with such a big presence that are willing to take, you know, less than livable wages to keep everything working because like we've seen in California and stuff with all of the raids that, those, there's been shortages that there then, you know, things have affected our economy, has affected our food and everything because Hispanic people have been deported. Um, so I definitely think that they, like, they're, they keep everything moving and working like clockwork. And if we didn't have them, we wouldn't have things running smoothly.

Speaker 1: [29:58](#) And um, we already talked about challenges or points or topics or things that you'd like to talk about that I didn't ask you.

Speaker 2: [30:11](#) Um, I think, um, I don't really think I have anything else to say just besides, you know, I wish we had more representation and I understand that, you know, in majority white areas we're not going to get that. Especially whenever, you know, where even a smaller minority than black people as well. So yeah, I think that it'd be good if, you know, we banded with other marginalized communities, but I guess it's a lot harder to do that considering I don't know where I was going on. I had something I was going to say, but then like I heard the kids running around, so I kind of like blanked. Well, sorry.

Jazmine Herbert

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) All right, so today is November 28th. We are in the center for inclusion and cross cultural engagement. I'm conducting an interview with Jazmine Herbert for my honors thesis research title, the Latino South Race and Racialization. So we'll go ahead and get started. Are you 18 years old or. Okay. And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:26](#) Sure. Jazmine Herbert

Speaker 1: [00:34](#) and when were you born?



Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:36</u></a>	I was born June 26, 1999.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:39</u></a>	And where did you grow up and where are you from?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:41</u></a>	I grew up in the Maryland area for part of my childhood then I moved to DC.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:47</u></a>	And um, where in Maryland?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:49</u></a>	I grew up in silver spring, Maryland for the beginning of my childhood. And then when I was about eight I moved to DC with my grandparents and my mom.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:58</u></a>	Okay. And um, what, what kind of motivated that moved from Maryland to DC and then ultimately you moving from DC here to ask her?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:07</u></a>	Sure. I, my grandparents actually had a house in silver spring originally, but my grandpa, his dream was to always have a brick house, so they went house hunting and my grandpa fell in love with the house as well as my grandma and my mom and that ultimately made them move to DC.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>01:24</u></a>	And what about moving to Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:26</u></a>	Oh Gosh. I feel like Oxford was such a whim. It was like just such a like last minute decision. I really liked the campus, which was great and that was what made me come here originally.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:00</u></a>	So is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:09</u></a>	It is different because I think that it's important to remember your roots and where you actually came from instead of where you're living.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:19</u></a>	And um, how has your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:26</u></a>	It's been hard. I haven't had like the best experience ever and it's been me view the university and

		Oxford differently now that I've actually been here for a good bit, but it's been okay.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:41</a>	What's been hard about it? I'm like, how has it affected your view of the university?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:48</a>	I find it to be isolating. I do, I just, I wish that the Hispanic community was bigger here. That's something I would like to see change.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:58</a>	And is that what you find to be isolating the fact that the Hispanic community is so small? Are there, are, are there other factors playing into that as well?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:07</a>	Sure. I think that definitely Greek, like a, like Greek life on campus makes things isolating too because it's like almost like a club, you know, there's elite club and it seems like that's the only way you can really make friends, you know. But living in Oxford, I mean I liked the town itself, I think it's a cute little town and I think it definitely has its up and downs for sure.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:36</a>	And what is your view of Oxford and the university mail after being here for a little, for a while
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:42</a>	I liked the campus, don't get me wrong. I think the university needs to work on a lot of different issues that had been kind of swept under the rug, like the building's ventures and Lamar at that they have to be renamed as well as meek and how that's still a slow process because it still hasn't been changed and it's been a good while. So to see those changes.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:03</a>	So back to you were saying that the Latino community is so small, um, is that something that is different for you? Like did you grow up in a majority Hispanic or Latino community? And then coming to the Mississippi and to the university because I had been a culture shock. What, how would you compare the culture here to your home?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:26</a>	I think that, you know, when I'm back home I see all these different races, Hispanic, Asian, Indian, more so than here. So when I go back home, like when I was walking through the airport, going back

home for Thanksgiving break, I was like, oh my gosh, like this is like such a culture shock already, you know, seeing all the different people. And I've always gone to like the Hispanic parts of Maryland in DC. Some really I'm used to, I'm used to seeing a lot. But here I'd say every once in a blue moon I feel like.

- Speaker 1: [03:06](#) And what is your major classification in some notable involvement that you have on campus?
- Speaker 2: [03:11](#) Sure. I am currently a psych major with a minor in education and I would like to become a school counselor.
- Speaker 1: [03:18](#) And what's your classification?
- Speaker 2: [03:21](#) Sophomore.
- Speaker 1: [03:22](#) Okay. And um, do you have any involvement on campus?
- Speaker 2: [03:26](#) Currently? Not as right now, I'm just a student worker currently for the Center for inclusion and cross culture engagement, which I've enjoyed a lot.
- Speaker 1: [03:34](#) And um, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why? And we're going to pause and wait for that. Pick it up.
- Speaker 2: [03:45](#) The most important aspects of my life right now are probably just. Oh, okay. I'll think about it.
- Speaker 1: [03:54](#) Okay. So whenever you might typically do this in an isolated room so we don't have like office noise but that's okay. It gives us time to think about it.
- Speaker 2: [04:29](#) Okay. Whenever you're ready. The most important aspects of my life right now are just really trying to focus on school and really trying to get outta here as soon as I can.
- Speaker 1: [04:41](#) And does that have something to do with the culture here or.

Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>04:47</u></a>	Yeah, pretty much. I just, I'm much happier when I'm at home. Like that's home. I don't think anything in the world could ever replace that and I just would like to graduate soon.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>05:03</u></a>	And so are you planning to like leave this university and finished her degree at another university? He closed on a home or
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>05:14</u></a>	hopefully that would be like the dream. That'd be the dream to go back to graduate school maybe in Baltimore, Maryland.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>05:21</u></a>	So you're going to stay here for Undergrad? Yes. And um, let's see. Number 11. Yeah. So now we're going to get it more into questions about race and identity. The previous missions were just more about background and getting to know yield. So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity is two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>05:43</u></a>	Hispanic. I feel like I've always said Hispanic, not really used Latino or Latina.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>05:50</u></a>	And um, what is your parent's nationality and do you identify with their nationalities?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>05:55</u></a>	Sure. My grandparents on my mom's side, born and raised in Mexico, came over to the states when they are about in their mid twenties legally. And my mom was born in the states as well as my uncle on my dad's side. His whole family is in Mexico currently and he came over to the states when he was about 17.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>06:20</u></a>	So both of your parents are Mexican? Yes. Okay. And, um, do you identify as a Mexican American? I do. And um, how do you identify racially? What is your race and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>06:36</u></a>	I would say definitely Hispanic. I would, I mean I do consider myself, you know, Mexican American, so I always on like the forms. I always put Hispanic.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>06:47</u></a>	And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latina and why? Which term do you prefer more?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:54</a>	I've just always said Hispanic. Sometimes I'll say Latina, but that's like every once in a blue moon, but Hispanic has just been something I've always said.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:03</a>	And is there a reason or just.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:06</a>	I don't know, I was just kind of like, it's one of those things you kind of say without thinking about it, you know,
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:11</a>	is that the language that your parents use? Like the, that's what they told you, like you're Hispanic. Um, is that something that the language that you use in your home, Hispanic or you just kind of gravitated more to Hispanic?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:24</a>	I feel like I've just gravitated more to Hispanic on most forms I filled out. It always says Hispanic.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:29</a>	Okay. And um, so studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in the country?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:40</a>	I, I've seen that the population is supposed to, you know, grow like a crazy amount, which is not shocking, but it is shocking to most people and I think that's, I think that's, I really think that's great. And I really hope that the nation changes their views because right now we do, you know, have a president who did bash on Mexican specifically and I really hope that people open their eyes to, to not be us. So negatively.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">08:13</a>	And um, how do you maintain your Hispanic culture while being a student?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:18</a>	Oh Gosh, I love listening to Mexican music, Hispanic music. Um, I like, I like watching novellas and I just, it's Kinda hard here. I will say that because it's such a small culture here and there's not much Hispanic related in the town itself, but I try just to, I try to read in Spanish too so I can just practice.

- Speaker 1: [08:49](#) And um, what are some challenges you face at the university as a Hispanic student?
- Speaker 2: [08:57](#) I feel like, you know, I was driving back home with a friend and on, on the back of a windshield of a car, it said build the wall, trump. And I was like, what, like how could someone, you know, have the heart to really put that in on the back of their car as a sticker. And I think that's, that was hard for me to even like look at or to even like think like this is actually real. It's not just, you know, something I'm imagining and I think it's hard because Latinos and Latinas I think are just misunderstood in the car on the campus. Um, especially with some students and I think people are just really quick on their feet to label. Everyone is Mexican. So that's definitely like, I think some challenges.
- Speaker 1: [10:02](#) And has anyone ever asked you about your race or your ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these questions?
- Speaker 2: [10:10](#) You know, what's so funny, I, some people, yes. And some people know it, just some people know what they're looking for and if you don't really know then you're just, they won't ask by how best people have asked me for sure. And I've always said, you know, my parents are Mexican, I was born here and some people are like really cool about it. And then some people will make racist jokes. So just depends.
- Speaker 1: [10:35](#) Um, how do people typically ask you and what are some jokes that you've had it?
- Speaker 2: [10:40](#) Sure. Um, people. I've usually said, where are you from? And that's a very broad question. I'm like, I usually answer like, oh, I'm from DC. And I was like, do you mean like ethnicity wise? Like, yeah. So I'm Mexican and they're like, oh, like. And they'll say some people I like the wall or how like trump said this. And then I just usually like walk away. I'm just like, I can't even handle a conversation.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:05</a>	And are these questions that you experienced, like in your dorm room and the class went home with friends, how do what and what form do these questions typically present themselves?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">11:18</a>	Sometimes with a group of it was specifically the group of people I was hanging out with last year and I don't hang out with that many more, but it was typically at the grove during football season.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:35</a>	And people would ask you. Yep. And um, excuse me, have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived race?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">11:46</a>	I mean, sometimes people are like, they'll ask me, are your parents documented? And like mean yes, but like I don't understand why that has to be a question, you know?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:00</a>	And how do you respond to that? Or how does it make you feel as a Mexican American woman living in the south?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">12:09</a>	That makes me feel just really sad for them that they would even ask that, you know, I just don't think that it's necessarily an appropriate question to ask someone when you're barely starting to talk with them. And it makes me just upset. But I, you know, I try to keep myself collected. I'm like, I just tried it. I answered what the honest truth. Like, no, like, you're wrong, but my parents are documented.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:38</a>	And do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn? If no, why not?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">12:42</a>	Yes, I do. I. I grew up with my grandparents ever since I was about to and they would always talk to me in Spanish.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:51</a>	What Spanish or English? Your first language? Spanish and I'm in school. In the DC area. Was it common to see other students whose first language was Spanish in the classroom with you? How was that education like coming from a household where you spoke Spanish primarily or Spanish was your

first language and then going to school where? I'm assuming the education wasn't equally.

- Speaker 2: [13:19](#) I would always talk in Spanish with my grandparents and my mom would always see her best at speaking English with me, but my best friend actually from kindergarten when she entered preschool at the school I was at, she didn't speak any English, like she didn't know anything and so like they're at school, like they were teaching her English and now she's completely fine and can speak it perfectly well, but I know it was challenging for her to have that communication barrier by think teachers do a really good job at trying to teach students
- Speaker 1: [13:51](#) and what's that communication barrier and there for you with this Spanish being their first language and then learning English at the same time as well. Was that ever a struggle or.
- Speaker 2: [14:05](#) No, I'm definitely sure that it was. I just have such a hard time remembering, but I'm sure I did have a hard time. I know when I used to go to Mexico back when I was much younger, about five or six, like that was hard too because I only know. I only knew so many words. I only understood so much at like five or six. So that was hard too.
- Speaker 1: [14:24](#) And Are you completely fluent in Spanish, reading, writing, you know, that or different levels or what's your comfortability in language?
- Speaker 2: [14:33](#) You know, Ryan is hard for me. I won't lie, I can come, I can type easily on the, on my phone because I have the Spanish keeper and just a lot easier. But I still would like to learn sometime in the near future hopefully. And for reading I can read, I can get by speaking, I have no problem.
- Speaker 1: [14:55](#) And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
- Speaker 2: [15:01](#) I think Spanish is just such a valuable language to know, especially with the Latino, you know, population growing and growing in the states and



it's becoming super important. You know, most jobs, you know, if you speak Spanish it's like a thumbs up.

- Speaker 1: [15:20](#) And um, how does the university and the community catered to and omit the Latino population?
- Speaker 2: [15:29](#) Well, I want to say the Hispanic community here is about three percent and I want to, you know, that's a really small percentage. So I do think that the university could do a better job at recruiting Hispanics
- Speaker 1: [15:46](#) and how, how does the community and the university kind of cater to and try to include a Hispanic students and how does the university and the community kind of omit or forget about or exclude the Hispanic community?
- Speaker 2: [16:01](#) Well, I know we have lasso which is like the Latin American club, so that's a way like the community welcomes, you know, Hispanic community but omits. I just don't think that's a hard question after like, I just don't think that the university pays that much attention to the Hispanic community.
- Speaker 1: [16:31](#) And um, how do you view race in the US in the south and here in Oxford?
- Speaker 3: [16:40](#) I think.
- Speaker 2: [16:43](#) Well I was always, I was always kind of warned about the south and like being Hispanic people don't like I know my uncle's wife told me, you know, like most northern nurse, you know, don't really make it in the south. They usually end up coming back home and I never really understood why she said that to me. And now I kind of see why because I do feel like northerners and southerners are like, they're very different, you know, in their way of thinking and in their thought process and in the way they view race because I think the south still needs to become more culturally accepting to all races and I think that's something we definitely, you know, definitely have to work on. And I do feel like

sometimes in the north you do have people who don't culturally acceptable. Racist too. I feel like you can't wait.

Speaker 1: [17:41](#) And what about in the south? How do you see race in the South and here?

Speaker 2: [17:46](#) I see, well I haven't seen, I kind of, I'm in the middle because what I've seen is what I've experienced and what I've seen is also what I've read on papers, you know, like the daily Mississippian. So I just, I'm not sure.

Speaker 1: [18:10](#) All right. And um, how do you perceive the Latino population effecting the idea of race in the south?

Speaker 2: [18:19](#) I think that I think that the Latino population is definitely trying to make their own definitely like their own path. And I do feel like people in the south are still hard, so still having a hard time accepting that and still referring to most as like illegals and in terminology like that. And I really hope that, you know, the south really changes that view of Latinos because right now what they have is the idea that trump is feeding them.

Speaker 1: [19:08](#) And um, I already asked you about challenges number 26 inches. Always forgets her name from the questionnaire, 17 as well. Um, are there any other points or topics that you'd like to discuss it I didn't ask you or anything else that you'd like to touch on?

Speaker 2: [19:26](#) I think you did an excellent job at covering everything. Alright. Well that is.

Jesus Escobedo

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) So today is November sixth and we are conducting an interview in the library for the purposes of my thesis research, which is titled the Latino South Race and Racialization. So we'll go ahead and jump right in. Are you 18 years or older? Can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: Jesus Escobedo

Speaker 1: When were you born?

Speaker 2: November 12, 1997. Got a birthday coming up.

Speaker 1: Um, where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2: I am from Mexico originally the state of Texas and I grew up in the little town of La Quemada Villanueva.

Speaker 1: [01:00](#) And um, what other places have you also lived in other than Oxford since coming to America? You moved from there to here to Oxford?

Speaker 2: Yes, in 2001.

Speaker 1: Okay. And why did you move from Zacatecas to here?

Speaker 2: Because my dad, he came to the United States working with the visa and he kept coming back and forth to get us all eligible as residents to come to United States legally. And ever since that against me, he just wanted a better life for us.

Speaker 1: And is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?

Speaker 2: I would say yes because it identifies who I am and also where I come from.

Speaker 1: Um, and how has your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?

Speaker 2: At the university. It's been great. Nothing, nothing bad or nothing wrong in Oxford, I've never, I haven't had any bad experiences with me being Hispanic or anything like that.

Speaker 1: So you would say your experiences at the university and living in Oxford and both have been pretty good?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Okay. And um, what is your major and your classification and maybe some notable involvement that you have on campus?

Speaker 2: My major is marketing and my minor is digital media studies. My classification is junior and involvements on campus is I'm the marketing director for rebel radio and I recently applied for to become a orientation leader for the summer of 2019.

Speaker 1: Okay. And um, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?

Speaker 2: Looking for the future? See what's ahead of me, what? See what I can do with it.

Speaker 1: [03:09](#) Okay. And um, the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [03:23](#) Would it be Hispanic or Mexican? You told me. You explained this to me last time you said Hispanic is any person from Latin America that speak Spanish? Am I correct in the Mexican is someone who is from Mexico. Right.

Speaker 1: When people ask you, what's your ethnicity? What do you normally say?

Speaker 2: [04:10](#) I used to say both. I'm Hispanic because I'm someone from Latin America speaks Spanish and I'm Mexican because I'm from Mexico.

Speaker 1: [04:18](#) And um, what is your parents' nationality and do you identify with their nationality?

Speaker 2: My Parent's nationality is also Hispanic and Mexican. And to identify with my print? Yes.

Speaker 1: And um, how do you identify racially and why do you identify this way?

Speaker 2: [04:39](#) See, this is a hard question because when it's on the little voting things, I'm Hispanic. When I get in

		trouble in high school, it always say white, black. I'm Asian. I think in other there was another, there was never caramel, so I guess I would be considered white.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:02</a>	Okay. Um, and um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?
Speaker 2:		Hispanic.
Speaker 1:		And why is that? Why do you prefer the term Hispanic over Latina?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:20</a>	Hispanic? Because it sounds it's more common, more common. If a Caucasian person ask you, Oh, you're Hispanic, you would, you barely hear, oh, he's Latino. You a more common word. Used to describe someone from Latin America would be Hispanic.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:43</a>	Okay. And a study showed that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:55</a>	Big Way because more kids, more families that are Hispanic are coming in and with growing populations the future is going to be decided majority because the Hispanic Latino population is growing and that it's going to be a big effect on voting and population size, school sizes synthesizes. So it's going to be a big deal.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:20</a>	And um, how do you mind saying your Latino culture while being a student at the university?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:25</a>	Are we speaking Spanish? Being bilinguals pig into my friends in both, in both languages, even though they can't understand Spanish, but always sticking to always describing what I like to do, what I like to eat, what are, what are my, what's my culture about stuff like that. Just describing who I am and what I come from.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:48</a>	And um, what are some challenges you faced at the university and an Oxford as a Latino do?

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:54</a>	Um, that's a good question. I would say other students putting, putting me on a lower level than them because I'm
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">07:11</a>	a minority and
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:12</a>	when it comes to group projects, they stick to their friends and they don't think about diversity. I guess that would be one challenge I have faced because they don't choose minorities. They stick to their close group.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:27</a>	And um, has anyone ever asked you about your race and ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these types of questions?
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">07:37</a>	No. Choir? No.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:41</a>	No, no one ever asked you any questions about what your race is or where you're from or anything?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:46</a>	Oh yeah, we do. And I just say, Oh, I'm from this. I'm from second biggest vehicle. It's six hours from the border. I was bored there, came here, and they know states have chosen one. Usually. That's how it goes.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:59</a>	Okay. And have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived writes? Can you elaborate on that? I had to say, has anyone ever said anything to you or about you because of the way that you look?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">08:18</a>	If I remember correctly? Yes. Some people in the past have confused me for being Chinese. Got Her. No, because somebody is Quintin ins or small eyes. But yes, I have been confused about my race.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:37</a>	And do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">08:40</a>	I do speak Spanish and I learned from my parents and being surrounded by Hispanic parents and family members because bay, I was born until 1997 and four s and all the way to 2001 I lived in Mexico. So I grew up learning and hearing Spanish

		until 2001 when I came to United States I began picking up the English language.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:03</a>	Um, and how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:07</a>	Very important because it's a communication factor that's between you and the person you're talking to. It's a communication aspect.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:17</a>	And um, how does the university and the community cater to the Latino population?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:26</a>	There's not much
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">09:28</a>	big
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:31</a>	for, is it going to the Latino component because there's not a lot of Latinos students. I spreading students here. So I'll add, say there's not a lot
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">09:42</a>	of um,
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:45</a>	recruiting coming to us from the university
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:51</a>	and um, how does the university and the community like omit or forget about the Latino population?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:59</a>	Um, this, the recently Hispanic heritage month was like one month ago, almost one month ago and then it ended one month ago on their social media or anything like that. I did not see anything about Hispanic heritage month or anything like that. So, and has been the marketing director for robbery at radio. I did, I played an hour, a Latin Hispanic music two days out of the week, so to celebrate my people in where I come from, but other than that. And I did see some groups on university campus put up flyers celebrating Hispanic heritage month, but the university as whole.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">10:41</a>	No. Okay. And how do you view race in the US and the south and here in Oxford?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">10:49</a>	How do I view race?

Speaker 3:	<a href="#">10:52</a>	Hmm.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">10:56</a>	To me, I don't, I don't judge a person's personality or will from their color view, everybody as equal. And then the United States, it's a big problem. They say snap now since uh, you know, who took office in 2016, but it's becoming a bigger issue now in the south. It's always been a big issue. And Oxford ever since coming here in 2001 and growing here ever since. I've never seen any racial disputes or anything like that.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">11:41</a>	Okay. And um, how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:47</a>	south? It's definitely a big issue since the south is very big on confederacy and all that stuff and it definitely affects it because I'm, it's going to increase minority, minority Tsm, that we're going to increase the minority population and that's gonna be a big factor, but what I had and um, that's really it. Um, do you have any other points or topics that you'd like to discuss? Thank you for having me. Thank you.
		Juan Riojas
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:00</a>	I'm now recording, the date is November 13th and we are conducting research and interview for my thesis, project title, the Latino South: Race and Racialization. So to start off, are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:20</a>	Juan Riojas
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:27</a>	And uh, when were you born?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:29</a>	Um, September 25th, 1998.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:33</a>	And uh, where are you from and where did you grow up?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:36</a>	Okay. So, um, I was born in Texas. My Dad's in the military, so I've lived in San Antonio. I've lived in



		Washington, DC area, then I graduated high school in the Gulf coast of Mississippi.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:50</a>	Okay. And, um, were those all of the places you've lived in or
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:55</a>	Those are the places I went to school and yeah.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:58</a>	And which place would you say had the most impact on how you were raised or which place do you kind of, I guess considered home more than the rest or.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:07</a>	Sure. So most of my family is in San Antonio. My Dad's family's in San Antonio, so that had a special place. Um, but honestly now, especially because I ended up going to ole miss, I consider Mississippi probably my home.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:20</a>	Okay. And you said you moved to the Gulf coast, right? Yep. What part?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:23</a>	Um, north Gulf coast area. Uh, just north of Biloxi has got one market.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:29</a>	Okay, cool. And um, why did you decide to move from the coast to Oxford to attend Ole Miss?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:37</a>	Well, it was funny because I thought, you know, as a junior and senior I thought, well, I'm not going to go to ole miss, whatever I do, I'm going to find somewhere else to go. And so I was going to go to either UT Austin or rice. Um, but then I visited their campuses and sat in on their classes and was not super impressed, but when I came to ole miss and sat in on both honors classes and a lot ppo, I just absolutely fell in love with the way that things were taught here. Um, and then of course I got a pretty good scholarship so that those two things coupled
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:11</a>	and um, is race and important part of your identity? Why or why not?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:20</a>	Yes. Um, sometimes more than others. You know, I went to Catholic school on the Gulf coast, so over there I feel like that part of that identity was kind of

		forgotten, but when I lived in San Antonio, um, you know, growing up as a Mexican American was part of everyday life.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:38</a>	And um, how has your experience been as a student at Ole miss and living in Oxford
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:45</a>	overall? I've enjoyed it. It's kind of a, you know, a small town. It's Mississippi but it pretty much does everything I needed to do and I get to travel a lot so I'm not here too much on the weekends. Right.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:00</a>	And uh, what is your major classification and some notable involvement that you get this?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:05</a>	Sure. So right now I'm doing public policy leadership in Arabic, Arabic flagship program and um, the Trent Lott leadership institute. I'm a sophomore and I'm ASB senator. I'm on the debate team and I helped start the quiz bowl team this year, so I do quiz, bowl and chess. So pretty much anything nerdy.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:25</a>	And uh, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:30</a>	Um, well, this semester in particular, being on the debate team has been huge because I've traveled already five weekends and we're going to South Africa this December. So for me that's huge. I'm also, um, being Roman Catholic is pretty integral, takes up lots of lots of Sundays. Um, so I guess, yeah, those are two of the things, you know, my spiritual life and academic competing
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:57</a>	and the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity is two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:04</a>	Uh, my ethnicity on the census, I believe would say Hispanic or Latino.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:08</a>	Okay. And um, what are your parent's nationality and do you identify with their nationality?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:16</a>	Um, in terms of like their citizenship or.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:19</a>	No, like just where they're from. Like what country they're from, not saying sure. If they are immigrants that's fine. If they are not immigrants, maybe just aware of their appearance or their grandparents come from just kind of like the nation basically.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:32</a>	Right. So, um, my dad is Mexican, his family is Mexican and then my mom is like half native American and half white.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:42</a>	And do you identify with either of those groups or what would
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:48</a>	I generally identify most as Mexican American because that's the, I know my dad's family the best.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:53</a>	And um, how do you identify racially and why do you identify this way?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:58</a>	Um, I identify as white in terms of race because I looked pretty good in terms of least that's what I've always been told, kind of just been, if nothing else, condition to check that box.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:11</a>	And um, so you said that's what you've always been told by my appearance friends or how was that created? Basically.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:22</a>	Sure. So definitely not by parents. Parents honestly don't talk about it that much. Um, but especially after the move from San Antonio to Maryland, you know, until people hear my name, they generally will say, oh yeah, you know, you're white. And so just, you know, starting in second grade that was just kind of told to me I guess like, yeah, probably my friends the most.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:46</a>	And how has that been because you're the first person that I've interviewed who, well as a few other people and you're the first person I've interviewed who you identify as a different race than your ethnicity. Most people will say Hispanic is they're raised. So this is, this is like a key part of what I'm trying to figure out. Okay. Why did you decide to separate the two? Why? What's that difference for you? Or have you

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:14</a>	never thought about that or. Yeah, I guess mainly just because when I, when I'm taking the sat and the act, Hispanic isn't generally a race option. So in terms of, uh, in my brain, they're kind of two separate entities.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:30</a>	Okay. And do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:38</a>	Either one is fine. I generally say Latino though. When people ask
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:42</a>	is there a reason why or
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:44</a>	I don't know. My grandparents say that Hispanic was treated by the government. So just from a young age, I was told to say you're Latino
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:54</a>	and so studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:58</a>	this will affect the way race relations is viewed in this country? Well, yeah, I feel like it, you know, it's definitely growing and it's kind of interesting to see how I feel like maybe in 2016 for the first time it was kind of an integral part of the political scene at least, you know, immigration which a lot of people conflate with. I'm Latino Americans. So yeah, the, the, the increase is rising quite a bit. So at least I think conversation is going to be needed, needed to be had pretty soon in terms of like who are we and what is our role here
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:40</a>	and how do you maintain your Latino culture while the while being a student here,
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:45</a>	it's very difficult. Um, there, there really isn't that much of a, like probably even less so than the Gulf coast. So I'm in the Gulf coast. I could at least go to Spanish mass, um, on Sunday without having to drive to far. But here not so much, um, and there aren't, I don't even have, I don't think I have hardly any friends who can, um, you know, speak Spanish or even really talk about culture at all. So it's been pretty difficult. Um, there's a few weekends ago I actually went to north Georgia and judged a debate tournament in Spanish even though I'm not

proficient in Spanish, I'm all right, but I'm definitely not that good. But being around they were all first generation Americans, all the debaters and so being there kind of sparked more of like a desire for me to like, uh, a little bit of a longing. So I haven't really found it yet. I tried to kind of, there was a, a table and business row for a lasso and I tried to say like, hey, how can I get involved in stuff? And the people at the table did not have any idea really how I could get involved. So that kind of died quick. But it's something that I'm not really participating in, but I would like to be involved in somehow.

- Speaker 1: [08:59](#) And what are some challenges you face? And as a student here and as a Latino,
- Speaker 2: [09:06](#) well I think that they're just not being that many like outlets, I guess to kind of participate in the culture like you have Latin night once a semester put on by by Alexa, which is a lot of fun. Um, but a lot of the students who go here also aren't used to being around, um, Latin American culture at all. They're much more used to being around either black culture, even Vietnamese culture is more familiar to them. So I guess just not, not really having outlets or having people who are familiar with it and comfortable with it.
- Speaker 1: [09:50](#) And has anyone ever asked you about your race and your ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these questions?
- Speaker 2: [09:57](#) Yeah. People ask me a lot when, when they, because I generally go by Jr instead of Juan Ramon. Um, but when people ask what J R stands for it, I say Juan Ramon, they go, Whoa, you know, what are you? And so I say, I'm Mexican American. And they're like, but you look so white. And I'm like, yeah, my dad's, my dad's first generation American. Um, what, what's it say and what to say to that? And it becomes uncomfortable sometimes. I can generally shrug it off though.
- Speaker 1: [10:30](#) And um, has that been something that you've grown to, I guess cope with or understand in the fact that, you know, people have this perception of what

Latinos are supposed to look like and if you don't look like that stereotypical image, then people tend to ask you what are you going to. And so is that something that you've grown to understand or think about on a deeper level at all or.

- Speaker 2: [10:57](#) Yeah, definitely. Especially because like in San Antonio, people wouldn't, wouldn't even think twice about it, you know, they, they know, you know, Latino American comes in all shapes, sizes and colors. Um, but being here you don't have people who are around any type of Latin American. And I understand that, you know, I know that I have, I'm sure, you know, biases unknown to me and kind of stereotypical ideas of other types of people. So I've been, and you know, there are some times, you know, people will just say something that's particularly ignorant. No kind of like take me off, but for the most part I feel like I've kind of grown to be understanding.
- Speaker 1: [11:37](#) And have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived race?
- Speaker 2: [11:45](#) You know, that's interesting. I'm honestly not sure if I can think of a of an example right off the top of my head can, can you say that one more time?
- Speaker 1: [11:52](#) Um, have you ever experienced any assumptions or stereotypes more on your character because of your perceived waves?
- Speaker 2: [12:02](#) Yeah. And I guess this probably isn't quite the question that you're asking, but I mean there's definitely times when people, um, you know, who knows that my name is Juan Ramon and know that I'm Mexican American. They'll make, they'll make stereo typical like assumptions about what I like to do that, you know, they'll even say, you know, do you play soccer? And I might say yes, like, oh, of course. Um, and things like that, I know that's not quite character necessarily.

- Speaker 1: [12:25](#) That's fine. That's it. It's really, it's a broad, open ended question just about you know, who you are as a person.
- Speaker 2: [12:31](#) Yeah, sure. Of course. Of course there's, there's plenty of assumptions of that when they find out I'm Mexican American and I'm sure there's plenty unknown assumptions happening when they just look at me and they kind of see my, my beaver s care and no, and they're like, oh, you know, he's just another white guy.
- Speaker 1: [12:50](#) Is that something that you've, that you make a point to have people understand that you're not. I guess in a way just another white guy, not that being white is something negative, but I'm sure you're obviously proud of your Mexican heritage. So is that something you try to make a point of or are you just kinda wait until maybe someone asks or how do you handle that?
- Speaker 2: [13:12](#) Yeah, so it often kind of depends. I guess, like in the setting that I'm in when I'm talking to these people, if it's someone who I'm already friends with, then I'll then I'll definitely talk about it. I really do. I enjoy talking about my family, especially because, you know, being in the military, even though we haven't moved as much as some military families, it's kind of easy to lose an identity. So I do like, um, you know, talking about it and trying to form an identity, um, you know, but if I'm just at like a party or something and you know, someone's asking, then I'll probably just, just let it slide because I don't see much of a purpose and getting into it.
- Speaker 1: [13:46](#) Alright. And uh, do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn?
- Speaker 2: [13:51](#) So growing up in San Antonio, my grandparents would speak Spanish to me pretty much exclusively. They're, you know, they're fine in English as well. Um, so until I was about eight years old, I was more or less fluent in Spanish and things regarding, you know, family and house and things like that. But when I moved to DC, my father who's also fluent in Spanish would not speak any

Spanish to me. Now there are people in the DC area. Of course you spoke Spanish, so it kind of was able to keep it up a little bit. But when I moved to Mississippi when I was 13, I pretty much lost all, all grounding and Spanish. I know when to speak to. My father wouldn't speak to me in Spanish and so now cut, um, I can still speak it and I go, I've been to what Haka like every September for the last three years, not this year, but the three years before that. And so when I go there and I start speaking it after about a week, it can kind of come back to me. Um, but like as of right now, I would not want to have to be a translator for someone.

- Speaker 1: [14:56](#) And um, is your family from what happened?
- Speaker 2: [14:59](#) Um, some of my families, I think it's a little bit more, more distant than my grandparents would like to think because I know my, I think my, my grandfather's father was from
- Speaker 3: [15:14](#) um,
- Speaker 2: [15:16](#) Mexico City, the LFA and then they came over when my grandfather was super young. Um, and so yeah, but we, we definitely have family roots that will haka, but of course it's also super hard because when I go there and they'll say, oh, this is your tia and I cannot tell you if it's actually my deal or not. I have no idea.
- Speaker 1: [15:36](#) And um, I know you said growing up until about how you were eight, your, your grandparents spoke exclusively Spanish to you. Which language would you say you learned first?
- Speaker 2: [15:49](#) It's kind of interesting because probably, and of course this is probably stretching my memory a little bit, but I feel like there were definitely some words I learned them concurrently. Definitely not Spanish first, but I feel like there were definitely some words were I didn't know them, I knew them in Spanish first, but I feel like I guess I probably learned the morphology of sentences and stuff in English, but like even though the school I went to for kindergarten, first grade we had English and



Spanish and it wasn't Spanish in the sense of when most people think of the class, it was more of like learning basic basic grammar and in learning how to read in Spanish. So I really did learn them at the same time.

- Speaker 1: [16:29](#) Okay. And you said your father didn't speak Spanish to you growing up. Is there a reason why?
- Speaker 2: [16:36](#) I honestly don't know. He's not the most talkative of people and I've confronted him about it a couple times, so I'm pretty confrontational. But, um, he, he's, you know, and his response has been like, oh, you don't need to know Spanish, you can just, you can just speak English or know the, the more typical one is like, oh, I'm not good enough to be speaking to you. You need to speak to someone who's better than me at Spanish and, you know, when I've gone places with him, you know, I can tell he's completely fluent and everyone else says so, but I really don't know what his motivations are, but that's what he says.
- Speaker 1: [17:12](#) And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the feudal culture?
- Speaker 2: [17:17](#) I think it's really important, honestly, especially like, you know, an integral part of, at least my family's culture, you know, is, is going to mass and my, one of my cousins got married and to be able to have all of the songs be in Spanish because both the bride and the groom were Latino American. You know, that's something that does invoke another side of emotion that I, I really like to be able to be in touch with and I think that being able to speak allows you to participate more fully in the culture because honestly, a lot of people, a lot of Latin Americans, I feel like that I've talked to. Um, well honestly a little bit. Look down on you. If you don't speak Spanish, you're trying to, to claim your Latin American heritage. So if nothing else in a practical sense, it's kind of good to know, to be able to, to get those outlets
- Speaker 1: [18:16](#) something that you agree or disagree with as people who may

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">18:20</a>	looked down upon
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">18:23</a>	those who are not fluent in Spanish or who don't speak Spanish.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">18:27</a>	I, I definitely don't like that at all. Especially because when you look at other cultures like on the Gulf coast, um, there's a huge Vietnamese population and, you know, I would go to some of their student organizations, church organizations and um, you know, less than half of them could speak Vietnamese yet that did not stop them from fully participating in a lot of the culture. So I feel like that is something that kind of hinders the Latin American population from maybe being united with people who could be within their culture and would like to identify but are maybe either too scared to or scared away. I don't think that that's a good thing. That being said, I still do appreciate the idea of learning Spanish and I wish people who could speak Spanish would speak to their children in Spanish to be able to pass it along. And
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">19:15</a>	um, how does the university and the community catered to the lesbian population?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">19:22</a>	It's difficult. Um, you know, and I don't know the numbers. I'm sure you do, but I don't feel like there's a very big, uh, Latin American population. So as of right now, I feel like it's pretty difficult to even just get their ear, the university's ear on these issues. I feel like a good way to do it is through the honors college. I feel like the, you know, the honors college is a good place to start some of this dialogue and getting students that identify with the Latin American culture really like fired up and passionate about wanting to do something is probably the best thing because I can't foresee the university saying no, but I also can't foresee the university really taking much initiative to do something to create or foster an environment that is conducive to that. And how does
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">20:16</a>	the university and the community omit the Latino families?

- Speaker 2: [20:23](#) Well, I think in a, maybe it's just the time and place right now that I'm in, but you know, so much of the dialogue when you hear about, um, race relations really is, you know, black or white and those conversations are definitely important. Especially the history of Ole miss in particular. Um, you know, but there really aren't any conversations at all about um, relations with Latin American people and I feel like, you know, and in 2016 and the election and again during the midterms, you know, I'm being in La, I feel like I'm pretty politically involved in. I try and go to a bunch of different things and not necessarily in law, uh, this happens, but where people who say to be politically involved, one of their big things is like immigration and they talk about all of these, you know, undocumented immigrants and all these Mexicans they say and there's just such a lack of education when they're talking that that really is frustrating and there's no conversation about it at the university and the community both kind of just let that happen and I don't, I don't know what they're supposed to do about it, but that definitely has an admitted conversation.
- Speaker 2: [21:34](#) And um, how do you, how do you view race in the US in the south and here in Knoxville? Interesting. So
- Speaker 2: [21:50](#) living in DC I was, I was definitely spoiled where, um, I had, there was people from all different nations where they were first generation Americans or just on visas. And so I just had this absolute amazing exposure and I kind of, you know, this is second to fifth grade I was there. And so for my elementary school years, I kind of had this falsified sense of there being this perfect race relations in America or at least in the American north. Um, now I'm not so sure if that's actually the case. Um, but in the deep south
- Speaker 2: [22:33](#) it's hard because especially, you know, just with all of the segregation that's happened with, with red lining in the south, there's been like this forced literal separation of the races. And so there are definitely lots of things that needed, need to be

amended. And I'm talking about, you know, of course I like the deep south of San Antonio I feel like is again, super different. And even the Gulf coast is a little bit different from the rest of the Mississippi. And then now in Oxford, I guess there are some amazing people who are having amazing conversations on campus and stuff. But I think the best maybe like a pit immigration, I don't think it's a word, but now it is of it is when you look in the Grove on Saturdays, I love football. It's always something I've been a huge fan of. But when you see all these people trying to wrap the Mississippi flag or just the blatant confederate flag and Colonel Reb, it served as a reminder to me that things are not well in Oxford and things are not well, uh, in the deep south. Hope that answered the. I got a little bit off track.

- Speaker 1: [23:46](#) No, that's fine. That was great. And how do you perceive the Latino population effecting the idea of race here in the south?
- Speaker 2: [23:59](#) Well, as you know, the Latino population begins to grow. There are going to definitely just necessarily have to be conversations about our role in society and especially our role in the deep south and I think it's going to be difficult to break stereotypes, um, because, you know, people here just have not been here, meaning the Mississippian and warm market have not really been confronted with any Latin Americans, Latinos at all. And so in their mind, they're still this kind of myth or legend of what it should look like of what one should look like. So the way Latina,
- Speaker 4: [24:46](#) um,
- Speaker 2: [24:50](#) and it's, it's hard, it's, it's, it's an internal debate too. And it's a debate we had actually when we went to, um, when I was at Yale the other weekend and you know, you have the kind of like the idea of, oh well you should just try your best to break those stereotypes and fit in and culture, but then like the rebel and he absolutely hates that idea. And I'm like, no, no, you should be super proud and just, you know, if people in deep south don't want to accept

you, then they shouldn't have you. But that doesn't work. That's not very practical either. So it's an internal dilemma.

- Speaker 1: [25:25](#) And that's my last question. Are there any other points or topics that you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you?
- Speaker 2: [25:34](#) I think we covered it pretty well. I'm looking forward to hearing what you, what you come up with. But yeah, I there, there is definitely that, that internal dilemma they kinda just drives me crazy of. It's like I don't want there to be violence against Latinos at all. Um, I don't want there to be prejudice against Latinos and things of like, oh, and here's maybe an interesting anecdote I can share with you. Um, you know, and people all the time we'll say things that I guess they probably don't mean, you know, say, Oh, you're fake Mexican and things like that. Um, that don't sting anymore. They used to. And it is true that I generally don't face as many prejudices as a lot of people would because of the way I look. Um, that being said, one story in one market when I was getting my driver's license, I go to with my, you know, to get my driver's license and they say, Oh, you need to get another social security card.
- Speaker 2: [26:31](#) You know, they just took one look at the name and like, what do you mean? Is it just the only social security card I've ever had? They're like, oh no, that one's not legitimate. So I had to order another social security card for some reason it looked the exact same. I'm a little bit more crisp than my old one. You know, I go take that in. They go, oh no, you need a new birth certificate. This isn't a real birth certificate. I'm like, what do you mean? Is it literally the only burst of they gave me, you know, that's what my mom was saying. And they were like, no, this is from the county of Texas. We need it to be from the state of Texas, you know, which again, I don't know, they might've been just trying to do their job, but it was the same old woman each and every time I went in there and there were about five times I went in there and I got denied by the same person and it was curious because all it took was me

showing up that six time and there being a different woman working the desk.

Speaker 2: [27:23](#) Uh, she was a young black woman and things were easy enough. Got My driver's license within minutes. Uh, so I don't know, I guess that was an anecdote to share of just how people can just look at a name. I feel like in just feel, feel things because in the deep south they're not being. They're not used to actually having to to talk to or meet any Latinos and yeah, that's all I got for you. I think.

Julio Cazares

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) We are now recording. Today is November 15 and we are conducting an interview in Bishop Hall and the interview is for my thesis research titled The Latino South Race and Racialization. So we'll go ahead and jump right in. Um, are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:20](#) Yep, that's Julio Cazares

Speaker 1: [00:25](#) So, um, when were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:46](#) I was born May 20, 1988.

Speaker 1: And uh, where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2: I'm from Holland, Michigan and I grew up in Holland, Michigan.

Speaker 1: And have you ever lived in any other places? I

Speaker 2: 've lived in Charlotte, North Carolina for Undergrad and then I studied abroad in Valencia, Spain for a little bit. So.

Speaker 1: And uh, what kind of attracted you to Charlotte, North Carolina for Undergrad and then ultimately what drew you here to Mississippi?

Speaker 2: So for Undergrad, uh, just kind of moving to a different state, different city, um, I knew that going

- to school in North Carolina would be a lot more affordable as well. Um, and also just there'd be more economic opportunity. I mean I could get a job in North Carolina really easy.
- Speaker 1: Ultimately, what led you here to the University of Mississippi Law School?
- Speaker 2: Pretty much just the law school itself. I mean I did a, I did a couple of visits to law schools during orientation weeks and stuff and mostly it's just my thought Oxford was beautiful. It actually reminded me a lot of my hometown, so.
- Speaker 1: [02:03](#) Okay. And how has that law school adjustment been here?
- Speaker 2: [02:08](#) It was interesting at first I actually, a, I realized I was going through like a culture shock. Oh my first month or so here in Mississippi, but now it's much better. It's still interesting, but it's better.
- Speaker 1: [02:23](#) And what were the demographics like in Holland? Like growing up, what type of community were you raised in?
- Speaker 2: [02:31](#) I was definitely around a Hispanic people or all Latino people mostly. Um, some African Americans. Holland is very honestly, it's very much like Oxford. It's very white. So I was, I grew up in a very segregated neighborhood. Um, so that definitely was interesting.
- Speaker 1: And what made Oxford, I guess kind of a shock to you, how is Oxford a culture shock?
- Speaker 2: Um, well I knew that it was going to be culturally different. I just wasn't prepared for how culturally different it would be and how intense it would be. Um, and so, uh, it's like a whole nother degree of southern every day. Yeah.
- Speaker 1: [03:21](#) And um, is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?

- Speaker 2: [03:26](#) Yeah, no, I definitely think it is race. I, I mean, I can't really, I don't want to and I can't really change who I am. It's the first thing people see about me. Um, it's another thing that I've really grown to love and accept and I didn't use to as a child. So now that I'm an adult and I do, um, and that it's become important to me.
- Speaker 1: [03:51](#) Um, and as a child, what made it difficult for you to embrace your heritage and who you are and I guess kind of versus looking at where you are now as an adult?
- Speaker 2: [04:01](#) Yeah, no, first was just growing up in Michigan growing up in Holland, Michigan. Um, and then the second was just how my parents raised me. They wanted me to definitely assimilate, um, definitely fit in as much as possible even though I mean that would, I guess I would never fit in 100 percent because I didn't look like everybody else. So, but yeah, so that, that definitely was it.
- Speaker 1: [04:31](#) And how, how are you now with just being proud of who you are? How has that been?
- Speaker 2: [04:37](#) I definitely, I'm always very proud of who I am. I'm actually kind of see it as a mission. Um, I realized that I have an obligation to be a visible Latino presence for people like, I mean, like I feel privileged to be able bodied, you know, educated going to college and I feel like I need to be out in the public eye so that other people who are less privileged than me can be out in the public and have an easier life. So,
- Speaker 1: [05:18](#) How has your experience been at university and living here in Oxford?
- Speaker 2: [05:23](#) Yeah, no, my experience has been pretty interesting. Um, I mean it, I would say everybody has been accepting enough. Um, it's, it's always interesting when you see like, uh, like when people try to overcompensate by being so polite. That's always funny. Um, and I mean they elected me as senator, so that has to be something that was interesting. I mean obviously, I mean, I don't know, maybe lucky



because I'm at the law school and there's a lot of out of state students, but I mean it's definitely been pretty interesting.

- Speaker 1: [06:04](#) Can you tell me what year you are in law school? What type of law you study and maybe some involvement that you have within the law school?
- Speaker 2: [06:21](#) Yeah. Um, so yeah, I'm a first year law student and I guess notable involvement. Um, well I'm a part of a LLSA which is the Latino, the Latino Law Students Association. I'm a part of BLSA, which is the black law student association, um, part of, part of outlaw which is the Lgbtq a law student association. I'm a member of the Student Bar Association and I'm a senator.
- Speaker 1: [06:54](#) What are you studying any type of law or do you know what type of law you ultimately want to practice or?
- Speaker 2: [07:02](#) So we're not learning any specific law just yet, but I do know I like any kind of international contract law. I like international business. I like anything to do with international stuff. So.
- Speaker 1: Cool. Yeah. And um, what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
- Speaker 2: School? Definitely just school. I mean it's like what I've been working for the last, well two years of Undergrad. I decided last years ago that I wanted to do law school. So this is definitely like my main priority.
- Speaker 1: And now into more questions about your identity and who you are. So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 2: So my ethnicity, I would say and probably be Mexican, Mexican American. I mean I would see my race as being Mexican obviously to um, I just can't see. Mexican culture is so unique. It's kind of hard to separate my race, my ethnicity.

Speaker 1: So, and um, what are your parents' nationality and do you identify with their nationality?

Speaker 2: Both of my parents are Mexican and I definitely do. Yeah.

Speaker 1: And how do you identify racially and why do you identify this way?

Speaker 2: I identify as Mexican. I mean, I, I could say Mexican American or something, but I just, yeah, just Mexican is fine with me.

Speaker 1: And um, were your parents born in the United States or were they born in Mexico?

Speaker 2: My Dad was born in Mexico. My mom was born in Texas.

Speaker 1: I think about how that's an interesting, I guess to have one parent who was born in the States and one born in Mexico. Did that in a way and make your experience as a child or unique, um, as a child of Mexican Americans unique?

Speaker 2: [09:06](#) It had definitely, um, it was interesting because, um, I mean where we grew up in and it was still like a migrant family. Like the only reason my parents ended up where they did was because of migrant work. So, you know, it's uh, it was, I would still say very much a strictly first generation Mexican upbringing in America.

Speaker 1: [09:31](#) And uh, are you a first generation college student?

Speaker 2: Yeah. And I guess taking that into account, going through Undergrad and now in law school.

Speaker 1: Um, how has your experience been in relation to you being a first generation student?

Speaker 2: [09:46](#) Um, it's, I've definitely had to take the advice of my peers a lot of because like for instance, um, you know, thanksgiving break is coming up, um, and I planned on going home for Thanksgiving break, but all of my classmates who have doctors and lawyers

as parents kept on saying, oh, my parents are saying stay here and study. And I'm like, why? And apparently that's very common and it gives you an advantage because he literally have 10 days to study. Whereas for me, I never had parents in college so I wouldn't never know to do that. So I definitely, that was something that was just an example of advice I've taken her from classmates, you know, here and even an Undergrad just to be like, oh, okay, I didn't know that was a thing. So,

- Speaker 1: [10:37](#) Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?
- Speaker 2: [10:41](#) Uh, I identify as a Latinx because I'm, you know, I'm gay and I like to identify, you know, Latinx just because I kind of, I prefer that.
- Speaker 1: [10:55](#) Yeah. And is there a reason why you prefer the term Latinx over Hispanic?
- Speaker 2: [10:59](#) Yeah, I think it's, I'm definitely more inclusive. Um, we don't live in Hispaniola. Um, I don't know, it just, it, it seems to be like a more welcoming. I don't know, maybe that's just me,
- Speaker 1: [11:14](#) A study showed that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race and race relations are viewed in this country?
- Speaker 2: [11:25](#) I think it'll definitely affect how race and race relations are viewed in the future. Um, in a positive way. I think right now we can see that it's affecting views in a negative and worrisome way. Um, I have plenty of my own views on how, how a growing minority majority state makes some populations worried. So I mean that's just, that's just changed. So.
- Speaker 1: [11:57](#) How do you maintain your Latinx culture and being a student?
- Speaker 2: [12:03](#) Let's see. I listen to a lot of great music on my Spotify. I just try to watch my novelas with subtitles on Netflix. I kind of just stay in touch with my parents. Um, now that I'm an adult, they kind of are

more willing to share, you know, more of our Mexican culture and stuff with me. Um, and then yeah, just trying to, here it's a little harder to find, uh, you know, other minority students. But whenever I do find, I don't know, we just kind of have that in common.

Speaker 1: [12:37](#) So, and uh, what are some challenges you face if the university and here at Oxford as a Latinx student?

Speaker 2: [12:48](#) Interestingly, it's not really, I don't really have challenges. It's weird, like I don't feel like I have challenges at the law school with my, with being Latinx. Um, I don't really, I, I, like I said, I guess that must just be because the law school has people from all over the country, um, but I definitely understand why it's different on the main campus. And then in Oxford, um, you know, it's just the normal, like you get those looks or you get those little subtleties, you know, when you're somewhere or you're, you know, those are the difficulties. I think people here are too polite or try to be too polite to at least be up, be overtly racist to me. So far I've had people be homophobic, but that's, you know, that's separate. So.

Speaker 1: [13:46](#) Has anyone ever asked you about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these questions?

Speaker 2: [13:53](#) Um, usually when people ask me because I have had people asking about right my race, um, I kinda just try to gauge where they're coming from and um, usually if it's funny, if it's a bit like a fellow minority, I don't take it as personally as if it's like a white person asking me because here it almost seems like a, you need to like justify who you are, what you are. So, um, I don't know, it's weird. I've responded, I wouldn't say it that rudely, but I've been short. And how do these questions typically, I guess present themselves?

Speaker 1: How do people typically ask? Literally out of the blue?

- Speaker 2: Um, I was at the grove one time and someone was like, what are you? I was at the bar one again, you know, just I feel like when, when alcohol is involved here, people feel a lot more comfortable just blurting things out that they probably wouldn't say normally because it's never come up on campus. It always comes up in social settings.
- Speaker 1: [15:14](#) And um, have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived race or ethnicity?
- Speaker 2: Not that I've noticed. I don't know what people, I don't know what's in people's minds, but at least so far I haven't so far.
- Speaker 1: [15:38](#) And do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn? If no, why not?
- Speaker 2: [15:43](#) I speak very bad Spanish. I've been trying to learn for the last three years, um, and I've just learned, you know, through schools and through classes at the university I'm studying abroad. I don't speak fluent Spanish. My parents. Yeah. They didn't want me to.
- Speaker 1: [16:13](#) Is there a reason why you were not taught Spanish In the home?
- Speaker 2: [16:16](#) Yeah. Just because, you know, the whole assimilation thing just to fit in. They taught my two older siblings, uh, because I'm from a family of eight, so they taught my two older siblings and they were teased and made fun of, for having accents and speaking Spanish. So they just decided not to teach anybody else after that
- Speaker 1: [16:35](#) How do you feel about that?
- Speaker 2: [16:39](#) I regret it and I try not to hold it. I don't, I used to hold it against my parents. Um, now I understand why they did it. Um, if anything I think I just think it's a sad fact of life. So.
- Speaker 1: [16:55](#) And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latinx culture?

- Speaker 2: [17:02](#) Well, I think it, I think that it's important should depend on each individual person. Um, I don't think we should limit people being a part of the community based on their ability to speak Spanish though. Yeah.
- Speaker 1: [17:23](#) And how does the university and the community cater to the Latinx population?
- Speaker 2: [17:29](#) Um, well we have the, you know, the Latin heritage month. That was pretty cool. That was interesting to see. Um, I'm dying to see how people do think with Cinco de Mayo here. I can only imagine how awful, how awful or problematic, you know, whatever it should be that, that'll be interesting to see what I mean. You know, it's uh, you know, we have LLSA at law school and I know we have the Undergrad organization. I just haven't had a chance to interact with them yet. So I mean, oh, and then we have a couple restaurants here in town, but I don't really enjoy the food. So I tried it, but, you know, maybe I just haven't found the right one yet.
- Speaker 1: [18:20](#) I guess to counter that, how does the university and the community omit the Latino population?
- Speaker 2: [18:25](#) I would say by making everything about, you know, it's like very much like about duality here. It's just like it's everything is a black and white issue and nothing's outside of that. It seems like, is that weird to say like that's how you feel? That's a valid point, you know, maybe. And I don't know, maybe that's, I don't know, that's just it. It's like, you know, we have all these ICE raids and stuff going on in an Oxford, Mississippi, but nobody is mad about it and like nobody says anything about it. Um, so to me that's very interesting. I, I, but I, I can understand why. It's Mississippi's history. Um, I just, I, that was very interesting to me right off the bat was how everything here is still very much just like a, yeah, like a black and white issue and nothing else. Yeah.
- Speaker 1: [19:32](#) And um, how do you view race in the US in the south, in here in Oxford?

- Speaker 2: [19:38](#) Um, I would view race as a concept that's definitely changing. I'm slowly, uh, I think now people definitely understand that like even within races themselves, there's like sub subgroups, subcategories, breakdowns within breakdowns. So I think that's interesting seeing how people are finally realizing that because I feel like minority communities have always recognized that. Um, but in the south I think it's still very much a duality. And in Oxford, um, I don't think people really think about it a lot. Maybe that's just me, but I don't, it doesn't seem like it's. Well, it seems like the majority of people don't think about it here. And when you try to talk about it they get very uncomfortable. So.
- Speaker 1: [20:46](#) And um, how do perceive the Latinx population effecting the idea of race in the south?
- Speaker 2: I think it will open the eyes of more people in the south to realize that there's, you know, entire populations that are being ignored in the south. Not even just the Latinx community. There's like, you know, entire communities of like Vietnamese and Filipino people in Mississippi alone, which I still have classmates who find that fascinating and I'm like, I don't know, I'm not even from here. And I just did a wikipedia search and I knew that like, or you know, we just have, you know, like exchange students from all over the world and I just don't see that. I don't know. I don't. Yeah. And hopefully it just opens people's mind is what I guess I'm getting at. It opens their mind.
- Speaker 1: [21:42](#) Are there any other points or topics that you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you?
- Speaker 2: [22:04](#) I guess one thing I would add is, um, it's very interesting not seeing any kind of. And I say I say queer law, Latinx community. I don't, I'm, I have, I'm sure. Well, I have friends who say other words, I prefer that term. Um, but it's interesting not seeing any kind of LGBTQ I presence at all in Mississippi like on the square or anything. Um, so that's, that's interesting because, you know, that's a minority within a minority within a minority. So, you know,

it's, it's been interesting. That's the, that's an interesting adjustment that I've had to face here too. So. Yeah, yeah.

Karina Rodriguez

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Okay, we're recording now. Are you 18 years or older? Can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 2: [00:13](#) Yes. Karina Rodriguez-Castillo
- Speaker 1: [00:22](#) When were you born?
- Speaker 2: [00:24](#) I was born December 24th 1998.
- Speaker 1: [00:32](#) And where are you from and where did you grow up?
- Speaker 2: [00:35](#) Okay. Um, I'm from Southaven. I grew up there pretty much my whole life.
- Speaker 1: [00:39](#) And um, what other places have you lived?
- Speaker 2: [00:42](#) I lived in Horn Lake, Mississippi, but it's literally 10 minutes from Southaven, so it's pretty much the same.
- Speaker 1: [00:49](#) And why did you decide to go to school here?
- Speaker 2: [00:54](#) Um, I grew up coming down here just because my dad works here and he commutes every day, so I would occasionally visit with him and I just really liked it, always liked it and it was always like in the back of my hand, um, that, you know, it was a potential option for college and definitely made that choice became clear once they got around to senior year.
- Speaker 1: Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
- Speaker 2: [01:22](#) Yes. Um, so definitely, um, my race and ethnicity, you know, makes me stand out here at Ole Miss, which I really like. Um, I haven't met that many Hispanics. Um, and you know, people are always



		asked me, oh, so like “what are you” not trying to be rude or anything, you know, they just wonder and um, I mean I, I always think it's cool to share it with them.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:46</a>	And how has your experience been as a student here and living in Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:50</a>	It's been good. Everyone's really friendly, really nice, which is what really attracted me here to Oxford because when I toured other universities, I didn't get the same feeling at them compared to the one that I got here in Oxford at Ole miss.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:05</a>	What is your major classification and some of your involvement?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:11</a>	I'm majoring in bio and I'm minoring in business, which is totally different. Um, I want to go into pediatrics but also want to have that business background just to one day, you know, be able to run my own business. I'm a sophomore and I'm not too involved. Um, I mean I'm in the honors college and I'm an honors ambassador, which has been pretty nice. Um, and I'm in ASB mentor now, which is really cool. I haven't met my mentee yet, but I'm excited for that.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:53</a>	Cool. Um, so what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:01</a>	My most important aspects are school and my family, which is I guess pretty basic, but this semester has been, it's just been really hard and I've had a lot of things going on and it just really made me realize what's important to me, which is same focus in school and just being grateful for my family.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:21</a>	So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:30</a>	Okay, this is always really confusing to me. Especially, you know, when there's like a form to

		fill out. Um, but I would just say my ethnicity is Hispanic.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:41</a>	And what are your parent's nationality? Do you identify with their nationality?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:46</a>	Okay. So I would say their nationality is Mexican and I would say yes, that I do identify with it.
Speaker 1:		And how do you identify racially?
Speaker 2:		Okay. I'll also say Hispanic and white. I'm not sure. I mean when I think of race, I feel like just a group of people who have similar characteristics. So I was just opt for Hispanic versus being more specific as um, for example, like Mexican.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:25</a>	And do you identify as Hispanic or Latina?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:30</a>	I like, I identify as both, but I guess Hispanic.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:35</a>	Studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:56</a>	I definitely feel that people are more open to the fact that, you know, different race versus just the, I want to say the major ones, Caucasians and African Americans, um, that the other races are growing. Um, so I was really sad just to see people so inhumane humane to people that are humane just because their migraine to different country. Um, and I definitely have seen a change in the way that people approach it, you know, whether they don't 100 percent agree with migration, at least they're more humane about how they want, you know, the issues to be handled. How do. Yeah. So hopefully people will continue to just be more open and more considerate, just, you know, be more humane with migrants because they're humans.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:55</a>	Um, and how do you maintain your Latino culture while a student here at the university?
Speaker 2:		No, it's kind of hard because there's not really a lot of Hispanics that I, you know, can be friend or just,

you know, be with. But I mean, I definitely talked to my parents at least every other day and I pretty much just speak in Spanish with them. Um, I do go home quite often, um, because I only live like an hour away and so I still am able to participate in cultural things just, you know, like the Hispanic parties which are totally different than the American ones and such. Um, and I don't get to travel too often to Mexico, but once I do and that's definitely a totally different life, which I enjoy.

- Speaker 1:            [06:50](#)            What are some challenges that you've faced at the university?
- Speaker 2:            [06:57](#)            I mean there's not really anything, any just negative, you know, situations that I've experienced or anything like that. But she's challenging to sometimes just find people you can relate to her, someone that you can, um, feel understands where you came from or how exactly your family is. And such, um, but everyone was inclusive and friendly. So it's nothing major.
- Speaker 1:            [07:28](#)            Um, has anybody ever inquired about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these types of questions?
- Speaker 2:            [07:43](#)            Yes, for sure. I mean I usually just say I'm Hispanic, if it's more of a involved conversation or just someone that um, I want to continue talking about with um, I'll, you know, go to, yeah, my parents are from Mexico but I grew up here and such. But if it's something just kinda like quick or whatever I'll just say Hispanic and leave it at that.
- Speaker 1:            [08:09](#)            And have you ever experienced or has anybody ever assumed things about your character because of your race and ethnicity?
- Speaker 2:            [08:20](#)            Yeah, I mean I suppose some people have assumed I'm a foreign exchange student, just, I don't know, just because um, but it's, it's not like they had, you know, bad, intense or anything like that. Um, a lot of people are shocked, I guess that my language is so good or just my accent is so good. Um, yeah. Nothing else really.

- Speaker 1: [08:53](#) And do you speak Spanish and how did you learn?
- Speaker 2: [08:56](#) So Spanish was my first language, pretty much grew up speaking it. I didn't really learn English besides the very basics until preschool. My parents enrolled me in preschool just so I could, you know, grab onto the English language better once I started kindergarten because once you start kindergarten and they're not gonna sit there and, you know, make sure that your English is good, they're just ready to teach you. Um, and so preschool definitely, um, taught me the majority of my English. Uh, I mean my parents, no English, they know it much better now than when I was a little kid growing up, but they wanted to make sure I learned Spanish first because if they didn't teach it to me, no one else would. And as kids, you know, we grab onto a different language much quicker than once you're older. So I learned how to speak Spanish, then I learned how to speak English and then my mom started teaching me how to read and write it. So I'm fluent in all three aspects.
- Speaker 1: [09:59](#) And how important is the ability to speak Spanish?
- Speaker 2: Um, it's really important to me. Um, I'm really grateful that my parents taught me Spanish not only just to speak a bit to learn it and read it so well. Um, when I do go to Mexico, I mean it people notice, you know, that my Spanish is just a little different or my accent is a little different. My word she is a little different, which, you know, it's Kinda hard to avoid just because I'm growing up in a totally different environment, you know. Um, I think it's really, really important. Some people, some parents don't bother to teach their kids Spanish. It's like a whatever, if they understand it, that's fine, but they need to learn how to speak it and breeding and learn it, at least in my opinion because Spanish, I believe is, I don't know what number, but it's like one of the most growing languages here in the US. Um, I for sure want to teach my kids Spanish, whether my husband knows it or not. My kids need to know Spanish. Um, and it's really, really important to have bilingual people, especially like regardless of, regardless of what field you go into. For example, I

want to go into the medical field, which there is a huge lack of interpreters and it's just if you've ever been hospitalized, um, and you don't know English, it's so hard to get an interpreter and it's just really, it's just a great, um, thing to have that second language.

Speaker 1: And how does the university cater to Latino students?

Speaker 2: [11:41](#) Um, I mean there's definitely, I think it's Latino awareness. I'm not sure, something Latino month here at Ole Miss. I personally am not very involved in it just because this semester has been a little tough on me, but that's really great that they do that they, you know, try to just get the Latino culture out there more, show different aspects of it. Um, because it's definitely very different. I mean, I'm familiar with the Mexican culture, but Latinos, you know, have a, it's a very, very large umbrella. I want to say I'm a, I know a lot of people were here at Ole miss are majoring or minoring in Spanish. Which is great because they don't just learn the language. They also learn the literature and culture and such.

Speaker 1: [12:29](#) And how does the university and the community omit the Latino culture or community?

Speaker 2: [12:36](#) Well, like I said, they do have that month. I'm dedicated to it, but other than that there's not really anything else. There's no other like organizations or clubs that are yearlong as, as far as I'm concerned anyways. Um, know there's like minority groups but nothing really specific to Latinos, like I said.

Speaker 1: [13:04](#) How do you view race in the United States? In the south and here at Oxford?

Speaker 2: [13:12](#) Well, like I previously stated, I think, I'm not sure, um, but to me race is just a group of people of similar backgrounds, characteristics or traits. Um, I mean, of course, you know, there's labels to race but people can identify as, you know, part of one race and also part of the other, um, but also here in the south racism, you know, it's still a big issue. So

another thing with phrase, it's just stereotypes and I think that really plays a big part into race.

Speaker 1: [13:52](#) And um, how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in this out?

Speaker 2: [14:00](#) Uh, well, I mean the Latino population is definitely a big part of the south in the US in general and it's definitely growing very, very rapidly, rapidly. Um, so affecting idea of racing. I don't know, I guess it's just adding to, you know, the idea of race that there's just not one or two or three major races. There's different races, there's different cultures, different types of people that we need to learn to interact and accept.

Speaker 1: [14:37](#) And what type of challenges, this question already, but what type of challenges or have you ever faced any challenges because of your identity?

Speaker 2: [14:53](#) I think it's maybe similar to the question before, but I'm just basically finding someone who understands exactly like your roots, where you came from. I grew up, um, in an area with a lot of Hispanics. Um, I went to high school with a lot of Hispanics, you know, they always understood what it meant to be Hispanic, what families were like, what your background is and you know, how it's harder to or just not harder, but the different challenges you face as an Hispanic in school outside of school. Um, and that's just not really what I get here. I'm just because, you know, there's not that many Latinos, you just kind of have to explain to people whenever you know the, some things are harder for you than others or when your family doesn't really understand, you know, what you're going through in college because a lot of people are a lot of Hispanics. Your first year students.

Speaker 1: [15:56](#) And would you mind elaborating on some of the challenges that you face? I know you were saying like in high school you went to a majority Hispanic high school and you all could just relate and understand like what it means to be Hispanic. Would you mind elaborating on that a little bit or like how bad, how you're not seeing that and feeling

that here and maybe how it's affecting you as a student?

Speaker 2:

[16:22](#)

Well I guess the biggest thing with that is people just don't understand your culture. Uh, so you're just excited about like a new song coming out from her favorite, like Hispanic artists or whatever, whatever or something like that. Um, people won't understand. They don't know who that is, you know, let's just see to or whatever. But, um, um, I don't know, I think the biggest thing would be, like I said before, your family or people don't understand how your families are different and how your family's didn't grow up here. They, you know, their parents probably didn't grow up here. And so they're basically learning a whole different culture there. Of course there's universities and colleges, you know, or my parents are from, but um, they didn't get, you know, this high, as high as I'm this higher level of education. Um, so they just have to learn what that's like and how it works and you know, the time and dedication and money that it takes. Um, and I feel like a lot of people are just used to that, like their parents already know how college works already knows the culture here. And for Latino's, that's not always the case. And in high school, you know, I had friends that understood that whereas here it's not as much not I have like one or two friends that could, you know, relate to me.

Speaker 1:

[17:45](#)

Um, and you said your parents are from Mexico. Can you tell me a story about, you know, moving from Mexico to Mississippi?

Speaker 2:

[17:55](#)

So my parents stayed there for five years and then got engaged and so when dad moved, not moved but came to, uh, yes. Um, he worked for maybe nine months to a year just to make money to get married and so he would send, you know, whatever he made to a mom and she would like start planning the wedding and such. So that went on for like nine months to a year. He moved back, um, they got married and then they stayed in Mexico for, I would say three or four months. And then they both came to the US again just so my dad could work to get their own home and such. And according to my

mom and my dad, I guess they plan to stay here for a year or two and then they just kind of kept adding like three years and such. Um, and now they've been here since, let's say let's see, for like 21 or 22 years when originally they plan to be here for a year or less. Um, but yeah, they, they just never went back to Mexico. I grew up here. My 11 year old brother grew up here, my seven year old sister grew up here. Um, and when my dad came down here, when he would come back and forth, he would just work for people and now he has his own company. He does like driveways and slabs and just concrete. So I mean it's pretty amazing to me that he went from just coming back and forth, um, just to get money to get married or to get a house to now he learned how to manage and have his own company. So I mean it's a really great opportunity that he had and took and learn how to value.

- Speaker 1:            [19:46](#)            And you said you identify as Hispanic, so let's say like on forms. What is your race? White, African American, native American or Hispanic. Which one of those boxes would you check?
- Speaker 2:            [20:02](#)            Hispanic
- Speaker 1:            [20:05](#)            So do you consider a Hispanic a separate race?
- Speaker 2:            [20:19](#)            Yes. Um, I mean I don't identify as white or Caucasian or African American or a lot of times it's like, what is it? Pacific islanders or something like that. Um, I don't identify as any of those I identify as Hispanic. And I remember one time Hispanic wasn't on the form and it was like, I don't, I don't know, maybe like Asian, Caucasian, African American, um, and then I want to say the islander one. Um, and then just like other. And also like, what do I put, you know, so I just Kinda went with the Pacific islander one aisle. It's like, I don't know, I panicked. So, I don't know, I think everyone's confused about, you know, race versus, um, versus what is it just ethnicity basically. There's, I, I've googled it before and there's not like a clear, you know, definition.
- Speaker 1:            Is there anything else that you want to talk about?



Speaker 2: I mean, this is really cool, uh, I mean, I'm assuming you really enjoy this and this topic and it's interesting. So I wish you luck in the recording.

Melissa Chavira Meraz

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) We're, we are recording. Um, so today is October 30th and we are in the library conducting an interview for my honors thesis titled The Latino South Race and Racialization. So we'll go ahead and jump right in. Are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:25](#) Yes. My name's Melissa Chavira Meraz

Speaker 1: When were you born? I was born on May 10th, 2000.

Speaker 1: [00:42](#) Okay. And um, where are you from and where did you grow up?

Speaker 2: [00:47](#) I am from Nashville, Tennessee. I was born there but I was, I moved to a Walls, Mississippi and that's where I grew up.

Speaker 1: Where is Walls?

Speaker 2: Walls is right on the state line of Mississippi and Tennessee, it's close to Southaven and all that in Desoto county.

Speaker 1: [01:06](#) Okay. And um, have you lived in any places other than Walls and Nashville?

Speaker 2: [01:12](#) No, I haven't.

Speaker 1: Um. And why did you move from Nashville to Walls?

Speaker 2: I think my parents decided to move from Nashville to Walls because there was just more family and friends down here, down here. So I think that's what made them want to move.

Speaker 1: And what brought you to Oxford?

Speaker 2:		Uh, really when I came to see the campus. I really loved it here. I was really convinced by a recruiter so, and I knew I wanted to start off at a university and I just always knew that I wanted to come to Oxford ever since I was little.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:52</a>	Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:57</a>	Um race is important but not important. I mean I think it's important like I liked the fact that I am Hispanic, Mexican, but like I don't pay attention to like negativity about it. So at that point, like it's like it's off to the side, like I don't really pay attention to that. So that's what I would say about it.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:28</a>	Um, how has your experience being well being a student here and living in Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:35</a>	Well, I myself haven't experienced, experienced anything. So like with racism, not yet. I hope not to experience that. I've heard many stories about it, but so far nothing. It's been a good experience so far.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:50</a>	And what about the Oxford community? Have you participated in maybe any community events or
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:58</a>	Not yet, but I probably will sometime soon.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:02</a>	And uh, what is your major, your classification and any involvement that you have?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:07</a>	My major is biology, um, I'm a freshman class of 2022. Yeah.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:17</a>	And um, are you involved in any campus organizations?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:21</a>	Not yet. Maybe next year.
Speaker 1:		Okay. Yeah, that's fine. And uh, what is the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:		Um the most important aspects. I think school is definitely one of them. Um, I think it's just all I can really think about is school because that's really

what I think is what I need to be focused on and being motivated to be able to getting into a career. Graduating. So I think school right now, college is important.

Speaker 1: [04:07](#) Alright, so now we're going to jump into more specific questions about race.

Speaker 2: Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [04:21](#) My ethnicity is Mexican.

Speaker 1: [04:25](#) What are your parent's nationality and do you identify with their nationality?

Speaker 2: [04:31](#) Both of my parents are Mexican. I do. You mean like, do I consider myself? Yeah, I consider myself Mexican just because I was born here doesn't mean Oh, I'm not Mexican, but I do consider myself Mexican, just like my parents.

Speaker 1: [04:48](#) How do you identify racially and why do you identify this way?

Speaker 2: [04:55](#) Um, could you explain that?

Speaker 1: [05:02](#) Race and ethnicity are different. I don't really want to tell you the definition right now because I just want to see how you personally choose to identify because I'm afraid if I tell you the definition that may change your answer. So just normally if someone asks your race, what do you say?

Speaker 2: [05:22](#) I'd just say Mexican.

Speaker 1: [05:24](#) And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latina?

Speaker 2: [05:29](#) I think I hear myself saying Hispanic more. I don't really say Latino, but I do have people that come to me and yet they're like, oh, you're Latina. I'm like, yeah, I guess. I mean I, I think I hear myself saying Hispanic more so.

Speaker 1: Do you prefer the term Hispanic over Latina?

Speaker 2:		I think so, yes. I don't know. I feel like it fits me better in some way. I just don't see myself saying Latina as much as. Yeah.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:04</a>	Do you maybe have like a reason as to why it fits you better?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:11</a>	I don't know. I think I just, I think, I don't know. I think I hear my parents say, Oh, they're Hispanic and so I don't know, I just always heard that term. So I've always, I've always been like, I'm Hispanic, you know, I don't really hear Latina in my household or anything or Latino. I don't really hear that a lot so I just stick with Hispanic
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:34</a>	Studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. Um, how do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is? Views viewed in the United States.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:51</a>	You said it's increasing? Uh, I think, I think it'll be worse just because it's kind of bad now. Seeing a lot of things going on. I hope that it will be better in the future, but I feel like it'll end up getting worse just because I've seen so many things going on. The I don't like.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:17</a>	can you elaborate a little bit on what those things are that you have seen?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:20</a>	Like ever since like Trump was in and I've seen like a lot of things like with the kids being separated from their families and stuff like that. So I just don't want that to increase more. I want it to be like I don't want it to be a problem anymore. Now I'm scared that it'll become a problem. Like even a bigger problem in the future.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:44</a>	Do you think that like things that are going on now are affecting the way Hispanic people are viewed in this country?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:58</a>	I think some people are like kind of getting it like okay they were getting separated from their families. Like I think people are like kind of seeing what we go through, what Hispanics go through

now, but I think there's still some of the negativity. They're like, they're still on that stuff. Like they don't, they will never get it. That's what I think.

- Speaker 1:            [08:27](#)            How do you maintain your Hispanic culture while being a student here at the university?
- Speaker 2:            [08:33](#)            Um, well I don't know how to answer that. I mean I don't, I think, I don't know if this is really like a big thing on but like since I go home every weekend because I'm not, I don't live that far. I try to bring like my mom's food and I don't know if it makes me feel more at home when I'm here and I'm eating her food and so does my roommate because she's Hispanic also when she brings some of her mom's food also. And like it just reminds me of like being at home, being at like when I'm at Oxford I feel more at home when I have her food. So.
- Speaker 1:            [09:18](#)            And what are some of your favorite things that your mom cooks?
- Speaker 2:            [09:22](#)            Uh, she makes these with, um, with me in vegetables in it and I just really love that. I always tell her to make that my roommate actually brought to my lists like two weeks ago now, last week and yeah, it was really good. So that's what we really liked to do, like bringing in food from home.
- Speaker 1:            [10:03](#)            Okay. And um, what are some challenges you face with the university and in Oxford as a Hispanic student?
- Speaker 2:            [10:13](#)            I don't know if I really don't think I've faced any challenges other than just not being able to make a lot of friends, but I mean that's part of my fault also because I'm a really shy person. I don't really talk first unless someone talks to me and I don't really like that. I feel like that's my problem, but um, I don't think I've, I haven't felt like anything, any challenge so far Um, I think it's like I have people that talk to me and I talk to them like in my dorm, like if I'm in the elevator, like they'll speak and I'll speak. Um, but like the specific class that I'm taking the freshman class, EDHE, um, they're like all like, all the girls are like rushing. So I think maybe that's

why I don't fit in a lot or maybe that's why I don't have like a lot of friends. I do have one friend in there, but it's not like I can like go up there and talk to the other girls maybe just because I'm not like I'm not rushing or anything. That too.

Speaker 1: [11:49](#) Was there any decision that strongly influenced you not to make the decision to and does it have to do with your Mexican culture or heritage or is it just something you're just not interested in?

Speaker 2: [12:00](#) Honestly, I didn't even know about that till I came to this unit to the university. I didn't know anything about it. I didn't even know what was like the point of it until I started hearing about it and I was like, I don't think I'm really interested. I think I'd rather join other organizations. But yeah, I didn't know what it was like outside of being at the university.

Speaker 1: [12:24](#) And. Has anyone ever asked you about your race and your ethnicity and if so, how do you typically respond to these questions?

Speaker 2: [12:34](#) I don't think I've had anybody asked me about my race ethnicity. I don't think I've had anybody talk or ask about that.

Speaker 1: [12:42](#) Do you think that people typically assume what your race is or you just have never really experienced anything period?

Speaker 2: [12:59](#) I have experienced like, oh, she's Mexican, I can already tell, but how do you know that? What if I'm Cuban or something, you know? Um, but I've experienced that before in high school, not here at the university. Not yet at least, but my friend has, like, they've, they've assumed that she's Mexican also and she said the same thing, like how do you know if I'm not Puerto Rican or anything, but I don't think I've, I've never like experienced that here yet.

Speaker 1: [13:29](#) So as a student in high school when people would just say, oh, she's Mexican, how would that make you feel?

- Speaker 2: [13:35](#) I would, at first I would be like, okay, whatever, like I am though I am Mexican. But then I thought about it and I was like, how do you know that though? Just because you see me and you think that I'm Mexican and that doesn't really mean that I am, I could be any other ethnicity and um, and I've actually had people think that I'm half white and half Mexican and half had people that come up to me and asked me, are you white? Are you all full white? And I was like, no, I'm Hispanic. I'm Mexican. So that's what I've experienced but not here.
- Speaker 1: [14:15](#) Um, when people assume that you're white or mixed with white, does that make you feel any type of way?
- Speaker 2: [14:22](#) Not really. I don't feel any type of way. I like being Mexican, but it doesn't make me feel like, oh my God, no. Why do they think that? No, I don't think that.
- Speaker 1: [14:32](#) Okay. Have you ever experienced any assumptions or has anybody ever made any assumptions about who you are because of your identity?
- Speaker 2: [14:59](#) They assume that I speak Spanish. I think that's the only thing have experienced.
- Speaker 1: [15:06](#) Okay. Um, and do you speak Spanish?
- Speaker 2: [15:09](#) I do, yes.
- Speaker 1: How did you learn?
- Speaker 2: Um, I think I learn the best way was learning from my parents because they speak Spanish, but um, but it was a struggle because I was learning Spanish and English at the same time, so that kind of like, it's kind of like a issue growing up, but eventually I got it.
- Speaker 1: [15:32](#) Um, and which language did you learn first?
- Speaker 2: [15:36](#) That's hard. I'm not sure. I think I want to say I want to say Spanish, but I speak more Spanish with my

mom and sometimes it's a little bit of English, not so much, but it's a little bit more. It's Spanish also with my dad, but it's a little bit more English than what I do with my mom.

- Speaker 1: [16:10](#) And is there any reason for that?
- Speaker 2: [16:12](#) Not really. Um, but I do try to speak English because they want to learn more and they're like, show me how to speak, like teach me. And they'll be like, just talk to me and I'll ask you if I don't understand. So I try to do that to them for them.
- Speaker 1: [16:29](#) And um, are they originally from Mexico or were they, were their appearance from Mexico or what is the history?
- Speaker 2: [16:36](#) Yes, they were born in Mexico.
- Speaker 1: [16:38](#) When did they move to the United States?
- Speaker 2: [16:41](#) I think my dad moved sometime in the 90's, I'm not sure. And my mom did too in the 90's.
- Speaker 1: [16:48](#) And um, do you remember there being much of a strong Mexican or Hispanic presidents while you were living in Nashville or do your parents ever talk about it or anything?
- Speaker 2: [17:00](#) I don't remember because I was really young. I was probably like two, but, um, I do remember my parents saying there was a lot of Hispanics in Nashville, but um, that's really it. They don't really talk about it unless we visit, but we don't really visit a lot. But I think that's the only thing I've heard them say that that's really it.
- Speaker 1: What about Walls?
- Speaker 2: They like it and everything. There's a lot of Hispanics also that I think that's the main reason why they moved down to walls because they know there's more family down there, more friends just because, you know, they just recently came from Mexico to the United States and they probably felt, felt little lonely with nobody to help them. So I feel



		like that's probably the biggest reason why they moved down the walls.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">17:58</a>	Um, and how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Hispanic culture?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">18:05</a>	I think it's very important because, um, there's a, there's Hispanics that don't, that can't speak English in. I think if you can speak Spanish and English, that's like a plus one right there. Like you can always help them with anything. Even if like you don't know them. Like I try to help people. If I see somebody at the store struggling that can't speak English, like I'll try to help them as much as I can and I think that's really important.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">18:36</a>	How does the university and the community cater to the Hispanic population?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">19:08</a>	Mm, I don't really. I don't know what to say about that because I haven't really seen like the university do anything help the Hispanic community. I haven't seen that myself. Um, so I don't think I can really say anything. Speak on that.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">19:27</a>	Okay and how does the university and the community omit or forget about the Hispanic population?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">19:41</a>	I don't know. Um, I remember there was one thing that I did attend, I think it was Hispanic heritage month. I did attend that. Um, it was just talking about how the university doesn't really do anything for like the Hispanic culture. So I think I can only say that I'm not sure if the university has forgotten. I hope not because I don't know, I just think that they should try to, how can I say, like try to focus on every culture, at least not just on one culture and have like their type of, like only like choice. I think they should focus on everything.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">20:34</a>	Um, and how did you perceive the Hispanic population of affecting the idea of race in the south?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">21:51</a>	I don't think I can say anything on that.

Speaker 1: How you see race in the United States, in the south and in Oxford. Like what is race to you or what type of issues do you see? It doesn't just have to be issues, maybe when you see a positive thing, it's just how you view race period. It's a very open ended. So maybe anything that comes to mind when you're thinking about race and how or how it relates to the United States, the South and here in Oxford.

Speaker 2: [22:57](#) I don't think I see like the same thing. Like I don't see a lot of racism here at the university or anything. Like any issues, I don't see positivity where issues here at the university, but within the south I do see a lot of other types of like problems with racism, same thing with the United States. So I don't think like the units in the United States in the south can, like really relate with the university. At least that's what I think now. I'm not sure something good could come up, but I can't really see anything they have related. I think if anything, I think the United States and the south could have shared common with racism things.

Speaker 1: Um, and is there anything else that you'd like to add or anything else that you'd like to talk about that I didn't ask you?

Speaker 2: No, I think you asked me pretty much a lot. Good enough.

Michelle Herrera

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Um, so first question, are you 18 years or older?

Speaker 2: I'm 18.

Speaker 1: Okay. And uh, can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?

Speaker 2: [00:22](#) Michelle Herrera

Speaker 1: When were you born?

Speaker 2: I was born on August 22nd 2000.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:58</u></a>	Okay. And where are you from and where did you grow up?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:02</u></a>	I am from Southaven, Mississippi and I grew up in Southaven.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>01:06</u></a>	Okay. And have you lived in any other places?
Speaker 2:		Just Southaven.
Speaker 1:		Okay. And why did you move from Southaven to Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:20</u></a>	I came to school here because I didn't want to be too close to home and not so far. The distance and because I don't know, this counselor just convinced me so I have to come in is really pretty.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>01:40</u></a>	And uh, is race and important part of your identity and why or why not?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:49</u></a>	I think it is important because I feel like it defines who I am and it distinguishes me from like other people.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>01:57</u></a>	Okay. And how has your experience been at the university and living in Oxford?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>02:03</u></a>	So far it has been like kinda hard but fun at the same time.
Speaker 1:		What has it been hard?
Speaker 2:		I'm just not used to like all those work. My high school was really easy. I had classes every day and that was it.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>02:17</u></a>	Oh. So it was really more so academic than anything else. Um, what is your major classification and any involvement that you have?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>02:28</u></a>	My major right now it's biology, but I'm thinking about switching over and classification as freshman. And I'm not involved in anything.

Speaker 1:		What are you thinking about switching your major to?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:47</a>	Nursing most likely
Speaker 1:		Um, and what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:18</a>	I guess just to like actually pass all my classes and just be successful to make my parents proud.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:26</a>	Okay. And the cool. So now we're going to get into some more questions about race and ethnicity, your identity. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different things. Um, what is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:		Hispanic. Hispanic.
Speaker 1:		Okay. And um, what are your parents' nationality and do you identify with their nationality?
Speaker 2:		My parents are Mexicans and yes. Oh yeah.
Speaker 1:		How do you identify racially and why do you identify this way? So if somebody, if somebody just says, what is your race, what, are you going to say?
Speaker 2:		Mexican
Speaker 1:		And why do you say Mexican?
Speaker 2:		I don't know. I just feel like that's what I am.
Speaker 1:		And do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:26</a>	I don't know. I use both. It just depends on what I'm talking to are like, what they say.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:30</a>	Studies show that the Latino population is growing in the United States. Um, how do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:50</a>	Well, from what I've seen on TV, a lot of people don't really want to hear, but I'm guessing that's just

		for the people who come here illegally. I don't know, I can't speak on that because I just don't know. That really doesn't bother me.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:03</a>	Um, and how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:14</a>	I mean I've talked Spanish with my best friend. She's my roommate, so together all the time.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:20</a>	What are some challenges you faced at the university and in Oxford as a Latina student?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:33</a>	I haven't faced any challenges yet and I hope not soon, but one thing that really bothered me this one time I was in class, so we were discussing about like the first word that pops up in your mind if they say these terms. Right? So the professor said Mexican and somebody yelled wall and that really bothered me. Like really? Anything else? Like food or anything like wall? I just didn't say anything. I just turned around and looked at him.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:01</a>	And has anyone ever asked about your race and ethnicity and how do you normally respond to these questions?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:38</a>	A lot of people do ask me like, are you Mexican? And I just, sometimes it bothers me because like that's the first thing they assume I could be Puerto Rican, Cuban, anything else in the Hispanic category, but they just assume, oh, are you Mexican? Like that's something that I just know I could be Puerto Rican because there's more Hispanics besides just Mexican.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:05</a>	Okay. And have you ever experienced any assumptions about you because of your character because of your race or ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:22</a>	No, not really because my high school was like really like diverse, so everybody just like really got along with each other. But then I come to this school and the majority of the people here are Caucasians on. I feel like I just don't fit in as much,

		but as long as I have my friends from high school, I don't really care.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:43</a>	And do you speak Spanish? How did you learn?
Speaker 2:		Through my parents.
Speaker 1:		Um, and how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:14</a>	I feel like it's important because I feel like I have an advantage to like communicate with more people and just like no two languages at the same time as that can like also like help translate for my parents and. Yeah.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">08:27</a>	And which language did you learn first, Spanish or in English?
Speaker 2:		Spanish.
Speaker 1:		When you began learning English and I'm sure you were really young or whatever, but was it like a challenge for you or did it just kind of all flow together or how was that?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:42</a>	Well, my parents knew some English so I feel like it was like I learned both at the same time, but I learned Spanish first.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:30</a>	how does the university and the community catered to the Latino populations?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:38</a>	I mean, honestly I don't hear anything like for Latinos besides that, like since Hispanic heritage month, I haven't heard anything or before that.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:47</a>	And um, how does the university and the community omit or forget about the Latino population?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:56</a>	Well, I remember when I went to the Hispanic, I mean, what's it called Latinas at Ole miss. Um, they were talking about how like we don't get advertised as much, just like other groups, like they're just

everywhere and then we'll, we'll get like one post are there and then we're not just advertise as much.

- Speaker 1: [10:15](#) And um, how do you view race in the US in the south and in Oxford?
- Speaker 2: [11:10](#) Well, since I just moved to Oxford, I haven't seen many Hispanics down here, but where I'm from in south haven, I've seen everywhere. And then in the south I feel like there's a lot but I'm not sure about an Oxford. And then the US I'm pretty sure were like everywhere now.
- Speaker 1: And um, how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in the south? So like for example, in the south, how things are sometimes very black and white. Um, have you ever maybe felt that your presence challenged like race and what it means to live in the south?
- Speaker 2: Because a lot of times I feel like things are really narrowed down and a lot of people are overlooked because in the south is still is very much so a challenge between black and white, but there's Hispanic people here and people from all over the world here.
- Speaker 1: So have you seen anything or feel anything or do you feel any type of way about the Hispanic population affecting race?
- Speaker 2: No
- Speaker 1: Um, are there any other points or things that you would like to talk about that she's like, I didn't ask you? Oh, okay. Well that is it.
- Nadja Jauregui
- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Today is November 29th and I am interviewing Nadja Jauregui in the Student Media Center for my honors thesis research title The Latino South: Race and Racialization. So we'll go ahead and get started. Are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record please?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:22</u></a>	Yes. Nadja Jauregui.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:32</u></a>	And when were you born? I was born July 4, 1998.
Speaker 2:		And where are you from and where did you grow up?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>00:40</u></a>	I am originally from Lima, Peru and I was there until it was five years old and when I was five we moved to Florida. And so basically I grew up in Florida and Mississippi.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#"><u>00:55</u></a>	Where did your family move from?
Speaker 2:		Kissimmee, so like by Orlando.
Speaker 1:		Okay, cool. And did you just move to Mississippi for school or had you moved to Mississippi prior to coming to Ole Miss?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:11</u></a>	Um, I moved to Mississippi prior to coming to ole miss. So when I was nine we moved to Mississippi because my dad's job was moving and they wanted him to move with them. So we moved to Mississippi when I was nine.
Speaker 1:		And so most of your life has been in Mississippi. What part of Mississippi?
Speaker 2:		Southaven.
Speaker 1:		Okay. And um, what brought your family from Lima to America?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#"><u>01:37</u></a>	Well, my dad, when I was like in my, like one year old, two year old stages, like my dad was working in America but he lived in Peru and so, um, he would fly to America and he stay with his mom who lived in New Jersey and um, because she also moved there for work and so he was just trying to like make a better living in America for me and my mom because in Peru it's really hard to live comfortably unless you're doing like a really higher up job. And um, so he was moving there or you have working there and when he got enough money he would come back and visit us and bring gifts and



stuff. And then although we are awaiting on, was my mom to get her visa approved, which took about two years and then she finally got her approved and that's when we moved to America.

- Speaker 1:            [02:28](#)            And what type of work? What was your father doing?
- Speaker 2:            [02:31](#)            Um, I don't really remember, but I know he majored in like computers and engineering and stuff like that. So I think he was doing something with computers.
- Speaker 1:            [02:41](#)            Can you compare a little bit? You said you moved from Peru. Can you compare a little bit maybe how life was in Lima and compare it to Florida? and even to Mississippi?
- Speaker 2:            So I still remember a lot of Peru, like I remember my whole neighborhood, my friends, my school and from what I remember and from what I've been told from my family and stuff there, it's like kind of like New York, but just not as glamorous as people make it out to be. There's more culture in the sense that like people hardly ever go out to eat fast food. It's always like home cooked and the food or on the street is everywhere and it's always like I'm in banana or like tacos or like chicken and it's always like the hustle and bustle, like everyone's always moving. You won't be capturable like walking slowly from place to place and it's a lot more dangerous than Mississippi. In Mississippi, I feel very safe. I can wear nice clothes, like everyone wears nice clothes, but my dad always tells me that if I were in Peru I couldn't be walking around with my jewelry or with my backpack behind my back because there's so many, a pickpocketer years and I'm like, if they see that you're wearing really nice clothes or nice jewelry, they'll come after you or follow you to rob you because it's happened a lot of times to family that I have had living there. Just like friends that we know that like aren't used to that culture. Um, and Florida recently, like when I first moved there, there wasn't as many Hispanics, but now it's almost becoming like them. I did majority and when we first moved there, um, I didn't really

feel out of place because I didn't know a lot of Hispanics and like in my school I had a friend who is Hispanic and like first grade or something and she helped me to learn English and then I learned English through TV and stuff and, but when we moved to Mississippi it was kind of like a culture shock. Like that was my first time feeling out of place and I just had never seen so many blonde white girls in my classroom until I moved to Mississippi and like I have memories of being in an elementary school and just hating that I was so tan because I was so dark back then. I've lightened up since I've been in Mississippi. I don't know why, but um, when I was younger I was so dark and I just remember thinking, Oh, I'm like, I stand out so much. I hate it. I hate being tan. I wish I was white or I wish I had lighter hair. I wish I had blue eyes, blah blah. And that was mainly because I want it to fit in, but no one ever made me feel like I was less than at some points. Like I think I made myself feel like that. But it was just because like, oh, these girls are getting boyfriends and I'm not, it must be because I'm Hispanic. But now I feel like everyone's trying to be darker and tanner.

- Speaker 1:            [06:12](#)            Were you ever asked you any questions like why you had dark hair or why you tanned skin?
- Speaker 2:            [06:27](#)            Um, no, I did have a lot of questions about where I was from um, but like I never, I don't know, like I feel like a lot of people have had it worse than me in terms of like maybe they weren't allowed to sit with them at lunch or they didn't have as many friends. But I had quite a few friends. But I did go through like bullying in middle school. And it was where the most stupid reasons. I don't know if it had a lot to do with my ethnicity, but mainly maybe more so with the way that I was raised because my parents were very strict and it was because one, they didn't know much of America and they were more like secure with me. They were more protective over me. Whereas for my younger sister, they let her do whatever the heck she wants and for me like I wasn't allowed to go to sleepovers. That wasn't like a common thing in Peru and they would be like, why do you feel the need to go to spend the night at

her friend's house? And I would tell him, I pick my friends that when they would ask me to spend the night and they would just see me like, uh, like I don't know, she's not allowed to go to these things and I have like one time my friend, she didn't invite me to her birthday party and I found out later on and asked her why. And she said, I just figured your parents wouldn't let you. And like she didn't even ask me. And I always got questions of like, I have people ask me, are you Chinese, are you Indian? Um, are you Mexican? And a lot of the times when people knew that I was Hispanic, they would automatically assume I was Mexican, which was kind of annoying, not because like Mexicans or less than me or anything, but just because that was the only idea that they had. They didn't know about any other cultures and I'm proud of where I come from and um, people assumed that I was Indian because I had one of my best friends was Indian and she was dark and I was dark and I just automatically assumed, which is also annoying.

- Speaker 1: [08:29](#) Interesting. You're the first interview with a perspective of coming from Peru. So the United States is probably a lot different. I've interviewed a lot of Caribbean, Central American Mexican, but Peru is totally different. Um, yeah. So is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
- Speaker 2: [08:58](#) Um, that's kind of like a hard question because like whenever you fill out those forms, race, I almost never know what to put because I really identified by my ethnicity which is Hispanic and then race, it's like white, black, Asian, and most of the time I've put white because I don't know what, like I don't really identify myself as black or Asian, so I just put white because I feel like that's the closest thing. Um, so because I'm not sure where I fall into.
- Speaker 1: [09:36](#) Was it something that your parents ever talked about like the change and how race operated in Peru versus coming to the United States?
- Speaker 2: I had into those forums and there's no option for Peruvian. Yeah. Um, that's actually something we

never talked about. It I couldn't really give you an answer on that.

Speaker 1: Cool. And um, how has your experience been at Ole Miss and living in Oxford?

Speaker 2: [10:09](#) It's been really good. I'm like, I really, I don't think I've ever had any negative experiences because of my race and I think because of that is because I've lightened up over the years and so a lot of people think I am American, like I don't look like your traditional Hispanic girl. And I get that a lot and because I don't have an accent, it's even harder for them to know that I am Hispanic. Some people can tell that I'm not from here, but most people just think that I'm American, which is fine. But I also wish that I did look more like my ethnicity because I dunno, I really liked the fact that I am from Peru and I would like for people to just automatically pick it up. Like, oh, she's not from here. But um, because of my race I feel like I'm, I'm naturally bilingual and that's helped me out in a few things. It almost like I can just take the CLEP exam and not have to take 12 hours of language that I already know. And um, I feel like I can relate to some people more. Like who are coming here, like international students and stuff I can like help them out and I'm like, I just feel like I have a little bit more of opportunities because I know how to reach out to them and stuff. And

Speaker 1: [13:16](#) And um, what is your major classification and some notable involvement?

Speaker 2: [13:22](#) Um, I'm on NewsWatch. I'm a news correspondent and right now that's like all I did because that's all I have time for. Um, but I was involved in lens collective last year and I work. Oh, I also work, well this is not on campus, but I'm a freelance photographer for the Batesville magazine.

Speaker 1: Cool. And what is your major and classification?

Speaker 2: I am a broadcast journalism student and I'm a junior.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">13:55</a>	And um, one of the most important aspects or parts of your life right now and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">14:01</a>	Um, right now it's just getting all of my classes done, like I want to graduate on time. There's no option for me to graduate a year later. Um, that's like right now, classes in grades are my most important thing and just like trying to balance that and my relationship with my friends, like my boyfriend, like those are like the most important things to me because they keep me grounded and I love like just having like a good group around me because I also go and say and like I'll just be depressed all the time.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">14:42</a>	And um, no questions about your identity ethnicity. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">14:53</a>	Hispanic or Latino.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">14:56</a>	And uh, what are your parent's nationality? Do you identify with their nationality?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">15:02</a>	Nationality is when they're originally born from. So they're both Peruvian and yes, I identify as Peruvian because I was also born there.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">15:11</a>	And how do you identify racially and why?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">15:17</a>	White most of the time. And that's just because I'm, I feel like that's the closest that I am only because of the way that I look and the way that I act maybe, um, I feel like the other ones are so like I don't really know much about it to even classify as them. Whereas I know a lot more, more about white people than I do about black people and I feel like it would almost be like unfair if I classified as black.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">16:55</a>	Do you identify as Hispanic or Latina?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">16:59</a>	I'm Hispanic because when I think of Latina, I think of people who are from like Spain or Latin America, but like Hispanic, I feel like it's more so like South America or Mexico and stuff like that.

- Speaker 1: And so studies show that the Latino population is growing with you is how do you think this will affect the way race and race relations is viewed in this country?
- Speaker 2: [17:29](#) Um, I feel like maybe if the Latino population gets big enough, they might have to add a new category into race. Um, or yeah, I think that's pretty much all I had to say.
- Speaker 1: Um, and how do you maintain your Latino culture here at each while being a student here?
- Speaker 2: It's really hard for me to like maintain it in a conscious way, like on campus. Um, mainly I guess what the way I cook, like at home I try to cook traditional foods that I cook at home and I called my parents as much as I can and we always talk in Spanish and so that's how I like I remember the language so quickly, um, and I try to keep, like my morals I guess my parents raised me because their morals are different than a lot of parents that I know who are in America. And so I just try to keep those with me.
- Speaker 1: What are some of those, what are some foods that you cook and then what are some of those moral differences that you notice in your parents versus American parents?
- Speaker 2: So some foods that I cook this, it like goes back and forth on like where it originated from, but I cook a roast which is like basically fried rice, but people classify that as an Asian food. But, um, I don't know if this is correct or not, but one of the very first places that it did originate was Peru because the Asians that come over and then they, like, there's all like a whole story behind it, but that's like one of our main dishes and I cooked that because it's super easy. And then, um, my mom cooked a lot of squash soup and so I cook a lot of that. And then I'm trying to think of what else we cook. We cook tallarines verdes where this, which is basically like Green Spaghetti and I'm with some chicken and uh, was one other dish that I cook a lot. I forgot what it was. But um my parents are very big on like

manners. I mean, that sounds like Americans. So manners but not what I mean. It's like, um, it doesn't matter. Like if they're young or older than me, like I'm always going to thank them for inviting me to their house or I'm saying sorry if like, you know, I did something that might've been offensive and um, then like if they feed me to say thank you for lunch or dinner because I've just noticed that like a lot of friends when I go to their house and stuff, it's usually just like, you know, we're done and then we just pick up our food and stuff. Like every time I'm done, even at my house I say thank you to my mom and dad for cooking and um, then I'm just like blanking right now. But um, my parents also another thing, they are very big on work ethic. Like doesn't matter whether you're at school or at home, like my dad is just like, you have to like do your best or else you're going to be lazy in one area and then that's going to translate to the other areas. So like even at home, like I'll always have a clean room. He'll always like, you know, try my best at school and like, just like everything I like translates into everything in that I do and I'm cleaning has become like a big thing. Like my mom used to make us clean at least like twice a week. And so now like as much as I can, I will, but at least once a week I'll clean. Um, and just like the music that I listened to, I listened to like a lot of Spanish music and when I, I just know that like when I get older and have my own family, I'm definitely going to try and raise them the way that my parents raised me. Maybe not as strict because I know how America is now, but I feel like I'll still wait until they reach a certain age to have sleepovers and maybe not as long as they waited for me, but just, you know, younger and still have like a limit on that. And then, um, my parents limited how many times I could go out with my friends when I was in middle school and high school. Um, and I'm definitely going to have that with my children because they don't have a limit on my sister and she's not trying as hard in school and she's having trouble and I school was so easy for me and I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I hardly ever went out.

- Speaker 1: And um, what are some challenges do you face any challenges as a Hispanic student? Um, any challenges?
- Speaker 2: [23:33](#) I don't really know about any challenges that I faced through like the school, but there some people that I have met I could never tell if was because of my race or maybe there's just something about me that I just felt like I couldn't really, really like fit in or I just felt like I had to look a certain way to be part of the group. Like I had friends in the past who I thought were friends and then like I would be asked to hang out with their friends and then I just like be with all of them and just felt like everyone was connecting with each other except me. And I just couldn't tell why. I couldn't tell if it was like a grade difference, like because I was older or I was new to the group, but that's usually never been a problem with like my other friends who are like, uh, like when I hang out with that group, there's different cultures. Like there's black people, there's Hispanic people, there's agents and so I just like, we all connected and I didn't know if it was because of that and the people that I hung out on, the other group that I didn't connect with, they were just mainly like white sorority girls and I don't know if it was because I wasn't in a sorority or what, but there's just something and I just remember that one instance that I just couldn't tell why they weren't really wanting to get to know me. I might've just been like the situation are, they all knew each other except me. I didn't know what it was, but I guess like if I were to have faced any challenges, it might have been relating to certain categories of friends.
- Speaker 1: And has anyone ever asked you about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to those questions?
- Speaker 2: [25:24](#) Usually people ask me like where I am from and I just say that I'm from Peru most of the time. I'm very surprised at how many people don't know where that's from. Like they are like, where is that? Is that in Spain? I'd be like, no, it's in South America. And um, I mean, I really don't mind at all to tell them where I am from because I would much



rather them ask me than assume that I'm from a certain place. One instance that was very like a culture, not a culture shock, but just like a slap to the face was when I went to the DMV to get my license and I had forgotten some paperwork at home or something. I forgot what it was, but I had my birth certificate. And um, we were there. And I don't remember if this was before, this was after, I think that my dad had already become a citizen. And so, because I was under 18, that naturally made me a citizen and we went to the DMV and the lady was like looking in my documents and she goes, um, I need to see her green card. And my dad was like, why? Like, um, she's a citizen, I'm a citizen, so she's a citizen. And then the lady said, yeah, but she's from Mexico. Like I had my birth certificate in front of her. She didn't even read it, but she just saw that I wasn't from here and she just initially thought he's from Mexico and my dad got so mad and he goes, that says she's from Peru and she doesn't need a green card because she's a citizen and it just like we're going back and forth. And we ended up having to go back home, get my green card that wasn't even, like, you know, relatable. Like they, she didn't need it and we gave it to her. And then, um, she like let us like take the exam or get my license or whatever. But it just like made us both so mad that she just assumed that I needed a green card and that I was from Mexico, like she wasn't really listening to my dad. I was just like so disrespectful and I've never had that occurrence until then.

Speaker 1:

And where was that?

Speaker 2:

That was in Mississippi. That was like in Olive Branch or Hernando.

Speaker 1:

And have you ever experienced any assumptions or stereotypes about your character and who you are because of your perceived race?

Speaker 2:

And I don't know if there were anything else. Um, I have had just a lot of people would just think that I'm from Mexico or Puerto Rico, but um, this one instance, it didn't hurt my feelings as much. It more so made me laugh because he's my roommate and

I've known her since middle school and she knows where I'm from. But like one time, like a couple weeks ago, she was introducing me to one of her friends and she's like, yeah, she's from Puerto Rico. And I was like, Haley, I'm npt from Puerto Rico. And she's like, oh my, you should, um, what's it called? The. And she's like, I was like Peru. And she goes, I knew that, I swear I did. And it's fine, like, because she felt bad, but other people they just assume and don't ask and just categorize me into a certain culture. And I haven't really had any people be like, oh, I bet that you could sing Mariachi all day long or anything like that. But, um, I feel like I'm trying to remember some instances when I worked at a Mexican restaurant. Oh. Um. So I worked at a Mexican restaurant over the summer and I didn't get this all the time, but the few times that I did it, like annoyed me and triggered me, I would go up to a table and ask them, hi, how are you doing today? What can I get for you? And some people would try to speak Spanish to me even though they didn't really know it. So they'd be like, Ola Como Se dice, um, and just kinda like butcher it. And I could never tell if they were thinking that I couldn't speak English very well and they were trying to help me. And that annoys me because I have, you know, obviously worked really hard to learn English as well as I do and for them to kind of almost, I don't know what it's called, like put me down a level and be like, oh, let me help you out because you need it, like I don't need it. And they're not even, you know, they're just assuming that I need the help. And other times they're doing, like I have had a customer once who, um, was a learning Spanish in college, so she wanted to practice their Spanish, which was totally fine with me and I like converse with her in Spanish too. Like she thought it was like fun and that was fine with me. But other times like people will like laugh as they're like speaking in Spanish and then I would just not like I'm using, I just keep wanting to begin in English. We're like, okay, so do you want beans and rice with that? And then they were just like laughing pat me on the back and like, I don't know, it just annoyed me for some reason and I can't really explain why. I don't know if it's because I thought

they were making fun of me or because I thought that they were like putting me down, but it's just like instances like that where they think that I don't know enough and I'm like, sometimes I, this hasn't happened to me personally, but I have had friends who have been working in restaurant industries. And one time I had a friend get tipped or something, I forgot how it went, but she was basically like, oh no, like, um, you really didn't have to. And they were like, no, trust me, I know that you need it. Like, I don't know, it's just stuff like that.

Speaker 1: [31:47](#)

And do you speak Spanish?

Speaker 2:

I do speak Spanish. Um, I learned it as my friend first language. So my parents taught me. And wait, I think I just said my friends taught me that. I say that my parents taught me, my parents did teach me and that tyler and basically Spanish was your first language. Yeah. And when did you start learning English in Peru or not certainly. Um, I knew very little English in Peru, like in kindergarten they teach you a little bit like they have books with English and so you learned that as your second language, but I mean kindergarten English isn't gonna get you far. And so really I learned a lot from Dora, like when I moved to America I would have watched your all the time and I learned a lot from her and I had a friend who is Hispanic, um, when I was in kindergarten and first grade and she already knew English very well and so she helped me a lot and then my teacher knew a little bit of Spanish and so because of her she helped me a ton.

Speaker 2: [33:02](#)

But if I hadn't had them, it would've been so much harder on me to understand the material. Um, so just through like classes and TV that's helped me out so much, like worth learning English. What language do you speak English for sure. Because I live in America and all my friends speak English. Um, me and my sisters speak English to each other and I don't really know why, but we just do, you just feel more comfortable talking in it and I know a lot of people who are Hispanic and they have brothers or sister sisters and they speak English with each other but speak Spanish with your parents and

it's so interesting to me because obviously they both know Spanish but they choose to speak English with each other and I choose to speak English with my sister because it just feels so formal and almost like two real when I speak English.

Speaker 2:

[33:58](#)

I mean when I speak Spanish with my parents, but when I speak English I just feel much more comfortable now because I know so many adjectives and I can express myself a lot better in English than I can in Spanish. I had to like think about it sometimes or how to make sure that the words are in the order that they supposed to go and stuff. Um, and sometimes I wish I knew Spanish just as well as I did English because since I spent more of my life learning English, the level of Spanish that I know now, it's just like, it's enough to like fluently talk day to day, but if I want it to like sit down and write a book, I definitely have to look up some stuff. And how, how is the ability to speak Spanish to the culture. I'm like not just myself but like the culture which you've seen within your own family.

Speaker 2:

[34:51](#)

Um, it's very, very important, especially if you're wanting to speak to older people because most of the time with my experience, they don't know English as well as their kids because their kids, when you're younger you can pick up languages so much faster when you're a kid then when you are an adult. So obviously they still have accents and they have to think more when speaking English. So naturally they just speak Spanish when we're all together. Um, and my boyfriend, he is American and so he speaks English and little to none Spanish, only what I've taught him. Um, so when we have family gatherings or were with, like our family, my family and our family friends who are all Hispanic, everyone's speaking Spanish and he sometimes feels left out of the jokes that they're saying or just really wishes that he could speak and just, you know, relate more.

Speaker 2:

[35:47](#)

They do speak English sometimes, like, you know, when they're talking to him or we're all talking together. But like, my mom doesn't know English as

well and a lot of the times when she wants to ask nick something she make, she asks me if I can ask him the question and I wish that she knew English more or nick knew Spanish more so that they could communicate better because I have a super close relationship with his mom. That's because one, I'm just more outgoing and I, uh, like I exerted myself, like I want it to get to know her better. But nick is a little more reserved and shy. And on top of that he doesn't know Spanish. And so his relationship with my mom, they both really like each other, but they probably haven't, like all combined that they've spoken with each other. It probably couldn't last more than an hour and 22 and 23.

Speaker 2:

[36:51](#)

Basically the same question. How does the university and the community cater to and omit the Latino population? Um, they had, if I think it's correct, they had like a Latino Hispanic heritage month. Um, and I thought that was really cool and they showcase like movies and books and then they have like a few lectures and stuff. Um, I wasn't able to go to most of them because of my classes in my schedule, but I thought it was really neat for them to offer those things for people who may not know about the culture as much and who want to know for them to just go and find out. And then, um, I don't know if this was a old miss thing. I know there's a lot of scholarships for Latino students and I think that's really cool. Um, and other than that I really don't know of any other resources that they have for Latino or Hispanic students.

Speaker 2:

[38:00](#)

And how do you view race in the US in the south and in Oxford. I'm like the relationship of I'm totally open ended the relationship or maybe like how race operates or what you kind of understand where it used to be. Totally open ended question. I feel like race is still a problem. Like we've definitely progressed a lot over the years, but racism in particular is still an issue. Um, we just had a protest yesterday on black lives matter and stuff like that. I feel like the two main racist that are always getting pointed out is white people and black people. And those are like the main issues. Like I always, when I think of race, I always just

automatically think black and white. I never automatically think Asian or Pacific islanders or anything like that. And it's because not many people talk about it and really identified those as issues even though they are issues. Um, just because they're not as vocal about it doesn't mean that there aren't any underlying issues within those cultures or races. Um, so I think sometimes race can also mean,

Speaker 3: [39:30](#) um,

Speaker 2: [39:33](#) like people discriminate or just have these stereotypes of certain races.

Speaker 3: [39:40](#) Um,

Speaker 2: [39:44](#) just yeah, like I just feel like race is a touchy subject for a lot of people, but when it comes to identifying your race informs and stuff, it's, you know, most of the time it's not a problem, but for like Hispanic Latinos it becomes like, what do I put and when it comes to like verbally talking about your race,

Speaker 3: [40:06](#) um,

Speaker 2: [40:08](#) I feel like some people are not as comfortable to talk about like their race or I just wish it wasn't a topic.

Speaker 3: [40:19](#) Yeah.

Speaker 2: [40:19](#) And then I was leaving so it was 40 minutes after the hour. Um, yeah. This is the last question. How do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of raising this out?

Speaker 3: [40:33](#) Um, hm.

Speaker 2: [40:39](#) I feel like the Latino population with its growing, we'll probably open new doors to race on like different categories and stuff. Um, and then it Latinos get big enough like they'll have to like obviously like be considered their own race and as in like numbers not like important or anything, but um, yeah, I feel like that's what's going to have to happen and it, I feel like at the beginning just

because people are the way that they are, it's going to be like very controversial. And so that was the last question. Do you have any other points or things that you'd like to talk about that I didn't ask you on? Yup. Cool.

Perla Viveros LeSure

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Are you 18 years or older? And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 2: [00:52](#) On my social security number it says Perla Viveros LeSure.
- Speaker 1: [01:07](#) And when were you born?
- Speaker 2: I was born May 9th, 1996.
- Speaker 1: Where are you from and where did you grow up?
- Speaker 2: [01:37](#) Originally from Mexico. I was born and raised there for the first three years of my life, but around my third year when I was three years old, that was when me and my mother, we transitioned to the United States and we ended up coming into Sardis, Mississippi. But it wasn't initially where I was raised. I was raised in various states, honestly, uh, I spent maybe a year in Sardis went to head start, uh, in the, the main reason why my parents put me or they wanted me to go through head start was because, so I can pick up the English language because whenever I came here I had no lick of English or anything like that. On the other hand, I was pretty much traumatized and the fact that I was putting a classroom full of people who I couldn't understand. And, uh, from then on I was able to be, to be able to participate in kindergarten because a lot of the problem right now is that a lot of children who come from Mexico or any other part of the Latin American countries, whenever they come from there to here, they normally set them back a year behind because they want them to pick up the English language. Well, for me it was different because I was here at a young age and I was put through headstart to pick up the language first. And then I went to kindergarten in Illinois. And then I

took a whole year there for kindergarten. Then from there we were typical Hispanic family that would move because of work and basically nomadic. And um, I moved to Michigan for maybe the first, my first semester.

Speaker 1:

From then, you made it back to Batesville, Mississippi from Michigan. For your first semester of first grade?

Speaker 2:

Yes ma'am. I'm sorry I wasn't clear. Uh, and then we moved down to Batesville, Mississippi. I went to first grade in Batesville, maybe two months. And then after that we moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. And I finished first grade there completely, and I stayed there until the end of the summer and then we moved down to the Jackson area. We all lived in Richland. So I went to Richland Elementary School over there in Mississippi. And I did my second grade there. And then after I finished second grade, we all moved to South Carolina. I was there for third grade. And then from then on I'll moved to Marion, Indiana and I did my fourth grade year there. But then I guess fourth grade is the time whenever you're starting to develop. And I was starting to develop, um, I was starting to develop as a young lady and you know, my mom talked to my dad and he said, well, you know, this type of lifestyle isn't for her, especially since she's grown up and, you know, we're typical Hispanic family that a whole that we live as a family and it's like maybe three families in one big house in like maybe extended cousins and all of that. And it was just a lot of males. And my mom, my parents didn't want me to put me through that, so they decided to settle down and my parents decided to settle down in Batesville, Mississippi. So we moved down to Batesville, Mississippi in fifth grade and I've been here ever since. So that's my whole entire life being raised. And personally I don't think I was specifically raised in one place. I was raised in southern and northern culture and I was able to get that cultural shock at a young age because I do know that I went to school where there was some Hispanics that were in different grades or there were some that were in my grades, but we were in



different age ranges and I did go to a school where I was the first Hispanic to go there and I was the only one there. And it was a really big shock to everybody. They were predominantly white and black and it was really shocking in them that there is somebody who is not like them who could speak another language because I was the first Hispanic and I was the first one to be like the first foreign person basically. It was really strange to me. It was strange because I thought this was normal, you know, and when we add being eight years old, I was like, I thought this was normal, but it wasn't. It is what it is. But then I was raised in Batesville, Mississippi and that's where I've been.

Speaker 1:

Why did you decide to move from Batesville to Oxford?

Speaker 2:

[07:14](#)

Well, I am a DACA recipient so I don't get any scholarships and if I do get any type of scholarships and I'd have to move to California, Arizona or any of the heavily populated Hispanic states. And I simply didn't think I could afford that honestly, uh, during the time I was filing my FAFSA and everything, my father, he wasn't a citizen, he was a permanent resident. And then my parents pay taxes and everything like that. They did the legal stuff in the United States, but, you know, it still wasn't enough for me to be able to even qualify just because it was simple reason, I wasn't a permanent resident or citizen so. Well my parents, they talked to me and they sat down with me. They told me that, you know, that they were willing to pay my college tuition full paid out. If I could take out student loans, which I know that we can take out student loans, it's just more heavily interest on us than what it would be to a normal United States of American here. Um, so my parents told me that, you know, you have a really great school down the road. If you stay home with us, we'll pay for your college. We'll pay for your textbooks, we'll pay for your car, gas, food, everything. So that's mainly the reason why I came to Ole Miss. It wasn't even really because I wanted to come here because I did apply for other schools. I applied for the Catholic University of America and I applied for NYU and I

was uh, accepted into them, but because of tuition, because of, you know, just, just trying to be affordable, I couldn't pay for it. I ended up coming home and found out Ole Miss business school is one of the best of the United States and I was just like, Huh. And I'm sitting here trying to leave somewhere else when I have one of the best schools of business down the road. So it worked out. It worked out. I was pretty content with where I came that I came here and that I was able to, you know, get a prestigious degree.

Speaker 1:

Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?

Speaker 2:

[10:04](#)

Well, race, you could probably say that it is an important part of my identity. And the reason why is because I'm a proud Latina. I'm a proud Hispanic, but I wasn't raised around anyone besides my family. I wasn't raised around other Hispanics, so I never really got that culture from other Hispanics. I only got the culture from my parents or my aunts. That's it. And I was actually, I was actually not raised with them after the age of 10. I'm 22 years old right now as it's been 12 years since I've really, and honestly had a relationship myself with other Hispanics and it's been a big part of me because I'm proud of who I am. Do I exactly know my culture? No, I don't because I wasn't exposed to it and it wasn't even much of my parents' fault. It was more of because there wasn't many Hispanics here or wherever I was. And um, I know whenever growing up I did have a mom, both my parents worked and I had a black nanny. And the reason why I say black is because her perspective on life and her telling me how things are really impacted me because now that I look at it now as a grownup, it's true what she said because she, uh, she told me, um, baby, you're my baby to me, you will like my little black baby, my little Latino baby. But whenever you start to grow up to these white people, you will be not them. You will never be close to their circle because you don't have their facial features. They know you're different. They can see that. They know in your face that you're different. And on the other end with black folks, you're automatically, we categorize you

as white because you don't have our skin color or our skin tone. And I never really understood it because I was like, but I'm not black or white. I'm Mexican. I want to be both. I want to be like you. And she said, I know baby. But you know, whenever you grow up you will see in you now maybe being or not. Now I do see it. Like, you know, I don't fit in with white people because of them. I'm different. I speak another language, my views are completely different from them because, you know, white supremacy and everything like that and I'm looking at it from the eyes of a minority that's not black. And then I go to and then whenever I hang out with some white people or I meet some people that are like, oh, it's the white girl. So immediately then say it's the white girl, you know, that kind of reflects to you that, you know, in their eyes, even if they can definitely tell that I'm not exactly why they still automatically categorize me as white. So it has been a big part of my identity. But you know, I have learned to face and say, no, I'm not this. No, I am not mixed because I get that a lot. I get asked, are you mixed with Puerto Rican? No, I'm Mexican, full blooded Mexican and I'm proud to say that.

Speaker 1:

And how has your experience been at Ole Miss?

Speaker 2:

It's been scary, especially with the Trump administration and everything like that. Just him running for presidency was completely horrible because I was, I was scared. I was in accounting class, and whenever he was elected president, somebody from behind me said a white male from behind me. He said, Oh, you're not from here and go back to your country. So I don't exactly feel welcomed here in all reality because, you know, it's uh, I mean we're in the south. The majority of the people here are all Republican. I even get it from both sides of the spectrum, the African Americans and the white people. I get it from both sides, and they say you come here to steal our jobs, you come here to take away our education and I'm just like, um, I paid just as much as anybody else does or probably even more. But you know it, it's been pretty hard, you know, and I know whenever I was

doing an interview or a panel discussion panel for the Latin American heritage month, I know there's this other, this other girl, she's a law student and she said that it really shocked her and you know, her sister even told her that, you know, she need a lower down her Latinidad. And that shocked me too because I'm like, why would somebody say that? But I can see it. I can see why she said it. And even she said, you know, I could see why she said it, but that wasn't going to stop me. So, you know. Yeah. I get asked, do I have a green card? Yeah. I get asked if I'm a citizen and yes, I get asked if I'm going to go back to Mexico to my own country and I tell them, you know, I have dual citizenship. I don't have to tell you what my immigration status is, and you don't have a right to even know. So, you know, the only thing that it did catch me off guard was whenever I stopped by the police and he asked me do you have your immigration papers? And I had to sit there and I had to show them because I was scared for my life. I was scared I was going to get deported and I wasn't going to be able to see my family or my husband. So I was like, I ready to comply with the law and not be put in a situation. I don't need to be in that situation here in Lafayette County. It was here in Oxford. It was right before Krystals in, in that gas station. I was stopped by OPD. He was a black male officer and he asked me, you know, I didn't feel any type of malice from him but it was still the fact that he asked me, you know, do you have your immigration papers with you? And I had to show him, you know, my immigration document and you know, I did ask, um, answered, why do I have to show you this? And he said, well, I'm just trying to make sure that you're able to be here. And I said, okay.

Speaker 1:

So it, was this the first thing that he said to you when he pulled you over or how did that conversation transpire?

Speaker 2:

They typically ask license and registration insurance. He looked at my registration. He looked at my insurance, then he looked at my license and he saw that it clearly says non-US citizen. So he, I guess out of curiosity he asked, you know, uh,

where you from and do you have your immigration papers? And at that time I was scared and I did decide to comply with him and not go against him because I didn't know. I didn't know if ICE was around there for the time being. So I decided to comply at that moment.

Speaker 1:

What is your major, your classification and some involvement?

Speaker 2:

I am a managerial finance major and I'm a senior. I will be graduating in May and any involvement the on campus at this point in time, I have no involvement because I'm trying to solely dedicate myself to my major because it's been a workload honestly. And, but I would say I did try, I have tried to participate like in the Big Event and the pink walk for Breast Cancer Awareness. I was part of the group of ESTEEM and I mean I've, I've tried to be involved and you know, do something and not just not doing anything.

Speaker 1:

[19:28](#)

What are the most important aspects of your life right now? And what aspects as in like the most important parts of your life? The most important things in your life right now?

Speaker 2:

The most important things in my life right now are my, probably I would say my education right now, my marriage and my siblings. And the reason why is because you know, oh, sorry, my marriage is because I have a, he's an amazing person and he supported me through everything. He's actually the first one who I told him I'm here illegally. I was in junior high and he actually thought it was pretty cool, which was kind of weird that, you know, throughout the, throughout the years. And then once we started dating, he was more involved in the political immigration aspect of it. And he agrees to a certain extent. He sees what is wrong, what is right, what can be done legally, you know, and that's understandable, you know, but even he supports what I do and he supports me. That's the most important thing and well my education, while I mean what's more important than having a minority with a bachelor's degree in this world now.

So it's pretty. It's pretty important. You know, you really can't get paid really good if you don't have a degree. And then my siblings as. Because I guess I teach them about the real world and how whenever you, whenever you get outside of high school, people think differently. There's people that are going to be accepting of you and there's people who are not willing to be accepting of you. Like people who you grew up with are not the people who are going to stay in your life because whenever you branch out, you go to different schools, you know you're going to face racism, you're going to face prejudice. I'm, you're going to face love. You're going to face kindness of different source. You're going to face different things that you never faced whenever you were raised with the same people over and over. You know. So I can honestly say those are three aspects of my life right now.

- Speaker 1:            [21:53](#)            The U.S. Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity are two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 2:            [22:04](#)            Well, my ethnicity, um, if it says Hispanic or Latino. I don't understand that. Like I don't because I can't bubble in anything in the race because I'm, the only options they have is Pacific Islander, White Caucasian, African American. And I think that's. Or Alaskan. And then for ethnicity they have Hispanic and Latino, which are brilliant. Honestly, don't understand what's the difference between Hispanic, Latino and race because I thought, you know, I mean we're all people.
- Speaker 1:            [22:55](#)            If somebody just asks you what is your ethnicity, what would you say?
- Speaker 2:            [23:09](#)            Hispanic, Latino just means that you're from a country in America and there are so many countries in Latin America that they don't speak Spanish. So I consider myself Hispanic and Latino because you know, I'm from Mexico and I speak Spanish so I would say I'm both.
- Speaker 1:                               Um, and how do you identify racially?

- Speaker 2: Uh, I guess it's Mexican.
- Speaker 1: Okay. What are your parent's nationality? Do you identify with your parents' nationality?
- Speaker 2: Like I mentioned earlier, I identify with them. One hundred percent, but it is a little different because I was raised in the United States of America. So the way they were raised, I don't completely agree with their own point of views. I don't completely agree and that's just because I was born, I was raised differently, but other than that I don't, I don't defy the fact that my parents are 100 percent Mexican and I am too. So, you know, it is what it is. That's who I'm proud of.
- Speaker 1: Do you identify as Hispanic or Latina? Which one do you prefer or do not have a preference?
- Speaker 2: I don't have a preference because I was born in Latin America, and Hispanic is just people who speak Spanish. So I'm both.
- Speaker 1: Studies show that the population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race and race relations are viewed in this country?
- Speaker 2: Oh, what's going to affect everything? And I'm all here for it because uh, the implementation of Spanish and just an education and the young in young children's education right now in Texas for example, I have a friend, she lives in Texas. Uh, their school programs are teaching English one semester, like full on English another semester. They're teaching it and full on Spanish. So you get your test papers in Spanish, you get everything in Spanish. So I do think that that is very important because growing up as a native Spanish speaker and heavily populated English speaking country are do believe. Being able to manipulate both language is important because Spanish is one of the top three languages spoken in the whole world along with English and I believe an Asian Chinese Mandarin. So I do think it is that the more heavily populated the Hispanic community or Latino community does grow in the United States, the more there is going to

be a requirement of people here knowing how to speak Spanish or being able to communicate with them simply as that because there's a lot of people that they're coming here that don't know English or they might know English but they don't know how to speak it correctly. It's like it's to them, it's like for a person here who speaks, who wants to try to speak Spanish in the classroom, and then they go down there and they're like, crap, what are you saying? So it can be the same way.

Speaker 1:

And how do you maintain a, your Latina culture while being a student here at university?

Speaker 2:

My Latino culture up whenever I get phone calls, I speak Spanish. Uh, whenever I get asked, oh, what language I speak, I speak, I'll tell them proud Latina, I speak Spanish, you know, from months ago, whenever I got asked where I'm from, I tell them I'm from Mexico. I don't really tell them all details like Batesville, Mississippi. If they asked me where I live, I do tell them Batesville, Mississippi. But I mean, my main thing is, you know, I celebrate moments. Mexican culture dates like the Independence Day of Mexico was in September, you know? I mean we celebrate, um, in December since I am Catholic, you know, and the majority of Mexicans are Catholic. They celebrate the Virgin Mary's birthday on December 12th. So that's coming up and we end up celebrating Christmas on the 24th going until the 25th. So, you know, I do try to keep my Latina or Hispanic culture around me. It's just, do I put it out there like a mall Christmas tree? No, but if somebody hears me speaking or they just randomly asked me, Oh, where are you from? I'm not afraid to tell them, you know, and you know, it's just kind of one of those normal things. It's just some normal person walking.

Speaker 1:

And what are some challenges you face at the university and in Oxford as a Latina?

Speaker 2:

Prejudice. The racism. How a lot of stuff keeps happening. But nobody really points out. Like whenever ICE was here, uh, honestly, I didn't even know about until somebody told me and then I saw



the, the white van just down the road and I was just like, oh crap. And I called my mom immediately. I was like, don't come to Oxford. And then you know, she called her friends and then her friends called and that's how we spread the word. But, you know, what I don't like is that, you know, I understand that there are criminals out there, but you know, what I don't understand is why would you take somebody's innocent family? Why would you try to separate somebody from their children? I just wish there was more awareness on situations like this that is truly happening. It has nothing that's on tv or what they say on tv about like how children are being kept and camps and all this and that. No, like, you know, that's just publicity, that's just media and reality and whether it's happening or not, you know, that's fine, you know, to make it aware. But I feel like you shouldn't just make aware what's going on in certain areas because it's happening all over, like it's happening in Memphis is happening. Hernando it's happening. It's happening in Jackson, you know, so I, that's what I don't like about here is that, you know, I feel like they don't care about the Hispanic community. On the other hand, I feel like they may think it's like a nuisance to have Hispanics except for weekends for cheaper margarita does Cinco de Mayo, you know, stuff like that. Then that's whenever we get recognized. But other than that, I mean I feel like we're not thought about, we're not told these are your rights even though you're here legally or illegally, these are your rights. You can still exercise those rights, you know, so that, that's my problem here. It's just I feel like we, nobody cares.

Speaker 1:

And has anyone ever asked you about your race or your ethnicity and how you typically respond to these questions?

Speaker 2:

Yes. I've gotten asked all the time and I've gotten asked, are you mixed? Are you mixed with something? No, I'm 100 percent Mexican. And they're like, oh, okay. And I'm like, yeah, I'm pretty chill about it that, you know, it also depends on who asks you because you know, there's people who, they come, and they asked. You can feel the men,

the vibe of of them. You can feel the, that one to make like evil aro from them, you know, there's just, you just, you feel it, you feel it whenever somebody is asking you to cause you harm. So to those people, I mean, I told him, you know, I'm Mexican, do you have a problem? And if they have something to say to me that no, that shouldn't be said and I tell them, you know, I don't have time for you or anything like that, but somebody who's out of curiosity, they asked me, you know, where you're from. I gladly smile at them and tell them, you know, Oh, I'm from here and here and here. And if they proceed to ask me questions about my culture and if I speak Spanish and all this, I gladly tell them, you know.

- Speaker 1: [32:50](#) And have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your identity? So like has anyone ever said something to you or about you or stereotyped you in any way ?
- Speaker 2: [33:04](#) I got asked if I jumped the border or if I crossed the river or if I was a wetback or anything like that. And I was just like, no, I'm a dryback. I came on the airplane.
- Speaker 1: [34:52](#) And do you speak Spanish? If yes, how did you learn?
- Speaker 2: [34:55](#) Yes, I do know how to speak Spanish, that I learned how to speak Spanish from the womb, so I was born with it.
- Speaker 1: [35:06](#) How important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
- Speaker 2: [35:09](#) I think it's super important. I really do think it is because I mean just the brain structure and brain development, what you can do with your brain is completely amazing. Just being able to balance and, you know, forgot the correct term. It's code switching code switching a that is completely, um, that is a complete brain function that only dual or more late bilingual people develop and that's whenever you immediately have different, you can, your brain reacts at a faster pace because you have

to transition from one language to another, which I do believe it helps your motor skills and it helps multitasking. So I do believe it is important for you for your own brain development and what. I mean it helps you for your job interviews, you know, more than two lane, you know, more than one language it differently. It looks really good on you and you also help your Hispanic community. Whenever you know that there's somebody or you can tell there's somebody that is on the side of the street, they don't know where they're going or they're speaking Spanish and you can actually understand them and they need help so you can help them.

Speaker 1:

So, you know, and how has the university and the community cater to the general population?

Speaker 2:

There was a Hispanic heritage month. Was it heavily broadcasted and advertised across campus? No, it wasn't, but did I enjoy it? Yes, I do. It was really lovely. I wish that, you know, it was more advertised because I do believe there are more Hispanics on this campus that they're probably afraid to come out saying, oh, Hispanic or anything like that. Yeah, probably. I do think so. So I do. I would like to see the campus cater more Hispanic events. Not specifically, you know, Mexicans, but you know, all around Latin America, you know, and cater some more, you know, bring out that awareness of Oh, this is what happened on this day in this country, you know, you know, show that you care a little.

Speaker 1:

How do you view race in the U.S., in the South and here in Oxford?

Speaker 2:

[39:17](#)

Well, race in the south it's very black and white, very, very black and white. And I feel like, you know, what's mainly portrayed in the media is black and white. It's either that or something about the religion, you know. And that tool is very, not necessarily pertaining to black white people or white people now that I just think it's, you know, it's either you're a Christian or you're something else. So I do think it's very black and white, black and white and not meeting in the gray zone or the gray

zone is being omitted in. It's like this is what matters gray zone that they don't matter. So that's what I feel like it is in the United States and America and the south. Well it's very black and white to is either you're this or you're that and you really don't have room for other minorities. And I'm speaking about minorities as in people from Saudi Arabia. There's been A. I know I've seen, there's been a lot more, you know, Indian people, a lot more a Middle Eastern people come to the United States are there, it's more Hispanics coming into and it's just more minorities that are not just blacks or native Americans or anything like that. It's just here in the south it's very black and white and then gray areas omitted. And I guess it's because of the history too. I mean the Jim crow laws and all that stuff that happened, so it was training on bullying. I guess if he can see where that point of view comes from and well here in Oxford, I mean I think it's a, it's a very big melting pot because you have different perspectives and in Oxford is very diverse too so I feel like it's more not necessarily black and white. It's more like grayish because you have. Because you do have some of the white people that do support their Hispanics. You do have something to black people that they support their Hispanics. You have Hispanics. I support the Indians. You have a hispanics that support the Muslims. There's, you know, everybody supports or everybody trusts to support each other. But mainly you see that in the, in the, in our generation. You and make me some time. I do think I've seen it was an older generation too, but mainly is with our younger generation, especially with today with the, with the Poles and the voting and everything. I do feel like, you know, a lot of our generation, they are sharp and see, you know, your voice does count and I hope we, we've made a good decision.

Speaker 1:

How do you perceive the population affecting the idea of race in the south?

Speaker 2:

I feel like it, it can affect it really big because, you know, I think it can affect the populate the population. I do. The race, um, the idea of race in the south. How does Latinos effect? Well, I mean

simply the fact that, you know, the majority of Latinos are in this, they come to the south or they go towards the West where California and all that is. But you know, I do feel like a lot of them do come towards the south because you know, it's warmer and let's be real. Let's be realistic. A lot of Hispanics, they don't like the cold but he, they're mainly in the Sol and I mean you're starting to see more Hispanics around here and you're trying. And it's not as big of a cultural shock as it was maybe 12, 15 or 12, 15 years ago. So I do believe people are getting more accustomed to see different people or people who speak different languages. Is it in a positive way or a negative way? Probably there's people who don't, you know, there are people who have told me no, you have to be. If you're up here, you have to speak English. You can't be speaking Spanish and all this and that. They would try to deprive you of your own language that has happened in. But it's all right. You know. So I do feel like, you know, it is going to make a good image is going to make an impact on the race as in the south. It won't be just, you know, so black and white. It be more of what they call of a melting pot.

Rosa Gonzalez

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) We are recording and we'll go ahead and jump right in. I'm just trying to find the questions in here. I'm giving you both the questions. That's your copy. Okay. All right. Um, so the date is November fourth and we are conducting an interview for my thesis research titled The Latino South Race and racialization. So we'll go ahead and jump right on in. Um, are you 18 years or older? Okay. And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 2: [00:38](#) Rosa Salas Gonzalez.
- Speaker 1: [00:50](#) And um, where are you from and where did you grow up?
- Speaker 2: [00:53](#) I am from and I grew up in South America.

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:57</a>	Okay. And uh, what other places have you also lived in?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:01</a>	I've only lived there. I've traveled a lot, but I've only ever lived there.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:05</a>	And um, what brought you from Venezuela to Mississippi?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:12</a>	It was just school, like the opportunity of going to college here.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:17</a>	And how did you hear about this opportunity area or this specific university?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:21</a>	Yeah, so this specific university, it was my friend Ingrid, she came here before I did. I took a gap year and then I kind of like followed her, uh, but she recommend that it a lot and not by to other places, but it ended up being the best option for me. So that's why I came.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:37</a>	Okay. And um, is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:43</a>	I think it is, um, I know it is. Um, it's very easy to kind of forget sometimes that the way I see things is not the same way other people see it. Um, but I think that growing up in another country really makes me the person that I am right now, like even the things that I enjoy doing are the things that I don't enjoy doing or the food that I like or the fit that I don't like. Um, I think the like that the fact that I was born somewhere else and somewhere else and grew up with these ideals makes me different person.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:24</a>	Can you give a little bit more insight as to maybe how you view race or how you were raised to view raised at home versus coming here to the United States and especially Mississippi where it can still be kind of complicated.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:39</a>	I think we have a lot of people back at home that are Italian descent, descendant or whatever you say, or like Arabic, but they still see themselves as

Venezuelan. Mostly I think from what I can gather from, you know, hanging out with us people. And I always thought of myself like for, for Venezuela and because we don't have that much of like outsider, like heritage I guess. But um, I think that it's very different in the sense that from where, where I grew up, it wasn't like that there was the, there were that many issues of like, kind of like people feeling unhappy because of that. And I think it's because I, it's kind of hard to talk about it, you know, like if you're not from there, but I don't feel like it was this controversial. I'm talking about race was very normal. People living jokes sometimes and it wasn't offensive and it was never, like, it never felt defensive and then here it's like you have to be a little more careful because um, it has been so bad and like it still is so bad with um, some of like the racial, like problems, like, you know, police brutality and all that stuff and segregation like so you have to be more careful when you talk about this things here.

Speaker 2:

[04:04](#)

So it's very hard to Kinda like think about it and like it I used to live in a country that was so kind of like they didn't care about anything that was related to race that I dunno. It's interesting. When you come here and how has your experience been living in Oxford and being a student at the university? I honestly, I've had a great experience. Like I somehow ended up with a lot of friends from Mississippi. Like it was just, I guess the, the friends that I made, the first couple of friends that I made were from Mississippi. So I have a lot of friends that are from Mississippi and they tell me things and I'm like, wow, like, that's interesting, you know, like Kinda like, oh yeah, I grew up in his school and like, like we didn't have that many. Like they didn't, they didn't go to school.

Speaker 2:

[04:55](#)

I can say like, I went to school and I went with a bunch of people from, not from but with families from Italy and families from a linear Lebanese families and stuff like that. And a lot of them are like, yeah, like I just grew up with a bunch of white people are like, I just grew up with a bunch of people who look like me, you know. So That's

interesting. But I've, I've enjoyed my time here. Like I felt very included. Of course there's sometimes that I'm like, oh, people are so um, uncle to, you know, they don't understand the, the, it's not just black and white and there's just like more than that, you know. Can you give some examples of when people are, I guess uncultured or. I mean, even like the smallest little things like, oh, where are you from? I say Vanessa.

Speaker 2:

[05:46](#)

And they're like, oh, what part of Mexico is that? And it's like, dude, like it's not just in Mexico and the United States, like it's, there's a bunch of other countries. It's being Spanish. There's a bunch of other countries that like fall into that Latino, you know, I'm like, a lot of people don't understand that and a lot of people like thinking like, oh, you know, like you talk about it, right. But it's like I can't wait to go to Mexico and have some repairs. And I'm like, no, I mean they're two completely different cultures that because we have, we share that language and a lot of like we share music, we share language, we share a slang, we shared TV. So while a lot of admits this together and we can have like a relationship that probably the United States can have with anything else because you only speak English based, not only but like mainly speak English.

Speaker 2:

[06:41](#)

Um, I think people just don't understand that there's more that it's not like you can define Latino with one specific word, nationality, like there's so many different like views of being Latino, you know, like I can say like, Oh yeah, like I, I feel so Latino and I like go to my house and I need some rip us and like listen to guide that which is our traditional music. Um, and other people can say like, oh, well it feels so Latino when I go home and I drink matt. Then I like listen to whatever they listen in Argentina, you know, like some alternative rock music, you know, like that's, that's also Latino and people don't understand that.

Speaker 1:

[07:31](#)

What is your major classification and maybe some notable notable and bond method you have on camera?



- Speaker 2: [07:37](#) So I am actually, I just got into the BFA program and ceramic, so that's basically like an undergrad level degree, but it's more specialized in a, in an area. So it's an art, it's an art degree. And then I'm a senior. And then what was the other question? So right now I'm at say director, which is the student activities association and I'll be done with that and like definitely not semester, I can't remember, like maybe February and I'm also involved with the ceramics club of course because we have to be in class so I'm like vice president with another girl and we just kinda like put up events for essay for all students and for McDonald's we do sales and um, we have visiting artists come into town and stuff like that.
- Speaker 1: [08:25](#) Cool. And what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
- Speaker 2: [08:31](#) I mean, I will say for sure it's, it's the fact that I'm trying to build a career I guess or like trying to understand myself as an artist. That's probably one of the biggest things, if not the biggest thing that I'm dealing with right now. Of course trying to pay for college because I have to stay a fifth year. So I'm trying to figure those things out. Um, like a lot of my recent like struggles have been trying to figure out a way to get enough money to be able to stay for a fifth year or like um, being able to change my, not change but like extend my visa because it's only for four years and I'll have to send it for longer. So those are definitely the things that have been, like struggling the most with and besides, you know, the regular, like a home, an artist I struggle, you know,
- Speaker 1: [09:19](#) and the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity is two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 2: [09:31](#) Uh, I, I mean I'm Venezuelan, you know, I never thought, I never thought that there were different, you know, I guess it's because I didn't give it that much of a thought.
- Speaker 1: [09:44](#) Yeah. And what are your parent's nationality and do you identify with your nationality?

- Speaker 2: [09:51](#) Yeah, as Venice Felon were from there, grew up there.
- Speaker 1: [09:55](#) Okay. And um, how do you identify racially and why do you identify this way?
- Speaker 2: [10:04](#) I mean, I am Latina, you know, like I'm very aware of that at all. I don't think I've ever like try to define myself that heart to be like, oh, I'm not Latino on this because I heard other people say like, I'm Latina, it's or whatever. But um,
- Speaker 2: [10:22](#) what was I, I mean, identify that way because I grew up in Venice, in Venezuela. I grew up in a Latino country and I grew up with like a very wide, uh, be on other countries that are Latino, you know, I had friends that were from the art, from Colombia and they lived there and I went to visit them. I have friends from Argentina, have friends that are from what, why I have friends who were everywhere in Latino Medica and including a Spain where they speak Spanish. So I think that all of those things and all of that connection with other people has shaped me even though I'm not like Columbia and know a lot of Columbia's laying, you know, so, um, we all love to watch soccer and all that stuff. So, um, and it's not like, oh, I'm a stereotypical Latino person. It's like, no, I grew up knowing all these things. So like, well it doesn't necessarily define me as a whole, like it definitely affects my life, you know?
- Speaker 1: [11:27](#) Um, when you were living in Venezuela, was the term Latino something common that you use to identify yourself? What was, or was that after you get moved to the United States?
- Speaker 2: [11:37](#) I really don't think it was. And I could be wrong. I could just be like, overlooking at, but I don't think so. No, it was. We never thought of. I never thought of race. I'm not going to say wait, I never thought of raised that much. Um, I knew there were other countries. I have friends from other countries, but I was never like, oh, like Latino power and, and, and, and I am, you know, but I don't think it was that intense. I definitely talked about it, but because like we all have a mutual understand then without even

		have to say it, that we were all Latino and we didn't have to say it.
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">12:21</a>	You know,
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:25</a>	studies show that the Latino population is growing in the United States. Oh wait, I skipped a question. Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino or Latina?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">12:35</a>	I just, I don't know why, but Latino, Latina, both. Either way.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:40</a>	Is there a specific reason or just.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">12:44</a>	No, not really. I just Hispanic just sounds so formal. Like Latina is more of like a, you know, like you can scream it, Hispanic, Latino, Latina. I don't know. It just sounds better.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:58</a>	And studies show that the mosquito population is growing in the United States. How do you think this will affect race and race relations?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">13:10</a>	You can tell.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">13:15</a>	No, I feel like wherever you go, I have family, Oregon and you know that they're so close to people that are not from Venezuela but they're from like another other countries in Latin America. I felt like it. I don't know. There's some, some feeling of, of familiarity when you see people that are from a Latino country. I don't know if it's maybe the language, you know, being able to like talk to someone in Spanish or maybe it's because we're also aware of what's going on in other countries. You know, like when I go to Taco shop, literally I go there and talk to Spanish with all the people that work there and they're like, oh, are you, where are you from again? And then we'll like talk for like five minutes. It could very short conversation of like how everything's going up there and they're like, how's your family and stuff. So I don't know, it's just like a very kind of like feels like family, you know. But I think it's definitely going affect the country, you know, like the little. I don't know, it

just, I don't know how I'm not gonna lie, but it's definitely gonna affect it somehow.

- Speaker 2: [14:23](#) I feel like so many people are coming here that, especially back in Venezuela, you know, like I know what's going on. I do, but I don't know exactly what's going on in other countries. But with that many people trying to leave, it's like it ends up being a place that you're like, oh my family is already there so I want to go and stay with them and like start a little business or whatever.
- Speaker 1: [14:46](#) So how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?
- Speaker 2: [14:52](#) I think dog onto my friends from home and I've like I noticed and I talked to other people about it, like how I don't have that many friends here that I met here that are Latino and I know a lot of people that are Latino and I talked to them a lot but not really very intentionally, but I think that, you know, being in contact with my mom and like trying to make sure of what's going on. Like I listened to Latino Music and um, a lot of other people will like hang out and like go have a party at a house party. But I don't, I don't do that. I'm just too busy. If I make a pollyannas like I'm too busy and when I have free time I'm with my friends. So like there's a lot of guild sometime of like, hey, I'm like I don't make time to be an ob with other people that are from my country and that we have that connection.
- Speaker 2: [15:47](#) But at the same time it's like, I dunno, I don't want to base my whole life on that, you know? Um, but I think that I talk a lot about where I'm from to everyone and it's because I'm very proud and like I miss it a lot and I think that's the best way that I can, you know, remind myself of where I came from. It's like, just talking about it. I have a lot of friends who are like, oh yeah, I didn't know as much until I like started talking to you about how like maybe being someone from Latin America feels like, um, because I, I can't speak for everyone but they can at least see the way that I grew up and kind of like the different things that we do.

- Speaker 1: [16:35](#) But what are some challenges you face at the university in Oxford as a Latino student?
- Speaker 2: [16:44](#) I mean, I'm sure everyone says that, but like there's not that much diversity. You know, like, even in food, like you go here and it's like, Oh man, like you can only this much like you get to the grocery store and I cannot buy anything that's from Minnesota. I remember when I went to New York and like you would go to the Latino section and there was like food from everywhere. It's like you're here. And it's like, oh, the Taco ception, you know, and it's like, come on dude, like give me some other things. Um, so that's annoying. And of course like feeling like a little puppet sometimes like, oh, you know, like Rosa, she's like our Latino students. So we have to put her in every single poster and like, I mean that's not necessarily something that makes me mad because I, I'm glad that at least um, I can represent a part of a culture or whatever.
- Speaker 2: [17:32](#) Like I'm glad that I can sort of help raise more awareness and stuff. But like that's a little frustrating sometimes. I don't know, like people know that it, it looks good, you know, to have a Latino student and they want to like kind of screen that. Like we, we have Latino students and is like, yeah, but like y'all don't really do that much for us, you know, like I, I, and I'm not trying to shit on anyone. Please don't think that I am. But like I haven't gotten that much help since I got here. Like I never got it. How are you doing? I never got so on going out of their way Toronto. See like if I was financially well if I was eating, you know, like, and being from a country that's literally falling apart, like I don't know, that's kind of that kind of sticks either. It doesn't make me mad because luckily I had my friends but like university wise I really haven't. My friends have been very nice and helpful but the university is Kinda like Thursday out and they were like the urine thing. Have Fun, you know? And I hope that that has changed. I think like, I know that uh, you can get a full scholarship now. Like deca has a full ride. I don't have a full ride, you know, like I still have to pay for tuition so that sucks.

- Speaker 1: [18:47](#) And has anyone ever asked about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically reply to those questions?
- Speaker 2: [18:55](#) Yeah, people ask all the time. Um, when I'm in the studio, there's a lot of people that have never been there before. They're taking their class for the first time and they're like, um, can I ask you a question? I hope you don't, like, it's kind of like offensive. How can I get mad? And I'm like, yeah, and I know it's where they're going to ask you another. They're going to be like, where are you from or where's your ats? And from. And I tell them I'm from Venezuela. That's the first thing I say, like, oh, well they never asked me like, what's your race or what's your ethnicity? They asked me like, where are you from [inaudible], I guess that people connect the. Where are you from? Do you know that race and ethnicity when it comes to like Latino people? And um, oh, I just always say Venezuela. It doesn't make me mad, but it's kind of like already know because I've had to respond so many times that it's like, I know they're going to ask me.
- Speaker 1: [19:51](#) And have you experienced any assumptions about your character because of your identity?
- Speaker 2: [20:00](#) I'm sure. I'm sure some people have made some assumptions, you know? Um, but I think even even myself, I'm like, oh, you know, like I'm Venezuelan and we're known as like the loud people. Like I'm very lot. I talk a lot and well that's not true. Like I guess sometimes I take those stereotypical thoughts of people from my, not even, not even country but from my city because we're known. If you, if you google it, you're going to look like Medeco chose. They like cars a lot and they like scream and they like dancing and they like this. Like if you go on Wikipedia, you might actually find that because I think I looked it up the other day that we cuss a lot and I don't say that I'm like, ah, you know, like I grew up like this. That's why I'm like this. So, um, and of course the, I already said the, Oh, what part of Mexico is that? And it's like, dude, you know, Latino America is way bigger than that. Not

		because I'm brown doesn't mean I'm Mexican, you know?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">21:08</a>	Yeah, yeah. Um, and do you speak Spanish? How did you learn?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">21:14</a>	Yeah, I mean, I don't even know how I learned. I learned when I was a kid. It's like, oh, how do you learn English, you know?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">21:21</a>	And uh, was Spanish or English your first language Spanish. And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to Latino culture?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">21:30</a>	It's extremely important. You know, like if you have. Actually, I have a couple, I know a couple people that they moved to New York and then they had kids and their kids learn Spanish and they can speak Spanish perfectly and they could speak English perfectly and it's because, you know, like how, how are my kids, if I ever have any, how are they going to speak to my mom if they like don't know Spanish, you know, like there's a lot of things that get lost in translation and even even music even like anything, like jokes, like, like pop culture, like, like shows on TV novella as like how, how, how sitting on important language is so important to understand each other. Um, so it's, it's really important to me. You know, that if I'm with someone that speaks Spanish, I speak Spanish and I'm not like, like sometimes me, I'm Ingrid, my friend Ingrid, we talk and it's like we, we talk in spanglish because some things are easier to say in English because we've already said them in English before.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">22:37</a>	But like, I don't want to not, I don't want to sit in front of someone that I've spoke Spanish my entire life and speak in English, you know, I don't know it and it's very nostalgic, you know, like I don't speak in Spanish to my friends, didn't know how to speak English because that's just gonna make it harder because I have to like Kinda like have a little, have a little more patience and trying to not correct them all the time. So I always speak English with the people that know how to speak English unless they

are like, can I get some help with the Spanish? But I don't know, it's, it's, it's truly important, like if you're, if you're a Latino kid and live in another country and don't know Spanish, then I mean, it's sad, but it's true. You're not, you're not going to grow up with the same immerse in the community as she could. But yeah, that's, that's what I think. It sucks. But I mean that's, that's what I think.

- Speaker 1: [23:34](#) Okay. And how does the university and the community catered to the Latino population?
- Speaker 2: [23:41](#) Um,
- Speaker 2: [23:44](#) I don't, I, I don't really know. I mean I know the, the other students from the Latin American Center organization, they like do a lot in party, but besides that I think that's the only thing that I ever see that's, that's big and that's for everyone and, and that's Latino, you know, besides the, of course like Mexican restaurants and stuff like that or like, no actually pretty a lot of Latino people work in there but I still don't think that it's really being catered. I know there's been like a couple activities like um, I would say this like panel of people that were Latino and they wanted to talk about it and they had some people that were raised in a Latino home but in the United States and they had some other international students. But like those are things that only journalists, journalism majors go do so they can write a story or like someone that's like very extremely interested goes to or like someone that feels like they have to go to support their friend, you know, like I don't feel like there's a lot of efforts into trying to.
- Speaker 3: [25:01](#) I Dunno,
- Speaker 2: [25:04](#) make it a more culturally aware campus try with how to tardy holidays like we invite everyone to, but that's such a small thing, you know, like, and, and it's sweet and it's nice and I appreciate it but I don't feel like you can't, you can make people
- Speaker 2: [25:26](#) like no more things that they don't want to learn of and I think that there's a lack of interest in trying to



understand because it's so easy to stick with what you know. And I feel like here it's like like, oh, you're white or you're black or you're like, you know, and everything else just kinda like falls into third place. You know? It's kind of like overlooked. Like even like, I don't like Asians, like nobody ever likes says, Oh yeah, that's have a nation party. Like I don't know. And I, I'm just talking right now, but I do feel like everyone that's not, that doesn't fit into black and white. It falls in that category of like other. How does the university have the community?

- Speaker 3: [26:23](#) I mean, it can, it can be anything, you know, like
- Speaker 2: [26:28](#) I just don't, I, it may not even be like the university's fault. It's just like there's so little, there's such a little amount of people. It, even in class when you go to class that you kind of do feel like you're the only one sometimes. Um, and I don't, I don't know if that's the university's fault. I think it's just the lack of people being interested in going to Mississippi for school when they have like this type of background. Um, but another given more financial aid and you know, that attracts people to come to college because like if I'm getting a full right, why wouldn't I? I'm so, I guess they're like trying hard on that. But even like, like faculty, like I don't see that much faculty that's Latino, you know, like, and the art department. Oh God, I hate to do this, but like they don't have, they don't have like a, a Netzero, a mesoamerican.
- Speaker 2: [27:26](#) Um, or like Latin American art. They have a lady that this Asian art. But I mean, that would suck if they didn't because Asian art, it's like very important, but you know, so it's that American art, it's like we don't have a single teacher that can sit there and talk to me about like our history in, um, I dunno like Mexico, Argentina, they probably can't but like to a limited extent. And I'm sure, I'm sure it's like that in other departments I have met, like do other professors, but they were, um, they were like Spanish teachers. It's like, I mean, that makes a little more sense, but I don't know, I guess there's not a lot of people like in a higher position at the

- university that I can, I can like pinpoint as like, oh, you know, like they're Latino, you know, and there may be. And I'm just like not thinking well
- Speaker 1: [28:23](#) right now, how do you view race in the US? In the south and here in Oxford?
- Speaker 2: [28:31](#) Um, I guess I don't understand that question. It looks like super broad.
- Speaker 1: [28:38](#) Yeah, it is. It's very open ended. So it really is. No, none of this is any right or wrong answer, but had just written. That's really, how do you see race and United States here in the south. So right here, not expert.
- Speaker 2: [28:56](#) It's weird because people do talk about Mississippi kind of like you should be scared of going to Mississippi when you're like, like brown or Latino. It's like I have friends who are like, oh, it must be hard. And I'm like, I mean yeah it is, but I've never like, I, I don't think I've ever been denied services because I'm Latino, you know? And, and I don't know if it's because it's Oxford and it's like the most deceptive little town in Mississippi. So like you know, there's a lot of gay people that are openly gay and they live here and they like literally like hang out here and have these parties and stuff like that and like inclusive and stuff like that. Like, and, and that, that is so cool and that makes me think of [inaudible] kind of like we had said people. But at the same time it's like you can tell that there's people that just don't give a shit and like think of you as less.
- Speaker 2: [29:59](#) But I think that in, in comparison to Mississippi as a whole, like alters very accepted. Um, and, and maybe because we're so close to like, um, the were in the North Mississippi do, so I don't know if that, like maybe memphis has a big population of like other races because it's such a big city. I don't know what it is, but like I feel like answer is way more accepted than people would imagine a town in Mississippi would be. And, and the US in general, like I just feel like there's always a lot of kind of like people are scared to talk about it. Like even

now I'm scared to talk about it sometimes because I don't want to offend anyone. You know? And, and it's like, it's not like, oh, you know, like I hope you don't get offended because I asked you where you're from.

- Speaker 2: [30:50](#) It's like, no, I mean you should ask me where I'm from. Like, because I'm clearly not from here. You know, like the, like you can tell, um, but at the same time it's like I would, I would get mad at people did that all the time. So it's like, it's so weird because I never had to experience people think of me as an outsider until I came here and now it's like I don't even know how to react to what people say sometimes. And, and it's because you're different. People know you're different. People ask you why you're different or how you're different, you know.
- Speaker 3: [31:26](#) But
- Speaker 2: [31:27](#) I never felt that until now. And I don't know if it's because I'm in Mississippi or if it's because I'm in the US because when I go to New York, when I go to anywhere in the country, not anywhere but like New York, that's a place that I've been to the most. People don't ask me where I'm from, you know, like they just don't care because it's such a big city, you know, like who cares where you're from and the idea of race. Well I hope that people understand that there's a lot of countries that are a part of Latino Medica and it's not just like Mexico, you know,
- Speaker 3: [32:05](#) um,
- Speaker 2: [32:07](#) I think that having more Latino people here, my actually help that, like Kinda like raise awareness on the fact that people just like don't really understand what Latino is.
- Speaker 3: [32:22](#) Um, I dunno,
- Speaker 2: [32:26](#) that's Kinda hard to think of because it's such like a hypothetical question, you know, but um, no, I just hope that it raises a little more awareness and people are less like prompt to make those assumptions of, you know, you're Latino. That

means that you do this. It's like I have a lot of friends that didn't even like Latino music. They listened to heavy metal when we were in high school. So. And are there any other points that you would like to discuss now? I think that's good. Well that's it.

Sabrina Ramirez

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Today is November 11th and uh, we're doing an interview for my thesis research title with the Latino South. First question, are you 18 years or older? Can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 2: [00:41](#) Sabrina Ramirez. December 19, 1997. And where are you from and where did you grow up from? Miami Beach, Florida. I grew up in Miami. I say this, I was about 14 or 15 and then I moved to Ridgeland, Mississippi. Then I came up here. And
- Speaker 1: [01:13](#) have you lived in any other places other than what you just told me? No. And why did you move from Miami beach too?
- Speaker 2: [01:20](#) Um, for my dad's work.
- Speaker 1: [01:25](#) And would you mind like going into further detail about that or
- Speaker 2: [01:28](#) um, he does like carpenter construction things like their roofing housing.
- Speaker 3: [01:34](#) Okay. And
- Speaker 1: [01:37](#) why did you decide to come to. Oh Man. So I just, some of tasks
- Speaker 2: [01:46](#) I came to ole miss because I was studying medicine and they offered me a lot of scholarships more than other ones would I was going to Jackson state at first, but it just didn't work out.
- Speaker 1: [02:02](#) And is raised an important part of your identity and why or why not?

Speaker 3:	<a href="#">02:08</a>	Does that mean
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:09</a>	like, I mean it's an important part of who you are. Is your rights important part of it?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:17</a>	I guess culture wise it would be like my language and like my family and our traditions. It's important to me but I guess. So that's, that would be why
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:31</a>	and how has your experience being a comic going to old miss and living enough?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">02:38</a>	Um, it's been good. It's been different. It's just very southern.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">02:49</a>	Can you kind of explain a little bit of how, so you were, so you were born and you grew up in Miami, so kind of, I guess like the cultural differences of coming from Miami to Mississippi and then coming to Oxford. You said it was different here, so how so how was it different when you moved to Mississippi?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:09</a>	Miami is just so much more diverse and we're all mixed in together. Like we're not like, okay, that person's why that person's black, that person's Hispanic or up here in Mississippi. If you're Hispanic they consider you to be Mexican. I feel like everyone who's Hispanic is just called Mexican, but like in Miami where the Medicare, like Colombian Cuban, like everybody's there for everybody's more diverse. So then over here I feel like everyone's more like in their own race and sticks to each other like split up.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">03:44</a>	And what about here? Is that the same in Oxford or.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">03:49</a>	Honestly from my experience so far I feel like it is. And then I don't really know a lot of Hispanics anyway. I've maybe I've met like one or two at the most, but so far. Yeah. See everyone just sticks to their own race.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:05</a>	Did you see a problem with that? Are you okay with that? What? What's my response to?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:11</a>	I don't really like it. I feel like, you know, everyone should be more diverse. It makes the Internet like to learn more about other people. There's just a lot of racism in Mississippi, but no, I don't like it. It's kind of uncomfortable.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">04:26</a>	Have you ever experienced any racism or any, any of your friends or anything ever talks about any racism which you may may have experienced in originally or here?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">04:37</a>	Um, I was in Walmart with my family ones. This was back in Ridgeland, Mississippi and um, my family is first all main language is Spanish, so they don't really speak English. So we were at Walmart Grocery shopping and we were just speaking Spanish and a lady came up to us. She was like, you need to speak English because you're in America now. And she was just saying I was like racist. The
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:08</a>	how did your family respond to that? How did that make you feel?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:13</a>	I'm independent. My mom kind of just went off on her. I don't think I can say all that, but yeah.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:21</a>	And is that something that you and your family experience in Miami?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:26</a>	No, not at all.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:28</a>	And was that your first time experiencing something like that when that happened?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:33</a>	The first time I've experienced racism like this when I moved to Mississippi.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">05:39</a>	And um, what is your major classification and any notable involvement that you have?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">05:45</a>	My major is Spanish and nursing. My minor psychology if you need that. I'm a sophomore and involvement like clubs, organizations. Okay. In opa community service, sorority and I'm also in maps and I'm on the committee for the community service

Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:06</a>	and he's me what? OPA and maps for just like him.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:10</a>	LPA is like friendship leadership and like giving back to the community and the university like
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:17</a>	doesn't like OPA.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:22</a>	Okay. Yeah. This is a minority association of premedical students and ops, Omega Phi Alpha.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:32</a>	And um, what are the most important aspects or parts of your life right now? And why do you mean what's most important to you right now?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">06:43</a>	Like just in general, like um, I wouldn't say school right now trying to get all my classes yet. I'm trying to graduate a year early to
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">06:52</a>	probably. Yeah. And so now we're gonna get into more questions about race and identity. So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:08</a>	Um, I guess Cuban, Colombian because my dad's side of the family, his coat is from Columbia and my mom's side of family, they're all from Cuba.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:18</a>	Okay. And what is your, when you just telling me, what is your parent's nationality? Do you identify with their nationality?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:26</a>	Identify as Cuban, Colombian. So as both.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:29</a>	Okay. And how do you identify racially? So somebody just says, what's your race? What do you typically say? His fanny. And do you prefer the term Hispanic or Latino?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">07:42</a>	I use Hispanic more than let's say no.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">07:46</a>	Is there a reason why or your shifts. And so studies show that the population has grown in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:02</a>	If the population grows, you know, maybe the racism would go down a little bit more. People be more open to new races and cultures probably.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">08:12</a>	Um, and how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student? Maintain your Cuban culture? You're Colombian culture?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:21</a>	Um, I don't really know a lot of Hispanics, like I said it or I don't know any Hispanic organizations or anything, but it is my major. So I do speak in the class and at home I cook for my roommates. I make them like Colombian Cuban food all the time.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">08:37</a>	Okay. What are some challenges you face as a student here? As a Lebanon? I guess
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">08:51</a>	not being around like my culture is much kind of fading apart for me. Like when I go home and speak to my family's like, oh, I forgot something would like to say some stuff in Spanish because I speak so much English here.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:05</a>	And has this issue about your race and ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these of
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:12</a>	um, as you get asked about my research and they study a lot and I tell them like, how makes with Cuba and Columbia most of the time everyone just thinks I'm Mexican because that's their idea of Hispanic. But yeah, a lot of people don't know where Columbia is or Cuba.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:29</a>	And was that something you started getting asked him once you moved to Mississippi or did people ask you that in Miami or how
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:37</a>	it was really just in Mississippi.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:41</a>	How does it, how do people typically ask you?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">09:44</a>	They're like, are you Mexican or are you make or what are you going to ask you? Something else I forget.



Speaker 1:	<a href="#">09:55</a>	Yeah, that's fine. It'll come back to me. Have you ever experienced any assumptions about your character because of your perceived race? So has anybody ever stereotyped you or said anything to you that was stereotypical just because of how you look?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">10:11</a>	I do, I want to make some Tacos for them. I'll get caught like Enchilada, but there'll be like playing around but still like a burrito. They'll be like, do you want to go eat at Taco Bell?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">10:29</a>	And who normally says and that that's what was going to ask you to, who normally says these things to you and not like snakes but groups of people and who normally asks you what your race is.
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">10:41</a>	Um, I mean like that, just people I communicate with people I surround myself around, people who like play around and say their probably like people hang out with like my friends.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">10:53</a>	And is that something that you're used to, do you accept that? Is it Kinda like you just brush it off or do you try to like
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">10:59</a>	at first it did bother me but we talked about and it's like they're like, they're just playing around and they don't, they stop if they feel like okay, she's getting offended. No, but I know they're just playing around most of the time.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:13</a>	And um, do you speak Spanish?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">11:18</a>	Yes, I do speak Spanish. I grew up learning it so it was kind of my first language until I just stopped hanging out so much at home when I moved up here.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:29</a>	And growing up in school, elementary school, like education, taught in just English, Spanish. Was it a mix? Because I know like the community is totally different. Just I'm interested in seeing if that was different.

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">11:47</a>	It was English, but a lot of teachers will like make like their ethnicity or their race and all that. And we had a lot of Hispanic teachers
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">11:56</a>	and growing up in Miami. Did you grow up in a majority Hispanic community and here who do you typically hang out with them? You said you haven't been able to find a, a large Hispanic community. Who Do you. I guess who is your. Who's your group? Who's your friends? I guess
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">12:15</a>	what do you mean like race names?
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:18</a>	Basically just to kind of see honestly like I'm trying to see like in this research, how do people in a sense like assimilate into like this white or black steel? Very,
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">12:34</a>	yeah. All my friends are black here. Like I honestly hadn't even met now like Caucasian people or anything. I just, all my friends are black. That's like what I've been used to in Mississippi. I feel like the black community is more accepting and more open to different cultures and everything. But I haven't really ever made like Caucasian friends since I moved to Mississippi.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">12:58</a>	And how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">13:03</a>	Um, I feel like is really important because this is like your culture. You should understand this kind of like a piece of me.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">13:11</a>	And how does the university and the community catered to Latino students?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">13:18</a>	Element is. I really don't know. I haven't seen them like, just do anything.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">13:27</a>	Um, and how did the university and the community for good about or a Latino?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">13:35</a>	Mm. I don't know. I know the community doesn't really have a lot. Well that scene for Hispanics or organizations are much. I feel like they should like

have more involvement in the Spanish community. I haven't really seen anything so.

Speaker 1: [13:54](#) Um, and how do you raise in the United States? In the south and Peter in Oxford. It's really open ended. Just how do you, how do you see race? What is race mean to you? How have you seen it?

Speaker 1: [14:12](#) She was playing out because of race and really anything, anything like that. So it doesn't have to be just racism. It can be like, you know how you were saying like here in Mississippi you'd mostly hung out with black people. Like you grew up in a majority Hispanic neighborhood in Miami. So just like you're the first person I've interviewed this from somewhere else in the United States, most people have either Dan from another country or from in Mississippi. So I'm really trying to kind of see how that dynamic works since Miami is super duper diverse, but it's still in the United States. So yeah, I'm really interested in here yet. Well

Speaker 2: [14:53](#) I grew up like the way my family is, they're really like open to race. We don't have like, they're not racist at all. We're really open. I always like, I grew up like it was a Hispanic community but it was like we have black and white Hispanics and everything. So I was, grew up around a whole bunch of different races and that's just what I'm used to. So like when I came up here, you know, I've never been racist so all my friends are like because of that, because they're the most accepting up here. Um, I don't have anything against white people either. I just haven't met any who are just like really open and accepting of what is mom. I don't know. My friends, they experienced racism up here too. So I see that like, it's not just the Hispanic community, a lot of them, we went to the movies and we watched some movies on Jackson Avenue and when we were leaving the movies, Oh, white guy called one of my friends that inward and it just threw me all, like, I've never experienced that in my diary. So I don't know, I feel like race is really like, everybody's just separate up here.

- Speaker 1: [16:03](#) And what did you and your friends do? Like when you say, what was the response like?
- Speaker 2: [16:10](#) Well it was like a lot of us. Everyone really just went like crazy when he said that he was just insulting them and he just like kept going, but we like nobody got into a fight or anything. They were mature about it.
- Speaker 1: [16:25](#) And um, so you said growing up in Miami, you grew up around Hispanic people, black and white, Hispanic. So did you do, like you've already said like here because would be people think that Hispanic people are Mexican growing up in Miami and obviously you know, you come from a Colombian Cuban family, people of all races are from Colombia and Cuba. Cuba, so like do you really, or is that something that you grew up around, like knowing that there are white Hispanics and blacks, Hispanics or was that something like I'm, I don't know, like in my app is my question. Making sense? Like even though like, pardon me, Dominican, and she, she looks like a black woman but she speaks Spanish
- Speaker 2: [17:12](#) and from some islands.
- Speaker 1: [17:14](#) Yeah, some somewhere down here somewhere. I can't even like a moral, a neighbor like she's full, she's from the Dominican Republic. So it's been interesting to see how people respond to people who look black but Hispanic as well. So is that something that you knew growing up or something that you were exposed to growing up in Miami? Like there are waiting, standing people, black, Hispanic people like just hispanics of all shades.
- Speaker 2: [17:43](#) I just grew up around this new American, like African Americans, Caucasian. Like now Hispanic too. I just grew up around all that. So I was just like, I guess I was used to. I already knew that I was very cultured on it. I knew about it because like in my family we had like why Hispanics and blacks, Hispanics as well

- Speaker 1: [18:06](#) being in Mississippi because even the questions that I've gotten, like people asked me, why would his party be with a mile and a Gra like I have to explain. Is that something that you people ask you about that? How do you respond to that? How does that happen?
- Speaker 2: [18:25](#) Um, I've got that. They're like, how do you please black? She's not Hispanic until they saw her speaking Spanish and stuff, but I try to coach with my friends a lot. Like on the background of that and try to explain to them that there's not only African Americans. It's also like Cubans, like Colombians, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, everything.
- Speaker 1: [18:46](#) Yeah. And how do you perceive or see the Latino population? It can be race here in the step,
- Speaker 2: [18:58](#) that idea of race. I don't know it. Wait, explain a little bit more
- Speaker 1: [19:08](#) like, um, like there are more Hispanics moving to the south, places in the south that aren't typically were Hispanic people move to like not Miami, not Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio. But more and more people are coming to Mississippi and Alabama, Louisiana and so with that, do you think or how do you think the Latino population is going to affect race in the south? Like even you coming from Miami where it was very diverse and people understood different cultures and subcultures, but here in, in Mississippi it's just like black and white, you see the Hispanic population affecting that at all.
- Speaker 2: [19:55](#) As the Hispanic population grows, the more that will become more cultured into it like other places because I'm sure before all these Hispanics got to Miami, Atlanta everywhere they were like how Mississippi is. And so I just feel like it would become more of a developed stay. It'll become more cultured on there. Yeah. On that race.
- Speaker 1: [20:21](#) Okay. And are there any other points or topics that you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask?

Speaker 2:	<a href="#">20:29</a>	Um, no, I can't think of anything.
Tristan Estrada		
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:00</a>	We'll go ahead and jump right in. Are you 18 years or older? Okay. And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:21</a>	Tristan Estrada
Speaker 1:		When were you born?
Speaker 2:		January first 1997. I'm a new year's baby.
Speaker 1:		And where are you from and where did you grow up?
Speaker 2:		I was born in Los Angeles, California, but I say I'm from New Albany, Mississippi just because I spent most of my life in the south.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:44</a>	And when did you move from Los Angeles to New Albany?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">00:47</a>	When I was about nine years old, so I don't know along the year, but I know I was nine years old and I started third grade in new Albany.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">00:57</a>	And um, have you lived in new Albany, Mississippi? Yes. Yep. And um, what was your family from La to New Albany?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:08</a>	I guess my parents will say God, but um, my dad had a family friend that he grew up with and they moved to Mississippi and they taught my dad how great Mississippi was and how he was. The cost of living was a lot cheaper than it was in California. So my dad decided to come take a look and that he brought all of us there
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">01:33</a>	and um, what brought you to ask for?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">01:36</a>	So I've always hurting. Oh, miss and state our big bible reading in, in Mississippi. So you hear about it in school. But uh, there was a time when we went back to California was my freshman year of high

school and I was in a magnet school there. I was in a business magnet and they used to talk about the almost accounting school and then I was like, oh, like I know that school I used to live a couple of minutes away from it, you know. So then when we moved back to Mississippi, I went to ole miss. I saw the campus and fell in love.

- Speaker 1: [02:07](#) And have you lived in any other place? It's just new Albany in La and in Oxford. Is an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
- Speaker 2: [02:21](#) I think at this point in my life, race has become important because growing up being Hispanic, I knew that it's not a race, it's an ethnicity, so I would never kinda choose sides almost. But I think now that I'm getting older races something huge. Why? Why? Why are the Hispanic people not considered race where they just ethnicity, you know, doing a lot of research and, you know, kind of educated myself on it. I understand the, I guess I understand the reasoning why it's an ethnicity, not a race, but at the same time it kind of makes you feel lower than people who do have a race to categorize themselves.
- Speaker 1: [03:06](#) And when did it start becoming important? When is your race or ethnicity you start becoming important? You said? You know, it has become, but it hasn't always been this house what I'm assuming. So
- Speaker 2: [03:18](#) I think it's become important with interactions with people. Um, I, I've dated out of race and to know that someone didn't see me as equal because I wasn't their race, that's when I kinda got thrown into a, almost like I was like in a numbness of just not understanding why is that such a big, big thing race because I'm not your race, your parents don't set me and that, that just kind of struck me because if we do it based on that I have no race. So what, you know, like who, who do I, where do I fit, you know.
- Speaker 1: [04:03](#) And when did that start happening? When did you start becoming more aware of your identity

- Speaker 2: [04:07](#) in college? In, in, in the university and in not because I guess the university like unfair treatment in the university, but just person a person and in this whole presidential, latest past presidential election, it was a big Hispanic. People were on the spot. Yeah. So to speak. And I think that's when they, I had a kind of kind of put myself like what am I, who am I and how does my culture play into, to Hawaii I am and what I can be calm.
- Speaker 1: [04:42](#) And um, so how has your experience been an old man? So
- Speaker 2: [04:47](#) yeah, I feel like being, I love Ole Miss, I love home has and I don't think I've ever felt unfair treatment by my professors, but I think the biggest problem that I have had adult mess would be people overlooking me for being Hispanic but never treating me less. Just it's not the fact that they treat me less because that hasn't happened, you know, I would lie if I said I felt like they have treated me less, but I think they will just overlook me or just ignore me. So not giving me unfair treatment but not give me treatment at all. So I don't think that's better than unfair treatment, but that's, I guess that's the worst I've experienced. Just being overlooked.
- Speaker 1: [05:37](#) And uh, what is your major classification or something notable that bottleneck that you have on campus?
- Speaker 2: [05:42](#) So I'm a senior accounting major and I'm also a ca community assistant at the University of Mississippi.
- Speaker 1: [05:52](#) And um, how has your, your work been as a ca? You know, you kind of have like a very personal relationship with your residents in comparison to your identity?
- Speaker 2: [06:05](#) Well, I think it actually goes hand in hand because most people in the south, since there's not a huge number of Hispanics in the south when, you know, they go to college, they go to their residence halls and they have a Hispanic, Hispanic ca and most of them don't know anything about the Hispanic



culture. So I kind of realize sometimes that I am probably the first Hispanic they have ever spoken to actually conversated with or actually try to get to know and I think it's, I do get to a personal level and I think even even myself sometimes I realize where we're all the same, we just create these constructs to separate ourselves. So yeah, I think that's what the CCA job has helped me, that I get to engage with people who have never engaged with, uh, with a Hispanic before. Cool.

Speaker 1: [07:01](#) And um, what are the most important aspects are the most important parts of your life right now? And why? Can you repeat that? I'm sorry? What was the most important aspects or the most important thing to you right now?

Speaker 2: [07:14](#) Family. It's a big important aspect and I think success, it's a big important aspect because I'm the first generation United States citizen and my family and that was the first to be born in United States. So there's all this type of pressure of I have these opportunities at my family. I remember my parents didn't have so I kind of have to succeed for my family, for myself and for the future, for, for, for my, for my, hopefully my kids in the future. So I think that's the biggest thing right now. I can't worry about small things because the big picture I have to sometimes focus on I have to do something of my life just because I have so much more that some people don't have. You know, I'm legal so I have no problems getting scholarships, financial help when it comes to, to the state or the federal government when there are Hispanics, who do I see? I guess something biggest advantages I have compared to people who are not Hispanic. I speak Spanish and English, they don't, failure's not an option almost. I have all these advantages that some people don't have and all this pressure, I just have to do something with my life to help me, my family and the Hispanic community and then the United States as a whole.

Speaker 1: [08:38](#) And I'm now more into questions about rates. I didn't. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. You seem

to have a pretty good understanding of that. Um, what is your ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [08:52](#) Hispanic. Latino? Yeah. That's what I consider myself Hispanic, Latino. I actually, I know there's a whole argument in debates about Hispanic and the word Latino. I actually don't mind either of them. So yeah, that would be my ethnicity.

Speaker 1: [09:08](#) What are your parent's nationality? Do you identify with their nationality as well?

Speaker 2: [09:12](#) Oh yeah, definitely. When people ask me, you know, what are you, I'll be like, well, I'm American. Oh, but, but you're Hispanic, so I guess they don't understand. But my parents were Central American. My Dad was born in Nicaragua. My mom was born in Chicago. My Mom, uh, she is Salvadorian and, but my dad, he got his citizenship. So he is an American citizenship, but he is from Nica Ira. Yeah. And do identify with their nationality. Actually, I think that I do, but it's almost as if my parents' generations don't upset me to accept my parents routes. For example, if I talk to my uncles and say, yeah, I'm Central American, they basically, no, you're American because you don't know the life in those countries. You've never been there. So I think that no matter how much I try to identify as what my parent's nationality is or was, they wouldn't accept that.

Speaker 1: [10:19](#) Is that something that you find disappointing?

Speaker 2: [10:22](#) Yes, definitely. It goes down to the argument where I thank God for my parents sacrifices of, of making the trek to the United States, but sometimes I know that because I was born here. There's things that I don't know from my culture and sometimes I feel like I was robbed from that and not from my parents, but from the reasons they had to come to the United States and because I don't have that I can fully identify like them because there's a lot of things that I'm missing from my culture that they have or that they have actually experienced and some things that I would like to experience, but I can't. And how do you identify racially and why?

Uh, I don't. And then it's always bothered me. I'm test like standardized tests. If I ask you what's your race? I don't. But if I were to pick one I don't consider myself like, and that it's actually been a big thing. Even though I am a United States citizen and even though I am lighter than half the, you know, American citizens, like the black community. I'm not white and white people wouldn't see me as white either. So if I were to actually choose one, I would choose black because I feel like the black community and the Hispanic community have gone through similar situations and struggles in United States that there would be more accepting if anything than the white community.

Speaker 1: [11:54](#) Is that something that you found? Have you ever had to kind of assimilate to one group or another kind of gravitate toward one group or another? You know, like we're here in the south. Obviously the shows between the light and black communities are kind of

Speaker 2: [12:06](#) pedestal, right? The problem is we always have. We always make everything white versus black and we fail to see that it's overlooking the Hispanic community. We always make it European African, right? Like we act like that's the root of our problems always. And I don't think so. And I think as far as being Hispanic, where would it, where have I been placed? I think just staying true to my culture has helped me a lot. And I think in fact, being Hispanic is the key to ending racial conflict within the white and black community because you can be white and Hispanic and you can be black and Hispanic and I feel we just use the Hispanic to tie you together. You could kind of move away from those racial problems that people might see. So I think being Hispanic has helped me in that regard that I don't have to side because I have both whites and blacks in my community.

Speaker 1: [13:10](#) And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?

Speaker 2: [13:14](#) Both Hispanic, Latino. It really doesn't matter to me. Um, I know Hispanic is more of a, comes from the Spanish and the Latino comes more from

French. But I, I, I actually have no problem with, with, with either.

- Speaker 1: [13:29](#) And so studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations in America?
- Speaker 2: [13:39](#) Oh, I think you're going to have to start considering Hispanics in the equation now. Especially when it comes to politics, you know, you are going to have to appeal to the Hispanic vote. And I think when it comes to race, you can't overlook the Hispanic, you're gonna have to see it as a race. Nothing a difficulty in that is again, Hispanics are different. I know some people get offended with Hispanic and Latino because it's an attempt from the United States government or the people in power to try to categorize us when in fact you can categorize Hispanics into Hispanic or Latino because in ourselves we have different cultures, different beliefs, different ideology. So I think the word Hispanic and Latino, just a failed attempt to categorize us.
- Speaker 1: [14:37](#) And how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?
- Speaker 2: [14:42](#) That's actually a good one. Me and my brother tried to have a lunch at least once a week together and we'll in Spanish to each other and just kinda keep our, our Spanish, you know, on par to what it should be. But other than that, it's, there's, there's nothing I can do it, you know, you've seen me at some of the Hispanic heritage. I tried to go to at least one event every year to educate myself on it because I think it would be really dumb to, to assume because I'm Hispanic, I know everything but the Hispanic history, you know, I think that's just now be faulty. So I go there to kind of educate myself and things I didn't know and what I don't know would be like the Hispanics in the United States, right. Since I'm the first Hispanic citizen of the United States and my family, I don't know so much about that Hispanic Americans. So I guess trying to go to events like that, but um, but I don't think it's enough.

Speaker 3:	<a href="#">15:51</a>	Yeah.
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">15:51</a>	And what are some challenges you face with the university as a Hispanic student?
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">15:58</a>	Um,
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">16:01</a>	I'll just say the lack of Hispanic students sometimes, and I know this sounds bad, but sometimes you just want to hang out with people similar to you and be able to talk about similar foods that you've had in China and talking in my language, you know, and sometimes I get, I have on me that I am Hispanic, I'm Hispanic, but it comes to the point where if I don't continue to, to surround myself or engage in Hispanic thing, so that, does that take away from me being Hispanic, you know, and I think that's just what was the biggest thing in the university. There's not a lot that I can do to engage myself in my culture.
Speaker 3:	<a href="#">17:00</a>	[inaudible].
Speaker 1:	<a href="#">17:01</a>	And has anyone ever asked you about your race or your ethnicity and how do you typically respond?
Speaker 2:	<a href="#">17:06</a>	Yeah, it's actually my favorite. What are you American? No, Blake, where are you from? The United States? Um, I mean it's just, it's just funny to me. People just don't know how to engage in that type of dialogue. Or another reaction I get is people hesitant and asking me because they don't want to offend me. And I, and I think that's funny also. So, uh, the best way I've actually had an ask that I don't mind. Someone asked me, you know, where your roots from and that was actually the best way someone who's ever asked me and I them, well, I'm Hispanic, my parents are from Central America because people always went, oh, so you're Mexican? No, Mexicans in nationality. My parents are Central American. So I guess, yeah, those are mainly the first two. The way people try to approach me. What are you or Kinda shy, shy to ask that question.

- Speaker 1: [18:11](#) And has anyone ever assumed something about you because of your appearance?
- Speaker 2: [18:16](#) Oh yeah. Oh goodness. Yeah. Almost all the time. When you, when I first encounters almost all the time per person counters people, what types of things would they assume Mexicans, the Mexican culture encompass all of Hispanic culture because that's what you see more of in the United States I guess, or best when people just categorize us. Just the way you look right now. So No. So that, that will be it. And it's mainly that Mexican, he's Mexican and then trying to just correct them and let them know, no, I'm American. My parents are Central American. That's where my, my culture is Central American, my roots are Central American, Mexican.
- Speaker 1: [19:01](#) Um, and have you ever experienced any like, I guess uncomfortable situations with people where they're are, you know, maybe you say inappropriate things or asking appropriate questions maybe with any of those students who, you know, this is their first account and like you said, with a Hispanic person, anything like that. Anything come to mind?
- Speaker 2: [19:18](#) Um, with students? Not really, but with, you know, just engaging in, in Oxford. I have gotten some, some despicable comments from people. One of them which is really funny with this whole rhetoric against the w in the whole rhetoric that the president of United States has come out with, you know, Hispanics had been targeted. And by that I mean just looking Hispanic, you get targeted. And, and I have had some comments that just, just full of ignorance. And I try not to give more than more attention than it needs. Just comments. Like, you know, if I'm speaking Spanish, oh, in the United States we speak English and it's like, well the United States doesn't have an official language so I can speak whatever language actually want, you know, or, or people ask me are you legal or what? When did you come from Mexico? How? That was one that was really funny. So yeah, just despicable comments that I tried to just ignore, but I think sometimes my silence is an insult to, to, to my

community because if I don't, if I don't stop it, people will continue using that type of rhetoric until someone house it and tries to educate people.

- Speaker 1: [20:38](#) And do you speak Spanish? If. Yes, how did you learn?
- Speaker 2: [20:41](#) I do speak Spanish and my parents I guess hearing them, I don't recall learning Spanish. The only time I can recall learning Spanish will be my mom making me read books and they so happen to be in Spanish and you know, and I read the Bible in Spanish. So it's one way to kind of get practice in reading and writing. So as far as learning, I guess just because my parents will speak it to the house, I just, it just grew with me I guess
- Speaker 1: [21:12](#) Spanish or English.
- Speaker 2: [21:16](#) I actually liked to save alert both of them at the same time. I think when I was born, I guess my parents did speak Spanish to me but. But they also spoke English. So I, I, my parents didn't study the high school here so they didn't know English. So I guess I learned both at the same time that way to kind of make it easier for me.
- Speaker 1: [21:39](#) And how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
- Speaker 2: [21:44](#) I think it's really important. I think if you lose, honestly, I feel like the thing that ties me, if anything to being Hispanic, Latino is my language and sometimes I have been unfair and I believed that if you have Hispanic roots but you don't speak Spanish, you are not Hispanic. And I know that's a really aggressive way of seeing it, but I, I think that's an important part of being Hispanic to language because you don't think we would be any different than, than people who are white or black in the United States. And, and I think the moment we lose that, you lose that Hispanic culture in you, so to speak.

- Speaker 1: [22:35](#) And um, how does the university occupied in 22 and 23? How does the university and the community both catered to and omit the Latino?
- Speaker 2: [22:44](#) I don't think they cater to it at all. I mean the best attempts will be the Hispanic heritage when they do events, but why? Why only on a certain month. Why am I, why? Why is my coach or limited to a month. My culture has a Hispanic culture, has a huge influence in United States and in United States history, you know, and it's, it's, it's sad that we don't get the credit that we deserve, you know? So I think if anything, that's the only way they cater to it, but I don't think they cater to it enough. And I think they omitted a lot. I think they omitted a lot. I feel like if the university will recruit Hispanic students as much as they recruit black students, you would have a more Hispanic students settlements, you know, they have the most program. If they would do a program like that for Hispanics, you would increase the enrollment of Hispanics. But I think because we only see things black and white in the United States, that's why I, like I said earlier were just overlooked.
- Speaker 1: [23:51](#) And um, how do you, you raised us in the south and here
- Speaker 2: [23:58](#) I think it's important to know your race, you know, but I don't think you should use that for like identification, you know, and I think right now because we have people identifying, identifying as white, black, Asian, Hispanic, we do it. But I think if it would just say, hey, we're all Americans, it kind of would take away. But knowing you are a white American, she is white American, she is a Hispanic American, you know, but I don't think we should read too much into that.
- Speaker 1: [24:37](#) And how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race here in the south?
- Speaker 2: [24:43](#) Well, I mean there's a study that a lot of Hispanics are going to be migrating to the south, I don't know, 10 years or five years. It's going to see a huge increase influx of Hispanic people and I think that is going to affect the idea of race in the south. And I



think people, there can be such a large amount of people and then not being able to be categorized as a race, you know, it's a huge amount of people. You have a lot of. Again, we have white Hispanics, Black Hispanics, but then we have Mestizo Hispanics. Right. Which will be me, you know, we're, we're basically Spanish mixed with indigenous people of Latin America. So I guess you would have to categorize us as, as a, as a raised if there's so much. So many of us. Excuse me.

- Speaker 1: [25:34](#) And we already talked about challenges. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about or any other points you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you?
- Speaker 2: [25:44](#) I think people just need to not stereotype Hispanics because
- Speaker 3: [25:53](#) hmm,
- Speaker 2: [25:54](#) in our group being Hispanic, we are different, you know,
- Speaker 2: [26:01](#) and it's difficult to categorize us as Hispanic because some people don't, don't, don't, don't see themselves the same Mexican cuisine and their culture and their music and their holidays are different in Central American food, music, the culture. And I think it's just to try to, to try to categorize in order to understand it is bad. I think if anything, if you want to categorize, if anything you should understand before you start categorizing. And I think the reason for the categorizing broad term of Hispanic Latino was to try to understand, and I think it has been a failure in the United States.