Episode 1:

Questions Before-

1. I would define race as how a person views or groups themselves based on their ethnic heritage and ancestral or modern places of origins, and sub-cultural practices. Race and ethnicity are very closely linked, however, they are distinctive. For example, my race is White, but my ethnicity is American. Someone else could also be an ethnic American, but belong to a different racial group, or vice versa. This, if I am correct, is the scientifically backed difference, and this is why I use it within my definition of race.
2. A. I think there are almost too many races to count. There are: White, African-American, Hispanic, Pacific-Islander, Asiatic, African, Native American/Aboriginal (in both northern Canada and Australia/New Zealand, although the Aborigines and Maori could also be counted as Pacific-Islander, (I’m not an expert), Mongolian/Central Asian, Middle Eastern (Arabs), Slavic, Teuton, Caucasian, Scandinavian, Indigenous Peoples of Siberia and the Urals (I couldn’t find a general name), Caribbean/Creole, Turkic Peoples, Israelis, etc. There are many broad racial groups. Caucasians, Scandinavians, Slavs, Teutons, etc, could all be grouped under the race of White. The main broad racial groups are White, African, Asian, Hispanic, and Indigenous Peoples, but within these large groups are different sub-groups, and one could argue that there is almost a race for every ethnicity. B. I think the whole point of this unit and really this class is that I shouldn’t be the one deciding which group people belong to. To do this, I would be judging them based on their skin colors, actions, or heritage. So I’m going to plead the fifth. As a society, however, we tend to group people into different racial groups based on the greatest visible difference, skin color. We further cement this separation into racial groups by attributing other appearance based differences such as hair color, hair style, eye shape. Within our established racial groups, things like dialect, common occupations, and perceived general wealth levels are used to establish the idea of a cultural difference between the races.
3. I think that both biologically and genetically there are not that many deep differences between the different races. The greatest differences are only in appearance, they are phenotypic, such as skin color, hair, etc. The other differences are neither biological nor genetic, but rather are due to the subcultural identities of the races, developed over time. I’d have to identify with Whites, probably descendants of those who immigrated from Europe, specifically Scotland. My Grandmother keeps trying to trace us back to like Pocahontas or Robert E. Lee but I don’t have any hard evidence. However, I wouldn’t be surprised if I did have some kind of Native American heritage.
4. My ideas of race come from my educational experiences, my encounters with other races and my own throughout my life, and media portrayal of race. As a child, I don’t particularly remember being aware of race, but throughout elementary school I interacted with members of different races and learned about other cultures and Americas own history with race. By the time I reached middle school I was most definitely aware of race. I was a curious child, so my parents did their best to answer as many of my questions about race as possible. Cartoons, games, and sitcoms often involved race, most notably in behavior and humor. Although sometimes I was too young and naive to understand the jokes or social commentary, I began to understand there was a reason behind their different behavior.

Questions During-

1. A biological view of race is when you try to find a genetic difference between racial groups, whereas a social view of race is how we, in our societies, view and group different races together based on their actions, appearances, etc. Biology is often used as an excuse for differences between how races are treated in our society. The video uses the example of infant mortality. Infants were dying more in other racial groups, the example states, not because they were forced into ghettos or reservations or were underpaid, but because of biological differences that made them more likely to lose a child. Our social view of race is usually inherently biased, and so biology was a way to cover that up.
2. I am just as likely to be genetically similar to someone who looks like me as I am to someone who doesn’t. The reason for this is that the difference between individuals genetic codes across the human population is extremely small. The video says that we are one of the most genetically similar of all species. Because of this, I could be just as genetically similar to someone on the other side of the world, who looks completely different than I do, as I am to someone down the street who looks much more like me. Human genetic variation is minimal, and this helps to put down older theories on biological or genetic racial traits that make one inferior or superior.
3. Because of how little variation there is in the human genetic code, it is difficult to biologically classify people into different races. One member of any given race can have just as much genetically in common with another member of their race as they do with a member of a different race. This is what is known as non-concordance. Non-concordance means that within the genetic code, there is little that binds someone to our idea of race. The ideas we attach to race, such as athletic ability or intelligence, also cannot be attached to the genetic code of any one race, so there is nothing that makes any one race genetically superior to another.
4. The majority group has always benefited from the idea that there are biological differences between the racial groups we separate people into. In America, this group is the White people. The idea of biological differences between races, or even a biological or genetic basis for race, helps to maintain the idea of superiority, and supports the separation of people into racial groups. Biological differences make separation reasonable. However, since there is no real biological basis for race, this means that race can only be a social construct.
5. Other than race, geography could account for susceptibility to diseases. When Europeans first arrived in the Americas, diseases like smallpox, which they brought with them, killed millions of Native Americans. This was not because of their race, but rather because of the fact that they had never been exposed to these diseases before. Therefore, the Native Americans did not have the built-in immunities which the Europeans had developed over time. Since race and genetics cannot inherently be tied together, race is not a factor in susceptibility to disease, instead, ancestry and your genetic code are responsible.

Questions After-

1. A. I agree with Goodman. We are never really taught about race, we just come to understand that it exists and different races are viewed differently. Because of this, most of us assume that race is due to biological differences between people, passed down through time. In order to understand that race has nothing to do with biology, and rather is purely a social construct, you have to throw out everything you thought you knew. That, if anything, is a major paradigm shift, and you cannot truly understand that race is a social construct without disregarding your ideas of biological race. B. The film’s evidence as a whole managed to change my idea of race. I had always assumed that there was some kind of biological basis for race. This was mainly out of a lack of understanding of the true nature of race. The film proved to me that there is no real biological connection to race. I know I will always view race differently now. C. The DNA tests the students performed was the main piece of evidence that helped to change my mind. It showed me that there is nothing in our genetics that inherently ties us to one race. Another was how they showed that there is nothing biologically that ties abilities in athletics or music or anything to a certain race. The example of sickle cell disease, and how they disproved that it was solely an issue for African-Americans. But mainly, the numerous examples of racial studies from the past helped to show me that there is no biological race. D. I think it is difficult, but not impossible. Especially because today we’ve done a lot to cast aside ideas that one’s race impacts one negatively in areas like sports. Rather it is harder to understand, for example, that there is no genetic trait that makes Asians better at math. The film does a good job of piling up its evidence that makes the viewer accept that there is no biological basis for race. If you are willing to put aside preconceived notions of race, you will be able to make the shift.
2. A. No, I don’t want to change my skin color. Not for any reason of inferiority or superiority or sense of pride in my race, rather because it's simply how I was born and I feel everything happens for a reason. I won’t deny that privilege or prejudice exists, but I feel it doesn’t factor into my life in a major way. I’m White, it’s who I am, it’s how it was meant to be, and that’s how it shall remain. I don’t want to not trade to avoid prejudice or maintain privilege, I just don’t want to change it because it’s who I am and I’ve fought a hard battle to try and like me. B. My life as a member of a different race would vary depending on what race and where I lived. Assuming however, that everything was the same except my race, family, and heritage, I think that I would likely experience life differently but possibly end up on the same path. I would likely empathize more with social justice movements, and feel the pressure of judgement based on my race. I likely would have held different interests and played different sports as a kid. However I feel that I would still have done well in school, but engaged in different activities than I did because I would have been raised differently and had different friends and interests.
3. A and B. I think certain racial groups dominate certain sports because of where they live. For example, African-Americans, once Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier, became huge stars of baseball during the 1950s and 60s. However by the 80’s, they dominated basketball. This is likely because of the shift of the African-American population into urban settings, while the Whites moved into the suburbs. There are a lot more basketball courts and gyms in the cities than baseball, because no grass is needed and they take up much less space. The same could be said for the domination, not just in America but in the world, of Hispanics and Asians in baseball. Their environment and culture makes these sports more popular and accessible. There is no inherent genetic trait that makes them better, just the fact that they are often more exposed to it. Even things like height, in correlation to race, do not play a huge factor. Asians and Hispanics are typically shorter, however they are still among top draft picks in basketball, where height is a key asset to take into consideration.

Episode 2:

Questions Before-

1. I don’t feel that race affects my life. Throughout the class we have learned about privilege in race, but I like to think that I have achieved what I have through my own efforts. Race may play a small role, but I just don’t feel like I owe my success to my race. Nor do I feel it would have affected my family. It may have affected my upbringing, but plenty of people from all races turn out the same way despite stereotypes of how their parents may have raised them.
2. I don’t think they are segregated by law, but rather by where they live. Even today, there are still boroughs and neighborhoods that are still heavily populated by members of one race, think of places like Chinatown. Rather than the law forcing people who live together to go to different schools because of their race, zoning makes people of different races go to different schools because of where they live. People have chosen to live in certain places, or maybe are forced to by poor economic conditions. Therefore, schools, neighborhoods, and even workplaces can remain segregated.
3. I feel that people should only be held accountable for past discriminations if they had a direct hand in it or if they still hold those discriminatory views. If they have educated themselves, learned how they were wrong, and have changed themselves and now work to help others, I feel that they have made things right. Blaming an entire race for past discriminations of their race, especially when many members of the race no longer hold these views or believe these actions were just, accomplishes nothing. Instead, educate on these past discriminations and why they were unjust to combat any who may still hold such views and to prevent them from becoming widespread again. Guilting others on the actions of the past only derails the current conversation and prevents progress. Only by putting aside our differences and the conflicts of the past can we move towards the future united and successful.
4. Racial preference is favoring one individual over another based on their race. This is different from racism as it is not believing your own race is superior, but rather favoring people based on qualities associated with their race. For example, if you had to pick someone to take a math test for you, and you were faced with a group of similarly intelligent looking people of different races, you may end up picking the Asian, because of the stereotype that they excel at math. Some more real life examples include hiring practices, media portrayal, awarding of scholarships, etc. I feel that traditionally these have benefited Whites, however as education on the nature of race has improved and stereotypes continue to be combated, the stressing of diversity has begun to shift the balance into equilibrium.

Questions During-

1. In 1790, Congress passed one of the first laws on immigration. This made it so that only White, free immigrants could be naturalized. The Civil War and the amendments to the Constitution that followed it made more changes to American immigration laws. Now, people of African descent were allowed to be naturalized as well. Until 1954, naturalization continued to be restricted on the basis of race. A. Citizens had better pay than non citizens did, especially White citizens. Citizens also had the right to vote, again, especially White citizens. This was not as present in the north, but was enforced in the south due to Jim Crow laws. Citizens could also run for office. During reconstruction, many non Whites held office, but once Jim Crow took effect, the government became almost exclusively White. B. Those denied citizenship lost more than just the right to vote. By 1920, Congressional acts denied non-citizens the right to own or lease land. In the case of US v. Thind, entire races of people could lose their citizenship due to a court decision. They lost their rights, their land, and were cast out of society. All due to racism.
2. European ethnics became White due to social changes during the 30’s, World War II, and after. During World War II, questions on exactly who was White just weren’t as important anymore. Questions of race were more in terms of White and Black. Slavs, Italians, and to some degree Jews, were now counted in as Whites. However, Blacks, Asians, Latinos, continued to be discriminated against. This, along with the development of suburbs excluded by real estate value to WHites, lead to ethnic Europeans becoming fully White.
3. The advent of suburbs following the development of the Federal Housing Program lead to more neighborhoods. These were primarily purchased by White veterans and White families because they had the money. While European immigrants did integrate, it was not as widespread because of their often low economic status. Colored citizens, as well as other non-White immigrants, were not allowed to purchase homes in suburbia because the FHA had suggested that their presence could lower real estate values. This lead to a form of institutionalized segregation in the housing industry.
4. Property values go down when a neighborhood changes from White to non-White. This because of the presence of the non-Whites. In a sense, the fact that they moved into them and Whites moved out decreases the values of their homes. Despite the Fair Housing Act removing racial bias from government management of real estate, housing, and loans, the private sector remained unaffected. So they would lower the rates of their property. A. As previously stated, the private sector would lower the rates of non-Whites property. Then, they would exploit the racial fears of the Whites living in the neighborhood, and show them how their property was losing value as well. They would then convince them to sell their homes at lower prices than market value. Now in possession of their property, they would then sell them to non-Whites at inflated prices. This is what is known as blockbusting.
5. When members of different races in the same economic status are compared, their differences almost completely boil down. Rates of graduation and welfare usage are the same. So are job hours and employment rates. This shows that equality can be achieved. However in order to make this more widespread, issues stemming from the past need to be addressed, such as the aforementioned blockbusting.

Questions After-

1. A. In my neighborhood today, there is a majority of Whites. Most of us are middle class, there isn’t exactly any “fancy house”. There are some non-Whites, but most of them are on the same level as us. However, in my own experiences, we kept to ourselves, with a few exceptions. Now I often see the non-Whites playing together, occasionally with a few Whites, and vice versa. B. I don’t think the wage gap will go away if we ignore race. In fact I think the only way to fix the wage gap is to address race. We must identify it as a needless source of the problem. If we can, over time of course, begin to eliminate race as a factor, the wage gap will begin to disappear. Then our society will be both equal and colorblind.
2. A. People not defined as White have had a harder time advancing in this country. This is because they often held low paying jobs such as mining or factory jobs. They were often denied the opportunity to own their own property due to lack of citizenship. In many cases could not own their own businesses. Therefore they left little for their children to inherit. B. The long term impact of these denials is that non-Whites had less skills. Because of this, they were forced into staying in low paying jobs. Because of their low pay, they could only afford to live in urban ghettos. By the time things began to change, the stereotypes of non-White neighborhoods lead to the downfall of value in non-White properties. This in turn lead to blockbusting and the lack of real estate value in the homes of non-Whites. C. With less access to financial opportunities, non-Whites are still unable to obtain trade skills or higher education. Because of this, generational differences lead to modern day problems. They are also often still unable to purchase new property at a good value, or maintain the value of their current home due to their lack of wealth and out of date predatory, circular real estate practices based on race. Traditionally non-Whites have less access to the same financial opportunities both now and in the past. Therefore they have less opportunities in their lifetime to improve themselves.
3. I agree with Justice Blackmun in that we must address race in order to confront racism. Pretending to be colorblind ignores the systematic inequality in our society due to past racism. You can say you are not racist and that you judge based on character, and that’s great and it’s a step in the right direction. And yet the way our society functions in inherently unequal, and we need to change that. Colorblindness is a good thing, but until it is true, it doesn't change anything. A. The dominant groups benefit if we adopt a colorblind society. In America, this would be Whites. Because we stopped viewing race, we wouldn’t have fixed any of the race based inequalities, and they would remain in place. Because of this, the dominant group would remain dominant. There would only be surface level equality. B. Colorblindness is different from equality in that colorblindness is an idea of equality, not the practice of it. You can say you are colorblind, but you are a part of an unequal system. Only by working to change the system are you actually promoting equality. Colorblindness is not equality because it ignores the fact that there are systems in place that still operate on past racist ideals, such as in hiring practices. Current culture is disregarded based on stereotypes that value certain races over the other because of character perceived to go along with race.