

**Faculty Senate**  
**May 4, 2021**  
**Small Group Discussion Question Prompts**  
**Caste by Isabel Wilkerson**

**Question 1:** In general, what did you learn about US history from these readings that was not part of your formal education?

How, if at all, does this new knowledge change your perspective on race?

How, if at all, might this new knowledge shape your professional and personal goals, actions and pursuits?

Ch. 11 – Dominant group status threat and the precarity of the highest rung

**Question 2:** How have historical and current government *policies and programs* and *unconscious bias* worked to create and maintain the US caste system?

How could this knowledge about policies change the conversation about handouts and special treatment/programs?

What are some specific examples of similar policies, programs and unconscious bias that have operated at VCU?

Pillars 5-7 [*The "Pillars" section refers to "the ancient principles... upon which a caste system is constructed, whether in America, India, or Nazi Germany, beliefs that were at one time or another burrowed deep within the culture and collective subconscious of most every inhabitant, in order for a caste system to function" (p. 99).]*

Pillar 5 - Occupational hierarchy

Pillar 6 - Dehumanization and stigma

Pillar 7 - Terror as enforcement, cruelty as a means of control

**Question 3:** How has the US created and perpetuated each of these pillars?

What are some examples of each, historical and current, in society at large and at VCU?