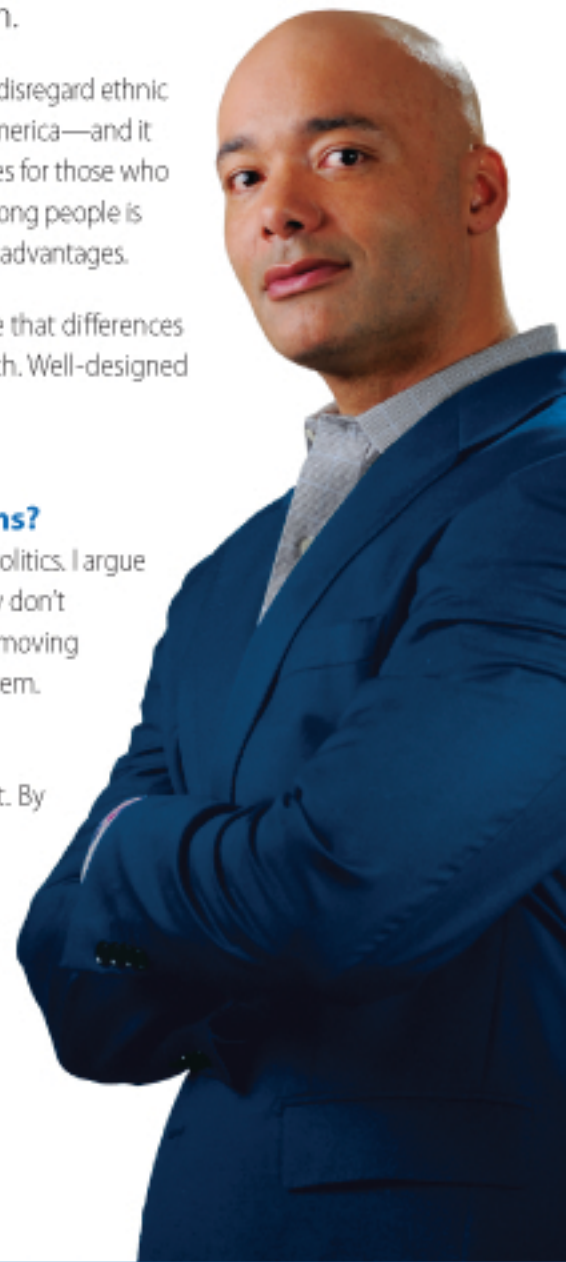


Multicultural Mindset.

The ideal of a color-blind society is admirable. But let's not kid ourselves: people are different.

—**Ranjoo Herr**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Bentley University and **Marcus Stewart**, Assistant Professor of Management, Bentley University

Professor Ranjoo Herr specializes in political philosophy with a focus on democracy. Her colleague Marcus Stewart specializes in organizational behavior with a focus on diversity. Both are pushing beyond the ideal of assimilation, or a color-blind society, toward a new multicultural model of inclusion.



Why not strive for a color-blind society? **RH:** Assimilation, an ideal by which we disregard ethnic and cultural differences and treat everyone equally, has long been the dominant ideology of America—and it has made important contributions. But ignoring differences can have oppressive consequences for those who do not fit the norm. **MS:** The notion that we can operate without recognizing differences among people is noble but unrealistic. In fact we're learning that a policy of *affirming* differences may have its advantages.

Do affirmative action plans play a part? **MS:** Yes, you start from the premise that differences should be recognized, respected and fairly accommodated—the multiculturalist approach. Well-designed affirmative action policies can create inclusive environments where diverse teams work more productively. The key is to have transparency around the process.

Would a multiculturalist approach improve world relations?

RH: The same principle of respect for differences should guide international politics. I argue in my work that decent non-liberal democracies, often rejected because they don't measure up to liberal Western ideals, are actually works in progress that are moving us toward a safer, more peaceful world—and we should be respectful of them.

Why multiculturalism in the business curriculum?

MS: Business takes place in an increasingly multicultural environment. By exposing students to organizational diversity courses, the liberal arts, study abroad, and other cultural constructs, we're opening minds to different ways of thinking. **RH:** Business people need to recognize their responsibility as citizens of the world. With that comes respect for cultural differences—teaching this has never been more important than it is today.

To learn more about our faculty research, innovative programs and cutting-edge technology, please visit our website.

MORE Professors Herr and Stewart discuss their work at Bentley.edu/research

