

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: [09:12](#) 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: [09:59](#) And what are your parents' nationality and do you identify with their, with their nationality?
- Ashlynn Principe: [10:05](#) 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: [10:26](#) And do you identify with their nationalities?
- Ashlynn Principe: [10:29](#) 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: [10:39](#) Um, how do I identify racially and why do you identify this way?
- Ashlynn Principe: [10:44](#) 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.