

# Movie Discussion Questions: Crash

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*"In L.A., nobody touches you. We're always behind this metal and glass," Graham muses after a car crash. "It's the sense of touch. I think we miss that touch so much that we crash into each other just so we can feel something."*

## Opening:

1. Show Film
2. Create Ground Rules
3. Depending on group size and general feeling in the room, do a free write and/or share in dyads in order to bring people towards organizing their voice regarding the film.

## Processing Questions:

When appropriate, shape questions based on current statements on the table. Discuss "intent vs. impact" and universality of categorizing.

- What's up for you?
- What character(s), event, or theme did you resonate with? Why?
- What situation or scene affected you the most? Why?
- The film shows several intense racial conflicts within a 24 hour period in the city of LA. How might that pace or frequency of negative experiences affect a person's view of the world and others?
  - everything begins to seem racially motivated
  - acts of help or kindness or viewed with distrust
  - feelings of safety around "others"
- Anthony (rap star Chris "Ludacris" Bridges) and Peter (Larenz Tate) have a strong narrative at the opening of the movie. How do you feel about their conversation as they walk the streets of Westwood? What kinds of truths are present in the conversation?
- Some criticized the film for reinforcing stereotypes instead of eliminating them. What do you think this movie accomplishes?
- What role did anger or hurt play in how the characters treated each other?
- Were the characters' anger or hurt justified? (officer worried about dad's health; father trying to keep daughter safe; businessman trying to protect his store; couple harassed by police; couple carjacked at gunpoint; man trying to help immigrants)
- How did the characters make choices around laying blame for their experiences?
- When people are angry or fearful, do they use a stereotype or racial insult that they wouldn't use when calm or might not even really believe?
- Do you think racism is this overt and obvious or more subtle and covert? Can you give examples?

- Think back to move-in weekend. What assumptions did you have before and during that process? Where did these images come from?
- Are assumptions useful? Are they ok?
- How about here on campus... who do we make eye contact with? Who do you feel safe around?
- When we're the victim of a prejudice "crash," how do we respond?
- Do our choices reinforce damaging racial stereotypes?
- Do we react differently to the person who cuts us off in traffic depending on their color?
- Do we smile at one stranger and then flinch at the next?
- In a *Time* Magazine article, Dave Chapelle stated that he realized that he was reinforcing stereotypes instead of eliminating them. What do you think this movie accomplishes?
- Imagine one scene where you have the power to push the pause button and change an event? What would you have done if you were that character with the same context, circumstances and background? Why?
  - What responsibility do we have for interrupting oppression?
  - What are some of the challenges?
  - What are some of the opportunities on this campus?
- How can you learn more about these issues?

**Closing:**

1. Have everyone go around and say one word.
2. Survey mood, look for individual follow-up supportive conversations
3. Pass out list of organizations actively working against prejudice and represent various communities (conservative ones too)

**Cast:**

Don Cheadle/Graham Jennifer Esposito/Ria (Graham's partner) Brendan Fraser/Rick (DA) Sandra Bullock/Jean William Fichtner/Flanagan (DA's assistant) Chris "Ludacris" Bridges/Anthony Larenz Tate/Peter	Terrance Howard/Cameron Thandie Newton/Christine (Cameron's wife) Matt Dillon/Officer John Ryan Ryan Phillippe/Officer Tommy Hansen Michael Pena/Daniel (locksmith) Shaun Toub/Farhad (store owner)
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