**Ama R. Saran, PhD, MSW**

**Yellow Mary Cottage**

**The Gullah Geechee Cultural Corridor**

**Low Country, South Carolina**

**Dear One,**

**Hello and welcome to our new school term and USC Social Work 630. This time with you is precious to me as it allows a broadening of my circle of world-changers and movement-builders. That is after all what we social workers do, is it not? Do be certain to show up, be present and bring yourselves as fully and as connected as possible. This course challenges all of us to identify our diverse and intersectional selves. Whether those selves be our gendered realities, ethnic identities, racial experiences, our ability status, or our spiritual discontent or well-being, insist they all show up for the work ahead.**

**Carefully, carefully read your syllabus and watch the videos with pen and paper in hand. There are also questions embedded in it that you are expected to include in our in-depth discussions. I wish to support you in every way possible so I shall send your work in advance affording more time to reflect on the principles and practices in our readings and viewings and always, our**

**reflections and discussions. Learn who you are working with, after all some of them will be your teammates. Be certain you can pronounce their names as a demonstration of cultural humility and competence. This is most significant to ensure cohesion, equitable input to produce assignments, and a reference group to help you research, conceptualize and write.**

 **Use the power points as your study guides weekly to better immerse yourselves in the concepts and their translation into real-world events. Speaking of that, and yes, I know it may well be difficult, but take advantage of National Public Radio, PBS, *Mother Jones, The New Yorker, Los Angeles Times, etc.*  Our work is most instructive when it interacts with what is occurring in our daily lives. And YOU then become all the more informed and brilliant when you immerse yourself in our critical work of diversity. I so look forward to working with you and soon.**

 **Gratefully,**

 **Ama R. Saran**