

BLACK LIVES MATTER: A SYLLABUS



SoHo, NYC: Juneteenth, 2020

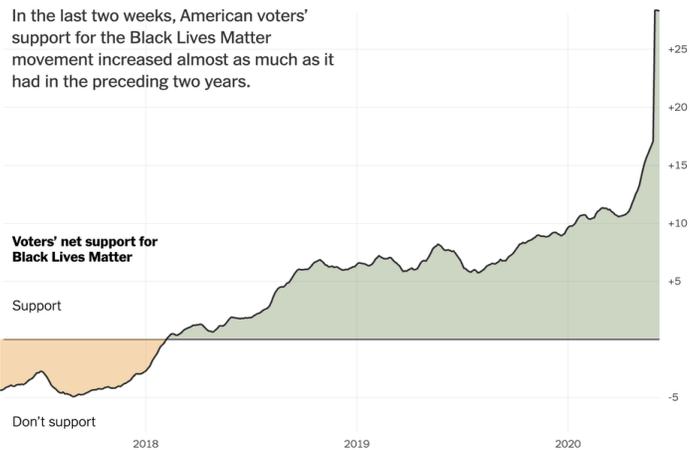
- an initiative of the CHSS Working Group on Equity and Inclusion with the support of the Office of the Dean

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How Public Opinion Has Moved on Black Lives Matter

By Nate Cohn and Kevin Queally June 10, 2020



Over the last two weeks, support for Black Lives Matter increased by nearly as much as it had over the previous two years, according to data from Civiqs, an online survey research firm. By a 28-point margin, Civiqs finds that a majority of American voters support the movement, up from a 17-point margin before the most recent wave of protests began. A Monmouth University poll found that 76 percent of Americans consider racism and discrimination a "big problem," up 26 points from 2015. The poll found that 57 percent of voters thought the anger behind the demonstrations was fully justified, while a further 21 percent called it somewhat justified. Polls show that a majority of Americans believe that the police are more likely to use deadly force against African-Americans, and that there's a lot of discrimination against black Americans in society. Back in 2013, when Black Lives Matter began, a majority of voters disagreed with all of these statements.

- Nate Cohn and Kevin Queally
The New York Times June 12, 2020

AN INVITATION TO FACULTY

Greetings Colleagues:

The CHSS Working Group on Equity and Inclusion invites interested faculty, as they prepare their syllabi, to give one week of the semester to discussing "Black Lives Matter" in a way consistent with their own disciplinary interests. We have organized a list of brief but engaging readings, videos, podcasts and discussion questions. From this wide array of options, we hope that faculty will select materials they believe would work well in their particular classes.

Any course offered by CHSS faculty will begin with its own disciplinary questions and approaches. Our hope is that the materials gathered below are specifically relevant to the "Black Lives Matter" conversation while at the same time intellectually provocative within a wide variety of disciplinary interests.

In general, interested faculty organizing a "one-week syllabus" devoted to "Black Lives Matter" might share any of these overall objectives:

- to help students contextualize "Black Lives Matter" as a movement and as antiracist language
- to help students think not in terms of individual "racists" but to contemplate forms of institutionalized racism
- to show students how a Liberal Arts education might help them understand this moment and position themselves within movements for social justice

If you would like share student-friendly materials (videos, readings, assignments) from your own teaching, please feel free to reach out to any member of the Working Group.

On the CHSS homepage, where we explain the importance of Liberal Arts programs, we make the following assertion: "By learning about the historical and modern influences on contemporary society, students develop a critical understanding of their position and responsibilities as citizens of the world." We are grateful to our colleagues who believe that an intellectual engagement with the "Black Lives Matter" movement is deeply relevant to our mission as a College.

Respectfully,

Peter Kingstone, Dean of CHSS
Johnny Lorenz, Co-chair
Patricia Matthew, Co-chair
Jessica Bonumwezi
Katia Paz Goldfarb
Emily Isaacs

Christopher Salvatore
Maisa Taha
Melissa Velez
Jason Williams
Leslie Wilson

MEDIA

[How a Hashtag Defined a Movement](#)

The Founders of #BlackLivesMatter on how it all began

[George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests, Ahmaud Arbery & Amy Cooper](#)

Trevor Noah on racism, protests, and the rending of the social contract

[Comedian Aamer Rahman Explains “Reverse Racism”](#)

Rahman answers the question: When will reverse racism be real?

[Hip hop, grit, and academic success](#)

Bettina Love, Professor of Education

TedTalk on assumptions about intelligence and academic achievement

[When Civility Is Used as a Cudgel Against People of Color](#)

NPR “Codeswitch” segment that unpacks the various way “civility” works to curtail dissent

[‘Whistling Vivaldi’ And Beating Stereotypes](#)

NPR “Talk of the Nation” interview with Claude Steel, Professor of Psychology

[Michelle Alexander: Locked Out of the American Dream](#)

“Moyers & Company” interview with the author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

[From Slavery to George Floyd: The Racist History of U.S. Policing](#)

“Democracy Now” interview with Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Professor of History, Race, and Public Policy

[Racial Justice and Social Change Campus Conversations with Dr. Jason Williams](#)

Justice Studies professor at MSU discusses history, racial justice, and social change

[Violence: An American Tradition](#)

Exploration of the tradition of violence in the United States of America

ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

Elizabeth Alexander: [The Trayvon Generation: On Childhood in the Face of Police Brutality](#)

Darrick Hamilton and Jesse A. Myerson: [Economics for Black Lives](#)

Taylor Hosking: [The Long History of Black Officers Reforming Policing from Within](#)

Mariame Kaba: [How the School-to-Prison Pipeline Works](#)

Bill Keller: [What Do Abolitionists Really Want?](#)

Siddhartha Mitter: [All Statues are Local: The Great Toppling of 2020 and the Rebirth of Civic Imagination](#)

Sarah Maslin Nir: [A Racist Attack on Children Was Taped in 1975. We Found Them](#)

Rashawn Ray: [What Does ‘defund the police’ Mean and Does it Have Merit?](#)

Joe Sexton: [“I don’t want to shoot you brother”](#).

ART, MUSIC AND LITERATURE

Childish Gambino (music video): [This is America](#)

--Sheri-Mari Harrison: [New Black Gothic](#) (on "This is America")

Ross Gay (poem): [Pulled Over in Short Hills, NJ 8:00 AM](#)

Robert Hayden (poem): [Frederick Douglass](#)

N.K. Jemisin (short story): [Valedictorian](#)

--[Lavar Burton Reads](#) "Valedictorian"

KRS-One (song and lyrics): [Sound of da Police](#)

Nina Simone's ["To Be Young, Gifted and Black"](#) -- the song and the story behind it

LitHUB (interview): [Jericho Brown and Nikky Finney on Black Lives Matter and Bearing Witness](#)

A.C. Thomas (YA novel excerpt): [The Hate U Give](#)

--Lulu Garcia-Navarro ["The Hate U Give" Explores Racism and Police Violence](#)

The New York Times: [How Statues Are Falling around the World](#)

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1) **A Music Playlist Project:**

Create your own music playlist in response to the BLM movement; explain how/why the music "speaks" to you and to this movement. (Keep in mind that your playlist might include *very* recent music, but it might also include music from a previous decade.)

2) **A History Project:**

Explore northern New Jersey's history of slavery and the Black freedom struggle using the illustrated lit review curated by Chris Matthews: "[The Black Freedom Struggle in Northern New Jersey, 1613-1860: A Review of the Literature.](#)" How does this information inform your understanding of Black Lives Matter?

3) **A Writing Project:**

Do you believe "Black Lives Matter" matters in your own community?
(adapted from an assignment developed by Prof. Elizabeth Martin)

Context: Although Black Lives Matters first began as a movement in 2013 after George Zimmerman was acquitted of killing teenager Trayvon Martin, it gained new attention on May 25th, 2020 with the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis, MN police officer. From then and through the summer, all over the country, there have been marches, protests and proposals for police reform. Here are just a couple of links that report on the protests/marches/vigils happening all over the country:

[My Tiny White Town Just Held A Protest. We're Not Alone.](#) -*Washington Post*, 6/5/2020
[How Black Lives Matter Reached Every Corner of America.](#) - *NYTimes*, 6/9/2020
[this link includes information about protests happening across New Jersey specifically]

Writing: Use your own local news sources to gather information and explore these questions: 1) What has happened in your own community in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement? (Were there protests, and can you describe them? Has there been public debate where you live? 2) Were there any specific proposals made? (for example, policing reforms?) 3) What has not happened in your community, and what, specifically, needs to happen?

RESOURCES

Organizations

[Black Lives Matter](#)
[Campaign Zero](#)
[Color of Change](#)
[League of Women Voters/New Jersey](#)

Teaching Resources

MSU's Sprague Library – [Research Guide on Race, Racism and Anti-Racism](#)

Podcast—[“Rethinking the Course Syllabus: Considerations for Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion”](#) (based on research by Dr. Milton Fuentes, et al)

Racial Equity Tools—[Glossary](#)
(includes key terms such as “implicit bias” and “structural racism”)

Resources for Mental Health

[Counseling Services Offered by MSU](#)
[What is "Racial Trauma"?](#)
[Mental Health Resources for Black People \(Includes Directories for Black Therapists\)](#)
[The Best Places on the Internet for People of Color to Talk about Therapy](#)