

Racism in America, Part 1

Class Syllabus as of 12-7-2020

When: Thursday mornings, January 7-February 25 (8 weeks). 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Where: Zoom; a link will be furnished to class participants the day before each class session.

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Course description: Events in recent years, including police killings of African Americans and the Black Lives Matter movement, have led many of us to recognize our under-appreciation of the reality and impact of systemic racism and the effects of our own backgrounds on our conscious and unconscious attitudes. A better understanding of racism requires historical context that we either didn't get in school or that goes beyond what we were taught. In this course, we will start to take a fresh look at US history, study common practices and events in the history of people of African ancestry in the US, and become better acquainted with the men and women who have led the struggle for social and legal justice. This class will cover the period 1619-1954 and will be followed by a spring semester course that will focus on racism in America from 1955-present.

Goals:

- To begin to develop a fuller understanding of the development and pervasiveness of systemic racism over the course of US history
- To begin to develop a fuller understanding of the impacts of systemic racism
- To increase our knowledge about some of the Black leaders who led their communities in fighting racist laws/practices
- To hear the Black experience as told by Black voices

Format: The class will comprise presentations by participants, as well as by outside speakers. We could not find a single appropriate, affordable book to use as a study guide for the entire course, although we have found a good resource for the first four classes. We are providing (a) a list of suggested short readings/viewings for each class; (b) a longer, but necessarily incomplete, list of relevant books, shorter readings, web sites, video materials, and podcasts for participants to explore; and (c) a reasonably detailed timeline including significant events and personages, for the years the course covers. Importantly, suggested readings include material by American authors of African heritage about their experiences. Participants should plan to read at least some of the suggested resources before each class and are encouraged to read additional materials to enrich class discussion.

Guidelines for Member Presentations: Due to the many significant and interesting topics available to choose from for each class, and also due to the size of the class, we have decided to increase the number of participant presentations in each class by limiting each presentation to 10-15 minutes, followed by 10-15 minutes of discussion (ie, a total of **25 minutes** for each presentation with discussion.) If everyone is careful to stick to this timeframe, we should be able to address 2 topics in each class hour. In that way, we anticipate that almost every class member will have the opportunity to do a presentation.

If you would like the other class members to read some material, think about some questions or do any other preparation before your presentation, please be sure to give them at least a week's advance notice.

Presentation Topics: The Course Calendar includes a large number of suggestions for presentation topics -- many more topics and ideas than we could cover in any one session. These suggestions are to give you ideas, but please choose a topic that is interesting to you. If you have an idea for a topic that we haven't suggested, let us know and we will find the most appropriate place to schedule it. **Please select a topic you are really interested in early to help us plan the sequence of presentations and discussions, and email us as soon as you know what you would like to do.** Dramatic readings and debates are good alternatives to discussions and presentations.

Because the presentations will be shorter than usual for an LLC class, they are likely to be most appropriate for presentation by a single person; however, if you prefer to present with a partner, that is fine.

Technology: We will accommodate screen sharing for members who want to use PowerPoint, Keynote or Google Slides or to show some images. And if you'd like to practice screen sharing in advance, we're happy to set up a Zoom meeting a couple of days before the class so that you can do that. Also, if you do not feel comfortable with screen sharing, you can send us your presentation so that we can advance the slides for you.

If you need assistance with creating your PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation, the LLC Technical Committee is ready to help you!

As noted above, we will send the Zoom link for the class the day before each session.

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	BACKGROUND READING/VIEWING TO DO BEFORE CLASS	CLASS CONTENT	PRESENTERS
1	Jan. 7	1619-1776: Slavery and racism in the American colonies	Henry Louis Gates, Jr., <i>Many Rivers to Cross</i> – either the book Chapters 1 and 2 or the PBS Documentary Episode 1 “Historical Foundations of Race” on the Nat’l Museum of African & American History website nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race	FIRST HOUR Introductions/ Organization Class Goals and Broad Themes	Coordinators Group Discussion
				SECOND HOUR “The Transatlantic Slave Trade” Talk followed by discussion with speaker	Keith Stokes and Theresa Guzman Stokes
2	Jan. 14	1776-1861: The First Founding; slavery and racism in the years before the Civil War	Henry Louis Gates, Jr., <i>Many Rivers to Cross</i> – either the book Chapters 3 and 4 or the PBS Documentary Episode 2 Add slave narrative sources	FIRST HOUR Timeline Overview Harriet Tubman and The Underground Railroad	Mark Guyer Maureen Johanson
				SECOND HOUR The Clothilda and Africatown Guest Speakers: Eric F. Finley, Africatown Tour Coordinator Karlos F. Finley, Municipal Judge, City of Mobile	Susan Norrie
3	Jan. 21	1861-1877: Civil War, end of slavery, Reconstruction	Henry Louis Gates, Jr., <i>Many Rivers to Cross</i> – either the book Chapters 5 and 6 or PBS Doc. Episode 3 Eric Foner: Reconstruction and the Constitution https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj5MeRM4fG8 Frederick Douglass speech https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/	FIRST HOUR African American Military Service in the Civil War	Sara Weed
				SECOND HOUR The 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments Reconstruction: African-Americans Take Their Place as Voting Citizens	Mark Guyer Sheila Brush
4	Jan. 28	Reconstruction cont.		FIRST HOUR Framing Blackness: Imagery and Ideology During Reconstruction SECOND HOUR Employment Opportunity and Education During Reconstruction	Philip Wheelock Sheila Brush

5	Feb. 4	1878-1900: The Jim Crow South; Racism in the North	<p>Henry Louis Gates, Jr., <i>Many Rivers to Cross</i> – either the book Chapter 7 or the PBS Documentary Episode 4 (first part)</p> <p>Ida B. Wells “LYNCHING, OUR NATIONAL CRIME” (1909 speech) https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1909-ida-b-wells-awful-slaughter/</p> <p>Booker T. Washington, <i>Up From Slavery: An Autobiography</i></p>	<p>FIRST HOUR Timeline 1875-1900</p> <p><i>Williams v. Mississippi, Plessy v. Ferguson</i></p> <p>SECOND HOUR</p> <p>Wilmington Insurrection – 1898</p> <p>Ida B. Wells/Lynching</p>	<p>Mark Guyer</p> <p>Linda Rexford</p> <p>Hugh Oechler</p> <p>Vicky McGrath</p>
6	Feb. 11	1901-1920: The Progressive Era, Birth of a Nation, and World War I	<p>Henry Louis Gates, Jr., <i>Many Rivers to Cross</i> – either the book Chapter 7 or the PBS Documentary Episode 4 (second part)</p> <p>Isabel Wilkerson, “The Long-Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration” -- https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/long-lasting-legacy-great-migration-180960118/</p> <p>W.E.B. DuBois</p>	<p>FIRST HOUR Timeline Overview 1900-1920</p> <p>Booker T. Washington, the Tuskegee Institute and the Atlanta Compromise</p> <p>SECOND HOUR W.E.B. DuBois</p>	<p>Mark Guyer</p> <p>Barbara Barnes</p> <p>Monica Schaberg</p>
7	Feb. 18	1921-1938: Race Riots, the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression		<p>FIRST HOUR Timeline Overview 1920-1939</p> <p>The Tulsa Race Riot</p> <p>SECOND HOUR The Harlem Renaissance</p> <p>African-Rooted Music (blues/jazz) Moves North with the Great Migration</p>	<p>Mark Guyer</p> <p>Deborah Decoteau</p> <p>Jackie Wheelock</p> <p>Dick Brush</p>
8	Feb. 25	1939-1954 part 1: World War II and beyond		<p>FIRST HOUR Mary McCloud Bethune and Roosevelt’s “Black Cabinet”</p> <p>African-American Experience in World War II Inspires Civil Rights Movement</p> <p>SECOND HOUR President Truman and Civil Rights</p>	<p>Arlene Strom</p> <p>Sheila Brush</p> <p>Marilyn Kaplan</p>

9	March 4	1939-1954 part 2: World War II and beyond		<p>FIRST HOUR Discrimination in Federal and State Laws after World War II <i>(see The Color of Law)</i></p> <p>SECOND HOUR Thurgood Marshall</p> <p>Desegregation in Education</p>	<p>Ken Nordstrom</p> <p>Stuart Enhorn</p> <p>Mark Guyer</p>
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