

University of South Carolina - Department of Anthropology's Commitment to Racial Justice and the Dismantling of White Supremacy

While the COVID-19 pandemic of the past few months has been challenging for all of us, the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Rayshard Brooks have again brought to public discourse the long-lingering racial inequities and the forms of anti-Blackness that frame our political-economic system and our daily lives as well as the unequal burden being borne by Black and Brown people. The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting and killing African Americans, Latinx, American Indians, as well as mixed-status immigrant families, highlighting the devastating effects of racialized structures of labor and economic disenfranchisement on the health of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). As a department, we stand against racial violence and discrimination, together in solidarity with African American communities and the continued struggle for racial equality, and call for the dismantling of White Supremacy and of the use of White state power in all forms. As anthropologists committed to social justice, we strive to work against the criminalization of Blackness, the valorization of Eurocentrism, and the enactment of racism, in all of its dimensions--from individual biases to systemic forms of anti-Black inequities.

To that end, we are explicit in our support of our African American colleagues and students at this time, for whom these experiences are deeply personal and lived day-to-day. We call on everyone--staff, faculty, administration, and students--to educate ourselves on the ways that systems of racial injustice are perpetuated and the ways in which everyday racial privilege and prejudice permeate our interpersonal exchanges.

Below are websites that have compiled several sources that may be helpful in historicizing and making sense of the current moment for those who might need it. It also reminds us to be mindful of the labor involved of BIPOC having to constantly explain or point out racism--as a culture we need to shift the burden to all, including awareness of how White (European) and other types of people can become allies, accomplices, and witnesses as well as being conscious of their own privilege and how it impacts their interactions with BIPOC.

<https://www.radicalhistoryreview.org/abusablepast/reading-towards-abolition-a-reading-list-on-policing-rebellion-and-the-criminalization-of-blackness/>

https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ariannarebolini/george-floyd-amy-cooper-antiracist-books-reading-resources?utm_source=dynamic&utm_campaign=bffbbuzzfeedbooks&ref=bffbbuzzfeedbooks

<https://medium.com/the-faculty/white-academia-do-better-fa96cede1fc5>

http://aba.americananthro.org/?fbclid=IwAR0xAAz3fehcYDSX8Nvn6KmX5aTdK6HR3orWla5kZDtgP9BUbegdB_7JWIQ

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BR1F2_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QgirITwCTugSfKie5Fs/preview?pru=AAABcpVoJi4*b_9PXKE0cSGSkFXEkU52pw

We also will be asking all staff, teaching faculty, and student instructors to complete anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training that will ensure that moving forward we are better able to recognize and interrupt the ways in which racial bias and prejudice impacts our teaching and mentoring. The University will be requiring all freshman to take a diversity training course that will reinforce USC's stated commitment to fight discrimination. The department encourages faculty to incorporate conversations on anti-racism, systemic discrimination, and racial injustice into all courses as these issues permeate all facets of the field (and daily life). We encourage faculty to center the experiences and work of people of color to better understand how these experiences are lived and racialized.

Additionally, in supporting our local Black Lives Matter organizations and political protestors against police violence we suggest faculty support bail funds for arrested protestors across the United States:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_OjxEKTEh0su8ZJ-mXiJ5w39J1RBpAjaJ7KyCgk-CiM/mobilebasic

Lastly, as a department, we echo the University's reminder that "Our Carolinian Creed calls on us to *respect the dignity of all persons, to respect the rights and property of others, to discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions.*" Let us heed this call now in this moment of crisis and in our daily practices going forward. As Angela Davis says, "In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be antiracist." Anti-Black dehumanization, White supremacy, and racism are built into the foundations of our country and the field of anthropology, and it is going to take hard, constant work by all of us to disrupt and dismantle this anti-Black foundation and move toward equality. Given our training and our interests, and the fact that our department is comprised of a significant number of anthropologists of color who experience this in a profound way, we want our department to be a model for this work on campus and in our larger communities.

Campus Resources:

To report incidents of bias or hate, submit a [Bias and Hate Incident Form](#)

UofSC Counseling & Psychiatry: 803-777-5223