

Racial Capitalism and the Colonial Present

ANTH 439/639

Department of Anthropology
American University

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(email for appointment)

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Wednesdays

11:20am - 2:10pm

Location: East Quad Building Room 17

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines the entangled histories of capitalism, racialization, and colonialism as major forces shaping our present world. Fundamentally, it engages the question of how capitalism, since its inception, has been structured by race/racialization as a major axis of inequality and exploitation. Alongside this theoretical preoccupation with the *racial* nature of capitalist political economies, we examine the major role that colonization and imperialism have played historically in shaping capitalist development. These forces (racialization and colonization) continue to shape to present articulation of capitalism in the world today, producing what some scholars call “the colonial present.”

This seminar provides a sustained engagement with these two concepts: “racial capitalism” and “the colonial present.” While both concepts have become touchstones of contemporary critical social sciences (in Anthropology, Geography, History, American Studies and others), the two are seldom theorized together. The theoretical core of this class will be: (1) to deeply think about the two concepts together through specific historical processes and (2) to examine their enduring power to structure the present (through uneven development, war, policing, prisons, urbanization, ecological vulnerability, etc.). Among others we will read Cedric Robinson, Neville Alexander, CLR James, Walter Rodney, Stuart Hall, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Angela Davis, Ann Stoler, Lisa Lowe, Françoise Vergès, Silvia Federici, Clyde Woods, Frantz Fanon, and Kwame Nkrumah.

Note: syllabus and course readings are subject to change. Please see Canvas site for most updated readings and syllabus

COURSE OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

1. Provide students with a foundational understanding of some of the major debates, theories and texts in study of capitalism and colonialism, with particular focus on their inherently racial character both historically and in the present.
2. Develop a general familiarity with major theories and debates around “postcolonialism”.
3. Develop tools for advanced theoretical and practical approaches to the study of intersecting systems of power: particularly those intersecting along lines of race, class, gender.
4. Highlight (ethnographically and historically) the intersections among various struggles related to land, labor, class, gender, race, colonialism, indigeneity, and the environment.
5. Develop a weekly writing practice through substantive weekly reading responses.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Washington DC occupies the land that was originally inhabited by Nacotchtank (Anacostan) and Piscataway communities. These indigenous communities lived across the confluence of Potomac and Anacostia rivers, engaging in farming, seasonal hunting, and trade. The Nacotchtank and Piscataway communities never ceded their lands. However European settlers attracted to the natural wealth and the profitable trade in furs and tobacco plantations displaced them. Currently descendants of these communities live in Maryland, Virginia and Washington DC.

II.EXPECTATIONS AND GRADES

Participation (20%): The course will be run as a collaborative seminar. Each week, students will come to class prepared to discuss the readings. **Reading load:** The reading load is heavy, but students are encouraged to strategically skim where necessary.

Reading Response (30%): Each week, students must submit a roughly 500-800 words reading response. Over the course of the semester you must submit 10 Reading Responses (i.e. there are 13 weeks of course content, so you can miss only three weeks of responses). I am asking for a specific format for these responses, so please include:

- a) a few sentence summary of the argument(s) being made in each book, article, and stand-alone chapter
- b) Taking all of the pieces read for this week and identify the questions, thoughts, ideas, come to mind when you read all of the pieces together.
- c) Lastly: write-out 1 to 2 questions (or passages) which you would like to discuss in class.
- d) RESPONSES DUE: **Every Tuesday at 10pm**

In-Class Presentation: (20%): Each student will give one presentation over the course of the semester. The purpose of this presentation is to give background and commentary on the assigned readings for the week. Read the text, present what you think their main arguments, purpose, audience and contexts are. Why, in your opinion are the texts important and how do they relate to other readings and themes of the course? For your presentation, specifically, please answer the questions in the “Reading Guidelines” provided at the end of this syllabus. (Presentations should be no more than 25-30 minutes). After the presentation, students will help facilitate a discussion based on a “Reading Handout” they will prepare and distribute to the class. The handout should include:

- 1) The ideas or concepts you found most striking from the reading, or those you find to be the “key” take away ideas.
- 2) Pull out some quotes that you would like us to think through.
- 3) Include two solid questions you would like to pose to the class to provoke conversation that arose from the week’s readings.
- 4) In the hand-out (or separately, e.g. with an web-link): bring to the class one or two objects or media for us to engage with. This could be an image, a poem, a song/audio track, a video clip, a news article, a work of art, a section of a speech, etc. This object/media should be carefully selected and should allow us to explore how the theoretical contributions of a given week’s readings could be applied (or not) in a different context.

Final Papers (30%): For the final paper, please write a 12-15-page (double spaced) analytic response to one (or two – but not more) sections of the course syllabus. Draw from both the required and recommended readings and bring in additional pieces that you think are relevant to the conversation. I want you make an argument and intervention into this body of work, identifying (1) unanswered questions, (2) whether these questions are outdated, (3) ways that the literature may or may not be relevant to a different context, (4) alternative methods that may be more useful, etc.

For graduate students: If you are working on a field statement or publishable paper related to the course themes and you would find it more useful to do something else for your final paper, please discuss it with me early on in the semester.

III. CLASSROOM CULTURE & YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

ENGAGEMENT AND BEING PRESENT

As a discussion-based seminar, the course assumes energetic, thoughtful, and collaborative engagement from everyone. Careful and thoughtful reading, active participation in class, and

high-quality writing are the most important elements of this course. To ensure that everyone is fully present and engaged during every class session, please turn off the ring tone on your phone(s) **and refrain from using your laptops** or technology of any kind except as prescribed for class. In order to avoid laptop use: please print all readings for consultation of text during class and come with a physical notebook to take course notes with pen/pencil and paper. (If you require an exception to this and need to use your laptop for note taking please consult with me outside of classtime).

Classroom Culture

A strong classroom environment demands that each participant treat everyone else with the utmost maturity and respect. Each participant should refrain from disruptive behaviors like the following: texting, sleeping, passing notes, holding private conversations, talking out of turn, arriving late, leaving early, etc. If you must leave early or arrive late, you should inform the instructor ahead of time.

Language

Language is a powerful thing. In this class, we will use it responsibly. Toward that end, participants are to refrain from language that could be viewed as sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, ableist, classist, etc. Such language jeopardizes class atmosphere and compromises our learning outcomes. Participants are also to employ gender inclusive language both in class discussion and in all forms of written work.

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By registering for this class and at the university, you have acknowledged your awareness of the [Academic Integrity Code](#) (or see the “Student Handbook and Planner”). You are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with all its standards of academic conduct, including those related to plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication. I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy is to fail students for the course. Please read the university’s Academic Integrity Code closely and ask me if you have any questions. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation formats or have questions, consult me, a reference librarian, or a [style manual](#). Lack of familiarity with proper procedures is not a plausible or credible defense.

Special Note: **Using ChatGPT** for the composition or completion of a writing assignment is a form of plagiarism. Moreover, ChatGPT often produces factually incorrect text. The University has access to digital tools for assessing work produced by AI platforms like ChatGPT.

ABSENTEES POLICY:

1. I expect advance notice for any classes you will miss, just as I will inform you if I must miss any classes.

2. Late Policy: The late policy for this course is as follows: One late attendance constitutes a tardy, and three tardy days constitute a full absence.
3. You are expected to attend and participate in all classes at the scheduled class time. I expect you to be present to participate in lectures, discussions and group work over the course of the semester. Regular attendance and active participation are taken into account in grading. You are responsible for checking Canvas to obtain materials from any missed classes.

IV. COURSE CANVAS SITE

Our readings will all be available online through our Canvas course site. Please find the respective weekly readings within weekly tabs in Canvas. On Canvas you can find:

- The most current version of this syllabus.
- Weekly tabs with links to assigned readings.
- Assignments with links for submitting those assignments online.
- Weekly course announcements and other important updates related to the class.

V. OTHER RESOURCES

- **The Writing Center** : Offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. (202-885-2991, Bender Library)
- **AU Help Desk (focuses on all other IT issues)**: Answers to your technology questions are just an e-mail, instant message, or phone call away. Contact the IT Help Desk at 202-885- 2550, helpdesk@american.edu, or [AskAmericanUHelp](#) to reach one of our professional staff who can answer your questions and provide general troubleshooting assistance. Students can also log on to the [Need Help Now?](#) portal for support.
- **Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC)**: All students may take advantage of the ASAC for individual academic skills counseling, workshops, Tutoring and Writing Lab appointments, peer tutor referrals, and Supplemental Instruction. The ASAC is located in Mary Graydon Center 243.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 - AUGUST 30TH - INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS RACIAL CAPITALISM?

In-class readings

- Michael Walzer, "A Note on Racial Capitalism," *Dissent* (2020): https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/a-note-on-racial-capitalism.
- Olúfẹmi O. Táíwò and Liam Kofi Bright, "A Response to Michael Walzer," *Dissent* (2020): https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/a-response-to-michael-walzer.
- Robin D. G. Kelley, "What did Cedric Robinson mean by Racial Capitalism" <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/robin-d-g-kelley-introduction-race-capitalism-justice/>

In-Class Video

- [Video] "Geographies of Racial Capitalism with Ruth Wilson Gilmore"
<https://antipodeonline.org/geographies-of-racial-capitalism/>

WEEK 2 – SEPTEMBER 6TH - LEGACIES OF VIOLENCE: ON THE COLONIAL PRESENT

Readings:

- Caroline Elkins. 2022. *Legacy of Violence: A History of the British Empire*, (p.3-30)
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o & Micere Githae Mugo. 1976. *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, (p.1-85)
- Ann Stoler. 2013. "The Rot Remains: From Ruins to Ruination" in *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*. (p.1-38)
- [Optional Reading: Aimé Césaire. 1950. "Discourse on Colonialism" (p.31-46)]

Watch:

- Reparations for Mau Mau Victims of British Torture:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmWgUVeN6U8>

Listen:

- Bob Marley and The Wailers, "400 Hundred Years"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRnXzP6Gb1Y>
- Nina Simone: I Wish I Knew (How it Would feel to Be Free)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vq3sdFOYXkM>

Recommended Readings

- Ania Loomba *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*
- Fredrick Cooper *Colonialism in Question*
- Ann Stoler *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*
- Jordanna Matlon. *A Man Among Other Men: The Crisis of Black Masculinity in Racial Capitalism* (p.29-50)

WEEK 3 – SEPTEMBER 13TH - COLONIZATION, CAPITALISM, GLOBALIZATION

Readings:

- Walter Rodney. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Chapter 1 (3-24) & Chapter 4 (p.95-103) (“The European Slave Trade as a Basic Factor in African Underdevelopment”) and (p135-145) (“The Coming of Imperialism and Colonialism”).
- Kwame Nkrumah. (1965) *Neocolonialism*. Introduction (pp. vii-xx)
- Mahmoud Mamdani. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism*. “Introduction: Thinking Through Africa’s Impasse” (p.3-34)
- Lowe, Lisa. 2015. *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (p.1-42)

Listen:

- Fela Kuti: “Africa Center of the World (Featuring Roy Ayers)”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyFqUOxPT-I>
- Tribe Called Quest “We the People” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vO2Su3erRIA>

Recommended Readings

- Amin, Samir. 1974. *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Mahmoud Mamdani “Indirect Rule: The Politics of Decentralized Despotism” in p.62-108)
- Marable, Manning. 1983. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*.
- Issa G. Shivji, “Chapter 8,” Pp. 83–94 in *Walter A. Rodney: A Promise of Revolution*.
- Robinson, William I. 2016. “Introduction: Globalization and Race in World Capitalism.” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 22(1):3-8.

WEEK 4 – SEPTEMBER 20TH - THEORIZING RACE AND CAPITALISM 1: ACCUMULATION & DISPOSSESSION

Readings:

- Karl Marx. 1867. “Primitive Accumulation” chapters 26-33, in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1*.
- Cedric J. Robinson. 1983. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (p.9-28).
- Singh, Nikhil. 2016. “On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation.” *Social Text* 34(3): 27-50.
- Silvia Federici “On Primitive Accumulation, Globalization and Reproduction” <https://frikctionmagasin.dk/on-primitive-accumulation-globalization-and-reproduction-c299e08c3693>

Listen:

- Hurray for the Riff Raff: “The Body Electric” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvXteZkByE>
- Billy Holiday “Strange Fruit” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U57GmB6ukI>

Recommended Readings

- Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva. 2012. "Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt: The Racial Logic of Global Capitalism – an Introduction." *American Quarterly* 64(3):361-85
- Cheryl I. Harris "The Racial Alchemy of Debt: Dispossession and Accumulation in Afterlives of Slavery" p.88-130

WEEK 5 – SEPTEMBER 27TH - THEORIZING RACE AND CAPITALISM 2: ARTICULATIONS OF COLONIALISM & RACIAL CAPITALISM

Readings:

- Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance," Pp. 172–221 in *Essential Essays*, Vol. 1, edited by David Morley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019 [1980]).
- Melamed, Jodi. 2015. "Racial Capitalism." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1(1):76-85.
- Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd and Brian Jordan Jefferson. *Colonial Racial Capitalism* "Introduction" (p.1-32)
- Alyosha Goldstein, "'In Constant Flux of its Incessant Renewal': The Social Reproduction of Racial Capitalism and Settler Colonial Entitlement" in *Colonial Racial Capitalism*, p.60-87

Listen:

- Big Bill Broonzy: "Black, Brown and White"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYSERmlOxGA>
- Jimmy Cliff, "The Harder They Come" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpQrLUopf-k>

Recommended Reading

- Hall, Stuart. 1986. "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10(2):5-27.
- Harris, Cheryl I. 1993. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106(8):1707-91.

WEEK 6 – OCTOBER 4TH - THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION & PAN-AFRICAN REVOLT

Readings:

- C.L.R. James. 1938. *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (selections tbd)
- Cedric Robinson. 1983. "The Historical Archeology of the Black Radical Tradition" in *Black Marxism* (101-164)
- Angela Davis. 2017. "An Interview with Angela Davis on the futures of Black Radicalism" in *Futures of Black Radicalism* (p.241-248)

Listen:

- Charles Mingus, "Haitian Fight Song": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7CoJEyiSfE>
- Charles Mingus, "Freedom": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23sah6aWk3A>
- Dead Prez, "We Want Freedom" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NceKuXts95U>
- Reverend Gary Davis: "If I had my Way" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pfuz3KfcaTc>

WEEK 7 – OCTOBER 11TH - REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Readings:

- Frantz Fanon. 1960 "Why we use Violence" (Address to the Accra Positive Action Conference) in *Alienation and Freedom*
- Kwame Nkrumah. 1968. *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* (selections)
- Laleh Khalili. 2012. *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies*. (p.1-43)

IN-Class Film:

- *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

Recommended Readings

- Aimé Césaire. 1966. *A Season in the Congo*

Listen

- Nina Simone: "Why? (The King of Love is Dead)"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh6R0BRzjW4>

WEEK 8 – OCTOBER 18TH - RACIAL CAPITALISM AND (POST)APARTHEID

Readings:

- Neville Alexander "'Race' and Class in South African Historiography: An Overview' (152-169)
- Zachary Levenson & Marcel Paret "The Three Dialectics of Racial Capitalism: From South Africa to the U.S. and Back Again"
- Zachary Levenson. *Delivery as Dispossession: Land Occupation and Eviction in the Post-Apartheid City* (Selections tbd)

Listen:

- Hugh Masekela: "Coal Train (Stimela)"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y09bhF_KcKI
- Mississippi John Hurt "Spike Driver Blues"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5img4o2Wgc>

Recommended Reading

- Steve Biko. *I Write What I Like*
- Gillian Hart. *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*
- Gillian Hart. *Rethinking the South African Crisis: Nationalism, Populism, Hegemony*

WEEK 9 – OCTOBER 25TH - RACE, SPACE, AND THE SECURITY FIX

Readings:

- Simone Brown. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. "Introduction, and Other Dark Matters" (1-30)
- Clyde Woods. 2007. "Sittin' on top of the World: The Challenges of Blues and Hip Hop Geographies," in *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* (p.46-76)
- Ruth Wilson Gilmore. 2007. "The Prison Fix" in *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (p. 87-127)

Watch:

- Olúfẹ́mi O Táíwò and Arun Kundani "Who feels secure? Racial Capitalism and Global Security" <https://www.kundnani.org/olufemi-o-taiwo-who-feels-secure-racial-capitalism-and-global-security/>

Listen:

- Mississippi Sheiks "Sittin' on Top of the World" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBuK2ZOZq6o>
- Lead Belly: "Bourgeois Blues" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5G1cnYpgsw>

Recommended Reading

- David Harvey "Globalization and the Spatial Fix" <https://d-nb.info/1217929630/34>
- Mark Neocleous *Critique of Security*
- Olúfẹ́mi O Táíwò "Who gets to feel secure": <https://aeon.co/essays/on-liberty-security-and-our-system-of-racial-capitalism>

WEEK 10 – NOVEMBER 1ST - URBAN TERRAINS OF COLONIAL RACIAL CAPITALISM

Readings:

- Jordanna Matlon. 2022. *A Man Among Other Men: The Crisis of Black Masculinity Under Racial Capitalism*, Part II "Between Places & Imaginaries (p.69-108)

- Caroline Elkins. 2005. *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. (Chapter 5) "The Birth of Britain's Gulag" p.121-130.
- Moyukh Chaterjee. 2023. *Composing Violence: The Limits of Exposure and the Making of Minorities* "Introduction: The Limits of Exposure" (p.1-33)
- Annie Pfingst and Wangui Kimari. (2021) "Carcerality and the legacies of settler colonial punishment in Nairobi" *Punishment & Society* Volume 23, Issue 5, December 2021, Pages 697-722

Listen:

- Bob Marley, "Burnin' and Lootin'" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0hSmgpFFL0>
- Fugazi, "Cash Out" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qcu5KT_bwvQ

WEEK 11 – NOVEMBER 8TH - PRISONS, WAR, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

Readings:

- Orisanmi Burton. 2023. *Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression, and the Long Attica Revolt* (Part I)
- Stuart Schrader. 2022. "Global counterinsurgency and the police-military continuum: introduction to the special issue" *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 33(4-5) (p.553-580)

Watch:

- Angela Davis. 1970. "On Revolution and Violence" <https://www.bunkhistory.org/resources/the-black-power-mixtape-angela-davis-interview>

Listen:

- Dead Prez "Police State" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c_UdWo4Zek
- John Coltrane "Alabama" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saN1BwIjxA>

Recommended Readings

- Robyn C. Spencer *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland*

WEEK 12 – NOVEMBER 15TH - WAR, COUNTERTERRORISM AND THE COLONIAL PRESENT

Readings:

- Derek Gregory. *The Colonial Present* p.3-29
- Nicole Nguyen. 2019. *Suspect Communities: Anti-Muslim Racism and the Domestic War on Terror* (p.1-35)

- Elizabeth Mesok. 2022. "Counterinsurgency, community participation, and the preventing and countering violent extremism agenda in Kenya" *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 33:4-5, 720-741.
- Brendan McQuade & Stuart Schrader. 2022. "Avoiding the Security Trap: The Contributions of Terence Hopkins and World-Systems as Methodology for Critical Police Studies" in *World Systems Analysis at a Critical Juncture* (11 pages)

Watch & Listen:

Anohni: "Drone Bomb Me" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUEoic7ro_o

Recommended Reading

- Stuart Hall et al. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging the State and Law and Order*
- Christina Heatherton & Jordan Camp. *Policing the Planet*
- Stuart Schrader. *Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing*
- Ruth Wilson Gilmore. 2017. "Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence," Pp. 225–40 in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, edited by Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin (New York: Verso, 2017).
- Catherine Besteman. *Militarized Global Apartheid*.
- Jasbir Puar. *Terrorist Assemblages*
- Jasbir Puar. *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*
- Hugh Gusterson. *Drone*.

[NO CLASS] NOVEMBER 22ND

WEEK 13 – NOVEMBER 29TH – GEOGRAPHIES OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Readings:

- Christian Parenti. 2011. *Tropics of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence* (p.3-77)
- Naomi Klein. 2019. "Let them Drown: The violence of othering in a warming world" *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal* (149-168)
- Françoise Vergès. 2017. "Racial Capitalocene" in *Futures of the Black Radical Tradition* (p.72-82)

Watch:

- Brett Story *The Hottest August*

Recommended Readings

- Davis, Mike. 2000. *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*. London: Verso.
- Kate Arnoff. *Overheated*.

WEEK 14 – DECEMBER 6TH CLIMATE (IN)JUSTICE & REPARATIONS

Readings:

- Kim Stanley Robinson. *Ministry for the Future* (Chapter 1)
- Olúfẹ̀mi O. Táíwò. 2021. *Reconsidering Reparations* “What’s Next: Why Reparations Require Climate Justice”
- Ashley Dawson et al. *Decolonizing Conservation*

WEEK 15 – DECEMBER 13TH

Wrap-up discussion

Final Paper Due December 18th

ADDENDUM. READING GUIDELINES

Here are some guidelines which should help you focus your reading responses, summaries and provide just a generally useful set of pointers for you in your current and future scholarly engagements. [Acknowledgment: I am indebted to Ruth Wilson Gilmore for these “Reading Guidelines,” which are adapted from one of her own courses.]

Reading Guidelines

- 1) What is the setting of the work? Consider both the ‘external’ and the “internal” dimensions of “setting”:
 - a. “external”:
 - i. What are the conditions under which the work was produced?
 - ii. Why – for what use -- was the work produced?
 - iii. What’s different now, if anything?

- b. "internal":
 - i. Where does the work sit in a body or bodies of knowledge?
 - ii. Where or what in time-space is the study's object?
- 2) Who is the announced and/or implied audience for the work?
- 3) What are the work's structure and style?
- 4) What is/are the work's key question(s)?
- 5) What is the work's definition and use of "race," "capitalism," or "colonialism," etc.?
- 6) What is the work's spatial scale and scope?
- 7) What theory serves as the writer's guide to action?
- 8) What method(s) does the writer use?
- 9) What evidence does the writer use?
- 10) What are the arguments? In other words, how does the writer use the theory, method, and evidence to propose answers (or make claims)?
- 11) What is the role of the state, and how is that (set of) institution(s) defined?
- 12) What works for you?