

READING LIST

Debating Justice, Politics, and Culture in Black America, From the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter

What follows is a reading list based upon my writing-based history course that I taught in the Fall of 2015. While teaching the course, I relied heavily on primary sources and short secondary sources due to the stringent page limit (45 pages per week).

Here I have gently revised the syllabus. I include a few more readings that enhance the list. The topics are listed in the order that were assigned. I added two topics – one on the Black Panthers and Donald Trump. I have also included a [Spotify playlist of music](#) that inspired the class.

White Supremacy and Racial Identity

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, Excerpts from “[The Case for Reparations](#),” *The Atlantic* (2014) (Read parts I-IV).
- W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” in *Souls of Black Folk* (1903).
- Frances Beale, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female” (1969).
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “[Letter to My Son](#)” (2015).

Civil Rights Movement: Direct Action

- Watch: *Freedom Riders* (2011).
- Ella Baker, “[Bigger than a Hamburger](#)” (May 1960).
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963).
- Patrice Cullors, “[#BlackLivesMatter Will Continue to Disrupt Political Process](#),” *The Washington Post*, August 18, 2015.

Civil Rights Movement and Memory: From Rosa Parks to *Selma*

- Watch: *Selma* (2015).
- Jeanne Theoharis, “National Honor/Public Mythology: The Passing of Rosa Parks” and “‘Racism is Still Alive’: Negotiating the Politics of Being a Symbol,” in *The Rebellious Life of Rosa Parks* (2013): vii-xvii; 233-244.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “[MIA Mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church](#),” December 5, 1955, from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute.

- Barack Obama, “[Remarks by the President at the Dedication of Statue Honoring Rosa Parks – US Capitol](#),” February 27, 2103.
- Joseph A. Califano, Jr., “[The Movie ‘Selma’ Has a Glaring Flaw](#),” *Washington Post*, December 26, 2014.
- Prathia Hall, “Bloody Sunday,” in *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts from Women in SNCC* (2010): 470-473.

Racial Violence, Police Brutality, and Urban Uprisings

- Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The Tangle of Pathology,” in *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965): 29-43.
- James Baldwin, “[A Report from Occupied Territory](#),” *The Nation* (1966).
- Philip A. MacComb, “Who is Behind the Race Riots?,” *National Review*, September 20, 1966.
- Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1967): 1-29.

What We Want is Black Power: Debating the Direction of Black Protest

- Malcolm X, “[Message to the Grassroots](#)” (1963).
- Stokely Carmichael, “What We Want,” *New York Times Magazine* (September 1966).
- Richard Nixon, “Bridges to Human Dignity,” *Human Events*, May 25, 1968.
- Fran Sanders, “Dear Black Man,” in *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, ed. Toni Cade (1970).

The Black Panthers

- Watch: *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* (2016).
- Watch: Beyoncé, “Formation,” Super Bowl Performance (2016).
- Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (2010).
- Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, “Ten Point Program: What We Want, What We Believe” (1966).

Black Worker Rebellion in Detroit

- Read Selections of Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying* and Thomas Sugrue’s *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.
- James Boggs, “[The Challenge of Automation](#)” (1963).

- Michael Hamlin, “Some Accomplishments of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers,” in *A Black Revolutionary’s Life in Labor: Black Workers Power in Detroit* (2015).

Challenging the Second Wave: Intersectionality and Black Feminism

- Becky Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism,” *Feminist Studies*, 28: 2 (Summer 2002): 336-360.¹
- Brittney Cooper, “Intersectionality,” *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (2016).
- Combahee River Collective, “[The Combahee River Collective Statement](#)” (1977).
- Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” (1984).

Reparations

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations” (Read the rest of the essay).
- Robin D.G. Kelley, “[For Reparations and Transformation](#),” *Against the Current* (January-February, 2003).
- Cedric Johnson, “[An Open Letter to Ta-Nehisi Coates and the White Liberals Who Love Him](#),” *Jacobin* (2016).

The Hip Hop Generation

- Read selections of Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* (2005).
- Tricia Rose, “Bad Sistas: Black Women Rappers and Sexual Politics in Rap Music,” in *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1993).
- John McWhorter, “[How Hip Hop Holds Blacks Back](#),” *City Journal* (Summer 2003).
- Sacha Jenkins, “[The Eternal Illmatic](#)” (2015).

Crime and the Carceral State

- Elizabeth K. Hinton, “A War within Our Own Boundaries: Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State,” *Journal of American History*, 102: 1 (June 2015).
- Heather Ann Thompson, “[Inner-City Violence in the Age of Mass Incarceration](#),” *The Atlantic*, October 30, 2014.

1. I had students get into groups and reverse outline Thompson’s article. The activity was successful on two fronts – students learned how scholars articulated and proved their arguments with evidence. They also learned a history of feminism that challenged some of the stereotypes often perpetuated in public discourse.

- Tricia Rose, “Public Tales Wag the Dog: Telling Stories about Structural Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era,” *Du Bois Review*, 10: 2 (2013): 447-469.
- Lynn Norment, “Charles Rangel: Front-Line General in War on Drugs,” *Ebony* (March 1989): 128-134.
- Donna Murch, “[Who’s to Blame for Mass Incarceration?](#),” *Boston Magazine*, October 16, 2015.
- Michael J. Fortner, “[Historical Method and the Noble Lie](#),” *Boston Magazine*, October, 23, 2015.

Black Sexual Politics

- Barbara Smith, “[Soul on Hold](#)” (1985).
- Cheryl Clarke, “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance” from *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981).
- Janet Mock, “[I Was Born a Boy](#),” *Marie Claire*, May 18, 2011.

Black Politics in the 21st Century

- Angela Dillard, excerpt from “[Malcolm X’s Words in Clarence Thomas’s Mouth](#)” (2001).
- David Remnick, “[The Joshua Generation: Race and the Campaign of Barack Obama](#),” *The New Yorker*, November 17, 2008.
- Adolph Reed, Jr., “[Obama: No](#),” *The Progressive*, April 28, 2008.
- Gwen Ifill, “The Race-Gender Clash,” in *The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama*, 70-88.
- Barack Obama, “[A More Perfect Union](#),” (2008).

21st-Century Black Feminist Politics

- Watch: Beyoncé’s 2014 MTV Video Music Awards Performance.
- Melissa Harris-Perry, “Introduction,” from *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*, 1-23.
- Tamara Winfrey Harris, “[All Hail the Queen?](#),” *Bitch Magazine* (2013).
- Brittney Cooper, “[Feminism’s Ugly Internal Clash: Why the Future Is Not Up To White Women](#),” *Salon.com*, September 24, 2014.
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists* (2015).

Campus Protest: From #BBUM to #Mizzou

- Selections from Thedemands.org (University of Michigan).
- Austin McCoy and Garrett Felber, “[Viewpoint: Student Protest and Affirmative Action](#),” *The Michigan Daily*.
- Tanzina Vega, “[Colorblind Notion Aside, Universities Grapple With Racial Tension](#),” *New York Times*, February 24, 2014.
- Dave Zirin, “[Black Mizzou Football Players Are Going on Strike Over Campus Racism](#),” *The Nation*, November 8, 2015.

Narrating the Movement: Ferguson and #BlackLivesMatter

- Department of Justice, “Report Summary” and “Background,” [Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department](#) (2015): 1-10.
- Alicia Garza, “[A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement](#),” *The Feminist Wire*, October 7, 2014.
- DeRay McKesson, “[Ferguson and Beyond: How a New Civil Rights Movement Began – and Won’t End](#),” *The Guardian*, August 9, 2015.
- Martha Biondi, “[The Radicalism of Black Lives Matter](#),” *In These Times*, August 15, 2016.
- Ben Carson, “[#BlackLivesMatter Misfire](#),” *USA Today*, September 3, 2015.

Race, Trump, and the 2016 Election²

- Brent Staples, “[Donald Trump and Reconstruction Era Politics](#),” *New York Times*, March 3, 2016.
- Geoff Eley, “Fascism Then and Now,” *Socialist Register*, Vol. 52 (2016): 91-117.
- Greg Grandin, “[Why Trump Now? It’s the Empire, Stupid](#),” *The Nation*, June 9, 2016.

2. I chose Staples’s and Eley’s articles from Blain’s and Connolly’s “Trump Syllabus, 2.0.”