

5th Black Canadian Studies Association Conference
**Asserting Black Life, Insisting on Black Freedom, Imagining the Decolonial:
Demanding Reparations and State/Institutional Accountability**
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia
June 3-4, 2019

The fifth meeting of the Black Canadian Studies Association (BCSA) will take place June 3-4, 2019 as part of the national Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of British Columbia, on the unceded territories of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations which are otherwise referred to as the city of Vancouver.

Our conference is entitled: *Asserting Black Life, Insisting on Black Freedom, Imagining the Decolonial: Demanding Reparations and State/Institutional Accountability*. Our conference draws inspiration from the Congress theme “Circles of Conversation,” with its focus on productive scholarly relations with Indigenous communities, and on art as an important form of engaged scholarship. We also draw inspiration from a United Nations working group report that, among other findings, recommends that the federal government of Canada should apologize for slavery and consider reparations for Canada’s implication in antiblackness.

Canada was established through settler colonialism, the dispossession of Indigenous land and through the trans-Atlantic trade economy based on chattel slavery. African people were brought to this land beginning in the seventeenth century as slaves within this context. Following the formal abolition of slavery in Canadian society, African people racialized as Black continued to be placed outside of the Human, and subjected to social, economic, and political exclusion. Furthermore, Canadian immigration policies have been used by the state to deny Black people entry into Canada where it can, and to mark us for dehumanization and disregard. Rooted in these histories, anti-Black racism remains embedded in all state institutions of Canada, particularly but not limited to education and legal systems. Black people in Canada today—both newly arrived and multiple-generation Canadians—continue to face pervasive systemic racism interlocking with other forms of oppression.

To date, there have been two apologies given to the Blacks in Canada. These are, the 2010 apology given by the City of Halifax to the descendants of Africville for the bulldozing of that Black community, and the apology given to the Black community in 2016 by the Royal Ontario Museum for the pain the Museum caused by showcasing the 1989-1990 “Into the Heart of Africa” exhibit. Neither of these acknowledged Canadian slavery, nor fully recognized the Canadian state’s implication in the pervasive antiblackness that constitutes as slavery’s afterlife.

This conference asks participants to consider the ways that Black communities and Black scholars can productively fully assert Black humanity, and insist upon formal government apologies and reparations in addressing the long history of antiblackness in Canada. Some of the questions this conference will consider are: How should the imperative to end Black suffering and the insistence upon Black life and Black futures inform our politics? In what ways is resistance to antiblackness crucial within a decolonial politics? How can we re-imagine social relations within Black communities, and among Black communities, Indigenous communities and other racialized communities? How can Black and Indigenous scholars collaborate in working toward a decolonial future? What are the terms of such engagement? From where will we draw our inspiration for these reconfigured relations? How and in what ways is an apology for slavery necessary, but

insufficient? What are the implications of state apologies for contemporary Black life? How should Canada repay Black people for centuries of antiblackness? How does ending antiblackness radically reconstruct the idea of Canada? What form/s should reparations take? What are the relationships between apologies, reparations and ongoing antiblackness? Beyond state responses, what actions do Black communities need to consider to end antiblackness?

With such questions in mind, the Black Canadian Studies Association is seeking individual papers, round tables and posters, art installations and performances from a wide range of disciplines that focus on Black Canadians/Blacks in Canada. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Canada's participation in the slave trade/ trans-Atlantic slave economy
- Conditions and characteristics of the enslavement of Black persons in Canada
- Denials and acknowledgements of slavery and anti-black racism in Canada
- Refuting Canadian nation-state mythologies
- The implications of the 1911 Order-in-Council for Black life in and outside of Canada
- Ending antiblackness, imagining Black freedom
- Centering antiblackness in our scholarly analyses
- Black and decolonial futures
- Afrofuturism as response to antiblackness
- The politics of apologies
- Apologies for slavery from Britain and France
- Apologies, reparations, and spirituality
- Reparations demands throughout the Black Atlantic
- Implications of reparations for Canadian slavery within the Canadian settler-colonial nation state
- Mobilizing Black communities to demand reparations in Canada
- Are reparations and reconciliation the same?
- Immigration discrimination, deportation, and reparations
- Africville and the dispossession of land in historically Black communities
- Reparations, land, and Indigenous land dispossession
- Solidarities and alliances in the demand for apologies and reparations
- Monuments and memorials to colonizers and slave owners
- The value and limits of symbolic gestures

We welcome presentations in either French or English from academics (including graduate and undergraduate students), activist-scholars, organizers, artists, politicians, professionals, cultural workers and community scholars.

Participants should submit a 250-word abstract proposal by January 28 to blackcanadastudies@gmail.com Kindly include your name and affiliation. Those proposing panels (3 - 4 papers) should submit a brief description of the panel, as well as abstracts for the constituent papers, and the names and affiliations of the presenters. You are not required to be a

member of the BCSA to submit a proposal, however upon acceptance of your proposal, you will be required to pay BCSA and Congress fees in order to present.