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The Black Perspective

Abstract

This paper explores evidence (past and present) of violence committed against African Americans in the United States and why The University of Utah could improve its response to racism. Addressed first is a compilation of research on historical and structural violence against the Black community. The topics include slavery, lynching, the formation of ghettos, police brutality and the need to focus on intersectionality and Black Feminism. The paper then points to the racial problems facing The University of Utah specifically. It also addresses the counterarguments students at The University of Utah could bring up in opposition to focusing on the Black community, like the “All Lives Matter” movement, the idea of living in a post-racial America, and the concept of disrespecting police. The paper concludes with a sample syllabus of a proposed Praxis Lab centering on bringing awareness to the historical and structural violence African Americans face in this country and creating positive and effective change on the racial climate for Black people in our community. It can be concluded from the historical and structural violence committed against the African American community over centuries, that it is necessary to bring a Praxis Lab targeting the racism toward Black people to the Honors College in order to build bridges between African Americans and other races and ethnicities, and work toward positive and effective solutions and peace.

Introduction

Enveloped in the fiery pain of historical bondage and drowning in the relentless sea of oppression, lie the bodies of a people without the chance to live in the dream Americans possess of a free nation. These people fight at the chance for a liberty and happiness that has been bestowed without strings attached to those not kissed by the sun. Today, in 2017, centuries of a racialized and violent past weigh on the backs of Black people. The historical trauma of American slavery has not ended, it has only evolved into a blockade of lacking opportunities, mass incarceration, and unequitable systemic institutions that continue to hold the Black race back. These disadvantages permeate in all parts of society in all parts of the United States. For too long, ignorance has reigned over the U.S., ignorance of a people ravaged by the detriments of white supremacy, obedience, control, and power. It's time we seek to rectify this ignorance. It's time we work toward knowing and understanding the problems faced by Black people. It's time we start working to make positive and effective change to better society for all citizens. Now, more than ever, the Honors College at The University of Utah could use a Praxis Lab called the The Black Perspective.

The Age of Slavery

In order to grasp the necessity for a Praxis Lab of this nature, it's important to have the historical backing to explain why American society is the way it is today. The Black community was not always racialized, segregated, and seen as inferior. The development of oppression and discrimination against Black people in the U.S. began centuries ago, and has never gone away; it has only evolved with time. Fields (1990) explains this oppression in terms of race and says:

It is ideology, and ideologies do not have lives of their own. Nor can they be handed down or inherited: a doctrine can be, or a name, or a piece of property, but not an ideology. If race lives on today, it does not live on because we have inherited it from our forebears of the seventeenth century or the eighteenth or nineteenth, but because we continue to create it today.

Black Americans' journeys began back on the West Coast of Africa, many centuries ago, when the Portuguese arrived on the western shores in the early fifteenth century. One of the problems with the way the American people are taught about history, and the reason there is so much ignorance, is because the majority of history is taught from a Eurocentric view. This view tends to glorify people of privilege and dehumanize minorities. By taking away this humanity, both the good and the bad aspects of an entire group of people are taken away. The history that begins on the slave coast of Africa has both good and bad aspects.

Africa was home to vast kingdoms, empires, and kings, despite the myths that all Africa had been was dispersed tribes and chiefs. The great kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai spanned great distances and acquired much wealth in the first and beginning part of the second millenniums (White, Bay, & Martin Jr., 2013). In fact, the richest man to ever live, Mansa Musa, ruled over Mali from 1312-1337; he gave away so much gold to the people of Africa on his pilgrimage to Mecca that he caused mass inflation and the economy didn't recover for almost a decade (Elkins, 2016; White, Bay, & Martin Jr., 2013). The kingdoms of Africa were in great shape when the Europeans (trying to find their way to Asia in order to trade) decided instead to stop in Africa and strike up trading deals with the Africans. Contrary to many beliefs, it was the African elite who were in charge of the trade

and the African elite who willingly volunteered their fellow Africans up for slavery; slavery had been in existence for centuries in Africa prior to this (White, Bay, & Martin Jr., 2013). African slavery was not inherited, not a lifetime commitment, and slaves could remain part of the community, own property (even other slaves), have a family (and get married), and most importantly, retain their humanity (Voltz, 2017). However, what slavery had been in Africa was nothing like what slavery would become in the New World.

This slave trade journey began with the horrors of The Middle Passage. This part of the process included slaves being marched hundreds of miles from inland Africa to the distant western shores in coffles (a line of animals, prisoners, or slaves chained and driven along together), being housed in barracoons and slave castles, being packed into ships like cargo, being starved, dehydrated, abused, and (predominantly women) consistently raped, only to be inspected like animals and sold on the auction block when arriving in the New World (White, Bay, & Martin Jr., 2013). This terrifying journey leaves out the majority of people who died while undergoing it. An estimated 20-50% of the Africans who started the long march, died on the long march; 10% of the Africans left after the march, died on the coastline awaiting their harrowing journeys on slave ships; 10-15% more would die during their transfer on the seas from Africa to the New World; and 10% of those left alive would die during initial seasoning periods, which were one or two years of hard work designed to break slaves and their will (Voltz, 2017). The fiery throes of bondage had begun.

Now, it's important to note, while this rough and inhumane treatment of slaves as chattel occurred throughout the Atlantic slave trade, when slaves first arrived in Colonial America, their inhumanness, inferiority, and life of oppression had not yet begun. White, Bay, and Martin Jr. (2013) write that when "Twenty and some odd Negroes" came ashore

Jamestown, VA in 1619, the world they experienced was nothing like what most African Americans would come to endure. The early settlers came to the New World with poor, white indentured servants. When slaves joined the ranks, they worked alongside poor whites, their bondage was not yet for life, and they were able to eventually become free and were afforded the same opportunities poor whites had to try and make something of themselves in the New World (White, Bay, & Martin Jr., 2013). Slavery was not racialized yet.

A number of factors soon changed this brief stint of opportunity and relatively equal treatment for Blacks. Edmund Morgan in *Toward Racism* lays out the argument that England's society and treatment of poor whites impacted the way English settlers treated their slaves. Morgan (1975) explains how "the perversity, the stubborn, immoral idleness of England's poor" was the downfall of the English nation and reason for its lack of wealth. People saw the poor as worthless and a hindrance and a plan soon came to fruition in order to rectify it. The poor and idle needed something to do so "Parliament in 1576 provided for the building of 'houses of correction' in which beggars could be put to work . . . work was the proper cure for all, and it could best be administered by incarceration" (Morgan, 1975).

The Virginian settlers easily agreed with the ideals of English contempt for the poor, as well as the plans and actions on what to do about them; making the shift from class to race was only a matter of time. And that time soon came in 1676, during Bacon's Rebellion, when a group of poor white indentured servants and African slaves rose up against the white elite and destroyed Jamestown (White, Bay, & Martin Jr., 2013). This insurrection terrified the elite and they soon realized that something had to be done, or the poor would overtake them. Morgan (1975) says that "the answer to the problem . . . was racism, to

separate dangerous free whites from dangerous slave blacks by a screen of racial contempt.” This social argument for slavery points to fear as the root of racism and shows that a line was drawn between white people (who were seen as safe, civil, and good), and Black people (who were seen as dangerous, unruly, and indecent). Slave Codes and Negro Acts were created after this time, making slavery for life, making it inherited through the mother, and making it harder to assemble, run away, or much else (Voltz, 2017). Thus, the concept of race had been created and the segregation line became slavery. Summing up this moment well, Fields (1990) says:

Race is not an element of human biology (like breathing oxygen or reproducing sexually); nor is it even an idea (like the speed of light or the value of pi) that can be plausibly imagined to live an eternal life of its own. Race is not an idea but an ideology. It came into existence at a discernible historical moment for rationally understandable historical reasons and is subject to change for similar reasons.

With race firmly established, oppression of African slaves took off, drowning the bodies of these people in the backbreaking labor of building a nation. These people and the continuance of oppression pose an interesting picture when the colonies roll around to the eve of a Revolution. In fact, Morgan (1972) says “the challenge . . . is to explain how a people could have developed the dedication to human liberty and dignity exhibited by the leaders of the American Revolution and at the same time have developed and maintained a system of labor that denied human liberty and dignity every hour of the day.” The Revolutionary War (a bloody overthrow of an oppressionist regime) called attention to the “American Paradox,” where the English colonies in 1776 spouted the rhetoric of freedom for all, while our Founding Fathers were content at maintaining the oppressionist bondage

of their slaves. It was here that “the American paradox of slavery and freedom [began], intertwined and interdependent, the rights of Englishmen supported on the wrongs of Africans” (Morgan, 1972). The United States, a country that would come to be known as the “land of the free” and home of democracy, was actually built on the backs of an enslaved population, tethered to bondage, and deprived of every freedom and liberty the citizens of American Revolutionary times claimed to idealize.

Looking at the development of the country, it can be seen just how much the freedom and opportunities for whites, hinged on the work, labor, and enslavement of Blacks. While many assume the South was the main profiteer off of slavery, the North was heavily invested and tied to the work of slaves. The evidence shows that while the South grew the most lucrative cash crop in the nation, cotton (picked by the slaves), the North manufactured it in textile mills, and proceeded to provide an entire planet with cotton textiles (Baptist, 2012). Other businesses benefited from slave labor as well. Baptist (2012) describes things like second order effects (goods and services necessary to produce cotton; i.e. purchase of slaves, land, food for slaves, clothes for slaves, tools slaves used) and third order effects (i.e. millworkers, hog workers, and steam boat captain salaries), making a profit off of slaves. In the end, “more than \$600 million, or almost half of the economic activity in the United States in 1836, derived directly or indirectly from cotton produced by the million-odd slaves—6 percent of the total US population” (Baptist, 2012).

The reality was, Blacks built up the capitalistic society of The United States, all while being mistreated, abused, and subjected to horrors at the hands of whites. Slaves were whipped, not given enough food, and lacked all freedom. Female slaves were consistently raped, forced to work in the fields while pregnant, and frequently had their children sold

off (Voltz, 2017). While in life, whites benefited off of slaves, but not many know that they benefited off of them in death as well. In 19th century medical schools, physicians and students would steal the dead bodies of slaves in order to perform autopsies on them, so they could learn about human anatomy (Berry, 2017). The souls of dead slaves could never rest easy. Berry (2017) says “[slave] bodies experienced commodification after death. The fiscal values of their cadavers became tradable goods that were a part of a clandestine traffic in bodies used for anatomical education.”

Another medical horror that slaves experienced in the 19th century was done by the father of modern day gynecology, Dr. James Marion Sims. Washington (2006) ponders “was Sims a savior or a sadist? It depends, I suppose, on the color of the women you ask. Marion Sims epitomizes the two faces – one benign, one malevolent – of American medical research.” Sims was set on curing the widespread problem (in that time period) of vaginal fistulas. Many hail him as a hero, as he invented the surgery to fix fistulas, which gave women (or rather, white women) back their lives. He was named as the president of the American Medical Association in 1875, had hospitals named after him, and currently has a statue of himself standing in Central Park (Voltz, 2017). However, the dark history of his famous surgery and beneficence to women is rooted in slavery. In 1845, Sims did experiments on Anarcha, a female slave, who had over thirty surgeries in four years without any anesthesia (Voltz, 2017). He later acquired eleven more women and did surgeries on them without anesthesia for four years as well, believing that black women didn’t have the same pain receptors as white women (Voltz, 2017). He eventually figured out the surgery to fix the fistulas and took off touring the country, performing the surgery

on white women everywhere; he was never to fix or help the black female slaves he experimented on (Voltz, 2017).

While medical experiments were cruel, stories of outright torture and harm have plagued the antebellum era as well. One of the most famous examples was that of Madame LaLaurie, a wealthy slave owner in New Orleans who became notorious for her sadistic reputation of murder, torture, and torment of her slaves. One night, a fire erupted in her house and townspeople hurried to help evacuate the home. Upon searching the house, bystanders came upon the slave quarters in the attic. Rushing (2017) says “on April 11, 1834, the *New Orleans Bee* stated, ‘Seven slaves more or less horribly mutilated were seen suspended by the neck, with their limbs apparently stretched and torn from one extremity to the other.’” These weren’t the only horrors seen in Madame LaLaurie’s houses that night. Rushing (2017) states: “‘The *New Orleans Advertiser* described finding one of the male slaves with a large hole in his head; his body from head to foot was covered with scars and filled with worms...those who have seen the others represent them to be in a similar condition.’” Her stories of cruelty are haunting, so much so that they continue to affect us today. Pop culture has taken a fascination with the Madame LaLaurie story, and it has appeared in places like books, poems, video games, and most recently the third season of the television series *American Horror Story*, called Coven. While not every slave owner was as sadistic as Madame LaLaurie, her story puts into perspective the cruel and harsh world that the Black body was forced to exist in.

The Age of Lynching

Slavery was a brutal affair that stripped the humanity away from Blacks, but it did not defeat them. With the Civil War and emancipation, Reconstruction brought on a world

never before seen by the African Americans alive in that day. Suddenly, freedom, opportunity, advancement, and true life were possible for a group of people never afforded anything. However, the time of progress for Blacks struck fear into the hearts of whites. Wiegman (1993) says “Emancipation represents the literal and symbolic loss of the security of the white patronym and an attendant displacement of the primacy of the white male.” It was at this point in history where lynching rose as a staple in this socially changed society. White culture needed to assert its power and dominance and show African Americans inherent inferiority. This led to demonizing Blacks, particularly the Black male. This narrative “features the African American male in the role of mythically endowed rapist, with the white woman as the flower of civilization he intends to violently pluck, and the white male as the heroic interceptor who restores order by thwarting this black phallic insurgence” (Wiegman, 1993). This was to illustrate the mindset that in bondage, slaves were docile, but with emancipation they were barbarous fiends who posed a threat to all of society.

Most notable about lynchings was the utter boldness and pride white culture took in participating in them. It was a spectacle and entertainment, acceptable and tolerable, as well as righteous since “n*****s jest supposed to die” (Litwack, 2000). In fact, Litwack (2000) explains:

In most lynchings, the guilt of the victim had not been proven in a court of law. As in most lynchings, no member of the crowd wore a mask, nor did anyone attempt to conceal the names of the perpetrators; indeed, newspaper reporters noted the active participation of some of the region's most prominent citizens. And as in most

lynchings, the white press and public expressed its solidarity in the name of white supremacy and ignored any information that contradicted the people's verdict. The public nature of lynchings reveals how deeply whites felt about underscoring Blacks' new freedom. Everyone, from high-ranking leaders to rednecks participated in lynchings, even children. Litwack (2000) says "the cheapness of black life reflected in turn the degree to which so many whites by the early twentieth century had come to think of black men and women as inherently and permanently inferior, as less than human." It seemed many lynchings were done to Black men who challenged the order of white supremacy. Their deaths were a way of putting them in their place and sending a message to other African Americans in the Reconstruction era.

The Rise of the Ghetto

Around the same time as lynchings rose, the migration of African Americans out of the South rose as well. Many left farms to head to the cities in order to escape the rampant violence that was being committed against the Black community in the South. Now, "blacks tended to live in predominantly white neighborhoods in the nineteenth century," but that began to shift after 1900 (Massey & Denton, 1993). African Americans started heading to cities, and with the push of realtors and their scare tactics on whites about the threat of the Negro, pushed whites out of neighborhoods, and filled Blacks to over capacity in the urban sector (Massey & Denton, 1993). The racial makeup of urban cities changed, and with them, so did opportunity and life. Massey and Denton (1993) say "for rural blacks . . . cities became a trap—yet another mechanism of oppression and alienation. The urban ghetto, constructed during the first half of the twentieth century and successively reinforced thereafter, represents the key institutional arrangement ensuring the continued

subordination of blacks in the United States.” This subordination carries on into the 21st century, separating white and Black with the color line formed by the boundaries of the ghetto. Firebaugh and Acciai (2016) say “as of 2010 . . . half of the metropolitan black population living in neighborhoods . . . were home to only 3.6% of the nonblack population. Clearly, the residential segregation of blacks remains very high in America.”

On Police Brutality

With the ghetto established, living conditions harsh, and whites still discriminating against African Americans in the spheres of opportunity and treatment, Black society today experiences the same oppression it always has. Now, it shows up as police brutality.

Lowery (2016) states:

According to the most recent census data, there are nearly 160 million more white people in America than there are black people. White people make up roughly 62 percent of the U.S. population but only about 49 percent of those who are killed by police officers. African Americans, however, account for 24 percent of those fatally shot and killed by the police despite being just 13 percent of the U.S. population. As The Post noted in a new analysis published last week, that means black Americans are 2.5 times as likely as white Americans to be shot and killed by police officers.

Examining cases where Black men were murdered at the hands of the state, Martinot (2014) said “the unifying factor driving their actions (other than that all the victims were people of color) was the absence of any external necessity” to have to kill the victims other than a want and internal drive to shoot them. Black Americans can be shot even when they aren’t threatening. Martinot (2014) states: “When the police are intent on shooting a black person, a black man (or woman) cannot surrender. White men can surrender, as the

Aurora (Colorado) killer did, after killing many in a movie theater. For black people confronted with a drive to shoot them, that right is not an option.”

Police violence doesn't just come from shootings. One alternative form of violence that is being done more and more is called a Nickel Ride, and was responsible for the death of Freddie Gray. Many think Gray “was the victim of a ‘Nickel Ride’, a horrific police torture tactic where a suspect is handcuffed and placed in the back of a police van without restraints, and driven recklessly around town by police officers. This practice has also been called a ‘Rough Ride’ or a ‘Cowboy Ride’” (Vibes, 2015). Its intention is to spark fear, promote power, and establish dominance over the Black body. Another type of violence being exacted on the Black community is structural violence in the form of mass incarceration. In Baltimore, the War on Drugs has completely changed the way police operate. The War on Drugs presents itself as a way to keep criminals off the streets, enforce law and order, and decrease drug use. In actuality, it is a thinly veiled screen for decades of biased law enforcement against people of color, particularly the Black community. In an interview with David Simon, he described the reality of the police force as:

What it taught the police department was that they could go a step beyond the manufactured probable cause, and the drug-free zones and the humbles – the targeting of suspects through less-than-constitutional procedure. Now, the mass arrests made clear, we can lock up anybody, we don't have to figure out who's committing crimes, we don't have to investigate anything, we just gather all the bodies — everybody goes to jail (Keller, 2015).

He goes on to describe that this happens because police are motivated by cash and promotion and are willing to do whatever it takes to get it. This has become a system

“where actual investigation goes unrewarded and where rounding up bodies for street dealing, drug possession, loitering such – the easiest and most self-evident arrests a cop can make – is nonetheless the path to enlightenment and promotion and some additional pay” (Keller, 2015). This is the reality on the streets of Black ghettos.

In addition to the ghetto, police brutality occurs among affluent Blacks as well. Evidence for this can be seen in Senator Tim Scott (one of three Black Republicans in Congress) as he was pulled over seven times by the police in a year, and when Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct while only trying to enter his own home in Cambridge, MA (Vega, 2016). Upper class Blacks do not get to escape the racial profiling that occurs in this country. Vega (2016) says

Data has repeatedly shown that blacks are more likely than whites to be pulled over for minor traffic violations, stopped and frisked or incarcerated . . . While there is very little data on the intersection of wealth and incarceration, one study from Duke University and The New School for Social Research showed that blacks with a higher net worth than whites were almost always more likely to be incarcerated.

This is what the Black community endures. Through a long historical violence, that slowly manifested itself in systems, life for Blacks is perpetually oppressed through the structural violence rampant in The United States.

The Narrative of the Black Woman

One area of Black life that still deserves attention is in the place where the intersections of different identities meet in the Black Community. Intersectionality plays on the fact that different identities interact differently with the systems of our world, creating unique problems and experiences for different people. One group of people with a very

unique experience is that of Black women, and the cause that arises from that, Black Feminism. From the time of slavery, Black women have been struggling against the intersections of the patriarchy and racism. During slavery, Black women were consistently raped by their masters. However, Hartman (1996) says the “construction of black female sexuality [makes] rape unimaginable. As the enslaved female is legally unable to give consent or to offer resistance, she is presumed to be always willing.”

With the information currently available, it seems there was no way in the eyes of the law for a Black woman to say she was raped in antebellum America, and simply had to endure the pain of that abuse. Painter (2002) argues that this perpetual abuse resulted in the soul murder of Black women and how this left their identities compromised, caused them to identify with their abuser, had anger toward themselves, and were more at risk for psychological problems (depression, anxiety, self-mutilation, sexual problems, suicide attempts, and drug and alcohol abuse). Painter (2002) also describes the fact that white mistresses tended to see themselves as the victims in the triangle between their husbands and slave women, rather than the slaves being raped. This could result in abuse and torture of the slave women by the white mistresses. hooks (1982) argues that “a devaluation of black womanhood occurred as a result of the sexual exploitation of black women during slavery that has not altered in the course of hundreds of years.”

Looking at the course of history, Black women have continued to struggle with their image and treatment in society. It can be seen that

During the years of Black Reconstruction, 1867-77, black women struggled to change negative images of black womanhood perpetuated by whites. Trying to dispel the myth that all black women were sexually loose, they emulated the

conduct and mannerisms of white women . . . [but] white society resisted.

Everywhere black women went, they were accosted and subjected to obscene comments and even physical abuse at the hands of white men and women (hooks, 1982).

In a time where Black men were lynched for the assumed rapes of white women, no one paid attention to the rampant sexual abuse being exacted on Black women by white men during this same time.

Finally, it's important to understand the different areas of oppression Black women have faced. Collins (2000) mentions that there are three interdependent dimensions affecting Black women: the exploitation on the labor Black women performed in order to promote capitalism ("iron pots and kettles" symbolizing the ghettoization service work Black women have done); political oppression affecting Black women in the criminal justice system, education, and running for public office; and also the images used to represent Black women (the mammies, jezebels, and breeder women to the smiling Aunt Jemima's on pancake mix boxes, Black prostitutes, and the ever-present welfare mothers). Black women face major disadvantages from the way society has treated them in the past, as well as the present day challenges and imagery they must overcome. Black Feminism is an issue that needs to be brought to the forefront and separated from white feminism. Black women face a kind of oppression that is not dealt with by white feminism. It is time that Black women are focused on and fought for.

Racism Today

Understanding the historical and structural violence done on the Black community, it's easier to understand what is happening today. Mass incarceration of Black men is an

incredible problem in 2017. Many would argue it is a modern day version of slavery. Gregg (2013) says “no other country in the world imprisons so many of its racial or ethnic minorities. The United States imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did at the height of apartheid.” Another problem facing our society today is the school to prison pipeline. Wald and Losen (2003) explain that

Students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are routinely provided fewer resources, fewer qualified teachers, and fewer advanced-level courses than their more affluent white peers. Not surprisingly, they experience lower rates of high school graduation, lower levels of academic achievement, and higher rates of college attrition.

These low-income and minority students don’t succeed in school, end up on the streets, end up getting into trouble with the law, and end up in prison. This current inequitable system is failing our Black youth. There’s also the police brutality violence, which manifests itself in shootings, Nickel Rides, and unlawful arrests to consider.

It’s also important to take into account the subtleties of power and advantages of white privilege. Our country is steeped in the memories and legacies of slavery, yet many people don’t see it, have never been forced to see it, or don’t care to see it. The places, things, and stories of our country that absolutely exist within the contexts of slavery, tend to conspicuously leave slavery out the narrative. Or, worse, they romanticize, monetize, and capitalize off of slavery. For example, when receiving a tour of Mt. Vernon, the history of George Washington is explained and the impressive grounds are shown. Toward the end, one will pass by an area where the tour guide will give a quick mention how that used to be

the slave quarters, only to return to talking about Washington and his many monumental achievements.

While public history tours certainly leave out the slave narrative, there is a branch of tourism that has prominently, and profitably, inserted slaves in. The dark tourism, also known as ghost tourism, industry has thrived and boomed because of the tales that can be spun off of slaves in the South. People pay good money to walk around old Southern plantations to experience the hauntings of slave spirits, lost and restless, left with unfinished business in a world that abused, defiled, and tortured them. These tours show people around rooms in Southern mansions where slaves hung themselves, where slaves were murdered, and where female slaves were raped. All the while, eager tourists snap photos, inspect the rooms, and invade the spaces where great trauma occurred, lives were horribly changed, and tragedy befell people, resulting in loss of life. Arguments can be made that slavery was brutal and it's inevitable that stories would be told about such gruesome deaths. In addition, slavery was so long ago that it's easy to distance oneself from the event and create it into a ghost tale that people are able to confront. However, before tourists draw the line of ghost stories with slavery, it's important to consider if this is really acceptable. Miles (2015) asks "what are the boundaries of what is acceptable? Can we imagine a ghost tour of the Twin Towers? Or of a Native American massacre site?" It seems Black people's trauma is acceptable to romanticize and make money off of, but one needs to ask the question of, is this ghost-telling of Black trauma really something our country should be pursuing?

With the profit the tourist industry makes off of Black bodies in the past, it's no wonder that other industries seek ways of profiting off of those bodies as well. Pop culture

continues to reimagine history, with Black people being the ones who suffer. Books and television continue to create histories that are familiar to us, whiteness wins and people of color remain oppressed. Recently, HBO was ready to create “Confederate,” a show based in today’s time period where the South did secede and slavery is alive and well there. Gay (2017) says

This show’s premise highlights the limits of the imagination in a world where oppression thrives. These creators can imagine a world where the Confederacy won the Civil War and black people are still enslaved, but they can’t or aren’t interested in imagining a world where, say, things went in a completely different direction after the Civil War and, say, white people are enslaved. Or a world where slavery never happened at all.

The nation needs to check itself and come to a reckoning on the rhetoric that is being promoted and the aftermath and current effects we experience today because of slavery.

Another example is the lack of acknowledgement of the labor that slaves were forced to put into building some of our nation’s most renowned structures and buildings. It is not often mentioned or ruminated on that slaves built things like the White House, the U.S. Capitol Building, Wall Street, Monticello, Mt. Vernon, and several large universities: The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, The University of Virginia, and Washington and Lee University (Sisson, 2016). Discussing the history of these famous places, means discussing slavery. Discussing slavery means coming face to face with the dark and murky past of our country. This forced confrontation of the reality of the horrors of the United States makes people uncomfortable, and many people don’t like having to think about the “land of the free” being created on the oppression of bondage.

Racism at The University of Utah

It's important to understand that racism isn't something happening far away. It isn't just happening in the South, or in the past, or in a vacuum. It's happening here on our campus today, in 2017. On August 13th, the day after the Charlottesville incident, posters were found on campus targeting Black students, saying to beware Black men because they will rape all white women. On September 27th, The U welcomed white supremacist, Ben Shapiro to come and speak on campus. During fall break (the week of October 8th through October 14th), "We hate n*****s" was found in graffiti on the Gardner Construction site. Also, the week of November 6th, "It's okay to be white" posters were found around campus.

There is a level of ignorance at The University of Utah. People don't know and understand the pain the Black community has endured and the very real obstacles set against them. This is the very reason that a Praxis Lab brought to The U would greatly help. The Honors College website defines a Praxis lab as a way to:

Draw students from all disciplines to collaborate on innovative project-based solutions to pressing societal challenges. Under the guidance of distinguished faculty and community leaders, you and your colleagues analyze your topic through in-depth classroom and field research such as lectures, panels, one-on-one interviews, readings and off-campus trips. After problems have been identified and solutions developed, you will work together to put your ideas into action in the community (*Praxis Labs*, 2017).

It would teach about the history presented here, understand why our society is where it's at today in terms of social movements like the "Black Lives Matter Movement"

and “Say Her Name Movement”, and work on making practical and positive solutions and changes to start altering the framework that people are existing in right now.

Counterarguments

There are a number of reasons why someone would think a Praxis Lab centered on the Black community would be a bad or harmful idea. However, there are other perspectives and ways to look at the situation that reveal the positive aspects of such a class.

1. *It sounds like you could be promoting anti-police attitudes. Why would you disrespect the police in our society?*

We wouldn't be promoting for anyone to stand against police; we would be drawing attention to the reasons behind standing against police brutality. Everyone in our society has an implicit bias toward Black Americans, and it's something that we, as a society, need to work on. Psychology research today reveals much of this implicit bias. In a study done on prejudice and perception, participants were primed either with a white or Black face followed by either a gun or a tool. The experiment measured whether the participants accidentally classified the gun as a tool, or the tool as a gun. The results showed that participants were more likely to accidentally say a tool was a gun with Black primes (Payne, 2001). Another study that was done was on shooter bias. College students were shown pictures of a white or black man in different settings on a computer either holding a gun or an innocent/neutral object. They had to quickly choose whether or not to shoot them (the goal was not to shoot unarmed people). Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink (2002) had the following results:

- When pictures did show a gun, participants:
 - Were faster to “shoot” the Black men than the White men
 - Made more “not shoot” errors on White men holding guns
- When pictures did NOT show a gun, participants:
 - Were faster to “not shoot” the White men than the Black men
 - Made more “shoot” errors on Black men holding neutral objects
- The researchers replicated these effects with real police officers (Correll et al., 2002)

2. *We had a Black man as president. Aren't we living in a post-racial society?*

Unfortunately, we are not living in a post racial society. Look at the criminal justice system, look at the skewed access to education, look at Charlottesville just a few months ago, and see if society looks post-racial anymore. The evidence reveals that Black people do not receive equitable treatment, some people still possess hate in their hearts toward Blacks, and with the prevalence of microaggressions (comments or actions that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group), racial difference can be seen in the ignorance of some and the misunderstandings of people different from one another.

3. *The Black Lives Matter Movement was mentioned. Don't all lives matter?*

Garza (2016) says “We don't only think that black lives matter. We call the contradiction that all lives should matter but they don't, and that all lives cannot matter until all lives actually matter in practice. Practice doesn't just mean

representation; what it means for black lives to matter is to make sure that there is an equitable distribution of resources for all of the Black community.” For too long, the voices of the Black community have been oppressed and ignored. Black people have much to offer and much to say in how they are truly treated. It’s time we, as a society, give the Black community its due respect. It’s time to allow their forgotten voices to emerge from the shadows of history. It’s time we hear the perspective of the Black community.

Conclusion

Throughout the history of a nation built on the intertwined destinies of oppression and freedom, Black people have fought to overcome every disadvantage life has thrown at them. Escaping the iron-holds of slavery, enduring the fearful grip of the noose, and soldiering past the violence of the state at the hands of those sworn to protect, African Americans continue to fight. Oppression, marginalization, discrimination, and disenfranchisement still occur in our society today, and still cause the Black experience to be one wrought with obstacles and trials. Racism is perpetuated anew in each generation, white supremacy continues to rear its ugly head, and life continues to be filled with burdens for African Americans. Now is the time to educate, teach, and inform the American people about the history and current struggles of Blacks. Now is the time to stop the wheels of oppression from turning. The University of Utah needs to take a stand against racism. It needs to halt the racist regime that underlies our society. It’s time that a Praxis Lab like The Black Perspective comes to our campus. It’s only when we understand the past and its problems that we can move forward in peace with solution.

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HONORS 3700: The Black Perspective

W / 3:00pm – 6:00pm

MHC 1205

Fall Semester 2018

Instructor: First Last, Ph.D.
Office: xxxx
Office Hours: xxxx
Email: xxxx@utah.edu

Required Text(s): White, D.G., Bay, M., and Martin Jr., W.E. (2013). *Freedom on my mind, volume 1, to 1865: A history of African Americans, with documents.* Maine: Bedford/St. Martin's.

White, D.G., Bay, M., and Martin Jr., W.E. (2013). *Freedom on my mind, volume 2, since 1865: A history of African Americans, with documents.* Maine: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Coates, T. (2015). *Between the world and me.* New York: Spiegel & Grau.

All other readings for this course are posted on Canvas. All students should have access to them. Please ensure you have access to and familiarity with how to navigate Canvas.

Course Website: Canvas

Course Description

The Black community has existed in this country under the dark countenance of historical and structural violence for centuries. Much of the violence has come to fruition under the ideology of race and assertions of a privileged group of people and their power. Throughout all of this history and many harsh circumstances, Black people are still here. They have formed communities, identities, and sought autonomy, while fighting for equitable treatment in this nation. During the first half of the course, this Praxis Lab examines the lives, labors, and culture of African Americans throughout this country's history and the obstacles they've had to face. During this exploration, students will gain insight into the historical and structural violence that has plagued the United States' history as well as the current problems of today. Students will also dive into the concept of intersectionality, and examine the role Black Feminism has to play in today's world. In addition, students will come to understand the current movements going on around the Black community, and practical steps to take in improving the condition of African Americans. In the second half of the course, students will work collaboratively toward an initiative to better the condition of the Black community at The U, in Salt Lake City, or in Utah as a whole. The goal is to bring awareness to the community and raise the peace levels around African Americans here in Utah.

Course Objectives

- Identify the key events which express/define African American history
- Discuss the ways in which factors such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, region, and religion influence historical and current narratives
- Challenge arguments of a controversial nature
- Interpret the complexity and diversity of situations, events and past mentalities
- Explain how people have existed, acted and thought in specific historical periods in regard to African Americans
- Obtain historical and up-to-date data from a variety of sources
- Discuss intersectionality and Black Feminism in regard to society in the past and present
- Formulate practical solutions to problems facing the Black community
- Collaborate with others to enact positive change toward the Black community here in Utah

Evaluation

Course Requirements

- (1) Weekly Reading Notes
- (2) Paper Essay 1
- (3) Paper Essay 2
- (4) Paper Essay 3
- (5) Presentation
- (6) Class Participation

Course grades will be determined by the following weights of course assignments:

- 15% Weekly Reading Notes
- 20% Paper Essay 1
- 20% Paper Essay 2
- 20% Paper Essay 3
- 15% Presentation
- 10% Class Participation

Final grades will be determined using the following scale: A (93-100%), A- (90-92.99%), B+ (87-89.99%), B (83-86.99%), B- (80-82.99%), C+ (77-79.99%), C (73-76.99%), C- (70-72.99%), D+ (67-69.99%), D (63-66.99%), D- (60-62.99%), F (below 60%)

Weekly Reading Notes

Each note contains:

- Reflection: As soon as you're done reading, write down what you're thinking (appx. 200 words)

- Discussion: A deeper discussion of two or three aspects of the reading(s)/video(s) that you find most interesting (appx. 200 words)
- Questions: What are two questions that the readings/videos brought up for you?

These should be printed off and brought to class each day and organized in a folder. For the first few weeks, these will be collected and assessed each day. Then, once folks get the hang of it, a handful will randomly be picked up each week. If you're selected and you don't have your folder, you're counted as absent. If your folder doesn't contain all of the notes, you will lose 10 points/missing note.

Paper Essays

Details and rubrics for each assignment will be posted on Canvas as the essays are assigned. As a general rule, essays should be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins and Times New Roman 12 point font or its equivalent. Please be sure to pay careful attention to spelling and grammar. Papers will be graded according to the content and aptness of your ideas, and the quality and accuracy of your prose.

Presentation

Each student will give a final presentation on the topic of their choice. It must be related to the Black community. Presentations should be between 5-10 minutes in length and work to engage the class. A rubric will be posted to Canvas. Presentations will be given in the last week of the semester.

Class Participation

Students are expected to come to class prepared and actively participate – which involves talking as well as active listening – fully and regularly. Ground your comments in the specific ideas shared within our readings so as to deepen and complicate our understandings of the theories at hand. Remember, we're looking for **quality, not just quantity**.

Course Email Policy

You should feel free to email the instructor if you have a quick question or concern. Before doing so, please check the syllabus and other course materials before asking us your question. If you have a question that you think other students may be able to answer OR that you think other students might benefit from hearing our answer, consider posting the question on the message board in lieu of emailing the instructor. In addition, we ask that you adhere to the following simple but very important guidelines:

- Include "Hon 3700" in the subject
- Use a proper greeting!
- Include your first and last name.
- Proofread your email for professionalism. Make sure there are no errors or typos in your message and that the tone is professional and respectful.

Gender Pronoun & Name Preferences

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name; however, I am happy to honor your request to address you by an alternate name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so I can ensure use of your preferred name and pronouns in this space.

University and Department Policies

Addressing Sexual Misconduct. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801- 581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801- 581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585- 2677(COPS).

The Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Academic Honesty: All activities in this class will be governed by the University of Utah's Student Code of Academic Conduct. As outlined in the Code, plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connect with examinations. In order to maintain academic honesty and the integrity of your work, all research must be carefully documented; this includes ideas that you have derived from texts and websites you have consulted, as well as direct quotes. If you are unclear about what specifically constitutes plagiarism, please contact the instructor or refer to the student handbook: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>.

Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language. If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language development and writing. These resources include: the Department of Linguistics ESL Program (<http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/>); the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>); the Writing Program (

program.utah.edu/); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

LGBT Resource Center. If you are a member of the LGBTQ community, I want you to know that my classroom is a safe zone. Additionally, please know that the U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu/>. Please also let me know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

Student Rights and Responsibilities. All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, detailed in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee. For Student Rights and Responsibilities, see <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>

Veterans Center. If you are a student veteran, I want you to know that the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center on campus. They are located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu>. Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

Wellness Statement. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness - www.wellness.utah.edu (801-581-7776). The Counseling Center is another excellent resource, offering services that include counseling and a mindfulness clinic (see <http://counselingcenter.utah.edu>).

Course Outline and Reading List

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that the instructor may modify it for any reason with reasonable notice to you. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.

[Please note: Readings will be discussed on the day corresponding to the day they appear on this schedule.]

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	August 22	Introduction to History, Peace and Conflict Studies, Racism, and Praxis Lab In Class Screening: <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i>	Read: Review the Course Syllabus and Canvas Page
2	August 29	Africa and the Atlantic World, and The Transatlantic Slave Trade In Class Screening: clip from <i>Amistad</i>	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , Ch. 1 Read: Fields, "Slavery, race and ideology in the United States of America" Read: Excerpts from Thornton, <i>Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World</i> Read: Rediker, "Life, Death, and terror in the Slave Trade"
3	September 5	Slavery in Colonial America, African Americans in the American Revolution, and Slavery in the New Republic In Class Screening: <i>Egalité for All</i>	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , Ch. 2-3 Read: Excerpts from Melish, Disowning Slavery Read: Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox" Read: Bay, "See Your Declaration Americans!" Read: Morgan "Towards Racism"
4	September 12	Life in the Cotton Kingdom, and Free People of Color in Antebellum America In Class Screening: clip from <i>Twelve Years A Slave</i>	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , Ch. 4-6 Read: Excerpts from Baptist, <i>The Half That Has Never Been Told</i> Read: Excerpts from Berry, <i>The Price for their Pound of Flesh</i> Read: Lighter and Ragan, "Were African American

			Slaveholders Benevolent or Exploitative" Read: Shulz, "The Perilous Lure of the Underground Railroad"
5	September 19	The Civil War, Slavery in Memory, and Legacies of Slavery in America In Class Screening: 13th	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , Ch. 7 Read: Yacovone, "The Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiments, The Pay Crisis, and the 'Lincoln Despotism'" Read: Grimsley and Paul, "Free At Last: Emancipation during the Civil War" Read: Excerpts from Miles, <i>Tales from the Haunted South</i> Read: Gay, "I don't Want to Watch Slavery Fan Fiction" Read: Coates, "The Case for Reparations"
6	September 26	Reconstruction, Lynching, Disenfranchisement, Jim Crow and the Formation of the Ghetto Paper 1 Due	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , Ch. 9-10 (first part) Read: Wiegman, "The Anatomy of Lynching" Read: Litwack, "Hellhounds" Read: Firebaugh & Acciai, "For blacks in America, the gap in neighborhood poverty has declined faster than segregation" Read: Massey & Denton, "The construction of the ghetto"
7	October 3	The Harlem Renaissance, Blacks in the Depression Era, WWII, and the Cold War	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> , Ch. 10 (second part)-11 Read: Excerpts from Baldwin, <i>Notes of a Native Son</i> Read: Excerpts from Wright, <i>Native Son</i> Read: Schuyler "The Harlem Renaissance: George Schuyler Argues against 'Black Art'" Read: Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" Read: Williams, <i>Eyes on the Prize</i> , Chapters 1-2
8	October 10	Fall Break – No Class	N/A

9	October 17	Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement, and the Black Arts Movement In Class Screening: <i>The Freedom Riders</i>	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i>, Ch. 12-13 Read: King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Read: Harper, "The Influence of Malcolm X on Black Militancy" Read: Harris, "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party" Read: Maag, "New Push to Capture Woman in '73 Killing of State Trooper" Read: Peterson, "Why the Assata Shakur case still strikes a chord" Read: Neal, "The Black Arts Movement"
10	October 24	Contemporary African American Thought in the 70's, 80's, 90's, 00's	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i>, Ch. 14 Read: Giddings, <i>When and Where I Enter</i>, Chapters 17-20 Read: Okiihiro, "Cheap Talk, Er, Dialogue." <i>Souls</i>
11	October 31	The Rise of Black Feminism and Intersectionality - In Class Screening: <i>WTF is Intersectional Feminism???</i> - In Class Screening: <i>Dark Girls</i> (Trailer) - In Class Screening: <i>Good Hair</i> (Trailer) - In Class Screening: Kimberlé Crenshaw - <i>On Intersectionality</i> - keynote - WOW 2016 Paper 2 Due	Read: Excerpts from Collins, "The politics of black feminist thought" Read: Hartman, "Seduction and the ruses of power" Read: Excerpts from hooks, <i>Ain't I a woman: Black women and feminism</i> Read: Painter, "Soul murder and slavery"
12	November 7	Police Brutality, Mass Incarceration, the School to Prison Pipeline, and Unequitable Treatment	Read: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i>, Ch. 15 Read: Gregg, "The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in an age of colorblindness" Read: Keller, "David Simon on Baltimore's anguish: Freddie Gray, the drug war, and the

			decline of 'real policing'" Read: Lowery, "Aren't more white people than black people killed by police? Yes, but no" Read: Martinot, "On the epidemic of police killings" Read: Vega, "For affluent blacks, wealth doesn't stop racial profiling" Read: Vibes, "Freddie Gray's death reveals a dark history of 'nickel rides' and police van torture" Read: Wald & Losen, "Defining and redirecting a school to prison pipeline"
13	November 14	Recent acts of Racism, Political Influence, and current movements (BLM, Say Her Name, pop culture influence) - In Class Screening: Alicia Garza: <i>Why Black Lives Matter</i> (Dangerous Ideas Festival – Sydney) - In Class Screening: Beyoncé Superbowl Halftime Performance - In Class Screening: <i>Lemonade</i> (Beyoncé film)	Read: Sinclair-Chapman & Price "Black Politics, the 2008 Election, and the (Im)possibility of Race Transcendence Author(s)" Read: Bale, "Beyoncé's 'Lemonade' Is a Revolutionary Work of Black Feminism: Critic's Notebook" Read: Zaru, "Beyoncé gets political at Super Bowl, pays tribute to 'Black Lives Matter'" Read: Heim, "Recounting a day of rage, hate, violence and death"
14	November 21	No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!	N/A
15	November 28	Practical Applications, Building Bridges, enacting Positive Peace and Change - In Class Screening: "Admissions" Paper 3 Due	Read: Benford, "Peace movements" Read: Coates, <i>Between the World and Me</i> (finish for end of semester) Read: Baldwin, "The Fire Next Time" Read: Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers"
16	December 5	Student Presentations	N/A