



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Columbia faculty working on the study of race, criminal justice, and social justice

The historic nationwide protests against police violence have recentered our national discourse on issues of race, criminal justice, and social justice. This list, by no means exhaustive, represents a cohort of our colleagues at Columbia whose work deepens our collective understanding of these critical issues.

Anti-Racism and Black Lives



[Katherine Franke](#), James L. Dohr Professor of Law, Director of the Center for Gender and Sexuality Law, and Faculty Director of the Law, Rights, and Religion Project, is among the nation's leading scholars working on law, race, religion, and rights. Franke's most recent book, [Repair: Redeeming the Promise of Abolition](#), makes an urgent case for reparations for Black Americans.

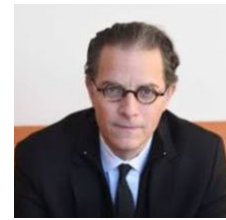
Professor of Philosophy and African American and African Diaspora Studies [Robert Gooding-Williams](#) studies social and political philosophy with a particular focus on anti-racist critical theory and the history of African American political thought. He is the winner of a [2020 Guggenheim Fellowship](#), which he will use to work on a book on W.E.B. Du Bois's philosophy of beauty and its relation to his defense of democracy and his critique of white supremacy. Gooding-Williams directs [The Center for Race, Philosophy, and Social Justice](#) within the Institute for Research in African-American Studies and has published on [political membership, citizenship, and democracy in the United States](#).



[Farah Jasmine Griffin](#) was interviewed in [Ms Magazine](#) to discuss Black feminism, and how her own work and the work done at the new Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, of which she is the inaugural chair, fits within that framework. Griffin is also the author of a piece in the Boston Review on "[Teaching African American Literature During Covid-19](#)," in which she discusses the effect the current pandemic has had on her Introduction to African American Literature course.

With Angela Davis, she wrote in [The New York Times](#) that Toni Morrison's revolutionary political vision should be part of her legacy, alongside her literary talent.

Professor of Law and Political Science [Bernard Harcourt](#) is the Executive Director of [The Eric H. Holder Jr. Initiative for Civil and Political Rights](#) at Columbia, dedicated to encouraging civic engagement and civic responsibility at the undergraduate level. Harcourt [has worked pro bono representing inmates sentenced to death or life imprisonment without parole](#) and is the author, most recently, of [The Counterrevolution: How Our Government Went to War Against Its Own Citizens](#).



Dean of Social Science and Professor of Political Science [Fredrick Harris](#) studies American politics with a focus on race, religion, and African American politics, among other areas. He is the Director of the [Center on African American Politics and Society](#) and has written about [the return of racism](#), the history of [policing Black communities](#), and the [human rights dimensions of the Black Lives Matter Movement](#).

[Saidiya Hartman](#) wrote about the end of white supremacy in [Bomb Magazine](#). Hartman is the winner of a [MacArthur Fellowship](#) for her work “tracing the afterlife of slavery in modern American life and rescuing from oblivion stories of sparsely documented lives that have been systematically excluded from historical archives.” She is the author of [Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route](#) and [Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval](#) (winner of the [2019 National Book Critics Circle Award](#)), among other works. Her books have been cited as recommended reading in a number of recent lists, in outlets including [The Atlantic](#), [Boston Magazine](#), [Hyphen Magazine](#), and [The New York Times](#) (in an article which also recommended other Columbia authors including Michelle Moody-Adams, Robert Gooding-Williams, Farah Jasmine Griffin, and Obery Hendricks).



[Kellie Jones](#), Professor in Art History and Archaeology and at the Institute for Research in African American Studies, is the winner of a [MacArthur Foundation Grant](#) for “introducing the work of critically important, but under-recognized, Black artists to the canons of modern and contemporary art through both research and curatorial practice.” She writes and speaks about [women and Black artists](#). Recently, she was appointed to a new advisory council for the [Johnson Publishing Archive](#), a collection of over 4.5 million items, including photography and video and audio recordings, assembled by the publisher of Jet and Ebony magazines.

Professor of Psychology [Valerie Purdie-Greenaway](#) has completed extensive research on racial bias and the [impact of societal expectations on the individual](#). Among other topics, Purdie-Greenaway has studied [patterns of racial bias in Stand-Your-Ground laws](#) and the crisis of [health disparities across racial and socioeconomic lines](#).



Professor of History, Sociomedical Sciences, and African American and African Diaspora Studies [Samuel K. Roberts](#) studies history, race, and public health. At the Center for Science and Society, he leads the Research Cluster for the [Historical Study of Race, Inequality, and Health](#). Since 2018, Roberts has hosted the podcast series [People Doing Interesting Stuff \(PDIS\)](#) where he speaks with guests working in public health and social justice.

[Josef Sorett](#) and author Darnell L. Moore discuss religion, race, and hip hop as part of Columbia's [Summer Ideas Exchange](#). Their discussion includes the ways in which, as Sorett says, “There is so much that would seem to be unprecedented, but there’s a way in which the African American story is about a long, flowing movement that responds in particular ways to moments like this, that are new, yet strangely familiar.”



Mass Incarceration



Professor of Psychology [Geraldine Downey](#) directs the [Center for Justice at Columbia](#), a research group committed to ending mass incarceration and criminalization, and she is Co-PO on the [Justice-in-Education Initiative](#). Downey's work with interdisciplinary criminal justice initiatives at Columbia has been featured in outlets such as [Columbia News](#) and the [New York Times](#).

[Carl Hart](#) is Professor in the Department of Psychology. His research focuses on drug abuse, drug addiction, and the decriminalization of drugs in America. He is the author of [High Price: A Neuroscientist's Journey of Self-Discovery That Challenges Everything You Know About Drugs and Society](#), has published on [racial discrimination in the context of opioid crisis intervention and response methods](#), and has been an outspoken critic of how [outdated drug crime policies have disadvantaged minority groups](#).



Professor of Philosophy [Christia Mercer](#) was the first professor to teach in Taconic Correctional Facility as part of Columbia's Justice-in-Education Initiative. She is now organizing courses in the Metropolitan Detention Center, a Federal Prison in Brooklyn, and publishes on justice reform and the need to [expand college-level prison education programs](#). Her work on education in prison, prison divestment, and other issues has been featured on [CBS News](#), [Newsweek](#), [Columbia News](#), and [The Crimson](#).

Sociologist [Bruce Western](#) is one of the leading scholars of mass incarceration in the United States. His recent book [Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison](#) focuses on telling the stories of formerly incarcerated persons and the challenges they have faced transitioning back into society after prison. He co-directs Columbia's [Justice Lab](#).



More Public Voices on Anti-Black Racism

In addition to the scholars above, faculty in a number of fields have written and spoken about this moment of uprising against anti-Black racism and its effects in the pandemic.



[Souleymane Bachir Diagne](#) has written for and spoken with a number of international outlets, including [Le Point Africa](#), [VOA Afrique](#), and [Sen360](#), about the protests following the murder of George Floyd. He has also commented specifically on [worldwide demonstrations](#) in support of American Black Lives Matter protesters, on social inequalities highlighted by the [coronavirus crisis](#), and on the place of [religion in times of crisis](#).

[Jennifer Dohrn](#), CSSD co-director of the “On the Frontlines: Nursing Leadership in Pandemics” working group and Associate Professor at Columbia Nursing, held a discussion with her Global Health Equity and the Responsibility of the Nursing Profession class on the public health crisis of police violence against Black Americans on #BlackOutTuesday, June 2, 2020. She and her 208 students made signs in support of the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement.



Professor of History and African American and African Diaspora Studies [Frank Guridy](#) specializes in sport history, urban history, and the history of the African Diaspora in the Americas. He has published a response to the ongoing protests against police violence arguing that the protests [necessitate historic action by American political leaders](#). Another recent publication examines how [sports stadiums can function as sites for social and political struggle](#).

Professor Emeritus of Political Science [Charles V. Hamilton](#) co-authored a response to the recent protests with visiting Professor of Political Science Wilmot James on [how rage is no strategy](#). Hamilton is widely known for his book [Black Power: The Politics of Liberation](#), co-authored with Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael).



[Vicky Murillo](#), CSSD co-director of “Environmental Justice, Belief Systems, and Aesthetic Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean” and Director of the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS), was interviewed on [CNN en Espanol](#) on the protests arising from the murder of George Floyd.

Upcoming Events

ADDRESSING RACISM:
A CALL TO ACTION
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

THURSDAY, JUNE 18
2:00 - 3:30PM VIA ZOOM

COLUMBIA | Faculty Advancement
Faculty Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Work/Life

Panelists: Malo Hutson, Diana Hernandez, Valerie Purdie-Greenaway, Jennifer Manly, June Cross

Addressing Racism: A Call to Action for Higher Education

Thursday, June 18, 2:00 - 3:30pm

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Please join our panel of Columbia faculty in a discussion about how we can leverage our collective

strengths as an institution of higher education to address this fundamental challenge.

Sponsored by the [Office of the Provost](#).

Columbia centers, institutes, and research initiatives working on race, criminal justice, and social justice

- [Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies](#)
- [Center on African-American Religion, Sexual Politics, & Social Justice](#)
- [Center for American Studies](#)
- [Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race](#)
- [The Center for the Study of Social Difference](#)
- [Institute for Comparative Literature and Society](#)
- [Institute for Research in African American Studies](#)
- [Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality](#)
- [Institute for the Study of Human Rights](#)
- [Justice-in-Education \(at SoF/Heyman\)](#)

For questions, comments, more information,
or to suggest your own or a colleague's work for inclusion, please contact:

- [Samar Kaukab](#), Director of Decanal Affairs, Division of Natural Sciences, at sk4578@columbia.edu
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 - [Jack Reilly](#), Director of Decanal Affairs, Division of Social Science, at jr2813@columbia.edu
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