

A stylized profile of a human head, facing left, filled with a halftone pattern. The head is overlaid with a map of the United States, also in a halftone pattern. The text 'RACE' and 'SPACE' is overlaid on the head, with 'and' in between. The background is a solid light beige color.

'RACE' and **SPACE**

What is 'race' doing in a nice field like the Built Environment?

The Bartlett, UCL Faculty of the Built Environment
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THE BARTLETT

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Introduction: 'Race', Space and the Built Environment

At a time when the term 'post-racial' is used to signal a supposed decline in the significance of 'race', a spatial perspective can provide a particularly useful lens and language for locating and understanding persistent racial processes.

(Neely & Samura, 2011, p.1934)

Ours is a Faculty of the Built Environment. Our work is all about human spaces, understanding and directing how and why they are structured. This includes physical structures like houses, buildings and cities, and the invisible structures that govern these things like political and legal systems, financial frameworks, and social and cultural norms. Our engagements with the built environment are necessarily interdisciplinary. It is the work of development and aid practitioners, prosperity theorists, economists, engineers, construction managers, planners, architects, designers and others to understand the structures shaping society and to work to make them fairer and more equitable.

Within the variety of strands of built environment education and practice, one of the vital shared concepts we imagine, articulate, create, modify, regulate or transform is that of 'space'. As foregrounded by Henri Lefebvre or Doreen Massey, the production of space is fundamental to the very nature and workings of societies and political economies.

Yet, in all our work on the built environment and the improvement of human spaces, one field is noticeable for its invisibility, it screams loudly in a silent void – the field of critical 'race' studies. As Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura (2011) explain, there are explicit connections between racial and spatial processes. Consider that the organisation of human spaces and the ways that our cities, towns and rural areas look and feel are expressions of power that create or may reinforce social and economic inequality. That is to say, we produce the social and material geographies and patterns that shape who lives where, how and with what prospects for a full and prosperous life. These geographies and patterns are racialised. Segregated housing estates, access to 'good' schools and the availability of affordable, healthy food, are spatial inequalities that can be mapped onto a racial order.

We cannot understand how space works and for whom, without understanding 'race' and racism. We cannot flex our power as teachers, practitioners and students



of the built environment nor tackle spatial inequality without understanding 'race' and racism. Space is a key agent in racial ordering, so, if we change space we can change the ways that 'race' is performed.

In The Bartlett, we are engaged in a concerted effort to see 'race', to articulate its effects and take steps to undo the damage of racism through our educational offering, commitments to staff and student diversity, and action against discrimination. This curriculum is a critical element of our efforts to build 'race' consciousness in our analysis of and work in the built environment. It is a teaching tool that allows us to see and hear people who experience the built environment at its margins, and provides a stimulus for a fuller articulation of social spatial justice.

Before going further, you will have noticed that 'race' appears in 'scare quotes'. We use this as a provocation and to acknowledge that 'race' is a contested concept shaped by social and political constructs, as well as having material impacts and outcomes on people's lives.

Why this curriculum?

This curriculum is our response to our collective reflection on built environment curricula, which in general avoid issues of 'race' despite a strong and inextricable link between 'race' and space. As Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura (2011) emphasise, all racialised social processes are also spatialised. The curators of this curriculum are academics, students and scholars of the built environment, all coming from different disciplinary backgrounds and all interested in 'race' as a rich analytical lens, as well as an affective identity. In choosing a curriculum as a format for our response we take inspiration from Huda Tayob and Suzanne Hall (2019), whose groundbreaking work on 'Race, Space and Architecture' we build upon here with an expansion of disciplinary boundaries and coverage, alongside a greater focus on effect. Within this format, we mobilise a particular political approach to accessibility to knowledge. The sources we have curated are deliberately balanced across high and low culture – from Hollywood blockbusters, best-selling novels and podcasts, to academic monographs. In dialogue, these forms of knowledge give a range of entry points to the critically minded and curious.

This curriculum aims to de-centre 'whiteness' in our imaginations of the built environment and to positively disrupt curricula that perpetuate racialised disparities as neutral, natural and normal.

In developing this curriculum, we engaged with two main questions:

1. Where is 'race' in my discipline? Specifically, where is 'race' in the canon, new theory, empirical research, research methodologies and pedagogy?
2. Where do I begin to introduce or advance analyses of 'race' in the built environment?

Organisation of the curriculum

The Bartlett constitutes a multiplicity of visions about how to understand, change and shape the built environment. To explore the inextricable link between ‘race’ and the built environment we have structured the curriculum around six main themes related to space. We draw from an interdisciplinary corpus of literature as an attempt to capture the multiple facets of this complex relationship. Each section contains a guiding question for the reader to hold in their mind throughout, a small set of core readings that frame the key theme, and, most importantly, a broad set of what we have called ‘primary resources’, which bring together pieces from the creative world such as film, painting, sculpture and literature, with non-traditional formats such as blogs and podcasts. These resources serve as illustrations or cases in point of complex ‘race’ and space relationships first introduced in the core readings. Thus this curriculum offers not only a range of theoretical and analytical tools but also affective interpretations of the connections of ‘race’ and the built environment across spaces, scales and temporalities.

This curriculum is organised under six main themes:

- **Encounters with ‘Race’**
- **Raced Landscapes**
- **‘Race’ becomes Place**
- **Colouring of Space**
- **Speculative Futures**
- **Call to Action**

The first theme, ***Encounters with ‘Race’***, explores the grounds for myriad experiences and embodiments of ‘race’ in (urban) spaces. The guiding question of this section is: ‘what racial encounters have you had?’ To help answer this question we bring some pivotal reflections from critical race studies, black feminist theories, and post-colonial debates. The second theme, ***Raced Landscapes***, looks at systemic processes that shape the way in which urban inequalities are produced and reproduced. The guiding question is: ‘where are you located?’ We engage with property-law discussions, housing studies, urban planning, and environmental justice debates. The third theme, ***‘Race’ becomes Place***, aims to understand how racialised segregation operates in our subjectivities, affective experiences and senses of belonging. The guiding question is: ‘does ‘race’ affect where you feel you belong?’ We bring insights from cultural studies, place-making debates, urbanism, and black feminism. The fourth theme, ***Colouring of Space***, focuses on the realm of representation and how the symbolic weight of ‘race’ manifests in everyday practices and places. The guiding question of this section is: ‘can you see ‘race’ in cultural symbols?’ We use de-colonialisation debates, architectural history, critical geography, cultural studies and development studies to shed light on this question. The fifth theme, ***Speculative Futures***, brings different spatial imaginations to push new trajectories for overcoming racialised injustices. The guiding question is: ‘what is the future you can imagine?’ We use here works from fiction, Afro-futurism, sci-fi, architecture, art and poetics. The final theme, ***Call to Action***, invites us to take

a position and look for different ways of fighting racism and discrimination in higher education and city making. This section poses the question: 'what are you going to do'? We draw from critical education, pedagogy, and activism in order to rethink the canon.

Who is this curriculum for?

There are two intended audiences for this curriculum. The first is teachers across The Bartlett who are looking to learn about the relationships between 'race' and space to augment their analysis of the built environment. Also, in light of calls for inclusive curricula to enable all students to relate to material that is meaningful for them, and in response to the building momentum to redress the coding of Eurocentric values aligned with the power of whiteness in curricula, teachers can add resources from this curriculum to their own.

The second audience is students currently studying at The Bartlett, or who are looking to study here. We recognise that changes to formal teaching and curricula can be slow and, we want these students to have the opportunity to access this resource and augment classroom learning so that, by the time they leave us, we have given them the ability to analyse 'race' in space and to take on professional practice with an orientation for racial justice. This focus on The Bartlett's users means the content engages particularly with the geography of London and the UK. This is part of a critical reflection on where we are situated and the city politics we constitute. It thus forms our attempt to de-centre Eurocentrism.

How to use this curriculum

The curriculum is designed for self-directed study. You are encouraged to dip in and out of the themes that interest you the most, to move back and forth between the core readings and primary resources, and to continually revisit themes as your understanding grows and you are able to draw out more relevant lessons. This is a flexible resource to be used in ways that are helpful and hopefully enjoyable.

Encounters with ‘Race’

Key question: What racial encounters have you had?

Although everyone has a racial identity, a ‘white’ racial identity, especially in the Western world, is often seen as the default. Many might also think that only people of colour or racial minorities have a ‘race’ or ethnicity. When a person is categorised and identified as belonging to a certain ‘race’ by the dominant racial group, this locates the person in a particular position in a racial hierarchy that gives them advantages or disadvantages. As a result, people experience racialised encounters or interactions where their ‘race’ or ethnicity affects their experiences of living in social and physical spaces. We may have been made aware of our ‘race’ as young children. Or, more typically for the ethnic and racial majority, our first encounters with ‘race’ usually come from changes to the social or physical spaces we find ourselves in. This could include moving to the UK or London from a place where your ‘race’ was not noteworthy to you or those around you. Depending on the structure or character of these spaces, people can experience racism (discrimination based on your ‘race’) directly themselves, witness it happening to others, or witness others enjoy privileges because of their ‘race’. London has been termed ‘super-diverse’, given the many different ethnic, racial, language and religious groups that have made their home in this city.

The following reading suggestions introduce you to ways we can see and locate ‘race’ in spaces through *encounters*. In the core readings, we see these encounters in universities, contemporary neighbourhoods of London and, historically, in former European colonies.

You could begin by watching a selection of these videos, which introduce some themes of racial encounters:

‘Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism’, by Saleem Reshamwala, *The New York Times* (2019). [\[Available through The New York Times website\]](#)

***bell hooks: cultural criticism and transformation*, by The Media Education Foundation (1997). [\[Available through Kanopy\]](#)**

***Stuart Hall: Race - the Floating Signifier*, by The Media Education Foundation (1997). [\[Available through Kanopy\]](#)**

WARNING: there is extremely violent imagery of lynching in this video.

There are many other videos available through **Kanopy**, a video streaming service available with your UCL account.



Core reading

Hall, Stuart (1996), 'New Ethnicities,' in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, edited by Baker, H., Diawara, M. & Lindeborg, M., London/Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.163–172.

Stuart Hall critically examines the use of the word 'black' in cultural and identity politics within the context of the UK. The word 'black' was traditionally used to unite all those who share common experiences of racism and discrimination, despite significant differences in terms of history, language, and ethnic identities within this group. Hall explains the shift towards a greater acknowledgment of these important differences that 'mark the end of the innocent notion of the essentialist black subject.' This acknowledgment has clear implications for understanding the various forms of racism and discrimination experienced by the different cultural groups within the category 'black'. Social and cultural encounters can give shape to this process of being labelled 'black'.

Ahmed, Sara (2012), *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, London/Durham: Duke University Press.

This is a book particularly concerned with diversity policies in higher education and how these perpetuate racial inequalities in universities. Based on interviews with diversity practitioners in universities in the UK and Australia, the author explores how the language of 'diversity' has become so common in university policy documents that offer equality on paper but fail to tackle the inequality in lived experiences. The most interesting aspect of the book is its powerful insights into the ways in which 'diversity work' in universities, which was meant to fight for a diverse and inclusive workforce, reproduces the status quo and perpetuates prevailing stereotypes, especially about racialised minorities.

Césaire, Aimé, (2000) [1950], *Discourse on Colonialism* [translation by Joan Pinkman] New York: Monthly Review Press

Aimé Césaire's work shows that some racialised encounters are violent. He critiques the ideas of colonisers 'civilising' colonised people, when colonisers used unspeakable barbaric violence to occupy the land of the colonised and subjugate them. He fiercely attacks Western intellectuals for using language and scholarly prestige to justify the colonisers' violence and racial categorisation to institute hegemonic, Western ways of life and philosophy, in the process rejecting local language and culture. He explores and examines the literary works of modern bourgeois thinkers to trace the various forms of colonial violence represented through their language and rhetoric. The work of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon (below) is fundamental to understanding contemporary uses of 'race' and racism, and their effects, especially in Europe.

Fanon, Frantz (2017) [1952], *Black Skin, White Masks*, [translation by C.L. Markmann], London: Pluto Press.

In this book, first published in 1952, Fanon provides an authoritative philosophical, clinical, literary and political analysis of the insidious effects of racism and colonialism

on the experiences, lives, minds and relationships of black people and people of colour. Fanon explores what it means to be a black man living in a white world by using his own lived experience of racialised encounters. For example, in chapter 5, a white child called him a 'negro' and the white child's mother tried to comfort Fanon by saying, 'Don't pay attention to him, monsieur, he doesn't realise you're just as civilised as we are.' He explains how the mother's seemingly innocuous expression of kindness is based on the same racist ideas as her child's overt racist remark, as he is fetishised as different or unique, and not part of the 'we'. Fanon argues that the lived experiences of black people show that there are still powerful expectations, codes, stereotypes, and practices that reinforce the idea that black people are inferior to white people.

Primary resources

***British Born Chinese* (Director: Elena Barabantseva, 2015) [Film]**

This is a series of interviews with two British boys of Chinese origin and their family. Footage of the city of Manchester, the boys' home and school, is important to understanding the environment in which they are being socialised. The parents stress the importance of Chinese heritage to their children, explaining that they will never be recognised as British in this country. The identity created, 'British Chinese', is to protect them from growing antagonism as the boys get older. The boys are smart enough to recognise that aggressive language towards them is often schoolyard abuse. However, they also understand that a 'them and us' divide is being established and that they are seen as separate from their peers who identify as 'from this country.' Through playing online games, the boys encounter and experience a virtual space that is non-racialised.

***My Beautiful Launderette* (Director: Stephen Frears, 1985) [Film]**

For 'My Beautiful Launderette' read 'my beautiful dream'. This is a story of hope, friendship and ambition among a British-Asian family in 1980s London. The film depicts instances where racial encounters intersect with gender, class, sexuality, identity and belonging. The film captures Britain in the 1980s under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, an era represented by free-market ideology and the dream that comes with wealth.

Ali, Monica (2002), *Brick Lane*, Penguin [Novel]

Brick Lane is a street in east London where successive migrant communities have lived. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was an area well known for its Irish and Jewish communities, and now for its Bangladeshi community. Monica Ali's novel follows a Bangladeshi woman – Nazneen – as she finds work in one of the few industries open to her as a brown migrant woman in east London (garment sewing), and navigates love and family away from 'home' in the diasporic space of London. The book was dramatised in a film released in 2007.

***Four Lions* (Director: Chris Morris, 2010) [Film]**

This film is a comedy about British jihadists that is also an insightful social commentary on the ways in which racialised minorities, and Muslim men in particular, are ‘othered’ in British society. It engages with complex ideas of fitting in and belonging. By focusing on British jihadists, the film gives us a range of perspectives on belonging that we don’t always see.

Smith, Zadie (2012) *NW*, Penguin [Novel]

Zadie Smith’s novel, set in north-west (NW) London, shows a multiracial and multicultural world where the lives of the lead characters, Leah (white) and Natalie (black) play out through racialised encounters. Such encounters affect where they work, how successful they are at work, who they marry, the nuances of their family lives, and how they behave with each other. This was dramatised as a film in 2016.

She, Lao (舒慶春) (2014) [1929] *Mr Ma and Son* (二马), Penguin Modern Classics [Novel]

Lao She, a significant figure in twentieth-century Chinese literature, lived briefly in London during the late 1920s while teaching at the School of Oriental Studies. His third novel, *Mr Ma and Son*, draws on his experiences of the city, satirising British sinophobia, while giving a detailed geography of those areas more and less welcoming to Chinese immigrants at the time.

Selvon, Sam (2006) [1956] *The Lonely Londoners*, Penguin Modern Classics [Novel]

This classic London novel follows a group of black, primarily West Indian, immigrants – early members of the Windrush Generation – as they attempt to build new lives for themselves in the post-war imperial capital. In dramatising the tension between fantasies and expectations of a city ‘paved with gold’, and London’s cold, gloomy, often hostile reality, Selvon touches upon themes of alienation and homesickness, as well as resistance and comic defiance.

Piper, Adrian (1970s) *Catalysis & Mythic Being* [Performance Art]

The street performances of the pioneering conceptual artist Adrian Piper employed strange and unorthodox behaviours to intervene in and challenge the social order of various public spaces throughout New York. In the process, she ‘catalysed’ reactions in those around her and rendered visible the normalising, regulating and surveilling practices of everyday, American public life; as well as the ways in which these practices were inflected through ‘race’, gender and class – particularly in relation to her position as a light-skinned black woman, or, in the case of the *Mythic Being* performances, an afro-wig-wearing, moustachioed black woman in drag.

Butler, Octavia (1979) *Kindred* [Novel]

Kindred employs the fantasy and science-fiction trope of time travel to contrast the spaces of twentieth-century California with those of antebellum Maryland, where slavery was legal. Not only does it detail the everyday conditions of slavery in the past, it forces the reader to contend with the complicated legacies of slavery in the present: legacies which are so often neglected or erased, yet which underlie and still affect experiences of 'race' in North America to this day.

***Babylon* (Director: Franco Rosso, 1980) [Film]**

A British film capturing the rich sound-system culture of the early 1980s in south London, as well as the struggles of a group of young, black, working-class musicians as they come into conflict with their white neighbours and daytime employers. Dance halls and illegal parties become racially-charged sites of conflict and resistance.

Racialised Landscapes

Key question: Where are you located?

Our landscapes are spatial manifestations of structural inequalities that are apparent in housing, health and education, to name a few fields. These inequalities can be presented as racially neutral, but they are not. The 'inner city', 'council estates', 'slums' and 'camps' are all material and spatial manifestations of racialised practices apparent in policy and governance. These mechanisms often set borders that are defined more by power and politics than merit. So, despite hard work, higher levels of education and frugality, social and geographical mobility for non-white people more often than not remains elusive.

Racialised borders and segregated landscapes mark people's living conditions and all aspects of life. For example, the phenomenon of gentrifying cities continuously marks and shapes the lived experiences of racialised minorities. In the UK, we can observe 'white flight', where racialised minority families move into an area with 'good' housing and schools, prompting local white families to move out. As our landscapes are set to change dramatically with the onset of climate change, at both a local and global level we can anticipate 'race' as a decisive marker in creating new unequal landscapes.

Core reading

Harris, Cheryl (1993), 'Whiteness as property', *Harvard Law Review* 106(8), pp.1707–1791.

This classic essay lays out how the law has treated and protected whiteness as a legal right in the USA, for example, with 'red-lining' in housing or racial disparities in education. Like a luxury car or an expensive suit, whiteness facilitates entry into elite or exclusive spaces. Harris urges white people to acknowledge that, while whiteness does not necessarily grant them access to such spaces, it allows them far more mobility, comfort and safety than those without it.

Sheller, Mimi (2018), 'Bodily moves and racial justice', *Mobility Justice: The politics of movement in an age of extremes*, London: Verso Books, Chapter 2.

In this chapter Sheller argues that 'race' is a performance of differential mobilities. This piece lays out the intersection between racial justice and mobility in the context of histories of patriarchy, 'ableism', colonialism and sexism. For example, she shows that imposed forms, such as detention, incarceration and confinement, have racialised immobility. Sheller's driving question is 'How can sustainable transport in cities be more aware of the micro-politics of racial, gendered, (dis)abling embodiment?' She explores how bodies and space produce one another, making mobility a crucial space for politics, power and resistance.



Right to the City Alliance (Mellon, Cynthia, Tutashinda, Chinyere, Orozco, Ana & Mosset, Kandi) (2018) 'Just Housing as an Intersectional Struggle', *Communities Over Commodities: People-Driven Alternatives to an Unjust Housing System*, [www] unequalcities.org

The Right to the City Alliance argue that the struggle for decent housing for black and other marginalised people is intersectional with the fight for land ownership in the USA. Black and other minorities' ownership of their own physical spaces is key for their liberation, freedom and autonomy. However, they have been the victims of white-supremacist laws and policies that have pushed them out of their land and dictated how and where they lived. Consequently, marginalised people, most of whom are people of colour, settle in undesirable areas because they are the only places open to them to rent, build, or purchase homes. These areas 'abut dangerously polluting industries, which produce great wealth for their owners and shareholders while leaving local residents sick, unemployed, and endangered.'

Teelucksingh, Cheryl (2007) 'Environmental Racialization: Linking Racialization to the Environment in Canada', *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 12(6), pp.645-661

Cheryl Teelucksingh explores how 'race' can be spatially oriented through a case study of the Canadian town of Mid-Scarborough. By utilising the residents' accounts of their lived experiences, the author demonstrates how historical processes of industrialisation, immigration, and suburbanisation shaped settlement patterns in the town, often marginalising and producing disadvantages for minorities. As a result, immigrants, racial minorities and low-income residents are far more likely to reside in run-down, subsidised housing in close proximity to environmental risks such as industrial facilities.

Primary resources

Pollard, Ingrid (2010) *Belonging in Britain* and other works [Photographs]

Ingrid Pollard is a photographer whose work focuses on representation, history and landscapes, through the prism of 'race' and difference. Her 2010 exhibit *Belonging in Britain* is a photo-essay on the geographies of 'race' and ethnicity, through which she explores contemporary ideas of belonging, linking this intangible feeling to tangible landscapes.

***Do the Right Thing* (Director: Spike Lee, 1989) [Film]**

This classic American film follows the simmering racial tensions in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, throughout the course of one, swelteringly hot day in the 1980s. The film is relevant in many ways, including its portrayal of racist police surveillance and violence; the valuing of white property over black life; as well as the ethnically segregated urban spaces of New York City.

Bowling, Frank (1970s) *Map Paintings* [Paintings]

Taking up abstract expressionism in New York after years as a figurative painter in London, Frank Bowling, the hugely undervalued black British-Guyanese painter, produced a series of vast canvases exploring the themes of the slave trade, black identity and landscape. The continents of Africa and the Americas are lightly stencilled over fields of bright colour and shadow, reconfiguring the typical Eurocentric map of the world, while evoking the violence and grief of the Middle Passage.

***Daughters of the Dust* (Director: Julie Dash, 1991) [Film]**

Set in the early twentieth century, this film charts the lives of a family of Gullah islanders, a distinct population of African Americans from the Sea Islands off the coast of Georgia. These islands were remarkably isolated from mainland American life, meaning the Gullah developed a rich and unique culture, preserving a variety of African traditions, as well as their own Creole language. Nevertheless, the family choose to emigrate north to the mainland, where they encounter modernity, but also more violent forms of racial aggression.

Prado, Marcos *Estamira* (2003) & *Estamira: Para Todos e Para Ninguém* (2007) [Documentaries]

These documentaries chart the life of Estamira Gomes de Sousa, a woman with schizophrenia who lives off the Jardim Gramacho dump near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Exploring themes of waste, poverty, mental health, gender and racial discrimination, they powerfully capture the destructive effects of capitalist consumerism on marginalised environments and human lives, as well as the remarkable resilience of those battling to survive there.

***Serpent Rain* (Directors: Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman, 2016) [Film]**

This film explores issues of 'race', global capitalism and the Anthropocene. To quote the authors' own description, the video 'speaks from inside the cut between slavery and resource extraction, between Black Lives Matter and the matter of life, between the state changes of elements, timelessness and tarot'.

***Fahrenheit 11/9* (Director: Michael Moore, 2018) [Documentary]**

Although primarily concerned with Donald Trump's election, a considerable part of this film looks at the racial politics of water in Flint, Michigan (USA). It argues that Rick Snyder, the Republican governor, privatised the water supply to a large area, mainly inhabited by poor African Americans, by declaring a false 'emergency'. As a result, drinking water was drawn from a highly polluted river, poisoning thousands of people, many of them children. Moore calls it "slow-motion ethnic cleansing" for which justice has still not been obtained: in fact it has arguably become a model for "disaster capitalism" throughout the world.

***City of God* (Director: Fernando Meirelles, 2002) [Film]**

Set in a Brazilian favela (or informal settlement) on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, the film follows the story of Rocket, an Afro-Brazilian photo-journalist, who documents drug and gang warfare in his local community. Through Rocket's storytelling we can see segregation in material ways, such as the physical division between the favela and other parts of the city, and in discursive ways apparent in the treatment by the police and the state of favela residents and in the fetishisation of Rocket among his white-Brazilian journalist colleagues.

***The Racist Sandwich* (since 2016) <http://www.racistsandwich.com> [Podcast]**

Through a series of podcasts, *The Racist Sandwich* explores food politics and food justice through a critical 'race' lens. The episodes explore how migrant communities are situated in Europe and North American food scenes, how such communities are valued for their culinary contributions to building 'vibrant' landscapes, and also how they are misplaced and appropriated. See, for example, episode 59 'Tikka Masala is a scam', episode 10 'Mexican food is already elevated', and episode 6 'It's double trouble' on being a vegan of colour.

***The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (Director: Chad Freidrichs, 2011) [Documentary]**

This documentary challenges popular and polemical histories surrounding the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St. Louis, Missouri, which was finally demolished in 1972 – an event which Charles Jencks called 'the death of Modern architecture'. By placing the development in its wider social, urban and economic contexts, as well as interviewing tenants, the documentary puts forward a different story: one not concerned with malignant Modernist ideology or ineffectual public housing policy, but social, spatial and racial injustice.

‘Race’ becomes Place

Key question: Does ‘race’ affect where you feel you belong?

Segregated dwellings and (dis)placements lead to particular ‘races’ inhabiting particular spaces and the production of particular subjectivities, affective experiences and a sense of belonging. Historically, place becomes ‘race’ through coercive practices, such as colonialism, where white settlers expropriated land from indigenous people. In modern times, place becomes ‘race’ through laws: while immigration and citizenship laws determine who is allowed, and who is not allowed, to settle in particular territories, housing and property laws directly contribute to racial and social cleansing of minorities under the guise of gentrification and progress to civilisation. These practices inevitably result in racialised segregation of living spaces that affect interactions between, and knowledge of, different racial groups. This can perpetuate racialised stereotypes and produce harmful outcomes. There is also strong resistance to these place-making processes. In particular, Gloria Watkins, under her pseudonym ‘bell hooks’, writes about belonging and place-making despite racial oppression and through the experience of it. She alerts us to agency in making our own sense of place and belonging.

Core reading

hooks, bell (1991), ‘Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics’ *Hypatia* 7(2), pp.177–187.

This is a work that is concerned with transforming oppressive structures of domination that are rooted in white supremacy. The author is especially critical of the media that perpetuate stereotypes of blackness and encourage oppressed people to actively create a “liberatory space to construct radical black subjectivity” in order to gain awareness or a critical eye that could help them identify domination and fight it. The central topic in her book is her own ‘voice’. She draws on her multiple identities and social locations to speak as an academic, a black feminist and a working-class girl throughout the 20 different essays in *Yearning*.

Fesenmyer, Leslie (2019), ‘Bringing the Kingdom to the City: Mission as Placemaking Practice amongst Kenyan Pentecostals in London’, *City & Society*, 31(1), pp.34–54.

Leslie Fesenmyer conceptualises the missionising efforts of Kenyan Pentecostals in London as place-making. She argues: “This place-making also tacitly acknowledges the phenomenological experience of living in a multiracial, multifaith context where racialised encounters are frequent and where Kenyan Pentecostals predominate in socially marginal sectors of the labour market.” The author refers to their mode



of place-making as ‘socialising space,’ reliant as it is on ‘inspiring’ others and relating to them in a welcoming, accepting manner.

Irazábal, Clara (2012), ‘Beyond ‘Latino new urbanism’: Advocating ethnourbanisms’, *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 5 (2–3), pp.241–268.

This paper discusses the notion of Latino New Urbanism (LNU) and reflects on the significance of ethnic-based reformulations of urban practices and living preferences in Los Angeles and the potential these have for the transformation of policy-making and development practices in the region and beyond. Can LNU truly avoid the pitfalls of New Urbanism and represent a new way of conceiving urbanism – one that is explicit and inclusive in its ways of recognising and addressing ethno-racial and class diversity? Can LNU instead be intentionally or unintentionally used to mask some structural social problems that Latinx face in the US? All of this poses questions related to the assessment of LNU in the context of tensions between structure vs. agency, diluting vs. celebrating ethno-racial differences, and oppressive vs. liberating urban design and community-building practices.

Gilroy, Paul (1993), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso Books

The Black Atlantic is a study of black diaspora and the movement of black Africans across the Atlantic coastline in North America, Britain, the Caribbean and Africa. Paul Gilroy focuses in particular on the cultural aspects of black Atlantic identity, looking at the history of African intellectuals and the cultural construction of the idea of blackness. He particularly focuses on a critique of ethnic nationalism as excessively ‘essentialist’ and argues the idea of ‘race’ and blackness is more dynamic, differentiated and hybrid, with implications for how we see and understand ‘race’ and place.

Primary resources

***Pressure* (Director: Horace Ové with Sam Selvon, 1976) [Film]**

Described as Britain’s ‘first black feature film’, this work focuses on the lives of a family of first-and-second generation British-Trinidadian immigrants living in London during the 1970s. It addresses intergenerational issues of respectability, assimilation and interracial love, as well as tensions with white neighbours, segregation, police brutality and the controversial suspicion (‘sus’) laws which allowed police to stop, search and arrest BAME people at will (a forerunner of today’s ‘stop and search’ policy).

Piper, Keith (1987) *Go West Young Man* [Collages]

This series of collages, on show at Tate Britain in 2019, explores the black male body in relation to space throughout history, particularly the ways in which it has been commodified, represented and stereotyped in the wake of slavery. By tying contemporary racism back to representations of the violence of the Middle Passage, Keith Piper demonstrates the ways in which slavery and colonialism still condition the lives of black British men today – not solely in the past or in faraway places.

***Twilight City* (Director: Black Audio Film Collective, 1989) [Film]**

Starring such luminaries as Paul Gilroy, Homi Bhabha and Rosina Visram, this film reflects on London, both historically and as it stood towards the end of the 1980s, after a decade of Thatcher in power: the gentrification, deregulation, fragmentation and racial tensions; yet also – playing on ‘twilight’ as both dawn and dusk – the formation of new left-wing movements of resistance, flourishing underground queer cultures and so on.

Smith, Zadie (2000) *White Teeth* [Novel]

Inter-racial friendship and agreed marriage are at the origins of *White Teeth* as two male friends, one white English and one Bangladeshi, take their new families to north London. Whilst the unions are tolerated, the bond between the two married couples is genuine and adds strength when both relationships are later threatened through age and frustration. A generation later, their children, native Londoners, have mixed feelings towards their heritage. There is acceptance and often high status among their peers. However, family interference and distrust of 90s youth culture leads to resentment as the teenage children choose to identify as British, placing more importance on the approval of their friends than that of their parents.

Levy, Andrea (2004) *Small Island* [Novel]

This novel focuses on domestic life in London after World War II and the response of white Londoners to black immigration from the West Indies. The ‘mother country’ offers hope of employment and a richer future. However, there is complete ignorance of the contribution made by black people during the war and little willingness to offer housing to perceived ‘outsiders’. Whilst immigration in large numbers is unexpected and unwelcome, many families are decimated by the loss of male figureheads and, out of necessity, take any support offered. When communication is lost with her husband Bernard, Queenie Bligh is obliged to take lodgers in her north London home. She houses Gilbert Joseph and his wife Hortense who, following the unexpected return of Bernard, adopt Queenie’s biracial child after her insistence that a mixed-race boy could only be accepted if he was perceived to have black parents. The story explores the complexities of ‘race’ and belonging for this family in London.

***This Is England* (Director: Shane Meadows, 2006) [Film]**

The action of the film takes place in England in 1982, after the Falklands War that stirred patriotic feelings and imperial nostalgia. Shaun, whose father was killed in that war, is bullied at school and finds unexpected support from a local gang of white-supremacist skinheads. Whilst his mother mourns the loss of her husband, Shaun is taken under the wing of the disenchanted gang leader Combo, who wants to regain nationalistic pride in being English. The film demonstrates how easily disadvantaged and disaffected young men can succumb to influential groups who offer protection in the shape of ‘family’. The theme of belonging and place plays out through a sense of loss, powerlessness and racial violence among young white English men.

***Kidulthood* (Director: Menhaj Huda, 2006) [Film]**

This film follows the lives of a group of young and low-income BAME school students in north-west London. It graphically depicts the role of violence, sex and drugs in their daily lives and shows how 'race' and class are barriers to moving away from your 'place' and out of violence.

***Roma* (Director: Alfonso Cuarón, 2018) [Film]**

Roma tells the story of Cleo, an indigenous live-in maid, in an affluent 1970s household in the Colonia Roma neighbourhood of Mexico City. Cleo is one of two domestic workers who help Antonio and Sofía take care of their four children. The film depicts the role of indigenous women in domestic life and care (in their own domestic sphere and that of their employers) in a world shaped by its colonial past.

***La Haine* [Hate] (Director: Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995) [Film]**

This modern classic film, shot in black and white, closely follows three male friends for 24 hours in the immediate aftermath of a riot in a Paris *banlieue* (suburban neighbourhood). *Banlieues* are thought of as places of discontent, with low levels of state investment, poor housing conditions and poor infrastructure. The people that live in such neighbourhoods are disproportionately black, Arab or from other ethnic minorities. The violence that runs throughout the film tells a story of hatred for the neighbourhood, the people who live there and the authorities who 'keep them in their place'.

***Bande de filles* [Girlhood] (Director: Céline Sciamma, 2014) [Film]**

Set almost twenty years after the groundbreaking *La Haine*, in another Paris *banlieue*, this film follows a group of young black girls, a demographic whose voices are rarely heard in cinema. The girls find friendship and sorority in a gang, and also encounter and produce violence and exploitation. The theme of belonging is explored through their friendship and love and rejection of family and the reality of life in the Paris suburbs.

The Colouring of Space

Key question: Can you see ‘race’ in cultural symbols around you?

‘Race’ is directly implicated in the cultural symbols and signs we build and experience in the built environment around us – features which typically represent the values of the dominant (or hegemonic) cultural group. This ‘colouring’, or racialising, of space occurs through the placement of monuments and artworks; the naming of buildings, streets and campuses; the ornamentation, style or aesthetics of spaces; as well as the representation of spaces in culture, or within a cultural imaginary. For example, when a university such as UCL hangs paintings or erects statues of colonialists and slave owners, names its buildings after prominent eugenicists, or adopts a Neo-Classical, imperialist style of architecture, it colours itself white and, in doing so, negates the cultural contributions of non-white students and staff.

London is the heart of the former British Empire and the built environment is full of memorials, significant and small, to an imperial past. Thus, the colouring of space with symbols reminiscent of past oppression and racism can perpetuate feelings of being an outsider, whereby underrepresented students may be admitted into the university, but not feel included – issues which inevitably clash with concerns over heritage and conservation of the built environment.

Equally, practices of counter-hegemonic representation, appropriation and building, even destruction (see the [Rhodes Must Fall Oxford](#) movement), enable racialised minority groups to reclaim space and even to re-colour space in ways which help them belong; or else create ‘safe spaces’ in which a temporary space is crafted free of racial oppression.

Core reading

Mbembe, Achille (2015), ‘Decolonising Knowledge and the Question of the Archive’, *Aula magistral proferida*.

This work was written as a public lecture and should be read aloud. In it, Achille Mbembe grapples with the concept of decolonisation in the context of higher education. He makes the argument for a radical rethinking of the purpose and essence of higher education in Africa. Of particular interest are his views on the link between the built environment, ‘race’ and decolonisation. He asserts, “The decolonisation of buildings and of public spaces is not a frivolous issue, especially in a country [South Africa] that, for many centuries, has defined itself as not of Africa, but as an outpost of European imperialism in the Dark Continent; and in which 70% of the land is still firmly in the hands of 13% of the population. The decolonisation of buildings and of public spaces is inseparable from the democratisation of access.”



Anzaldúa, Gloria E. (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

In this work, Gloria Anzaldúa challenges readers about normative ways of thinking about the concepts of 'border' and also 'identity', drawing on her lived experiences of Chicana and lesbian activism. She exemplifies that the term 'borderland' refers to a geographical place that is susceptible to hybridity by using the example of people living within the Mexican/American Borderlands. Her work demonstrates how the mixing of cultures at borders transforms our idea of a border as a clear and simple divide of land and people, rather than a blend of cultural terrain that colours physical spaces.

Chattopadhyay, Swati (2006), 'The limits of 'white' town' in *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism and the Colonial Uncanny*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, pp.76–135.

Representing Calcutta is a spatial history of Calcutta which addresses the question of modernity that haunts our perception of the colonial city. The book responds to two inter-related concerns about the city. First, the image of Calcutta as the worst-case scenario of a 'Third World City' – the proverbial 'city of dreadful nights'. Second, the changing nature of the city's public spaces, such as the demise of certain forms of urban sociality that have been mourned in recent literature as the passing of Bengali modernity. By examining architecture, city plans, paintings, literature and official reports through the lens of post-colonial, feminist, and spatial theory, the book explores the conditions of colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism that produced the city as a modern artefact.

Yat Ming Loo (2013) *Architecture and Urban Form in Kuala Lumpur*. London: Ashgate.

Following the end of British colonial rule in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Islamisation of urban space became central to the majority Muslim government's project of decolonisation. However, this led to the marginalisation of the city's minority Chinese population. Yat Ming Loo's work follows the ways in which the city's Chinese spaces have become subjugated under the state's hegemonic national identity and ideology, as well as the ways in which the Chinese population has actively re-appropriated and racially re-inscribed the Kuala Lumpur old city centre into a Chinatown, alongside Chinese cemeteries across the capital.

Primary resources

***Get Out* (Director: Jordan Peele, 2017) [Film]**

A surreal horror film which satirises the more insidious aspects of contemporary, white, liberal racism and complacency in the USA: taking them to their terrifying and often comic extremes. Space is used schematically and symbolically, for instance with 'race' being mapped over the country/city or suburbia/inner-city divides; while traditional markers of white security and comfort are rendered ironically unsettling.

Himid, Lubaina (2018) *Meticulous Observations & Naming the Money* [Installation]

In this work, Lubaina Himid, the first black woman to win the Turner Prize, inserts several sculptures/paintings of black characters into both the physical space of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, as well as the grand narrative of art history itself – from both of which black life has been conspicuously absent.

RESOLVE Collective, *Brixton Bridge (with Farouk Agoro) & Brixton Passageway* (2018) [Mural and Installation]

Through these two projects, the interdisciplinary design collective RESOLVE explore, recover and memorialise the Afro-Caribbean life and heritage of Brixton in south London, reasserting its history and shoring up its strength in the face of encroaching land speculation, gentrification and displacement. As they write of their slogan ‘Come In Love/Stay In Peace’, painted boldly over Brixton’s railway bridge: ‘Undertones of ‘love’, ‘neighbourliness’, ‘homecoming’ and ‘peace’ act as a potent reminder of Brixton as more than an area, but a community’.

Uddoh, Rosa-Johan (2018) *The Serve* [Performance and Article]

In her surreal autobiographical take on the Williams sisters, Serena and Venus, Uddoh refigures herself and the sisters as ‘spatial agents’, actively dismantling or ‘taking up space’ inside elite white institutions – whether this is the Wimbledon Tennis Championships or a Russell Group university. Aesthetic symbols and forms, whether in fashion, sculpture or architecture, are used to contest and reshape space; transforming what were once sites of racial and misogynistic oppression, into places where black women can flourish.

Studio MASH (2018) *A Long Shadow Over London* [Installation]

In this award-winning installation for Historic England, the young architecture practice Studio MASH proposed a means of adapting and radically contextualising – rather than tearing down or erasing – statues of colonialists in the UK: in particular a statue of Robert Clive, an infamous East India Company official. In a shadow beneath Clive’s heroic memorial, an alternative history is etched in dark stone, educating those who view it of his many crimes and dramatising the contestation of historical narrative and heritage.

***Pelo Malo* (Director: Mariana Rondón, 2013) [Film]**

This film is the story of Junior, a nine year old boy who lives in [Caracas](#) in a shoddy apartment complex with his mother and baby brother. He has ‘pelo malo,’ a Hispanic term for curly, Afro-textured hair, which he constantly attempts to straighten using various methods, including smearing a mixture of mayonnaise and other ingredients into it. His hair is a constant source of frustration for both him and his mother, who does not approve of his obsession with his looks, believing it’s not normal behaviour for a boy his age.

Fleming, Crystal (2017), 'Politics of Blackness, Memorialization of Slavery and Racial Denials in France', *The Funambulist*, [podcast number 120](#).

[Podcast]

In this podcast, Crystal Fleming is in conversation about her book, *Resurrecting Slavery: Racial Legacies and White Supremacy in France* (2017), and discusses memorialising slavery and colonialism in France. The discussion includes how commemorating the abolition of slavery, an anti-racist act, continues to reproduce racial order. The relevance of the discussion carries to the memorialising of slavery in the UK, a country that was a key architect and beneficiary of the 300-year-old transatlantic slave trade, and where slavery was ostensibly abolished in 1833.

Stoler, Ann (2014) 'The Colonial Administration of Bodies and Space', *The Funambulist*, [podcast number 52](#). [Podcast]

In this podcast, Ann Stoler is in conversation about colonial governance and explores how space, including public buildings, are built to accommodate colonial hierarchy and its order. The conversation draws on Professor Stoler's earlier work, including the influential *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (1995).

***Cholet: el trabajo de Freddy Mamani* (Director: Isaac Niemand, 2016) [Film]**

In this documentary on El Alto, the highest-altitude city in Bolivia, the director asks questions about architecture and authenticity. The film explores how the built environment of El Alto has changed, speaks to those who have been leading that change, and queries the legitimacy of architectural knowledge where such knowledge sits in tension between Indigenous ideas and practices of building cityscapes and non-Indigenous ideas.

Speculative Futures

Key question: What is the future you can imagine?

Imagining the future generates the possibility of different spatial trajectories that overcome racialised injustice. Imagining new futures and horizons of possibility are central to the work of The Bartlett. The future can be progressive, radical, novel and completely different from our present and our past. Afro-futurism, post-colonial urban futures and decolonial theory and projections are three fields of study that enable us to speculatively imagine different futures and thus different built environments and different ways of living and being. Yet, the future that we are able to imagine may be conditioned and its range limited by racialised experiences of what is possible.

For example, work speculating on human futures in mainstream art, media, films and sci-fi produced in Europe and North America is all too often racialised. As explored by Donald Bogle with reference to cinema, black actors in Hollywood are consistently excluded from work that is meant to creatively imagine the future, either through omission or negative depiction. This exclusion denies them a role in speculative projects, and, more deplorably, imagines a future world where they do not exist. When included, they often represent 'difference' and 'otherness' to act as a counterfoil within a future representation of 'advanced humanity'. While Bogle's work allows us to appreciate the limits set on our imaginations, the work of Robin Kelley, reminds us that the limits of our imagination can be undone as he sets about undoing racist and exclusionary stories of the past and retelling them, thus (re)setting the groundwork for new possibilities and new speculations.

Core reading

Kelley, Robin D.G. (2002) *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press Books.

This book retells familiar but incomplete stories of freedom of the African diaspora around the world. Drawing on Surrealism and communism and the prospects they offered for a radical anti-racist future, Robin Kelley guides the reader through poetry, visual, musical and political texts from the African diaspora over the twentieth century on topics including space travel, post-capitalist society and a people's revolution. His work intends to reignite a black radical imagination.

The Funambulist N°24 – Futurism (2019) July – August.

This edition of *The Funambulist* focuses on imagining the future through political struggles. Drawing on a decolonial tradition, contributors imagine futures where present-day political struggles and violent conflicts have significantly altered their trajectories. So, for example, Sophia Azeb presents her imagination of 'Palestinianness' once



Palestine is free. Jessica Hansell describes Māori futures on Aotearoa (New Zealand). Kordae Jatafa Henry presents Congo in a personification that plays between self-determination and resource extraction.

Datta, Ayona (2018) 'Postcolonial urban futures: Imagining and governing India's smart urban age', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 37(3), pp.393–410.

This paper draws on research analysing India's '100 Smart Cities' initiative to explore narratives of the future from a post-colonial perspective. Ayona Datta explores how narratives of nation and technology work together to create a vision for smart cities. But the Indian discourse is highly complex and draws on 'Hindutva nationalism', bringing mythologies of the past into direct connection with an urban future. The paper argues that post-colonial futures are subject to capture by the state as a mechanism to exert forms of legal and political control.

Bogle, Donald (2019), *Hollywood Black: The Stars, the Films, the Filmmakers*, Itasca, Illinois: Turner Classic Movies.

This accessible book is an anthology of black actors in Hollywood over the last century. It traces representations of black people from silent films, where white actors were covered in black face paint, to modern black movie stars, directors and screenwriters. Through what may seem like a simple narration, Donald Bogle examines in detail the relationship between perpetual stereotyping of black people and racist structures that exclude black actors and film professionals from redressing the stereotypes.

Primary resources

Ra, Sun (1967) *We Travel the Space Ways* [Jazz album]

Although this future may now be somewhat dated, Sun Ra's fusion of jazz, space travel and ancient Egyptian mythology has provided inspiration for many artists, critics and practitioners working today. As the urban geographer William Sites argues in his article of the same name (2012), Sun Ra can be understood to be creating 'utopian', 'imagined spaces' through his experimental music.

Thomas, Sheree R. (2001), *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, & (2005) *Dark Matter: Reading the Bones* [Prose anthologies]

These anthologies focus on African-American science fiction and speculative writing, giving examples spanning a century, from W.E.B. De Bois to Octavia Butler and beyond. Many of the pieces are extracts from larger works, making it an excellent entrance point for anyone looking to discover more about this previously undervalued tradition.

Gumbs, Alexis Pauline (2016) *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugivity* and (2018) *M Archive: After the End of the World* [Poetry]

In these works by the self-declared 'Queer Black Troublemaker and Black Feminist Love Evangelist', Alexis Gumbs explores themes such as the survival of black life

'after the end of the world', and the fugitive lives of black women in the present, as they seek 'freedom from gendered violence and racism'. These are the first two works in an 'experimental triptych' which blurs the lines between poetry, fiction and scholarship.

***Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival* (Director: Fabrizio Terranova, 2017) [Documentary]**

In this documentary film, the multispecies, anti-racist feminist Donna Haraway talks about her most recent work attempting to bridge the gap between science and fiction through 'speculative fabulation' or 'SF' – most thoroughly expressed in her book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Cthulucene* (2016). She sees this as a means of creating new, ecologically and socially just and diverse worlds: and of entering into new, ethical relations with fellow 'critters', both human and non-human.

***Black Panther* (Director: Ryan Coogler, 2018) [Film]**

Black Panther is an extremely well-known US superhero film based in the mythical African nation of Wakanda. The film is interesting on several levels and subverts narratives of African-ness, contrasting them with the African-American experience. Alternative possible futures are also presented to the viewer, mixing together a creative mythology of Wakanda with a technologically advanced society. The reception of the film itself was an significant cultural event, given the predominantly black cast and the positive and complex representations of black identity.

***Children of Men* (Director: Alfonso Cuarón, 2006) [Film]**

Cuarón presents a dystopian vision of a world where humans are unable to reproduce, set in London, in 2027. His film explores the breakdown of society in a world where human futures are ending. Britain has become a police state with an intensely hostile immigration policy where many people are placed in refugee camps or highly lawless zones.

Marshall, Kerry James, *Look See* and other works [Paintings]

Kerry James Marshall is one of the USA's foremost artists. His paintings address questions of blackness and the lack of representation of black people in art. Marshall directly challenges these historical absences through his rich depictions of blackness and black life. His work directly addresses blackness through his careful selection of painting pigments. His work makes powerful political commentaries on race within American life. One of his paintings, *Untitled (London Bridge)* (2017) is in the collection of Tate Modern.

Boyce, Sonia (1987), *English Born Native* and other works [Paintings]

Sonia Boyce is an important black British artist who is currently Professor of Black Art and Design at the University of the Arts, London. Her work came to prominence in the 1980s and she was the first black woman to hold a solo show at the Whitechapel Gallery in London (1988). Her work addresses 'race' and gender, and questions British identity and belonging. One of her most famous early works *She Ain't Holding Them Up, She's Holding On (Some English Rose)* (1986) is a self-portrait examining complex notions of beauty, belonging, migration and diaspora.

Critical Media Project – short videos under a number of categories including ‘race’ and ethnicity [Multimedia]

Critical Media Project uses clips from TV and film, adverts and other publicly available material to raise questions about how identity is represented within the media. The material is arranged thematically and provides a short overview, along with a series of discussion questions. The project is based in Los Angeles and therefore uses a lot of material from the US, but, given the global consumption of US-based media it is highly relevant.

***Gravesend* (Director: Steve McQueen, 2007) [Film]**

Steve McQueen is one of Britain’s greatest artists and has recently moved into commercial film-making. The first black person to win the Oscar for Best Director, his work has always engaged with complexities of ‘race’ and identity. *Gravesend* is a film that centres on coltan, a mineral used in mobile phones and computers, that is that is only found and mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Technology, global networks, neo-imperialism, violence and racial identity are all explored in this short film. The title, *Gravesend*, references the town in North-West Kent. In the film McQueen alludes to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.

Call to Action

Key question: What are you going to do?

The 'Call to Action' in this final section presents thinking and reflective actions in three key areas: pedagogy, rethinking knowledge and the canon, and avenues for political anti-racist activism. We present a longer list of core readings here to help you to change your teaching and learning journey, and re-orientate our primary sources to focus on material and networks of support at UCL.

Despite the efforts of British higher education to portray itself as a truly meritocratic and equitable sector, 'race' and racism continue to texture the lived experiences of non-white students and staff alike. University leaders, especially Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors, remain overwhelmingly white. According to Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data, in 2017/18, 25 out of 500 (5%) managers and senior officials in higher education institutions were from a BAME background, and among 212,000 academic staff only 16% were from a BAME background. For 2017–18, the national Office for Students (OfS) records an undergraduate awarding gap of 23% between white students and black students (this is a gap in final degree outcomes that cannot be explained by any variable other than 'race'). This sizable gap is an improvement on the 24.7% recorded in 2015-16. Institutional racism plays a major and significant role in creating and perpetuating these inequalities. Fighting racism and discrimination in higher education, among other things, involves assessing the racial climate for students; diversifying the curriculum to include content from different world views that place 'Eurocentric' knowledge in context; diversifying the teachers and sector leaders; and placing 'race' consciousness at the centre of institutional policy and practice.

Pedagogy

Craig, Gary; Cole, Bankole; Ali, Nasreen & Qureshi, Irtiza (2019), *The Missing Dimension Where is 'race' in social policy teaching and learning?* Salford, UK: Social Policy Association.

This is the report of a study that audited the teaching, learning and coverage of 'race' in the Social Policy curricula in 16 UK universities. The survey found that the teaching of 'race' within Social Policy and related departments was "dismal". Survey respondents cited the lack of BAME teachers and students, and the 'whiteness' of the curricula, which alienate BAME students, as issues contributing to the poor state of teaching 'race' in Social Policy. The report concludes that very limited attention is given to the dimension of 'race' in terms of curricula, student and staff recruitment, and support for students. On occasions where 'race' is discussed, "it was often in more general



areas of discussion, such as migration or citizenship, rather than, for example, on the impacts of racism within public policy or in universities.”

Wekker, Gloria (2016), *White innocence: Paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

In this book, the author describes and critically analyses the Netherlands and its perception of itself as very progressive, as champions of women’s and LGBTQ people’s liberation, as colour-blind and anti-racist. She argues that the lived experiences of people of colour in the Netherlands challenges this self-image. She explains how 400 years of colonialism have left traces and legacies which are embodied through language, practices of various institutions, and in the white Dutch community’s perception of itself and others. She explains how the traces of these 400 years of colonialism are left in what she calls, drawing on the work of Edward Said, “the cultural archive” – a mental space where white Dutch people hold a deep-seated belief that white people are superior and people of colour are inferior. The author critically engages with how this deep-seated belief has been normalised and made invisible, and as a result white Dutch people refuse to acknowledge how racist legacies of colonialism shape current perceptions of the Netherlands as a colour-blind and anti-racist country.

Samura, Michelle, A. (2010), *Architecture of diversity: Dilemmas of race and space for Asian American students in higher education*, Santa Barbara, CA: University of California.

This is the author’s PhD thesis that examines the experiences of Asian-American college students on university campuses. Using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) and a special combination of space and ‘race’ theory, the author argues that we need to consider space to examine issues of ‘race’, because as a spatial lens helps us to locate racial meanings in students’ lived experiences in spaces such as dormitories and libraries.

Linley, Jodi L. (2017), ‘Teaching to deconstruct whiteness in higher education’, *Whiteness and Education* 2(1), pp.48–59.

In this instructive paper, the author challenges whiteness through constant reflexivity upon her practice as a white professor teaching graduate students. She asserts that she has learned the pervasiveness of ‘perspectivelessness’ among white higher-education leaders that perpetuates and dominates supposedly race-neutral ideologies that silence the voices of people of colour.

Khandwala, Anoushka (2019), [‘What Does It Mean to Decolonize Design? Dismantling design history 101’](#), *Aiga Eye on Design* www.eyehondesign.aiga.org.

The author argues that designers’ work is inspired by taste, and taste is derived from one’s exposures during upbringing or socialisation. Danah Abdulla, an educator and designer quoted in the piece, says “designers have remained married to the concept that what we do is neutral, universal, that politics has no place in design”. Yet, Anoushka Khandwala adds, ‘the choices designers make are intrinsically political: With every design choice we make, there’s the potential to not just exclude but to oppress; every

design subtly persuades its audience one way or another and every design vocabulary has history and context.' She urges fellow-educators to place design into the history of colonialism so we can see, and then work to undo, the power structures and racial hierarchies that are imbued within it.

Sartorio, Francesca S., and Thomas, Hugh (2019), 'Freire and Planning Education: The Pedagogy of Hope for Faculty and Students', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, [Dol:10.1177/0739456X19844574](https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X19844574).

The authors of this paper address the radical pedagogy of Paulo Freire in relation to planning education in the UK, particularly his emphasis on critical self-reflection. It commends thinking relationally in and of one's context in order to make meaning and self-discovery vital learning outcomes of planning education.

Rethinking the canon

Akel, Sofia (2019), *Insider-Outsider: The Role of Race in Shaping the Experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic students*, London: Goldsmiths, University of London.

This latest study reports BAME students' experiences of racism and discrimination at Goldsmiths, University of London. The report found that, despite 45% of the students at Goldsmiths being from BAME backgrounds and the university's image as relatively progressive, 26% of the students surveyed said they had experienced both overt and covert forms of racism. BAME students also reported that their white peers' racism often went unchallenged and that white lecturers made racist assumptions about their intellect. The report also found that Goldsmiths' curricula negate the experiences and histories of BAME students and links this with poor academic attainment as measured by the grades awarded to BAME students. There is a 25% attainment gap between white and BAME students at Goldsmiths and 21% of the survey respondents believe that their ethnicity impacted the grades they received.

Harper, Shaun (2012), 'Race without racism: How higher education researchers minimise racist institutional norms', *The Review of Higher Education* 36(1), pp.9–29.

In this article, Harper systematically analyses 225 published sociological studies on higher education and demonstrates how researchers explain, discuss, and theorise about racial differences in student attainment, experience and also lecturers' lived experiences. He reports that researchers minimise racism using 'assorted explanations' that argue 'anything but racism' in reporting their research findings. Instead of naming what their research participants experienced as 'racist' and/or 'racism', the researchers used such semantic substitutes as 'alienating,' 'hostile,' 'marginalising,' 'chilly,' 'harmful,' 'isolating,' 'unfriendly,' 'negative,' 'antagonistic,' 'unwelcoming,' 'prejudicial,' 'discriminatory,' 'exclusionary,' and 'unsupportive.' He strongly argues that we cannot study 'race' without engaging with racism.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria (1998) 'Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 11(1), pp.7–24.

In this seminal article, the author describes the emergence of a relatively new epistemological lens of critical race theory (CRT), which, she argues, can be used to examine the link between educational disparities and 'race' and racism. CRT recognises the existence and also permanence of 'race' and racism at all levels of education and offers the tools that can be used by educators to ensure that all students are given an equal opportunity to obtain a quality education. The author advocated for the use of CRT to understand how and in what ways racism operates in educational institutions, so that educators can play the role of social justice activists and fight for equity for people of colour. In higher education, the lens of CRT can be used to examine issues of colour-blindness, admission policies, retention, attainment, awards and the racial climate on campus.

Banks, James (1993), 'The canon debate, knowledge construction, and multicultural education', *Educational Researcher* 22(5), pp.4–14.

In this authoritative article, James Banks reviews of the debate on what should be taught in schools, colleges, and universities and who should decide the content of the curriculum. More importantly, he argues that, although all knowledge reflects the values and interests of its creators, it is only the dominant and established canons that form the mainstream academic knowledge taught in schools, colleges, and universities. The author also presents a typology that describes five types of knowledge and contends that each type should be a part of the curricula.

De Sousa Santos, Boaventura (2014), *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, New York: Routledge.

In a world of appalling social inequalities, people are becoming more aware of the multiple dimensions of injustice, whether social, political, cultural, sexual, ethnic, religious, historical or ecological. Rarely acknowledged is another vital dimension: cognitive injustice, the failure to recognise the different ways of knowing by which people across the globe run their lives and provide meaning to their existence. This book shows why cognitive injustice underlies all the other dimensions; global social justice is not possible without global cognitive justice. De Sousa's work is leading in a movement to 'theorise from the south', a movement that reveals acts of epistemicide in the structural silencing of voices outside 'the canon'.

Bhambra, Gurminder K., Gebrial, Dalia & Nişancıoğlu, Kerem (Eds) (2018), *Decolonising the University*, London: Pluto Press.

This powerful collection of essays provides a comprehensive and contemporary overview of the vital issues affecting higher education in the UK. These are the power of whiteness; the Eurocentrism of our curricula and knowledge bases; and issues of inclusion and exclusion, all within the over-riding context of education markets and a neo-liberal rationality which governs the look, feel and trajectory of higher-education institutions in the UK and elsewhere. The book is a primer for thinking about a decolonised university.

Political activism

Di Angelo, Robin (2018), *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

This is a ground-breaking book exploring the counter-productive reactions that some white people have when discussing racism that serve to protect their positions and maintain racial inequality. Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is characterised by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviours including argumentation and silence. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium and prevent any meaningful cross-racial dialogue. In this in-depth exploration, anti-racist educator Robin DiAngelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what can be done to engage more constructively.

Sands O'Connor, Karen (2017), *Children's Publishing and Black Britain, 1965–2015*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

This book examines a critical period in British publishing, from the earliest days of dedicated publishing firms for black audiences, to the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK. Taking a historical approach that includes education acts, black protest, community publishing and children's literature prizes, the study investigates the motivation behind both independent and mainstream publishing firms' decisions to produce books for a specifically black British audience.

Thomlinson, Natalie (2016), *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's movement in England (1968–93)*, London: Palgrave MacMillan.

This work addresses this issue of race in the women's movement in England during the 'second wave' period. Examining both the white and the black women's movements through a source base that includes original oral histories and extensive research using feminist periodicals, this book seeks to unpack the historical roots of long-running tensions between black and white feminists. It gives a broad overview of the activism that both black and white women were involved in.

Kirshner, Ben (2015), *Youth activism in an era of education inequality*, New York/London: New York University Press.

Ten years of research by youth development scholar Ben Kirshner shows young people building political power during an era of racial inequality, diminished educational opportunity, and an atrophied public realm. The book's case studies analyse what these experiences mean for young people and why they are good for democracy. What is youth activism and how does it contribute to youth development? How might collective movements of young people expand educational opportunity and participatory democracy? The interdependent relationship between political engagement, personal development, and democratic renewal is the central focus of this book.

Soldatic, Karen and Johnson, Kelley (Editors) (2020), *Global Perspectives on Disability Activism and Advocacy*, Oxon: Routledge.

This new work is an exploration of the diverse ways in which activism and advocacy are experienced and practised by people with disabilities and their allies. Contributors to the book explore the very different strategies and campaigns they have used to have their demands for respect, dignity and rights, heard and acted upon by their communities, national governments and the international community.

Primary resources and support at UCL

***Why is my curriculum white?* (11th November 2014).**

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dscx4h2I-Pk

A 20 minute film by the UCL Student Union which started the movement that has spread across the UK questioning and critiquing the whiteness and/or the Eurocentric domination and lack of diversity in curricula.

***Why isn't my professor black?* (21st March 2014). Organised by Dr Nathaniel Coleman. www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBqgLK9dTk4**

This is a video of a UCL panel discussion on 10 March 2014, which attracted over 400 people. The event was chaired by Professor Michael Arthur, UCL's President & Provost. In the video, BAME students from UCL are asked if they would pursue a career in academia. At least three of the students who say they would not, feel that there are not enough BAME staff members teaching at UCL. The students say they are not convinced they can deal with the stress caused by stereotyping and prejudice.

***Eugenics at UCL: We inherited Galton* (9th October 2014).**

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e412C7Pmm8

In a 13-minute video, UCL students and staff question the adulation of Francis Galton and his memorials at UCL, despite his racist views and scholarship. Mahmoud Arif, among others, is a UCL student who questioned why students are not taught the racism of Galton and the justification for naming a lecture theatre after him. UCL appears to celebrate a known racist. The participants call upon UCL and other universities to acknowledge the centrality of 'race' in the lived experiences of people from minority backgrounds and to take a vanguard role in fighting racism.

UCL BAME Students' Officer [<http://studentsunionucl.org/officers/black-and-minority-ethnic-students-officer-sandy-ogundele>]

Race Matters network for staff [<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/committees-and-social-networks/racemattersucl>]

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Students' Network [<http://studentsunionucl.org/make-change/representing-you/who-can-help-you/bme-students>]

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