

RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, AND POPULISM: THE MISEDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC

Part of the UNIVERSITY WORTH FIGHTING FOR Initiative #fight4edu



Tuesday, September 20 | 3 PM to 4 PM | <http://bit.ly/fight4edu-live> | #fight4edu

Link to this document: bit.ly/fight4edu-racism

Link to Twitter conversation: bit.ly/fight4edu-twitter

Description

Join us at the Graduate Center on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 3:00-4:00 p.m. in the Skylight Room for an open, livestreamed panel and discussion featuring Jessie Daniels (Hunter College and The Graduate Center, CUNY), Mary Phillips (Lehman College, CUNY) and Linda Sarsour (Arab American Association of New York). The event will be livestreamed at <http://bit.ly/fight4edu-live>. For those joining us in person, a reception will follow.

This panel is the first in the The University Worth Fighting For, a series of events that tie student-centered, engaged pedagogical practices to institutional change, race, equality, gender, and social justice.

To help build momentum and to provide a place to discuss related topics outside of the event itself, we also invite you to join a Twitter chat on September 20 at 2 p.m. at the hashtag #fight4edu. The Twitter chat will be led by three graduate students who are part of the HASTAC Scholars network:

- Jason Buel: [@jwbuel](https://twitter.com/jwbuel)
- Merisa Martinez: [@merisamartinez](https://twitter.com/merisamartinez)
- Christine Yao, [@yao_christine](https://twitter.com/yao_christine)

Follow along with the Twitter chat: <http://bit.ly/fight4edu-twitter>

Twitter Chat Questions (2-3pm EDT, #fight4edu)

- Q1: How can we generate awareness of racism and violence without reproducing their brutality or desensitizing the public to them? #fight4edu [@yao_christine]
- Q2: What are the risks of visibility and surveillance for anti-racist activism online? #fight4edu [@merisamartinez]
- Q3: What would we like to see online platforms themselves doing to promote social justice? #fight4edu [@jwbuel]

- Q3a: How do we work with platforms that attempt to censor the sharing of images that document violence against people of color? #fight4edu [@jwbuel]
- Q4: How can digital platforms serve as areas of critical discourse and analysis with regard to intersectional activism? #fight4edu [@yao_christine]
- Q5: As academics, what unique opportunities do we have to apply our skills, training, and resources to questions of like these? #fight4edu [@merisamartinez]

Notes and Questions

Notes and questions can be added to this document during the session.

Mary Phillips (bio below):

I'm going to share a bit of my work as part of the Black Panther Party, specifically the role of women in the Black Panther Party, and then I'm going to connect that to Black Lives Matter. In an old issue of the Black Panther Party, there is an image of a mother and child in a rat-infested apartment, with the mother holding a shotgun at a hole in the wall to kill the rats. In this case, the mother stands as the protector of the entire family, both the children and the husband. It also speaks to black women's place in history, and disrupts the image that women are to be additional to men.

Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, Gloria Richardson, and other women who laid foundation for women's activism in Black Panther Party.

Women wanted to serve their communities in practical ways.

There is a skewed image of women as silent background characters or silent partners. Women were involved in everything, including free breakfast program, cooperative housing, educational initiatives, selling panther newsletter, running electoral campaigns, etc. They were critical to the survival of the party.

In an interview with Ericka Huggins, with 50 fellow comrades, and 8 month pregnant at the time, she vividly remembers an experience of gender politics within the party. The women were the only ones cooking, and when the meal was done, one of the women came out and said 'Brothers, you can eat now.' and suggested that brothers eat first. Ericka Huggins challenged this presumption. Her courage in challenging sexism in the movement was profound. She served as many roles within the movement, including editor of the journal. When her husband died, she was imprisoned. Huggins incarceration became an important part of gender politics in the party. Despite governmental assaults, she demanded her own humanity, on her own terms.

After her incarceration, she served as director of a school in Oakland. She was the first black person elected to the Alameda County board of educators. Eventually, she became a mind-body

practitioner, using tools to improve the quality of life of especially women and children in prisons, schools, and other institutions.

As we embark on the 50th anniversary of the Black Panther movement, Beyonce, and we have release of Black Panther curriculum, people are embracing Black Panther praxis in their organizing strategies.

Black Lives Matters mirrors the structure of the Black Panther movement. Emphasis on self-defense, restorative justice, power of the collective, and important of loving engagement with each other, family-friendly environments to alleviate the gender inequality. They believe in an intergenerational communal network that embraces ageism. Black Lives Matter was started by black queer women, and many times black girls and women are silent in the movement. Just like black boys, black women and girls are targets of police assault.

Jessie Daniels (bio below):

Posted the slides on twitter at:

<http://www.slideshare.net/JessieNYC/understanding-the-trump-moment>

Started working on white supremacist movements as part of my dissertation. I was studying at the University of Texas at Austin, and to study it, I had to travel to Montgomery, Alabama, to the archives to make xerox copies of old newspaper articles. Part of what I found in that work, which became part of *White Lies*, was that the white supremacist movements (including many of them) rhetoric was gendered along lines of masculinity and femininity. I had expected to find a long list of groups that they hated. There was a real focus on the construction of whiteness, blackness and jewishness, and within each of those, a gender component.

The other thing that struck me, in the early 1990's, about this research, was that the rhetoric matched the contemporary political language. The way that President Clinton and other political candidates discussed certain artists, the death penalty, and other political issues, looked very similar to century-before rhetoric among the white supremacist movement.

With the arise of the internet, I started taking my classes to the computer lab, and a shocking thing happened, and made me rethink my research. One undergraduate look up "KKK" and another looked up "Martin Luther King" and both of them wound up at a white supremacist site. The one that came up as MartinLutherKing.org is actually written by white supremacists, though it looks, on first glance, as a tribute to MLK. I spent the next few years trying to figure out how to study young people stumbling onto these sites. Part of what I did was ask young people (15-19) to go online, and I would observe them. They were very good at sussing out bad graphic design, so that bad background colors and such made students skeptical.

A white supremacist had taken quotes of prior slaves out of context and put them on a website as a remembrance of slavery. But, composition-wise, it makes the argument that slavery wasn't

that bad. I asked the students what they thought about that, and they were more likely to feel that there were two sides of the story.

That seems to be the goal of these sorts of white supremacist sites, to continue or reinvigorate the disagreement over these very basic issues. There is no doubt that Trump, for instance, is sharing and retweeting quotes from white supremacist groups. He also begins to conflate reality TV and social network. He's sharing these consistent messages, and amplifies them with social media.

Linda Sarsour (bio below):

I am the non-academic on the panel, and very honored to be part of a panel. Speaking as an activist, and a product of the NYC public education system--and having felt shortchanged of an education--of CUNY. I want to look at three different areas: 1) the rise of islamophobia. People want to argue against radicals, but I'm a proud "radical" - in the best sense, of looking at the "root" of the problem. There are no stories being told about what it is to be Muslim in America. 25-30 percent of enslaved Africans brought to this country were Muslims. Somehow, they were able to continue practicing islam, despite pressure to change their religion.

But we are being taught Islam as a "foreign" entity, something that belongs on the other side of the world. Not talking abt the deep-rootedness of Islam in this country.

When we think about the conversations happening around us, to counter violent extremism in this country, we default to thinking of Muslims, whereas there are many other violent extremists. We should challenge ourselves the deep question: Where was ISIS before 6 years ago? This idea that we're not being asked about (or know about) the roots of global terrorism, and why we are a target. And that's deeply troubling.

All of our foreign policy mishaps (and let's be clear, we've killed hundred of thousands of people, and they hate us for that). We have to understand how that's going to impact us here. It's a call for deep critical thinking that we're not discussing.

2) Another area that has impacted the way I think about rhetoric is the term "patriot". We have this conception that "patriots" pledge to the flag, and wear red, white and blue. When I think about my taxpayer money and my country killing many Iraqis who I also share a culture with. When we think of patriotism, we think of what white people consider to be patriotism. If we don't agree with what patriotism is, then we are not considered patriots. That has been partially the demise of our education system because we aren't talking about patriotism as people who speak up in the face of oppression and atrocities.

Who gets to set the standards of patriotism in our country? No one wants to talk about where that comes from because it comes from white supremacy. No one wants to acknowledge white supremacy because immediately you're considered racist against white people, even though

there are many white people standing against white supremacy. Everyone has bias, and someone can be biased against white people. But, racism is bigotry plus power.

The whitewashing of civil rights history. People talk about MLK as a peaceful man who want to join black and white people together. But, the MLK I know was a victim of police brutality, whose life was taken at the age of 39, and was a radical black activist. People have not be taught to explore and read more about the history of black leaders in history. When I started reading about Rosa Parks, I was astounded at the decades of history before she even took a stand on the bus. Because we don't have that historical perspective, it's very troubling.

I have my children read additional books outside of school, and what happens is that they take it back to the school and present it to the teacher. When reading these stories, you are supposed to be moved by the stories. It's important to be open to what students can show you. Hopefully, we can see public education as a "woke" curriculum. I'm woke now, and I hope I never go back to sleep.

Questions:

Q: With the recent passing of resolution 1058-A, what do you think about its impact on student voices about the conflict?

A: Testified at that hearing. 1058-A prohibits Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). One major opposition to the resolution--can agree or disagree about the tactic of BDS, but the problem is prohibiting those who want to use this tactic - CUNY has been one of the places where it's been successful

When we try to realign politics. Most of the people are white. There were no people of color at the hearing who were in support of 1058-A. It was mainly white men who were for the prohibition of BDS. These people who testified in favor of the resolution trying to limit free speech. There are people who will not be intimidated or silenced. What worries me is the chilling of free speech in general on campus. I send people to public school to engage in that dialogue, and here are politicians saying that they'll allow free speech as long as you don't disagree with them. Why was this in the contracts committee? Being active in these political movements is critical.

Comment: History of some people, talk about gypsies as an example. They've been in a weak position without any power. I don't tolerate negativity about gypsies, at any time, or in any way. I can imagine how jews and black people can feel the same. People who have been targets have the right to be sensitive and to react to negativity.

Q: I appreciate bringing to attention the use of the word "radical" and who we define as a "radical". I thought of it a lot over the Brexit decision, when they were discussing white working class people who had been let down by the labor party in the UK. Should it be a battle over the "radical" legacy, so that it doesn't get channeled toward a radical right?

A: I think there is a moment where we could reach out to the people who have been radicalized by Trump. I was disheartened to hear Hilary's comment about the "basket of deplorables" and that they were unreachable. I think that's a common approach among the left, thinking about those who have been radicalized by Trump. A lot of them were Bernie Sanders supporters who then went over to Trump. In an effort to be safe or centrist, and to hold up those systems of white supremacy, there isn't a real alternative that's being offered.

A: When we talk about the history of the term, radicalize is about wanting to get back to the root of any problem. I don't want to be radical left or progressive because they also practice islamophobia and stand against police reform. Either we define clearly what we define as progressive, or don't call me that. We've lost the clutch on language, and trying to put everyone in boxes. I don't want to be in a box with people who don't believe in Black Lives Matter.

A: The other language that I find problematic is "extremist". I often do that to give people a way into the conversation, but I think the white supremacist movement has been recategorized as "extremist" white supremacy, so that people feel more comfortable discussing it. People will compare the Klan with the Black Panther party, and it's a false equivalence. The conversation we need to be having is on white supremacy, and that's difficult to have with white people.

Comment: We should start by not putting people into boxes, but by considering them as American.

Q: Could you give us resources (for critical thinking at LaGuardia), so that we can teach our students to connect with to see that there's more than one side to the story.

A:

- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Citizen*, by Claudia Rankine
- Interactive website ([Understanding Race](#)), which has a mini documentary called "Girl Like Me." Researcher redoes the doll test, and the results are the same as they were in 1950s. It has a bunch of articles and games to play with. Great site for use in the classroom that extends beyond the classroom.
- When we talk about violence against women and spousal abuse, there's a great [Ted talk by Jackson Katz](#)
- "Case for Reparations," in *the Atlantic*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Invisible Man got the Whole World Watching*

Q: Do you have any tips or advice for young journalists in a way that brings these issues to light?

A: There's a lot of power in personal stories. Really highlighting issues around the politics, and not allowing the silence to pervade. When I talk about these issues with my students, I find that they are really eager to digest and discuss these issues. Given youth an opportunity to share their stories and interweave their experience with stories.

Panelist Bios

Jessie Daniels, PhD is Professor of Sociology at Hunter College and The Graduate Center, at the City University of New York (CUNY). An internationally recognized expert on Internet manifestations of racism, Daniels is the author of two books about race and various forms of media, *White Lies* (Routledge, 1997) and *Cyber Racism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), as well as dozens of peer-reviewed articles in journals such as *New Media & Society*, *Gender & Society*, *American Journal of Public Health*, and *Women's Studies Quarterly*. In 2014, *Contexts Magazine* called her a "pioneer in digital sociology." Daniels also worked in the Internet industry. She writes regularly at [RacismReview](#), a scholarly blog that she co-founded and has maintained since 2007. *Forbes Magazine* named her one of "20 inspiring women to follow on Twitter," and you can find her there as [@JessieNYC](#).

Mary Phillips received her PhD in African and African American Studies from Michigan State University. She currently teaches at Lehman College, CUNY. Her research explores women and gender in the Black Panther Party. Her most recent publication, "The Power of the First-Person Narrative: Ericka Huggins and the Black Panther Party" in the *Women's Studies Quarterly* (Fall/Winter 2015) has been nominated for the the Association of Black Women Historians Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Book and Article Award. She is currently completing a book manuscript, *A Spirit on a Sword: Ericka Huggins' Life as a Panther, Educator, and Activist*.

Linda Sarsour is the Executive Director of the [Arab American Association of New York](#) and co-founder of the first Muslim online organizing platform, [MPOWER Change](#). She has been at the forefront of major civil rights campaigns including calling for an end to unwarranted surveillance of New York's Muslim communities and ending police policies like stop and frisk. In wake of the police murder of Mike Brown, she co-founded [Muslims for Ferguson](#) to build solidarity amongst American Muslim communities and encourage work against police brutality. Linda is also a member of the [Justice League NYC](#), a leading force of activists, formerly incarcerated individuals, and artists working to reform the New York Police Department and the criminal justice system. She is a working woman, racial justice and civil rights activist, every Islamophobe's worst nightmare, and mother of three. Ambitious, outspoken and independent, Linda shatters stereotypes of Muslim women while also treasuring her religious and ethnic heritage.

Kitana Ananda (Moderator) is the Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow for the Humanities Alliance. Her scholarship and teaching examines the culture and politics of war, migration, and diaspora in North America and South Asia, with a focus on Tamil refugees and immigrants from Sri Lanka. She believes strongly in the mission of the public university, and has a deep interest in digital communications for scholarship, collaborative learning, and public engagement. Kitana has served as a Contributing Editor for the open-access website of the journal, Cultural Anthropology, and as a Communications Associate intern with the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative. She earned a Ph.D. in socio-cultural anthropology from Columbia University, and an honors B.A. in history and anthropology with a minor in cinema studies from the University of Toronto.

How to Join Us

- Watch the livestream at bit.ly/fight4edu-live (unedited footage will be available after the workshop for a limited time under "Recent Videos", and we'll post an edited version soon)
- Follow the hashtag #fight4edu and tweet your questions/comments
- During and after the workshop, add your questions and comments to this Google Doc

Notes/Resources from Twitter Chat

- Here is an excellent op ed by danah boyd, founding director of Data and Society, who lives on the block in NYC where the second bomb was discovered. She considers the bomb threat and media and police coverage in the perspective of statistics and other useful perspectives
<https://medium.com/@zephoria/there-was-a-bomb-on-my-block-6045e597ac2f#.rjos0cyp6>
- <http://www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com/fall2016/>
- Jade E. Davis, [Black Men Getting Killed is the New Girls Gone Wild](#)
- Alex Juhasz, [HOW DO I \(NOT\) LOOK? LIVE FEED VIDEO AND VIRAL BLACK DEATH](#)
- Kimberly Fain, [VIRAL BLACK DEATH: WHY WE MUST WATCH CITIZEN VIDEOS OF POLICE VIOLENCE](#) <http://goo.gl/ymfVP1>
- John McDermott, [Why Facebook is for ice buckets, Twitter is for Ferguson](#)
- Lisa Nakamura [Indigenous Circuits](#)
- FemTechNet's resources: <http://femtechnet.org/csov-site-specific-resources/>
- Patricia Matthew, [Afro-Pedagogy: The Poetry of Race and Privilege](#)
- Christine Yao's #digiped #staywoke assignment:
<https://www.hastac.org/blogs/thevorpallblade/2015/10/27/digital-pedagogy-or-how-engage-your-students-staywoke>

- González-Tennant, Edward. In Press (2016). Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Technologies for an Engaged Anthropological Pedagogy. In *Deep Stories: Practicing, Teaching, and Learning Anthropology with Digital Storytelling*, edited by Aaron Thornburg and Mariela Nunez-Janes, pp. xx-xx. De Gruyter Open.
 - The chapter will be open source, so free to access! I'll also post a copy at my Academia.edu page: <https://florida.academia.edu/EdwardGonzalezTennant>
- We also discussed this topic in my Academic Activism course offered years ago at the University of Florida. PM Edward González-Tennant if you're interested in getting a copy of the syllabus.
- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Citizen*, by Claudia Rankine
- Interactive website ([Understanding Race](#)), which has a mini documentary called "Girl Like Me." Researcher redoes the doll test, and the results are the same as they were in 1950s. It has a bunch of articles and games to play with. Great site for use in the classroom that extends beyond the classroom.
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- "Case for Reparations," in *the Atlantic*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Invisible Man got the Whole World Watching*
- "How the Trumps Got Rich" -By Sam Stein, GC Student in Earth and Environmental Sciences <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/08/trump-real-estate-theft-public-land-taxes/>