

Reading *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*

Whether examining the place of slavery in US history is new to you or something you have been dealing with for a while, this seminar should be a stimulating experience.

The 1619 Project began as a special issue of the *New York Times Magazine* published on August 19, 2019, the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved people in North America. The issue generated much excitement and quickly sold out. In November 2021 it was published in expanded book form with additional essays and literary contributions.

The project's editor, Nikole Hannah-Jones, has assembled a fascinating collection of essays that address various aspects of the African American experience in US history. For an excellent overview of the original magazine, you can watch the 15-minute interview on PBS:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-1619-project-details-the-legacy-of-slavery-in-america-1566152469/>

Although *The 1619 Project* has been criticized by professional historians and others, to our knowledge those critiques have been directed only at Hannah-Jones' introductory essay (for which she won a Pulitzer Prize). For an early overview of the controversy, see Adam Serwer, "The Fight Over the 1619 Project Is Not About the Facts," *The Atlantic*, December 23, 2019.

Chapters in the book include:

Preface: Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Origins"

Ch. 1: Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Democracy"

Ch. 2: Dorothy Roberts, "Race"

Ch. 3: Khalil Gibran Muhammed, "Sugar"

Ch. 4: Leslie Alexander and Michelle Alexander, "Fear"

Ch. 5: Tiya Miles, "Dispossession"

Ch. 6: Matthew Desmond, "Capitalism"

Ch. 7: Jamelle Boule, "Politics"

Ch. 8: Martha S. Jones, "Citizenship"

Ch. 9: Carol Anderson, "Self-Defense"

Ch. 10: Bryan Stevenson, "Punishment"

Ch. 11: Trymaine Lee, "Inheritance"

Ch. 12: Linda Villarosa, "Medicine"

Ch. 13: Anthea Butler, "Church"

Ch. 14: Wesley Morris, "Music"

Ch. 15: Jeneen Interlandi "Healthcare"

Ch. 16: Kevin M. Kruse, "Traffic"

Ch. 17: Ibram X. Kendi, "Progress"

Ch. 18: Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Justice"

We will be addressing the chapters in the book over the course of two semesters, covering the first half of the book, through chapter 9, in this semester, and the second half in the spring. The two semesters will be independent of each other, and you are welcome to sign up for either or both.

Participants will be expected to read the chapter in question each week. In addition, they will choose to make a presentation related to one of the chapters or to lead a discussion based on the chapter. Whether to include the literary contributions is at the option of the presenter or facilitator. If two participants choose to work together to develop themes around the chapter, they will be given priority.

Possible resources in addition to the required book:

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, June 2014

Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own*

Nikole Hannah-Jones, "What Is Owed," *New York Times Magazine*, June 25, 2020

Jared Ross Hardesty, *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds: A History of Slavery in New England*

Historic Northampton, "Slavery Research Project," <https://www.historicnorthampton.org/slavery-research-project.html>

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*

Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*

Robert Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America.*

Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*