

UNC-CH Classics Department Statement on Anti-Black Racism

The Department of Classics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill condemns the murders by the police of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade and calls for justice and accountability for their deaths, as well as the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery and countless others. We recognize the trauma that these recent and unfolding events, as well as the enduring, systematic structures of white supremacy, inflict on Black people and people of color. We also acknowledge that white people, regardless of their beliefs, benefit from this system, and that the national conversations about violence and oppression are not abstract and distant, but are directly relevant to our own campus community (witness the controversies over Silent Sam) and our pedagogies.

With this in mind, we are seeking multiple means to make our field and department more equitable and inclusive, and we are amplifying the work of other groups who promote that goal. We stand in solidarity with Black communities, and we repudiate the use of classical antiquity to support anti-Black racism, white supremacy, and any form of prejudice. For us, “Black Lives Matter” is not just a cause to follow but a promise to fulfill. However, realizing that words are not enough, we commit to the following actions:

- To seek out further resources and activities to help us better understand the systemic racism embedded in the structures we inhabit by engaging in comprehensive training with the Race Equity Institute in the coming academic year
- To continue our work with “Carolina Firsts” to develop classes and share resources for first-generation college students
- To include in our courses, especially large lecture courses, discussion of concepts of race and ethnicity in the ancient world and how they affect the modern world
- To support institutional reform at UNC by supporting Black faculty, staff and student groups and advocating for the direct acknowledgement of UNC’s racist past, and an active and transparent reckoning with that history
- To support the cancellation of the moratorium on renaming campus buildings

We consider these to be starting points in our ongoing commitment to social justice and making Classics more equitable and inclusive. Additionally, we welcome feedback on how we can continue to improve in our support of Black communities and anti-racist initiatives. Please [click here](#) if you have suggestions and further ideas or would like to share your experiences related to Classics with our department.

Finally, in the spirit of learning, we share with you the following lists of statements and essays by Black classicists and resources for learning and teaching:

- [“Fight or Die: How to Move from Statements to Actions,” by Pria Jackson](#)
- [“After Careful Consideration...” by John Bracey](#)

- ["Center and Margins: Recruiting, Anxiety, and the Power of Reaching Out," by Jermaine Bryant](#)
- ["The Birth of a Muthos," by Vanessa Stovall](#)
- Society for Classical Studies interviews with Shelley Haley: [Part I](#), [Part II](#)
- ["Some Thoughts on AIA-SCS 2019" by Dan-el Padilla-Peralta](#)
- [Itinera Podcast – Interview with Jackie Murray](#)

Resources Related to Classics and Classical Archaeology

The Sportula: Microgrants for Classics Students

<https://medium.com/@libertinopatrenatus/statement-of-solidarity-with-blacklivesmatter-af2dede7bce5>

The Mountaintop Coalition

<https://www.mountaintopcoalition.org/home/statement-of-solidarity>

EOSAfricana

<https://www.eosafricana.org/>

Archaeological Institute of America

<https://www.archaeological.org/aia-statement-on-archaeology-and-social-justice/>

Society for Classical Studies

<https://classicalstudies.org/scs-news/statement-police-brutality-systemic-racism-and-death-george-floyd>

Joint Statement by Classics and Social Justice and the Women's Classical Caucus

<https://classicssocialjustice.wordpress.com/>

Asian & Asian-American Classical Caucus

<https://www.aaaclassicalcaucus.org/>

A Brief History of Black Classicism

<https://kleos.chs.harvard.edu/?p=11475>

[What Studying Classics Taught me about my Relationship with Western Civilisation](#)

<https://cucd.blogs.sas.ac.uk/files/2020/03/DHINDSA-What-Studying-Classics-Taught-me-about-my-Relationship-with-Western-Civilisation-2.pdf>

Resources for Learning and Teaching

Antiracist Allyship Starter Pack

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/e/2PACX1vTkmrhfhYUfCcTbp3NoDmxKZUAN7xMiVuhqIINBizKzIh7yPPqTPFgYzmd5NgKtEdpVugB6GoZwPWR/pubhtml>

Antiracist Toolkit, UNC Department of Asian Studies

<https://asianstudies.unc.edu/antiracist-toolkit-department-of-asian-studies/>

Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources

<https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1PrAq4iBNb4nVIcTsLcNIW8zjaQXBLkWayL8EaPlh0bc/mobilebasic>

Antiracism Resources & Reading List

<http://bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES>

Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org/>

Writing Prompts If You've Been Accused of White Fragility

<http://leesareneehall.com/expressivewriting-prompts-to-use-if-youve-been-accused-of-whitefragility-spiritualbypass-or-whiteprivilege/>

Other AntiRacist Readings & Resources

[White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo](#)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/books/review/antiracist-reading-list-ibram-x-kendi.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/parenting/kids-books-racism-protest.html>