

UFELAW

Center for the Study of Race and Race Relations

FREDRIC G. LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW • FALL 2017



Kathryn Russell-Brown,
CSRRR Director and Professor of Law

Letter from the Director

In public spaces, conversations and images of Black life and Black people typically focus on singular aspects of Black life. As well, public images of Blackness are often trained on parts of the Black body—not a fully embodied person, with a body, mind, and soul. These portrayals present disconnected Blackness for public consumption. Consider the debate about professional Black football players and their right to take a knee during the national anthem. The Black body kneeling.

I have been thinking a lot about this since I visited the National African American Museum of History and Culture last summer. Our tickets were for August 8, 2017, 10:30 AM. My family and I traveled to Washington, DC from Florida, and my 80-year-old aunt sojourned from Oakland—almost 3,000 miles away. As I entered the building and went through security, my first thoughts were of my mom. She and I had talked about the museum, and over the years, we had both donated small sums to its building fund. I carried some of her ashes with me.

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Race Matters in the News

In 2015, CSRRR initiated a discussion on race and the law school curriculum. Following the first panel, the CSRRR began its bi-monthly “Race Matters in the News” series. This marks year three of our discussion series where the CSRRR held talks on a range of important contemporary issues.



Professor Tanner Amdur-Clark and 3L Adam Trumbly discuss the Dakota Access Pipeline (Jan. 2017)

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Prof. Darren Hutchinson discusses police misconduct and the courts (March 2017)



UF Psychology Prof. Colin Smith reviews implicit bias (Sept. 2017)



Prof. Mary Jane Angelo discusses the Flint Water Crisis (Oct. 2017)



CSRRR WELCOMES Will Atkins

Will Atkins is the new Senior Director of UF's Multicultural and Diversity Affairs (MCDA) office. Through transformative educational experiences and developmental opportunities, Multicultural and Diversity Affairs celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus for all students across identities. As Senior Director, Atkins' department oversees Black Affairs, Hispanic-Latino Affairs, Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion Peer Educators, the University Minority Mentoring Program and Gatorship, a leadership development retreat focused on social justice education to create a more inclusive campus environment.

Letter from the Director, continued from page 1

Once inside, we took an escalator and elevator down to the ground floor to begin our tour. As I looked around, I was intrigued to see that most of the visitors that day were African American adults. Mostly people over age forty. The majority were dressed comfortably, but I observed more than a few people clothed to the nines, women in dresses and high-heels and men in suits and dress shoes. This was an event.

There was so much to see, read, touch, hear, and take in—it was a full-sensory experience. The design and artwork of the building's spaces are beautiful.

I was especially taken with the photography exhibits, exhibits on political movements, and videos of early Black dancers. The Emmett Till room was deeply moving. The breadth, depth and sheer boldness of the museum's vision is humbling.

We left the museum at closing time, seven hours after we had entered. There was still so much artwork and so many exhibits that we had not had time to stop and experience. Even so, I left feeling a deep sense of satisfaction. I later realized that feeling was rooted in the museum's true gift: showcasing the phenomenal girth of African American life.

The museum displays the wholeness of African American life. African Americans are represented as vast, complex communities of people. Through the museum's eyes, African Americans are not reduced to their physical capabilities as singers, dancers, artists, or athletes. They are not just people who were kidnapped, raped, beaten and forced into back-breaking labor, and killed. Not just people with artistic, intellectual, political or athletic gifts.

The museum's legacy is that it renders African Americans as full persons and shares the community's deep history, its evolution, its defeats, its vibrancy, its mundaneness, and its glories.

If you have not done so already, I strongly encourage you to plan a trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture. We hope in some way, that CSRRR's work furthers the goal of presenting race and racial groups, particularly those that have been marginalized, as whole.

Please join us in our work. Enjoy this issue of the newsletter.



Professor Cynthia Lee

CSRRR **2017 SPRING LECTURE**

Race, Policing, and Lethal Force: Remediating Shooter Bias with Martial Arts Training

Last March, Professor Cynthia Lee gave CSRRR's Spring Lecture. The talk was engaging and informative and illuminated the issue of fatal police shootings, which disproportionately effect Black men and communities of color. As a remedy, Prof. Lee presented two proposals: mandated traditional martial arts training for officers and training within police departments to improve accuracy and reduce bias. Prof. Lee engaged the audience in a lively discussion on the efficacy of traditional martial arts training. She highlighted research establishing the benefits of martial arts training, including increased confidence, lowered stress levels, and conflict diffusion.



Laura Gomez, UCLA Law Professor

*Mark Your
Calendar!*

Noon, March 21, 2018

CSRRR **2018 SPRING LECTURE**

The Racialization of Latinos in the U.S.: From Manifest Destiny to the 2016 Presidential Election

*with Prof. Laura Gomez
UCLA Law*



2017 Yegelwel Summer Fellow

Andy Garcia, was selected as the 2017 Yegelwel Fellow for the Anti-Defamation League. Andy, a 3L, is from Miami, Florida. He graduated from UF with a BA in Political Science and International Relations (magna cum laude). In 2016, he was awarded the Campus Compact Fellowship and Projects for Peace grant by UF President Fuchs for his extensive non-profit work in Cuba. Garcia says, "Working for the Anti-Defamation League made me personally aware about multiple instances of discrimination happening on a daily basis in our state and of the need for organizations like ADL to stand up to defend the anti-discriminatory principles enshrined in our laws. It was a great experience to handle complaints, help draft anti-hate legislation for Florida and promote ADL's mission of inclusiveness and justice for all."

The Evan Yegelwel Fellowship allows one UF law student to complete a summer fellowship at the Anti-Defamation League's Florida Regional Office in Boca Raton. A generous gift from UF Law alumnus Evan Yegelwel, makes this fellowship possible.

In anticipation of the October 2017 talk by White supremacist and alt-right leader Richard Spencer, panel discussions, rallies, and teach-ins were held across the UF campus.



UF panel “A Conversation on the First Amendment,” co-sponsored by CSRRR, with (L-R) Prof. Clay Calvert, Prof. Ken Nunn, and moderator James Tyger, Student Government Advisor.

Center for the Study of Race and Race Relations

Vision

The Center for the Study of Race and Race Relations (CSRRR) is an academic research and resource center. The Center’s mission will be met through the work of various groups engaged in a wide range of activities. This work includes:

- Producing, supporting, and highlighting race-related scholarship within and beyond the UF community
- Gathering, analyzing, and sharing historical and contemporary knowledge about race and race relations
- Developing and supporting, through teaching, research, writing, and workshops, race-related curricula for collegiate and professional schools
- Fostering non-stigmatizing ways of discussing issues of race and ethnicity for African Americans, Latino/as, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Whites

Mission Statement

The CSRRR is committed to de-stigmatizing race. With the objective of fostering communities of dialogue, the Center embraces historically and empirically based thinking, talking, teaching and writing on race. To this end, the Center creates and supports programs designed to enhance race-related curriculum development for faculty, staff and students in collegiate and professional schools. Of the six U.S. law schools with race centers, the CSRRR is uniquely focused on curriculum development.

CONTACT US

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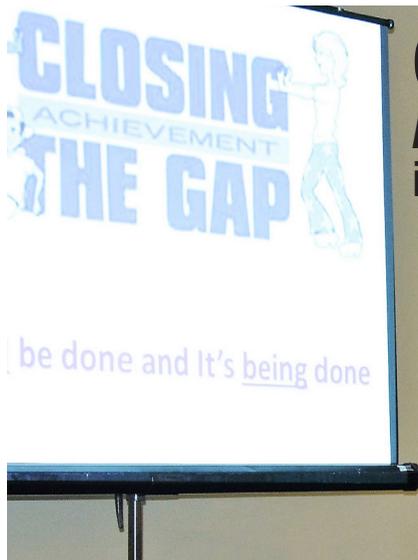
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WORKING TOGETHER



Creating Excellence in Education: A Town Hall on Ending Racial Disparities in Our Local Schools (March 2017)



In Alachua County, African American students substantially underperformed compared to White students on all measures of achievement and graduation. “Creating Excellence in Education,” co-sponsored by CSRRR, Gnv4All of the Gainesville Sun, and other local organizations, educated the public on the urgency of the racial-academic achievement gap. During the event, Dr. Diedre Houchen (pictured above), CSRRR postdoctoral associate, presented evidence-based best practices to create equity, mitigate standardized test disparities, and significantly raise African American student performance.

Fireside Chat with Former Florida Supreme Court Justices Rosemary Barkett and Joseph Hatchett (June 2017)



The UF Center for Governmental Responsibility, the Bob Graham Center for Public Service, the George A. Smathers Libraries, and CSRRR hosted a discussion with two Florida judicial system luminaries: the Honorable Rosemary Barkett (seated left) and the Honorable Joseph Hatchett (seated right). The distinguished guests, both of whom served as Florida Supreme Court justices and federal appeals court judges, provided historical and contemporary perspectives on race, gender and justice in Florida’s court system. Prof. Jon Mills (center) moderated the discussion.

NEW BOOKS ON RACE

All descriptions are from the publishers

Chokehold: Policing Black Men

Paul Butler
The New Press (2017)

Cops, politicians, and ordinary people are afraid of black men. The result is the Chokehold: laws and practices that treat every African American man like a thug. In this explosive new book, an African American former federal prosecutor shows that the system is working exactly the way it's supposed to. Black men are always under watch, and police violence is widespread—all with the support of judges and politicians.

In his no-holds-barred style, Butler, whose scholarship has been featured on *60 Minutes*, uses new data to demonstrate that white men commit the majority of violent crime in the United States. For example, a white woman is ten times more likely to be raped by a white male acquaintance than be the victim of a violent crime perpetrated by a black man. Butler also frankly discusses the problem of black on black violence and how to keep communities safer—without relying as much on police.

Chokehold powerfully demonstrates why current efforts to reform law enforcement will not create lasting change. Butler's controversial recommendations about how to crash the system, and when it's better for a black man to plead guilty—even if he's innocent—are sure to be game-changers in the national debate about policing, criminal justice, and race relations

Loving: Interracial Intimacy in America and the Threat to White Supremacy

Sheryll Cashin
Beacon Press (2017)

Loving beyond boundaries is a radical act that is changing America. When Mildred and Richard Loving wed in 1958, they were ripped from their shared bed and taken to court. Their crime: miscegenation, punished by exile from their home state of Virginia. The resulting landmark decision of *Loving v. Virginia* ended bans on interracial marriage and remains a signature case—the first to use the words “white supremacy” to describe such racism.

Drawing from the earliest chapters in US history, legal scholar Sheryll Cashin reveals the enduring legacy of America's original sin, tracing how we transformed from a country without an entrenched construction of race to a nation where one drop of nonwhite blood merited exclusion from full citizenship. In vivid detail, she illustrates how the idea of whiteness was created by the planter class of yesterday and is reinforced by today's power-hungry dog-whistlers to divide struggling whites and people of color, ensuring plutocracy and undermining the common good

We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy

Ta-Nehisi Coates
Penguin Random House

“We were eight years in power” was the lament of Reconstruction-era black politicians as the American experiment in multiracial democracy ended with the return of white supremacist rule in the South. In this sweeping collection of new and selected essays, Ta-Nehisi Coates explores the tragic echoes of that history in our own time: the unprecedented election of a black president followed by a vicious backlash that fueled the election of the man Coates argues is America's “first white president.”

But the story of these present-day eight years is not just about presidential politics. This book also examines the new voices, ideas, and movements for justice that emerged over this period—and the effects of the persistent, haunting shadow of our nation's old and unreconciled history. Coates powerfully examines the events of the Obama era from his intimate and revealing perspective—the point of view of a young writer who begins the journey in an unemployment office in Harlem and ends it in the Oval Office, interviewing a president.

Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution, and Imprisonment

Angela J. Davis (Ed.)
Penguin Random House (2017)

A comprehensive, readable analysis of the key issues of the Black Lives Matter movement, this thought-provoking and compelling anthology features essays by some of the nation's most influential and respected criminal justice experts and legal scholars.

Policing the Black Man explores and critiques the many ways the criminal justice system impacts the lives of African American boys and men at every stage of the criminal process, from arrest through sentencing. Essays range from an explication of the historical roots of racism in the criminal justice system to an examination of modern-day police killings of unarmed black men. The contributors discuss and explain racial profiling, the power and discretion of police and prosecutors, the role of implicit bias, the racial impact of police and prosecutorial decisions, the disproportionate imprisonment of black men, the collateral consequences of mass incarceration, and the Supreme Court's failure to provide meaningful remedies for the injustices in the criminal justice system. *Policing the Black Man* is an enlightening must-read for anyone interested in the critical issues of race and justice in America.

Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America

Michael Eric Dyson
St. Martin's Press (2017)

Short, emotional, literary, powerful—*Tears We Cannot Stop* is the book that all Americans who care about the current and long-burning crisis in race relations will want to read.

As the country grapples with racist division at a level not seen since the 1960s, one man's voice soars above the rest with conviction and compassion. In his 2016 *New York Times* op-ed piece "Death in Black and White," Michael Eric Dyson moved a nation. Now he continues to speak out in *Tears We Cannot Stop*—a provocative and deeply personal call for change. Dyson argues that if we are to make real racial progress we must face difficult truths, including being honest about how black grievance has been ignored, dismissed, or discounted.

Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America

James Forman, Jr.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (2017)

In recent years, America's criminal justice system has become the subject of an increasingly urgent debate. Critics have assailed the rise of mass incarceration, emphasizing its disproportionate impact on people of color. As James Forman, Jr., points out, however, the war on crime that began in the 1970s was supported by many African American leaders in the nation's urban centers. In *Locking Up Our Own*, he seeks to understand why.

Forman shows us that the first substantial cohort of black mayors, judges, and police chiefs took office amid a surge in crime and drug addiction. Many prominent black officials, including Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Barry and federal prosecutor Eric Holder, feared that the gains of the civil rights movement were being undermined by lawlessness—and thus embraced tough-on-crime measures, including longer sentences and aggressive police tactics. In the face of skyrocketing murder rates and the proliferation of open-air drug markets, they believed they had no choice. But the policies they adopted would have devastating consequences for residents of poor black neighborhoods

The Origin of Others

Toni Morrison
Harvard University Press (2017)

America's foremost novelist reflects on the themes that preoccupy her work and increasingly dominate national and world politics: race, fear, borders, the mass movement of peoples, the desire for belonging. What is race and why does it matter? What motivates the human tendency to construct Others? Why does the presence of Others make us so afraid? Drawing on her Norton Lectures, Toni Morrison takes up these and other vital questions bearing on identity in *The Origin of Others*. In her search for answers, the novelist considers her own memories as well as history, politics, and especially literature. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, and Camara Laye are among the authors she examines.

If we learn racism by example, then literature plays an important part in the history of race in America, both negatively and positively. Morrison writes about nineteenth-century literary efforts to romance slavery, contrasting them with the scientific racism of Samuel Cartwright and the banal diaries of the plantation overseer and slaveholder Thomas Thistlewood. She looks at configurations of blackness, notions of racial purity, and the ways in which literature employs skin color to reveal character or drive narrative. Expanding the scope of her concern, she also addresses globalization and the mass movement of peoples in this century.

The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America

Richard Rothstein
W.W. Norton & Company (2017)

In this groundbreaking history of the modern American metropolis, Richard Rothstein, a leading authority on housing policy, explodes the myth that America's cities came to be racially divided through *de facto* segregation—that is, through individual prejudices, income differences, or the actions of private institutions like banks and real estate agencies. Rather, *The Color of Law* incontrovertibly makes clear that it was *de jure* segregation—the laws and policy decisions passed by local, state, and federal governments—that actually promoted the discriminatory patterns that continue to this day.

Through extraordinary revelations and extensive research that Ta-Nehisi Coates has lauded as "brilliant" (*The Atlantic*), Rothstein comes to chronicle nothing less than an untold story that begins in the 1920s, showing how this process of *de jure* segregation began with explicit racial zoning, as millions of African Americans moved in a great historical migration from the south to the north.

In the Wake: On Blackness and Being

Christina Sharpe
Duke University Press (2016)

In this original and trenchant work, Christina Sharpe interrogates literary, visual, cinematic, and quotidian representations of Black life that comprise what she calls the "orthography of the wake." Activating multiple registers of "wake"—the path behind a ship, keeping watch with the dead, coming to consciousness—Sharpe illustrates how Black lives are swept up and animated by the afterlives of slavery, and she delineates what survives despite such insistent violence and negation. Initiating and describing a theory and method of reading the metaphors and materiality of "the wake," "the ship," "the hold," and "the weather," Sharpe shows how the sign of the slave ship marks and haunts contemporary Black life in the diaspora and how the specter of the hold produces conditions of containment, regulation, and punishment, but also something in excess of them. In the weather, Sharpe situates anti-Blackness and white supremacy as the total climate that produces premature Black death as normative. Formulating the wake and "wake work" as sites of artistic production, resistance, consciousness, and possibility for living in diaspora, *In the Wake* offers a way forward.

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Young People's Book Corner

Middle Grade and Young Adult

I am Alfonso Jones

Tony Medina (author)
Stacey Robinson and John Jennings (illustrators) | Lee and Low (2017)

The Only Road

Alexandra Diaz | Simon & Schuster (2017)

You Bring the Distant Near

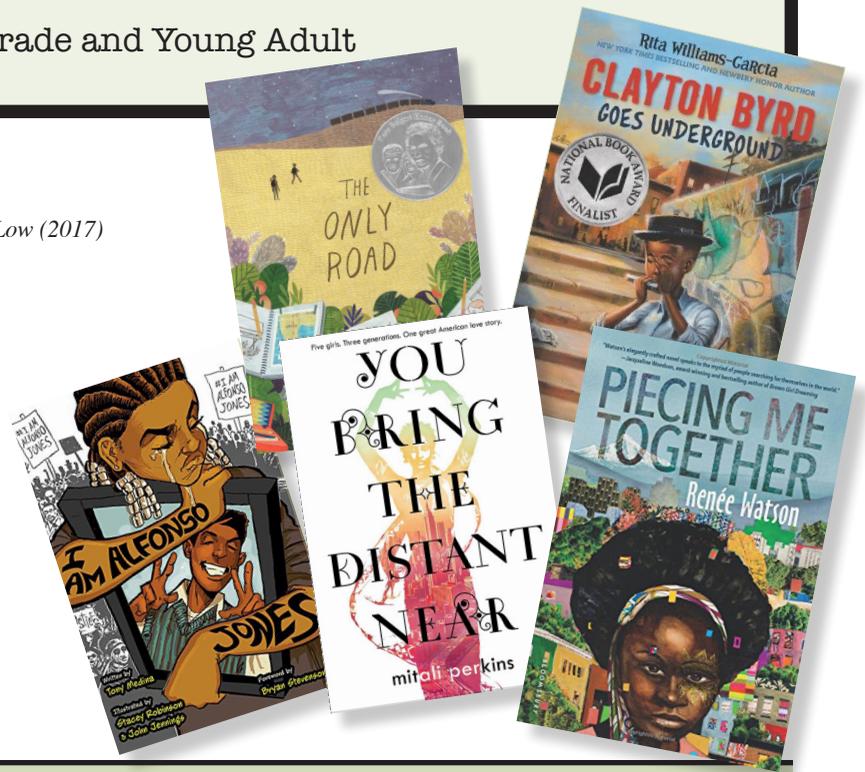
Mitali Perkins | Farrar, Straus and Giroux (2017)

Clayton Byrd Goes Underground

Rita Williams-Garcia | Amistad (2017)

Piecing Me Together

Renee Watson | Bloomsbury (2017)



NEW BOOKS ON RACE, CONTINUED

Meaning-Making, Internalized Racism, and African American Identity

Jas Sullivan and Williams E. Cross, Jr. (Eds.)
SUNY (2016)

Focusing on the broad range of attitudes Black people employ to make sense of their Blackness, this volume offers the latest research on racial identity. The first section explores meaning-making, or the importance of holding one type of racial-cultural identity as compared to another. It looks at a wide range of topics, including stereotypes, spirituality, appearance, gender and intersectionalities, masculinity, and more. The second section examines the different expressions of internalized racism that arise when the pressure of oppression is too great, and includes such topics as identity orientations, self-esteem, colorism, and linked fate. Grounded in psychology, the research presented here makes the case for understanding Black identity as wide ranging in content, subject to multiple interpretations, and linked to both positive mental health as well as varied forms of internalized racism.

The Blood of Emmett Till

Timothy Tyson
Simon and Schuster (2017)

In 1955, white men in the Mississippi Delta lynched a fourteen-year-old from Chicago named Emmett Till. His murder was part of a wave of white terrorism in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision that declared public school segregation unconstitutional. Only weeks later, Rosa Parks thought about young Emmett as she refused to move to the back of a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Five years later, Black students who called themselves “the Emmett Till generation” launched sit-in campaigns that turned the struggle for civil rights into a mass movement. Till’s lynching became the most notorious hate crime in American history.

But what actually happened to Emmett Till—not the icon of injustice, but the flesh-and-blood boy? Part detective story, part political history, *The Blood of Emmett Till* ...draw[s] on a wealth of new evidence, including a shocking admission of Till’s innocence from the woman in whose name he was killed.

2017-18 Course Development Grant Awardees

The CSRRR Course Development Grants fund the development and teaching of UF courses that substantially address issues of race and race relations.



Vincent Adejumo

Vincent Edward Oluwole Adejumo attended Florida State University, where he earned his B.S. degree in Business Administration (triple major in Business Management, Management Information Systems, and Human Resource Management). He received a Master's in Public Administration from Strayer University and his Ph.D. from UF's Political Science Department. He is a fulltime

lecturer in UF's African American Studies program, where he teaches several courses, including Introduction to African American Studies. For the course development grant, Dr. Adejumo will teach, "Black Wall Street: Critical Discourse for Black Entrepreneurship and Black Enterprise" during the Spring of 2018.



Mandisa Haarhoff

Mandisa Haarhoff is a doctoral candidate in the University of Florida's Department of English. She came from South Africa on a Fulbright Scholarship in 2012. Her dissertation, "Black in the Afterlife: Late Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Narratives," considers the ways that writers use the trope of death to represent black experience in the aftermath of apartheid. Haarhoff is an actress, playwright, and poet, and in 2016 she performed in the play *Tshepang*, at Mondial du Theatre in Monaco. Haarhoff taught her course, "Being and Blackness," in the Fall 2017 semester.



Aida A. Hozic

Aida A. Hozic is an Associate Professor of International Relations in UF's Political Science Dept. Born in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia, and raised in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, she holds degrees in Philosophy and Comparative Literature (B.A.) from the University of Sarajevo, International Affairs (M.A.) from The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and in Political Science (Ph.D.)

from the University of Virginia. Her work is situated on the intersections of cultural studies, international political economy and international security. She is a recipient of multiple Fulbright Awards, John D. and Katherine T. MacArthur Fellowship in Global Security, Open Society Fellowship and many others. Dr. Hozic will teach "The Color Line: Race and International Politics" in the Spring 2018 semester.



Alyssa Hunziker

Alyssa Hunziker is a doctoral candidate in the University of Florida's Department of English. Her research is focused on literature that evokes histories of colonialism, American Indian dispossession, and race in North America, Ireland, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The course development grant provided support for the course, "Hidden Histories: U.S. Historical Fiction and Race" that was taught in the Fall 2017 semester.

The course examines recent historical fiction that engages multiple sites of colonial and racial subjugation and includes texts by African American, American Indian, and Asian American authors.

CSRRR COURSE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Since 2010, CSRRR has awarded Course Development Grants (CDG). These grants are available to UF faculty and doctoral students. The awards are designed to encourage and highlight undergraduate courses that address issues of race and race relations. Faculty awardees receive \$1000 grants and graduate students receive up to \$3,000 (with a stipend available for race-related materials). Over the last eight years, CSRRR has sponsored 19 courses and awarded over \$40,000 in CDG funding. Ten faculty members and nine graduate students, from ten UF departments, have received funding.

CDG grant applications for 2018-2019 are due January 26, 2018.

For more information about CSRRR Course Development grants, visit our website

www.law.ufl.edu/areas-of-study/centers/csrrr



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Questions for Brant T. Lee

1. Why study race?

With regard to the big themes in the development of American law and American society since the founding, there's not much that happens in which race is not a central factor, whether explicitly or not. The American Revolution occurred in a context in which the Founders imagined themselves settlers in undiscovered territory, which is only possible to imagine if the primacy of Whiteness is the premise. The racial compromises over slavery in the Constitution are pervasive and well-studied, and the 19th-century consummation of continental ambition very explicitly swept aside Red, Brown, and Yellow. And, of course, slavery divided the country. Less well-recognized is the fact that reunification involved cruelly abandoning Black people to a reign of racist, violent, terror and Jim Crow segregation for almost a hundred years.

My own thesis is that Whiteness has made White people miserable. The inescapable truth that confronts observers on all sides is the fact of persistent racial inequality. As human beings are a species

that strives for meaning, we have to make sense of that fact, and we have two strong competing narratives: merit or malice. Either inequality is the result of objective merit-rewarding systems, or it is the result of malicious, intentional racism. The strong pull of self-serving rationalization (on both sides) leads White people towards an ideology of individualistic meritocracy. Every time racial inequality is raised to consciousness, the instinctive turn to merit kicks in. People often argue that an ideology—or myth—of extreme individualism exacerbates racism, but I think it's the other way around: the interpretation of the cause of racial inequality motivates the commitment to individualism. But that ideology is failing its proponents. Hyper-capitalism is destroying opportunity for everyone. I think the stress and frustration of struggling or even failing when you're deeply racially committed to believing that the world allocates rewards based on individual merit creates tremendous dissonance that leads to the White resentment and rage that we see so much of today. That puts race at the center of broad debates about the nature of the self and the role of government.

There is also an element of self-serving rationalization in calling everything intentional racism. But this is why dialogue is so hard. These two narratives are so familiar that they're part of the environment. Everyone walks into every race-charged discussion already accused, either of having inferior merit, or of being racist. That's no way to start a dialogue. It's so important to develop new metaphors and images for how inequality is produced. It's not either Bull Connor or a blind audition. Everywhere we look, in the business world, in human relationships, or even in the broader natural world, we are able to study, discuss, and understand complex systems where there is not a linear relationship between merit and success, or where the important work is not accomplished through coordinated, intentional acts. Yet, somehow we think that the explanation for racial inequality should be simple.

2. How do you incorporate race into your teaching?

I've been very fortunate to have been able to teach a number of courses that involve race very explicitly. I get to teach a

seminar on Feminist and Race Theory, and a hybrid seminar/clinic on Social Justice Lawyering. I also teach Employment Discrimination Law. In those courses, race is front and center. In Property, I try not to just lecture on vast historic evils, but to connect our racial legal history to core concepts. How do you reconcile the denial of Native American property rights with your reaction to the doctrine of adverse possession? How does the 1857 Dred Scott decision inform our attitude towards the Takings Clause?

3. Can you suggest a book for “beginners”?

Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy* tells the story of the cruelty of our criminal justice system in a personal, affecting way. He has a very nice knack of telling stories about individuals while also conveying the nature of systemic problems. I would pair that with Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow*, which does such a good job of capturing the cumulative nature of the multiple, layered assaults on Black communities by different, connected aspects of the criminal justice system.

4. What book or article caused you to think about race in a new way?

Derrick Bell’s “Chronicle of the Amber Cloud” (in his book, *And We Are Not Saved*) comes back to me time and again. People trying to confront racial disparities often wail, “but what can we do?” Bell illustrated for me that we have for a long time known what works, economically, sociologically, and psychologically, to rescue people from despair. What we lack is the will to do it, based primarily on a narrative that says that those people don’t deserve to be rescued. In the decades since, we’ve demonstrated this over and over. That’s been a foundational notion for my thinking and writing ever since.

5. What’s the best part of your job?

I love my job. I get to interact with young, ambitious people every day. I get to help them understand complex new concepts and ideas, and watch the lights come on. I try to model being demanding,

compassionate, and present in every interaction, and that keeps me grounded and centered myself. And then when class is over, I get to read and write about whatever I want! Recently, I temporarily stopped trying to produce brilliant scholarship and gave myself permission to work more on administrative programs and projects that I love; I got to create my own dream job title: Director of Diversity and Social Justice Initiatives. Law school can be soul-crushing for students who came in thinking they wanted to change the world, especially for students of color at a law school in the Midwest who often find themselves isolated and demoralized in class. But for progressive White students, too. When those students discover a space where they can talk openly and explicitly about how law impacts inequality, there’s often an actual sigh of relief, a kind of relaxing-for-the-first-time-in-a-long-time sensation that can be quite visceral. I’m so happy to provide that kind of respite.

6. What are you reading now?

Ibram Kendi’s *Stamped From The Beginning*. It’s kind of a biography of racism—the history of the evolution of ideas rather than the history of particular racists. I think it’s important to recognize that ideologies and norms and practices have lives of their own, and move the focus away from the individual as the locus of racism. Racism consists of a network of cultural memes that co-evolve

over time, forming an ecosystem. But it’s daunting to think about how to evolve yourself out of it. I’m also reading *There Goes My Everything* by Jason Sokol. Understanding how White southerners experienced the Civil Rights movement is so necessary to understanding our national politics today. People say that winners write history, but the losers don’t just disappear. And when they are the majority of the population, they create history, too. It’s extraordinary when a minority group wins a political battle in a democracy; one shouldn’t expect the consequences to be simple going forward.

7. What’s your take on how the legal academy is doing with regard to incorporating race into the curriculum (what grade would you give it)?

C, I think. We’re doing what we can with what we have. Most American law professors, like most Americans generally, are White people who are not all that comfortable talking about race. Couple that with the fact that 1) many law students are not all that comfortable with it either, and 2) the current law school market requires more attention to law student satisfaction and preferences, and you end up with a situation where it can seem easier all around for everyone to avoid the topic. One positive aspect of the turmoil that President Trump continues to raise is that the relevance of race is more and more inescapable.

About Professor Brant T. Lee

Brant T. Lee is Professor of Law and Director of Diversity and Social Justice Initiatives at The University of Akron School of Law. He works to create community by connecting students with opportunities to pursue their passions as they relate to making the world a more just place. Professor Lee writes about race and complex systems. More specifically, he works across disciplines to create a better understanding of how racial inequality operates like other well-understood complex systems. He received his B.A. from The University of California at Berkeley and his J.D. and M.P.P. from Harvard University. Prior to joining the Akron Law faculty, Professor Lee served as Counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, and as acting Deputy Staff Secretary and Special Assistant to the President in the White House.

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Professor Laura Gomez, UCLA

The Racialization of Latinos in the United States:
From Manifest Destiny to the 2016 Presidential Election

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