Harvard African and African American Studies Faculty Reading Recommendations

The Department of African and African American Studies (AAAS) at Harvard University was forged through protracted struggle and in response to antiblack racism and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Many in our community have devoted their scholarly lives to gaining a deep understanding of the causes of racial and related injustices and to identifying the appropriate responses to such oppression. In light of the killing of George Floyd and the protests his death has engendered, several AAAS faculty members have recommended a few works that they believe might help others understand and respond appropriately to our complex political moment, particularly with respect to racism, police violence, political resistance, and state repression of dissent. Below are their recommendations, followed by a few selected works by AAAS faculty that bear directly on our moment.

Robin Bernstein
James Baldwin, Blues for Mister Charlie (1964)
Anna Deavere Smith, Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992 (1994)
Lorraine Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun (1959)
Elizabeth Hinton, From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America (2017)
Claudia Rankine, Citizen. (2014)

Suzanne Blier
Orlando Patterson, Rituals of Blood. (1999)

Vincent Brown
Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1963)

Jean Comaroff
Robert Gooding-Williams, Reading Rodney King/ Reading Urban Uprising (1993)
Stuart Hall, Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order (1978)
Trevor Noah, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4amCfVbA_c (2020)

Alejandro de la Fuente
George Fredrickson, Racism: A Short History (2016)
Martha Jones, Birthright Citizens (2018)
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Jarvis Givens
Elizabeth Alexander, “Can You Be BLACK and Look at This?": *Reading the Rodney King Video(s)* (1994)

Evelynn Hammonds

Jennifer Hochschild
Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals* (1999)

Vijay Iyer

Walter Johnson

Jamaica Kincaid
William Bartram, *Travels of William Bartram* (1791)

Michèle Lamont
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)
Ava Duvernay, 13th *Netflix Film* (2016)
Sarah Lewis
Richard Avedon and James Baldwin, *Nothing Personal* (1964)
Maurice Berger, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (2012)
Laurence Ralph, *Renegade Dreams* (2014)

Jesse McCarthy

Marcyliena Morgan
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

Tommie Shelby
Jennifer L. Eberhardt, *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice that Shapes What We See, Think, and Do* (2019)

Kay Shelemay

James Sidanius
Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965)

Doris Sommer
Brandon Terry
Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here?* (1967)

Todne Thomas

Cornel West
Anton Chekhov, *The Student*, (1894)
Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, (1959)
Malcolm X, *The Ballot or the Bullet*, (1964)

David Williams

Works by AAAS Faculty


** Michèle Lamont, *Getting Respect: Response to Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil and Israel* (2016)


** Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa* (2007)

** Tommie Shelby, *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform* (2016)

** Tommie Shelby and Brandon Terry, *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, (2018)

** Cornel West, *Race Matters*, (1993)