

International Workshop on Racial Capitalism: History, Theory, Pathways to Freedom

May 11-12, 2022

Sponsored by the Project on Race and Capitalism, University of Houston



AGENDA, PROGRAM, and PARTICIPANTS

Wednesday, May 11

Session One: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM:

South African Theorizations of Racial Capitalism and Their Influence

- Salim Vally, University of Johannesburg, *“Neville Alexander and the Struggle Against Racial Capitalism”*
- Zachary Levenson, University of North Carolina, *“The Three Dialectics of Racial Capitalism: From South Africa to the US and Back Again”*

Discussant: Tshepo Chéry, University of Houston

Chair: Priscilla JudsonWallace, doctoral candidate, Dept. of History, UH

LUNCH 12:30 – 1:30

Session Two: 1: 30 – 3:30 PM:

Historical Formations and Trajectories of Racial Capitalism

- David McNally, University of Houston, *“A Chattel Proletariat? CLR James, Sylvia Wynter, and Historical Formations of Racial Capitalism”*
- Ricardo Jacobs, UC Santa Barbara, *“The Historical Trajectory of Racial Capitalism in South Africa and its Antithesis”*

Discussant: Aaron Kamugisha, Smith College

Chair: Valerie Butler-Harris, doctoral candidate, Dept. of History, UH

3:30 – 4 PM – Preparations for Day 2

6 PM – Leave Hotel for Workshop Dinner at the Backstreet Cafe

Thursday, May 12

Session Three: 10 AM – 12 Noon:

Thinking About Racial Capitalism with Gramsci and Social Reproduction Theory

- Gargi Bhattacharyya, University of East London, *“Social Reproduction and Racial Capitalism”*
- Jordan T. Camp, Trinity College, *“Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Racial Capitalism”*

Discussant: Vanessa Wills, George Washington University

Chair: Erica Augenstein, doctoral candidate, Dept. of History, UH

LUNCH: Noon – 1 PM

Session Four: 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Neoliberal Transformations, Abolitionist Legacies

- Arun Kundnani, Transnational Institute, *“The Racial Constitution of Neoliberalism”*
- Christina Heatherton, *“The Abolitionist International”*

Discussant: Nicholas De Genova, University of Houston

Chair: Dr. Kelly Hopkins, Department of History, University of Houston

3-4 PM – Informal Discussion on Workshop and Future Collaborations

Session Five: 6 to 8 PM ***The George Floyd Memorial Lecture***

Featuring Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Director of the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics, City University of New York

Conrad Hilton Ballroom, UH Hilton Hotel Reception at 6 PM, Lecture at 6:30 PM

Support provided by the Panos Family Endowed Lecture in Equity and Social Justice

8 PM – Dinner at the Hilton Hotel

Friday May 13 – 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Walking Tour and Lunch with the Juneteenth Legacy Project (JLP), Galveston

With Mr. Sam Collins III, president of the JLP.

We will retrace the steps of the United States Colored Troops as they arrived in Galveston, TX on June 19, 1865, and visit the Juneteenth wall mural and the offices of the Juneteenth Legacy Project.

Bus provided by the Department of African American Studies

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Gargi Bhattacharyya

Dr. Gargi Bhattacharyya is Professor of Sociology at the Centre for Refugees, Migration and Belonging, University of East London. Dr. Bhattacharyya has published widely on issues of migration, racism, austerity, and sexuality. Among their many books are *Tales of Dark-Skinned Women: Race, Gender and Global Culture* (1998); *Race and Power* (2001); *Sexuality and Society: An Introduction* (2002); *Traffick: The Illicit Movement of People and Things* (2005); *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror* (2008); *Crisis, Austerity and Everyday Life: Living in a Time of Diminishing Expectations* (2015); and *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival* (2018).

Dr. Jordan T. Camp

Jordan T. Camp is an Assistant Professor of American Studies and Co-Director of the Social Justice Initiative at Trinity College. He is the author of *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State* (University of California Press, 2016), co-editor (with Christina Heatherton) of *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter* (Verso, 2016), and co-editor (with Laura Pulido) of the late Clyde Woods' *Development Drowned and Reborn: The Blues and Bourbon Restorations in Post-Katrina New Orleans* (University of Georgia Press, 2017). His work also appears or is forthcoming in venues such as *American Quarterly*, *Antipode*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *Eurozine*, *Journal of Urban History*, *Kalfou: A Journal of Comparative and Relational Ethnic Studies*, *Ord & Bild*, *Race & Class*, *Social Justice*, *In the Wake of Hurricane Katrina*, edited by Clyde Woods (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime*, edited by Paula Chakravartty and Denise da Silva (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), *Futures of Black Radicalism*, edited by Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin (Verso, in 2017), and *Oxford Bibliographies in Geography*, edited by Barney Warf (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). He is currently working on a new book tentatively entitled, *The Southern Question: The Long Vendetta Against Social Justice in the Twentieth Century*.

Dr. Tshepo Masango Chéry

Tshepo Masango Chéry is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Houston. She is a South African scholar who turns to religion as a site from which to historicize liberation struggles in Africa. Her current book project *Kingdom Come: The Politics of Faith and Freedom in Segregationist South Africa and Beyond* (Duke University Press, forthcoming) traces the intersecting paths of Black radicals who rely on Christianity, and more specifically institution building, as a space to organize and respond politically to oppressive states in Segregationist South Africa, the Jim Crow South in America, and Colonial Zimbabwe and Kenya. Critically attuned to the function of race, gender, and class, Masango Chéry's research seeks to understand and redefine our own notions of what it means to be free and experience freedom in southern African history.

Dr. Nicholas De Genova

Nicholas De Genova <www.nicholasdegenova.com> is Professor and Chair of the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Houston. He previously held teaching appointments in urban and political geography at King's College London, and in anthropology at Stanford, Columbia, and Goldsmiths, University of London, as well as visiting professorships or research positions at the Universities of Warwick, Bern, and Amsterdam. He is the author of *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago* (2005), co-author of *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (2003), editor of *Racial Transformations: Latinos and Asians Remaking the United States* (2006), co-editor of *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement* (2010), editor of *The Borders of "Europe": Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering* (2017), co-editor of *Roma Migrants in the European Union: Un/Free Mobility* (2019), and co-editor of *Europa/ Crisis: Nuevas Palabras Claves en "la Crisis" en y de "Europa"* (2021). He is also the host of the podcast Metropolis Rising.

Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Ruth Wilson Gilmore is Professor of Earth & Environmental Sciences and Director of the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics at the City University of New York Graduate Center. Co-founder of many grassroots organizations including the California Prison Moratorium Project, Critical Resistance, and the Central California Environmental Justice Network, Her new book, *Abolition Geography: Essays Towards Liberation* (Verso), was published in April by Verso. Other books include the prize-winning *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (UC Press); and (co-edited with Paul Gilroy) *Stuart Hall: Selected Writings on Race and Difference* (Duke). *Change Everything* is forthcoming (fall 2022 Haymarket). She has lectured in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. In April 2019 Rachel Kushner profiled Gilmore in The New York Times Magazine. Honors include the American Studies Association Angela Y. Davis Award for Public Scholarship (2012); the Association of American Geographers Harold Rose Award for Anti-Racist Research and Practice (2014); the SUNY-Purchase College Eugene V. Grant Distinguished Scholar Prize for Social and Environmental Justice (2015-16); the American Studies Association Richard A. Yarborough Mentorship Award (2017); The Association of American Geographers Lifetime Achievement Award (2020); and the 2020 Lannan Foundation

Lifetime Cultural Freedom Prize (co-winner with Angela Y. Davis and Mike Davis). In 2021 Gilmore was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Christina Heatherton

Christina Heatherton is an Associate Professor of American Studies and Human Rights at Trinity College. She is the author of the forthcoming book, *Arise! Global Radicalism in the Era of the Mexican Revolution* (University of California Press, Fall 2022). With Jordan T. Camp she previously co-edited *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter* (Verso, 2016) and *Freedom Now! Struggles for the Human Right to Housing in LA and Beyond* (Freedom Now Books, 2012). She has been curating collaborative works of popular political education with scholars, organizers, and artists for over a decade. Towards that end, she has also co-founded and co-directed several initiatives including the Bristol Radical History Group, the Working Group on Racial Capitalism, the Oral History and Activism Project, and the Trinity Social Justice Initiative.

Dr. Ricardo Jacobs

Ricardo Jacobs is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Global Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research is on the global political economy of urbanization, ecology and agrarian change with a focus on Africa. His 2017 article—“An Urban Proletariat with Peasant Characteristics: Land Occupations and Livestock Raising in South Africa”—won the 2017-2018 Krishna Bharadwaji and Eric Wolf Prize from the *Journal of Peasant Studies* and the Terence K. Hopkins award from the Political Economy of the World System section of the American Sociological Association. His current book project *The Agrarianization of Urban Space: Historicizing the Insurgent Present in Southern Africa* examines how agrarian class structures get mapped onto urban space, reconfiguring the urban ecological landscape and reshaping race, class, gender, ethnicity and indigeneity in ways that are giving rise to a new urban agrarian politics.

Dr. Aaron Kamugisha

Aaron Kamugisha is the Ruth Simmons Professor of Africana Studies at Smith College. His latest book, *Beyond Coloniality: Citizenship and Freedom in the Caribbean Intellectual Freedom* was published by Indiana University Press with a simultaneous edition by University of Witwatersrand Press in March 2019. He is the editor of six edited collections and five special issues of journals on Caribbean and Africana thought, is the co-executive director of the *Race and Resistance* book series with Peter Lang Publishers, and an inaugural member of the Other Universals transnational research collective.

Dr. Arun Kundnani

Arun Kundnani is the author of *The Muslims are Coming! Islamophobia, extremism, and the domestic War on Terror* (Verso, 2014) and *The End of Tolerance: racism in 21st century Britain* (Pluto, 2007), which was selected as a *New Statesman* book of the year. His next book, *What is Anti-Racism? Racial capitalism and the limits of liberalism*, will be published by Verso in 2023. He is currently working on a biography of H. Rap Brown/Jamil Al-Amin. Kundnani is a former editor of the journal *Race & Class* and has been a scholar-in-residence at the

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. The *Guardian* has described him as “one of Britain’s best political writers.”

Dr. Zachary Levenson

Zachary Levenson is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and a Senior Research Associate in Sociology at the University of Johannesburg. Next year he will be a Donald D. Harrington Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin, where he will be writing a book about theories of racial capitalism in 1970s South Africa. His first book, *Delivery as Dispossession: Land Occupation and Eviction in the Postapartheid City*, was just released on Oxford University Press. Levenson also co-edited a recent special issue of *Qualitative Sociology* on political ethnography, and he is currently co-editing a special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* on South African theories of racial capitalism. In addition to his academic work, he is an editor of the journal *Spectre*.

Dr. David McNally

David McNally holds the NEH-Cullen Chair in History & Business at the University of Houston, where he also directs the Project on Race and Capitalism. Before coming to Houston, David taught political economy at York University, Toronto. The author of seven books, Dr. McNally won the Paul Sweezy Award for *Global Slump: The Economics and Politics of Crisis and Resistance* (2011) and the Deutscher Memorial Award for *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism* (2011). His latest book, *Blood and Money: War, Slavery, Finance, and Empire* (2020) is now being translated into German. David is an editor of *Spectre Journal* and on the Advisory Board of *Historical Materialism*. He is currently at work on a book entitled, *Slavery and Capitalism: Explorations in History and Political Economy*.

Dr. Salim Vally

Salim Vally is the director of the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, the National Research Foundations Chair in community, adult and workers’ education and a professor based at the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg. He is also a visiting professor at the Nelson Mandela University. His latest co-edited book is *The University and Social Justice: Struggles Across the Globe* (Pluto Press, 2020).

Dr. Vanessa Wills

Vanessa Wills is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the George Washington University. In Spring 2022, she is also Visiting Faculty Fellow at UMBC’s Drescher Center for the Humanities. She is also a founding member of the editorial board of *Spectre Journal*, a biannual journal of Marxist theory, strategy, and analysis. Her areas of specialization are moral, social, and political philosophy, nineteenth century German philosophy (especially Karl Marx), and the philosophy of race and of gender. Her research is importantly informed by her study of Marx’s work, and focuses on the ways in which economic and social arrangements can inhibit or promote the realization of values such as freedom, equality, and human development. Her recent publications include, "'And He Ate Jim Crow': Racist Ideology as False Consciousness" and "PPE in Marx's Materialist Conception of History."

A Note on Covid-19 Protocols

All of these events are primarily in-person. During the workshop, attendance will be capped at 24 in a room that comfortably accommodates more than twice that number. This will allow spatial distancing, and masks will be available at all times. We will adhere to the University of Houston's Covid 19 policy, available here: <https://uh.edu/covid-19/guidelines-protocols/diagnosis-symptoms/index.php#visitor>

Masks will also be provided and encouraged at the George Floyd Memorial Lecture, although recent experience suggests that many will choose to go unmasked.

The May 11 workshop dinner will be outdoors. The May 12 dinner, however, will be indoors (at the conference hotel). Those who are not comfortable attending the May 12 dinner should inform David McNally so that we can make alternative arrangements.

The May 13 walking tour is an outdoor event and masking will be encouraged on the bus ride. Our hope is that weather will permit us to hold the lunch in Galveston outdoors.

None of these protocols are perfect, of course. But we will do our best to encourage public health practices.

Accommodation

Out of town guests will be housed at the UH Hilton Hotel, 4500 University Drive, Houston, TX 77204.