

IDC4U: Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism



2021

Acknowledgements

Our team realizes that the course we have created is but one of many acts of resistance in the fight for justice. We thank all those who came before us. We feel that any sentiments of thankfulness that this document evokes are owed to many known and unknown ancestors, members of diverse Black communities, and committed allies, who have been engaged, and continue to engage, in this work.

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IDC4U: Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism

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This document has been reviewed for equity.

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About the Writers



Tiffany Barrett

I was born in Jamaica, raised in Montreal, and have lived and worked in Toronto for the past six years. I am a secondary educator and I enjoy working with young adults. My philosophy of education has always been that as an educator, it is my duty to inspire each student to develop a hunger for learning, but I am convinced that a hunger for learning can only be ignited when students feel a sense of belonging within their classrooms and school communities. I decided to carry out this initiative with my colleagues because I want our education system to include more voices and perspectives within their narratives, so that more students can feel a sense of belonging as they learn. My hope is that the content of this course will enlighten and inspire all students, but Black students in particular, as it highlights Black history, Black excellence, Black joy, and Black celebration.



Remy Basu

I am a first-generation biracial Canadian. My mother is Nigerian and my father is South-Asian, raised in Kolkata, India. My identity has been an integral part of my ever-evolving journey as an educator and has informed the person I am today. It is my identity that has brought me to this work that centres and empowers Black students and provides a space for non-Black students to become co-conspirators. My hope is that this document inspires all educators to build their own critical consciousness and in doing so, encourages them to move beyond the status quo toward an Afrocentric and multicentric pedagogy, forever centring the students and their identities.



Tyler Robinson

Proudly born and raised in Toronto's culturally diverse east end, for me, Scarborough provided the foundation for a world view grounded in learning about my own history, and appreciating that of those around me. My father's African-American ancestry, combined with my mother's European-Canadian heritage, has provided an interesting and complex outlook and lived experience. My approach to teaching and learning is ongoing, grounded in hope, and centred in undoing racism and other forms of oppression.



Kiersten Wynter

I am a proud Canadian, born and raised in Toronto to hard-working Jamaican parents. My family taught me to love and respect others, value education, and that the joy of community is found in forgiveness and celebration. After studying at the University of Ottawa and earning my degrees in Philosophy and Education, I began my career teaching abroad, where I was exposed to a multitude of cultures, languages, and perspectives, and began to think of myself as a global citizen. Now that I am back at home, working for the Toronto District School Board, I endeavour to foster in students a deep appreciation for diversity as I find the courage to stand up for others in the name of justice.

Front Matter

Before diving deep into a conversation about the experiences of a stolen people, and the deconstruction of anti-Black racism, the creators of this document wish to acknowledge the stolen land upon which we have been settled.¹ Honouring the 94 Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, requires us to recognize that the place where we live, love, and labour on, is the traditional lands, and continues to be the homes of, the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Huron-Wendat. There are more than 40 treaties governing Ontario lands, mostly contested today, as they were intended to share the land with White settlers, not to relinquish rights.²

In this course, as we explore the lived realities and histories of Black communities in the Americas, this land acknowledgement is crucial because it requires us to reflect upon our own geographical and social location in Canada's colonial history, and enables us to stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities, who continue to seek justice for their people.

1. Why this course?

Addressing anti-Black racism is a key component of the equity work within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), and other boards across the province; therefore, academic success, sense of belonging, and the overall well-being of Black students are central mandates. In dismantling anti-Black racism, it is essential to promote Black excellence and foster a sense of joy (Johnson, 2015).

The pilot version of this course, *Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian and North American Context*, was locally developed by

a group of TDSB educators in response to the students in their class and the community's sense of urgency that deeper and more immediate action was required to expedite the elimination of racism in schools.

Although our education systems should serve, protect, and empower all students, Black students continue to suffer daily. In 2021, the TDSB released its *Human Rights Annual Report*, detailing the rise of and prevalence of anti-Black racism. This data confirms an undeniable fact: racism not only

¹ www.nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/

² www.nationalobserver.com/2020/01/24/analysis/what-we-mean-when-we-say-indigenous-land-unceded

continues to prevail in our society at large, but that the institution of education is fertile ground for racist activities to take root when not directly addressed. Systemic racism has led to negative academic outcomes for Black students, which are disproportionately low in comparison to other racial groupings (James & Turner, 2017).

This course is a counter-space of celebration that centres Black students, promotes unity, allyship, and participatory action, by allowing all students to learn about theories, histories, and stories of Black resilience and advocacy that have been largely and systematically

left out of Ontario's curricular expectations. Eurocentric frameworks, prevalent in Ontario curricula, normalize Eurocentric ideologies through the exclusion of multicentric world views (Dei, 1996). Anti-Black racism serves as an important entry point for examining white supremacy in the Canadian context because it criticizes the ideology that positions whiteness as the default *normal*. This course will seek to disrupt this notion, recognize the value of all cultures, enable students to foster their sense of wonder in learning, and empower students to move in their world as brilliant and capable agents of change.

2. Why an Interdisciplinary Studies course?

Black Studies is an Interdisciplinary Studies program that draws upon multiple fields, such as history, politics, economics, religion, and law. The content in this subject is so expansive that a single course or instructional method would be insufficient to cover it. A way in which to delve deeper into key components of Black Studies, like anti-Black racism, is through collaborative inquiry, as the academic work of this field is not stagnant, but is ever growing (Cooper, 2021). The goal of this particular course is not about filling students with a set of fixed content, but rather is about introducing learners to Black Studies. The educator is not teaching what to learn, but rather how to learn (Graham

& Watt, 2021). The educator facilitates the development of skills, tools, and conceptual frameworks required to understand race, racism, and specifically anti-Black racism, so that students can engage in ongoing related and self-directed inquiries in the future.

There is currently no existing Ontario secondary course that focuses exclusively on Black Studies, using perspectives and approaches required for engaging in authentic instruction. The Ontario Interdisciplinary Studies curriculum (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/interdisciplinary1112curr.pdf>), however, does allow educators to innovate existing Ontario curricula by following specific guidelines

and creating an outline for a non-existent course. This process was implemented for the creation of the pilot course, but to be clear, a stand-alone course in this work is overdue, necessary, and should be forthcoming from the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE). This course could serve as a template for this future MOE initiative. A deep tension exists, and is present, when trying to create a course that centres Blackness and Afrocentric history and pedagogy, while working within an Ontario curricular framework steeped in Eurocentrism, and this must be acknowledged. In the interim, this document is intended and should be used as a school-based planning guide, to help educators develop and facilitate their own culturally responsive, anti-Black racism interdisciplinary course, which draws from the pilot course as a starting point.

Process of Implementation and Official Accreditation

Schools planning to implement any Interdisciplinary Studies course (IDS) must begin by considering the unique characteristics of the school community and learners in order to ensure that they plan a course outline that is relevant and responsive to the community. The Ontario Interdisciplinary Studies approach to learning asks students and teachers to directly name strategies, perspectives, methodologies, and approaches to knowledge building and research, and then apply these in familiar and new contexts.

Within this IDS planning guide, learners centre Blackness and Afrocentric approaches to knowledge construction as they build critical consciousness through exploration of topics within History, Culture, Equity, Social Justice, Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology. This course combines all the expectations of the Interdisciplinary Studies, Grade 12, University course with a relevant selection of expectations from the following courses: American History (CHA3U), World History Since the Fifteenth Century (CHY4U), World History to the End of the Fifteenth Century (CHW3M), Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSE4M), Canada: History, Identity, and Culture (CHI4U), and World Cultures (HSC4M).

Schools wishing to implement their own anti-Black racism IDC course will complete their own course outline. The document has been carefully curated and reviewed to ensure that implementation remains authentic and successful. School communities can utilize this document, together with the Interdisciplinary Studies, Grade 12, University Preparation curriculum, to plan for and co-construct with students fully developed learning activities and assessments that address the curriculum expectations. Once detailed learning tasks and assessment strategies have been added to the course outline, within the expectations of the Interdisciplinary Studies curriculum, the course becomes officially accredited by having the course outline approved by the local principal.

Notes for schools offering IDC courses:

1. Schools may offer as many IDC or IDP courses as they wish.
2. Schools may offer multiple IDC courses at the same level.
3. Students may only take one of each course (IDC30, IDC40, IDC4U).
4. Schools that are offering this single-credit IDC course should use the code IDC4U.
5. Schools that are offering multiple IDC4U courses can schedule these as separate sections.

The positioning of this Interdisciplinary Studies course as 4U is intentional; it is a specific response to a well-known and documented culture of low expectations that exists for Black students in Ontario's education system (James & Turner, 2017). Students needing to take an 11U course as a prerequisite should be made aware that it is also designed to lift Black students out of widespread, lower-level streaming. The course is constructed in a way that seeks to give students the ability to interrogate systemic racism and social conditions, so as to increase engagement, help close achievement gaps, and address education debts that exist from Eurocentric educational approaches.

3. What are the theoretical and inquiry frameworks for this course?

This course draws principally upon four different frameworks to guide student inquiry and learning. The underscoring framework is Critical Race Theory (see the works of Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Cheryl Harris, Mari Matsuda, Patricia J. Williams, and others). This theory draws upon the idea that race and racism remain significant in society, and that students need to develop their critical consciousness to navigate their world. It is thus necessary to create counter-spaces, where common deficit narratives are critically examined.

In this course, it is necessary to review history, and so the second framework is *Historical Thinking Skills* (Sexias & Morton, 2012). This framework allows students to “gain a deep understanding of historical events and processes through active engagement with historical texts” (The Historical Thinking Project, 2014).

This course will also centre *Afrocentric Pedagogy* (see the works of Molefi K. Asante, George J. S. Dei, Maulana Karenga, Ama Mazama, and others), which lends itself well to developing an understanding of Black experiences (Dei, 1996). By using

the principles of Afrocentric pedagogy, educators and students are co-constructors of knowledge and disseminators of information. They are building the learning framework together, and thus the course embodies a communal model, rather than the traditional Eurocentric hierarchical structure (Dei, 1996).

Finally, *Culturally Relevant* (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and *Responsive* (Gay, 2000; Villegas

& Lucas, 2002) is an essential framework for this course, as it draws upon the students' lived experience, thus allowing the course curriculum greater inclusivity (Ladson-Billings, 1996). The course will be delivered differently in different spaces. It requires educators to continue to reflect on their strategies, use updated and relevant resources, and be mindful of the ever-changing societal climate and student body.

4. What are the key conditions for successful implementation?

What is the role of the student?

This course is designed to provide space for ALL Ontario students to engage meaningfully with anti-Black racism specifically, and racism and oppression more generally. Black students need a mirror in which they will see themselves reflected in the curriculum. All other students need a window to gain meaningful perspective on their Black peers' experiences as they consider what it means to work toward allyship (Styles, 2013). Equitable, thoughtful, and meaningful course selection strategies and/or counselling should be considered by administrators and the guidance office, if needed.

Regardless of a student's background, the content will engage students, since it touches on their lived experiences, so that they are active contributors to course content. The Interdisciplinary Studies framework hinges on

student inquiry. Inquiry is a process that can be taught and seeks to critically question the world, thus giving rise to new knowledge. It asks the students to engage in wonder and curiosity, thereby finding meaning in the world around them. The recognition that knowledge is dynamic and ever changing is a central tenet of the inquiry process. The educator is responsible for guiding the process of inquiry by teaching "how" to inquire. Inquiry in the classroom asks students to solve problems, while acknowledging their social location and what they need to do in order to solve the problem, thus giving students greater agency of their own learning. Inquiry can begin with an essential question based on student voice and choice (Graham & Watt, 2021).

The content of this course will, at times, necessarily provoke intense emotional responses; hence, it is essential that students

engage in innovative self-reflective practices throughout the course, to unpack their learning experiences. This particular skill will equip students to name their pain. This is done successfully when students recognize that critical academic reflection can be a liberatory practice that allows them to make sense of the world (hooks, 1991). Students are expected to communicate continuously with educators and peers about their needs, and develop strategies for coping with the difficult content matter. As all students engage in this type of learning, the course will offer a space for students to foster healing.

What needs to happen in the classroom?

Specific conditions are to be created within the classroom for successful execution of this course. As the content of the course includes sensitive and sometimes difficult topics, teachers must preface the course by highlighting this detail, as well as co-creating with students clearly articulated classroom agreements to guide their conversations and learning. A very strong sense of community, grounded in Afrocentric principles, needs to be co-developed among the students before navigating certain topics (Dei, 1996). Afrocentric teachings highlight the importance of collaboration and community building. Along with teachers and students, parents, guardians, family members, and other community members should be encouraged to participate in the course in some capacity to promote *communal learning* (Dei, 1996).

Materials presented to students should be carefully chosen by the educator. It is crucial that context is clearly underscored before issuing/posting certain sensitive course materials. Students should never be expected to deconstruct sensitive content independently. Although certain topics are heavy, it is important to centre Black joy, Black excellence, and Black celebration, while developing the students' understanding of different systems of oppression. The educator should also regularly allow room for students to debrief and consider next steps throughout the course.

Learning experiences should be expansive, multi-faceted, and seek to develop independent learning, critical-thinking and inquiry skills. Assessment strategies should support students to successfully achieve the expectations. Introductory lessons have been provided as a guide; educators will need to also plan additional/alternate activities for each unit.

Who is the educator and what is their role?

Student feedback from the pilot of this course was unanimous: it is preferable for a Black educator, who is willing and knowledgeable about Black Studies, to teach this course, since they can relate to the content by way of their lived experience. This does not mean that Black educators should be expected to teach the course, nor is it their responsibility; however, all Black educators within the school

should have first right of refusal to teach this course, before a non-Black educator is considered. In the absence of a willing Black educator, administrators should consider the possibility of hiring a Black educator to teach this course. Finally, in the absence of either of the above, administrators should explore different ways to consult the school community to determine the educator for the course. Absence of a Black educator should NOT preclude offering this course.

The educator chosen should have a proven and demonstrable commitment and ability to effectively address anti-Black racism, along with a track record of building meaningful relationships with Black and other racially and historically marginalized groups. It is essential that all educators demonstrate an approach to this course infused with compassion, humility, empathy, and a commitment to continued learning in Black Studies.

The classroom educator is responsible for building their own capacity and criticality in Black Studies and anti-Black racism, as well as their knowledge of the course's grounding theoretical frameworks: Critical Race Theory, Historical Thinking Skills, Afrocentric Pedagogy, and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (details listed above). Educators should have a thorough understanding of the IDC framework. Educators who are new to Interdisciplinary Studies should review the curriculum document, noting in particular that although

the course content draws from other curricula, it is only the IDC4U expectations that are assessed. Students should be presented with a variety of tasks to showcase their learning in the different strands: Theory and Foundation, Processes and Methods of Research and Implementation, Evaluation and Impact.

It is imperative that educators review legislation at the local, provincial, and national levels in regards to non-discriminatory practices (Ontario Human Rights Code and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Specifically, educators are responsible for consulting and abiding by their own board policies and procedures in relation to human rights, as well as the ethical standards outlined by the Ontario College of Teachers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2021). In understanding these policies and standards, when students are engaging in deep dialogue about race, racism, and anti-Black racism, the teacher must immediately address all misconceptions as they arise in order to avoid harm.

What needs to happen in the school or board system?

Community should be at the centre of any authentic equity work, and stakeholders within racialized groups need to be engaged in development before, during, and after any equity initiatives take place. Since educators are co-learners in this course, collaboration throughout and beyond the school community is essential. All educators teaching the course are recommended to form a learning network

and collaborate for additional support. If there are specific questions related to course content, there should never be hesitation to seek information in the community, while keeping in mind that differing outreach protocols must be adhered to, depending on community. Within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, the Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Team, the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, and the Gender-Based Violence Office are all reliable sources to reach out to for assistance when engaging in equity work.

Administrators are responsible for the establishment of a succession plan that ensures that the longevity of this course is not predicated upon a single teacher's presence in the school. Given that this course deals with extremely sensitive subject matter and requires a thoughtful approach as outlined above, school boards and administrators must ensure that the course will only be taught in an in-person/synchronous manner. Under no circumstances should this course be taught asynchronously exclusively. That being said, students should have the opportunity to access the course through diverse platforms (summer school, night school, etc.). Furthermore, administrators should commit to the implementation of the course not being predicated on initial registration numbers; students will be interested in the content, and numbers will grow with time.

The offering of this course is not a panacea; anti-Black racism in schools is a long-standing, socially constructed reality. In moving our schools forward on these issues, administrators must exercise authority and moral duty in ensuring that the continuous professional learning and unlearning related to anti-Black racism specifically, and anti-racism in general, is ongoing for all school community members.

This course is an invitation to our education system to try something different because things need to be different. Administrators must be aware of performative activism's rampant presence in the educational system and take steps to ensure that this course does not become just that. There is much work to be done to dismantle racism, and one anti-Black racism course is not a cure for anti-Black racism. Rather, this course is an opportunity to call in where we once called out, co-learn where we have mis-learned, to emancipate, and to celebrate.

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Anti-Black Racism: Exploring Language and Discourse



18
hours



Essential Question

What is the role of language and discourse in the perpetuation and dismantling of anti-Black racism?



When you are having a conversation about racial oppression, you will not be the only one who is nervous and you will not be the only one taking a risk.

- Ijeoma Oluo
(author)



Description

This introductory unit will equip students with the language and skills required to lean into the discomfort that comes when speaking of racism and anti-Black racism. It is important when engaging in this equity work to first acknowledge the land upon which we are situated. The unit will explore students' personal language and understanding about racism and anti-Blackness, through sharing their lived experiences. Thereafter, a common understanding of selected terms and concepts will be established as the educator and students co-construct a glossary of essential terms. The glossary will be developed and referenced throughout the course. This unit will also investigate how and why language surrounding race has transformed over the years. The origins of certain terminologies and their impact on the concept of anti-Black racism will also be dissected.

Through an inquiry-based approach, students will develop increasingly higher-order questions based on their topic of interest in regards to anti-Black racism. As students explore their topics, they will build upon their research skills by identifying credible sources, analyzing information, and evaluating their findings.

Courageous conversations (Singleton, 2015) will allow students to explore effective communication strategies in order to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to having difficult and controversial conversations about anti-Black racism within the classroom and beyond. Throughout this unit, students will be required to respectfully demonstrate their ability to engage

in controversial topics, using the target language effectively. It is important that a strong sense of community is established within this unit. Educators are encouraged to facilitate various team-building activities in order to increase communication and build trust among students.

At the end of this unit, students will apply their learning through presenting and dissecting various readings, using strategies and vocabulary explored in class. In order for students to develop a deeper understanding of certain terminologies, they will include their personal narratives as examples as they define and discuss the terms.

Enduring Understandings and Guiding Questions



Enduring Understandings

1. How to carry out respectful and courageous conversations about race and anti-Black racism
2. Understanding the importance of their own identities in order to understand others' and to make an impact
3. Common understanding of foundational terms related to racism/anti-Black racism



Guiding Questions

Identity

1. Who am I?
2. How has race informed my identity and experiences?
3. How does who I am influence my perspectives and relationships?
4. Where do I fit in the conversation of anti-Black racism?

Terminology

1. What do I understand about race and racism? Has race/racism impacted my life? How so?
2. What do I understand about Blackness and anti-Blackness?
3. In what ways does racism show up in my community? In society?

Ethical and Respectful Conversations about the Experiences of Black peoples and communities

1. What do we have in common as a people? (examining the values that support us in developing an understanding as a collective [trust, community, spirituality, etc.]
2. What conditions need to be set to engage in meaningful and critical conversations about race, racism and controversial and sensitive topics?
3. In what ways might I address racism?

Unit Breakdown

(key components and assessments within each unit)

Unit 1: Anti-Black Racism: Exploring Language and Discourse

A. Introduction/Inspiration Behind This Course

- How does discourse differ from arguing?
- What does it mean to deconstruct/dismantle?
- Why an anti-Black racism course?
- What is anti-Black racism?
- What is something that I would really like to learn about Black history?

B. Key Terms and Concepts* (This list is expected to grow throughout the course.)

- Discourse, dialogue
- Critical consciousness (Critical Race Theory)
- Courageous conversations
- Bias, discrimination, prejudice, oppression, race versus racism versus racist, Black, white, People of Colour, Indigenous
- One-Drop Rule, Mulatto, Octoroon, Quadroon
- Allyship, power, solidarity, praxis, privilege, white privilege
- White supremacy, overt/covert racism, forms of racism:
 - institutional/systematic, structural/systemic, interpersonal, internalized
- Globalization, capitalism, colonization, decolonization, indigeneity
- Negro, coloured, African/Canadian/American, Black, Sankofa, Afrocentric,
- Eurocentric, multicentrism, normalize

C. Meaningful Engagement

- Respectful discourse/dialogue
- Creating classroom conditions for having serious/difficult conversations
- Giving students a voice and ensuring involvement – facilitate discussions

Key Expectations

(Include curriculum expectations and sections on skills and fundamental concepts from each discipline represented in this course.)

Instructional Strategies, Assessment, and Evaluation must focus on IDC4U Expectations. The following chart provides an overview of how educators might consider these in the context of this particular course. Through the iterative nature of inquiry, students will revisit and deepen understandings of concepts and skills focused on in previous units. Use of learning conversations, observations of learning, and products of learning as assessment strategies through triangulation of assessment will provide educators with the most relevant information for assessment and evaluation.

Unit/Context

- **1. Anti-Black Racism: Exploring Language and Discourse**
(18 hours)
- Interdisciplinary focus: Sociology and Social Justice

Major Activity

- Discussion
- Collaborative Knowledge Building

Theory and Foundation

- Concept analysis
- Theoretical frameworks: **Critical Race Theory and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy**
- Understanding the role of Information in society regarding **anti-Black racism**
- **TFV.01** demonstrate an understanding of the essential terminology related to **anti-Black racism** and key ideas and issues related to each of the subjects or disciplines studied

Processes and Methods of Research

- Developing and adjusting questions
- Critical-thinking strategies for research
Recording, sorting, and analyzing information and ideas
- Identifying topics for research related to **anti-Black racism**
- **PMV.01** be able to plan for research, using a variety of strategies and technologies
- **PMV.03** be able to process information, using a variety of research strategies and technologies
- **PMV.04** be able to assess and extend their research skills to present their findings and solve problems

Implementation, Evaluation, Impacts, and Consequences

- Describe and analyze contributions of **Black leaders/ scholars/activists**
- **IEV.03** analyze and describe the impact on society of interdisciplinary approaches and solutions to real-life situations

Other Course Expectations

The discipline-based expectations of the “other” courses provide an appropriate context and content for developing practical applications or for exploring topics and themes, using an interdisciplinary approach. In single-credit Interdisciplinary Studies courses, only achievement of the Interdisciplinary Studies expectations will be evaluated.

Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSE4M)

Approaches and Perspectives

B1. demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity

and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice.

Promoting Equity and Social Justice

D1.1 describe how fundamental values, attitudes, and day-to-day behaviour (e.g., fair-mindedness, empathy, reflection, respecting and embracing diversity, personal language use) can contribute to equity and social justice;

D1.2 describe how education can help promote equity and social justice (e.g., by fostering critical thinking, increasing awareness, exposing students to multiple perspectives).

Assessment and Evaluation

The primary purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve learning for all students. In single-credit IDC courses, only the expectations for Interdisciplinary Studies are assessed and evaluated. Seventy percent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. Thirty percent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an action-based community initiative.

Assessment in this unit focuses on formative assessment of students' skills in self-reflection, historical thinking, critical thinking, examining bias, and production of oral and written work. Teachers should focus on

providing ongoing, specific, and constructive feedback to students. Students will develop peer-assessment skills. Students should be developing their skills in locating, analyzing, and evaluating sources for relevance and impact.

Teachers should be using inquiry-based learning activities throughout the course as part of assessment.

Evaluations should seek to involve innovative and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Students should be engaged in smaller inquiry-based tasks in addition to a unit-culminating inquiry task.

Minds On: Introductory Lesson: Let's Begin!

The central focus of this unit is for students to explore the foundational language related to racism and anti-Black racism, and also to learn how to navigate, facilitate, and carry out controversial topics in a respectful and thoughtful manner. It is important for students to build a strong sense of community throughout this unit.

This Minds On activity will prompt students to become more introspective as they learn about their peers. Prior to facilitating this activity, educators should carry out a few community-building activities and icebreakers with the students.



Goal/Rationale Learning Goals

1. Students explore their own social location.
2. Investigate the knowledge and vocabulary that students already have about certain terms related to anti-Black racism.
3. Begin to foster a classroom atmosphere that will encourage critical and controversial conversations



Materials/Tools

Computer: Padlet/Jamboard, Cultural Iceberg template



Activity Steps

Part A: Cultural Iceberg

(adapted from *A Kid's Guide to Canada*, 2017)

- Present a completed Cultural Iceberg template to students (see *Figure 1*).
- Ask students to complete the blank Cultural Iceberg template (see *Figure 2*).
 - * Ask students to note the visible elements of their culture and identity at the top of the iceberg, along with elements that are less visible at the bottom. At the very bottom of the iceberg, they will list elements that are hidden.
- In pairs, students will share their diagrams with each other.
- As a group, the students will discuss what they have learned about themselves and their classmates.

Part B: Let's Talk about Race

Oral Discussion

1. What is race/racism/anti-Black racism?
2. What is intimidating/concerning about talking about race/racism?
3. Why did you take this course?
4. What do you hope to learn about race, racism, Blackness, and anti-Blackness?

Part C: Identifying Racism

1. Using an anonymous online tool (Padlet, Jamboard, etc.), the educator will ask students to complete the thought: *I see/know racism is happening when I see/hear....*
2. As the students enter their responses, the educator will group ideas (e.g., racism in the media [regarding caricatures, beauty standards, etc.]; school [e.g., Black students experiencing disproportionate disciplinary rates, etc.]) to make categories.
 - * The educator should debrief the categories and highlight the notion that racism is prevalent.
3. Students will be asked to select the area they would like to discuss further with peers, based on the categories co-determined by the educator and students.
 - * The educator will tell students they are about to have their first classroom discussion regarding their lived experiences on racism.
4. In their groups, students will discuss examples of racism in their chosen area and share group thoughts during a debrief.

- * Students are encouraged to both note their own feelings throughout the discussion, as well as any disagreements/ tensions that arise during the group discussions.
5. The educator will document the thoughts and feelings from each area.
 6. As a class, the educator and students will discuss areas of similarities and differences, as well as the areas of tension/ disagreements that arose during the group discussion (e.g., the structures of racism, intersections).
 7. The educator will now address Glenn Singleton’s framework, *Courageous Conversations*, to guide further conversations throughout the rest of the course.
 - * Students could be encouraged to unpack and/or extend Singleton’s framework based on their lived experiences.



Teaching Methods

Class discussion

Small-group discussion



Teacher Considerations

- Prior to this activity, the educator and the students should co-create a list of norms that will facilitate tough topics in the classroom.
- It is recommended for the educator to model the completion of the iceberg.
- Anonymity during certain parts of the activity will allow for ideologies to be interrogated, not students.
- Educators should interrupt and challenge misrepresentations and misperceptions presented during this Minds On activity.
- It is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that no harm is done during the discussions - this might be achieved by categorizing tensions as substantive conflicts, or relationship conflicts, and highlighting the difference.
- Before exiting the conversation, the teacher should draw upon community circles in closing.
- Teachers may consider using the students to do the observation and assessment of how their peers are using Singleton’s framework to navigate future conversations.

Resources

(Include text, media, community for each unit [for teachers, for students].)

Creating Conditions

Pacific Educational Group

- [Beginning Conversations about Race](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/BTB_23_PRECON_Make_It_Plain_2.pdf)
www.courts.ca.gov/documents/BTB_23_PRECON_Make_It_Plain_2.pdf

In this article, Glenn Singleton’s framework, *Courageous Conversations*, is presented in a concise manner as he and Cyndie Hayes underscore some important tips to carry out difficult conversations.

The Slate Group

- [My Child’s Third Grade Teacher Totally Ignores Talking About Race and Racism](https://slate.com/human-interest/2020/06/race-discussions-school-teachers-parents.html)
<https://slate.com/human-interest/2020/06/race-discussions-school-teachers-parents.html>

Brandon Hersey’s article highlights the importance of addressing topics surrounding racism within the classroom. He provides tips to specific groups (elementary teachers, high school teachers, parents/guardians) on how to get the conversation about race and racism started in schools. He also offers additional readings/resources to facilitate conversations.

Learning for Justice

- [Let’s Talk: Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/TT-Let-s-Talk-Publication-January-2020.pdf)
www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/TT-Let-s-Talk-Publication-January-2020.pdf

Learning for Justice presents a thorough guide on how teachers may navigate tough topics in different classroom settings for different grade levels. The guide also includes specific activities and prompts to engage students.

Anti-Defamation League

- [Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism](https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about)
www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about

This article informs educators about important considerations in order to build a healthy classroom climate, appropriate to having challenging conversations about race.

Terminology

TDSB

- [P037 – Equity](#)

The TDSB Equity Policy provides definitions for various essential terms related to race and racism.

Racial Equity Tools

- [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)
www.racialequitytools.org/glossary

This website provides a glossary of high-frequency terms in relation to race and racism, along with their definitions.

Western States Center

- [A History: The Construction of Race and Racism](#)
www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/conference_websites/2017/documents/construction-of-race-and-racism.pdf

This article discusses the evolution of the idea of race. It explores the different justifications that people use to support racism.

Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health

- [Negro, Black, Black African, African Caribbean, African American or what? Labelling African origin populations in the health arena in the 21st century](#)
www.jech.bmj.com/content/59/12/1014

This article analyzes the different terminologies used to describe people of African origin. It discusses the appropriateness of each term.

PBS

- [Who is Black? One Nation's Definition](#)
www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/mixed/onedrop.html

This text explores the different historical terms imposed upon people of African descent. The concept of the One-Drop Rule is explained in depth.

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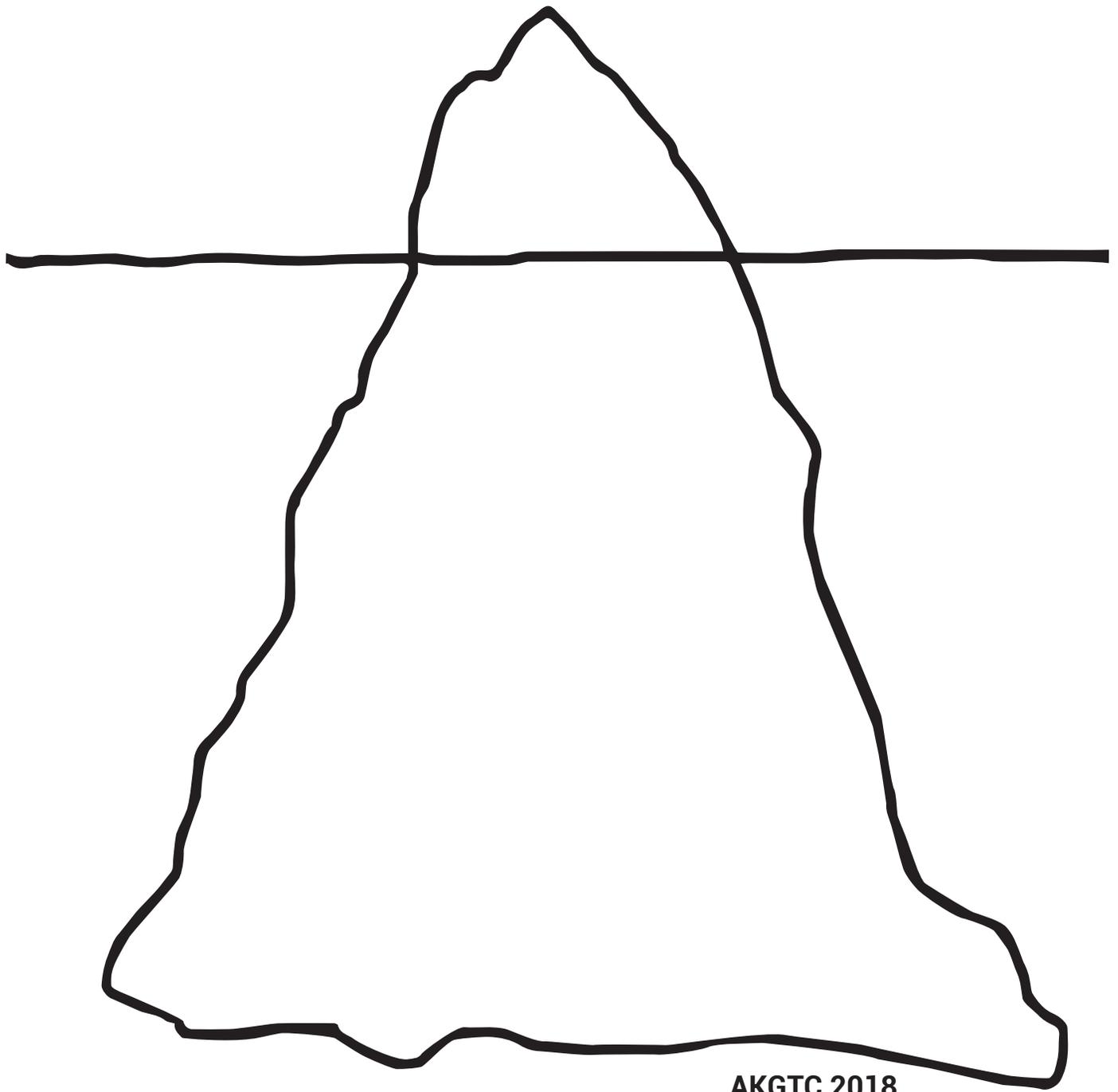
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Figure 1:
Sample Cultural Iceberg



Adapted from A Kid's Guide to Canada, 2017, www.akgtcanada.com/if-i-really-knew-you/.

Figure 2:
Blank Cultural Iceberg Template



Going Back to Africa: Peoples & Cultures before Colonization



22
hours



Essential Question

Why is it necessary to learn about Africa's sophisticated and complex history (pre-colonial contact)?



A People without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.

- Marcus Garvey
(political activist)



Description

This unit will position the philosophy of Sankofa, literal translation [SAN (return), KO (go), FA (look, seek, and take)] of the Akan tribe of West Africa as the grounding principle that will guide inquiry into pre-colonial Africa, the birthplace of humankind (Sankofa – Department of African-American Studies – University of Illinois Springfield, 2021). This unit will disrupt the notion of Africa as the “dark continent” and will reconnect students to histories that have been purposefully and systematically excluded from the K–12 public education in Ontario.

To begin, students must recognize that within the Canadian context, Eurocentric ideologies inform much of their knowledge, ways of knowing, and ways of viewing the world. Building onto the knowledge acquired in Unit 1, students will begin to develop a multicentric world view by examining narratives about the history of African civilizations and philosophies from an Afrocentric perspective (Dei, 1996). African peoples have the right to have their “culture and traditions correctly reflected in education” – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 15 (Blackstock et al., 2013).

From this Afrocentric viewpoint, students will understand the necessity of being critical about ideology and sources, reflecting on who created them, and for what purpose (Dei, 1996). In collaboration with their teacher, students will co-create a **whole-class research project** (e.g., class website, storybooks, school-wide initiative), designed to deeply investigate Africa's rich and varied civilizations prior to colonial impact. In this

investigation, the class will explore the history, achievements, contributions, and complex networks of pre-colonial African civilizations. This investigation can be focused on a variety of areas of civilizations guided by student

choice. By the end of this unit, students will understand, through an inquiry-based approach, that, “Black history did not begin with enslavement; enslavement interrupted Black history” (Mutabaruka [poet and artist]).

Enduring Understandings and Guiding Questions



Enduring Understandings

Students will develop an understanding for why it is necessary to look to history to make sense of the present and future as represented in **Sankofa**.

1. Students will develop an understanding that history, within the Canadian context, is taught/framed from a hegemonic and Eurocentric view, and that this leads to an incomplete and limiting world view.
6. Disrupt the notion of Africa as the “dark continent,” and encourage understanding of Africa as a complex and sophisticated network of pre-colonial empires and societies with an enduring global legacy impact.



Guiding Questions

1. What do you seek to understand about pre-colonial Africa? What do you wonder?
2. Have you experienced Sankofa principles in your education? Why or why not?
3. In what ways can your past inform your future?
4. How might looking back to pre-colonial African civilizations, philosophies, and perspectives reshape ideas about Blackness?
5. What do you know about pre-colonial Africa? What informs this knowledge? If limited, or non-existent, why do you think you have this gap in knowledge?
6. How have Eurocentric ideas become “normalized”?
7. Why might Afrocentrism and multicentrism be useful in developing ways of knowing and ways of viewing the world?

8. In what way do Eurocentric ideologies establish themselves as historically, politically, and ethically superior?
9. What evidence can we find that suggests that modern Canadian society has been defined by Eurocentric ideologies?
10. What is the definition of a civilization, and who defines it?
11. How might your understanding of Africa’s complex and sophisticated civilizations and/or centralized/ decentralized societies disrupt the notion that Africa has been described as the “dark continent”?
12. Where do we find legacies of African peoples, empires, and global contributions in our present-day experiences?
13. How might building up positive Afrocentric knowledge act as a therapeutic, self-care exercise?

Suggested Topics

Some Suggested African Civilizations across History	Possible Areas of Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nubia ● The Kingdom of Aksum ● Empire of Ghana ● Oyo Empire ● Empire of Songhai ● Empire of Mali ● The Great Zimbabwe ● The Swahili Coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Language ● Oral History and Traditions ● Proverbs ● Ideologies ● Philosophies ● Family Practices ● Spirituality ● Transmission of Culture ● Identity ● Healing and Wellness ● Creation Stories

Key Expectations

Instructional Strategies, Assessment, and Evaluation must focus on IDC4U Expectations. The following chart provides an overview of how educators might consider these in the context of this particular course. Through the iterative nature of inquiry, students will revisit and deepen understandings of concepts and skills focused on in previous units. Use of learning conversations, observations of learning, and products of learning as assessment strategies through triangulation of assessment will provide educators with the most relevant information for assessment and evaluation.

Unit/Context

- **2. Going Back to Africa: Peoples and Cultures before Colonization** (22 hours)
- Interdisciplinary focus: History and Culture

Major Activity

- Guided collaborative inquiry project

Theory and Foundation

- Theory of Knowledge and approaches to perceiving “reality” in each discipline (history, culture)
- Analysis of different perspectives (Afrocentric versus Eurocentric) on the same topic
- Collaborative skills and understandings for interdisciplinary research in Ancient African Civilizations
- Systems Thinking (internal and external, real or hypothetical factors in relation to the systems/organi-zations)
- **TFV.03** demonstrate an understanding of the different perspectives and approaches used in each of the subjects or disciplines studied
- **TFV.04** demonstrate the skills and strategies used to develop interdisciplinary products and activities

Processes and Methods of Research

- Understanding the purpose of Afrocentric and multicentric approaches to research within each discipline (history, culture)
- Selecting relevant information from within resources as it relates to Afrocentric knowledge
- Effective search strategies, using wide-ranging sources from an Afrocentric perspective of information in locating relevant primary and secondary resources

- Selecting and critically analyzing relevant information as it **pertains to African civilizations**
- Assessing effectiveness in generating new ideas within the disciplines
- Developing and applying effective criteria for assessing their interdisciplinary research
- **PMV.01** be able to plan for research, using a variety of strategies and technologies
- **PMV.02** be able to access appropriate resources, using a variety of research strategies and technologies
- **PMV.03** be able to process information, using a variety of research strategies and technologies
- **PMV.04** be able to assess and extend their research skills to present their findings and solve problems

Implementation, Evaluation, Impacts, and Consequences

- Create interdisciplinary products that showcase students' learning.
- Communicate and present information effectively **regarding ancient African civilizations.**
- Use strategies for monitoring and improving their research products and activities.
- **IEV.01** implement and communicate information about inter-disciplinary endeavours, using a variety of methods and strategies
- **IEV.02** evaluate the quality of interdisciplinary endeavours, using a variety of strategies

Other Course Expectations

The discipline-based expectations of the “other” courses provide an appropriate context and content for developing practical applications or for exploring topics and themes, using an interdisciplinary approach. In single-credit Interdisciplinary Studies courses, only achievement of the Interdisciplinary Studies expectations will be evaluated.

World History to the End of the Fifteenth Century (CHW3M)

HISTORICAL INQUIRY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

A1. Historical Inquiry

A1.1 formulate different types of questions to guide investigations into issues, events, and/or development in world history to 1500.

EARLY SOCIETIES AND RISING CIVILIZATIONS

B1. Early Societies

B1.4 assess the criteria by which societies are judged to be “civilizations.”

B2. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B2.3 describe various types of innovation in early societies;

B2.4 explain how various factors contributed to the economic development of some early societies and emerging civilizations;

B2.5 describe key political structures in some early societies and emerging civilizations.

B3. Co-operation, Conflict, and Rising Civilizations

B3.1 explain how various factors contributed to the ability of certain early societies to dominate others.

FLOURISHING SOCIETIES AND CIVILIZATIONS

C1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

C1.3 describe key economic structures, developments, and practices in various flourishing societies/civilizations, and explain how they contributed to the success of these societies/ civilizations.

C2. Stability and Expansion

C2.3 explain the role of military innovation in the expansion of various societies/civilizations;

C2.4 describe educational practices in various flourishing societies/civilizations;

C2.5 analyze the influence of religion/ spirituality in various flourishing societies/ civilizations, and explain how it contributed to stability in these societies.

C3. Identity, Citizenship, and Culture

C3.1 describe methods used to challenge or limit government power in various flourishing societies/civilizations, and assess the contributions of individuals and groups in challenging established authority;

C3.2 assess the political, social, and/ or philosophical contributions of various individuals to the society/civilization in which they lived;

C3.3 assess the artistic and/or scientific contributions of various individuals to the identity and/or culture of the society/ civilization in which they lived.

CIVILIZATIONS IN DECLINE

D1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

D1.1 explain the role of various social events and developments in the decline of some societies/civilizations, and how these factors affected people living in these societies;

D1.2 explain the role of various economic events and developments in the decline of some societies/civilizations, and how these factors affected people living in these societies;

D1.3 explain the significance of various political events and developments in the decline of some societies/civilizations.

D2. Interrelationships

D2.1 explain how war and foreign invasion contributed to the decline of some societies/civilizations;

D2.2 analyze how factors associated with longevity and expansion contributed to the decline of some societies/civilizations.

THE LEGACY OF CIVILIZATIONS

E1. Social, Cultural, and Political Heritage

E1.3 analyze the architectural legacy of various societies/civilizations;

E1.4 explain the significance of the contributions of some societies/civilizations to religion and philosophy.

E2. The Legacy of Interactions

E2.1 describe ways in which practices or innovations in one society/civilization were borrowed by other societies/civilizations;

E2.2 assess the consequences for one society/civilization of coming under the control of another.

E3. The Fifteenth-Century World

E3.4 describe the roles and status of women, men, and children in some societies in different parts of the world in the fifteenth century.

Assessment and Evaluation

The primary purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve learning for all students. In single-credit IDC courses, only the expectations for Interdisciplinary Studies are assessed and evaluated. Seventy percent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. Thirty percent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an action-based community initiative.

Assessment in this unit focuses on formative assessment of students' skills in self-reflection, historical thinking, critical thinking, examining bias, and production of oral and written work. Teachers should focus on providing ongoing,

specific, and constructive feedback to students. Students will develop peer-assessment skills. Students should be developing their skills in locating, analyzing, and evaluating sources for relevance and impact.

Teachers should be using inquiry-based learning activities throughout the course as part of assessment.

Evaluations should seek to involve innovative and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Students should be engaged in smaller inquiry-based tasks in addition to a unit-culminating inquiry task.

During this Minds On activity, the teacher will activate students' prior knowledge of Africa. Students will begin the task by identifying and locating countries on a map of the continent of Africa. This will be followed by a small-group discussion and whole-class discussion. Finally, students will reflect on their learning.



Learning Goal

Students will understand that their education is predominantly from a Eurocentric perspective, which wrongfully omits Afrocentric and multicentric perspectives.



Materials/Tools

Map of Africa template



Activity Steps

1. To begin, students will independently label the different countries to the best of their ability, using the Map of Africa template. Students may NOT use any additional resources to aid them during this process.
2. The students will then move into groups of two or three and discuss information from each of their maps. The educator will determine the time allotted for small-group discussion.

Sample student discussion prompts:

- * How many of the 54 countries in Africa were you able to identify and locate on the map? Why were you able to locate many/few countries?
 - * What were the similarities/differences between your maps?
 - * Why do you think there are similarities/differences?
 - * What do you know about the countries you were able to identify?
 - * Where did you learn about these countries?
3. Following the small-group discussion, the students will then complete their maps of the continent of Africa by accurately labelling all the countries. The educator will display a complete map of the countries via medium of choice.
 4. The educator will then lead the class in a large-group discussion.

Discussion prompts:

- * Why is it important to learn about African countries and civilizations prior to colonization?
- * What are you interested in exploring further about African civilizations prior to colonization?

Students will reflect on the following quotation:

"Europeans not only colonized most of the world, they colonized information about the world."

- Dr. John Henrik Clarke
(historian, 1912–1998)

Guiding reflection prompts:

- Make connections between the quotation and education at large, your own learning experiences, and the Minds On task.
- What does the quotation mean to your learning in our current education system?



Teacher Considerations

Students should not have access to any resources or the Internet to complete the task.

Teachers should keep in mind that the series of scaffolded questions are designed to introduce the notion that their formal

education is predominantly from a Eurocentric perspective, and that the absence of other perspectives is problematic (Dei, 1996). This idea can be further developed through critically exploring the history of education, analyzing curriculum content of compulsory courses, or looking at other sources of knowledge. By the end of this activity, students will have identified potential areas of interest that might be used to guide further exploration of African civilizations prior to colonial impact.



Possible Extension

The educator can explore with students various map representations of Africa. Maps themselves are not free of bias; in fact, maps are tools of colonization.

Resources

(Include text, media, community for each unit [for teachers, for students].)

BBC

- [Four Lost Kingdoms of Africa](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pv1m4)
www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pv1m4

A series of videos (less than 5 minutes) about a selection of ancient African empires.

Canadian Scholars

- [Centering African Proverbs, Indigenous Folktales, and Cultural Stories in Curriculum: Units and Lesson Plans for Inclusive Education](http://www.canadianscholars.ca/books/centering-african-proverbs-indigenous-folktales-and-cultural-stories-in-curriculum)
www.canadianscholars.ca/books/centering-african-proverbs-indigenous-folktales-and-cultural-stories-in-curriculum

A comprehensive book that focuses on improving pedagogy that engages students' learning by way of African proverbs, Indigenous folktales, and cultural stories.

Canadian Society for the Study of Education

- [The Role of Afrocentricity in the Inclusive Curriculum in Canadian Schools](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1495088?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)
www.jstor.org/stable/1495088?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

A study of the necessity for Afrocentric pedagogy for academic and social success for Black students, and the move toward a more inclusive curriculum for all students.

Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra

- [Discussion Guide: 'After all, it was Europe that made the modern world': Eurocentrism in history and its textbooks](https://eg.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/42638/1/Discussion%20guide%20-%20After%20all%2C%20it%20was%20Europe%20that%20made%20the%20modern%20world_Eurocentrism%20in%20history%20and%20its%20textbooks.pdf)
https://eg.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/42638/1/Discussion%20guide%20-%20After%20all%2C%20it%20was%20Europe%20that%20made%20the%20modern%20world_Eurocentrism%20in%20history%20and%20its%20textbooks.pdf

A detailed study on the prevalence of Eurocentric pedagogy through the analysis of history textbooks and pedagogy.

The Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute

- [Black History: Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas – Teacher’s Resource](http://www.dbdli.ca/resource-materials/black-history-africa-the-caribbean-and-the-americas-teachers-resource/)
www.dbdli.ca/resource-materials/black-history-africa-the-caribbean-and-the-americas-teachers-resource/

A detailed overview of ancient African civilizations (Chapters 1 and 2).

Encyclopedia Britannica

- [Cradle of Humankind](https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Cradle-of-Humankind/601978)
<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Cradle-of-Humankind/601978>

An accessible resource outlining the origins of humankind and an explanation of a region within South Africa known as the Cradle of Humankind.

Encyclopedia Britannica

- [Nubia](http://www.britannica.com/place/Nubia)
www.britannica.com/place/Nubia
- [Aksum](http://www.britannica.com/place/Aksum-ancient-kingdom-Africa)
www.britannica.com/place/Aksum-ancient-kingdom-Africa
- [Ghana](http://www.britannica.com/place/Ghana-historical-West-African-empire)
www.britannica.com/place/Ghana-historical-West-African-empire
- [Oyo Empire](http://www.britannica.com/place/Oyo-empire)
www.britannica.com/place/Oyo-empire
- [Songhai Empire](http://www.britannica.com/place/Songhai-empire)
www.britannica.com/place/Songhai-empire
- [Mali](http://www.britannica.com/place/Mali-historical-empire-Africa)
www.britannica.com/place/Mali-historical-empire-Africa
- [Great Zimbabwe](http://www.britannica.com/place/Great-Zimbabwe)
www.britannica.com/place/Great-Zimbabwe

A brief overview of a selection of ancient African empires.

Rubicon

- [Sankofa Black Heritage Collection](http://www.sankofacollection.com/CAbooks.html)
www.sankofacollection.com/CAbooks.html

A series of historical and contemporary books of the African-Canadian experience, accessible for a diversity of literacy levels.
Book of focus: Early African Civilizations

Smithsonian Magazine

- [How Africa Became the Cradle of Humankind](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-africa-became-the-cradle-of-humankind-108875040/)
www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-africa-became-the-cradle-of-humankind-108875040/

A brief article from the *Smithsonian Magazine*, tracing the origins of humankind to the continent of Africa.

University of Illinois Springfield

- [Sankofa](http://www.uis.edu/africanamericanstudies/students/sankofa/)
www.uis.edu/africanamericanstudies/students/sankofa/

A description of the Principle of Sankofa.

United Nations and UNICEF

- [Know Your Rights! United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for Indigenous Adolescents](http://www.un-declaration.narf.org/2013un-adolescent-guide/)
www.un-declaration.narf.org/2013un-adolescent-guide/

A student-friendly version of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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www.un-declaration.narf.org/2013un-adolescent-guide/

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www.uis.edu/africanamericanstudies/students/sankofa/

Black Agency, Activism, Resistance, and Resilience



30
hours



Essential Question

In what ways have folx and communities exhibited agency and overcome simultaneous and successive waves of systemic oppression in the Americas since the seventeenth century?



To manipulate history is to manipulate consciousness; to manipulate consciousness is to manipulate possibilities; and to manipulate possibilities is to manipulate power.

- Dr. Amos Wilson
(psychologist)



Description

In this unit, students will examine examples of agency, activism, resistance, and resilience exhibited by Black communities, leaders, abolitionists, and liberationists since their arrival in the Americas. Students will develop an understanding of the political, economic, legal, and social systems underpinning the Trans-Atlantic enslavement of African Peoples and the continued oppression of African Peoples for over 400 years. Students will be able to articulate how white supremacist beliefs can be found in imperialism, capitalism, law, and other social institutions and how these social systems have served to subjugate Black people up to the present day.

Students will examine counter-narratives to commonly accepted negative media-propagated representations of the outcomes of trauma visited upon Black people. Students will learn of the many ways that African traditions have been retained and live on among descendants of the African diaspora, despite the experience and inhumanity of bondage for capital gain and denial of full liberation. Students will learn of the immense efforts to resist and endure enslavement and sustained brutality, demands for emancipation, and continued efforts toward liberation, be they physical, emotional, spiritual, legal, social, economic, educational, or other.

At the end of this unit, through the use of a gradual release of responsibility instructional framework (GRR) (Fisher &

Frey, 2011), teachers will have modelled for students the accessing and analysis of counter-narrative research, as well as the development of students' own ability to seek and honour ways of knowing that are derived from Black experiences in the Americas. In so doing, students will have examined counter-narratives, drawing from a wide

range of historical inequities that exhibit Black perseverance, despite the conditions in the Americas (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Finally, students will explore both well-known and lesser-known heroes of Black liberation in an effort to centre the long-standing examples of Black excellence.

Enduring Understandings and Guiding Questions



Enduring Understandings/ Big Ideas

1. Black counter-narratives since the African Diaspora illuminate the political, economic, legal, and social systems that subjugated Black people and struggles against white supremacist ideologies.
2. Systemic racism is derived by the individually racist actions/inactions of those in positions of power.
3. The past is never far from the present.



Guiding Questions

(Include specific questions.)

1. What are the dominant narratives about Black people in the Americas? What are the counter-narratives, and how have they played a role in disrupting dominant and often deficit views of people of African descent?
2. How might building up positive Afrocentric knowledge and dismantling anti-Black racism act as a therapeutic, self-care exercise?
3. In the present day, how should we view the ethics of actions/inactions of significant actors from the past (e.g., should monuments that celebrate or revere individuals who supported imperialism, colonization, and Indigenous genocide, enslavement be and/or remain in public spaces)?
4. In what ways do the stories of Black agency, activism, resistance, resilience counter the general exclusion/erasure of Black people as “historically significant” in Canadian history?
5. How should we seek to establish the truth of Black history, given sustained, written, Eurocentric historical perspectives that have usually omitted Black voices and views (primary-source evidence)?

6. Describe the “how” and “why” systems that came with imperialism and colonialism (legal/societal) served to oppress Black people as they did? In what ways do these systems live on? (cause and consequence/causes are thus multiple and layered)
7. In what ways might differing socio-political locations impact a person’s thinking and beliefs on historical events and/or people?
8. In what ways have the effort(s) of Black leaders (individual/group) exemplified African ideologies explored earlier in the course?
9. How have Black people documented their narratives, and how are these methods forms of resistance (slave narratives, oral traditions, documentary films, etc.)?

Course Breakdown

(key components and assessments within each unit)

Examples of Potential Points of Entry into Big Ideas

The following list contains suggestions for guiding inquiry and exploring content in this unit:

- **Reminder:** It will be impossible for students to learn all the history of Black oppression in this unit.
- **Reminder:** It would take the entire unit for students to fully explain any one of the four systems presented.
- **Suggestion:** It is the teacher’s responsibility to spend additional time in this unit to build capacity for students to understand and discuss how systems advance oppression, and how Black communities and leadership have continued to resist.
- Therefore, approach this unit through inquiry, centering the multiple experiences/stories of Black agency, activism, resistance, and resilience exhibited by Black people of the African diaspora.
- While examining counter-narratives of/ by Black people, students will slowly, little by little, co-construct an overall understanding of the following four systems, and by the end of the unit, will understand how they oppress:
 - * Political system (imperialism): i) define, ii) explain advances of system of oppression, and iii) provide a couple of examples
 - * Economic system (capitalism)
 - * Legal system (the law)
 - * Social systems (colonialism/religion/settlers)

- Analyze and interrogate how each system contributed to a long history of systemic oppression against Black people.
- Use the resources listed below as a starting point in identifying people/ groups to research.
- Ensure students come to a realization that anti-Black racism is the culmination of the intersection of various oppressive/ racist systems that are often unseen and not fully understood.
- **Ongoing:**
 - ✳ Utilize current events “In the news” to hook a topic, and then go back to history to provide depth/perspective.
 - ✳ Minute Reflection: Check-ins: Bring students’ daily reflection, conversations with peer/parent/ teacher, and thoughts and concerns into a space of discussion.

Key Expectations

(Include curriculum expectations and sections on skills and fundamental concepts from each discipline represented in this course.)

Instructional Strategies, Assessment, and Evaluation must focus on IDC4U Expectations. The following chart provides an overview of how educators might consider these in the context of this particular course. Through the iterative nature of inquiry, students will revisit and deepen understandings of concepts and skills focused on in previous units. Use of learning conversations, observations of learning, and products of learning as assessment strategies through triangulation of assessment will provide educators with the most relevant information for assessment and evaluation.

Unit/Context

- **3. Black Agency, Activism, Resistance, and Resilience**
(30 hours)
- Interdisciplinary focus: History and Culture

Major Activity

- Research skills
- Historically significant counter-narratives, culturally relevant and responsive, counter-narratives (individual/ group/ community, exposing systemic racism/ oppression)
- Academic Discussion and critical analysis

Theory and Foundation

- Analysis of information through historical and cultural inquiry frameworks
- Analysis of new structures that have emerged to advance knowledge within the disciplines
- Utilization of systems thinking
- **TFV.02** demonstrate an understanding of the different structures and organization of each of the subjects or disciplines studied
- **TFV.03** demonstrate an understanding of the different perspectives and approaches used in each of the subjects or disciplines studied
- **TFV.04** demonstrate the skills and strategies used to develop interdisciplinary products and activities

Processes and Methods of Research

- Strategies for research
- Critical- and creative-thinking strategies for research
- Comparing significance and effectiveness of questions posed with existing research narratives
- Synthesizing findings of **oppressive systems and Black liberators via counter-narratives**
- **PMV.01** be able to plan for research, using a variety of strategies and technologies
- **PMV.03** be able to process information, using a variety of research strategies and technologies

Implementation, Evaluation, Impacts, and Consequences

- Represent **Black counter-narratives** to foster critical analysis that exposes systemic racism/ oppression.
- Evaluate effectiveness of collaborative strategies.
- Plan, conduct, and present research with reference to specific disciplines in **Black Studies**.
- **IEV.01** implement and communicate information about inter-disciplinary endeavours, using a variety of methods and strategies
- **IEV.02** evaluate the quality of interdisciplinary endeavours, using a variety of strategies
- **IEV.03** analyze and describe the impact on society of inter-disciplinary approaches and solutions to real-life situations

Other Course Expectations

The discipline-based expectations of the “other” courses provide an appropriate context and content for developing practical applications or for exploring topics and themes, using an interdisciplinary approach. In single-credit Interdisciplinary Studies courses, only achievement of the Interdisciplinary Studies expectations will be evaluated.

World History Since the Fifteenth Century (CHY4U)

Communities, Conflict, and Co-operation

B2.2 analyze ways in which predominant social attitudes and beliefs/values were reflected in interactions within and/or between communities during this period (e.g., with reference to beliefs and attitudes that underpinned European exploration during this period; the Treaty of Tordesillas and its presumption of European superiority over Indigenous peoples and rights to their land; attempts to convert Indigenous peoples in the “New World,” and underlying assumptions about the value of Christianity and Indigenous religious/spiritual practices; African slavery and the idea that some races were superior to others);

C2.3 analyze the impact of the slave trade during this period on various societies around the world (e.g., with reference to the Arab slave trade; the impact of the transatlantic slave trade on African societies; the use of slaves in Indigenous societies in North,

Central, and/or South America; slavery in colonial North America and the American republic; the impact of slave auctions and inherited slave status on families).

American History (CHA3U)

Communities, Conflict, and Co-operation

B3.4 analyze the impact of prejudice and discriminatory policies and practices in the United States prior to 1791 (e.g., with reference to slavery and slave code attempts to convert Native American people and disregard for their land rights and ways of life);

C1.4 describe key economic events, trends, and/or developments, including international trends/developments, that affected the United States during this period, and assess their impact (e.g., with reference to the Industrial Revolution, the expansion of slavery and plantation economies in the South).

Identity, Citizenship, and Heritage

C3.1 explain the role and effects of slavery in the United States during this period (e.g., with reference to the buying and selling of slaves, working and living conditions, rape and other forms of violence, slave revolts and resistance movements, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Underground Railroad, aspects of slave culture, the abolitionist movement, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Thirteenth

Amendment, the challenges facing former slaves during Reconstruction), and analyze how the legacy of slavery continues to affect heritage and identity in the United States;

C3.4 analyze ways in which discriminatory policies and practices reflected and/or reinforced ideas about citizenship, rights, and social status in the United States during this period (e.g., with reference to slavery; the passing of the Black Codes; the forced relocation of Native Americans; religious and ethnic discrimination; the Naturalization Act of 1870; the Page Act of 1875; the formation of the Ku Klux Klan; the rights of workers, women, free Blacks, and Native Americans).

Canada: History, Identity, and Culture (CHI4U)

Interactions and Interdependence

C2.6 analyze key developments in the relationship between Canada, Great Britain, and the United States during this period, with a focus on their consequences for Canada (e.g., the abolition of slavery in Britain and its colonies, the Underground Railroad, Britain's interactions with the Union and the Confederacy during the American Civil War).

Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSE4M)

Approaches and Perspectives

B1.2 demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts related to the social construction of identity (e.g., the construction of race, gender,

ability, sexual orientation, class) that have been developed by a range of theorists and of how to apply the concepts when analyzing equity issues.

Power Relations

B2. analyze, in historical and contemporary contexts, the dynamics of power relations and privilege, as well as various factors that contribute to power or marginalization;

B2.1 analyze the dynamics of power relations and privilege in various social settings, both historical and contemporary (e.g., the status of women in various historical periods and/or societies, power relations in slave societies, the connections between economic and political power, heterosexual privilege, power relations between dominant and minority language groups);

B2.2 analyze the effects of bias, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression on individuals and groups (e.g., feelings of marginalization, powerlessness, anger, hopelessness, apathy, lack of self-worth, defiance; ghettoization; formation of support groups; motivation to seek societal change or engage in advocacy, action);

C1.1 analyze the rationale for specific instances of social injustice in Canadian history (e.g., denying women the vote, educational restrictions/quotas facing women and Jews, racial segregation, the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II,

the institutionalization and/or sterilization of people with disabilities, forcing Aboriginal children to attend residential schools, the destruction of Africville), and demonstrate an understanding of how perspectives on the issues related to these historical injustices have changed.

Leadership

C2. evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups and/or movements identified with specific aspects of the struggle for equity and social justice;

Assessment and Evaluation

The primary purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve learning for all students. In single-credit IDC courses, only the expectations for Interdisciplinary Studies are assessed and evaluated. Seventy percent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. Thirty percent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an action-based community initiative.

Assessment in this unit focuses on formative assessment of students' skills in self-reflection, historical thinking, critical thinking, examining bias, and production of oral and written work. Teachers should focus on providing ongoing, specific, and constructive

C2.1 evaluate the achievements of a range of individual Canadians (e.g., activists, actors, artists, economists, environmentalists, humanitarians, journalists, philanthropists, politicians, scientists, social visionaries, writers) in the areas of equity and social justice.

Promoting Equity and Social Justice

D1.2 describe how education can help promote equity and social justice (e.g., by fostering critical thinking, increasing awareness, exposing students to multiple perspectives).

feedback to students. Students will develop peer-assessment skills. Students should be developing their skills in locating, analyzing, and evaluating sources for relevance and impact.

Teachers should be using inquiry-based learning activities throughout the course as part of assessment.

Evaluations should seek to involve innovative and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Students should be engaged in smaller inquiry-based tasks in addition to a unit-culminating inquiry task.

Minds On/Introductory Lesson



Goal/Rationale Learning Goals

1. Students define moments of Black historical significance.
2. Activate and assess students' existing knowledge about Black history and excellence via a collaborative exercise designed to enable students' voice/choice to guide Minds On activity and possible subjects for study later in the unit.



Materials/Tools

Placemat or similar in-class or virtual tool



Activity Steps

1. The following exercise is an adaptation of the Historical Thinking Project's lesson, *The Historical Significance of General Sir Isaac Brock: Part 1* (www.historicalthinking.ca/sites/default/files/files/docs/L11_Brock%20Part%201.pdf).

The following six historical thinking skills will be present in this activity, but not explicitly stated to students:

- Establish historical significance.
 - Use primary-source evidence.
 - Identify continuity and change.
 - Analyze cause and consequence.
 - Take historical perspectives.
 - Understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.
2. Put students in groups of four or five.
 - Students will individually develop a list of five to ten individuals/groups in history, representing Black leadership in the face of oppression, whom they would deem “historically significant (e.g., use placemat).
 - In groups, students take turns discussing the following:
 - * Their selections of historical Black figures/groups, who demonstrated leadership and resistance in the face of subjugation (e.g., Sojourner Truth, Assata Shakur, Marcus Garvey, Kendrick Lamar, Tupac, Frederick Douglas, MeToo, Black Lives Matter)
 - * The catalyst for change: What social, political, or systemic forces of oppression were present and required change (e.g., capitalism, sexism, segregation)?
 - * The leadership characteristics each individual/group represents (skills and competencies)
 - * The “change” affected as a result of this leadership (e.g., policy development, shift in mindset, social movement)
 - Each group establishes consensus of “Top 5,” with justification, and completes the table below.
 - Before starting, the teacher should model the above steps with one example (see below).

Individual/Group	Form of Unfair Treatment (Oppression) Resisted	Leadership Qualities Demonstrated	Contributions or Change Made
e.g., Montgomery Bus Boycott	Segregation	Courage, Economic solidarity, Perseverance (381 days)	Supreme Court ruled segregation on public buses as unconstitutional.

3. As a whole class, small groups share their results, with the class attempting to name/ describe the historical moment (designed to engage class):

Individual/Group	System of Oppression Resisted	Leadership Qualities Demonstrated	Contributions or Change Made	Historical Moment
e.g., Montgomery Bus Boycott	Segregation	Courage, Economic solidarity, Perseverance (381 days)	Supreme Court ruled segregation on public buses as unconstitutional.	e.g., "I think the historical moment involving the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation is part of the Civil Rights Movement."

4. By way of a whole-class discussion, come to a consensus on the top three individuals/ groups from this exercise, whom the class would like to explore further later in this unit. Teachers will incorporate three student choices into the unit.
5. Considerations for the teacher in the creation of the final list of three:
- * Are the choices historically appropriate?
 - * Where (geographically) are the folks/groups from?
 - * Are there Canadians present?
 - * Is there gender representation on this list?

Resources

(Include text, media, community for each unit [for teachers, for students].)

New York Times

- [Over the Edge of the World](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/07/books/chapters/over-the-edge-of-the-world.html)
www.nytimes.com/2003/12/07/books/chapters/over-the-edge-of-the-world.html

An article looking at Pope Alexander VI's 1494 Papal Bull dividing rights to the world in half for Spain and Portugal

Canadian Museum of History/Musée canadien de l'histoire

- [Slavery: Virtual Museum of New France](http://www.historymuseum.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/population/slavery)
www.historymuseum.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/population/slavery

Resources providing counter-narrative to long glossed-over issue of slavery in Canada by historians and society in general

The Canadian Encyclopedia

- [Black Enslavement in Canada](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-enslavement)
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-enslavement

Resources documenting enslavement of African peoples as legal instrument to fuel colonial economic enterprise (1600's)

New York Times

- [Black Enslavement in Canada](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html)
www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html

Ongoing initiative with resources centring consequences of slavery and contributions of Black Americans (1619– present)

Medium.com

- [Partus Sequitur Ventrem – The Rule That Perpetrated Slavery and Legalized Rape](https://www.medium.com/discourse/partus-sequitur-ventrem-the-rule-that-perpetrated-slavery-and-legalized-rape-e3c423692bc2)
www.medium.com/discourse/partus-sequitur-ventrem-the-rule-that-perpetrated-slavery-and-legalized-rape-e3c423692bc2

Trigger Warning: This brief article speaks to the legal frameworks allowing for hereditary bondage and justification of sexual assaults against enslaved people (1662).

The Canadian Encyclopedia

- [Slavery Abolition Act, 1833](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/slavery-abolition-act-1833)
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/slavery-abolition-act-1833

Resources documenting the Act that abolished enslavement in most British colonies

The Weekly Challenger

- [Mary Ann Shadd Cary: Black suffragist, abolitionist, publisher, and lawyer](http://www.theweeklychallenger.com/mary-ann-shadd-cary-black-suffragist-abolitionist-publisher-and-lawyer/)
www.theweeklychallenger.com/mary-ann-shadd-cary-black-suffragist-abolitionist-publisher-and-lawyer/

An article profiling the leader of the Canadian emigration movement during the 1850's

National Archives

- [The Emancipation Proclamation](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation#:~:text=President%20Abraham%20Lincoln%20issued%20the,and%20henceforward%20shall%20be%20free.%22)
www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation#:~:text=President%20Abraham%20Lincoln%20issued%20the,and%20henceforward%20shall%20be%20free.%22

Primary-source document from 1863 about bringing an end to slavery in the United States

National Film Board

[Journey to Justice](http://www.nfb.ca/film/journey_to_justice/)
www.nfb.ca/film/journey_to_justice/

A 47-minute documentary looking at Black Canadians who took racism to court (1930's–1950's)

National Geographic

- [The Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws](http://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/black-codes-and-jim-crow-laws/)
www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/black-codes-and-jim-crow-laws/

Resources documenting Black codes and Jim Crow during Reconstruction to enforce racial segregation and curtail the power of Black voters

Ryerson University

- [Akua Benjamin Legacy Project](https://ryecast.ryerson.ca/28/Watch/11197.aspx)
<https://ryecast.ryerson.ca/28/Watch/11197.aspx>

Five short documentaries by five women directors, that highlight 50 years of Black activism in Canada (1960's–present) (37 minutes in total)

The Estate of Martin Luther King

- [Letter from Birmingham Jail](https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218230016/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/popular_requests/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf)
https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218230016/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/popular_requests/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf

Martin Luther King's 1963 letter to fellow religious leaders in Alabama

C-SPAN

- [1963 Interview with Malcolm X](http://www.c-span.org/video/?318826-1/reel-america-1963-interview-malcolm)
www.c-span.org/video/?318826-1/reel-america-1963-interview-malcolm

Malcolm X Berkeley interview (41 minutes)

NPR

- [Housing Segregation in Everything](http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/04/11/601494521/video-housing-segregation-in-everything)
www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/04/11/601494521/video-housing-segregation-in-everything

Housing segregation and the effect government policies have had on schools, health, family wealth, and policing

Boston Review

- [What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?](https://www.bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism)
www.bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism

An article on the intersection of capitalism and racism (1967)

Teaching African-Canadian History

- [Books, Articles, and Other Publications](http://www.teachingafricancanadianhistory.weebly.com/books-articles--other-publications.html)
www.teachingafricancanadianhistory.weebly.com/books-articles--other-publications.html

A wide range of resources with Canadian content

Documents for Schools

- [DFS Today: Being Black in Canada](http://www.hotdocs.ca/p/dfs-today-black-canada)
www.hotdocs.ca/p/dfs-today-black-canada

Free online curated films on Black experience

CBC

- [Toronto police investigating after Black TDSB teachers receive racist hate mail](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/tdsb-racist-hate-mail-newtonbrook-black-teachers-anti-black-racism-1.5922976)
www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/tdsb-racist-hate-mail-newtonbrook-black-teachers-anti-black-racism-1.5922976

A short article, from February 2021, documenting racism experienced by creators of this course.

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The Reclamation of Black Identity



22
hours



Essential Question

How do I/should I understand BLACKness?



It comes down to this: Black people were stripped of our identities when we were brought here, and it's been a quest since then to define who we are.

- Spike Lee
(film director)



Description

After students have spent time exploring the deep, rich, and complex histories of Black peoples, the focus of Unit 4 is anchored in exploring the present-day conditions of the Black experience, in the media, and the unfettered reality of BLACK JOY (Johnson, 2015). This learning is centred around the development of counter-narratives as a means of promoting Black excellence within popular culture and beyond (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Students will learn how deficit narratives about Blackness were, and continue to be, created and sustained by the enduring legacy of white supremacy to perpetuate its power and privilege in social, legal, economical, and political institutions (Gorski, 2019).

Students will learn the origins of these deficit narratives and will be prompted to recognize, analyze, and critique representations of Blackness within a variety of media outlets. This critical process will enable students to identify patterns of covert and overt ideologies that inform and perpetuate anti-Black racism. This investigation will enable students to recognize the insidious and elusive nature of current-day racial oppression and why they, as agents of change, need to oppose them (El-Amin et al., 2017). Furthermore, students will understand the ways in which intersectionality should inform their understanding of Black identities (Crenshaw, 2016).

At the end of the unit, students will demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension of concepts through action-based initiatives that require students to challenge deficit narratives through

engaging in discourse with those in positions of privilege and power. Students will foster an increasing understanding of anti-racist principles and values, and will be empowered with the knowledge of tools and strategies implemented by Black people to reclaim and redefine Blackness.

Enduring Understandings and Guiding Questions



Enduring Understandings

1. Black identities are rich, diverse, and complex; oppression may link Black peoples to a monolithic common lived experience, but oppression cannot define Black identities.
2. There are many narratives informing ideas about race that serve particular purposes, so it is necessary to be critical about which narratives influence one's understanding of Black identities.
3. Counter-narratives can be used as forms of resistance to empower and promote Black excellence.



Guiding Questions

1. What, at this present moment, do I understand about Blackness? What sources are informing my knowledge of Black identities?
2. What are my thoughts/opinions about current racial discourse?
3. What are the definitions for key concepts* in this unit? (i.e., Blackness, Anti-Blackness, Critical Race Theory, Deficit Narratives, Counter-Narratives, Stereotypes, Prejudice, Implicit and Explicit Bias, Overt and Covert Racism, Intersectionality, Popular Culture, Media)
4. What role does Critical Race Theory play in understanding Blackness?
5. How does intersectionality play in understanding Black oppression?
6. How does intersectionality (gender, sexuality, class, etc.) impact deficit narratives about Blackness?
7. What is Black excellence?
8. Where does Blackness appear within the media and popular culture? What does it look like? Why?
9. What are the prominent/dominant narratives on racial discourse in the media? Whose voices are present? Whose voices are absent?
10. How do power structures play a role in narratives around Blackness?
11. What are some common narratives about Blackness? Are they positive or negative? If they are deficit, how do they affect Black individuals and Black communities?
12. How can I locate/create counter-spaces that promote Black excellence and Black joy?

Suggested Topics

	Dominant or Deficit Narratives	Counter-Narratives
Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial epithets and slurs Trope theory (Sambo, Mammy, Jim Crow, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reclamation (policy) of racial epithet Ebonics/African-American Vernacular English (AAVE)
Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music: Appropriation, imitation of Black musicians Film: Lack of (positive) Black representation Sports: Hierarchy (role of racialized players), absence from certain sports (over-representation in others) Advertisement: The commodification of Blackness (e.g., coolness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black agency in rap and hip-hop culture Sport: Political Black resistance Black diversity in the entertainment industry
Art and Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of Black representation in children’s literature Minstrel shows and blackface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black authorship Poetry and activism Black artistry (galleries and museums)
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection about Black student achievement School-to-prison pipeline Access to higher education Dissemination of vital information (health, parent councils, research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcasts: Racial discourse, TED Talks Black student activism Scholarships Advocates for education Affinity spaces
News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police brutality “Black on Black” crime Islamophobia/terrorism Lack of African news (broader) Lack of representation in journalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance groups, protests (e.g., Black Panthers, Black Lives Matter) Local news stories Black politicians
Fashion and Beauty Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural appropriation Eurocentric notions of beauty: hair, body shape Shadism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black innovators Black-owned businesses Black beauty industry
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memes Hate speech Cancel culture Trends (feedback loop) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Vlogger, and social influencers (or any other relevant social-media applications)

Key Expectations

(Include curriculum expectations and sections on skills and fundamental concepts from each discipline represented in this course.)

Instructional Strategies, Assessment, and Evaluation must focus on IDC4U Expectations. The following chart provides an overview of how educators might consider these in the context of this particular course. Through the iterative nature of inquiry, students will revisit and deepen understandings of concepts and skills focused on in previous units. Use of learning conversations, observations of learning, and products of learning as assessment strategies through triangulation of assessment will provide educators with the most relevant information for assessment and evaluation.

Unit/Context

- **4. The Reclamation of Black Identity** (22 hours)
- Interdisciplinary focus: Equity and Social Justice

Major Activity

- Independent Student inquiry
- Project: Media Analysis

Theory and Foundation

- Interdisciplinary research within Equity and Social Justice as it relates to **anti-Black racism**
- Analysis of errors in research through **Black counter-narratives**
- **TFV.01** demonstrate an understanding of the key ideas and issues related to each of the subjects or disciplines studied

Processes and Methods of Research

- Evaluating information from a variety of sources, analyzing for bias as it relates to **Blackness**
- Thesis development
- **PMV.03** be able to process information, using a variety of research strategies and technologies

Implementation, Evaluation, Impacts, and Consequences

- Plan, conduct, and present interdisciplinary research in relation to **Black counter-narrative**.
- **IEV.03** analyze and describe the impact on society of inter-disciplinary approaches and solutions to real-life situations

Other Course Expectations

The discipline-based expectations of the “other” courses provide an appropriate context and content for developing practical applications or for exploring topics and themes, using an interdisciplinary approach. In single-credit Interdisciplinary Studies courses, only achievement of the Interdisciplinary Studies expectations will be evaluated.

Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSE4M)

Approaches and Perspectives

B1. demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on, and approaches, to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice;

B1.2 demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts related to the social construction of identity (e.g., the construction of race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, class) that have been developed by a range of theorists, and of how to apply the concepts when analyzing equity issues;

B1.3 explain how individual and systemic factors (e.g., fear, greed, isolation, pressure to conform, poverty, individual and systemic discrimination) can cause or perpetuate inequity and social injustice;

B1.4 explain how biases and stereotypes, including those related to race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, are transmitted through the media and popular culture.

Power Relations

B2.2 analyze the effects of bias, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression on individuals and groups (e.g., feelings of marginalization, powerlessness, anger, hopelessness, apathy, lack of self-worth, defiance; ghettoization; formation of support groups; motivation to seek societal change or engage in advocacy, action).

Media and Popular Culture

B3. assess the impact of media and popular culture on equity and social justice issues;

B3.1 analyze stereotypes found in the media and popular culture, and assess their impact (e.g., with reference to: personal aspirations, expectations, and assumptions; empathy; violent or oppressive behaviour; harassment and bullying; sense of belonging or alienation);

B3.3 demonstrate an understanding of various ways in which media and popular culture can be used to raise awareness of equity and social justice issues (e.g., how popular music, feature films, documentaries, photographs, and the Internet can raise social awareness).

Assessment and Evaluation

The primary purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve learning for all students. In single-credit IDC courses, only the expectations for Interdisciplinary Studies are assessed and evaluated. Seventy percent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. Thirty percent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an action-based community initiative.

Assessment in this unit focuses on formative assessment of students' skills in self-reflection, historical thinking, critical thinking, examining bias, and production of oral and written work. Teachers should focus on

providing ongoing, specific, and constructive feedback to students. Students will develop peer-assessment skills. Students should be developing their skills in locating, analyzing, and evaluating sources for relevance and impact.

Teachers should be using inquiry-based learning activities throughout the course as part of assessment.

Evaluations should seek to involve innovative and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Students should be engaged in smaller inquiry-based tasks in addition to a unit-culminating inquiry task.

Minds On/Introductory Lesson

Minds On: Where does “Blackness” show up in my media intake trends?



Learning Goals

During this pre-activity and Minds On for Unit 4, the teacher will activate students' prior knowledge around the concept of Black identities within the media. As this unit is centred around the present-day lived experiences of Black peoples, which are vast and complex, it is important that students have a central role in identifying areas of interest. As this activity unfolds, the teacher should take note of these students' responses to inform the direction of inquiry for the unit. The activity will serve as an initial entry point

into various key concepts in this unit, including: Critical Race Theory, deficit and counter-narratives, stereotypes, prejudice, implicit and explicit bias, popular culture, media.



Materials/Tools

Jamboard or Padlet
Digital media tracking sheet (see template)



Activity Steps

Pre-Activity: Start toward the End of Unit 3

1. The teacher will first begin by generating a discussion about what constitutes

media. Students will brainstorm together the different forms of media they know about and use. Once a list is generated (on board, Padlet, Jamboard, etc.), students will begin this activity by identifying their top four forms of media and personalizing the Media Tracking template. *To extend this lesson, consider having students add a media source that they do not normally utilize.

2. Prompt for students:
For the next one to three days, take note of what representations of Blackness you see around you. Try not to go out of your way to change your media intake habits. Do not feel the need to justify or explain what you watch or see either. The activity is about observation, rather than analysis or critique. Simply document what you see; take notes, point form, tally form.*

*The length of activity will be determined by the teacher. More time will permit more data, but as the activity continues, media intake habits may unconsciously be altered because students will become more critical of what they see.

Minds On: Day 1 of Unit 4

3. After the allotted time, students will work in small groups of three or four to discuss what they noted on their chart. What are some similarities and differences in your data trends?
4. The teacher will facilitate a large-group discussion and should keep notes of how students respond.

Prompts:

- Describe your process for collecting data.
 - What criteria did you use to identify Blackness?
 - How did you decide whether something was positive, negative, or neutral?
 - What was surprising or enlightening about the activity? What was your big take-away?
5. Students will conclude the activity by completing self-assessment of the Minds On.
 - What specifically, in relation to Blackness and media, do I want to understand or explore more deeply?



Teacher Considerations

Since critical reflection is a key component of this unit, students could keep journals to track how their ideas change and develop throughout the exploration. These journals can and should vary in format: handwritten notes, blogs, collages (saving photos from posts), creating playlists, voice or video recordings, etc.

By the end of this activity, students will have identified areas of interest, and as a group, should decide what points of entry will lead whole-class inquiry activities about Blackness and media. It is encouraged that the teacher:

- a) leave space for individual inquiry as well;
- b) centre students in this unit, and provide opportunities to facilitate key components of the unit; and
- c) facilitate learning by offering

tools and strategies for understanding and analyzing media texts. This activity can be replicated if you want students to explore their personal media intake more critically. Prompts from the form can be altered as students' understanding of big ideas develop.

Following this Minds On activity, teachers will develop activities to understand, deconstruct, and respond to the media. The teacher should craft learning exercises that support the development of critical consciousness through explicit examination of race and racism within popular culture. These activities could also include an inquiry into historical stereotypes, analyzing the messages within media text such as music lyrics or advertising

campaigns, etc. Content should be focused on centring Black voices and highlighting Black excellence, as well as looking specifically at local communities. The topic covered in this unit should evolve and be culturally responsive and relevant to reflect students in the class.



Example

Digital Media Tracking Sheet (Please note that each student will modify for personal use, and we encourage a variety of sources.)

WHEN YOU SEE US: Where does Blackness show up in my media intake trends?

Media Source	What was it? (Describe what you see.)	Who was speaking? (From what point of view?)	Would you categorize the message as positive or negative or neutral?
1. e.g., News (TV CP24)			

Resources

(Include text, media, community for each unit [for teachers, for students].)

Association for Media Literacy

- [Association for Media Literacy](http://www.aml.ca/)
www.aml.ca/

A website with resources to critically understand the techniques and impacts of the media, and to foster media literacy skills within students

Ferris State University

- [Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia](http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/index.htm)
www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/index.htm

A website of the museum with the largest public collection of anti-Black racist artifacts in the United States

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

- [What's the deal with blackface?](http://www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada/what-s-the-deal-with-blackface-1.5497247)
www.cbc.ca/radio/secretlifeofcanada/what-s-the-deal-with-blackface-1.5497247

Numerous news articles to discover and understand the history of blackface in Canada

Toronto Public Library

- [Uncovering the Stories of Freedom](http://omeka.tplcs.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibits/show/freedom-city/stories-of-freedom)
<http://omeka.tplcs.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibits/show/freedom-city/stories-of-freedom>

An article explaining how Black Torontonians challenged minstrel shows in the 1840's, along with other stories of resistance. *Uncovering the Stories of Freedom* has additional resources on a variety of topics related to Black Studies.

Nia Centre for the Arts

- [Nia Centre for the Arts](http://www.niacentre.org/)
www.niacentre.org/

This centre states that it is a Toronto-based charitable organization that supports, showcases, and promotes an appreciation of arts from across the African diaspora.

ByBlacks

- [ByBlacks.com](http://www.byblacks.com)
[www.byblacks.com/](http://www.byblacks.com)

This online magazine is focused exclusively on telling Black-Canadian stories. The site also provides a free business directory for Black Canadian-owned businesses, a free events listing, and promotional services.

Parents of Black Children

- [Parents of Black Children](http://www.parentsofblackchildren.org/)
www.parentsofblackchildren.org/

This foundation states that it is set up to support and advocate on behalf of Black students and parents.

Toronto District School Board

- [TDSB Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement](https://tdsb.on.ca/cebsa)
<https://tdsb.on.ca/cebsa>

Tools and information on the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

Ontario Ministry of Education

- [Capacity Building Series: Pedagogical Documentation Revisited](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_PedagogicalDocument.pdf)
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_PedagogicalDocument.pdf

Strategies for engaging in pedagogical documentation as a form of assessment

Ontario Ministry of Education

- [Capacity Building Series: Inquiry-Based Learning](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_InquiryBased.pdf)
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_InquiryBased.pdf

Key principles and strategies for engaging in inquiry-based learning for students

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Essential Question

How might I connect my knowledge of anti-Black racism in order to act as an agent of change in communities who experience systemic oppression?



"I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change... I'm changing the things I cannot accept."

- Dr. Angela Davis
(professor and activist)



Description

Throughout the course, successful **agency** has been defined as the ability of individuals and communities to move beyond systemic barriers to create change. The course has highlighted countless methods of resistance and examples of excellence. The skills developed from the enduring understandings of previous units have enabled students to build their capacity in recognizing the intersections of racialization and marginalization (James, 2019).

During this culminating unit, students will engage in praxis: moving from theory into action, by identifying an existing and oppressive problem and designing a critical intervention of that oppressive problem (Freire, 2005). In order to accomplish this with success, students will consider their subject location in relation to that problem, and consider what is necessary to engage in equity work within various communities. It will be helpful for educators to model what appropriate ways exist to engage a community, by highlighting any protocols that should be followed, so as to avoid instances of false saviourism (Retrieved June 18, 2021, from <https://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/csafety/mod2/notes3.htm>).

The exploration of anti-Black racism serves as the entry point to the ultimate enduring understanding of this course: oppression is oppression. Students have seen how taking action, whether it be great or small, can work toward the elimination of racism. In this culminating unit, students will recognize that that same agency explored throughout the course exists within them, and that they are agents of change.

Enduring Understandings and Guiding Questions



Enduring Understandings

1. Meaningful, effective, and far-reaching change cannot be achieved alone, but must be done within the community.
2. Before engaging in meaningful change, one must consider one's subject location in order to understand one's own connection to change that one wants to implement.
3. The act of creating change is a non-linear process that occurs in varied ways; change is ongoing and everyone can engage in meaningful action.
4. How might I thoughtfully, respectfully, and ethically engage with a community that is being oppressed?
5. In what ways would I determine the needs of a community?
6. What processes and systems do I need to understand in order to effect change?
7. How might I move from agreement with a cause toward praxis?
8. How does my learning around anti-Black racism and the systems of oppression inform my ability to act as an agent of change?



Guiding Questions

1. How does my subject location promote or inhibit my ability to be an agent of change?
2. How will I centre those who are most impacted by my commitment to effect change?
3. What does solidarity entail if I do not identify with the community I am trying to support?
9. What is the role of role models, leaders, and Elders in change efforts, and how do I draw from this wisdom, appropriately and respectfully?
10. What specific action am I going to carry out in order to create change?

Suggested Topics

Due to the open-ended and non-prescriptive nature of this unit, there are no suggested topics of exploration.

Key Expectations

(Include curriculum expectations and sections on skills and fundamental concepts from each discipline represented in this course.)

Instructional Strategies, Assessment, and Evaluation must focus on IDC4U Expectations. The following chart provides an overview of how educators might consider these in the context of this particular course. Through the iterative nature of inquiry, students will revisit and deepen understandings of concepts and skills focused on in previous units. Use of learning conversations, observations of learning, and products of learning as assessment strategies through triangulation of assessment will provide educators with the most relevant information for assessment and evaluation.

- Application of conceptual frameworks and models for anti-racism to develop interdisciplinary activities
- Use of various technologies for action research
- **TFV.04** demonstrate the skills and strategies used to develop interdisciplinary products and activities

Processes and Methods of Research

- Analyzing scope and sequence of research and effective strategies
- Locating and selecting relevant primary and secondary sources of information relevant to the selected interdisciplinary research topic
- Synthesizing findings and identifying real-life applications, describing how multicentric and innovative approaches to inquiry can lead to new findings and make contributions to society
- **PMV.01** be able to plan for research, using a variety of strategies and technologies
- **PMV.02** be able to access appropriate resources, using a variety of research strategies and technologies
- **PMV.03** be able to process information, using a variety of research strategies and technologies

Unit/Context

- **5. Agent of Change**
(16 hours)

Major Activity

- Action Project

Theory and Foundation

- Use of linguistic and mathematical representations to make connections between disciplines

Implementation, Evaluation, Impacts, and Consequences

- Explain how the manipulation of information affects society by analyzing historic and contemporary examples.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and processes used for planning and implementing the action research.

- **IEV.01** implement and communicate information about interdisciplinary endeavours, using a variety of methods and strategies
- **IEV.02** evaluate the quality of interdisciplinary endeavours, using a variety of strategies

Other Course Expectations

The discipline-based expectations of the “other” courses provide an appropriate context and content for developing practical applications or for exploring topics and themes, using an interdisciplinary approach. In single-credit Interdisciplinary Studies courses, only achievement of the Interdisciplinary Studies expectations will be evaluated.

Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSE4M)

The Social Construction of Identity

- B1.2 demonstrate an understanding of how a variety of factors (e.g., race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ability) intersect in individuals to create diverse experiences of identity and social roles.

Social Action and Personal Engagement

- D3. design, implement, and evaluate an initiative to address an equity or social justice issue;

- D3.1 identify a specific need related to an equity or social justice issue, and design an initiative to address this need (e.g., an initiative such as designing a school workshop or campaign to promote diversity; creating and publicly presenting rap songs, videos, visual artworks, dances, dramatizations, or podcasts on the impact and prevention of discrimination; organizing a petition or a letter-writing campaign on a social justice issue);
- D3.2 identify strategies and skills needed for gaining support for and handling potential resistance to their initiative (e.g., strategies such as finding allies within their school/ community, determining who has power and influence, and working with those people/groups; skills relating to advocacy, persuasion, diplomacy, active listening, understanding various perspectives, collaboration and consultation);
- D3.3 demonstrate an understanding of how to effectively evaluate social-action initiatives (e.g., strategies for

evaluating the clarity of the message and the appropriateness of the initiative for the target audience or group being served, for measuring results). Teacher prompts: “What are the goals of your initiative? How will you know if you have successfully reached your goals?” “How have other activists measured the success of their initiatives?”;

- D3.4 implement their initiative, using appropriate planning, organizational, evaluation, and communication skills;

- D3.5 reflect on the skills and strategies they used before, during, and after designing and implementing their initiative; explain which ones they found most useful in achieving their objectives; and identify what they would do differently in the future to improve their work as committed, responsible activists.

Assessment and Evaluation

The primary purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve learning for all students. In single-credit IDC courses, only the expectations for Interdisciplinary Studies are assessed and evaluated. Seventy percent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. Thirty percent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an action-based community initiative.

Assessment in this unit focuses on formative assessment of students’ skills in self-reflection, historical thinking, critical thinking, examining bias, and production of oral and written work. Teachers should focus on providing ongoing, specific, and constructive feedback to students. Students will develop

peer-assessment skills. Students should be developing their skills in locating, analyzing, and evaluating sources for relevance and impact.

Teachers should be using inquiry-based learning activities throughout the course as part of assessment.

Evaluations should seek to involve innovative and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Students should be engaged in smaller inquiry-based tasks in addition to a unit-culminating inquiry task.

Minds On: Resistance for Change

The focus of this task is to activate prior knowledge surrounding resistance and acts of change by way of lived experiences. Through a series of questions, students will identify a time when they (whether independently or collectively) acted in resistance. Furthermore, they will be able to share a succinct analysis of the resistance.



Learning Goal

Students will see themselves as agents of change.



Materials/Tools

Resistance for Change template



Activity Steps

1. Students will independently respond to the following questions on the template provided. If students are having difficulty recalling a time when they acted in resistance, they may choose to share an act of resistance they have seen others perform.
2. To begin, students will independently complete the Resistance for Change template and answer the following prompts:

- When in your life have you acted in resistance? Or when have you seen someone/a group of people acting in resistance? What were you/they trying to change?
- What were you/they pushing back against or trying to change?
- What forces were acting against the change? (Teacher prompts: What or who was pushing back? Was it an institution? Was it an ideology?)
- Why does this matter to you/them?
- Students will then share their experiences of resistance via the medium of the educator's choice (e.g., oral discussion, flip grid, Padlet/Jamboard). Finally, the educator consolidates the shared experiences. The educator will then affirm that all individuals are capable of change, big or small, and that students are already agents of change.



Teacher Considerations

The educator may choose to provide a series of examples that underscores the notion that not all change or acts of resistance happen through one medium. Moreover, change/resistance can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, local, etc.

By the end of this activity, students may have identified potential areas of interest in relation to identifying an existing oppressive problem and designing a critical intervention. Keep in mind that the exploration will vary,

depending on the individuals in the classroom and the current social climate. Students will then begin to understand how their subject location and engagement of community will inform their critical intervention.



Possible Extensions

Self-Reflection: The medium may vary (e.g., written response, flip grid, Padlet/Jamboard).

Quotation:

“I’m no longer accepting the things I cannot change... I’m changing the things I cannot accept.”

- Dr. Angela Davis (professor and activist)

Reflection prompts:

- How might the quotation connect to an oppressive problem that you would like to change?
- How might the above quotation connect to your learnings from this course thus far?
- How might the above quotation apply to your lived experience?

Resources

(Include text, media, community for each unit [for teachers, for students].)

University of Regina Press

- [Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada](http://www.uofrpress.ca/Books/U/Until-We-Are-Free)
www.uofrpress.ca/Books/U/Until-We-Are-Free

Urban Indigenous Education Centre

- [Promising Practices in Including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in the Curriculum and The Experiences, Perspectives, and Histories of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in the Curriculum Checklist of Best Practices](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cfQfVKf6TLGPJ0NA5onsqZwvXH_wzkhF/view?form=MY01SV&OCID=MY01SV)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cfQfVKf6TLGPJ0NA5onsqZwvXH_wzkhF/view?form=MY01SV&OCID=MY01SV

Practices for including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in education.

Toronto Star

- [Students craved a lesson in understanding anti-Black racism. So four Toronto teachers made a course.](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/01/25/students-craved-a-lesson-in-understanding-anti-black-racism-so-four-toronto-teachers-made-a-course.html)
www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/01/25/students-craved-a-lesson-in-understanding-anti-black-racism-so-four-toronto-teachers-made-a-course.html

This article discusses the genesis of this course. It highlights the importance and power of the student voice.

Toronto District School Board

- [Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/Addressing%20Anti-Asian%20Racism%20Resource%20Booklet%20final%20web%20Jan%202024.pdf)
www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/Addressing%20Anti-Asian%20Racism%20Resource%20Booklet%20final%20web%20Jan%202024.pdf

A resource guide for educators in addressing anti-Asian racism developed in collaboration with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

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Resistance for Change

