



USF School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies

Dear Fellow Bulls,

As people in the United States and abroad continue to protest the police killing of George Floyd and, much more broadly, the systematic devaluation of Black lives that his killing and that of so many others makes evident, SIGS faculty want to affirm our solidarity with these protests; to affirm our commitment to a just, equitable, sustainable, and democratic world; and to emphasize the ways in which our work as faculty in the School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies is intended to address the struggles that are occurring in the world around us today. As scholars and teachers, we are committed to ongoing education to help ourselves, our students, and the broader public gain a better understanding of the systems, structures, and historical legacies that have led us to this point and accordingly how we might find our way to a world free from such devaluation and violence.

First, we want to affirm that the faculty in the School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies believe that human societies should be based on justice, equity, respect, and dignity for all people. Accordingly, we condemn the history of racist violence in the United States and the world, including the long history of racist police and vigilante brutality in the US. Our condemnation is unrelated to any political ideology or party affiliation; rather, we view this issue as a matter of human rights and the fundamental principles upon which the United States is founded. As is both well documented and illustrated yet again in recent news, Black people and other people of color in the United States are disproportionately targeted, injured, and killed by police officers and vigilantes who are quite frequently not held accountable by the justice system. That the Minneapolis police have used force against Black people at seven times the rate they have used force against white people is but one example. As scholars of history, politics, anthropology, education, and culture, we understand the protests currently sweeping this country as democratic political participation at a moment of extreme frustration with longstanding injustices. Politics by its very nature inevitably includes disagreement and dissent, including nonviolent civil disobedience in some cases. We know that we, our students, and the country will inevitably have some different perspectives about the best ways forward in days to come, but we affirm the right and importance of people to protest unjust treatment as key to a functioning democracy.

Second, it is crucial to understand that the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmed Aubrey and the many, many others before them are part of the ongoing history of racial violence sustained by institutionalized, structural racism. Knowledge about the ongoing history of institutionalized, structural racism and white supremacy and their interactions with other forms of oppression is critical to building a just, equitable, and democratic future for the United States, a country that is being torn apart by racial hatred toward Black people and other people

of color. Learning such core truths about this country could save it. Education on these issues is one of the School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies' main missions. Under our overarching focus on "Citizenship, Justice, and Identity in a Global Context," SIGS offers majors and courses in Africana Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Political Science, and International Studies. We offer courses in the history of racism and racial violence in America and the rest of the world; critical thinking about the intersections between race and other forms of oppression; the influence of racial structures in politics, economics, culture, and education; the study of American politics with attention to the role of race; issues of human rights affecting all peoples; understanding social movements of resistance to oppression and injustice; and political theories that analyze how systems of oppression function and offer normative visions of freedom, justice, and democracy. Above and beyond providing crucial information and knowledge, these courses provide spaces to dialogue about these issues, to process concerns, and to build community. We strongly encourage all students, regardless of major, to take the opportunity to learn and connect with each other in these courses.

This is a revealing time in United States history. Structures and systems that began before this country was founded and that have run throughout its history in sometimes more and sometime less blatant ways are becoming all the more apparent again. We hope that this moment in history will provide a society-wide opportunity for better understanding as a foundation for working to change existing injustices. We as SIGS faculty stand ready and committed to contribute our efforts towards that end.

Sincerely,
SIGS Faculty