



Department of English, Languages, and Cultures Statement on Racialized Violence

The Department of English, Languages, and Cultures at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, located on Treaty 7, homelands of the Niitsitapi (the Siksika, Piikani, Kainai), the Îyârhe Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina Nations unequivocally condemns the murders of African Americans Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. As faculty members engaged in teaching, scholarship, and learning regarding literary and film narratives that reflect the historical and current realities of anti-blackness, anti-Indigenous racism, and oppression, we are outraged by these killings, two of which (Taylor and Floyd) were committed by the police, while the other occurred when a young man (Arbery) was shot by white men as he was jogging. Enough is enough. We stand with communities of colour and Indigenous peoples throughout America who are appalled and are making their voices heard through their legitimate constitutional right to protest. They have suffered the violent effects of colonization and white supremacy since 1492. They have endured enslavement, segregation, lynching, brutality, rape, epistemicide, and land dispossession. Their stories of anguish, survivance, and resilience have been and are told across the centuries, right up to this moment, in oral and written traditions that we study and teach. Today, we renew our commitment to the study, to the research, and to the teaching of these stories.

Yet, we must point out that not only the United States but also Canada continues to bear responsibility for our destructive colonial past, a past that makes itself felt in the everyday lives of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Black Canadians, Afro Indigenous, and recent immigrants from communities of colour. The death of Regis Korchinski-Pacquet, who was Black and Indigenous, coming as a result of police interactions in her own residence, constitutes the most recent tragic example in Canada's long history of violence and dispossession. Such violence and dispossession are unacceptable. If the United States' history of oppression includes (but is far from limited to) Matoaka, Metacomet, Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, Emmett Till, Martin Luther King Jr., Tamir Rice, and Eric Garner, Canada's is no less grave. Black, Indigenous, and racialized people living today in Canada experience undeniably greater levels of oppression, disease, incarceration, violence, and police brutality than white Canadians. They too are people with names, such as Louis Riel, Leo Lachance, Machuar Madut, Abdirahman Abdi, Tina Fontaine, Colten Boushie, and the thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls whose stories are documented by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Final Report 2019). Canada too is in crisis.

Like our colleagues in Sociology and Anthropology at Mount Royal University, we value taking positive steps to foster decolonial, anti-racist action. We support students as they engage in the crucial work of opposing all forms of oppression and of constructing a more inclusive and just world. We recognize the need to increase our commitment to do the same both in and out of the classroom. We see this time as a turning point, one in which silence is complicity. We commit to students of colour and Indigenous students both in and out of our classrooms to search for justice

and peace. We will use our textual, analytical, critical, and linguistic skills to inform, teach, write, and speak out. We pledge to survey and listen to students regarding anti-Blackness and anti-Indigenous racism. We will also compile an ongoing substantive list of primary resources from our specific disciplines, as well as resources for students and faculty to access support and help in their own lives at this critical time.

Resources

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