

From Ferguson to Oakland: Michael Brown and Race in America

This lesson plan was facilitated at California College of the Arts in Oakland, CA for the first time on December 1, 2014 by Alicia Bell, Lauren Elder, and Aaron Gach to students from two classes: “Engage: What’s Hip? Eco-Hop” and “Introduction to Community Arts” as well as any invited guests from the college or greater community.

Suggested Time Allowance: Three hours (180 minutes)

Materials Needed: Slides, “How do you feel?” Handout, “Does this apply to you?” Handout, “Environmental Sustainability & Anti-Racism” Article, Large Post-Its

Room Set-up: Seats in circle, Timeline of Events posted around the room

Session Structure/ Layout:

As participants walk in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music playing lowly in the background. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some music options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hip Hop ▪ Funk ▪ Soul ▪ Jazz • Ask participants to write a few words describing how they feel about what’s going on re: Michael Brown/Ferguson/Darren Wilson/etc. on a handout and drop it in a box.
5 minutes	Community Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Gender Pronouns
10 minutes	Community Guidelines for the session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to identify any guidelines that would help them participate fully in session. • Provide examples if necessary. • Ex. PROCESS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participate and be present. ○ Respect and be mindful. ○ Open and Honest Communication. ○ Confidentiality. ○ Engage with new ideas. ○ Space: Make it; take it. ○ Self Care
30 minutes	Conceptual Check-In <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a working definition of each of the following concepts. • Either at the end of each concept or at the end of introducing all concepts, ask participants if there is anything that they would like to add, clarify, or challenge regarding the provided definitions. • Concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sample Definition(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power is the legitimate control of, or access to, those institutions sanctioned by the state. (Barbara Major) • Power is the ability to define reality and to

convince other people that it is their definition. (Dr. Wade Nobles)

- Power is the capacity to act.
- Privilege
 - Sample Definition(s):
 - Unearned benefits conferred upon members of mainstream or dominant groups at the expense of others. (Peggy McIntosh)
- Oppression
 - Sample Definition(s):
 - Ideological Oppression: Oppression at the level of ideas; any oppressive system has at its core the idea that one group is better. The dominant group might consider itself intelligent, harder working, stronger. Opposite qualities are attributed to the other: lazy, weak, etc.
 - Institutional Oppression: Oppressions are embedded at an institutional level: laws/legal system, police practice, media images, etc.
 - Interpersonal Oppression: Personally disrespecting individuals in the target group. Dominant group members may not be consciously oppressive; they have internalized messages & consider their attitudes towards the other group normal.
 - Internalized Oppression: Targeted groups internalize oppression: oppressed people internalize the ideology of inferiority, see it reflected in institutions, experience interpersonal disrespect, and internalize those images.
- Race
 - Sample Definition(s):
 - An idea created by western Europeans following exploration across the world to account for differences among people and justify colonization, conquest, enslavement, and social hierarchy among humans. The term is used to refer to groupings of people according to common origin or background and associated with perceived biological markers. Among humans there are no races except the human race. In biology, the term has limited use, usually associated with organisms or populations that are able to interbreed. Ideas about race are culturally and socially transmitted and form the basis of racism, racial classification and often, complex racial identities. (American Anthropological Association)
- Racism
 - Sample Definition(s):
 - Racism exists when prejudice + power combine to form social constructs, legislation and widespread media bias that contribute to the oppression of the rights and liberties of a group of people. Racism is systemic, institutional, and far-reaching. It is the

	<p>prevalence of racism within social structures and institutional norms, along with implicit and explicit enforcement by members of a group that allows racism to run rampant and unchecked. (Feminspire.com)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sample Definition(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both a process and a goal. "The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure." (Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, & Pat Griffin)
20 minutes	<p>Michael Brown/Ferguson, MO Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to walk, as they are able, through a timeline of events regarding Michael Brown. • Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any questions about the events in the timeline itself? ○ Is there anything in this timeline that stands out to you or that you didn't know?
30 minutes	<p>How are you feeling?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read through some of the emotions/feelings participants submitted at the beginning of the session. • Small Group Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do any of these feelings resonate with you? ○ Does anyone feel comfortable sharing how they feel about what's going on in regards to Michael Brown, Ferguson, etc.? • Large Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask participants to share highlights of the small group conversations.
15 minutes	<p style="text-align: center;">BREAK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Play: "Ñ Don't Stop": Mike Brown Rebellion Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNSROQYGepM Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOv_7aOZtGI</p>
5 minutes	<p>Does anything involving Michael Brown and Ferguson, MO apply to you/your life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to write a response and submit.
30 minutes	<p>Ferguson Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play first 10 minutes of "Twilight: Los Angeles" (Anna Deavere Smith) • Present statistics regarding Ferguson, MO, Race/Criminal [In]Justice, and US Policing. • Sample statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ferguson, MO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 67% of all residents of Ferguson are black. 29.3% of Ferguson residents are white. (Census Data) ▪ Ferguson's police chief and mayor are white. Of the six City Council members, one is black. The local school board has six white members and one Latino. Of the 53 commissioned officers on the police force, three are black, said Ferguson Police Chief Thomas Jackson. (LATimes.com)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 92.7% of all 2013 arrests in Ferguson involved black suspects. 86% of all 2013 traffic stops in Ferguson involved black suspects, as did 92% of all vehicle searches. ▪ 34% of searches of white suspects found contraband. Only 22% of searches of black suspects did. (Ferguson Police Dept.) ○ Race/Criminal [In]Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The mere presence of a Black man can trigger thoughts that he is violent and criminal. Simply thinking about a Black person renders these concepts more accessible and can lead people to misremember the Black person as the one holding the razor. Merely thinking about Blacks can lead people to evaluate ambiguous behavior as aggressive, to miscategorize harmless objects as weapons, or to shoot quickly, and, at times, inappropriately. (Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004) ▪ While black students represent 16% of student enrollment, they represent 27% of students referred to law enforcement and 31% of students subjected to a school-related arrest. (U.S. Dept. of Education) ▪ From 2007-2009, sentences of similarly situated Black male offenders were 19.5 percent longer than those of similarly situated White male offenders. (US Sentencing Commission) ▪ African Americans represent 12% of the total population of drug users, but 38% of those arrested for drug offenses, and 59% of those in state prison for a drug offense. (Human Rights Watch) ○ United States Policing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The transformation from “community policing” to “military policing,” began in 1981, when President Reagan persuaded Congress to pass the Military Cooperation with Law Enforcement Act, which encouraged the military to give local, state, and federal police access to military bases, intelligence, research, weaponry, and other equipment for drug interdiction. That legislation carved a huge exception to the Posse Comitatus Act, the Civil War-era law prohibiting the use of military force for policing. (Alexander, 2010) • Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thoughts/Feelings/Reactions to this? ○ How does this relate to the concepts discussed earlier? ○ Does this impact your earlier responses to the handout prompts?
30 minutes	<p>What now?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask each group to create a list of ways to protest/push back/increase peace/heal/etc. • Ask participants to share lists in large group. Follow with discussion.
5 minutes	<p>One word check out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to name one thing (an emotion, insight, idea, etc) they’re feeling or taking away from the session.