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### Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy

Savannah Shepherd , '24

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**POPULAR EDUCATION CURRICULUM: AN ABOLITIONIST PEDAGOGY**

Savannah Shepherd

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Swarthmore College

Dr. Edwin Mayorga

May 14, 2024

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to give a special thank you to Professor Edwin Mayorga for his guidance and expertise throughout this project. It was through Dr. Mayorga's classes that I felt emboldened to pursue aspects of educational studies outside of the dominant scope of the field in higher education, and it was these spaces that showed me what abolitionist teaching looks like in practice. I would also like to share my gratitude for the Film and Media Studies Department, as they have allowed me to explore media literacy's impact on liberation movements. Finally, a huge thank you to Abahlali baseMjondolo, a South African grassroots movement, for broadening my horizon to the world of popular education and laying out the blueprint for a decolonized, anti-capitalist coalition doing the work of the people.

## **Introduction**

Education has long been regarded as the cornerstone of knowledge and power. Western society operates on the premise of a direct correlation between increased knowledge and heightened social capital, thus establishing a structure that favors those with access to formal education and reinforces a nearly impenetrable hierarchy. Rooted in a history marked by racism, genocide, and capitalism pivotal to the formation of the United States and other Western nations, those in positions of power are predominantly white. With authority over public education vested in those at the top, and qualifications tailored to maintain their position within the elites, it's unsurprising that the system perpetuates their dominance while keeping others markedly beneath the established threshold.

Abolition, whether pertaining to slavery, the criminal legal system, or education, seeks the complete dismantling of colonial power structures, advocating for models centered on the well-being and experiences of the most vulnerable communities. In this course, we will be using a working definition of abolition composed by Critical Resistance as our jumping-off point which defines the term as “ a political vision to eliminate imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and create lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment”. Now,

in alignment with the curriculum's focus on the liberatory potential of education, abolition is also about undoing the society we live in due to the fact that the colonial structures that currently exist both feed on and maintain oppression and inequalities, making it necessary that we build models today that can represent how we want to live in the future based on our own freedom dreams (Critical Resistance, 2024). Given that learning serves as the basis of future progress, education should play a pivotal role in the quest for a liberated society. Alterations within the existing education system fail to achieve abolitionist ends, as the system itself was designed to uphold white supremacy from its inception. Therefore, envisioning and implementing a model that is inherently inclusive, liberatory, and anti-colonial becomes imperative.

Popular education, introduced to Western academia by Paulo Freire in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1968, has been practiced for centuries in indigenous communities and those in the global South. This educational paradigm is grounded in experiential learning, centering the lived experiences of marginalized communities with the aim of achieving liberation and political/social autonomy. Operating within a circular framework, popular education blurs the lines between teacher and student, fostering an environment where all engage in reciprocal learning and teaching, thus dismantling inherent power structures in formal education. Rejecting the traditional "banking" model of education where knowledge is deposited into passive students, Freire advocates for a problem-posing approach, fostering critical dialogue to interrogate societal norms and imposed structures. Scholar Nicole Wiggins conceptualizes popular education as a philosophy and methodology seeking to foster more just and equitable social, political, and economic relations, empowering historically marginalized individuals to acquire and leverage knowledge in eliminating societal inequities (Wiggins, 2011).

In line with these principles, the creation of a popular education curriculum necessitates an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and pro-liberatory approach, as exemplified by the "Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy". Designed to cultivate abolitionist thought and encourage the exploration of privilege, passion, and the power of collective action, this curriculum stands in opposition to the competitive, testing-oriented formal education model. Both in theory and practice, it fosters accessible learning that defies quantification through grading systems. The knowledge imparted through this curriculum becomes

ingrained in individuals' daily lives and critical perspectives, empowering them to identify and combat injustices, and actively strive for the liberation of all, recognizing that no one is truly free until the most vulnerable and oppressed achieve total liberation. This iteration of the “Popular Education Curriculum: And Abolitionist Pedagogy” may be best viewed from the perspective of potential facilitators who will then go on to interpret the materials in their own context and community. Throughout the ten-week program, our aim is to explore the potential of an anti-colonial educational paradigm, urging participants to be attentive to multimedia analysis and learn how to be critical readers of media, using it as a tool to leverage resistance and express abolitionist dreams.

## **Literature Review**

When it came time to decide what literature I was going to ground the curriculum in, I started reading the work of abolitionists I have admired and learned from over the years. This curriculum is based on care, truth-telling, and becoming comfortable in the uncomfortable, so it only made sense to select written, spoken, or displayed texts from individuals who hold these values in their work and their actions. With a curriculum as broad as this, it is crucial that the lens through which participants view and interrogate topics and materials be identified. Spanning topics from prison abolition, popular education, womanist ideology, and liberation theology, the following resources provide insight into how the curriculum was designed and how the course is approaching discussion.

Boggs, G. L. (2011). Education: The great obsession. *Monthly Review*, 63(3), 38.

[https://doi.org/10.14452/mr-063-03-2011-07\\_4](https://doi.org/10.14452/mr-063-03-2011-07_4)

Written by Grace Lee Boggs, community organizer and author out of Detroit, Michigan, “Education: The Great Obsession” outlines the necessity for a new education model that is based on community care rather than the individualistic and opportunity system that currently reigns supreme in American Academia. Boggs advocates for an active learning approach that emphasizes community problem-solving that is specific to the community in which it is being taught. Boggs argues that schools should add to a community not extract resources and

abandon students in a system intended to subjugate vulnerable communities to an endless cycle of harm and poverty at the hands of systematic white supremacy.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Penguin Education.

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, acts as the foundational text for popular education and abolitionist teaching as a whole. Written by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in 1968, the book identifies educational systems as the place of further oppression but argues that there is a way to structure learning that would foster a liberatory framework resulting in a more just and equitable society. Freire rejects the traditional banking model of education, instead proposing a structure that does not separate teachers from students and centers around problem-posing teaching and learning that will create a wider consciousness in those involved, thus increasing awareness of one's political and social context.

*Guide for Racial Justice & Abolitionist SEL*. Abolitionist Teaching Network. (2020, August).

<https://abolitionistteachingnetwork.org/guide>

Created by the Abolitionist Teaching Network, this guide provides an outline of the goals of an abolitionist pedagogy and the integral principles of the practice. This resource emphasizes the importance of creating a curriculum that centers on Black and Brown joy and contributions and the use of an evaluation strategy based on Black liberation and the fostering of joy and criticality. The Abolitionist Teaching Network advocates for the complete abandonment of standardized testing practices, schools built to reflect prisons, and the removal of all police and school resource officers. These three steps are crucial in the pursuit of a space centered on restorative justice practices striving to provide reparations for students stolen by the school-to-prison nexus.

hooks, bell. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Taylor & Francis Ltd.

Defending an education model of critical pedagogy, bell hooks advocates for an approach to learning that supports critical thinking, dialogue, reflection, and the investigation of dominant systems. Hooks views education as a tool for liberation and recognizes the need for culturally relevant teaching that supports students

on the journey to become agents of change. *Teaching to Transgress* critiques traditional power structures in schools instead of arguing for a model where all participants are teachers and learners, thus decentering colonial dynamics.

Love, B. (2020). *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. BEACON.

This revolutionary work by author and academic Bettina Love acts as a toolkit to the inner workings of abolitionist pedagogy. Love begins by defining what abolitionist teaching is to her, highlighting the key values of justice, equity, and liberation. The historical implications of educational oppression are explored, while Love shows the evolution from enslavement to segregation, to mass incarceration, and finally to the inequalities of the current American education system. A champion for culturally relevant education, Love reinforces the importance of intentionally crafted curricula designed to reflect the lived experiences of those present in the space. *We Want to Do More Than Survive* argues for teachers to take on the activist role, as they have a responsibility to fight for social justice both in and out of the classroom. This work is underlined by the belief that education should be a site of increased dignity and humanity for all.

Muhammad, G. (2021). *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. Scholastic.

*Cultivating Genius* is one of educator Gholdy Muhammad's finest works, outlining an equity-focused approach to literacy rooted in the belief that all children have "genius" potential and it is the responsibility of the educator to nurture and support this potential. Drawing on critical race theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, and Black intellectual legacies as the backbone of the cultivating genius framework, Muhammad upholds the importance of including a diverse array of texts and resources to develop a space in which learners can identify their positionality in society while engaging in collaborative discussion and reflection. Muhammad posits the four pillars of the cultivating genius framework as identity development, skill development, intellectualism, and

criticality reifying the principle that education should be tailored to the individual with respect to the environment in which they exist.

Muhammad, G. (2023). *Unearthing Joy: A Guide to Culturally and Historically Responsive Teaching and Learning*. Scholastic Inc.

Expounding on the information included in *Cultivating Genius*, Gholdy Muhammad emphasizes the importance of love and joy in curriculum building in her book *Unearthing Joy*. Joy is an aspect that is often overlooked inside the classroom. Many people hold the view that learning is not about always having fun, and while some educators may try to create a space of joy, we can not expect students to feel the full potential of joyful learning within a system created to enforce obedience and assimilation. Muhammad explains how joy greatly increases engagement and the well-being of both students and teachers, especially when constructed with the lived experiences of the students in mind. Muhammad proposes many ways to develop joy in the classroom like including music throughout the day, storytelling, and activities that get everyone up and moving. Muhammad desires for people to not see joy as separate or antithetical to critical conversations, but rather use joy to create an inclusive and empowered space of learning.

*Popular education (PopEd)*. Highlander Center. (2024).

<https://highlandercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/methodologies-EN-color-1.pdf>

Highlander Research and Education Center is a social justice leadership training school that supports grassroots movements and liberatory practices as a whole. This incredible resource is a twelve-page PDF that outlines the principles, practices, and questions for topics including popular education, cultural organizing, language justice, intergenerational organizing, participatory action research, and land, legacy, and place. The information provided by the Highlander Center is accessible, clear, and actionable making it an excellent tool for conversation development and as an introduction to topics that people may experience but never had a name for.



Van Houten, C. (2016). Place-Based Education in Detroit: A Critical History of The James & Grace Lee Boggs School. *Workplace: A Journal for Academic Labor*.

This article takes an in-depth look at The James and Grace Lee Boggs School and the impact it has on the Detroit community. Utilizing Black radical traditions and pedagogy, the school emphasizes community problem-solving and the importance of building a coalition. The Boggs School follows the place-based education model which is described as an educational approach rooted in the unique history, environment, culture, and needs of a particular place. This way of teaching increases community ties, appreciation for the natural environment, and global awareness.

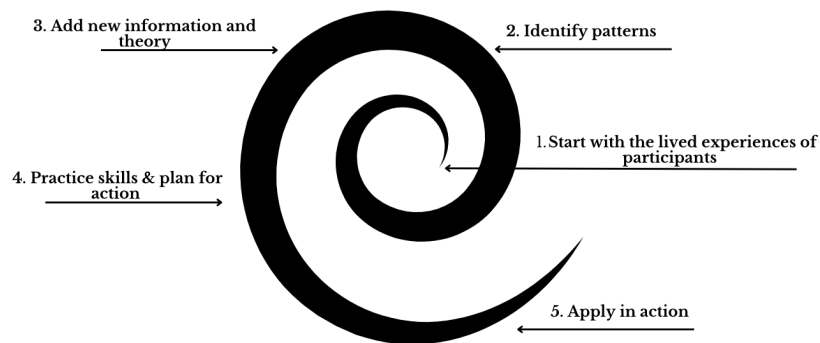
## **Methods**

When designing a popular education curriculum, key factors such as joy, inclusion, dreaming, and dynamic conversation come into play. In contrast to traditional courses that assess knowledge through tests or routine memorization, this curriculum revolves around care and the organic acquisition of societal knowledge. As previously stated, the theoretical framework underpinning the “Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy” primarily draws from Paolo Freire’s seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. It was through this lens that the curriculum's foundations were laid, acknowledging the need for a structure aligning with popular education principles. Here, "structure" deviates from its conventional meaning, focusing instead on dismantling traditional educational models, such as the hierarchy between teacher and student, formal examinations, and compulsory curriculum content.

Given this perspective, the curriculum design process was straightforward. Emphasizing the creation of an equitable space free of hierarchical structures led to the decision to arrange the course setting in a circular format. This circular format allows all participants to be equally seen and heard, eliminating podiums or rows associated with the banking model of education and carceral structures. The course aims to introduce participants to abolitionist principles and equip them with critical investigative skills to challenge colonial structures, fostering a society where everyone enjoys equal freedom and opportunities. Accessibility, both in

instructional materials and physical space, is paramount in popular education and abolitionist teaching methods. Consequently, the curriculum, tailored for participants aged 14 and above, prioritizes scheduling sessions at times convenient for individuals balancing work or formal education commitments. Moreover, a diverse range of materials from various media sources and models enriches the learning experience.

Sessions, scheduled for Saturday afternoons over a three-hour period, accommodate diverse schedules, allowing ample time for meaningful discussion, material review, and reflection. Each session follows a loose structure comprising 30 minutes of check-in and free thought/journaling, 30 minutes dedicated to reviewing weekly materials, a 10-minute break for participants' needs, 90 minutes of group discussion linking materials to real-life contexts, and a 20-minute period for collective dreaming/journaling. The popular education spiral, shown below, acts as a visual representation of how the curriculum will flow, starting with the personal narratives of participants and ending in direct action steps.



Reflecting the broad age range of participants and the ethos of popular education, learning resources were selected for accessibility, accommodating varied reading levels and educational backgrounds within the community.

Content selection prioritized enhancing media literacy, a key outcome goal throughout the curriculum. Starting in week 1, participants will be introduced to Stuart Hall and his idea that being able to critically “read” or decode media is an essential part of understanding how dominant institutions are portraying social issues and also creates an opportunity for one to create new media that can be an act of fugitive learning by bringing

non-dominant perspectives and ideologies to the public sphere. By providing examples from diverse mediums, participants gain awareness of the many forms media can take in liberatory and abolitionist efforts, later using the knowledge gained throughout the duration of the course to apply their findings in action. As the curriculum spans a wide array of topics related to abolition, clarity, and informativity were pivotal in content selection, avoiding overly complex or academic materials due to time constraints.

The design and implementation methods of the “Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy” are anchored in the mission for Black liberation and the dismantling of colonial capitalist systems. Echoing the Black Panther Party’s belief that hunger curbs learning, this curriculum uniquely incorporates food provision during each session. This recognizes that participants mirror the broader community, irrespective of race, socioeconomic status, or employment. Nourishment, a fundamental aspect of survival, underscores the curriculum's commitment to addressing participants' basic needs, aligning with abolitionist principles striving for universal access to essentials like food, water, clothing, and shelter. Thus, external funding or donations are needed to ensure adequate resources to feed all participants throughout the ten-week course.

## **Reflection**

I believe that education is a site of liberation, while simultaneously believing that formal public education and the core curricula of courses from elementary classrooms to those of higher education act with the mission to quell revolutionary discourse in an effort to further subjugate and ostracize marginalized communities. When setting out to complete my capstone project, my goal was to create something that could be taken and used all around the world in communities eager to gain a better understanding of the hidden transcript from which they are being taught. We are living in a time where many institutions are claiming inclusivity and truth-telling, but fail to acknowledge the reality that they are only going to reveal the information and knowledge that will allow them to remain in power. No formal Western education is going to break down the reality of the construction of the capitalist and imperialist structures our lives revolve around, and why they were built in the manner they were. It is only in these small pockets of fugitive learning that the full history of

the colonial power structure and its offspring is brought to light, and this is the type of space that I hope the “Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy” can foster.

The inspiration for creating a curriculum following the framework outlined by popular education came from my time studying abroad in South Africa. I had the immense privilege to learn from and work alongside Abahlali baseMjondolo, a grassroots people’s movement fighting for the land rights, housing rights, and dignity of the inhabitants of the shack-dwelling communities. ABM created the Frantz Fanon Political School, which employs the methods of popular education as a means to provide a radical abolitionist education that believes that freedom of thought is necessary for the total liberation of our global community. My time in Durban revealed a revolutionary family that I never knew I had and reified the fact that a true anticolonial anti-capitalist revolution will only be successful if it comes from the voices of the global south because the reality is they have been doing this work far longer than western institutions have and the collective community is critical to the success of a people-first movement. My semester abroad utilized the educational framework of popular education, emphasizing learning by living and being completely driven by informal conversation, and I can say with complete certainty that I learned more during these three months than I have in any of my semesters at Swarthmore College. This is not to say that I have not learned from the brilliant minds of my professors and peers, but I gained a self-understanding - - a time in a space where my Blackness was not seen as a weapon and learning was something smoothly integrated into my life allowing me to structure the rest of my undergraduate career in a way that was intentionally in line with my passions and the greater mission of achieving Black liberation.

The Frantz Fanon Political School is committed to its place in the undercommons, recognizing the need to construct lessons with cultural consciousness and address the importance of nourishing one's body before nourishing the mind. Within the eKenana community where the school is located, they have created a community garden. This garden is a site of love, care, and nourishment for the land it inhabits and the individuals it feeds. In this decolonized space, there is no differentiation between teacher and student and there is no fear of humiliation when answering a question, because, just as it is stated in the curriculum above, this is

a space that genuinely believes there is value in every word spoken and holds space for the educational journeys of all participants.

As much as I have worked to make this curriculum as thorough and encompassing as possible, I have had to remind myself that while this is a culmination of my studies at Swarthmore College, this work is committed to the deconstruction of elitist expectations in academia, which means that I need to hold myself and my work to the same standards. There have been many times throughout this process that I have felt I was not doing enough or my topic was not complex enough to validate my academic venture over the last four years, unveiling the same imposter syndrome that has plagued much of my time at the college. After time spent reflecting on why I pursued the creation of an abolitionist curriculum, I realized that this project was my freedom dream. In my classes that asked us as students to take a minute to dream about what our world would look like after the demolition of white supremacist structures, I always found myself envisioning a space of learning where everyone was sitting around in a circle talking, laughing, crying, screaming, fully releasing the rage that has accumulated inside of us while fighting to survive within the institutions designed to kill us. I am proud of the work I have produced and it fills me with an overwhelming sense of joy to think about the possibility of this curriculum acting as a framework that can be adapted across cultures and generations for the production of liberation.

In conclusion, the “Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy” aims to provide participants with the knowledge necessary to examine the systems in which they exist with a critical anti-colonial lens, allowing them to have a hand in their own liberation and the liberation of their community. We define abolition as a political action and ideology aimed at eradicating incarceration, policing, and surveillance while establishing sustainable alternatives that seek to dismantle existing colonial structures perpetuating oppression and inequality, thus advocating for the creation of models reflecting collective freedom aspirations for the future. We used this definition with the awareness that as the course progresses, it may be adapted to better describe what abolition means within the context of a specific community. This curriculum is set to take place over a ten-week period, including the following topics of exploration: Introduction to Popular

Education, Pathways to Freedom, Understanding Black Liberation, Reclaiming Narratives, Liberating *All* of Us, Reimagining Economic Systems, Fugitive Learning, Creative Expression and Resistance, Building Coalition, and finally Action Planning and Organizing. Devoted to creating a space in which informal education is validated just as much as formal education, this curriculum is devoid of traditional methods of grading, punishment, and individualism, enhancing participants' desire to learn and the freedom with which they are able to dream.

## References

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## Popular Education Curriculum: An Abolitionist Pedagogy

Saturdays 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Savannah Shepherd

Education, Race, and Media

Swarthmore College

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“Abolitionist teaching is not a teaching approach: It is a way of life, a way of seeing the world, and a way of taking action against injustice. It seeks to resist, agitate, and tear down the educational survival complex through teachers who work in solidarity with their schools’ community to achieve incremental changes in their classrooms and schools for students in the present day, while simultaneously freedom dreaming and vigorously creating a vision for what schools will be when the educational survival complex is destroyed.”

— **Bettina L. Love**, *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*



## **Our Exploration**

In this curriculum, we embark on a journey of critical inquiry and transformative learning, exploring the intersections of education, social justice, and liberation. From the foundational principles of popular education and critical pedagogy to the histories of abolition movements and black liberation, we delve into theories and practices aimed at dismantling oppressive structures and fostering collective empowerment. Through an exploration of decolonization, intersectionality, anti-capitalism, fugitive learning, creative expression, and coalition building, we seek to understand how to effect meaningful change in our communities and beyond. Ultimately, this curriculum serves as a guide for action planning and organizing, equipping participants with the tools and insights necessary to engage in the ongoing struggle for justice and liberation.

## **Our Space**

I, as the facilitator of this course, ground our journey within the ethos of the Black Radical Tradition, Pan-Africanism, and frameworks of Black Radical and Womanist thought. Our collective ethos defines this space as inherently anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, pro-Black, and pro-liberation. As abolitionists, we declare our class a cop-free zone, urging participants to dismantle the internalized policing within themselves. Embracing a horizontal structure, we emphasize collaborative learning, valuing every voice equally. Our commitment extends beyond discourse; we actively strive to embody abolition and decolonization principles, fostering a classroom environment rooted in mutual respect and care.

This space serves as a sanctuary for critical Black study and reflection, echoing Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's conception of "study" as a communal act of resistance against institutional norms. Here, all lived experiences find validation, with particular emphasis on centering voices historically marginalized. We acknowledge and honor those absent comrades—separated by various systems of oppression—recognizing that it is through their resilience that dreams of liberation and Black freedom endure.

In alignment with abolitionist and liberatory principles, we recognize the essential need to meet our material needs in order to foster a conducive environment for learning and community engagement. To honor this commitment, our sessions will include provisions for nourishment, which will be provided by myself, as the facilitator, or through the generous contribution of others in our community if they so choose. Every individual around the world deserves access to clean water, food, clothing, and shelter without resorting to self-exploitation or the exploitation of others. Thus, our space is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to resources for all participants throughout our shared journey of learning and growth.

Moreover, we embrace the full spectrum of emotions, including rage and anger, as integral to the Black experience. Rejecting the constraints of liberalism, we invite exploration of righteous indignation toward systems of oppression, challenging the notion that Black rage should be subdued. In "Our Space," we dare to confront, disrupt, and transform, envisioning a future where liberation is not just a dream but a lived reality.

## **Our Community**

1. Show up as you are and as you can.
2. All contributions to class discussions are welcome, whether verbal or otherwise.
3. This is a community meant to facilitate questions, interrogations, and unformed thoughts.
4. We do not believe in punitive practices or elitist measures of academic success. By this we mean there will be no ranking based on scores or repercussions due to the inability to read all materials.
5. This is a community for all, by all; we care for and support one another, and thus, we take accountability for our words and actions.
6. We center and uplift joy and self-care.
7. This space is rooted in communal care.

## **Guiding Question**

How can a popular education model of learning, that encourages participants to critically analyze and decode multimedia using it as a tool for resistance and expressing abolitionist visions, influence societal change over time?

## **Learning Goals**

1. Develop a deep understanding of the foundational principles of popular education and critical pedagogy, and their relevance to social justice and liberation movements.
2. Engage in critical analysis of power structures and forms of oppression, including their manifestations in education and society.
3. Enhance media literacy and cultivate fugitive learning skills as tools for resistance and resilience.
4. Foster an understanding of coalition building and solidarity across diverse communities and movements.
5. Develop strategies for action planning and organizing aimed at effecting meaningful change at the individual, community, and systemic levels.
6. Cultivate the ability to identify and acknowledge personal privilege and how we contribute to the reification of harmful systems.
7. Foster a commitment to ongoing learning and activism in pursuit of liberation for all.

## **Course Session Structure**

We will meet once a week, on Saturday, for three-hour sessions. This course will last ten weeks and the materials will build on each other as each week goes by. Our sessions will flow as follows:

- 30 minutes of check-in and free thought/journaling
- 30 minutes of reviewing materials provided for that week
- 10 minute break that could take whatever shape participants need (i.e. outdoor walk, eating)
- 90 minutes of group discussion and connecting materials to real-life applications
- 20 minutes of collective freedom dreaming/journaling

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: Introduction to Popular Education and the Role of Media Literacy**

Taking a deeper look at the origins of popular education and how it was developed out of the theory behind critical pedagogy, we will explore how this mode of study has become the face of abolitionist teaching and holds the potential to transform public education as a whole, taking note of how media can be used to decode messages and subvert the dominant ideologies spread by institutions.

- i. Critical Pedagogy and Popular Education: Towards a Unity of Theory and Practice
  1. Noelle Wiggins
- ii. *Writings on Media: History of the Present*
  1. Stuart Hall
  2. Chapter 13: "Introduction to Media Studies at the Centre"
- iii. On Popular Education
  1. John Hurst
- iv. Academic Vocabulary
- v. Crash course video

### **Week 2: Pathways to Freedom**

How have different iterations of abolitionist movements found success? Understanding the work done by our ancestors that have brought us to this space and place is integral in ensuring that intergenerational ties continue to mature, and this understanding acts as a blueprint for which tactics worked well and which should be avoided or adapted.

- vi. The Case for Abolition
  1. Ruth Wilson Gilmore
- vii. The Case for Abolitionist Pedagogy
  1. Talisa Feliciano
- viii. Abolitionist Teaching is...
  1. Bettina Love
    - a. Figure
- ix. In Our Own Hands
  1. Rania El Mugammar
    - a. Getting Curious

### **Week 3: Understanding Black Liberation**

Liberation can take many different forms and result in a wide array of outcomes. This lesson is designed to create a space in which we can all explore how the liberatory movements have tangible differences for Black communities all over the world, and hopes to answer the question: Why Black liberation specifically, and not a different racial or ethnic group?

- x. Black Liberation Movements: Then and now
  1. Sally Dray
- xi. Black Liberation Theology
  1. James Cone
    - a. Podcast clip
- xii. Antillean Women and Black Internationalism
  1. Myriam Moise

- a. Podcast

#### **Week 4: Reclaiming Narratives**

The common phrase “killing the cop in your head” acts as encouragement to decolonize the mind and create a practice in which colonial theories are decentered and the experiences of the people most impacted by historical events are uplifted and validated, striving to rewrite history from a non-white perspective.

- xiii. Decolonization ~ Meaning What Exactly?
  - 1. Pegi Evers
- xiv. Building a Post-Colonial Community Starts with Vocabulary
  - 1. Kelsey E. Thomas
- xv. Decolonization is for Everyone
  - 1. Nikki Sanchez
    - a. TedTalk

#### **Week 5: Liberating All of Us**

No race or coalition of individuals is monolithic, everyone has their own experience and interacts with the world in regard to their race, age, gender, sexuality, and other aspects of identity simultaneously, making it necessary that a nuanced approach to recognizing how social movements and subsequent change be implemented.

- xvi. Combahee River Collective Statement
  - 1. Combahee River Collective
- xvii. Disability Justice: Centering Intersectionality and Liberation
  - 1. Patty Berne, Sins Invalid
    - a. 27:40 - 45:25
- xviii. What is Intersectionality
  - 1. Kimberle Crenshaw
    - a. Video

#### **Week 6: Reimagining Economic Systems**

The colonial hierarchical society that exists today, is a byproduct of the capitalist system that has flourished for centuries, requiring the exploitation of self and others for its success. How can we destroy an economic system that has been in place since enslavement and has simply evolved into its modern form? What are the alternatives?

- xix. Anti-Capitalism: A Marxist Introduction
  - 1. Paresh Chattopadhyay
    - a. Chapter 19
- xx. There Are No Utopias
  - 1. Robin D. G. Kelley
    - a. Podcast
- xxi. Why Anti-Racism Must be Anti-Capitalist
  - 1. Zarah Sultana
    - a. Short article

#### **Week 7: Fugitive Learning**

The Western institutions that facilitate learning, pride themselves on the fact that just enough information is shared to make the learner feel like they are gaining unprecedented knowledge when in reality, the learner remains on the short leash designed by the elites to ensure the security of their spot in the hierarchy. It is necessary that spaces are found and protected, in which those excluded from the wealth of the institutions are positioned in the institution, but are not of the institution.

- xxii. Fugitive Pedagogy
  - 1. Jarvis Givens

- a. Preface and Introduction
- xxiii. Fugitive Pedagogy (Article)
  - 1. Lydialyle Gibson
- xxiv. The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study
  - 1. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten
- a. Chapter 2

### **Week 8: Creative Expression and Resistance**

Resistance does not solely mean going out to protests or giving public speeches. Art and creativity have been at the cornerstone of revolutionary movements for centuries and have the power to transcend the boundaries of language, borders, and formal education experience. This lesson asks participants to explore how art, whether it be music, painting, or any other art form, can be used to inspire change.

- xxv. How Artists Have Championed The Black Liberation Movement Over a Century
  - 1. Gazed
- xxvi. Music's Role at the Frontline of Liberation Struggles
  - 1. Ben Jacob
    - a. Blog post
- xxvii. Class art built

### **Week 9: Building Coalition**

What does it mean to be in coalition with others? There is no set definition of what makes a coalition what it is, it is completely up to the goals, mission, and cultural implications of a given movement. There are, however, factors that can ensure the proliferation of coalitions and provide a foundation for the growth and adaptation of collective struggle.

- xxviii. From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation
  - 1. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor
    - a. Chapter 5, "Building a Movement Against Police Violence"
- xxix. Maintaining a Coalition
  - 1. Browse page
- xxx. What makes a good coalition?

### **Week 10: Action Planning and Organizing**

How do we put all of this into action? This final session urges participants to think about how their freedom dreams can be implemented in the world, or how they can be helpful participants within a pre-existing movement.

- xxxi. 8 Stages of a Social Movement - Summary
- xxxii. The Power of Collective Organizing
  - 1. PBS Learning Media
    - a. 3 videos

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