

Study and Struggle Curriculum

The Study and Struggle program will run from September - December 2020. Our Critical Conversations series, hosted by Haymarket Books in the first week of the month, will cover the themes for the upcoming month. Smaller groups (we recommend capping at about 15) will meet biweekly on the second and fourth weeks of the month.

Each session will include: required readings, discussion questions, an exercise related to each session's topic, and a reading guide. The reading guide will help explain some of the main ideas. The discussion questions and exercise can help structure each reading group meeting, but each group should feel free to structure their time however they see fit.

September

Date: TBD

Critical Conversations: Abolition as Study and Deconstructing Racial Capitalism
Participants: TBD

Session 1: Abolition as Study

Key Questions:

- Why do we study?
- Why do we read the past?
- What is important from our history?
- What is the relationship of study to struggle?
- What do we mean by study? What forms of study are there?
- What is abolition as study?
- What is abolition as practice?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Introduction: Prison Reform or Prison Abolition?"
- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Imprisonment and Reform"
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "Introduction: When History Sleeps: A Beginning"
- Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "Chapter 1"

Session 2: Deconstructing Racial Capitalism

Key Questions:

- What is racial capitalism?
- How do we talk about racial capitalism in relation to the Prison Industrial Complex?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives"

- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “The Negro Question: Red Dreams of Black Liberation”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “A Day of Reckoning: Dreams of Reparations”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism”

October

Date: TBD

Critical Conversations: Abolition, Intersectionality, and Care

Participants: TBD

Session 3: Abolition as Intersectional

Key Questions:

- What does intersectionality mean?
- Why is intersectionality important for understanding imprisonment and migration controls?
- Why is intersectionality important for building abolitionist movements?
- How do heteronormativity and binary gender norms contribute to the prison industrial complex?
- What does it mean to be queer?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, “How Gender Structures the Prison System”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “This Battlefield Called Life: Black Feminist Dreams”
- “Combahee River Collective Statement”

Recommended Materials:

- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “Until Black Women Are Free, None of Us Will Be Free”

Session 4: Abolition as Care

Key Questions:

- What is mutual aid? What has it looked like in your life? What can you imagine it as?
- What are the differences between restorative and transformative justice?
- What do we understand as restorative? What has the potential to be transformative?
- What does community mean?
- How do we reimagine communities as central to the continuum of care?
- How do we build care webs for ourselves and our community?
- If you had the chance to develop your own care web and care programs what would it look like? What would you provide that isn’t currently available through our local/state/federal government?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, “The Prison Industrial Complex”
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, “Care Webs: Experiments in Creating Collective Access”

November

Date: TBD

Critical Conversations: Deconstructing Settler Colonialism and Borders

Participants: TBD

Session 5: Deconstructing Settler Colonialism

Key Questions:

- What is settler colonialism?
- What does settler colonialism have to do with territory and nation-state borders?
- What is the relationship between settler colonialism and the prison industrial complex?
- How can we understand the relationship between settler colonialism and racial capitalism? How can we make these connections clearer?
- How can our movements for abolition better incorporate the analytic of settler colonialism into our organizing, coalition-building, and strategizing?

Required Readings:

- Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates*, “Introduction”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “Dreams of the New Land”

Session 6: Deconstructing Borders

Key Questions:

- What is the relationship between abolition and no borders politics?
- What function do border walls, border militarization and internal Border Patrol checkpoints serve?
- How is ending deportation a necessary part of abolitionist politics?

Required Readings:

- Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates*, “Not Imprisonment in a Legal Sense”
- Harsha Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism*, “What Is Border Imperialism”

December

Date: TBD

Critical Conversations: Movement Building and Transnational Freedom Struggles

Participants: TBD

Session 7: Abolition and Transnational Freedom Struggles

Key Questions:

- How do we build from places of transnational solidarity? What challenges might we encounter, and how can we overcome them?
- How is solidarity maintained across privilege, region, and context?

Required Readings:

- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "Roaring from the East: Third World Dreaming"
- Angela Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, "Ferguson Reminds Us of the Importance of a Global Context"
- Angela Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, "On Palestine, G4S, and the Prison-Industrial Complex"

Session 8: Abolition as Movement Building

Key Questions:

- What is coalition versus movement building?
- What does accountability look like in movement building?
- What does the proliferation of nonprofits mean for movement building?
- How can we shape movements outside the contours of oppression to support abolition work?
- What are the conditions (political, socioeconomic, cultural) necessary for movement building?
- What does it mean to be in movement? What are the prerequisites for a movement?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Abolitionist Alternatives"
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "Keeping It Surreal: Dreams of the Marvelous"
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "'When History Wakes': A New Beginning"