

“There must always be a remedy for wrong and injustice if we only know how to find it.”

Ida B. Wells

The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and Dreasjon Reed (here in Indianapolis), are shameful and despicable indicators of a fulcrum of covert and overt anti-Black racism that has successfully enslaved, murdered, raped, beaten, maimed, and discriminated against Black people for hundreds of years. Contemporary socioeconomic obstacles, including housing discrimination, mass incarceration, over-policing and extra-legal surveillance, labor & wage exploitation, health disparities, and environmental injustices also have legacies traceable across centuries. History tells us that the current instances of police brutality, police harassment, and police murder is in no way a new phenomenon, nor is it an anomalous feature of U.S. society. Adding further injury, attempts to resist or to simply acknowledge these issues is typically met with outright hostility or subtle microaggressions that pervade the daily lives of Black people. Under such conditions, suspicion, perceived or imaginary threats, illogical uninformed stereotyping, and rote dishonesty steeped in racist conditioning becomes weaponized and often results in death for Black people – young and old. Responses from the justice system and larger society encapsulate a wide range of obfuscations, gaslighting, and a systematic aversion to engaging the root causes of oppression that activate such a lack of concern for humanity.

The Africana Studies Program at IUPUI recognizes that the perspectives and insights we gain through our scholarly work in this discipline makes us uniquely qualified to critically probe the ever-present existence of anti-Blackness. We further assert that our scholarship and teaching must endeavor to expose how white supremacy and systemic racism work to deploy iniquitous formulae that maintain a corrosive residency in Black lives. We see this is as our front of struggle within the larger movement, and as we are called to study the Black Radical and Intellectual Traditions, we understand that we must also stand steadfastly in solidarity with activists, some of whom are students in the Africana Studies program, currently engaging in protesting state violence against Black men, women, boys and girls. The collective resilience of Black people in protracted struggle serve as a counter to strategies aimed to dampen and discredit dissent, empty platitudes meant to satiate in the short term, and the backlash that always follows even perceived Black success. The Africana Studies Program at IUPUI is committed to supporting and guiding student inquiry that foments a deeper analysis of the Africana context, and encourages critical interrogation of white supremacy toward its end.

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