

6th September 2016

#ColinKaepernickSyllabus



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#ColinKaepernickSyllabus | special to **NewBlackMan (in Exile)**

On September 4, **Rebecca Martinez** tweeted **Louis Moore** and **David J. Leonard**, suggesting the creation of Colin Kaepernick Syllabus. Soon, we, along with **Bijan C. Bayne**, **Sarah J. Jackson**, and many others began the work of creating a syllabus to hopefully elevate and empower the conversations that Colin Kaepernick started when he decided to sit down in protest during an August 26, 2016 preseason game.

Building on the framework established by Chad Williams, Kidada Williams, and Keisha Blain, with their monumental **#CharlestonSyllabus** [<http://www.aaihs.org/resources/charlestonsyllabus/>], Marcia Chatelain with **#FergusonSyllabus** [<https://sociologistsforjustice.org/ferguson-syllabus/>] and subsequent efforts from Candice Benbow with **#LemonadeSyllabus** [<https://diasporahypertext.com/2016/05/07/download-the-lemonadesyllabus-compiled-by-candice-benbow/>] and others who have sought to not only use social media and online technology to crowdsource and aggregate conversations, this syllabus represents an effort to bring together multiple conversations, histories, disciplines, discourses, and spaces. If we are going to follow Colin Kaepernick's lead to have conversations and work toward justice, we must do so with the necessary tools and collective understanding. This requires engaging multiple conversations, entering into these spaces with a historic foundation, with knowledge about the persistent realities of racial injustice and inequality, with insight into the longstanding struggles of the Black athlete.

This syllabus represents an attempt to aid in these conversations, to turn our everyday conversations, debates, and discourse into a classroom, all while making sure our institutionalized classrooms are engaged with the histories, struggles, and public discourses that shape our current moment.

[Harry Edwards recently recently wrote](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-letter-to-the-university-of-texas-about-) [<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-letter-to-the-university-of-texas-about->

[campus-concealed-carry_us_57bf596ce4b04193420e57e6](#)], “silence is evil’s greatest and most consistently dependable ally.” For all those engaged in these conversations, for those who have written, spoke about, and organized around racial injustice, silence is antithetical to our work, our ethos. Yet, too often people speak past one another; too many people presume because of the everyday saturation of sports culture, the ubiquity of media coverage of the Colin Kaepernick, and the hypervisibility (and invisibility) of racial discourse, along with the belief that this is all about opinions and “two sides” that they are prepared for these important conversations.

Too often, especially within the media and from those whose whiteness - their privilege - insulates, empowers, and protects, people speak without the requisite tools, without the requisite historic foundation, and without necessary information. This offers a toolbox of knowledge, links to resources, and information. The #Kaepernick syllabus furthers the efforts to disrupt the silence, to make connections, and to otherwise build on the work of Kaepernick, Edwards, members of the WNBA, Bomani Jones, Serena Williams, and so many others demanding that we speak and act. While continuing the conversation is important, it must be done so with literacy and knowledge about American racism, the history of sports, the African American athlete, #BLM, protests, and so much more. Discussions aren’t inherently transformative but with the requisite understanding, introspection about privilege and widely-held assumptions, and critical examination, we are better equipped as we walk toward justice and radical transformation
#KaepernickSyllabus #WeSitWithKaep

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