Leonard Moore has been teaching Black history for more than twenty-five years, mostly to white people. Drawing on decades of experience with community groups and in classrooms on campuses throughout the South, Dr. Moore has developed The History of the Black Experience to illustrate how an understanding of Black history is necessary for everyone. This brief course includes a syllabus and other tools for actionable steps that white people can take to move beyond performative justice and toward racial reparations, healing, and reconciliation.
This brief course looks at the Black experience in America with a particular emphasis on the period from 1865 to the present. I’ve chosen to highlight the historical issues and themes that best connect to contemporary Black life in America, putting events like the murder of George Floyd and the growth of Black Lives Matter, as well as debates on topics ranging from policing to reparations, into a much-needed historical context.

**BOOKS**

*Lynch Law in Georgia* by Ida B. Wells-Barnett

*Negroes with Guns* by Robert F. Williams

*The Revolt of the Black Athlete: 50th Anniversary Edition* by Harry Edwards
CLASS 1

FREEDOM? (1865–1877)

- The Legacy of Slavery and White Supremacy
- Making Freedom
- Constitutional Amendments
- The Criminalization of Black Life

READ

*The 1619 Project* by Nikole Hannah-Jones,

WATCH

Class 1: https://youtu.be/kPIT7Jd74CM
https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/black-codes/

“Laws to Criminalize Black Life?”
“The Origins of Black Codes”
“Pig Laws and Imprisonment”
“New Systems of Exploitation”
CLASS 2
THE NADIR (1877–1940s)

• The Necessity of Jim Crow
• Convict Leasing
• Sharecropping
• Disenfranchisement
• Lynching
• Black Institution Building
• The Lost Cause and Confederate Remembrance

READ

*Lynch Law in Georgia* by Ida B. Wells-Barnett

WATCH

Class 2: https://youtu.be/1uMwbxmKAP4

https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/convict-leasing/

“What It Meant to Be a Convict”

“Reflections on Child Convict Labor”

“Reflections on Convict Leasing”

https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/sharecropping/

“Sharecropping as Slavery”

“The Complications of Sharecropping”
CLASS 3

THE GREAT MIGRATIONS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN AMERICA (1920–1965)

- Push/Pull Migration Factors
- White Flight and the Making of Modern Conservatism
- The Making of a Black Underclass
- Redlining and Housing Discrimination
- Employment Bias
- De Facto School Segregation in the Urban North
- Police Brutality

READ

“The Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates,
https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/

WATCH

Class 3: https://youtu.be/2BNfLZBt8ak

“Redlined: A Legacy of Housing Discrimination,”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_sCS2E8k5g
CLASS 4

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
(1954–1965)

• Economic Roots of Black Protest
• Cold War, Civil Rights
• Violent White Resistance
• The Debate over Violence vs. Nonviolence
• Local Movements
• Civil Rights Legislation

READ

Negroes with Guns
by Robert F. Williams

WATCH

Class 4: https://youtu.be/HNmAmx-h7ow

“The Murder of Emmett Till,” American Experience,

“Fannie Lou Hamer Interview 1965,”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a3KqhkJQ-s
CLASS 5
THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT
(1965–1972)

• Northern Urban Frustration
• The Impact of the Nation of Islam
• The Revolutionary Nature of the Black Panther Party
• Black Power and the College Campus
• COINTELPRO
• The Rise of Black Political Power

READ

_The Revolt of the Black Athlete: 50th Anniversary Edition_
by Harry Edwards

“The Rank and File Women of the Black Panther Party and Their Powerful Influence” by Janelle Harris Dixon,

WATCH

Class 5: https://youtu.be/trSBx-fGUCU

Malcolm X’s Legendary Speech: “The Ballot or the Bullet,”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zLQLUpNGsc
CLASS 6

BLACK LIFE AND THE CONSERVATIVE COUNTERREVOLUTION (1980s–PRESENT)

• The Privatization, Segregation, and End of Public Education
• Gentrification
• Mass Incarceration and the New Jim Crow
• Voter Suppression in the Age of Trump

READ

“Austin’s Gentrification Problem: How We Got Here” by Ashley Goudeau,

“The New Jim Crow: How the War on Drugs Gave Birth to a Permanent American Undercaste” by Michelle Alexander,
https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/new-jim-crow/

“They Don’t Really Want Us to Vote’: How Republicans Made It Harder” by Danny Hakim and Michael Wines,

WATCH

Class 6: https://youtu.be/trSBx-fGUCU

13th,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY OVERVIEWS


SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION


**JIM CROW AND SEGREGATION**


**BLACK URBANIZATION**


**CIVIL RIGHTS**


**BLACK POWER**


**RACE, SOCIETY, AND ANTI-RACISM**


TEACHING BLACK HISTORY TO WHITE PEOPLE
LEONARD N. MOORE

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. Do you agree with the author’s opening statement in which he says that “every white American should be required to take an African American history class in either high school or college”?

Why or why not?

2. Why is the teaching of Black history considered controversial and somewhat “divisive”?

How much African American history were you exposed to during your high school or college years?

3. How has the Black experience in America shaped your life? Be specific.

4. How do you respond to the author’s relative who told him that it is not the responsibility of Black people to teach Black history to white people?

5. In your opinion, which is more valuable: diversity training or a semester-long class in Black history?
TEACHING WHITE STUDENTS ABOUT BLACKNESS

1. Why does the author suggest that some Black students reject taking Black history classes?

2. Some people believe that as Black history classes become more popular with white students, it gives the subject matter more academic legitimacy in high schools and on college campuses.

Do you agree? Why or why not?

3. In your opinion, why do you think there might be tension between African Americans and African immigrants in the United States?

TEACHING MYSELF

1. The author talks about how growing up in a community with a large Orthodox Jewish community shaped him and his worldview. Describe the neighborhood you grew up in and how it shaped you.

2. Based upon America’s racial history, do you think white teachers/professors can effectively teach Black history?

3. Why does the author like teaching in the South and why does he reject political correctness?

4. Many immigrants of all colors come to the United States with a stereotypical view of Black people. How can we effectively teach immigrants about the Black experience?
TEACHING BLACK ANGER

1. Many people wonder why Black frustration is usually high after a police officer kills an unarmed African American, yet the Black community can appear to be silent on issues of Black-on-Black crime. Discuss and explain this phenomenon.

2. Explain your reaction when you read about racial Monopoly.

3. Describe your past interactions with police. At any point, did you fear for your safety?

TEACHING ENSLAVEMENT AND EMANCIPATION

1. What came first, slavery or racism?

2. Discuss the five things formerly enslaved people did in making the transition from slavery to freedom.

TEACHING JIM CROW

1. In your opinion, what effect did segregation have on the psyches of African Americans? What about on the psyches of white Southerners?

2. After looking at the components of Jim Crow (disenfranchisement, sharecropping, convict leasing, lynching, violence and intimidation), which do you believe continues to haunt Black America today? Why?

3. Should Confederate memorials be allowed on or in public spaces? Why or why not? Or should they be removed and put on private property or in museums?
TEACHING BLACK URBANIZATION

1. How did the Great Migration change the fabric of urban America?

2. Upon arriving in the urban North and West, Black migrants confronted racism in housing, education, police treatment, and employment. Which of these issues still affects African Americans today?

3. What has been your experience with the real estate industry? In your opinion, is race still a factor in homeownership?

TEACHING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

1. In your opinion, what collateral damage did the Black community suffer with integration? Has integration been a failure for the Black community?

2. Were you surprised to learn that two of Martin Luther King Jr.'s mentors were African American women? Why or why not?

TEACHING BLACK POWER

1. If you were living in Detroit in 1962 and Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. were both speaking in Detroit on the same day at the same time, who would you go listen to, and why?

2. How did Black Power innovators instill self-pride in Black people?

3. In today's political climate, would it be beneficial for Black people to completely leave the Democratic party and form their own political party? Why or why not?
NOTES