

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

SEMINAR ON CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THOUGHT 2020-2021 SEMINAR L 8866 / CPLS GR8866

ABOLITION DEMOCRACY 13/13

Bernard E. Harcourt
Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor
Law, Political Science, and ICLS
Jerome Greene Hall, Suite 603
cccct@law.columbia.edu
(212) 854-1997

CCCCT Executive Coordinator
Fonda Shen
cccct@law.columbia.edu
Faculty Assistant
Adebambo Adesanya
aa4551@columbia.edu

This seminar is cross-listed in Law, Political Science, and ICLS.

Seminar Description

This seminar focuses, each year, on a different set of topics at the heart of contemporary critical thought in law, politics, and social inquiry. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the seminar focused on Michel Foucault's 13 Collège de France lectures and produced the [Foucault 13/13 series](#). During the 2016-2017 academic year, the seminar focused on 13 critical readings of Friedrich Nietzsche and produced the [Nietzsche 13/13 series](#). During the 2017-2018 academic year, the seminar focused on 13 modalities of uprisings and produced the [Uprising 13/13 series](#). During the 2018-2019 academic year, the seminar focused on the relationship between critical theory and praxis, and produced the [Praxis 13/13 series](#). During the 2019-2020 academic year, the seminar returned to 13 fundamental texts of critical theory, and produced the [Critique 13/13 series](#).

The upcoming seminar for 2020-2021 will focus on abolition today and will work through the different dimensions of contemporary arguments for abolition (regarding the prison, the police, and the death penalty, but also the abolition of property, of capital, of coverture and marital dominion, of oil, of borders, and it will consider the history of the abolition of slavery). To explore these arguments for different forms of abolition, we will read and discuss the following texts, among others:

Davis, Angela. *Abolition Democracy*. 2005.
Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 2011.

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- Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. 1935.
Foner, Eric. *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*. 2019.
Foucault, Michel. *The Punitive Society*. 2015.
Franke, Katherine. *Repair: Redeeming the Promise of Abolition*. 2019.
Kaba, Mariame. *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*. 2021
Martin, Reinhold. "Abolish Oil." 2020.
Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 1848
Proudhon, Pierre Joseph. *What Is Property?* 1840
Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body*. 1997.
Vitale, Alex. *The End of Policing*. 2017.

The graduate student seminar will be structured to frame a series of 13 formal seminars at which one or more guests, from different disciplines, will be invited to discuss the readings and present on the themes of the seminar. Each formal seminar will host a contemporary critical theorist from across the disciplines. It will also frame and interrelate with a Paris critical theory seminar at the EHESS that will run alongside the seminar. The graduate student seminar thus will serve as the vehicle to enrich the formal 13/13 seminars and support the intellectual apparatus that will accompany those formal seminars. This seminar will function as an advanced graduate research seminar.

We will be holding the formal 13/13 seminars on Thursday evenings this coming year, generally from 6:15pm to 8:45pm EST, mostly at Columbia University. Students who are not able to be physically present at the seminar will have the option of joining via Zoom. Students will be expected, though, to be seated and in discussion with the other participants from 6pm to 9pm.

The seminars will begin with a short introduction of the readings, followed by guest presentations (15-20 minutes) and a commentary, and then open discussion with the students and participants for over an hour. The formal part of the sessions will begin promptly at 6:15pm and will end promptly at 8:45pm.

Description of the Paris Seminar

In addition, there will be a graduate student seminar in Paris at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) that will be take place in December-January and May-June. Information about that seminar can be found here: <https://enseignements.ehess.fr/2020-2021/ue/609>. These may be in French. We will find ways to coordinate sessions and make these accessible as well.

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Assignments

For each seminar, there will be assigned readings (e.g. one book and optional additional materials). The readings may be updated and revised, in which case any changes will be posted on our course website page. You should consult the course website page regularly to get updates and information about the seminar.

This year may be different because of the pandemic, but there will also likely be a virtual dimension to the seminar, what we have called the Live Streaming and Twitter (LST) room. The LST room is a dynamic, interactive virtual space that will be run simultaneously alongside the seminars. The idea of the LST Room is to virtually extend participation beyond the seminar room and create a virtual space for our public to not only watch our guests speak, but also to formulate questions that will directly inform the seminar discussion. Questions arising in the LST room will be transmitted to our guest speakers during the formal seminar itself via email and Twitter. We will be in charge of the LST room, which means communicating with others, who are not physically present in the formal seminar but watching the livestream, to pose their questions or comments.

Books and Texts

The texts for the course will be assigned readings, mostly available at Book Culture or on Courseworks. In order to access the readings and syllabus on-line, please go to the Courseworks page and log in using your UNI and password here: <https://courseworks.columbia.edu/welcome/>. All digital materials will be posted to the Courseworks page.

Required Books

- Davis, Angela. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Prison, Torture, and Empire*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005.
- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.
- Foner, Eric. *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Punitive Society*. Trans. Graham Burchell. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

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- Franke, Katherine. *Repair: Redeeming the Promise of Abolition*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019.
- Kaba, Mariame. *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021.
- Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Ed. Frederick Engels. New York: International Publishers, 1948.
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body*. New York: Pantheon, 1997.
- Vitale, Alex S. *The End of Policing*. New York: Verso, 2017.

Sample of Articles and Resources On-Line

- Hannah-Jones, Nikole. "What is Owed," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 30, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/24/magazine/reparations-slavery.html>
- Hoag, Alexis. "Valuing Black Lives: A Case for Ending the Death Penalty." *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, 51.3: 985 (2020)
- Martin, Reinhold. "Abolish Oil." *Places Journal* (June 2020). <https://placesjournal.org/article/abolish-oil/>.
- McLeod, Allegra. "Envisioning Abolition Democracy." *Harvard Law Review* 132, no. 6 (2019): 1613-1649. https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1613-1649_Online.pdf.
- Roberts, Dorothy. "Abolition Constitutionalism." *Harvard Law Review* 133, no. 1 (2019): 1-122. https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/1-122_Online.pdf.

Requirements

Graduate students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to the formal seminar and should be prepared to offer public comments to facilitate seminar discussion. There should be no absences. If a student has an excused absence, please e-mail Fonda Shen (cccct@law.columbia.edu) by 10:00 a.m. of the day of the seminar.

Students will conduct their own research and prepare, for each semester, (a) one ex ante 5-page book review or pre-seminar blog-post providing guidance on the book we will be reading that week, and (b) one ex post 5-page blog-post discussing and elaborating on the intellectual discussion at one of the 13/13 seminars. In addition, this work will form part of a final paper for the seminar of about 15 pages.

Professor Harcourt will hold office hours on Mondays from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. Please contact his assistant, Bree Adesanya (aa4551@columbia.edu) to schedule an

appointment. Office hours are by appointment only.

Laptop Policy

Please note that you *may only use* your laptop for three purposes: (1) as a *word processor* to take and read notes; (2) as a *reader* to consult assigned course materials that are on-line or saved on your hard drive; or (3) to participate on Zoom. You *may not* use your laptop during the seminar, ever, to write emails, shop on-line, or for any other purpose that is not seminar related. Please respect your peers and this policy.

TENTATIVE SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Seminars will take place in Jerome Greene Hall and simultaneously on Zoom.

INTRODUCTION [FOR REGISTERED STUDENTS ONLY]

Thursday, September 17, 2020 6:15-8:45

Introductory seminar for enrolled graduate students. We will explore abolitionism today, discuss these readings by Allegra McLeod and Dorothy Roberts, and review the logistics of the seminar.

Please read:

McLeod, Allegra. "Prison Abolition and Grounded Justice," 62 *UCLA L. Rev.* 1156 (2015): 1156-1239. Available at https://www.uclalawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/McLeod_6.2015.pdf.

Roberts, Dorothy. "Abolition Constitutionalism." *Harvard Law Review* 133, no. 1 (2019): 1-122. https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/1-122_Online.pdf

1/13 ABOLITION TODAY

Thursday, September 24, 2020 6:15 – 8:45 pm

Opening music with the Freedom Trap, poetry by Ian Manuel, and artwork by persons who have been incarcerated and affected by racialized mass incarceration,

with an introduction to "Abolitionism Today" by Jindu Obiofuma, Cheryl Wilkins, the Abolition Collective, the Barnard Prison Abolition Collective, and the team at The Digital Abolitionist,

and a "Critical Conversation about Abolitionism" with Ivan Calaff, Alexis Hoag and Bruce Western.

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Still today—with police killings of unarmed Black and Latinx women and men, with blatant racial profiling and grossly disproportionate policing and enforcement in African-American communities (85% of stops-and-frisks in New York City were of persons of color), with a capital punishment system in this country that is multiple times more likely to sentence someone to death based on skin color—we live in a time still today in which the practices and institutions of the penal law serve as the glue, the mortar that keeps together our system of racial hierarchy.

W.E.B. Du Bois’s words ring today as true as they did in 1935. As Du Bois wrote, in his landmark study, *Black Reconstruction*: “The whole criminal system came to be used as a method of keeping Negroes at work and intimidating them. Consequently, there began to be a demand for jails and penitentiaries beyond the natural demand due to the rise of crime.”

Our abolitionist efforts today—whether they target the police, prisons, capital punishment, or more broadly our punitive society—have to be understood through this perspective: the dark legacy and long history of the still uncompleted abolition of slavery.

Please read:

McLeod, Allegra. “Envisioning Abolition Democracy.” *Harvard Law Review* 132, no. 6 (2019): 1613-1649. Available at https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1613-1649_Online.pdf.

Please visit the website of The Digital Abolitionist here: <https://www.thedigitalabolitionist.com>

Please familiarize yourself with The Digital Abolitionist’s Library here: <https://www.thedigitalabolitionist.com/resources>

2/13 ABOLITION DEMOCRACY

Thursday, October 15, 2020 6:15-8:45 pm

Opening with a reading by Christopher P. Wolfe of his personal essay “The most beautiful thing in this world”

Followed by a conversation with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ivan Calaff, Flores Forbes, Robert Gooding-Williams, and Kendall Thomas.

The criminal law served to transform American slavery into a system of peonage that, in many cases, exceeded the horrors of the Antebellum period. The

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enforcement of the criminal law reproduced a system of racial apartheid and injustice in America that continues to the present. As brilliant critical thinkers have demonstrated since Du Bois's book in 1935—Angela Davis, Michelle Alexander, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Dorothy Roberts, and Bryan Stevenson, among others—we live today in the continuing legacy of slavery.

But although the ambition of abolition democracy was not realized then, the promise of abolition democracy still guides us today. This seminar will explore the theoretical lens of “Abolition Democracy” originally coined by W.E.B. Du Bois and later interpreted by Angela Davis, as a way to think critically about the different struggles for abolition, both historically and in their current context.

Please read:

Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.

Davis, Angela. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Prison, Torture, and Empire*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005.

Thomas, Kendall. “[Envisioning Abolition: Sex, Citizenship, and the Racial Imaginary of the Killing State](#).” In *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, ed. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee, 257-275. New York: Zone Books, 2012.

3/13 ABOLISH THE POLICE

Thursday, October 29, 2020 6:15 – 8:45 pm

Samantha Felix, the sister of Matthew Felix, and Ghislaine Pagès open the seminar with a conversation on the pervasiveness of police violence

Followed by a conversation with Amna Akbar, Derecka Purnell, Josmar Trujillo, and Alex Vitale.

Abolish the police. #DefundNYPD. #AbolishICE.

Never before has the country been engaged in such a genuine conversation about abolishing police departments. Of course, there were earlier flashpoints that raised serious challenges to the police—in the wake of the Rodney King beating, for instance, especially after the acquittal there, or in the wake of the Selma March, or the DNC convention in Chicago in 1968, or further back still. There has been

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protest against the police; but not until now has there been a national debate over abolishing the police. As Amna Akbar correctly observes, “The nationwide protests catapulted abolition into the mainstream and, in the process, unsettled the intellectual foundations of police reform discourse.”

There is no point in debating the law-and-order apologists, and there is little point continuing with the kinds of incremental reforms we have been doing. So the only two viable positions are limiting the police or abolishing it. That is what we will discuss in this seminar.

Please read:

Vitale, Alex S. *The End of Policing*. New York: Verso, 2017.

Purnell, Derecka. “How I Became a Police Abolitionist.” *The Atlantic*, July 6, 2020, available here

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/how-i-became-police-abolitionist/613540/>.

Akbar, Amna. “An Abolitionist Horizon for Police (Reform)” (August 10, 2020). *California Law Review*, Vol. 108, No. 6, 2020, available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3670952>

Additional bibliographical resources:

Kaba, Mariame. “[Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police. Because reform won't happen.](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html)” *New York Times*, June 12, 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html>.

Muhammad, Craig and Noah Gimbel. “Are Police Obsolete? Breaking Cycles of Violence Through Abolition Democracy,” *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 44, no. 4 (2019) available at <http://cardozolawreview.com/are-police-obsolete-police-abolition/>.

Materials at <http://criticalresistance.org/abolish-policing/>.

Purnell, Derecka. “What Does Police Abolition Mean?” *Boston Review*, August 23, 2017, available at <http://bostonreview.net/law-justice/derecka-purnell-what-does-police-abolition-mean>.

Purnell, Derecka. “Reforms are the Master’s Tools.” *Level*, October 19, 2020, available at <https://level.medium.com/the-system-is-built-for-power-not-justice-c83e6dc4dd6>.

4/13 THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Thursday, November 12, 2020 6:15 – 8:45 pm

Opening with a presentation by artist Dread Scott on his Slave Rebellion Reenactment

Followed by a conversation with Dennis Childs, Maeve Glass, and Stephanie Jones-Rogers.

A central thrust of Du Bois's writings serve to demonstrate that abolition was achieved through the actions of Black men and women: through escape to fight in the ranks of the Union army, through the general strike and the threat of a general strike, through forms of resistance, through their presence as the primary force that fueled the Southern economy.

The war transformed abolition into a democratic movement, against the will of the majority of the North and the South. The North had no choice but to bring enslaved persons into the democratic fold as a way to win the war. The South would have had to do the same in order to win the war, but it was, of course, unwilling.

In this seminar, we turn to interrogate the lessons that the abolition of slavery might teach us today in our struggles for abolition democracy. The passage from a *de jure* to *de facto* system of racial oppression in this country raises many important questions. Some involve the continuities and the differences: What can we learn from thinking of these different periods as similar or different? Some involve the lessons to be learned for abolitionist movements in other domains: In what ways do the struggles enrich each other? Some involve the hidden and not-so-hidden pitfalls of abolitionism: What are the shoals to be avoided in future abolitionist campaigns? These will be some of the themes we explore in this seminar on the abolition of slavery.

Please read:

Childs, Dennis. *Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary*. University of Minnesota Press, 2018 (chapters 2 and 3).

Jones-Rogers, Stephanie. *They Were Her Property*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019, Chapter 8 and Epilogue.

Hartman, Saidiya. "[Venus in Two Acts](#)," *Small Axe*, No. 26, Vol. 12(2), June 2008, pp. 1-14.

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Morgan, Jennifer. "[Partus sequitur ventrem: Law Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery](#)," *Small Axe*, Volume 22, Number 1, March 2018 (No. 55), pp. 1-17.

Prince, Mary. *The History of Mary Prince*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Reidy, Joseph P. *Illusions of Emancipation: The Pursuit of Freedom and Equality in the Twilight of Slavery*. University of North Carolina Press, 2020 (selections)

Foner, Eric. *Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019 (selections)

Additional Bibliographical Resources:

Davis, Adrienne. "Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle: The Sexual Economy of American Slavery," pp. 103–121, in *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work*, ed. Sharon Harley and The Black Women and Work Collective. Rutgers University Press, 2002.

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

Harcourt, Bernard E. "[Imagery and Adjudication in the Criminal Law: The Relationship between Images of Criminal Defendants and Ideologies of Criminal Law in Southern Antebellum and Modern Appellate Decisions](#)," 61 *Brooklyn Law Review* 1165-1246 (1995).

Kazenjian, David. "Two Paths Through Slavery's Archives," *History of the Present*, Vol. 6(2), Fall 2016, pp. 133-145

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York: Random House, 2020.

5/13 PROPERTY IS THEFT!

Thursday, December 3, 2020 12:15 – 2:45 pm EST / 6:15 – 8:45 pm Paris time

Opening with a performance by singer and composer Theo Bleckmann of a verse from Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* set to an original composition by Bleckmann and a rendition of "Solomon Song" by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill

Followed by a conversation with Amy Allen, Karuna Mantena, Étienne Balibar, and Dan-El Padilla Peralta.

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The relationship, interconnections, overlap, differences, and conflicts between the movements to abolish slavery and to abolish property are complex, to say the least. The historical record is fraught. But the resonances are clear.

Chattel slavery was, of course, a form of property, and its abolition entailed technically the abolition of property. From the other end, the abolition of capitalist property-ownership was often presented as a liberation from relations of dominance no different than slavery. The resonances are clear, but the history is fraught—especially the relationship between anti-racism and the labor movement.

And so we turn now, in this seminar, to the puzzle: How should we rethink the movements to abolish property through the lens of abolition democracy? How do we rethink Proudhon, Marx, and utopian socialist thinkers—as well as the entire political traditions of the labor theories of property and of value from Locke onwards—through the prism of abolition democracy?

Please read:

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. [*Manifesto of the Communist Party*](#). Ed. Frederick Engels. New York: International Publishers, 1948.

Marx, Karl. “[Critique of the Gotha Programme](#).” In *Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume 3*, 13-30. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970.

Proudhon, Pierre Joseph. *What Is Property?* (1840). Ed. and trans. Donald R. Kelley and Bonnie G. Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Additional Bibliographical Resources:

Dardot, Pierre and Christian Laval. *Common: On Revolution in the 21st Century*. Cambridge: Bloomsbury Press, 2019 (selections)

Hardt, Michael and Antoni Negri. *Assembly*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017 (selections)

Harris, Angela. “Compassion and Critique,” *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, Vol. 1:3 (2012), pp. 326–352.

6/13 ABOLISH CAPITAL

Thursday, December 17, 2020 12:15 – 2:45 pm EST / 6:15 – 8:45 pm Frankfurt time

A Joint Session with Professor Martin Saar and the Institute for Social Research at Goethe-Universität Frankfurt.

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The seminar will open with a performance by Heartbeat Opera of an excerpt from their visual album *Breathing Free*, including the Prisoners Chorus from Beethoven's *Fidelio* and "I would not tell you what I know" from *X (The Life and Times of Malcom X)*, and a conversation with Filmmaker Anais Cisco, Director Ethan Heard, and Creative Producer Ras Dia.

This session will explore the regime of capital that displaced feudal property relations, and imagine its overcoming. We will focus on the debate within the Frankfurt School over the transformations of capitalism during the mid-20th century into state capitalism, totalitarian monopoly capitalism, or late capitalism. In the process, we will discuss the abolition of feudal property relations and paradigm shifts in political economy. We will also discuss arguments for cooperation as an alternative to capital.

Please read:

Marcuse, Herbert. *The One-Dimensional Man*, 34-55. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

Neumann, Franz. *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944* (New York: Octagon Books, 1963. Please read Part II, section IV, ch. 7 ("conclusion"). This text is also available through HathiTrust via CLIO.

Pollock, Friedrich. "State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations." *Studies in Philosophy and Social Research*, vol. IX, no. 2, 1941, p. 207.

Adorno, Theodor W. "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?" In V. Meja, D. Misgeld and N. Stehr, eds, *Modern German Sociology*. New York: Columbia University Press, New York, 1987, p. 232.

Additional Bibliographical Resources:

Harcourt, Bernard E. *For Coöperation and the Abolition of Capital; or, How to Get Beyond Our Extractive Punitive Society and Achieve a Just Society* (draft).

Kelly, Duncan. "Rethinking Franz Neumann's Route to 'Behemoth,'" *History of Political Thought* 23, no. 3 (2002): 458-496.

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7/13 BEYOND THE PUNITIVE SOCIETY

Thursday, January 7, 2020 12:15 – 2:45 pm EST / 5:15 – 7:45 pm UK time

A Joint Session with the Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy at the University of Warwick, including Miguel Beistegui, Claire Blencowe, Irene Dal Poz, Stuart Elden, Daniele Lorenzini, Goldie Osuri, and Federico Testa. And a conversation with Adnan Khan, Lonnie Morris, and playwright Cori Thomas on the play *LOCKDOWN*.

In 1973, Michel Foucault delivered a series of lectures at the Collège de France on *The Punitive Society* that tied together the exploitation of the working class to the invention of the prison. Foucault brought together the different strands of oppression—economic, social, carceral—under the larger rubric of a “punitive society.” In this seminar, we will explore what it would mean to abolish our punitive society.

Please read:

Foucault, Michel. *The Punitive Society*. Trans. Graham Burchell. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

8/13 ABOLISH THE FEDERAL DEATH PENALTY

Thursday, January 21, 2021 12:15 – 2:45 pm

With Rep. Adriano Espaillat, Lee Greenwood, Kelley Henry, Alexis Hoag, Liliana Segura, and Susannah Sheffer

In this seminar, we will discuss the trauma of executions on family of the condemned and the abolition of the federal death penalty.

Please read:

Liliana Segura, “[The Death Penalty’s Other Victims](https://theintercept.com/2020/12/26/execution-death-penalty-families-orlando-hall/),” *The Intercept*, December 26, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/12/26/execution-death-penalty-families-orlando-hall/>.

Liliana Segura, “[Another Failed Execution: The Torture of Doyle Lee Hamm](https://theintercept.com/2018/03/03/doyle-hamm-alabama-execution-lethal-injection/),” *The Intercept*, March 3, 2018, <https://theintercept.com/2018/03/03/doyle-hamm-alabama-execution-lethal-injection/>.

Juana Summers, “[Democrats Unveil Legislation To Abolish The Federal Death Penalty](#),” *NPR*, January 11, 2021.

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Additional Bibliographical Resources:

Hoag, Alexis. "Valuing Black Lives: A Case for Ending the Death Penalty."

Columbia Human Rights Law Review 51, no. 3 (2020): 985.

<http://hrlr.law.columbia.edu/hrlr/valuing-black-lives-a-case-for-ending-the-death-penalty/>.

9/13 PRISON ABOLITION

Thursday, February 4, 2021 6:15 – 8:45 pm

With presentations by Reginald Dwayne Betts and Allegra McLeod, followed by a roundtable discussion with Ivan Calaff, Alexis Hoag, Jindu Obiofuma, and Jocelyn Simonson

This session will discuss the decades-long effort to abolish prisons spearheaded by Angela Davis and Critical Resistance. It will also broach the topic of the deinstitutionalization of asylums and mental hospitals in the 1960s, which prefigured the abolition of total institutions, but also points to certain risks and pitfalls of abolitionism.

Please read:

Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011.

McLeod, Allegra. "Prison Abolition and Grounded Justice," 62 *UCLA L. Rev.* 1156 (2015): 1156-1239. Available at

https://www.uclalawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/McLeod_6.2015.pdf.

Van Buren, Deena. "Imagine a World Without Prison," TED Talk.

Additional Bibliographical Resources:

Harcourt, Bernard E. "[Reducing Mass Incarceration: Lessons from the Deinstitutionalization of Mental Hospitals in the 1960s](#)," 9 *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 53-88 (2011).

Kushner, Rachel. "Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind," *New York Times Magazine*, April 17, 2019, available at

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/17/magazine/prison-abolition-ruth-wilson-gilmore.html>.

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10/13 ABOLISHING FAMILY POLICING

Thursday, February 25, 2021 6:15 – 8:45 pm

This seminar will open with a presentation by activist and artist Tymber Hudson, followed by a conversation with Dorothy Roberts.

This seminar will explore the campaign to end family policing.

Please read:

Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body*. New York: Pantheon, 1997 (excerpts).

Roberts, Dorothy. *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*. New York: Basic Books, 2002 ([excerpts](#)).

Roberts, Dorothy. "[Prison, Foster Care, and the Systemic Punishment of Black Mothers](#)." *UCLA Law Review* 59 (2012): 1474-1500.

Roberts, Dorothy. "[Abolishing Policing Also Means Abolishing Family Regulation](#)." *The Imprint*. June 16, 2020.

11/13 ABOLISH OIL

Thursday, March 11, 2021 6:15 – 8:45 pm

With Alyssa Battistoni, Daniela Gandorfer, and Reinhold Martin. Opening with a performance of traditional Lakota singing and drumming by the Iron Bull Singers and a conversation with Noah Smith-Drelich on the CCCCT's Standing Rock Litigation.

“Oil abolition implies social transformation—a systemic change toward collective freedom,” Reinhold Martin writes. In this seminar, we will explore the relation between fossil fuels and social inequality, and focus on efforts, like the Green New Deal, to abolish oil dependency.

Please read:

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Aronowsky, Leah. "[Gas Guzzling Gaia, or: A Prehistory of Climate Change Denialism](https://doi.org/10.1086/712129)." *Critical Inquiry* 47, no. 2 (Winter 2021): 306-327.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/712129>.

Latour, Bruno. *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Medford, MA: Polity, 2018.

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12/13 OPEN BORDERS

Thursday, April 15, 2021 6:15 – 8:45 pm

With Seyla Benhabib, Joseph Carens, and Paulina Ochoa Espejo.

"The feudal system was once deeply entrenched. So was the institution of slavery. For a long time, there was no real hope of changing those social systems. Yet criticism was still appropriate," Joseph Carens argues. It is time, now, to ask fundamental questions about the justice of borders. This seminar will explore those questions in all their complexity, including the fraught relation between borders and colonialism. We will also discuss the movement to Abolish I.C.E.

Please read:

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13/13 AN ABOLITIONIST FUTURE

Thursday, April 22, 2021 6:15-8:45

Opening with a performance by the poet Ian Manuel, author of *My Time Will Come*, followed by a conversation with Woods Ervin, Katherine Franke, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

We end our Abolition 13/13 series looking forward to the possibility of an abolitionist future, with a special focus on reparations. What will it take to get there? What will it look like? How soon will we be there?

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