

CALL FOR PAPERS & PARTICIPATION

ClassCrits XIII:

Unlocking Equality: Revisiting the Intersection of Race and Class

Co-Sponsored by [ClassCrits, Inc.](#)
& Thurgood Marshall School of Law

November 6-7, 2020

Keynote Speaker: Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi

The Civil Rights Era of the mid 20th century brought about reforms designed to establish formal legal equality for African Americans and other people of color. Thanks to what some have called the Second Reconstruction, it is no longer lawful to forcibly segregate children by race in public schools or to discriminate privately on the basis of race in public accommodations, housing, or employment. However, these reforms have not produced substantive equality for people of color, and in particular for the African American, Latinx and Native American communities. The wealth and income of these communities are far below that of whites, their poverty and unemployment rates are far above the national average, and they are far underrepresented among college graduates and in professions requiring higher education. There is still widespread de facto racial and ethnic segregation in schools and residential living patterns. And people of color are often harassed and brutalized by police and private citizens when engaged in normal human activities. Even as tentative bipartisan consensus to roll back mass incarceration emerges, the current president has political support for a militarized and racialized anti-immigrant campaign that puts children in cages and bars immigrants and refugees from entering the United States if they hail from so-called “shithole countries.”

For several decades, scholarship in Critical Race Theory and LatCrit Theory has examined the role of ongoing racial discrimination in perpetuating these injustices. Part of the explanation is the persistence of outright bigotry on the part of many whites. Despite laws prohibiting it, much private discrimination still occurs, as shown by the thousands of successful complaints of housing and employment bias annually filed with enforcement agencies. And public officials continue to promote and engage in bigotry for political advantage, as with the Trump Administration’s support of white supremacists and its demonization and mistreatment of immigrants. Implicit bias is a second factor underlying ongoing racial discrimination. As research in cognitive psychology has demonstrated, awareness of racial stereotypes negatively affects the perceptions of and behavior toward people of color even among those who claim and may believe themselves to be colorblind. Finally, structural and institutional racism perpetuate the ongoing discrimination. Inequalities within and interactions among housing markets, the educational system, labor markets, and the carceral state magnify the effects of conscious and unconscious bias, producing “locked-in inequality.”

A slightly different account is found in the literature on “racial capitalism.” Inspired by scholars in the Black radical tradition such as W.E.B. DuBois, Cedric Robinson, and Sylvia Wynter,

historians and theorists of capitalism have begun to trace the relationship between global capitalism and white supremacy. From the dispossession of indigenous people in the “New World” to the establishment of Atlantic slavery, through the construction of empires of cotton, sugar, bananas, and other commodities that pulled colonized and racialized peoples around the globe into new supply chains designed to serve the European metropolises, the cheap land and labor produced by white supremacy has been central to the emergence of capitalism. Indeed, new historical research suggests that capitalist tools and mechanisms—from accounting and management practices to mortgages, the corporate form, and private property itself—are the products of a mindset that has distributed the privileges of “humanity” unequally. This account refuses the conventional question of “Is it race or class?” and suggests that the two are intimately intertwined.

This backdrop poses several questions. Is it possible to overcome white supremacy with the existing tools of American law? Can white supremacy and capitalism be disentangled? Is it possible, given what DuBois called the “wages of whiteness,” to build a more egalitarian society with minimal wealth and income disparities, high quality education and guaranteed employment for all, and comparable opportunities to seek fulfillment in life? Despite the enormous power of the moneyed elite, is it possible and what would it take to transform our society from one based on competition, profit, and individual satisfaction to one whose core values are working cooperatively, meeting people’s needs, and fairly sharing what society collectively produces among all its members?

We invite panel proposals and paper presentations that speak to this year’s theme of Unlocking Equality: Revisiting the Intersection of Race and Class as well as to general ClassCrits themes. See below for details.

In addition, we extend a special invitation to junior scholars (*i.e.*, graduate students, aspiring faculty members, or faculty member with less than two years of experience in a full time position) to submit proposals for *works in progress* (WIPs). A senior scholar as well as other scholars will comment upon each work in progress in a small, supportive working session. Due to the increasing popularity of our WIPs program, we may need to limit capacity. We anticipate selecting WIP papers on a first-come, first-served basis. Scholars submitting WIPs who are not selected to workshop their paper will have the opportunity to participate on a regular conference panel.

We invite panel proposals that speak to this year’s theme as well the general ClassCrits themes, including:

- ☐ The legal and cultural project of constructing inequalities of all kinds as natural, normal, and necessary.
- ☐ The relationships among economic, racial, and gender inequality.
- ☐ The development of new methods (including the interdisciplinary study and development of such methods) with which to analyze and criticize economics and law (beyond

- traditional “law and economics”).
- The relationship between material systems and institutions and cultural systems and institutions.
 - The concept and reality of class within the international legal community, within international development studies and welfare strategies, and within a “flattening” world of globalized economics and geopolitical relations.
-

Proposal Submission Procedure and Deadline

Please submit your proposal by email to classcrits@classcrits.org by August 15, 2020 with the following details:

Individual paper proposals should include a title and short abstract, along with the presenter’s name, contact information, institutional affiliation (if any), and a short speaker bio (1-3 sentences). Individual papers (other than works-in-progress submissions, see below) will be grouped by the conference organizers into panels.

Works-in-progress submissions for junior or emerging scholars seeking individualized presentations and comments) should be clearly identified as “Work-in-Progress” and should similarly include a title, short abstract, name and contact information, and a 1-3 sentence bio identifying their current status as a student or new or aspiring faculty member (see details on previous page).

Panel proposals may use a variety of formats, including traditional paper presentations, roundtables, and audience discussions. Please indicate the format of the proposed panel, and include a proposed panel title, a short description of the overall topic, and a list of confirmed panelists, with contact information. For panels comprised of individual presentations, please include titles and short summaries of each presentation and a short bio (1-3 sentences) for each panelist or panel organizer.

Logistics & Fees

The venue for the gathering is the Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston, TX. The conference will begin with continental breakfast on Friday November 6, 2020, and continue through the afternoon of Saturday November 7, 2020. Arrangements are being made for conference hotels.

For updates, check www.classcrits.org, where you can also sign up as a ClassCrits member to be on our contact list and to post a profile that will build our network and showcase your work. Associate membership is free; full membership dues are \$25 for 2020 (includes ClassCrits, Inc. voting rights and 2020 conference discount).

The registration fee is \$215.00 for accepted presenters who are full-time faculty members; ClassCrits members get a discounted registration fee of \$200. Registration is free for students

and activists. Participants who do not fit into these categories, and/or who for individual reasons cannot afford the registration fee, should contact us at classcrits@classcrits.org. Workshop attendees are responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses.

Who we are

Twelve years ago, a group of scholar-activists organized a series of conversations about law and economic class. Building on “outsider” jurisprudence that has moved inequalities of race, gender, and sexuality from the margins to the center of law, the group proposed a jurisprudence of economic inequality. To foreground economic justice, the group sought to critique mainstream law and economics and to focus on the lives of poor and working-class people.

Rejecting the neoliberal ideology of scarcity, and reclaiming the possibilities presented by the commons and by collective action, ClassCrits was born. Our name “ClassCrits” reflects our ties to critical legal analysis and our goal of addressing economic class in the multiple intersecting forms of subordination. We confront the roots of economic inequality in divisions such as race and gender and in legal and economic systems destructive to the well-being of humanity and the planet.

ClassCrits Conference Planning Committee

Antonia Eliason, University of Mississippi School of Law
Tiffany Graham, University of South Dakota School of Law
Victoria Haneman, Creighton University School of Law
Angela Harris, U.C. Davis School of Law & U.C. Davis Center for Poverty Research
Danielle Kie Hart, Southwestern Law School
Lucy Jewel, University of Tennessee College of Law
Thomas Kleven, Thurgood Marshall School of Law
Martha McCluskey, University at Buffalo School of Law
Athena Mutua, University at Buffalo School of Law
Carla Spivak, Oklahoma City University School of Law
René Reich-Graefe, Western New England University School of Law
Lua Kamal Yuille, University of Kansas School of Law

ClassCrits, Inc. Board of Directors

Victoria Haneman, Creighton University School of Law
Angela Harris, U.C. Davis School of Law & U.C. Davis Center for Poverty Research
Danielle Kie Hart, Southwestern Law School
Lucy Jewel, University of Tennessee College of Law
Thomas Kleven, Thurgood Marshall School of Law
Martha McCluskey, University at Buffalo School of Law
Athena Mutua, University at Buffalo School of Law
René Reich-Graefe, Western New England University School of Law

Lua Kamal Yuille, University of Kansas School of Law