

USF Anthropology Statement on Police Violence and Anti-Black Racism

Over the last week, the USF community has been hit hard by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other victims of police violence as well as the widespread protests that followed. The painful events have brought forth anger and grief made worse by the anxiety associated with the pandemic, exposing systemic inequalities simmering not far under the surface of this country. It is impossible to remain untouched. In the words of Desmond Tutu: “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

We write to you today to share our clear commitment to principles of anti-racism.

We acknowledge that anthropology, as a discipline, is rooted in racism in the guise of colonial projects. Despite efforts to end scientific racism and include a diversity of voices, racism persists in the academy. We affirm our commitment to continuing to overcome long-standing structural barriers to access in higher education, the discipline of anthropology, and academia in general.

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The matter of anti-Black racism must move beyond our research and into our daily lives as well. The problem of systemic racism in our society may feel too complex to solve, but we believe that structures of oppression can be dismantled through deliberate action and through meaningful actions to effect change in our community and society. Educating ourselves about

being better allies is one step. We invite you to help us as we move forward. We are using the list of resources below to educate ourselves and to progress more effectively. Please explore these and share other resources and tools with us.

We believe we have to start at home. We must be a resource and place of support as a department for all. We strive to be attentive to the need for systemic change, recognizing that we are a source of strength for those who don't share the same privilege. This includes a review of our own USF police department as to its function to provide safety for the university community and particularly Black students, staff, and faculty. We need to offer our assistance to the local community. We need to connect with others in the university and beyond, use our privileges and our resources, and effect change within our own university, the larger community in which we are situated, and in this nation.

This moment is worth nothing if nothing changes. We will continue this conversation as we move forward as a nation and as a program.

In solidarity,

The USF Department of Anthropology

Useful Resources:

How to be An Antiracist: <https://www.ibramxkendi.com/how-to-be-an-antiracist-1>

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* This statement was drafted by a sub-group of the Department's outgoing and incoming Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, the current and incoming Graduate Director, current Chair and Incoming Chair.