"Black Studies in 21st Century Higher Education" Webinar Video

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University of Maine Alumni Association
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In honor of Black History Month, the University of Maine Black Student Union and the University of Maine Alumni Association welcomed Dr. John Bracey and Dr. Sonia Sanchez to discuss the relevance and impact of Black Studies in 21st century higher education.

The event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Fund, the McGillicuddy Humanities Center, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Departments of Anthropology, Communication and Journalism, Native American Studies, Political Science, Sociology, and Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies.

Transcript is machine generated, unedited, in English.

00:04  [Music]
00:06  I’m Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President of the
00:08  University of Maine and its Regional
00:10  Campus, the University of Maine at
00:11  Machias.
00:13  As we near the start of Black History
00:14  Month, I wish everyone health, peace, and
00:16  Goodwill.
00:17  I’m honored to welcome you to tonight’s
00:19  Conversation with Dr. Sonia Sanchez and
Dr. John Bracey titled Black Studies in 21st Century Higher Education.

The University of Maine recognizes that it is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation where issues of water and territorial rights and encroachment upon sacred sites are ongoing. Penobscot homeland is connected to the other Wabanaki tribal nations through kinship alliances and diplomacy. The University also recognizes that the Passamaquoddy Maliseet and Mi'kmaq through kinship alliances and diplomacy.

The University also recognizes that the Penobscot Nation and the other Wabanaki tribal nations are distinct sovereign legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination. The University of Maine at Machias also recognizes that it is located on lands of the
pasamaquadi tribe structural racism continues to be endemic in our society and institutions at the inauguration of president biden and vice president harris poet laureate amanda gorman refers to the united states as a nation that isn't broken but simply unfinished as learners we know that education can reframe and recenter history as well as provide opportunities to create equitable and inclusive communities and at the university of maine and the university of maine at machias we're committed to inclusion diversity equity and anti-racism the president's council on diversity equity and inclusion that i appointed last summer released its initial findings and
recommendations and the senior leaders
and I have already started engaging
with the council co-chairs about how to
implement the recommendations
we are working to ensure inclusiveness
in our community and that black brown
and indigenous people can pursue their
dreams to the fullest
thank you to all who had a role in
bringing these insightful leaders for
this important discussion
including the university of maine black
student union university of maine alumni
association
cultural affairs distinguished lecture
series fund mcgillicuddy humanities
center
college of liberal arts and sciences the
departments of anthropology
communication and journalism native
american studies political science
sociology and women's gender and
02:26
sexuality studies
02:28
i look forward to learning more about dr
02:29
sanchez and dr bracy's experiences
02:32
their work toward racial justice their
02:34
perspectives about this incredible
02:36
moment in time
02:37
and their thoughts about the impact of
02:39
black studies in 21st century higher
02:41
education
02:42
thank you
02:45
hello everyone welcome to the black
02:48
history month kickoff
02:50
event black studies and 21st century
02:53
higher education
02:54
i'm lauren and i am so excited tonight
02:58
to witness and moderate this
03:01
conversation between
03:02
two legendary black scholars dr sonia
03:05
sanchez
03:06
and dr john bracy welcome you both
03:11
hello how are you good good so
03:14
yeah i really just want to
open up the floor to have dr bracey begin so dr bracey whenever you're ready okay thank you thanks a lot lauren uh a lot of credit a lot of credit goes online for pushing everybody to do this uh it got a lot bigger than when it started out when she first said would you help me out a little bit and i said i'll give a talk and next thing you know we're on youtube uh so that's progress uh i'm going to begin with my uh conclusion so if i don't get back to them you'll you will hear them uh the reason you need black studies at the beginning and why you need it today is uh first of all you have to correct the false narratives about america's being a monocultural
society a multicultural civilization
the hard reality is that you
from the beginning of the united states
from the beginning of colonization
uh europeans arrived on a place that
already had people here who had been
here for thousands of years
so minimum you have two cultures you
know so you know yeah and we still have
those names like i'm in massachusetts do
you have connecticut these are all
native american names
you bring along uh african people to do
the work
you know europeans didn't come by
themselves they looked around and needed
help
with the labor uh and you drag in
you know 20 to 30 million people of
african descent so you automatically
without even thinking about it you have
three different major cultural groups in
one space
so to even try to pretend that this is a multicultural society
it just is absurd on the face of it you know just go through the names of the states and you have all these native american names or the names of the rivers and the names of the mountains you know the names of the streams you know the names of uh the foods we you'll see that that we've always been a multicultural nation issues what does that mean how do you acknowledge that and black studies is is a part of that in terms of in uh emphasizing the african-american experience that's why you have black studies we're not all of that we're all part of this broader kind of mosaic right the second thing is that it's kind
of obvious if you just count heads
around the world
the vast majority of people on the planet are people of color there's just no way around it
you know uh one out of four people on the planet uh are chinese like one out of four you know uh doesn't make any sense to talk about western civilization dictating things that one out of four people are chinese right behind him are people from the indian subcontinent you know another almost 2 billion people that's a big chunk of the world's populations uh those are civilizations that go back some thousands and thousands of years so it's quite presumptuous to assume that a country that's barely 300 years old
should dictate their behavior
you know and how people ought to
organize their societies who've been
around
10,000 years you know 5,000 years i mean
just
the arrogance of it is just kind of
staggering just on the face of it
uh you know america is a developing
country
you know sister goldman was right about
that we're not an advanced country we
are a developing country we haven't got
there yet you look the way we treat each
other the way we treat young people
the way we treat uh the way we organize
our society
we clearly haven't got advanced toward
anything that anybody else wants to
emulate
and so don't even look at it that way so
black studies points it out that america
is in process
and we haven't arrived yet and until you
understand where we are in this history
of peoples of different colors then you
won't have an accurate picture of the
world that you
are you're living in the third thing is
if you
and this is what black studies is for uh
it's not just for black people
uh if you're a human being living on
this planet and move out of
your neighborhood if it's all white
neighborhood you will encounter people
of color
it'd be a very good idea to figure out
how to get along with them
uh it might even save your job it might
even get you a job
uh it might make you happier on your job
if you're an engineer and get assigned
to work in nigeria it might be a good
thing to know something about africa
before you get there
and don't get off the plane and say
people talk funny and just funny because
you just lost your engineering contract
you know so it's it's uh it's not
altruism that we teach the history of
black people
is to help white americans understand
how they can
live in a world where they're not the
dominant population you know
uh and i know it's difficult trying to
get off the kind of high horse about
where we think we are
but the reality is that that uh people
of europeans
said small percentage of the world's
population and
we all have to make adjustments uh so we
can all get along and live together
without
destroying the planet and they're showing each other uh
and that's the short version of why you need black studies well how did i get to this point
well i had the advantage or someone would say the disadvantage of growing up under jim crow born in 1941
and i went to segregated schools all the way up to high school grew up on a college campus howard university
people don't know much about historically black institutions uh but howard university is what people that howard called the capstone of negro education
now black education uh if you're not familiar with howard i'll mention just a couple of alums to capture your attention you know tony morrison and mary baraka
uh roxy local linux fabulous mother uh
roberta flack uh tony the hisi coach uh
chad big boseman uh and tamara harris
so whatever howard was it's certainly
not a place that turns out people
of inferior quality it turns out people
who in fact have made a tremendous
contribution to the society as a whole
and it might be a good idea to look at
people coming out of those institutions
not as
my god how did they make it but my god
why can't we send our kids there
you know there's something going on
there what i learned growing up in jim
crow washington dc
automatically as part of my environment
was that there was a broader struggle
and a broader contribution of black
people to the world
that wasn't even taught in the classroom
it was just haunting the names of the
i went to lucretia my elementary school
you know you could be stopped in the
hallway about
mrs brown she's the principal and she
would stop you and say
who is lucretia like you know say she's
an abolitionist or what do abolitionists
do they help free the slaves
now you can go to class if you don't
know that you have to stand in front of
our office until somebody tells you
what decreasing right did that means
you're forced to deal with the reality
of a white abolitionist so you have to
know who the creation right is
it's not in the curriculum it's in your
head every day otherwise
you can't get down the hallway past the
principal's office right
i went to benjamin raniker junior high
right people say that black people are late in the stem fields benjamin banneker was a scientist. He helped lay out you know the uh design for washington dc with pierre lawrence. Right even thomas jefferson acknowledged that he was a great scientist. Jefferson had doubts about his ancestors. He said he's kind of too smart to be really black so you must have some european in there. But he did not doubt benjamin banneker's skill as a scientist. Right so i knew that black people could do something just by looking at the names of the schools that i walked around and i went into uh on the campus of howard university. Howard university was named after general
howard who was the head of the
freedmen's bureau right
the school was started with money from
the american missionary association
which was running left over from the
armistice boat
and at the end of the civil war they
formed a lot of black colleges uh howard
two little talladega
lemoine brisk right uh again
historically black schools
right my mother's office was in douglas
hall
with douglas salt frederick douglas why
is the name not the frederick douglass
because he was on the board of trustees
of harvard university
i am learning all of this just by
osmosis almost
you know i don't have to go look for
these things i walk into douglas hall
there's a picture of project others
right i sit in my mother's office when
i'm growing up you know coming up from
my school doing my homework in the
corner
she's got an office on the second floor
still there they redoing the building
uh who's in the english department
walking in to chit chat with her
sterling ground
a great point if you don't know sterling
ground go read him
uh if you want to know something about
uh lloyd smith jones will stick ahead
and she's a very
accomplished one of the leading most
accomplished uh black artists in the
20th century
the history faculty included john hope
franklin the sociology department
included e franklin frasier
like these are the people i am
surrounded by
right who make jokes with me help me
with my homework sterling brown would
lean over and tell me put a comma right
here otherwise your sentence doesn't
make any sense
franklin and frazier would make jokes
about the other faculty
when they wrote books they gave me
copies of these books when i was too
young to read them
you know and i would say this is a big
fat book they say hold on
to it you'll get to it eventually right
so it never ever occurred to me
that black people couldn't accomplish
things you know you walk over to the
chapel you have the dean of the chapel
is howard thurman one of the beating
theologians of the 20th century nothing
there's no inferiority anywhere
around here right is this where is
inferiority going to be
right you know you go down to freedom's hospital and the head surgeon at freedman hospital is charles drew right invented blood plasma right he's the one that if you know you you break your finger on the playground that's supposed to split on it charles drew not an intern you walk in there and dr drew says what did you do this time you said well you know i sprained it at the playground i said stick the hand in this thing i'll put it back together for you right one of the leading uh doctors in the 20th century so it never ever occurred to me that black people were inferior what we learned was that there was a society that didn't recognize what we contributed right and we had to learn how to deal with that so the advantage i had growing up on the jim
crow is we had to learn
all the western civilization plus we
also learned what we knew
right so i thought i had a better
education oh i still believe that
you know so i can i can do shakespeare
you know i can i can do
i know about ira aldridge and paul
roberson who still has the longest
running shakespeare play on broadway
today still have you know othello
right you know i can say you know you
know hush your word before i go
you have done this state some service
and i know it right or i can say went to
the sessions of sweet silent thought i
sum up remembrances of things past i can
do i can do some shakespeare friends
romans and countryman lend me your ears
i can do that but i can also do
dunbar an angel robe been spotting the
swiping down to kiss the sleeping night
night woke to blush the sprite was gone
men saw the blush and called it done
white kids can only do
shakespeare if they get shakespeare they
can't do dunbar i can do shakespeare and
dunbar
i can do shall i compare it to a summer
day but i said the langston hills like
for me ain't been no crystals there
right who's got the advantage who's got
the advantage who's learning who has not
learned it
i studied the violin i can do european
culture i studied ten years
on the lawyer jones she's in the
langston hughes talks about him in the
big c
uh du bois said he was the greatest
negro violinist of the 20th century
right 10 years european music i can do
beethoven
i was first chair concert maths i can do
that right
but there are other times when i'm not
doing that not practicing
where am i i'm at the howard theater who
am i listening to
bb king howling will you know rita
franklin
right who's got the advantage who's got
the advantage
right so i can do i can do beethoven i
can do buck
you know i can do stuvinsky right but
can also do
charlie popping john coltrane and so
forth who
who's trapped who's culturally defined
not us
not us who comes to us for culture
right so if i sit there today and say
nobody knows the trouble that i've seen
that's the spiritual you know that's a
spiritual right
sometimes i feel like a motherless child
we don't know the people the black
people that produce those songs
slaves anonymous phrase produced music
we still know today
right you cannot name me one song
written by a slave holder
there's not one painting painted by a
slave holder there's no
culture that comes out of slave holders
the culture that we hold on to the day
that we love today
that's fundamental to american life
today came out of the slave population
you know we define popular culture in
20th century america nobody
we don't look to elvis presley to get
our music elvis presley looks to us
right nobody we don't go over to hear
pat boone sing a song pat boone comes to
listen to us
right and today you live in a world
where there is no youth culture that is not hip-hop right young black people with no resources whatsoever no music no martian band no music teachers drag some old 33 in the thirds put them on a turntable started twisting them around half and have a form that has dominated the world for the past 40 years it is on every planet right now you can denigrate the people that make that but you can't deny the importance of african-american culture to american culture you know and if you're talking about uh young white students i will vet you and i wouldn't have brought a lot of money on this if black people disappeared they would still listen to black music if there are
no black people on maine's campus when
they have spring concert they want to
bring some hip-hop stuff they want a
rapper up there
right you know they don't want a white
guy saying something something something
they said
they went to real music black music they
know that white people know that
like we're not a side light to american
society we're foundational to american
society
like you know the gift we're given the
boys talked about the gift of black book
we're not incidental there was slavery
in every single colony the 13 colonies
all had slaves all of every last one
it's not a southern thing
right it's a british expansion thing
like some people got rid of them early
because you had the north and
south but there was slavery everywhere
we were not incidental to american economic development
we were the capital under capitalism at the time of the civil war there was more uh money put in slave labor than in industry and in banks and then railroads and anything else going on in this country two billion dollars two billion dollars worth of slave labor like we we were the factories we were the workers right and we didn't get a penny for that right imagine how much money you can make if you get people to work for 250 years and don't pay them you know and then you come in and walk into a building they built and say look what we did look what we didn't do that thomas jefferson didn't lay a brick
at monticello he said i think i have a pretty good and the slaves built it and everybody knows the difference between the architect's drawing and what the workers put up right you can join anything one on the sheet of paper that the confidence says that's not gonna work the ceiling will fall down the way you got it but we'll fix it for you black people built mine to shuttle black people built the washington monument black people with the capital right with the white house right we built the railroads right we're not incidental we're foundational to american society we're not on the outside we're the indispensable based american society you know and if you want to just look at the expansion of the united states you just have to look to another
denigrated group of black people
your haitians this country would have
stopped at the mississippi river except
for tucson
lowered your andre first stop and
jacques desolate in the san domingo
revolution
right thomas jefferson gets credit for
getting the louisiana purchase
why is napoleon dumping the louisiana
purchase on them for this discount
because after they lose san diego he
doesn't care about anything in the
western hemisphere the money was made in
san domingo
right once they lost that napoleon said
bail out on the rest of that whatever it
is see if you get whatever you get for
it give it to him
right then nobody knew what it was
that's what he had to say in lewis and
clark i didn't figure out what it don't
even know what it was
but it was french when you cross the mississippi river it's tucson lower children should get credit for everything from the mississippi river to the pacific ocean not thomas jefferson but who talks about haiti who talks about tucson lower jail black people do right when i grew up when i was in elementary school the one person i wanted to play during the negro history month week play was tucson because we got to rehearse the haitian revolution every february and tucson or that big crown he had a sword and that thing is really cool the best i could get was to be desert lane who stood next to tucson but you know because other kids parents probably hadn't adapted my parents had
uh but i knew who he was white people
don't know who thompson overture is
they say we know about napoleon he beat
napoleon
we know about george washington no no
washington said why don't we go there
and try to you know stifle the haitian
revolution
tucson said come on i said well we'll
just kind of leave that alone for a
while
say come on they defeated every army in
europe every army
every army napoleon lost to both of his
troops in san domingo
dead then wellington beats what's left
and they say oh wellington defeated him
at the battle of waterloo
no no tucson beat him in san domingo but
they don't teach you that
that's what black studies does it puts
you at the center of
history you know in american history
and everything else grows from around it
interacts with that
you know now of course we're not african africans because the slave trade ended in 1800 so everybody the majority of the slave population in 1860 was born in the united states right so we don't speak african languages as african languages but we had a sensibility right we had a set of values we brought with us and you had this strange notion that people say well everybody lost everything they had they got on the boat ride and they came all the way across the ocean and wrote passage and they got off the other side and they know anything about anything how many people been on a boat ride they go from here to london to somewhere do you
forget your language on the boat
do you forget your values on the boat do
you forget who you are on the boat
no you were just if you can't speak french when you get out in france
you learn how to speak french like you're not lost you just have to adjust we adjusted
we said okay where are we we're surrounded by people they don't understand us we adjust we learn their words
you know we take their symbols they try to give us a certain version of christianity and they said oh no no no we're the hebrew children we got this y'all talking smack over here we're not just surrendering the season what it is caesar's no no i ain't going with that one servant obey your master no no we're not going there we're going under
we're the hebrew children we're the ones
in bondage
right that's why we call our leaders
moses
that's why we're saying go down moses
chill off burial let my people go
that's who we are that's how we got
those baby because we knew
that we were going to come out of that
we didn't know when but we knew we would
raise up leaders who
were called moses we don't care whether
they're male or female that's a western
thing harriet tubman was moses people
say well she's a woman so what
she's a leader leader is moses right
we're not tied into western forms of
patriarchy we have our own versions of
it
but it certainly does not exclude women
from leadership
so black men and women followed harriet
23:12
Tubman
23:12
Today when you said who should be on the
23:14
twenty dollar bill black people didn't
23:16
Say Frederick Douglass they say how are
23:17
You tell me it wasn't even a contest
23:18
Win the contest black men didn't say
23:20
Well how come you didn't put a brother
23:22
On that you know hey
23:25
Tubman she's number one everybody knows
23:27
That
23:28
She's the most popular figure in 19th
23:30
century America
23:31
Right you know that's what people don't
23:33
Know she said well what is about the
23:35
History of women in the country and
23:36
Gender equality
23:37
Harriet Tubman if you don't know Harriet
23:39
Tubman or Adobe Wells
23:41
Or Mary McLeod Bethune you don't know
23:44
The history of women in this country
23:46
You know you don't know wherever Kyle
23:48
Bethune ran a coyote black college in
the 1920s it took to the 1970s and 80s
for white people to head to co-ed
when I came to the pioneer valley in
1972 Smith College had a male president
a male they didn't get a breakthrough to
get a female president of Smith College
and except in my lifetime my academic lifetime
right black people had schools run by
women a long time ago
Lucy Laney you know Charlotte Hawkins
brown you know
you don't hold we don't hold ourselves back because we don't have enough people and we need all of the help we can get and we come out of a culture that has women in leadership that we look up to and we hold on to that it's got nothing to do with matriarchy it's got nothing to do with some kind of
defamation of western society and how come the women have more power it has to do with how african societies are organized which we remember like who handles the culture who raises the kids who sets the values who calls the men you know to fight that's what black studies will teach you how to look at the world in a different way how to look at relationships in a different way how to understand and when you look around you that they don't talk when they they talk differently like the words that you use might be words that happen you may not even know like a lot of young might when uh white might call this self bubba bubba is a african word it's a dollar word comes out of congo it's congo word comes
25:13
out of congo angola you know
25:15
sea islands color people you know
25:18
georgia south carolina okra it's african
25:20
word
25:21
you know tate is an african word you
25:24
know
25:25
guru is an african word you said you eat
25:27
peanuts you eat google down south they
25:28
call them google
25:30
it's an african word we speak african we
25:32
think african we act happy we just don't
25:34
know it we have to learn it
25:37
right we're to stay in the way we
25:38
interact with things you go into a black
25:40
church
25:41
you know north america you have a lot of
25:44
people from congo so we don't have a
25:45
hierarchy so we don't have a lot of
25:47
priests and stuff stacked up
25:49
people talk to god anytime they want to
25:51
because in africa the spirit is
25:53
everywhere
congo people in spirit is everywhere
it's in you it's not out there you don't
have to have somebody explain it to you
it's in you
so my grandmother could talk to jesus
while she's baking biscuits in the
kitchen
she don't have to be in church god talks
to her when she needs god to talk to her
and she listens when god talks to her
like she doesn't say i have to hold out
to sunday she says no no
you know and i learned that as a young
child when i'm sitting there you know
in the living room when i'm like four or
five years old and my grandmother starts
to cry
you know and i said what are you crying
about you see this is jesus talking to
me and i'm feeling good
right and i'm looking around i don't see
anybody you know
26:30
but that's not what it's all about you
26:32
know i said well that's effort
26:34
that's what we consider black studies
26:35
get you to see that
26:38
you know we take english and make it
26:40
into a language that
26:41
is a little bit different from the way
26:43
white people use it we take the original
26:45
english 16th century english if you want
26:47
to hear people talk
26:48
bible talk you know king james bible
26:51
talk go to a black
26:52
church black preachers still hold on
26:54
there they don't want the new final
26:55
bible to strange the words out they want
26:57
to hear the words that their ancestors
26:58
heard when they got off the stage
27:00
16th 17th century english king james
27:02
bible that's what they hear
27:04
that's why they like shakespeare that's
27:06
that's what they heard coming over on
27:07
the spaceships that's the language
right of the masters in the 15th and 16th century that way you can understand why the leading uh shakespearean actors in the history of this country are black people there are two people in shakespeare's hall of fame stratfor and avon the first one is ira aldridge in the 19th century african american right couldn't do shakespeare here had to go to europe he's the first american that got elected into the shakespeare hall of fame like who does othello like nobody ever did otello paul roberson right again 3000 performances of otello in the 1940s early 1940s 3000 nobody's ever come anywhere near that not in blackface not lost olivia roberson like who did the british get to
read shakespeare on the path on the anniversary of shakespeare
g eorge lambing from barbados why because he sounds like what shakespeare would have sounded like like that's our contribution that's what black studies is all about it's not about how we're out there is how we're inside we're inside the west i'm going to chicago you know i wasn't born after i'm going to chicago i feel just walking up and down the streets in chicago i hear the way people talk walking down the streets and check i go to a church i go to a meeting right you see how people organize themselves how they look after each other how they make adjustments for each other
28:33
how somebody has too many kids somebody
28:35
else takes them in
28:37
you know whether you have welfare or not
28:39
you know
28:40
there are no orphans in black
28:41
communities on this baby 25
28:44
of the slave families got broken up
28:46
there were no orphans when you went to
28:47
the next plantation people took you in
28:50
they said come on you're part of our
28:51
family now that's why black people can't
28:53
get their relatives straight they say
28:55
that's your cousin
28:56
well who is he late don't worry about
28:58
that's your cousin
29:00
you know this your uncle i didn't know
29:02
you had a brother don't worry about it
29:04
that's your uncle
29:05
that is somebody you took in that needed
29:06
to be taken in
29:08
because you didn't leave a young kid out
29:10
there by themselves with no mother
you know because these are the people that would say sometimes i feel like a motherless child but you know take them in so you don't feel that way anymore that's an african sensibility that americans ought to learn how to how to carry out you know that should be the foundation of how you organize the care of children like if you look at the black family kids are the priority the youngest are the priority you feed the children first everyone else comes later you look at the way we organize schools we talk about how we love students and teachers but we pay teachers crap right we don't put money in the schools you know kids stay home now people have their kids at home for a month and say take them back to school there's too much trouble to look after them the
teacher looks after them every day
and then you want to argue about how
come they want more money they should
get a million dollars a year because
they're looking after your kids because
they're the most important thing in the
world
but we don't value young people we just
say you do black people value
young people you know we try to save
them if you have a dollar
you get 50 to the kids so they eat
person and you split up with stuff
but those are values that are here and
among us to make this country different
for what it is
you know that's where we are you know
that's what we consider
black studies teaches that you don't
have to agree with all of that you don't
have you can get into details about
things you can argue about the
multiplicity of blackness now because we have african immigrants we got people from brazil we got people from all over the western hemisphere and so black is not just a color like it's a sensibility and a historic experience what we share is a degradation on the part of the west that's what we all know we share didn't matter where you come from right it doesn't matter what you say well i wasn't a slave yet but you were colonized you're not speaking african language when you walk up to me on the street you say i'm from nigeria you're telling me that in english you're not speaking evil to me because i can't speak evil and if you're going into grunts you can't speak evil either
31:04 you know like i got african soon to say
31:07 i'm a warlock can you speak while
31:08 oh no no my parents speak wall over well
31:10 you speak he got a hat on backwards he
31:12 got his timberlands on
31:14 you know he got his eddie power jack he
31:16 speak hip-hop
31:17 write the universal language right it
31:20 doesn't mean he's not an african i mean
31:21 he's an african-american in a
31:23 complicated kind of way
31:24 it doesn't matter whether you speak
31:26 spanish enough so what
31:28 the slaveholders spoke different
31:29 languages had nothing to do with us
31:32 you know you put kids on the playground
31:34 they can learn spanish in five minutes
31:36 so they don't learn
31:37 go to any playground in the city where
31:39 you got puerto ricans and blacks
31:40 together they talk to each other
31:43 they know who won the basketball game
right you know how much money somebody owes them in whatever language you want to argue that's what black studies will teach you you know that we are complicated people but we are an american people and we make we have we define a lot of what america is and the failure to look at that to try to to throw that away and ignore that and say we're really a white country we'll leave you with people walking around with confederate flags but they can't sing a song they don't have no no i can't dance to have no don't don't know how to live right you know how to get along without anything you know to make something out of nothing right which we had to learn how to do in the stadium
and after gem code that's what black stuff this to us and you come in that and we wanted it in one department because we don't separate people into your economic life over here your historical life over here your literary life over here we want to teach people as a human being so we want all the disciplines in one space you know so in our you know when sonya got here we met together back at 50 years ago i can walk out of my office and i want to thank music i got max roach next to me i got archie shipped across the hall five years later i got j involved and said jimmy tell me about you know how do you do this how you do that well i got down at moments and coming in talking about that i want them right there i don't want to cross campus
i want them right there so that the black student can walk into that experience and know who they are and know that they have somebody right so you don't look at that sister and think she's unusual she's just the one we found there's a lot like her we haven't found yet because we think black people can't do that she shows you can do that again she's his sister you know amanda gorman she's trained in sociology she's a great point she did that on her own she didn't go to the mfa program she came out of her experience and put that together in an overwhelming beauty and power right without having to write 25 different passages in a class in english about
somebody just trying to tell you how to make your stuff sound like that stuff black studies let you do that it teaches that it teaches she's not an exception she's just one we found they're more like her and we know that you know and albeit howard you know like tony he she coates or she abby bozeman you know or kamala harris you know there'll be a more house like you know martin luther king jr you know that's where they're coming from right or they'll come out of pits like w like b du bois right co you come out of fistful then he goes to harvard right or they'll be like stacy abrams to go to spelman and then she can take over georgia right she didn't go to emory like she didn't go to georgia tech she was
spelling she's a spelman grad
but she knows how to run the state of georgia knows how to run get two people in the congress knows how to run the president out of office right you know that is spelman you didn't learn the technique somewhere else but it's that black experience that grounds you and you want everybody to participate in that so it's open to anybody that comes black schools have always been integrated how it was integrated from day one black people open up the school is for everybody right there's no discrimination right and so black studies is not just for black people but it's not to make us feel good it's for to make everybody understand the world in which you live and the place of
black people in it
and i'm gonna cut off now because sonja's looking like she's warmed up over there
and i'm gonna segue into my part in crime these many many years who will carry on uh the next time for you thank you very much it is such an honor to be here but it's a real honor to be here with professor bracey because each time i listen to him this great historian this person i met at a place called amherst and i still see us on a hill when we had come out of a meeting and we both looked at each other and we said to each other how can we make black studies continue up here and be recognized and we both said
we've got to get a graduate program it cannot it can no longer be undergrad and i remember standing on that hill saying that's it and to see your department uh brother john is a joy and to know that no many of us figured that out uh here in america to have not only an undergrad but also a graduate graduate program uh is to see so many people that we've taught graduated and go into these many colleges and become chairpersons of departments and continue to uh perpetuate the ideas simply that we as african americans you know brought to education something that made education change in spite of itself it's an amazing thing but it did because
from black studies came
women's studies jewish studies uh
chicano studies puerto rican studies um
asian studies all that came from
something called black studies
because we decided to change uh this
educational system
um and they would they didn't take to it
happily at all but i am reminded uh
that when we began to teach black
studies it was the first one the san
francisco state
someone said you know if you need
someone to teach
the black literature you should contact
that sanchez woman
she's always talking about somebody
black who writes
um and that was true because um i had
graduated from hunter college
in january and i had just
turned 20 and my father said well you
need to get a job also sonia and i said okay dad um and so i started answering ads from the new york times and all these newspapers and i go and they said well the job is filled and so i used to come home and i said you know dad this is going to be hard well eventually i was he got the sunday times to me and there was this ad that said they needed someone to write uh for their affirm would i send an example of my writing and a cv and so i did all that and i got a telegram uh i think i sent it out on a monday and i got a telegram on the saturday some of you don't know what telegrams are but it used to be like these little
yellow things that they would deliver on saturdays in the morning after they rang your bill and you open it up mine said report to work at 9 00 a.m i went whoa i got that i said dad dad that look at him look here uh guess what look at here look at here and he read the telegram he looked at me he read and tell him he looked at me and said uh-huh well uh you're probably gonna end up teaching but i put on my blue suit the next day in my blue heels and i had this hat sitting ac do see in my blue purse and my white gloves and i showed up at 8 30. i was not going to do cp time i showed up at 8 30 and nobody was there yet all of a sudden down the hallway
i heard these clicking of heels was this young woman and she said yes can i help you and i took out my telegram and handed it to her she read the telegram and she looked at me she read the telegram and she looked again at me and she read the telegram for a third time and looked at me and handed it back and said well i'll unlock the door you come inside have a seat she sat down she disappeared she came back she took off the cover of a typewriter someone you might not know what a typewriter is and she pulled some work out and started to type and i'm sitting there at a quarter to a head comes around the corner and looks
you know and then about two minutes later another head came around the corner and looked and all of a sudden a man appeared at the door he said can i help you and i took the telegram out of my purse and stood up and handed it to him all smiles this is a 20 year old smile right on my face i've been 20 years old for what three months right i got a job right writing can you imagine and he looked at the telegram and he looked at me he looked at the telegram and he looked at me and he looked at me he looked at the telegram and looked at me and handed it back and said i'm sorry the job was taken i said oh oh i'm from new york i said i got it i know you said the telegram says report to work at nine i got here at 8
40:36
30. I'm gonna go outside
40:38
when it gets to be 9 a.m I will re-enter
40:41
and everything will be okay he didn't
40:43
smile he said lady
40:44
I said the job is taken and I realized
40:47
what was happening and I said
40:49
oh I get it it's discrimination I'm
40:51
going to report you to the urban league
40:53
and he shrugged his shoulders and went
40:55
out the door
40:56
and I remember taking off my hat going
40:58
out the door
40:59
tears of my eyes taking off like gloves
41:02
whatever
41:02
got on the train any you know New York
41:05
city if you're going to stay on the west
41:07
side
41:08
you've got to stay on the number one
41:12
train otherwise you're going to end up
41:14
on the east side and I'm sitting there
41:16
and the door closes at 96th street
41:18
95th street and all of a sudden the
train begins to shake
mightily and i look up and we're on the
east side
and i realize i'm going to have to get
off at 135th street
which i do cross the street get about
maybe a quarter into the block and i see
a guy outside smoking cigarettes very
fast
and a sign says schaumburg and i stopped
the man and said
uh sir what is the schomburg
he's a lady lady go inside sign in go up
the steps
and you will see so i signed this little
book
went inside and came into this vast room
with a very long table and nothing but
men
mostly africans from the continent
sitting there with stacks of books
and there was this glass door and i
passed by them looking at them
they never looked up and i knocked on
the glass door
and miss hudson miss jean hudson opened
the door she said yes dear
i told her my name i said could you tell
me pl
and she gave me her name my name is this
is gene hudson
i said glad to meet you can you possibly
tell me what is the schomburg
she said oh my dear the schomburg is a
library
that has books only by and about negroes
and i said with my fast fresh mouth i
said there must not be many books in
here huh
let me forget that every time i brought
my students from amherst
from philadelphia wherever i was new
jersey to the schomburg she would say to
i have a story to tell you about your professor you know and i would disappear to the back of the room and all my students and i said oh we got something on you now professor sanchez that is the reality of that place and so she set me down she went over to the all these men she asked them to move over she pushed the chair there and she said just wait for me and i'm sitting there 10 minutes 15 minutes and finally at 20 minutes she brought three books up from slavery souls of black folk and their god and their eyes are watching god that was on top and i just took it from the top and i started to read it and you know how difficult it is to read black english it is
43:33
when you teach it it is not dialect it
43:36
is black english we remember that okay
43:38
and uh i began and by the time my ears
43:41
and my tongue
43:42
became accustomed to it i was crying i
43:45
eased out and i knocked on the glass
43:47
door and she came i said but how could
43:50
i be a graduate of hunter college
43:53
right and never came across this book
43:55
says oh my dear
43:56
go sit down and read some more i'm going
43:59
to bring you
44:00
loads lots and lots of books and i went
44:03
and eased in
44:04
and continued to read and when i got to
44:06
about a third of the book
44:08
i started to cry i love the idea that
44:11
the english language has more
44:13
words for crying than just cry i was
44:15
sobbing actually
44:17
and i eased out and i knocked on the
44:19
door
and i said to her but no no no no no how could i call myself an educated young woman and i don't know these books and she said oh you will know them all during the summer if you come i will give you these books and as i inch back in this african scholar said miss hudson tell this young woman either she sits still or she has to leave and i sit still for the rest of that semester i told my dad every day i'm going out to look for a job and i went to the schomburg and she fed me book after book after book and the amazing thing is that when i was really going to start this job later on i had to go in for some classes and
things
um she gave me the name i’m missing the
show
and she said he has something for you
and miss michaud had a bookstore at
125th street
and i went there and he had two bags and
not
shopping bags like we have now but two
bags like grocery bags and they were
full
of black books right you know
and i mean i had to take a cab homer he
said i better get you a cab
and i remember going in the house with
these books and i took them and threw
them
open them and just put them all over my
bed in my bedroom
and just sat there and just went through
each one you know
just relishing but then she also gave
him the name
uh mr richard moore who had a bookstore
about a block down the street
with caribbean books and i remember when
i walked into his bookstore
the next day i always say that bookstore
was so narrow
right that he had to go in sideways but
that's an exaggeration that
is you know a story like many of us tell
us black folks right and as i walked in
he was on one of those rollers and he
was up high
and he said yes and i jumped you know
and i am an ex-stutterer
so he said what do you want and i said
get it out he said speak up speak up
girl
girly and i said miss hudson
uh uh sent me oh you're the one
she told me about you right and he had
two bags of books
people right also and he said if you want to hear some important work come out we're having a meeting you know he would have these students from the caribbean right who would come in and give lectures and and i would come out that's how i began to go in and listen to those lectures um that is a reality so um in new york core uh you know people will say but mention a book and i said well have you read the following and they said oh girl you're always talking about those black books i said yeah but you should know them because they're important for us and we began something called black studies in a place called san francisco state you know in the mid 1960s
um i was the one chosen to teach black literature and writing because who else had all those books and when we got to a place called san francisco what did we do we had all the students um uh type um um souls of black folk excerpts from it right all of kane right on that blue stuff uh what is that stuff called you know it wasn't xerox the stetner the scheduling yeah you know you know the little remember a graph machine with that no yeah our hands were forever blue you know honestly they never got clean but the students typed up all of these you know experts from souls of black folk also too you know and all of cain a
little book you know and
all the sayings of mark is gone because
we got it from richardson's
bookstore at a place called
um at a place called san francisco
because we're at san francisco state and
in my class
we were not just learning how to write
my dear brothers and sisters
i was also taking them to that bookstore
mr michelle's bookstore
and they had to learn how to put out a
paper you know they had to learn how to
put out you know
uh um um a journal whatever they did the
typing for mr micho
uh uh uh for brother richardson in san
francisco
uh uh they were allowed at some point
under my direction
to read some of the poems out loud and
decide which ones
also would be because they were not only there to learn how to write but they were also learning how to what do you do with that writing you know how do you encourage people they also learn how to type you know when we said we cannot use this right now at this time but keep sending that was the reality of black studies you were not only in the classroom but you were out of the classroom when black history came my students went into the high schools and taught those students how to what this uh black history was all about so that was important and they would come and invite them to the campus on the wednesday it's one of the ways that we gathered people to come into what we were doing to learn about black studies
we fed people every wednesday wednesday
at 12 o'clock
we made food whatever and students will
show up for food
but after they ate we asked them to sit
down and we would also then
have people read poetry read sections
whatever
and that's how we got people to be
involved
because what we said is that we not only
care about what's here
but we also care about what's here at
the same time and if we get those two
places we got you
you know and we know that you will then
begin to
to learn what we want you to learn my
dear brothers and my dear sisters when i
told
my father i was going to study francisco
to begin something called black studies
he said
oh my god why can't you just not settle down
right move to long island someplace
right and stop this traveling
he said why don't you just teach what's in you know just teach
that other that literature that you learned just teach it and i said dad if i do that then i can't teach what i want to teach is i want people to feel when they walk into a classroom they have a her street and a history i want to teach that her student history i want them to know that when i walked into a classroom the first time when people were sitting sharing seats by the way people pull up chairs in the doorway it was it was a really a mob scene on many levels some of them were not registered at
all i went around the room the blackboard was all the way around the room and i wrote all the names on the board that i knew from writers political people whatever only two names they recognize mlk and malcolm and i said don't worry at the end of the semester you would know a lot of people and they did and so that's the kind of a history in history that we had there at a place called san francisco state kay ball who is a writer with hemingway um a very amazing woman amazing writer you know you can google her an amazing white writer an amazing human we were very close she was the chairperson of the english department i
came out of the english department into black studies in order to teach um and the only thing we differed on was one thing and that was um uh the brother who came to to manage the um that great organization the black panther party um he had just gotten out of jail he wrote a book called um a solar sol on what is it was it solar and ice yes right right um that was the only disagreement we had you know uh amongst everything else but there we were teaching students about themselves she would write an amazing chapter from her book about teaching black students how to love themselves teaching black students to see
themselves as human beings who 
teaching black students what it means to 
walk in the university 
teaching black students to write about 
what they know 
that was themselves you know it was they 
that they wrote about whatever 
you know teaching teaching teaching 
teaching 
teaching and creative writing you know 
what it means 
to walk up right as a human being and to 
say i am human 
sucker that's what i be whatever you 
know and leave me alone 
if you don't think that's the case so 
one of the things i wanted to read was 
from this 
great book that i dear brother bracy 
uh smedhurst and i did um because there 
was no other book 
no other reader on blackfire on on black
studies
or on black lit uh after the book that
larry neal and at that time leroy jones
uh amity baraka
put out called blackfire and we said
amongst ourselves
we need a book you know uh for people
because people were calling uh professor
bracey constantly about
come tell us about black studies tell us
this whatever
and we finally said we need a book you
know so they can buy this book the
students can read this book they can see
and the great thing about this book is
that we didn't take favorites
you know we said this is what people did
right or wrong
reading about it so of course many of us
just said well leave
out something that i said that maybe is
not correct today or it was really
really hard i said no put it in people
got to know
simply how angry we were we didn't go
around
starting riots we didn't go around
hurting people and beating people up
but our miles you know said you know you
said that about me
let me show you how to assassinate
somebody with my tongue
and that's what we did with our words
and our poetry
which was an amazing kind of thing so
let me read to you
if i may poetry of the bam
meditation critique and praise france
for gnome
said what is needed is to hold oneself
like a sliver
to the heart of the world to interrupt
if necessary the rhythm of the world
to upset if necessary the chain of
54:55
command ellipses
54:57
but to stand up to the world i do battle
55:00
for the creation of a human world
55:02
that is a world of reciprocal
55:05
we knew that this would not be a place
55:08
just for blacks
55:09
we knew the moment that it was put out
55:12
there students would go back into the
55:13
dorms and you know what i’m studying and
55:15
we knew
55:16
that black studies would be open up to
55:18
everyone that much renewed
55:20
but we had to stop with the base there
55:22
to get people to come
55:24
in jose marti wrote in the world
55:28
there must be a certain degree of honor
55:30
just as there must be a certain degree
55:32
of light
55:33
when there are many men women without
55:35
honor
55:36
there are always others who bear in
55:38
themselves the honor of many
men and women in the quote how to tell
you of peace
change hope of racial and sexual and
economic injustice
of an america rising up out of an
aristocracy of death
an aristocracy of slavery racism
and aristocracy of color and aristocracy
of corporate
greed and america that made langston
hughes right
we the people must redeem our land and
make
america america again how to tell you
about lives
running on hairpins of a country needing
parts from people to live step right up
i say
step right up a good cell on legs today
eyes today
hands today kidneys today hearts today
history herstory today
integrity today truth today families today
how to tell you of a country that will not recognize
the two most important revolutions that were rooted in a cultural base
cuba and haiti these two countries symbolize a regional process of struggle and liberation of the mind which must be an essential part of our journey towards the fulfillment of the western integrity
how to tell you a progress so we move beyond a politician saying cuba and haiti and everyone has the automatic voice of washington shouting communism continuing the blockade vote people aids poverty but never the eloquent and graceful poetic voice of my team the spiritual father of the cuban
revolution who said
as he observed the conduct of the u.s
delegation in 1889
at the monetary congress of the american republic and i quote
they believe in need in the barbarous right
as the only right this will be ours
because we need
it almost 100 years late
after the invasion of granada by 6 000 u.s soldiers the u.s secretary of state
george schultz arrived
and his first observation was complete
he said
this is a delicious piece
of real estate this is a delicious piece of real estate uh-huh
how to tell you of walking climbing the citadel in haiti and hear the footsteps of a people
a country crying out for liberty
economic justice
equality and change how to really make you understand that it's the poets as prophets as teachers as visionaries as activists as writers who sing of peace racial and social and sexual and economic justice how to make you remember baraka in his 1965 poem black art declaring we want poems that killed ellipses we were in a black poem of a black world or larry niels and there there is jail america is the world's greatest jailer and we are all in jails black spirits contain little magnificent birds of wonder how to make you remember james bond a
man baraka called

god's black revolutionary mouth who said

in 1979

in a new york times article if black

english

isn't a language then tell me what is

baldwin said it goes without saying that

language is the most

novel and crucial key to identity it

reveals the private identity

and connects one with or divorces one

from the larger public or communal

identity

how to make you hear your hearts

pounding

sounding out what w.e.b du bois wrote

this is a beautiful world this is a

wonderful america

which surrounding father's dream until

their sons and daughters drowned it in

the blood of slavery

and devoured it in greed how to make you
remember the sister poets
singing of the workers with words that
had the scent of the earth
and the genius of the stars how to make
you store in your blood
the memory of black women's voices
jordan fields cortez
clifton evans fabio angelo lord
giovanni rogers sanchez linking
continents
making the country and the world
abandoned closed minds
spreading themselves rainbow-like across
seas
their voices stalk in the morning stars
as they helped a generation of young
people
began to question their silence their
poverty
their scarcity their greed they helped
us all
ask the most important question we can
ask ourselves what does it mean to be human in the 20th and 21st century what does it mean to be human how to make you continue to lift your eyes off the ground and to a higher ground of living of being loving how to make you remember the poets coming behind us in 1989 public enemy 1989 the number another summer get down sound of the funky drama music hitting your heart cause i know you got sold gotta give us what we want huh gotta give us what we need hey our freedom of speech is freedom or death we got to fight the power that be let me hear you say fight the power faith the power fight the power
as James Stewart the black critic wrote
man woman cannot create a forever
but she he can only create if he she
creates as
change creation is is itself
self-perpetuation
change is being the question of art is
dialectical
art goals art is not fixed art cannot be
fixed
art is changed like music poetry and
writing
are when concerned they must move sway
not necessarily as physical properties
but by their nature but they must go
spiritually
as we people lovers and workers of
change must go out
into this world spiritually and if we do
it'll get better it'll get better you
and that's a piece that I wrote for this book which I thought was really important for us to see and and have and you know that kind of motion and movement um uh uh that's important uh i don't know what time is it anyone i didn't bring my clock with me so it's outside off into my running forward yes it's 705 so you're hitting your mark say that again 705 uh-huh you're hitting your mark perfectly if that if we can move into the q a session now if like so do i do the poem at the end of the q a you in for the poem okay and let me just say one thing okay if i might okay because i had another piece but let
me just um
maybe end um um
uh you know end it again right
let me just say uh sister bernice reagan
told me one day
about the great blues singer brother
montgomery who said
we all come here naked black folks know
it
but white folks don't know it because
they come here white
white folks don't come here naked their
skin is an additional
currency puts them far ahead he
continued
we all come here naked and must make
arrangements with someone else while
you're here
not just do for yourself that's what
these poets did
they made arrangements for someone else
while they were here this anthology will
help us reintroduce our past blood to our present and future

make our memory we enter our bloodstream in order to erase any deaf prince

tony morrison said we died that may be the meaning of life but we do language that may be the measure of our lives and how sister tony and these poets do this thing called language the measure of our lives how they caress embrace untangle this language recapture our memory how they stand words up and let them menu at our blood how they help us recover our civil words as they open up the sorcery of language take us out into the wings of laughter and pain intellect and beauty how they commandeered words spinning under this
domestic side
and they become a river moving against
winter sails
repelling ice water ghosts kneeling on
raise up their knees at confession our
bodies are tattooed forever
with their quick silver rhythms we are
one
alive apart from the elasticity of the
dead
the elasticity of the dead starting
black studies
made us move away from the elasticity of
the dead
made us see the world differently
because you cannot teach black studies
without also as you study
what happened i come into my classroom
to chase my black lick
and someone says look what i found sonia
there's this poster it's an old poster
it says report to this particular place
it was supposed to for japanese americans to report to a place on a monday to be sent to concentration camps is that amazing that happened in our time and what did i do i turned to my two japanese americans uh students in the uh and the black um lit class and i said do you know anything about this they got pissed at me what concentration camps japanese they completely almost left the class i said it's all right i put it down but at the end classes uh brother john knows that that we always hold hands right and each one says something and at the end i said i don't know if this is correct or not but i hope you take these two little
and ask your parents if they know anything about this and on tuesday when they return to class they had tears in their eyes and the tears was about they found out that their parents had been in concentration camps in a place so black studies was the beginning of real discussion about what was going on in a place called america as far as it was as race was concerned as far as literature was concerned as far as education was concerned as far words were concerned and humanity was concerned we began the discussion about universities opening up for different people
and having them come together and work
together and read together and learn
together
and love together and begin to look at
each other and say hey you're okay you
might not
have the same hair i have but you're
okay you're kind of nice looking you're
kind of cute you know
huh you know you're not after all as
they say in those movies you say no
i'm like hey how you be here i
is and here we is now i hope that wasn't
too long
no it's perfect i think everyone is
just grace can i say one thing to the
audience yes
professor bracy is i mean i love him
because he is the most brilliant man
that i know
you know anytime i'm writing something
and i don't i can't
get it and i've been looking for it i
i've bought a professor i said
john can you tell me this he said oh
sonia that's
the following thank god for john bracey
right you know
and that amazing mind you know he has
that memory
you know this man that anything he reads
is right there
and he can recall it for you so it's an
honor uh brother bracey again to be
working with you
mm-hmm now that's mutual ritual
no no no so we have a couple questions
that have come in
during the duration of our program um
i'll start with the question this is for
dr bracy um
do western do other western hemisphere
countries such as brazil
embrace similar courses that you were
speaking of on history
if you know the answer what black
studies in this country did was to inspire
black populations in the western hemisphere to begin to study themselves
our department i'm we have a diasporic certificate program we have
in uh our doctoral program four or five kids from colombia who have gone back to colombia which is the second largest black population in the western hemisphere and are starting afro-colombian studies and they're translating du bois and they're translating it uh and you know they called me up again like sonny says once a week saying what should we get out in colombia uh now has black studies i wrote an introduction to clr james black japanese the cubans are translating walter rodney
the cubans are translating eric williams

no no there's a movement with the you

know the afro-descendant movement which

is probably going to be the most

powerful movement of black people in the

western hemisphere because of the

numbers

you know if black people in brazil

understand that black people

that's a huge country it's only got a

couple hundred million people

this is this is not chump changing and

if you're talking about columbia

afro-colombians who are aligned with

indigenous colombians

if they assert their rights as

afro-colombians

they have like a whole country you know

we're trying to get neighborhoods these

are my whole countries here

that's why the u.s wants to keep these

places divided that's where they got mad
at cheverus and he talked about the
unity of colombian peoples
in ohio since uh chucho over to the u.n
and to work in africa and so forth
that's why they got mad at che guevara
when he went to work in the congo you
know what is what does kirby have to do
with the congo
that's where the cuban slaves came from
angola you know
slaves came into cuba up to 1899 so at
the time of the cuban revolutions there
were people in cuba who were born in
africa
they weren't going to some alien country
they're going home they want to fight at
home
if we understand that the diasporic
nature of the african-american
experience
all these things will come up and
complicate black studies make black
studies richer and deeper
there's a million Nigerian immigrants in the United States a million
a million right they and you got to fight for them time to tank cause they're still arguing Nigerian stuff so you know we like cheddar with champions my yoga friends don't like you know what champion because of the office i got to negotiate between Europa over here evil over here you know the city lisa getting the whole thing about i'm not mandating on water well so okay so now we gotta deal with travelers and one more time but that's okay hip-hop makes everybody the same if you notice they all get up on the stage together you know they get on the stage together there's a new stronger blackness coming out of the diasporic focus
and they look to the african-american population as the inspiration for that i mean people call me up from every country in latin america to give them books to read advice about things how did they do what we did because if they can do what they did in their country like in colombia or brazil that's a powerful intellectual force in transforming the way we look at the western hemisphere you know the religions and and you know there's more africa in you know say like you know codonble and santeria and so forth which is the african religions you know we don't study them that much there's you know black studies is not just about african americans in the nor in north america it's about people of african descent in
africa and outside of africa wherever
they might be
right we started where we were because
this is where we were we didn't have the
access and the resources to do beyond
that
but when our department opened up we had
african scholars we had doby
faces we had uh jimmy richards we had
michael taylor who started the
department was a jamaican
we had axel lynch who was a trinidadian
we we went into no tribal thing that's
how we got over here on the slave ships
that travel thing
now if you if you are suffering under
racism
you're us you know i don't you mean i
think you us
and you say well i speak spanish that
means that the slave master would spoke
why you want to hold on to that you know
ain't nothing black about you know you
said your slave holder was better than
my slave holding come on off that stuff
no no we have a unified world experience
every country that you look at
where there people of color black
dark skinned people they happen to be at
the bottom this is not happenstance
right now someone may not realize that
at the bottom like our dominican
brothers and sisters still working on
that
but they are you know and when they come
to new york nobody knows that
they may not think that they black but
they can't get a camp in new york going
uptown no
fast and i can't you know you know white
racism makes black people black
you don't get to pick you know you don't
get to stand on the corner and say oh
i'm not black american i'm a warlock the cab passes you right by
they don't know that no no racism will unify us so i mean i don't even get an argument with students about that stuff no no racism will make you back you know it'd be a different type of blackness a deeper blackness but we're not a narrow thing blackness is not a narrow thing we we're the people that i mean civilization came out of africa the first human beings just stood up and walked around chrome magna and they walked out of there 40 000 years ago and populated the whole world by africans like we all got the dna is just african dna and everybody there's not a person on the planet that they go all the way back to end up in africa somewhere like that's what we we're building on we
got we have a foundation that if we get a hold of it right we can move through the world that's why you have to teach this to young people because you know if you can convince a kid that your ancestors built their pyramids they can do the algebra homework don't tell me you can't do your algebra homework and it says it built your prayer mr christ said come on get back to work you know no excuses don't let people tell you you don't have a brain of course you had a brain they're telling you you don't have one because they don't want you to use the one that you have you know and part of black studies is that for black people is you learn what you did so you know you can do things
you know that's that's and that's
everywhere in the up and down there's no boundaries from you know the north pole to the south pole if there's a person of african descent they're part of us there's no i don’t have any boundaries on that yeah we have a question that's coming in and there's a professor as well as a student excuse me who's asking a similar sort of question and i'm just going to paraphrase here but how did you start these black studies programs at your respective universities um you know for a small to medium sized call a college like umaine i guess humane is more on the medium side um thinking about trying to start something here where do you see that beginning in
hiring

and diversifying syllabi um

uh i hope you don't do what we had to do

we had to take over a building in

northwestern to get black studies

i hope i hope you don't have to do that

and a san francisco state too they had

we we had to fight for the right to

educate white people

right we had we had to knock the doors

open and demand

that they make their university relevant

to the 20th century

they fought tooth and nail not to learn

anything

you know it's willful they were fighting

for the right to remain ignorant so we

had to get their attention

and in case of northwestern by holding a

building until they

agreed and we gave it back and then we

had black studies we had clr james in
the wrong minute
hopefully we're past that now we're two
generations past that
what you have you have a situation
where you're not going to have a lot of
black people but that doesn't mean
you can't study black people if you have
courses in the middle east and courses
in russia you don't have a lot of
russians in me but you still can study
russian
black people are not an alien species
for human beings
right of course you can have people to
study black people and teach them
they may not know as much as somebody
that is a black person
and if you can't get a black person you
get a white person that has a
sensibility
that's honest and sincere and wants to
learn
you know you're not going to get perfection because you know and it's open to everybody black studies is not just black people teaching about black people i stand up in black studies i deliberately wanted and you did this in history i wanted all the leading scholars in the country to study black people we were successful in that all the leading white historians in this country american history study black people what are you talking about eric foner or david blight or david rodriguez these are all guys that came out of the left foot in the 60s i said look you study your piece of black people eugene generation studied slavery no you want the smartest minds devoted to studying black people right so you don't need black people if you don't have them but that means you
can't teach about black
you peop that's what you do where you
are you start with the with the basics
how can you teach american literature
seriously
and i'd like to teach john neil hurston
on langston hughes
or paula stumble who is the greatest
american novelist of the 20th century
tony morrison you got another name you
want to throw up there again said come
on
come on keep looking find out who is the
leading american intellectual of the
20th century
wb du bois i will i got money go to the
library and go look at all the google
anything you want you find me
in american academic it equals w.b du
bois and productivity
insight impact right that you don't know
that is your education problem not du bois's father
he wrote 19 books 3 000 articles led to
right could write plays poetry
700 page book bracket reconstruction the
first sociological study which you can
still read you can't read white sociology from 1890 because it's all crap
all that racist food the boys got to
philadelphia negro he wasn't even 30 years old if that's all he wrote he'd be one of the leading scholars that's anybody can do that you can go find these people and you learn about them and you teach them you start with that you know whatever course you have there's a black component to it that's what i did before black studies
whatever class i took
i would say i want to write about black people in relationship to this topic
the progressive movement what about black people the
the populist movement what about black people the american south what about you can't name a part of american society the west what about black people you know alaska what about black people there's no part of the hemisphere no part of the world that black people are not theirs so so whatever your specialty is stop and look and say were there any black people there and they will be there you will find them and then you can expand the knowledge base that way you get enough of those people and you just find each other you know so not to call how many people
teach anything about black people
why don't we get together and get a
study group and try to work on that
that's easy to do you teach american
literature don't teach no black
not teaching people away are you
teaching english letters are you
teaching general or chevy
you're not teaching english citizens
you're teaching white people to write in
english
like you're not teaching you got a
chapter george lammy
come on you know and all those wonderful
african women writers right in the day
there's so many i can't even keep track
of them
you know some of the greatest writing in
the world these young advocates they're
nigerian
they're gonna they're all over
everywhere they're in canada they have
England they everything

these beautiful beautiful books you know

there's so many of them i got them

stacked up i can't get through all of

them

they they write you start the crowd

there's a system in ethiopia that writes

about ethiopia brings tears to your eyes

she writes with such beauty you know

about the genocides and so forth and and

the barbarism of the ethiopian civil

wars

and it just they it's it's it's you know

teacher

you know yeah you know it's not that

hard you have to you have to

duck around black people to to miss them

you bump into them

and have to back away and make like

you're not there

but if you're serious about american

culture we're we're we're right there
80:27
like i don't i don't see how you can
80:31
you know if you're thinking about this
80:33
democracy you've got to teach it i mean
80:35
that's the whole point of this
80:36
yeah right yeah yeah which is our
80:38
contribution we don't want to
80:39
yet believe in democracy anyway
80:43
i will i will plug that this fall
80:47
i and two other teachers developed a
80:50
course called black feminist thought and
80:51
expression
80:52
that was taught through the
80:54
communication
80:56
communication and journalism department
80:58
and so if you're a graduate student
81:00
or an eager undergrad please look out
81:04
for that
81:05
and get in while you can because there's
81:08
a lot of goodness a lot of a lot of
81:10
goodness so
81:12
i'm going to ask just two more questions
81:14
we got one for
Dr. Sanchez, which um says how did black studies articulate with native studies at SFU in the 1960s. This was a period of great civil rights activism in both communities. Right well you know the point is that most of what we did was that we were supporting each other um. Uh I was there for two or three years and I don't know if you know that we had a major strike so all the things that were happening just ceased, at some particular point uh but we barely got the black studies part off the ground. What was good about it is that when we began to teach many of the other people began to come into our classrooms to learn and to study and to take the writing.
as I said um in one of my classes there uh when I was teaching uh uh you know a lit class uh and someone came and said look here uh professor sanchez here's this poster here and we think it's about uh um japanese people being put in concentration camps and I held it up uh for my students uh I had two japanese american students in my class and I said to them they got as I said they got very angry and later on as we left the classroom I handed the poster to one of them uh they came back in the following tuesday with tears in their eyes and said their parents told them an amazing story about
they were put in concentration camps

it's a couple of interesting things that

i've learned

in some of the concentration camps um

one of the things that someone wrote me

is that they kept them alive was that

they learn how to write haku

i love the haku i always say the haku

is a living force but they began to

teach each other the haku

in order to stay alive but the other

thing that was equally as

important to me in terms of of of the

concentration camps

was simply that um

this these two students one of the

students uh began

to do work on her parents and the

japanese

american concentration and concentration

camps and i was in a place called

seattle
and I had done this huge program
with thousands of people and all of a
sudden I looked up when people had
surrounded me
and I saw this young Japanese American
uh
I mean I'm saying girl but she was a
young woman but she was moving like a
little girl
jumping the steps coming down the steps
and she ran across the stage and it was
one of my students
from San Francisco State and she said
did you see it
did you see it did you see the
documentary I did on
the Japanese and concentration camps
that's what we're talking about that is
what
which not giving someone a book to read
about themselves
but also making them write on what
happened to their parents
they interviewed their parents in terms
of having been
in a concentration camp and we also
began to make people understand at some point
that what happened uh to us i could not teach them
uh black studies i could not teach the history history
i could not teach a black rider who lived in the west or whatever et cetera
without mentioning the fact that the chinese were building railroads
you know you know also you know in the west and sometimes they bang that dynamite
and they exploded you know in amazing amazing yellows
at some particular point that kind of reality
happened so one of the things that we
did is that we had people who began to set up courses there at the university all right that they were going to have a course on on on um chicano studies a course on uh japanese american studies uh all of that came out of a place called san francisco state and it went in one year it began to go all over the country my dear sister my dear was that a brother who asked me a sister asked the question my dear sister that's what happened at some particular point and we would send people out from the bsu to help them begin something you know i mean those bsu students learned so very much you know that they would go out and begin to teach you know um uh
and we began to talk about this is that you're gonna teach not just in the classroom you're gonna go into the high schools and also teach this history in history that you're learning that is the reality so it's not by chance then that it spread began to spread all over from san francisco state i went to a place called pittsburgh we began at the university of pittsburgh the first black studies there uh and we began to talk about that and that great um playwright um he lived he settled in seattle john um he did all the great plays on broadway come on um it's not it's not what who went to seattle what it wasn't august wilson he stayed
yesterday he was born in pittsburgh
right august wilson would come and ask
will you let me come along and read some
of my poetry
and we said sure because we invited
everybody and i remember
august wilson read his first poem and it
was this long
lengthy involved thing and i said to rob
petty who was a playwright
i said rob did you hear how he described
that person
he said yes i said he's a playwright i
mean this is i mean
this is what happened and rob says i
said take him under your wings
and teach him how to write plays and rob
penny
did that isn't that amazing so this huh
that's going to say hey go ahead you
finish you i'm okay
okay i'm going to say because the the
the question reminded me that that i have to get my reading list in because i teach a course on native americans african americans uh we taught uh joyce vincent and i taught the first course in this country taught by a native american and african-american i didn't know that until we taught that we've been for about 15 years joyce has retired now but we taught it because native students came to us and said how come black people were taking all these native people and claiming they were black and not acknowledging their native heritage and i'm saying like whoa wait a minute like who are we talking about here they say well how about paul rosen how about thomas
fortune how about
by tony i said okay okay time out time
okay
no no no you can you can have anybody
you want but you can't have all my
people
like friends look one quarter of the
african
minimum one-quarter african-american
population is mixed with natives like
sonja's family got native tony said well
you got choctaw
my family quite likely has charity you
know going into going into
uh from south carolina going down into
florida
right what i found out which because i
know
i had i had the pequod kids and and
what's the other group down there the
walking dead
right who whenever take the class would
question me
on why did i say everybody got sent out
to the reservations you know with the
trail of tears and the kid raised his
hand and said
we're still here we haven't gone
anywhere so i said come talk to me i
don't want to be talking something
that's wrong
so i've i've been a close advisor with
the native kids on my campus since a
sister named josephine white eagle came
years ago to set up natives
i taught it for like 20 years i take
the kids to the pequot museum
you go to dc my favorite museum even
though i love my own people i like the
native american museum because i think
the food is a little bit better
and it back a whole lot better uh i'm
just going to interrupt you very quickly
that's my job um it looks like we are
going over so if you cannot stay that's fine this will be recorded and available on youtube um but yeah you too so you can stay great if not you're free but we will keep talking and just go over a little bit um end with poem from dr sanchez so you know if somebody wants some syllable i've got syllabi to go back about i've got about five six seven i think i've got to get one into because i'm teaching next week and i'm still messing with the books no no that you can't understand the the african-american population in the eastern half of the united states without understanding the relationship to native americans is virtually impossible uh it's where you ran away to
uh it's it's it's the people that that
you could merge within
and hide yourself and be native you know
uh and so and who would not let you be
given back as a runaway because they
would claim they own you
and white people respected that so a lot
of those can you talk about
indian slavery or black people no a lot
of times you'll get like
the creeks were not that great but the
cherokee and so forth they would say
that because white people
understood that they would say you can't
have them he used to run away in his
mind now and they say
okay we respect five and five private
property
you're living in a native community you
got your own space
you're living with them but every time
white people show up looking for they
90:40
say no no he's ours
90:42
right people don't understand that so
90:44
they write books about how native
90:46
americans enslaved black people well a
90:48
few of them did but that was not the
90:49
norm the norm was how do you hide people
90:51
among yourself but some of those
90:53
are nothing but that you know the
90:55
seminoles are this amazing amalgamation
90:57
of of african-americans and natives
90:59
you can't you can't possibly separate
91:01
them out there's no way you can do that
91:03
you'd have to
91:03
split people down in the middle and have
91:05
half their head over here have to head
91:06
over there
91:07
to get it pulled out the snake
91:09
leadership in mississippi is choctaw
91:12
right if you're talking about macarthur
91:14
cotton if you talk about
91:16
vernon dahmer you know you talk about
91:18
all those people that that
that leads they can lead the civil rights movement are choctaws right but they identify as african-american but their ancestor is choctaws the name of the football team at alcorn university is the braves not because they appropriated that because they they have a huge number of apple indians that went to alcorn so they named their team to face right the emblem for the tougaloo college you know the two little official mascot is the bulldog the students wear the eagle because of their native americans they say you wear the bulldog bulldog don't mean nothing else eagle does so if you buy a hat in in the shop when you go down to tougaloo you get hats with eagles on them and they say what does that have to do
with tougaloo if you don't know we're not going to tell you no we're so close to say nothing of the wampanoags and the peak parts i mean is the first the first power i went to i kept saying why all these black people here and the guests that i landed you said we're pequots well how come you look like black people and say well explain it to you i mean they do when you go to peak rock museum you think they had a lot of black people i thought well they had a lot of color people down here they picked watch their pequots the tribal council of his brothers had someone backwards say billionaires because they run their casinos but they rolled up in a pickup truck hit timberlands on jackets you know but they run
you know being out but then they they're
mixed they're mixed
you know and that's that's the reality
of that
you know that i don't know how you pull
people out because if you mix you don't
get
shipped out to the west so a lot of
native americans pass african-american
in the south so they wouldn't get
shipped off to a reservation
you know every every black college has
native american organizations howard's
had one since the 1860s
tuskegee put out a magazine called the
southern workman half the articles on
native americans
tuskegee and hampton they didn't they
made all over the place everywhere they
know
they all like i don't know how you can
separate us out
we just have to acknowledge that deal
with that
you know uh ron welburn the leading
black on sport
he's a native american he now writes as
a native american he's in black fire he
writes about jazz
but he teaches at umass he now writes as
a native american because he was kind of
passing for black during the black power
period and he said this is not really me
i really am more of this
and so now he's he was the head of our
native american studies program
that's that's their foundation those are
the people that share the grievances
that we have
they stole our labor they stole the
whole continent from native americans
like the whole thing
that's the only thing they had more
value than slave labor
was the land that they did they stole
the whole kind of
the whole thing like everything they
ain't buying nothing from the nose
nothing just
stole the whole thing right that's
something black people talk about five
states we ought to be negotiated with
native americans not with white people
you know if you say you want five states
in mississippi you gotta negotiate with
native americans
because white people don't own it they
stole it
you don't deal with that then you can't
dip you can't deal with that
complex reality you know so
if one of us get in touch with me i can
send you syllabi and read and listen
people to talk to it's a very very
important very very important subject
it's important in latin america too
because of the you know distinctive indigenous populations you know the mayans the told texts and so forth you know i mean it's very very important well make sure that your contact information is yeah yeah description of the video or something someone can get in contact with you yeah yeah yeah i'm going to pick up the department you'll find me yeah in kind of in closing we want to listen to dr sanchez recite an incredibly moving poem of hers um and then we will be adjourning our webinar so thank you for sticking around on youtube or in the zoom for as long as you have um so dr sanchez whenever you're ready sure um uh bernice reagan um
called me one day and said uh
uh sister sonia uh we're gonna record um
a version of i'm gonna stay on the battlefield and
um we'd like for you to uh put some lyrics to it i said sure
no good deal good deal but i went away to do um i think i was away for four weeks to do a four weeks um in in florida a workshop it's either four weeks and every night um they they had done the music and i would listen to the music i go to sleep with it but i came back home and i was awakened one morning uh and it was bernice and she said um um i we hear you're coming down to the smithsonian to do a reading and i said oh yes i am and she said well would you bring the the um the lyrics the words that you wrote
for the music and i said uh-huh right and so i got on the train i got there i did my talk i did my reading i saw the person from bernice's office sitting in the audience right i waved to her i went out the side door got on the train and went back home and i said i blew it completely right i blown the opportunity to record with sweet honey in the rock and in the morning and about 7 30 in the morning i heard bernice said dear sonia i said yes this is bernice she said um when do you think she's an artist so she knew when do you think you can get the lyrics to us i said give me two days right and i did and this is what i wrote i'm going to stay on the battlefield i'm
going to stay on the battlefield i'm
gothing to stay on the battlefield till i
die
i'm going to stay on the battlefield i'm
going to stay on the battlefield
till i die i had come
into the city carrying life in my eyes
amid rumors of death
calling out to everyone who would listen
it is time to move us all into another
century
time for freedom and racial and sexual
time for women and children and men time
for hands
unbound i had come into the city wearing
peaceful breasts
and the spaces between us smiled i had
come into the city carrying life in my
eyes
i had to come into the city carrying
life in my eyes
and they followed us in their cars with
their computers
and their tongues crawled with
caterpillars and they bumped us
off the road turned over our cars and
they bombed our buildings
killed our babies and they shot our
doctors maintaining
our bodies and their courts changed into
confessionals
but we kept on organizing we kept on
teaching
believing loving doing what was holy
moving to a higher ground even though
our hands were full of slaughtered teeth
but we held out our eyes delirious with
grace but we held out our eyes delirious
with grace i'm gonna
treat everybody right i'm gonna treat
everybody right
everybody right
i'm gonna treat everybody right till i
die i'm gonna treat everybody right
i'm gonna treat everybody right i'm
gonna treat everybody right till i die
come
come i say come you sitting still in domestic
bacteria
come i say come you standing still and
double breasted mornings
come i say come and return to the fight
come i say come and return to the fight
this fight for the earth this fight for
our children
this fight for our life we need your
hurricane voices we need your
sacred hands i say come sister brother
to the battlefield
coming to the rain forest coming to the
hood coming to the burial
coming to the schools coming to the
abortion clinics come into the cities
come into the voting booths come into
the prisons come and caress
our spines i say come wrap your feet
around justice i say come
wrap your tongues around truth i say
come wrap your hands with jesus and
prayer you
brown ones you black ones you gay ones
you
white ones you lesbian ones you muslim
ones you
jewish ones you lgbtq ones come
come come come come to this battlefield
called life
called life call life go on the
battlefield i'm gonna
say on the battlefield i'm gonna stay on
the battlefield till i die
i'm gonna stay on the battlefield i'm
gonna stay on the battlefield
i'm gonna stay on the battlefield till
tillman.com
come come come come come to this
battlefield go live life
life life life life life life
thank life thank you thank you
thank you everyone for joining us um
i want to give a special thanks
obviously to dr sanchez dr bracy
thank you for gracing us with your
presence tonight
i want to thank all of our sponsors who
made this event possible
and a dear thank you to the alumni
association
for gracing us with your
presence tonight
i hope that everyone remains safe and
healthy
and take care thank you so much thank
you
yes thank you for doing this
yes to you thank you thank you very much
what an honor to be here bye bye
stay safe yeah right right
mask up wash your hands that's right
grab a glass on put a double mask on
right
The University of Maine in Orono is the flagship campus of the University of Maine System, where efforts toward racial equity are ongoing, as is the commitment to facing a complicated and not always just institutional history. The University recognizes that it is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot nation, where issues of water and its territorial rights, and encroachment upon sacred sites, are ongoing. Penobscot homeland is connected to the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations — the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac — through kinship, alliances, and diplomacy. The university also recognizes that the Penobscot Nation and the other Wabanaki Tribal Nations are distinct, sovereign, legal and political entities with their own powers of self-governance and self-determination.