

To Our Students and Community:

The International Affairs (IA) Program at Skidmore College stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests around the United States in condemning anti-Black violence and police brutality. The murders of Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd which have ignited wide-spread protests across the country, have also inspired institutions and programs, like ours, to consider how we can better support and address the ongoing political, social, and economic subjugation of Black people in the US, around the world, as well as on campus.

Our solidarity with BLM is in keeping with the IA Program's broader commitment to addressing issues of racial, religious, social, economic and political inequities and injustice, and our mission to engage with both their historical roots and contemporary manifestations.

Race in the International Affairs Program

In expressing BLM solidarity, we also take seriously the charge that not only our curricula but our classrooms must reflect our anti-racist and decolonial commitments in order for change to happen at the institutional as well as individual level. As an interdisciplinary program with global scope, Race already runs like a thread through the fabric of many of our courses, scaffolded by considerations of slavery, colonialism, exploitation, conflict and inequality. Core courses like *Colorism in Paradise*, *Excavating Culture* and *Faces and Phases of Global Capitalism* strenuously engage with the dynamics of race and anti-Blackness as they play out in the USA and elsewhere.

The IA Program has also sought to bring attention to these issues outside the classroom, with the broader community. For instance, last year's Annual International Affairs Lecture in April 2019 featured Professor Andrew Zimmerman, a historian from George Washington University whose talk, "From the New South to the Global South: Revolution and Counterrevolution on the Color Line" examined the export of the American Jim Crow South to colonial Africa. The talk was accompanied by a workshop, organized by IA and the IGR Program on "The Racial Politics of Knowledge" to discuss challenges in designing and delivering courses that contest the Whiteness model of learning.

Our other course offerings and campus events also actively engage issues of inequality and injustice, including those of minority stigmatization and persecution, at a more general and global level.

What we pledge to do

This does not mean that we cannot do even more. The IA faculty are committed to exploring ways of further enhancing the race and racism related components of our existing courses, especially our introductory IA-101 course, as well as developing new offerings that expressly address the violence directed against Black bodies in America and beyond.

Outside of the classroom, this year, the IA Program will be partnering with Management and Business in hosting the Annual Zankel Lecture to bring noted scholar, Professor Elizabeth Esch to campus (remotely or in-person). Prof. Esch's research explores the engineering of deep racial divisions in American corporations, and how this model of segregation and exploitation was exported to countries like apartheid South Africa and Brazil in the twentieth century.

The IA Program will also be exploring the introduction of a Black Diaspora Regional Concentration for the major, in collaboration with Black Studies, which will allow students the opportunity to develop a more systemic understanding of anti-Black racism as a global phenomenon.

As always, we will welcome both feedback from our affiliates and students on how IA can better support its diverse, international, and BIPOC community, as well as the opportunity to have conversations and provide more details on what we are already doing, and plan to do going ahead in support of this endeavor.

In Solidarity.