

## AAPT Report, Heather Wilburn, “Tulsa Race Massacre at 100: Contractualism and Reparations”

“Tulsa Race Massacre at 100: Contractualism and Reparations” is a grant funded by the AAPT to design an introductory social and political philosophy course for Tulsa Community College around the centennial of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Due to the pandemic the course ran online in the Spring 2021 semester. The course was divided into three units: 1) Justice and Contractualism; 2) Injustice and Contractualism; and 3) Tulsa Race Massacre.

In unit 1 our class explored various understandings of justice through the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Rawls. Supplementary resources for this unit included Astra Taylor’s film, *What is Democracy* and sections of Helliung’s book, *The Social Contract in America*.

In unit 2 we turned to examine systemic racism and other forms of injustice through the lens of contractualism. Here we discussed the history of systemic racism, power and personhood, selections from Mills’ *The Racial Contract*, selections from Vine Deloria Jr.’s *God is Red*, and Quraysh Ali Lansana’s article “Hell Came to Tulsa.” Our supplemental resource for this unit was Levin’s *The Fractured Republic*.

For unit 3 we read Krehbiel’s *Tulsa 1921: Reporting a Massacre*. Part of the grant money awarded by the AAPT was used to purchase copies of this text for students that did not already have a copy. We also used sections of Hannibal B. Johnson’s *Black Wall Street 100*, images from the Tulsa Historical Society, a virtual tour of John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation, Coates’ article, “The Case for Reparations,” and Tulsa City-County Library’s “City Directory and Maps.”

Through the support of the AAPT, our class engaged in a variety of activities. For example, students used the “City Directory and Maps” to identify current businesses in the area and to trace the land lots back to businesses that were thriving prior to the massacre. In this assignment, students used their findings as well as their work with the social contract tradition and Coates to create an argument for or against reparations. Some students reported they went to specific locations to view and reflect on the locations--what is there now and what once was. My original plan was to take several field trips to these locations, but these were off limits due to the pandemic. Thankfully, there were virtual galleries and tours, although students did comment about their desire to do this in person, rather than virtually. I am planning on running the same course again with the hopes of engaging in physical tours and guest speakers.

Students created visual representations, poetry, video presentations, and essays throughout the semester. I am incredibly grateful to the AAPT for supporting the course design and resources for this class. It was one of the most profound and moving courses I have ever taught and my students were hopeful and inspiring. I am confident future versions of this course will be just as meaningful for my students.