



Summer Media List

Delve into Twelve

Developed by Pablo Tsolo, SOCC Anti-Racism Coordinator

School's out for many of us and its time to catch up on some reading that isn't assigned by our professors!

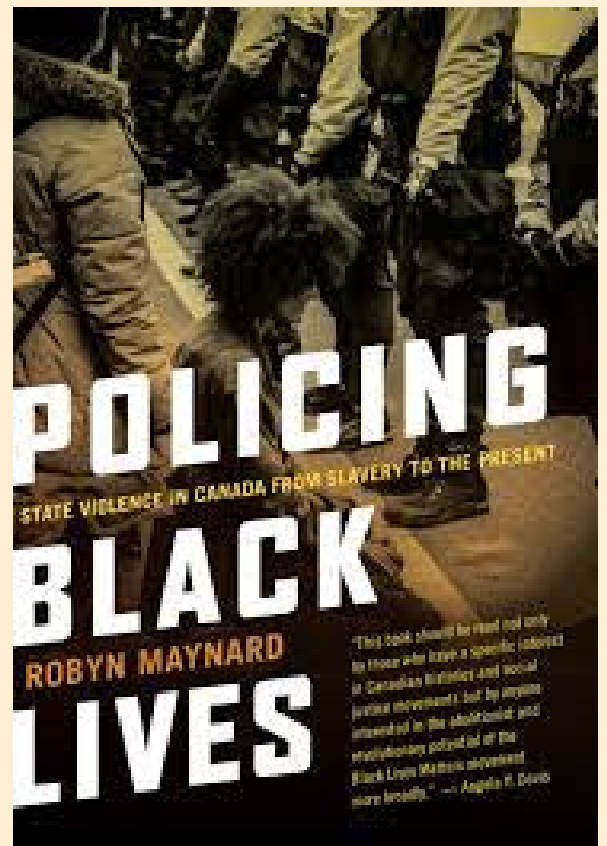
SOCC's Anti-Racism Coordinator has researched and curated a list of documentaries to watch and books to read in order to raise awareness about systemic racism and oppression in general. This list centers the voices and perspectives of Black and Indigenous folks.

Delve into these 12 media items this summer!

01

Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present (2017), Robyn Maynard

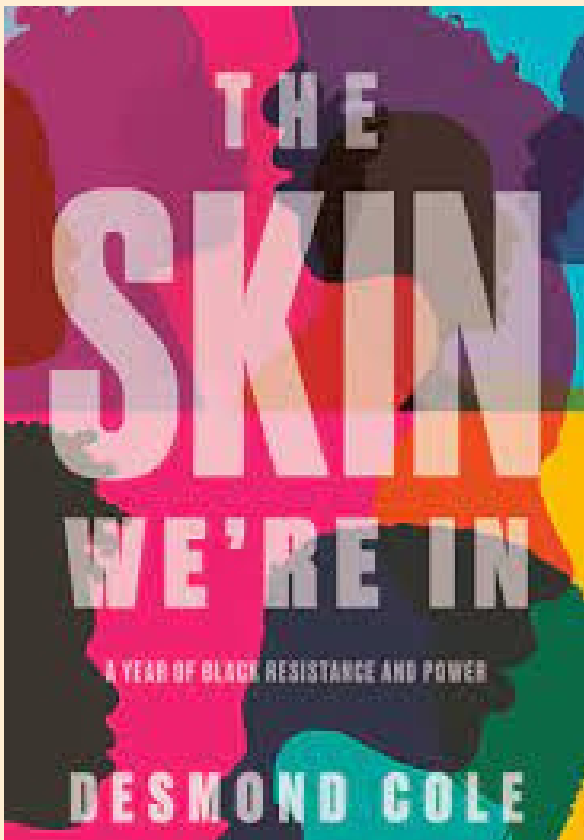
Anti-Black racism within North America is a systemic ideology with a chilling and extensive history. However, it's colonial beginnings and current social impacts are often exclusively confined to the context of American society. 'Policing Black Lives' powerfully articulates the historical and contemporary realities of anti-Black racism specifically within the borders of Canada. The chapters in this book take a broad intersectional approach in covering the various ways the Canadian state has oppressed Black people of all genders and ages in social areas such as housing, education, health, employment, immigration policing, and prisons. The factual research behind Maynard's book is enhanced by her inclusion of poignant empirical accounts, which paint a compelling picture of Canada's true racialized treatment of its Black citizens.



02

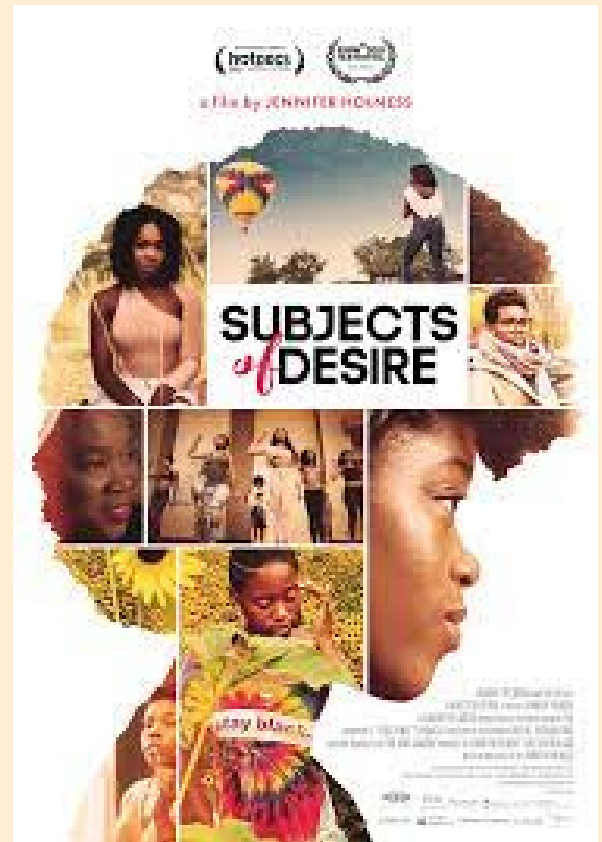
The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power (2020), Desmond Cole

Focusing on the socially tumultuous year of 2017, which was also Canada's 150th birthday, 'The Skin We're In' does more than observe contemporary Canadian racial tensions, but serves as a radical call for anti-racist action and change throughout the country. It is an award-winning book which boldly challenges the notion of Canada as a racially benevolent society rooted in multiculturalism. In light of how the large majority of Canadian society is indifferent to issues of systemic racism, 'The Skin We're In' informatively introduces readers to central concepts of critical race theory such as white supremacy and imperialism. Fueled by a blend of the author's own biography, as well as activist journalism, 'The skin We're' In also manages to 'recover disappeared histories of Black resistance' from both the past and contemporary times. The assertive confidence of Cole's prose is matched by the graceful honesty with which he portrays the challenges and joys stemming from legacies of Black rebellion. Desmond Cole's 'The Skin We're In' is as educational as it is inspiring for those who envision the possibility of a better world.



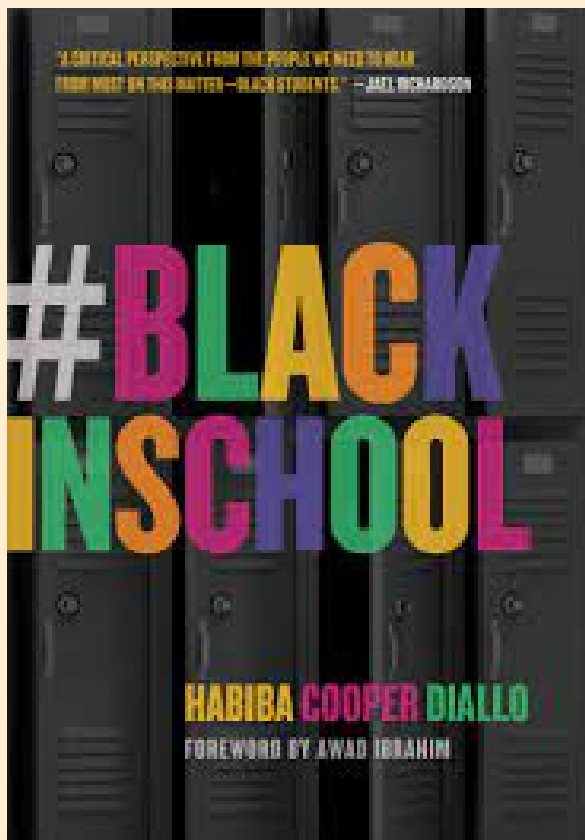
03 *Subjects of Desire (2021), Jennifer Holness*

This recent documentary film by Jennifer Holness is a profound exploration of the media's portrayal of Black women in North America. The film takes a critical eye towards how the cultural hegemony of white supremacy has deliberately promoted aesthetic standards which privilege white women as the standard of beauty. The resulting media and advertising narratives that socially position white women as the definition of womanhood, have led to the denigration of Black women within society. While examining the danger behind certain stereotypes ascribed to different Black women, *Subjects of Desire* takes a deeper look at North America's recent cultural shift towards the celebration and commodification of 'Black female aesthetics.' By centering the voiced experiences of Black women from all walks of life, Holness manages to convey the ways in which they have rejected conventional myths regarding beauty, as well as the joy and pride behind their personal journeys to self-acceptance.



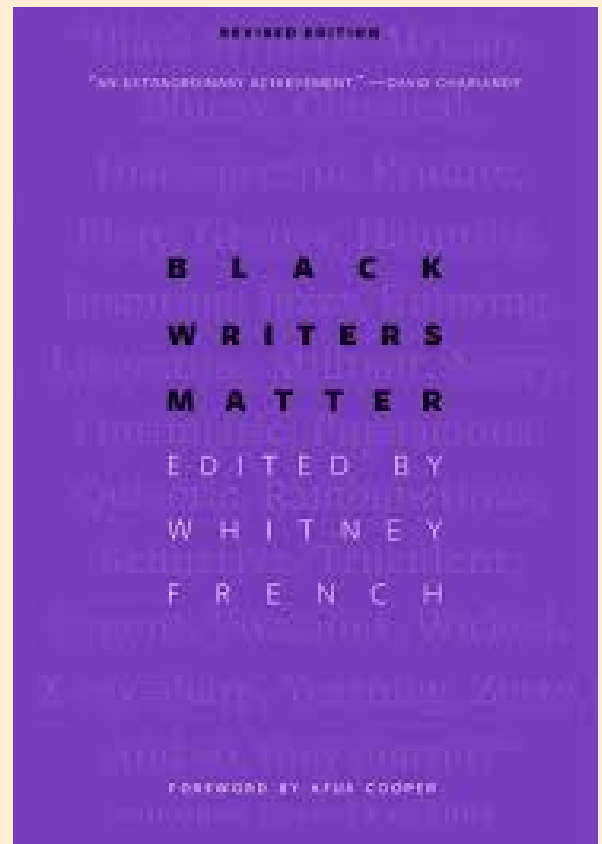
04 *Black in School (2021), Habiba Cooper Diallo*

This touching memoir serves as a powerful critique of the institutional nature of racism Black people endure at all stages of life within North American society. Racial prejudice is so pervasive that it not only impacts us as adults in the world, but begins to shape our very formative interactions, even as children growing up. *Black in School* recounts the high school experiences of young Habiba Cooper Diallo. However, far from being unique or isolated, her personal experiences with intolerance and micro-aggressions from both students and educators in the Canadian school system points to a larger systemic problem; which is the explicit and implicit racist curriculum taught in classrooms across the country. *Black in School* reveals just how institutionally embedded anti-Black racism is in Canadian society. The fact that ideologies behind white supremacy are learned, they can just as well be unlearned and replaced with a pedagogy focused on building a just and equitable future for all generations to come.

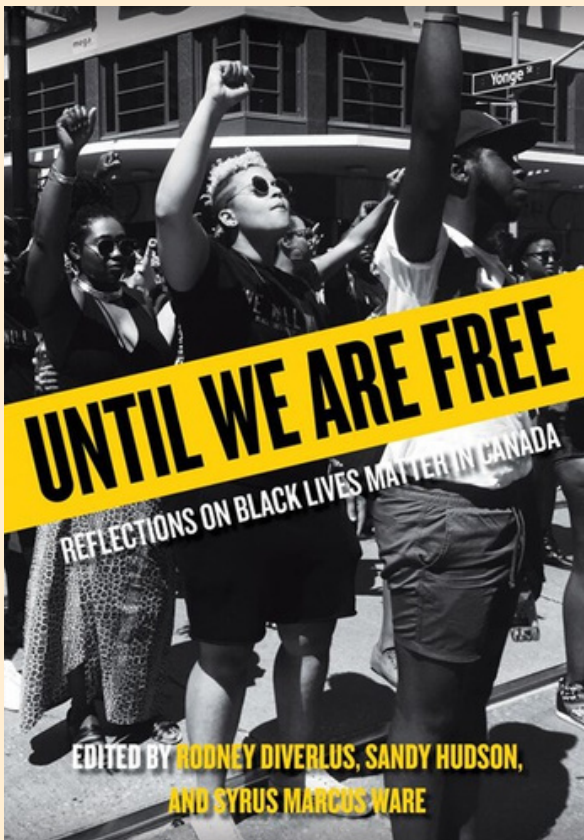


Black Writers Matter (2019) Edited by Whitney French

A collection of personal essays and reflections by a wide variety of African-Canadian authors, *Black Writers Matter* is a profoundly cathartic book that explores themes and issues related to Black identity and culture in Canada. The elegant prose of both these established and aspiring writers is imbued with deep humor, anger, sadness, resilience, and happiness. Both communities of color and allies have found that *Black Writers Matter* takes a relatable, or else elucidating look at everyday life for Black people in Canada. For instance, the personal impact of stereotypical assumptions or micro-aggressions expressed by the writers in this anthology is profoundly honest and significant. Through their nuanced accounts, the undermined social realities experienced by members of the Black diaspora in Canada become illuminated.



UNTIL WE ARE FREE: REFLECTIONS ON BLACK LIVES MATTER IN CANADA (2020) Edited by Rodney Diverlus, Sandy Hudson, and Syrus Marcus Ware

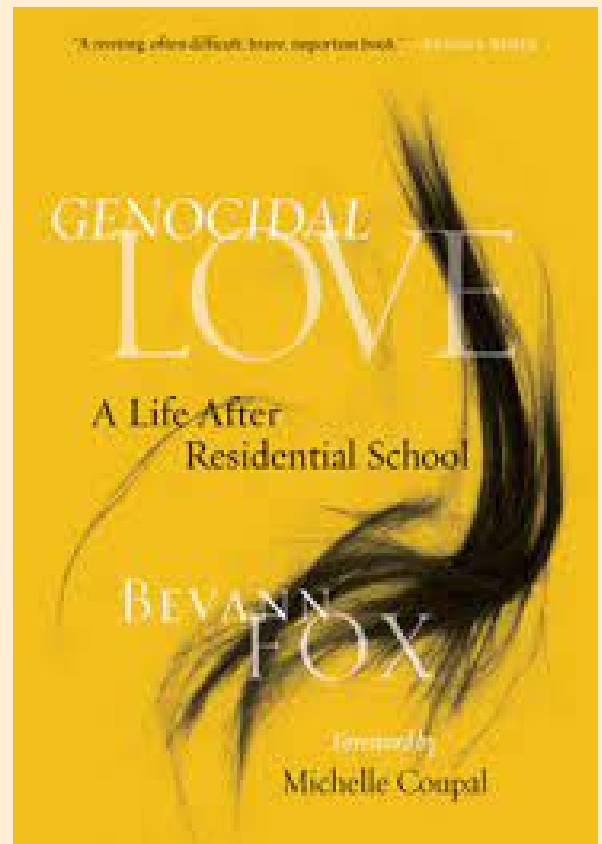


'Until We are Free' overflows with a rich selection of critical voices and perspectives on anti-Black racism in Canada. Its editors and over a dozen contributors comprise of individuals who have an unwavering commitment to the mobilization of social justice through scholarship and activism. One of the central themes of this book is the promotion of solidarity between Black and Indigenous communities. Such solidarity, when purposefully organized has the ability to not only benefit all stakeholders in society, but also undermine current systems of power. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter Movement which began after the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012, this book is especially prescient because of its uniquely deep focus on the present-day context and consequences of Canada's hostile racial landscape.

07

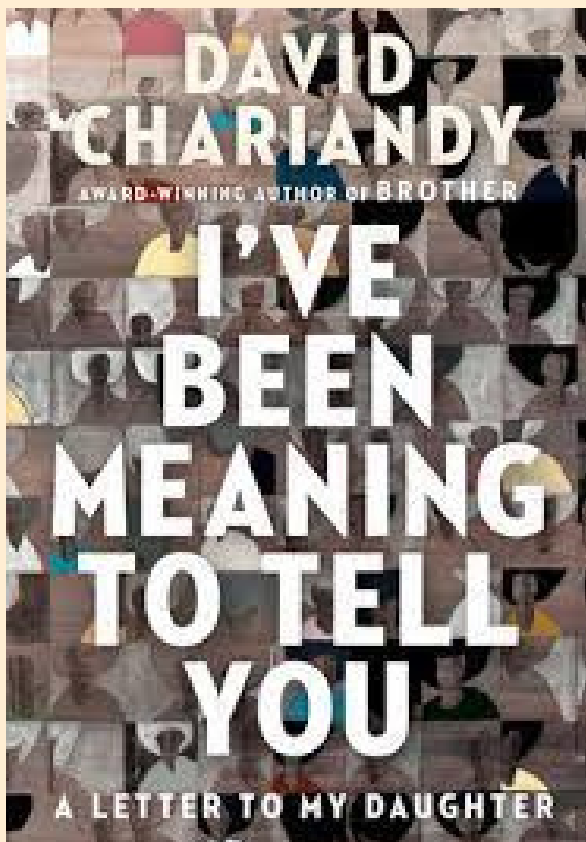
**GENOCIDAL LOVE: A LIFE AFTER
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (2021), Bevann Fox**

Using the fictional character of 'Myrtle,' a survivor of Canada's residential school system, Bevann Fox creates a poignant, coming of age story which conveys to readers the horrific realities of life for Indigenous people in residential schools and under the Indian Act. Within the story, Myrtle has the challenge of trying to regain her voice after the trauma of residential school violence. Her struggle to rebuild familial bonds is especially inspiring in how it reveals the power of love, trust, and healing in the face of intergenerational pain. This historically accurate novel is a poignant confirmation of Canada's colonial past. Fox's novel also serves as a thought-provoking commentary on the Canadian state's continuing abuse and neglect of Indigenous rights and sovereignty.



08

**I've Been Meaning to Tell You: A Letter to
My Daughter (2018), David Chariandy**

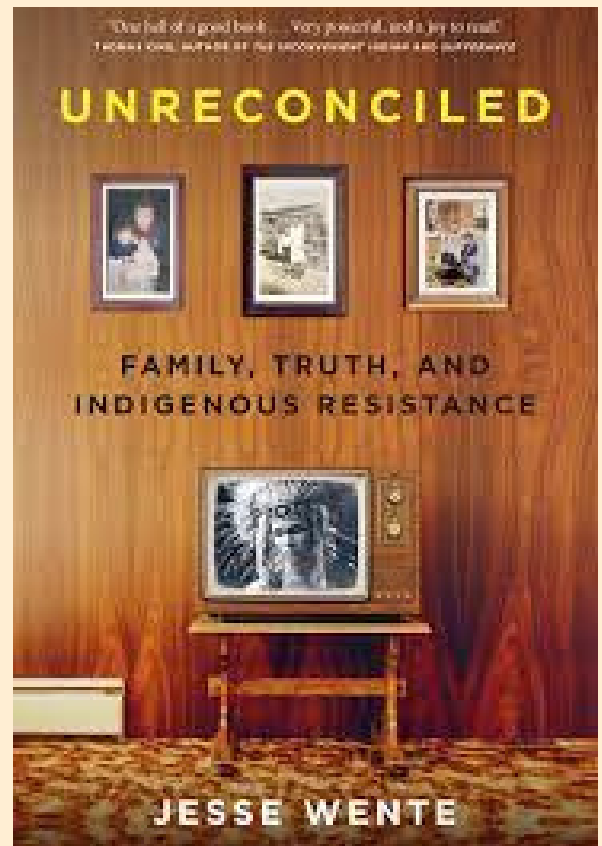


For many parents of colour, while their home may be a haven of love and safety, there is the ever-burning question of when to talk to children about race; also, how to do so in a way that prepares rather than inhibits them in their dealings with the outside world. Reflecting on a racist encounter he had in which his then three-year-old daughter asked, "What happened?" David Chariandy writes a hopeful memoir as a response to her ten years later explaining the politics of race. Using his own background as the son of Black and South Asian migrants from the island of Trinidad, Chariandy's letter includes accounts of his ancestors' history of slavery, indenture and immigration, as well as his own accounts of growing up as a visible minority in Canada. The honest details within this memoir are often quite tragic, however they reveal the scope of racism within our current society, while proposing that we carry a collective responsibility, as both parents and younger generations, to learn from the past's pain and create brighter outcomes for the future.

09

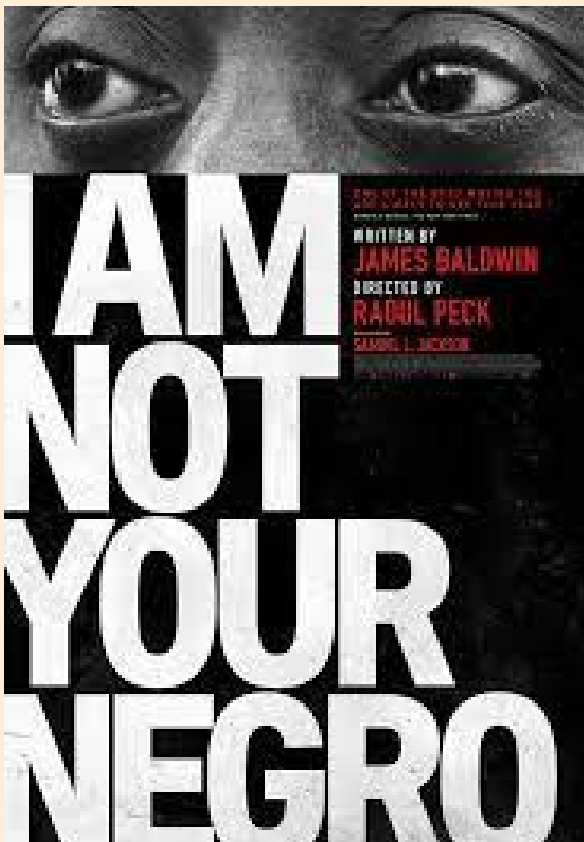
Unreconciled: Family, Truth, and Indigenous Resistance (2022), Jesse Wentz

Born to an American father and Anishinaabe mother, Jesse Wentz skillfully uses storytelling to recount how he came to form his own sense of self growing up in Toronto in the face of profiling and hostile racialization. He combines the layout of memoir and manifesto to spark an interrogative discussion into the myths and false concepts that have constructed the nation of Canada. For example, Wentz deeply questions the colonial concept of the English and French being Canada's 'two founding nations,' as well as the how the loaded term 'reconciliation,' implies that a mutually beneficial relationship existed between the state of Canada and First Nations -which was never the case at all.



10

I Am Not Your Negro: James Baldwin and Race in America (2016), Raoul Peck

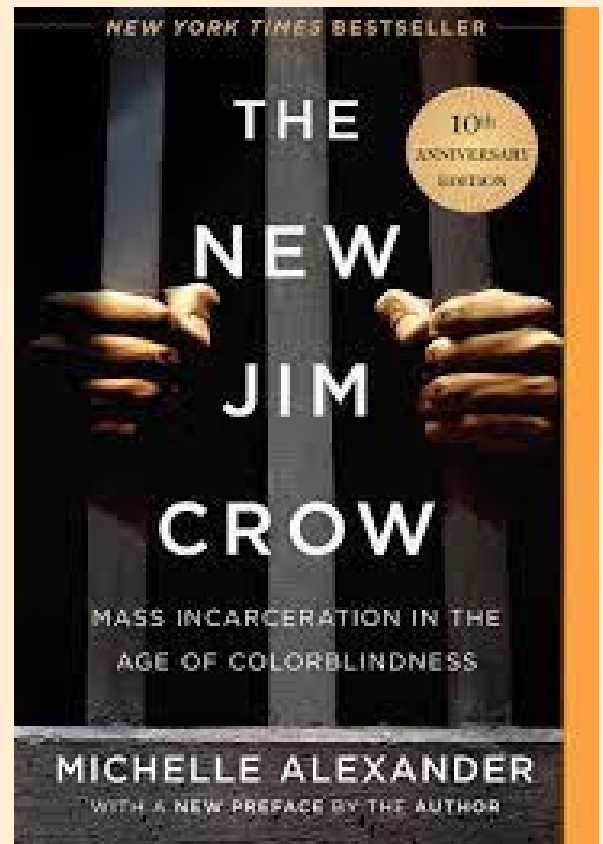


Before he died in 1987, the writer and social critic James Baldwin was penning *Remember This House*, a revolutionary account in memory of the lives and activism of his three assassinated Civil Rights companions Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Medgar Evers. Combining these notes with rich archival material; filmmaker Raoul Peck was able to envision a way to retell Baldwin's story while also undertaking an acute examination of American racial politics. Peck's Oscar-nominated documentary, *I Am Not Your Negro* skillfully makes relevant connections between America's socio-political climate during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's and today's current Black Lives Matter Movement.

11

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the age of colorblindness (2010), Michelle Alexander

Since its publication in 2010, *The New Jim Crow* by highly regarded scholar and civil rights lawyer Michelle Alexander has been significantly influential in shifting American debates regarding the racialization of crime. The focus of her best-selling book, *The New Jim Crow* is on the discriminatory over-representation of Black and Brown people within the American criminal justice system. In her book, Alexander argues that one of the ways of maintaining racial subjugation in America, was by means of slavery. Now, in a supposedly 'post-racial' world, this form of racial oppression has been replaced with prisons, immigrant detention centers, and other types of incarceration. This paradigm shift is of particular interest within the context of Canada, where Black and Indigenous communities face higher levels of surveillance, criminal prosecution, and imprisonment than white Canadians for the same offenses.



12

How to Be an Antiracist (2019), Ibram X. Kendi

With the publication of *How to be an Antiracist*, Kendi continues writing with the same ground-breaking eloquence to be found in his prolific body of books on American social justice. Kendi goes beyond just establishing a correlation between anti-black racism, other racisms, and intersectional forms of oppression; he sees the whole system of white supremacy and its supporting ideologies as predicated on warped or 'false hierarchies of human value.' To combat this, *How to be an Antiracist* proposes viewing antiracism as an active, transformative concept that can empower all communities to achieve liberating identities and relations within society. Kendi suggests to readers it is not enough to be 'not racist,' but that each of us must actively do anti-racism work if we are to eradicate this type of oppression from our society.

