

INJUSTICE AND THE ARTS: Fall 2020 at Hunter College

Creative people in music, theatre, film, and the visual arts are once again passionately involved in conflicts about immigration, police brutality, economic fairness, environmental degradation, ethnic and sex discrimination, political corruption, and other urgent matters. Many artists, old and new, have found ways to work for justice, sharpening our awareness of cruelty and dishonesty, imagining better worlds, grieving losses, and celebrating victories.

Explorations in the Arts (Humanities 20100, section 09, Tu 3:45 to 6:15). This section is a newly designed seminar focused on connections between the arts and the continuing quest for justice. Open to Hunter students who are hungry for compelling images and stories and who are looking for effective strategies of change, the course will be online.

Musical theatre will include: **HAMILTON** by Lin-Manuel Miranda; **MADAMA BUTTERFLY** by Giacomo Puccini; **CANDIDE** by Leonard Bernstein; and prisoners' choruses by Verdi and Beethoven. We also will spend time on poetry and on songs of freedom and of protest.

Likely films: **FENCES** (Denzel Washington acts and directs); **MILK** (Harvey Milk, gay liberation); **HIDDEN FIGURES** (black women at NASA); **CESAR CHAVEZ** (United Farm Workers); **SELMA** (civil rights); **MATEWAN** (coal miners); and **BREAKER MORANT** (war crimes, South Africa).

A few great plays are available on video. One already chosen is Athol Fugard's **MASTER HAROLD AND THE BOYS** (set in South Africa). Sam Brakarsh, who played Master Harold recently in Zimbabwe, will join our discussion.

For the visual arts we plan small-group visits to museums and galleries and outdoor sculpture. We will study **JACOB LAWRENCE: THE AMERICAN STRUGGLE** online at the **Metropolitan Museum** and various artists at the **Museum of Modern Art**. A young scholar at the **Frick Collection** will talk with us about great art, great wealth, and the ambiguities of philanthropy.

Readings will include some essays and short stories. Assignments will include short papers and brief oral or video presentations. Any video or online expenses will be paid for by the College.

Adjunct Professor **Bruce Payne** will teach the course. A civil rights and anti-war activist and, later, a foundation president, he has taught political theory, ethics, leadership, and drama, winning Duke University's top teaching award. **Nigel Philip** will be our staff assistant, counselor, writing coach, and videographer. For further information, contact nigel.philip@gmail.com



"Migrants left. They did not feel safe. It was not wise to be found on the streets late at night. They were arrested on the slightest provocation." Jacob Lawrence, 1940-41, Panel 22 from the *Migration Series*.



The Flag is Bleeding #2 (American Collection #6), 1997. By Faith Ringgold