Dear Majors, Minors, Alum, Colleagues, and Friends,

We write to you today to collectively take a knee alongside all those who are fighting against systemic racism, structural violence, and other forms of oppression in our country and around the world. We grieve for George Floyd and his family as well as with all victims of police brutality and their families. We mourn for people who have died from coronavirus and their families, and we hope for the recovery of all coronavirus sufferers. We are deeply concerned about communities who are experiencing disproportionate rates of infection from coronavirus, including African Americans in South Carolina and nationally, the Navajo and many Native American nations, and the Yanomami and other Indigenous communities worldwide.

We stand in solidarity with demonstrators and others who are speaking out. We pledge to point out anti-black racism, fight it, and denounce it here at Wofford, in Spartanburg, and across our communities and daily interactions. Excluding, marginalizing, and targeting people, for example Black birders, is objectionable. We encourage everyone to thoughtfully reflect on their own race, class, and gender based privileges. We wish to express our deep compassion for all who are struggling. We stand with you now and imagine better futures with you.

As sociologists and anthropologists, we recognize the most recent incidents of police brutality and the inequitable suffering from the coronavirus pandemic as manifestations of long-standing, pervasive structural violence and systemic racism. Our task is to evaluate today’s social problems with the goal of finding more ethical ways of living well together. Studying social and cultural phenomena is, for us, seamless with advocating for justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity.

Should you wish to consult sources of information from our two disciplines, we have compiled a list of key texts and websites. Please note this list is not exhaustive and still has room for your contributions and suggestions. The authors on the list below have perspectives that can help us interpret the current situation.

As we seek justice and equity, please know we welcome the opportunity to converse with you and will do all we can to support you. One among the many potential ways to be active is to participate in online gatherings such as Breath, Ritual, and Witness in the Midst of Fire at 6:00 pm on June 5 (register here). You are invited to reach out to your SOC/ANTH professors with suggestions or to relay your thoughts to us.

In Solidarity,
the Faculty Members in the Sociology and Anthropology Department of Wofford College
Cissy Fowler, Alysa Handelsman, Rhiannon Leebrick, Gerry Ginocchio, Anna Harkey, Gerald Thurmond, and Jordan Miller

Recommended Readings


**Online Resources**

American Anthropological Association’s Statement on Race

“Race and Ethnicity” from the American Sociological Association

Understanding Race. The Race Project. American Anthropological Association

#BlackLivesMatters | Cultural Anthropology

Teaching Race | Society for Cultural Anthropology

The Paradox of the Shameless White Liberal

#CharlestonSyllabus

Talking about Race

An Advocacy Toolkit for Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing

Silence is NOT an Option

Resources for Accountability and Actions for Black Lives

Anguish and Action

Justice in June

26 Ways to Be in the Struggle Beyond the Streets

So Let’s Talk About _____

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Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples: We acknowledge with humility and gratitude the Native American communities who, for thousands of years, have lived and worked in the space now occupied by Wofford College. We offer our respect to the living, previously living, and future generations and hope to live in a way that honors them all. Please join us in recognizing the importance of the historical and continuing presence of the Indigenous Peoples of the Carolinas.