



## 2021 Stand Against Racism Content Curator Julia E. Rodriguez



### Julia E. Rodriguez

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Julia E. Rodriguez is an Associate Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire. Her current research focuses on the history of racial ideologies in Latin America, Europe, and North America. She is the author of the book *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State* (UNC Press, 2006), and numerous articles on the history of race, gender, and science. She also created and edits the open-source teaching website *HOSLAC: History of Science in Latin America and the Caribbean* ([www.hoslac.org](http://www.hoslac.org)). A National Science Foundation CAREER awardee (2006-2011),

Rodriguez's work has also been recognized by the American Council of Learned Societies; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the American Association for the History of Medicine; the New England Council for Latin American Studies; and Harvard University.

### Discussion Content

#### **[“Caretaking Relations, Not American Dreaming” by Kim TallBear](#)**

*Kalfou A Journal of Comparative and Relational Ethnic Studies* (article)

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#### **[First Light by the Upstander Project](#)**

(video)

#### **[1619 Project Symposium: Nikole Hannah-Jones](#)**

(video)

### Brief intro:

Amanda Gorman, our national youth poet laureate, shared this line at the 2021 Presidential inauguration:

*“If we’re to live up to our own time, then victory won’t lighten the blade but in all the bridges we’ve made, that is the promise to glade, the hill we climb if only we dare, it’s because being American is more than a pride we inherit. It’s the past we stepped into and how we repair it.”*

Which living legacies of past harm call for repair? How will we repair them?

While there are many types of inequality in the U.S. today, recent developments, such as the COVID pandemic, the economic crisis, and new awareness around racial violence and white supremacy has it made startlingly clear that two communities in particular pay a high price: Indigenous and Black.

Despite these gaping disparities in health, economic, and other social indicators, the reality is that after over 500 years, we—descendants of invaders, victims, activists, and survivors alike—must coexist together in a multiracial, multicultural community.

What would it mean to heal racial disparities in generational wealth and health? Creating the society we want requires a future vision, but also an honest assessment of the past. This idea is not new; African, Native American, and European elders have argued as such. German-Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin’s concept of Redemption is but one example. African-Americans embrace the Ghanaian concept of Sankofa, translated as “go back and get it,” linking past and present. Indigenous peoples speak of historical memory as a collective act, rooted in land and the living community. As we bravely face the harsh realities of the past, we also seek connection and agency within and among our communities. A powerful way to think about the challenges is with the concepts of relationality and repair. Dakota scholar Kim TallBear speaks of “caretaking relations,” in which, working together people from different walks of life commit to honoring our shared existence and place on this planet.

The selected texts and videos should prompt you to think about societal repair both institutionally and interpersonally, as well as the links between history, the present, and the future. The goal of this exercise is to think of ways to bravely face the harms of the past and empower us all to collaborate towards thriving.

## **Julie E. Rodriguez’s Discussion Questions**

1. After reading the TallBear article, how would you define “good relations” in a societal sense for our time?
2. In your view, which harms and inequities in our society call out most urgently for repair?

3. What might the first step be to repair damages from historical legacies of violence towards and theft from Black and Indigenous peoples? What might a second or third step be? Can you imagine an end to the process, or is it ongoing?
4. Which specific measures could be taken to address disparities in health care made visible by the COVID pandemic? What about the racial/generational wealth gap? Focus on structural changes (such as laws and social programs) as opposed to individual solutions.
5. Now, on an individual basis, what is one way you could participate in practices of repair? Which perspectives do you still need to listen to? What can you add to the process?

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