ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Remaking the #Syllabus: Crowdsourcing Resistance Praxis as Critical Public Pedagogy

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Between 2014 and 2017, the creation of hashtag syllabi—bricolage iterations of reading lists created by or circulated among educators on Twitter—emerged as a direct response for teaching about three highly publicized incidents of racial violence in the United States. Educators used hashtags as a means of sharing resources with their networks to provide non-normative literatures from marginalized scholars for teaching to transgress in the wake of Mike Brown's slaying in Ferguson, Missouri; the massacre of nine congregants at Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina; and the fatal car attack on anti-fascist protestors in Charlottesville, Virginia. Acting on Chakravartty et al.'s provocation to center scholars of color in course syllabi as a pedagogical strategy to disrupt the reification of white supremacy in communication and media studies, I consider the creation of three hashtag syllabi related to these events as a form of critical resistance praxis in the emerging framework of digital intersectionality theory. I present a brief textual analysis of the aforementioned syllabi, triangulated with data from online conversations linked to them via their hashtags and derivative works produced by their creators and users to map two social media assisted strategies for doing critical public pedagogy.

Keywords: Communication for Social Change, Race and Media, Social Networking, Critical Pedagogy

During the Ferguson uprising of 2014, and in the wake of the Charleston Massacre of 2015 and the "events of 11 and 12 August"[1] in 2017, scholars capitalized on Twitter's technological affordances[2]—specifically hashtags, but also the platform's re-tweet, quote-tweet, and "like" functions (Bucher and Helmond, 2017)—to circulate texts that provided context and information missing from breaking news reporting and firsthand social-media "witnessing" (Richardson, 2016). The loosely linked networks of social media prosumers—Twitter users whose activity is

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intended for the common good (Zajc, 2015, pp. 42–43)—contributed to the construction of #FergusonSyllabus, #CharlestonSyllabus and #CharlottesvilleSyllabus, three hashtag syllabi that offered educators on Twitter suggestions for teaching about the respective instances of racial violence. The hashtagged tweets are indicative of a shared sense of community, a digitally mediated affective relationship through which participants were motivated to do racial justice work in the academy (Blanchard & Markus, 2004; Kuo, 2018).

The crowdsourced construction and/or circulation of hashtag syllabi is an intervention designed to provide educators with resources for teaching non-normative perspectives on racial violence, particularly those developed and argued by scholars of color. These efforts grow out of an assumption that existing courses and their syllabi are deficient for providing intersectional analysis of the historical and contemporary oppressions that foment conditions for anti-Black, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant violence. In their analysis of communication studies literature, #CommunicationSoWhite, Chakravartty et al. produced evidence of such erasure, calling the symbolic annihilation of scholars of color a problem of "citational whiteness" (2018, p. 261). The study's authors identified the task of intentionally including critical studies scholarship in course syllabi as one strategy in what must be a comprehensive effort to directly engage work that confronts questions of structural oppression along lines of race, gender, and class:

> Our attention to citational representation is not about pluralistic difference; it is about attending to structures of power embedded within knowledge production. We must all be more attentive to our own racialized (and gendered) citational practices. We often cite work we already know. Thus, one important way to counter citational disparities is to expand the range of scholarship with which we critically engage. (2018, p. 261)

In this study, I identify the creation of three hashtag syllabi (#FergusonSyllabus, #CharlestonSyllabus, and #CharlottesvilleSyllabus) as artifacts of anti-racist pedagogy circulated via Twitter between 2014 and 2017. The syllabi represent a form of digital resistance praxis designed to actively subvert the "invisible college," the figurative network of majority-white scholars whose normative works characterize public framing of U.S. racial politics. I also analyze the syllabi as sites of production, foregrounding their utility in efforts to dismantle hegemonic pedagogical structures within the academy. I argue that the three iterations of collaboration used to create each syllabus are a form of democratic education, the pedagogical praxis hooks (2010) advocates as a means of connecting students, teachers, and the world outside of the academy with the tools for dismantling oppressions in their everyday experiences.

The syllabus as a site of study

Every scholar's course of study has, at one time or another, been influenced by the rhizomatic properties of the syllabus, a document that does the work of

"establishing connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). As a contract, communication device, concept map, and plan for learning, the syllabus — usually developed by a single instructor for use in a single course— is a centralized site where tacit claims about the relevant value of knowledge production are made (Matejka & Kurke, 1994, pp. 115–117). It leaves an indelible imprint on learners, including their knowledge—or ignorance—of epistemologies developed by intellectuals of color (De Chavez, 2018). In its functions as a communication device and concept map, the syllabus serves as a medium of understanding between teacher and student. The professor has judged the selected texts sufficient for a chosen form of instruction, giving them unspoken approval. The syllabus communicates the professor's approval to the student, indicating that knowledge embedded therein is significant and relevant to guide the learning concepts being discussed.

This relationship, between teacher, document, and student, must thus be identified as another "space of possibility," one that earned a passing mention in #CommunicationSoWhite, but through its assemblage in social and digital media spaces, warrants further consideration as a site of inquiry. Conceptually speaking, the syllabus is one component in the toolkit for doing the work of democratic education and culturally responsive teaching. As a networked property, its digital construction via social media platforms like Twitter offers scholars, students, and the general public exponential opportunities for exploring the inclusion and application of situated knowledge from underrepresented intellectuals, while providing them a sense of shared purpose and scope in the pursuit of critical public pedagogy.

Twitter as a tool for democratic education

Twitter, the microblogging social-networking platform where these syllabi were initially constructed (#FergusonSyllabus and #CharlestonSyllabus) and/or circulated (#CharlottesvilleSyllabus), allows users to post "microblogs," messages of 240 or fewer characters that can be indexed through the use of the hashtag (#) symbol. Reid (2010) notes that social media have redefined our understanding of public pedagogy sites, and both Willet (2019) and Stewart (2015) have rigorously detailed scholars' use of Twitter to develop network connections with other intellectuals. Over more than a decade, Twitter-centric hashtags have assisted loosely formed groups, from #OccupyWallStreet to the #MeToo movement, in taking collective action to educate, organize, and mobilize diverse publics to action, albeit with limited quantifiable impact.

Ahmed (2017) identifies blogs as a tool for world-making through the application of feminist values. Scaled down from their digital antecedents as sites and blog posts, tweets-as-microblogs are also tools for the critical construction of social reality in digital media spaces. Within Black Twitter, the amorphous network of culturally linked communicators using the site to discuss topics of concern among Black

communities, hashtags such as #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, #WhyIStayed, and #SayHerName, were used by participants on Twitter to discuss how intersecting oppressions shaped Black women's lived experiences (Clark, 2015; Clark, 2016; Williams, 2016). Similarly, during the period in which the three hashtag syllabi were created, racial justice hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter and #CharlestonMassacre were being used to draw attention to instances of police brutality and white supremacist violence as they unfolded across the country, providing context about the history of racist violence in the United States (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2018; Kuo, 2018). The hashtags were also used among ad hoc networks of users engaged in anti-racist education (formal and informal) to share resources and amplify voices from oppressed groups (Clark, 2019). In each iteration, the originators of the hashtag syllabi—all of whom were embedded in the academy, and thus working within existing academic hierarchies as either professors or students—were engaged in critical pedagogy online, praxis that Jones and Calafell (2012), following Fassett & Warren (2007) describe as recognizing and working within spaces of (relative) power in the academy.

This approach to using Twitter reflects hooks' (2010) ideal of democratic education, a form of critical public pedagogy (Giroux, 2000) whereby teachers take knowledge developed inside of the academy and work to make it available beyond the confines of the university. In this model, "teaching and learning tak[e] place constantly" (hooks, 2010, p. 41), and the educator adopts multiple modes and methods of instruction, so that they can "speak to the heart of the matter in whatever teaching setting [they] may find [themselves] in" (p. 43). Between 2014 and 2017, the "heart of the matter" was an acute demand for intersectional analysis that considered the historical and contemporary structural oppressions through which each act of white violence occurred. To engage in this analysis, Twitter users needed information on scholarship and other resources for critical reflection, which the syllabi's creators offered through their suggestions.

Hashtag syllabi as tools for culturally responsive teaching

The syllabi are also artifacts of culturally responsive teaching, a pedagogical approach that required educators possess explicit cultural knowledge in order to connect effectively connect with and teach students from diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2002). Culturally responsive teaching encourages the learner to "reject the status quo." It involves both teacher and student in ongoing interrogation of the contemporary and historic norms imposed by structural oppressions of race, gender, and class, empowering both parties with the tools to dismantle systems of oppression in their everyday lives. Reaction to the offline violence is a reflection of this practice, in that the individuals who created and contributed to the syllabi recognized that their colleagues would need non-normative literature to guide students through critical examinations of acute episodes of white violence. By using the designated hashtags, participants signal their efforts to reframe media narratives of white nationalist violence through the works of scholars of color. Together they offered their peers an

alternative path to teaching on real-time outcomes wrought by the country's unwillingness to confront implications of its racial hierarchies. In essence, these strategies invoke a transmedia storytelling approach (Jenkins, 2006) using concepts familiar to college instructors to underscore the urgency of anti-racist teaching about each incident. These practices are aligned with Ramasubramanian's (2016) assertion that ethnic minorities have used web-based technologies to refute stereotypical portrayals in U.S. mainstream media as a transmedia strategy of resistance.

The collaborative creation and digital circulation of these syllabi meets students—specifically defined here as anyone interested in self-directed learning to complicate dominant narratives about each assault—in a medium where information flow is dynamic and influenced by ongoing interaction. While black-box algorithmic influence on the flow of these artifacts cannot be ignored or underestimated, this analysis assumes a dialogical relationship between two key parties on Twitter: the motivated prosumer who took direct action to collate and disseminate selected works, and active audience members who either searched for them as part of their social and digital media use, or stumbled upon them as a consequence of following the hashtags and/or those who interacted with them.

Method

This research uses textual analysis, which demands that researchers "interrogate cultural texts to reveal traces of the dominant worldview embedded within them as well as the[ir] "silences" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 237). However, given my positionality as a Black feminist researcher situating the work of Black women and members of other subjugated groups at the center of my analysis, my approach searches for evidence of *intentionality in resisting the dominant worldview* through the construction of alternative bodies of literature. The initial question guiding my research was "how are hashtags conceptualized as part of a social-media toolkit for communicating anti-racist efforts in educational contexts?" As I reviewed the data, I reframed this question to consider the construction, circulation, and use of the hashtag syllabi as artifacts, evidence of social media assisted resistance strategies among educators online.

For this research, I purposively selected three hashtagged syllabi created in response to acts of racial violence (particularly anti-Black violence) and terror between 2014 and 2017: #FergusonSyllabus, #CharlestonSyllabus, and the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus. The first two syllabi were created through organic processes of crowdsourcing materials; the third was developed and published by a group of graduate students at the University of Virginia (UVa). As a faculty member with close proximity to Charlottesville, my familiarity with the teaching tasks associated with the third syllabus informed my decision to include it; it serves as a point of comparison for understanding how the development choices changed in the hashtag syllabi's subsequent iterations. My analysis also included a purposive sample of 162 tweets referencing each syllabus by its respective hashtag, collected via screenshots taken between 2014 and 2017.[3] The criteria for tweet selection

included tweets posted by human beings, in this case, collegiate-level instructors based in the United States whose identities could be cross-referenced with material in scholarly databases. The tweets had to use one of the corresponding hashtags, and be posted within one year of the designated syllabus's posting. Finally, for the purpose of triangulation (using multiple points of data to confirm emergent themes in the analysis), I also analyzed a corpus of eight digital media texts written by the syllabi's respective creators to examine how they conceptualized the purpose of the syllabi and their intended use.

Unpacking the hashtag syllabus

"[H]ow do you teach about a movement that is still in progress?"

Dexter Thomas, a writer covering digital culture for the *Los Angeles Times*, posed this question as part of a year-in-review story on the Ferguson Uprising. Thomas explained that #FergusonSyllabus "became a way for educators on Twitter to share books, blog posts and articles to help college students understand what was happening in Ferguson" (Thomas, 2015). The hashtag signaled a rapid-response effort for educators who desired to teach about racial justice during the zenith of the Black Lives Matter movement. Through the call-and-response use of the hashtag, contributors created a reading list of works as a starting point for teachers reacting to news media coverage of the Ferguson uprising. The syllabus took on transmedia properties as it was linked on news websites and university web pages, and referenced in news radio broadcasts.

#FergusonSyllabus. Georgetown University history professor Marcia Chatelain was the first to use the hashtag #FergusonSyllabus in her direct efforts to help an "open scholarly network" (Stewart, 2015, p. 297) make sense of the power relations at work in Michael Brown's slaying and the subsequent civil unrest. Chatelain said the realization that Ferguson-area children were supposed to start school the day after Brown was killed in August 2014 moved her to action:

> In this kind of situation, people all say, what can I do? I have few talents in a crisis, but I do know I'm pretty good at teaching, and I knew Ferguson would be a challenge for teachers: When schools opened across the country, how were they going to talk about what happened? My idea was simple, but has resonated across the country: Reach out to the educators who use Twitter. Ask them to commit to talking about Ferguson on the first day of classes. Suggest a book, an article, a film, a song, a piece of artwork, or an assignment that speaks to some aspect of Ferguson. Use the hashtag: #FergusonSyllabus. (2014)

The initial texts she tweeted out were sourced from her own course syllabi. Through this initial action, tools for anti-racist teaching were extended from a private institution of higher learning into public spaces as the suggestions were recirculated by others via re-tweets and other means of digital engagement. One user, reflecting on the syllabus in 2015, noted upending her entire course to teach about the uprising using #FergusonSyllabus.
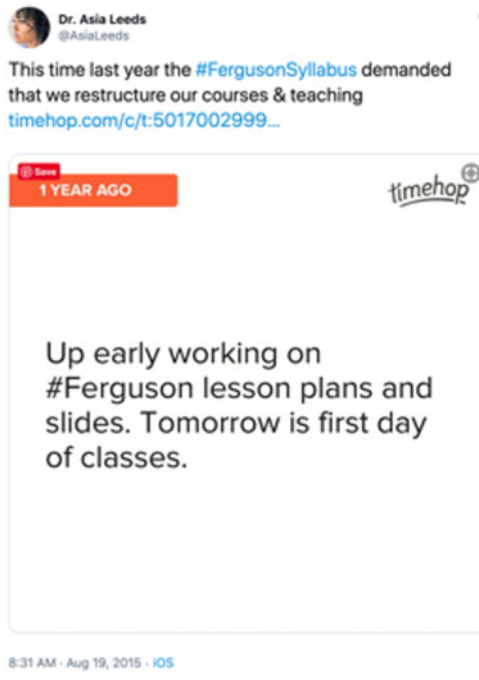
Figure 1 Prompted by a social media memory tool, educator Asia Leeds' 2015 recalls the #FergusonSyllabus' evocative direction to update courses and approaches.

[Figure 1](#) Asia Leeds' 2015 tweet recalling how #FergusonSyllabus prompted change in course construction in 2014.

In a January 2015 blog post, the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) shared the more than 8,000 tweets posted with the hashtag between 17 August 2014, and 7 January 2015 ([Summers, 2015](#)). Users who tweeted with #FergusonSyllabus, both in 2014 and in the years that followed, used it to craft approaches to teaching about racial (in)justice.

The #FergusonSyllabus itself did not initially stand alone as a cohesive document on Twitter. Instead, it existed as a networked text further amplified by its inclusion in articles and reflections published in popular-press sources including the *Chronicle for Higher Education*, *Dissent Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*. In one subsequent iteration, posted by *The Atlantic* magazine online, Chatelain wrote about syllabus over a week after the hashtag debuted. In the article, Chatelain curates an extensive, but not exhaustive list of sources, organizing them by topic and application. Topics include:

• Teaching about race and Ferguson—which features first-person narratives about grappling with race and racial identity, pre- and post-Ferguson;

- African American history/civil rights in the United States—including essays, reports, and foundational texts on issues of lynching, black identity and citizenship;
- Children's books;
- Community organizing;
- Leadership and activism;
- Educational issues;
- Film;
- Media studies and journalism;
- Music.

The syllabus, posted alongside Chatelain's column, also included other relevant, education-oriented hashtags. As she explained in an interview for her home institution, Georgetown University, the syllabus was designed for anyone who wanted to teach/learn about the context of Ferguson:

> I think some people assume that they have to be experts on the dimensions of the precipitating event or they are afraid that talking about Ferguson will unleash discord in the classroom. I think educators have to focus on the bigger picture of how these moments lead us to debate aspects of our society that can be unpleasant, but remember that it is robust and respectful conversation that will ultimately change the world. (Chatelain, 2014)

Nearly a year after she created the #FergusonSyllabus hashtag, Chatelain would also refer back to it during the Baltimore Uprising in response to the police killing Freddie Gray.

Figure 2 #FergusonSyllabus creator Marcia Chatelain uses the hashtag to direct colleagues to resources for teaching about Baltimore Uprising.

Others later referred to the syllabus to create courses on race and politics, among other topics.

Figure 3 Professor Jeannine Love refers to #FergusonSyllabus as an impetus for using situated knowledges in the construction of a course on race and politics that keeps pace with current events.

Using social media for teaching to transgress

The creation of the #FergusonSyllabus is an exercise in digital intersectionality, critical praxis executed by social media tools and grounded by Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000; Tynes, Schuschke, & Noble, 2016). First, Chatelain is a Black woman who, in the moment of the syllabus' creation, serves as representative of black women as an oppressed group in the United States. Second, she recognizes that hers is not the only perspective necessary to engage in resistance praxis informed by the experiences of the oppressed—an action evidenced by her specific call to others. Third, she makes strategic use of a hashtag related to ongoing discussion indexed by #Ferguson, which at the time was one of the most commonly used hashtags

Marcia Chatelain, Author: Franchise, Jan 2020 🇺🇸
@DrMChatelain

Teachers, please consider searching #FergusonSyllabus
to talk about the tragedy of #FreddieGray's death as
students struggle to understand.

8:43 AM · Apr 28, 2015 from Washington, DC · Twitter for iPhone

130 Retweets   **58** Likes

Figure 2 Marcia Chatelain, creator of the #FergusonSyllabus, encourages fellow educators to return to it for pedagogical resources to teach about Freddie Gray's death during the Baltimore uprising.

Jeannine Love @JeannineMLove · Aug 27, 2018

Getting ready for the first day of #POS210, Race in U.S. Politics. This course was developed in response to the #FergusonSyllabus and evolves every year based on current affairs. The goal is to look at what's happening now and contextualize it through history & lived experience.

Hi! It looks like you've quoted Martin Luther King, Jr. out of context instead of engaging with the complex reality of white supremacy in America. Would you like some help with that?

Yes   No

⚪   ↻ 2   ♡ 13   ⬆☺

Figure 3 Jeannine Love acknowledges developing a race and politics course in response to the #FergusonSyllabus, using the concept of situated knowledge to update the course for timely events.

related to racial justice discourse in the United States (Anderson & Hitlin, 2016). Chatelain invites participation and use of the syllabus as a resistance practice informed by her lived experience as a collegiate-level instructor and a witness to the impact of #BlackLivesMatter as a tool for collective action. By using the term "syllabus" as part of the hashtag, she evokes the concept's cultural resonance among scholars, who will recognize it as a collection of texts guiding learning development. Fourth, in keeping with Collins' definitions, her curation of texts by "intellectuals" (2000, p. 14) both inside and outside of academia imparts perspectives often missing from the canon of political science, history, communication, and other disciplines that interrogate the rhetorics and realities of the civil rights movements in the United States. Fifth, the digital context for this work cannot be understated, as Black cyberfeminist praxis was enacted via Twitter to meet the needs of its

Figure 4 Brian Behnken, a professor at Iowa State University, references both the #FergusonSyllabus and the #CharlestonSyllabus as he creates an #ElPasoSyllabus in response to the mass shooting targeting Mexican migrants in August 2019.

practitioners. Twitter's affordances allow the syllabus to be discovered by users in the imagined community of educators as well as individuals outside of it. Sixth and finally, the creation of the #FergusonSyllabus exemplifies digital intersectionality as critical praxis in that the hashtag syllabus concept has been replicated for use with other topics related to social justice themes.

Figure 4 Iowa State University associate professor Brian Benkhen credits creators of #FergusonSyllabus and #CharlestonSyllabus in his effort to create #ElPasoSyllabus.

#CharlestonSyllabus. As a Wednesday night Bible study at a historically black church came to a close in June 2015, a young white man, a first-time visitor to the services, opened fire on the assembly, killing nine and injuring five others. Within 24 hours of the shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., Twitter user @drdobie—who identifies as a Jewish-American educator in her Twitter bio—posted using the hashtag #CharlestonSyllabus, referring directly to Chatelain's creation of #FergusonSyllabus in her search to "put together a reading list 4 fall that 'breaks the silence'" (Dobie, 2015).

Figure 5 An early tweet using the hashtag #CharlestonSyllabus in response to the massacre of the Emmanuel Nine.

Her tweet indicates that the idea of a digital, crowdsourced, rapid-response syllabus had achieved salience as an artifact created by educators on Twitter for the purpose of fostering critically engaged public pedagogy. The users had created unto themselves a digital "web of significance" through their own online interactions and discourse (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). The replication of the "# + incident site + syllabus" formula as signifier underscores Rieder's (2012) point that a "very short message can convey complex meaning by drawing on a reservoir of shared ideas, debates, stereotypes, facts, trivia, and (...) can be often be *evoked* with a single word."

Ultimately, four contributors, including @keishablain, @InfAgit, @foureyedsoul, and @seskali, curated the syllabus as a document designed to help readers develop a working knowledge of how racial violence shaped the history of the church—at both that particular site, and as an institution.
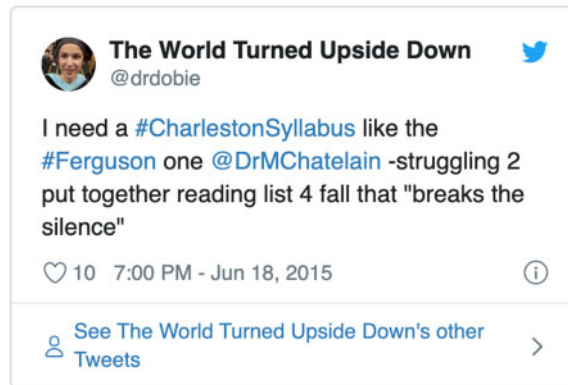
Figure 5 @drdobie's tweet calling for a #CharlestonSyllabus, referencing Chatelain's creation of the Ferguson syllabus.

Figure 6 Tweet from the African American Intellectual History Society giving context to #CharlestonSyllabus.

The African American Intellectual History Society introduced the #CharlestonSyllabus on its blog as:

> [A] list of readings that educators can use to broach conversations in the class-room about the horrendous events that unfolded in Charleston, South Carolina on the evening of June 17, 2015. These readings provide valuable information about the history of racial violence in this country and contextualize the history of race relations in South Carolina and the United States in general. They also offer insights on race, racial identities, global white supremacy and black resistance.

The language frames the readings as being intended for a set purpose and a specific audience: educators working in formal settings to articulate a brief historiography of religion and anti-Black violence, moving away from normative frames of such history and raising questions about race and racism, white supremacy, and Black resistance. But the acknowledgement of contributors from Twitter indicates that this knowledge work is not limited to formal educators, and that its creation relies on leveraging the initial contributors' social connections to promote the spread of this particular brand of social movement media.

Figure 7 #CharlestonSyllabus co-creator Kidada Williams discusses the social media's utility in networking responses among educators and the general public.

While they acknowledge that the syllabus is not an exhaustive list, the curators provided 23 topical headings indicative of potential applications of the materials, such as resources for teaching historical perspectives, place-based studies, plug-and-play course handouts, films, and books for K-12 readers. By including such an extensive range of materials, the curators reinforce the concept of hashtag syllabi as

Figure 6 The African American Intellectual History Society's tweet contextualizing the #CharlestonSyllabus.

Figure 7 Dr. Kidada E. Williams, a co-creator of the #CharlestonSyllabus, credits Twitter's utility in networking responses among educators and the public.

co-created cognitive maps offering a complex set of frames for interpreting histori-cal and contemporary events from perspectives that center the oppressed in their analysis. The inclusion of readings on Black women's contributions to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement; fiction, poetry, film and music; children's books, and digital resources, all created by Black and non-Black people of color, including women and individuals outside of the academy, gives educators from a variety of fields and at multiple levels several points of entry into counter-hegemonic discourses of domi-nation and resistance. Given its convenient and static presentation on the AAIHS blog, the #CharlestonSyllabus has the potential to serve as the foundation for a number of courses and learning contexts that prioritize perspectives from people on the margins of society.

#CharlottesvilleSyllabus. For most of the world, the demonstrations by white supremacist fascists who stormed the ground at the UVa appeared to be limited to

a two-day period of terror. In reality, several groups, representing the "whitelash" of resentment of losing white male privilege and dominance, had occupied public spaces in Charlottesville throughout the so-called "summer of hate" (Kellner, 2017). The torchlit rally on 11 August and the vehicle attack on the 12 August counter-protest marked the third and fourth such incidents in Charlottesville orchestrated by white supremacist groups in as many months. In response, the UVa Graduate Student Coalition for Liberation self-published the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus as print zine, posting a complementary document to the blogging site Medium, where it was eventually linked to Twitter. Unlike the earlier syllabi, this document was not com-piled via public crowdsourcing on Twitter. The group described the work as follows:

> The Charlottesville Syllabus seeks to explore the local historical and contempo-rary precedents for this gathering, to give it history and context, to denounce it, and to amplify the voices of community members most affected by this "alt-right" occupation of space. (2017)

Structured with eight headings covering topics including contemporary and his-torical perspective on the existence of white supremacist groups in Charlottesville, "Lost Cause" mythology and its links to the city's Confederate memorials, and the history of student-led civil rights activism at UVa, the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus is a more nuanced iteration of the hashtag syllabus, with subheadings that offer contex-tualizing information authored by its student contributors. Whereas its predeces-sors simply listed and organized suggested readings, the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus took a more active approach to informing readers on the relevance of each of its components. In one instance, the authors clarified their motivation for including works like "Why Richard Spencer Matters," an article by UVA graduate and opin-ion columnist Jamelle Bouie, paired with an Encyclopedia Virginia entry on the his-tory of the Ku Klux Klan in the Commonwealth to decode media characterizations of the white nationalists who descended on the town:

> These resources are key to contextualizing the "alt-right" and their racist motivations.
> The "alt-right" have been working to distance themselves rhetorically from old-fashioned
> racist groups like the KKK, and it is essential that we do not let them falsify the narrative of white supremacy in Charlottesville and in this country. (2017)

The syllabus included a glossary of terms, complementary multimedia features, and links to the first-person perspectives of individuals with direct ties to the Charlottesville and UVa communities.

In a reflexive epilogue to the document, two contributors note:

> In our unique position as students, researchers, and educators, we seek to pool and share knowledge. And in our position as workers and community mem-bers, we seek to build coalitions with undergraduates, fellow University

Figure 8 Daniel Soodjinda, associate professor at California State University - Stanislaus, promotes a tweet from the New York Times, which links users to the #CharlestonSyllabus.

workers, and other community members in Charlottesville, holding our University accountable to all those it serves and affects. (2017).

Their statement echoes Chatelain's intention to "call in" educators through the #FergusonSyllabus. A variant of "call out culture," a method of protesting injustice online (Nakamura, 2015), "calling in" other educators in this instance is a means of using one's relatively privileged position as a scholar with critical orientations to history, civics, and social-justice issues to provide colleagues with tools for teaching. By using social media, and signaling with a culturally resonant hashtag, the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus effort stands as the material articulation of hooks' assertion that conversation is at the heart of the democratic educator's pedagogy. Additionally, the use of social media to do this work emphasizes that "learning can take place in varied time frames," by allowing the syllabus and its constituent parts to be retrieved at any time through the hashtag's indexing function (hooks, 2003, p. 44).

Figure 8 Associate Professor Daniel Soojinda re-tweets message from the New York Times, echoing its message about the utility of the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus.

Figure 9 Professor Karla Holloway references the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus in a tweet that also mentions her colleague, Professor Mark Anthony Neal.

In the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus, the authors express a sense of self-actualization of their position of relative power in academia, and with it, a responsibility to engage in social justice education through the use of digital and social media tools. The creation and dissemination of this syllabus, work undertaken by graduate students navigating the in-between existence of student-becoming-teacher, suggests that previous engagement with earlier iterations of hashtag syllabi have helped students fulfill hooks' (1994) interpretation of the classroom as a space of possibility. When social networking platforms are reinterpreted as extensions of classroom sites, participants engage in the form of dialogue that hooks, following Freire (1970), advocates for as a means of doing democratic education. The creation of

Figure 9 Karla Holloway, professor at Duke University, references the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus and connects it to Mark Anthony Neal, a colleague at Duke.

hashtag syllabi becomes a collaborative project adopted by students who recognize that their time to serve as peer educators has come, embodying Freire's vision of di-alogical partners who share responsibility, rather than the top-down, hierarchical approach to educating for change that positions credentialed teachers as the central source of knowledge.

Implications for communication pedagogy

The unifying theme across all three syllabi is the modeling of how complex histories that center the perspectives of people on the margins can and should be taught for the purpose of helping students interpret contemporary phenomena such as state violence, racialized violence, and expressions of white nationalism. The phenomena of crowdsourcing and sharing texts in a reflexive response to these issues continues today with the proliferation of related artifacts, such as the Standing Rock Syllabus, created in response to protests of a planned oil pipeline that would traverse pro-tected indigenous lands in South Dakota, and the Trump 2.0 syllabus, a corrective to an ill-conceived attempt to replicate the hashtag syllabi's success without the in-clusion of scholars of color.

Ultimately, we can identify two pathways of engagement for the use of hashtag syllabi. First, signaled by their hashtags, the syllabi are an example of "decoding as stance," which Conley explains is "a practical method for disentangling encounters, identifying dominant modes of knowledge production, and contextualizing the roots of those systems" (2017, pp. 29–30). Through open engagement on Twitter, where thematically-bound communities of like-minded users unite in discourse about shared interests and goals, participants in the creation and dissemination of these syllabi take up the task of interdependent striving to re-interpret contempo-rary phenomenon through non-normative literatures and frameworks. The contrib-utors chose to work through their struggles out in the open, and co-construct Twitter as both classroom and faculty development workspace, allowing it to be-come a site for critical public pedagogy. The discourses presented in the lists of texts offer a complex set of frames for interpreting historical and contemporary events

from perspectives that center the oppressed in their analysis. The schema organizing the readings, films, digital resources and other media on each syllabus provide disparate networked publics on Twitter with a cohesive system for "organizing the component parts" of a self-directed course in anti-racism through which "actors make sense of and categorize their social environment and locate themselves within broader webs of ties and interactions" (Diani & McAdam, 2003, p. 5; Matejka & Kurke, 1994, p. 116).

Second, the reception of these syllabi—from the Twitter-based discourse they inspire to their amplification via other forms of digital and print media, and their memetic effect on the creation of similar bodies of knowledge—illustrate the potential effectiveness of using crowd-sourced, digitally circulated set of texts as a technique to disrupt the surreptitious practice of adopting pre-formed bodies of literature that go largely unchallenged as canonical in communication, education, history, religion, sociology, and other fields. Additionally, their ability to be sourced, retrieved and searched via hashtags on Twitter and other platforms is essential, as the hashtags themselves signal connectivity and belonging among educators who are often otherwise isolated and disconnected in the confines of their institutional homes. As @DrChadWilliams notes in the AAIHS blog post for the #CharlestonSyllabus, each of these documents—while immeasurably useful to the networked publics who access them—are more than the sum of their parts. They indicate the existence of "a community of people committed to critical thinking, truth telling, and social transformation."

Codifying praxis. Cooper (2015) challenges Black feminist thinkers to push beyond the limits that interventionism imposes on our work. Through this lens, we must consider the lasting impact wrought by the creation and use of hashtag syllabi, and how the development process has been codified as a form of critical public pedagogy in democratic education. After the immediacy of a critical response moment has passed, the syllabi exist as artifacts of the humanizing pedagogy Freire (1970, p. 69) argues must exist between would-be revolutionary leadership, represented by teachers; and the oppressed, represented by students. Collaboration, or dialogue, to paraphrase Freire, is essential to the construction of these artifacts. Motivated educators stepped into Chatelain's role, calling for texts to include via hashtag syllabi, and challenging other teachers to take time to focus on the work of providing nonnormative collections of works to help their colleagues address contemporary issues from positions on the margins. Or, like members of the Graduate Student Coalition for Liberation at UVa, they worked in concert with others in their offline communities to develop a responsive syllabus and used social media to make it available to others. The difference can be measured by comparing similar efforts introduced by individualized institutional powers, such as the "Trump 101" course/syllabus. This document, published by Chronicle of Higher Education in the fall of 2016, failed to prioritize dialogue as part of humanizing pedagogical praxis. The creators initially neglected to acknowledge the initial work of the hashtag syllabus's initial creator,

Chatelain, and omitted the perspectives of people whose voices are underprivileged or otherwise silenced in the academy.

As a final example of codifying this form of digital praxis, the syllabi provide a model for scholars working in digital spaces for translating their online efforts into forms that can be unambiguously defended within the quantifiable metrics of tenure and promotion. The #FergusonSyllabus was eventually included in "Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and Digital Humanities," an edited volume published in 2019; the #CharlestonSyllabus was published as its own edited volume in 2017.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that the creation and reception of these hashtag syllabi is illustrative of a process of critical public pedagogy conducted via social media. Each syllabus exist is a tool offering suggestions for the inclusion of texts to assist teachers doing anti-racist work as they explore power from a multiplicity of non-privileged perspectives, particularly those from scholars of color.

By taking the set of texts and/or adding to them both their own interpretation of the bodies of knowledge and their own application, Twitter users who employ these digital artifacts as part of their professional development and course design become actors in a system of engaged pedagogy that can be adapted to suit the needs of nearly any teacher and any group of students working to develop a richer historical perspective of contemporary social problems. The construction of each syllabus allows users to sample what they need, and adapt it as part of their educational strategies for culturally responsive teaching.

The creation and use of crowdsourced hashtag syllabi has been further codified as a form of public scholarship (Wilder, 2019). Candice Marie Benbow (2016) created the #LemonadeSyllabus as a primer for the visual rhetoric of singer Beyoncé's visual album, *Lemonade*. Historians N.D.B. Connolly and Keisha Blain issued the Trump Syllabus 2.0 as a corrective to "Trump 101" (Connolly & Blain, 2016). Similar works, like the #OrlandoSyllabus, also covered issues such as terrorism directed at queer people of color (Anderson, 2016).

Used with intention, these syllabi are part of a networked approach to systematically dismantling white supremacy in the academy by providing teachers with alternative bodies of scholarship. The educators involved with these syllabi work together in a spirit of democratic education, enacting a pedagogy of radical imagination, living and teaching in the world *as it could be* (Ginwright, 2008). Their work fosters the conceptual evolution of the syllabus from a closed text to an open one—allowing for multiple ways of seeing and studying social phenomena (Roeh & Cohen, 1992). They offer to one another, and to other publics linked via Twitter and other digital and social media, a vision for education that considers how race, gender, class, and other strata influence public understanding of racial violence. Their suggestions help satisfy the demand to "decolonize the syllabus," and to equip

teachers with resources for instruction. The collective of engaged readers on Twitter and connected social media platforms can use these peer-recommended examples of perspectives from the oppressed to teach about the dynamic racialized and gendered nature of power, a persistent challenge we see raised with each high-profile case of white supremacist violence such as those in Ferguson, Charleston, and Charlottesville.

Notes

1. This description is one of the colloquial terms used in local news media to describe the white supremacist march and attack on anti-fascist protestors in Charlottesville on 11 and 12 August, 2017.
2. Tools that allow a user to perform a particular function.
3. Between the initial data analysis period and the development of the final version of this article, I was forced to recreate the screenshots after losing some of the original data. The images in the article were retrieved up to five years after they were initially posted; thus some of the components, including the avatar and screen names, have changed.

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