

Learning About the Nature of Racism in America
Suggested Readings and Films for
Interracial Discussions in Proposed Order

1. **Nicholas Kristof, *When Whites Just Don't Get It*** CURRENT FACTS
6-Part Series in NY Times: Aug.30, Sept.6, Oct. 11, Nov. 15, Nov. 29, Dec. 10,
2014

Kristof's statistics and anecdotes make it impossible to walk away from the fact that African Americans and Latinos live at a significant disadvantage that is not in any way of their own making.

2. **Claude M. Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi*** BEGINNING EMPATHY
W. W. Norton, 2010

Steele takes us into the experience of being in the minority from a psychological point of view. Without accusations, he makes connections between white readers own experiences and those of people of color so readers begin to empathize what it is like to live in the skin of a minority.

3. **Debra Irving, *Waking Up White*** WHITE PRIVILEGE
Elephant Room Press, 2014

By chronicling her own dawning and then shaking experience, Irving surfaces in bold relief how the experience of white people in daily life (i.e. that presumably how people react to you is built on perception of your merit) is radically different from the experience of people of color, who are profoundly stereotyped. Their experience is radically different from those who benefit from white privilege.

4. **Eric Deggens, *How to Talk about Race*** LAYING THE GROUNDWORK
TEDxBloomington www.youtube.com

Prepares for the conversation across races by showing non-judgmentally the difference perspectives whites and blacks bring to talking about race.

5. FILMS STARTLING HISTORY
These films are older, but still startlingly accurate in depicting the experience of African-Americans. They reveal stereotypes, omissions, and distortions in American culture over the last 2 centuries about people of color.

- ***Ethnic Notions Documentary* (1986) <http://newsreel.org>**
- ***Color Adjustment* (1992) www.pbs.org**
- ***The Tale of O* (2010) www.trainingabc.com**
- ***True Colors* - ABC Primetime Live (1991) www.youtube.com**

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These films provide a history of the idea of “race” and its evolution in relation to scientific facts as well as a commentary on the recent past of oppression.

- ***Race: the Power of an Illusion*** (2003) California Newsreel <http://newsreel.org/>
- ***Slavery By Another Name*** (2012) PBS www.pbs.org

6. **Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*** INSTITUTIONALIZED
The New Press, 2012 RACISM

This book is about how mass incarceration, justified by the Nixon era “war on drugs” which continues to this day, has resulted in creating Jim Crow all over again, and institutionalized it. In addition, the first chapter is a powerful, compact, and illuminating history of racism itself.

7. **Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*** INSTITUTIONALIZED
Harvard University Press, 1993 RACISM

Continuing Michelle Alexander’s unpacking of institutionalized racism, this book details how racial segregation impacts black people, and how it was consciously created and still perpetuated by private and public policy and spending.

8. **Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration”**
Atlantic Monthly, October 2015 FEELING THE PAIN

Now readers are ready for Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *Letter to My Son*, which makes visceral for an aware and empathetic white person (at least as much as writing *can* across the white privilege barrier) what being black in America means for one’s life experience and interior life.

9. **Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*** DEEP UNDERSTANDING
Spiegel and Grau, New York 2015

This most personal account of his life, framed as an extended letter to his son, brings the full weight of the black experience in America to our consciousness.

10. **Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence***
Wiley and Sons. Hoboken, N.J 2015 SKILLFUL RESPONSES

Once you’re committed to anti-racism, these are the skills needed to talk and respond to it.