

## **Call for Applications at the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis**

Black Power and White Supremacy: The Cyclical Dialectics of Power  
Leslie Alexander and Kim D. Butler

The Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis seeks graduate student fellows for the 2025-2026 seminar, which interrogates the dialectical relationship between Black power and white supremacy over time and across the globe, considering its manifestations from the fifteenth century to the present and from Africa to Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Australia, and the Americas. We will examine how history is operationalized as people, the state, and movements constantly seek to reposition themselves and advance competing agendas. We aim to better understand how manipulations of historical memory have helped maintain the structural, systemic, and physical violence of white supremacy on an unending loop for centuries.

We propose cyclicity as a useful lens for understanding and locating patterns in the recurring waves of white supremacy and Black insurgency that have defined global racial politics over the five centuries since the African/European encounter began evolving in its modern context. The action/reaction cycles of the encounters between Black Power and white supremacy belie popular presumptions of linearity in historical narratives. While the relationship has indeed adjusted over time, it has consistently returned us to an unchanged hierarchy of power, continually building upon each cyclical iteration of itself. We invite participants to consider relinquishing conventional evolutionary orientations, and instead grapple with a cyclical notion of the past and present—one in which the actions of any single moment are deeply entangled with and simultaneously animated by that which has come before.

For this seminar, we seek projects that bring Black liberation struggles into dialogue with white supremacy's power and influence spanning from the era of European/Arab/African contact to the present moment. How has anti-Blackness manifested and reproduced itself through laws, policies, and even cultural practices designed to assert and maintain white power? And how does white supremacy respond to Black resistance, morphing and shifting to adapt to continued Black liberation struggles? Ultimately, can the cycle be broken?

We are equally concerned with the rise, development, expansion and strategies of global Black liberation struggles. How have Black resistance movements confronted and repurposed anti-Black hierarchies to advance the causes of freedom and justice? How has Black resistance anticipated and responded to inevitable waves of counterinsurgency? In what ways has Black resistance forced white supremacy to alter its strategies to cope with persistent rebellion? Is Black freedom and liberation even viable in the context of white supremacy and racial capitalism?

Exploring the political functions of history will enable us to understand that what is labeled as "presentism" is essential to Black History and history in general. In this seminar, we intend to reflect on how scholars and academics can better equip ourselves to engage with the past in ways that help us to avoid repeating it. For this reason, we are especially interested in working with scholars who use "presentist" approaches to consider the critical relationship between past and

present manifestations of anti-Blackness, and who work across and beyond the boundaries of the United States. We welcome scholars whose scope of study encompasses antecedents and/or repercussions within particular empirical examples of the relationships between Black protagonists and hegemonic responses, including scholars whose work on Black power and resistance illuminates intersections with other cyclical hierarchical systems such as caste. Our seminar will support scholars seeking to frame their work with conclusions, postscripts, afterwords, etc., that connect the present to their subject of study.

Graduate Fellows will receive a \$2,000 stipend to support their participation in the seminar.

To apply, please submit the following items to [quiyana@sas.rutgers.edu](mailto:quiyana@sas.rutgers.edu) as a single pdf file:

- a curriculum vitae
- a project abstract of about 150 words
- a two-page description of your research project and its relationship to the theme of “Black Power and White Supremacy: The Cyclical Dialectics of Power”

Applications must be received by **Friday, March 7, 2025**.