



Instructor's Manual Lesson 2

Reparations - 2

This instructors' manual has been made with the following in mind;

- **To provide the instructor with maximum flexibility to edit and adopt the material based on his/her classroom requirements and audience.**
- **The audience is between the ages of 14 -18.**
- **The lesson would be between 45 to 60 minutes long.**

Slide 2:

The Instructor should introduce students to the ways in which laws were (and are) established based on protecting those with power, the land they hold, the resources they control, and their interests more generally.

Allow students 2-3 minutes to think about this question and reconvene to take the students thoughts/answers.

Ensure that students understand that, historically and contemporarily, after the colonization of the Americas, laws were often created not for justice, but rather to necessitate the subordination of those who were already dispossessed, by criminalizing them.

Slide 3:

Students should understand that laws are not an act of nature, but that human beings make them, and they can, therefore, be manipulated. In this way, the violence of slavery can come to be justified through law (i.e. slave owners didn't do anything "illegal," so their actions were justified). Laws, then, do not necessarily reflect morality¹.

Slide 4

When slavery was finally abolished, laws that demanded the state, slave owners, and corporations who owned enslaved people or benefitted from their subjugation, provide

¹ Dogs, D. (2019, February 07). Alexandria Ocasio Cortez Discovers No Ethics Laws Apply to the President. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AljakpXAh7c>

reparations were never implemented. Enslaved people were not provided with any capital (for example, land or money).

Because enslaved people were viewed as property that could be bought and sold, when slavery was finally abolished those who owned enslaved people were compensated for the loss of their "property." This, again, illustrates that law does not reflect what is moral, and it also illustrates that enslaved people continued to be viewed as objects; their lives were still given a monetary value, and there was not consideration for the damages of enslavement (loss of culture, loss of language, violence, intergenerational trauma etc.)

The abolition of slavery has often been viewed as a "gift" to enslaved people. This ignores that they were taken from their lands, their labour exploited, and their humanity violated for the purpose of producing capital for their owners. Moreover, the state did not simply just "free" enslaved people. Abolition came through hundreds of years of slave revolts, resistances, and pressure from abolitionists.

Slide 5

Allow students 2-3 minutes to discuss how metropolitan states could be held responsible for the subjugation of the peoples in the places they colonized. What might justice look like?

Explain to students that there was an attempt by Palestinians and the Lebanese to use a Belgian law to file a law suit against Ariel Sharon. In 1982, Sharon led an Israeli invasion of Lebanon and massacred 2000-6000 Palestinians. In 2001, the survivors of this massacre attempted to use a Belgian law that could prosecute foreigners for offenses committed abroad. The U.S. government intervened, however, and demanded that the Belgian government halt the process or the NATO headquarters would be moved out of Belgium. Belgium changed the laws so that the plaintiff must have lived in Belgium for at least three years in order to utilize this law. Though this case ended prematurely, it demonstrates how international law can be used to mete out justice.

Slide 6

Introduce students to "reparations." Keep in mind that some students might not have heard of the idea of reparations before. Reparations for enslavement become particularly important because colonial states, institutions and families benefitted from enslavement (most obviously through accumulating capital from free black labour), and because the psychological, social, and economic effects of enslavement continue until the present day. This is why it is important for there to be both **material** and **immaterial reparations**.

Slide 7

Provide students with examples of how material reparations can be enacted, and provide some concrete examples of states or institutions that have provided material reparations.

Slide 8

Provide students with examples of immaterial reparations. These reparations can come through institutional practices and be combined with material reparations. Furthermore,

they need not be mutually exclusive (such as providing material reparations that can then fund immaterial reparations such as educational projects). Such acts would not only redistribute financial resources for the descendants of enslaved peoples, but it would also provide means for educating and imagining different ways of structuring society that are not based on colonial, Eurocentric, or white institutions.

Slide 9

Though laws are made by those in power (and that power often rests in the hands of colonial states, or those who inherited states built off slave labour and Indigenous land and resources), law can still be created to ensure that reparations are paid to subjugated communities. Go through some examples of how laws have been enacted to attempt to repair historical injustices.

Slide 10

Summarize this lesson with a 2-3 minute discussion about the ways in which laws can, or cannot, address historical injustices through reparations. Present-day laws do not necessarily reflect what is moral.

It is also important that students understand that laws are enacted by states/institutions that are guilty of wrongdoing, which means that the power to enact laws remains in the hands of those who are/were oppressors.

Culminating Activity for Lesson 1.

The instructor may provide reading materials on reparations and apologies such as [20 Questions and Answers on Reparations for Colonialism](#) (Chapters 13, 16, and 17) and how they connect to the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and enslavement.

Case 1 Research Project:

Students should research one law that has been enacted that has positively dealt with the historical injustices of slavery. How does this law facilitate the redistribution of power?

Case 2 Critical Thinking:

Students should explore how laws can, or cannot, provide substantive changes for previously enslaved populations/communities. In what ways can laws tackle historical injustices? Can laws ever be enough?

Discussion Activities Suggestions (Can be applied to any discussion questions in the lesson):

- 1. Think-pair-share:** Students think about the question themselves and develop a response, they pair with a partner, and finally share their ideas with their partner.

2. **Small Groups:** Students get into groups of four and discuss the issue the groups are then switched and two students from one group are moved to another group to discuss the new questions or expand on the previous questions.
3. ***Snowball:** Two student discuss the question and join with another two students to discuss their ideas in a group of four. Then the group of four joins another group of four to form a group of eight and this continues until a whole class discussion is formed.
4. **Teach-ok:** Students pair up and reteach main concepts to the class after the teacher has given a brief introduction to the topic.