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**IN REVIEW:  
DECOLONISING  
BRISTOL  
UNIVERSITY**



# EDITOR'S NOTE

Decolonising the curriculum, and our institution as a whole, is an essential part of the University of Bristol's civic responsibility. It is an ongoing process of learning and unlearning which requires us, as students, educators or members of the university to critically reflect on and interrogate how colonialism and its legacies are embedded within the academy's praxis and hierarchies. This zine archives recent decolonising efforts across a number of schools and departments within the University of Bristol. It provides examples, frameworks and steps that educators and students have taken – or could take to work towards a 'decolonised curriculum' – across a range of curricula.

The process of decolonisation is not just concerned with curricula but rather seeks to dismantle and overturn the hegemonic narratives presented to us within educational institutions. I am particularly interested in implementing alternative, decolonial methods of knowledge sharing and learning which encourage critical thinking and creativity. In bringing together and reflecting on current decolonising efforts, this zine is an opportunity for educators and scholars to reflect on their own practises, disciplines and decolonial work. For an institution to fully embody a mandate ensuring the delivery of an education that benefits all equally, it is crucial that decolonisation is embedded within our practises.

Anti-racist activists and scholars have worked for centuries, and continue to work, both within and outside of institutions, to challenge racist systems, policies, and practices. Today, Gurminder Bhabra and others present a radical argument for decolonising universities, the “home of the coloniser, in the heart of establishment”, including greater attention to anti-racist practice within universities. The curation and production of this zine has been heavily informed by the efforts of scholars, activists and students who have come before me. My hope is that this zine has provided space for an archival of collective decolonial action within the University of Bristol and hope for reimagining a liberated way of learning.

EVELYN MILLER

**IN REVIEW: DECOLONISING BRISTOL UNIVERSITY**

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02

EDITOR'S NOTE

*Zine contents are organised based on the main outcomes or aims of decolonising action into three themes: Re-structuring, Evaluating, and Resourcing*

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# RE-STRUCTURING



RE-STRUCTURING  
RE-STRUCTURING  
RE-STRUCTURING





# **BRISTOL MEDICAL SCHOOL**

## CASE STUDY

### **WORK SO FAR...**

- Conducted two staff surveys on attitudes and barriers towards decolonisation in the medical school. The findings from these are being written up for publication.
- Developed a website and framework for decolonisation within the Medical School. The framework aims to help staff reflect on their module content and is currently being piloted.
- Compiled a 'Decolonise Bristol Medical School' Resource list
- Piloting the framework: Share this with people in the decolonising mailing list to see how these ideas are working etc.

### **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE...**

- Expansion of Deputy Education Director role?
- Encourage start of decolonisation reflections with school workshops, mapping against programme simplification; structure of the academic year changes ; authentic assessment strategy
- Embed within the EDI Agenda and strategic vision to ensure longevity
- Organising and attending conferences or talks with guest speakers related to 'decolonisation'
- Working closely with student groups such as BME Medics, LGBTQ+ Health, Muslim Medics and the Student EDI Form
- Continuing research alongside practical decolonisation steps.

WITH THANKS TO JOSEPH  
HARTLAND & GIBRAN HEMANI

*“We’ve often grappled with what decolonisation should look like for medicine. A lot of the literature on decolonisation comes from the humanities, where a large emphasis is on whose ideas are promoted (i.e. who is the curriculum by).*

*However, we noted that the problems manifested by coloniality in the Medical School curriculums are framed around adverse consequences to health inequalities in patients / public health. In the paper, “Decolonizing” Curriculum and Pedagogy: A Comparative Review Across Disciplines and Global Higher Education Contexts, Shahjahan et al. (2021) discuss that applied subjects often put more emphasis on who the curriculum is for, and this distinction has resonated somewhat amongst educators in the Medical School.”*

*“We opted to go down the route of educators leading the decolonisation process of their own work, rather than enlisting external stakeholders such as students themselves to lead the process. Students can and should certainly be involved in this process. However, we try to place an emphasis on understanding the causes of bias – following literature which often finds a distinction between decolonisation and EDI based on decolonisation focusing on the causes of bias in order to effectively remedy them. We felt it was important that lecturers took ownership of the problems in the curriculums they led (and often which they inherited from senior colleagues), and that they would be best place to understand with expertise the underlying causes of bias that would often be subject-specific.”*

### **Reflections from Gibran Hemani**

BILT CATALYST FUNDED PROJECT



# IN CONVERSATION WITH FOLUKE ADEBISI

**Dr Foluke Ifejola Adebisi is an Associate Professor at the Law School, University of Bristol. Her scholarship focuses mainly on the relationship between theories of decolonisation and how they do and can interact with legal knowledge. Thus, her scholarly work is concerned with what happens at the intersection of legal education, law, society, and a history of changing ideas of what it means to be human.**

---

**Evelyn:** So, starting with the quote from Ashwarni Sharma, “there’s been a long history of the policing of what counts as legitimate knowledge, especially in terms of black folks and the marginalisation of certain types of thinking and intellectual work”. How do you feel that understandings of what legitimate knowledge is have changed over time?

**Foluke:** Hmm. Big question. I’m not entirely sure that it has changed. I think in a certain way, the question is who is determining what counts as legitimate knowledge and how has that group of people changed?

And I think when we talk about institutions that are given, let’s say, the freedom or licence to label certain knowledge as legitimate, we’re often talking about the University. In what Ramon Grosfoguel calls the Westernised University, we are referring to universities that are particular sort of places, particular locations in particular forms, and people who have been sort of granted access into those universities.

Who has access to these spaces has changed over time, giving the impression that what looks like legitimate knowledge has changed although, we should not be so quick to congratulate ourselves. This change has largely been a basic question of access whereas whose knowledge is legitimised, or has to be justified, largely remains the same. For example: When submitting journal articles for peer review, during the REF [1] process, there’s always an increased level of justification needed for racialised or

marginal knowledges, but sort of noting that the counterpoint to that is to think about places.

Institutions of knowledge that are outside of the university and where what counts as legitimate knowledge has never been questioned, and I often suggest that universities – or people who are within universities – should be a little bit more humble about our position in the ecosystem or ecology of knowledge.



**Evelyn:** Wow. Definitely. Thank you for that. The justifications often involved for racialised knowledge during the REF process of journal articles is something we do not discuss enough within universities. To break this question down further, could you try to clarify what we really mean when we are talking about legitimate knowledge?

**Foluke:** I have been reflecting on this for a while. I feel that within the University, we always try and define decolonisation narrowly, in relation to the curriculum. As a result, we often don't talk about where research fits in. As we've already said, research is where the knowledge that we put into the curriculum comes from.

When you think about the history of decolonisation itself as a political movement, which is, you know, where the word and the movement originate from, they respond to the political imposition with epistemic tools.

Historically, processes of racialisation and creating hierarchies of human beings have led to dispossession and environmental devastation, so for me, trying to appreciate that or coming to an initial understanding of all of that. I think they're two things that were happening when I was much, much, much younger.

During the 1980s, you had the anti-global, anti-apartheid movement where it is important to note two things. The formal institution of apartheid began in 1948, but there had been sort of racial demarcations and institutionalised racial segregation in what is known as South Africa way before 1948, and we didn't have an anti-apartheid global uprising and movement reaching that momentum until the 80s. The second thing to note is that a lot of the anti-apartheid organisations outside of South Africa, and some of them within South Africa, disbanded in 1994 because it was, you know, Nelson Mandela's now president. Everything is fine. I think that this speaks to quite a lot of other movements where people become almost accepting of cosmetic change rather than fundamental, institutional change.




Around the same time, so also in the 80s, I read *Roots* by Alex Haley, both the old one and the new one, and Chinua Achebe's novels about the Mao Uprising. Both of these novels led me to question where do these processes of racialisation, of human beings being dehumanised in this way, begin and end? Does it end with the legalised end of racialized enslavement? Can it?

As Stuart Hall says, when we're talking about the post-colonial, we're not talking about the end of one regime and the other we're talking about how that regime continues and how it metamorphoses, changes or evolves. And so, the post-colonial is not the end, but the evolution of colonial worlds. James Baldwin also describes it really nicely when he says that "the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do."<sup>[2]</sup>

**Evelyn:** That was really interesting. Thank you for sharing that and for all the historical depth and detail within your response. It is important to remind ourselves of these histories of resistance, especially when we are doing this type of work within university spaces, where we can lose sight of the wider political picture of what 'decolonising' means. In consideration of everything you've just said about the presence of colonialism and how its regimes metamorphose across time and space, I'd like to specifically ask you about your work. How do you navigate being an academic working within a colonial institution?

**Foluke:** It's a constant struggle, right, because and it's kind of like you said, there are resource problems, time constrictions and there's only one of you. You also have to eat and pay rent, mortgage or the bills. I went to buy eggs today and it was ridiculous. I had to get there first thing in the morning as they were putting the eggs out on the shelves to be able to get any! As academics, we often try to compartmentalise ourselves. So now I'm being academic and now I'm being the person who's trying to buy eggs but that still means I am one person. This speaks to the tension between the small picture and the big picture – we need to try to balance those two out and knowing that we get small wins.

You climb a mountain step-by-step but the top of it may not be something we see in this generation, especially with the combined forces of racial injustice, extreme poverty and environmental devastation. We have to make the choice to imagine those worlds



and hope that what we're doing brings us to them in some way. That idea is what keeps me going.

We all need to survive in this world, and we need to find ways to do that and that's why I think it's important for us to keep a bigger picture in front of us. We have to put into context that within decolonising movements, what we are fighting for is survival and humanity. And that's what we have been fighting for! since 1492, the inauguration of Coloniality as Anibal Quijano would put it.

**Evelyn:** That's brilliant. We must continue to imagine liberated futures and remember that processes of decolonisation are part of wider political and social justice within our worlds, not merely the curriculum or an institution. Thinking about working towards these liberated futures, I would like to bring this conversation back to the quote we started with before we end. How do you envisage resistance to the policing of what counts as legitimate knowledge within the academy?

**Foluke:** If we're trying to define decolonisation itself, I define it as context dependent. We resist what we're experiencing. So, the way in which resistance to the colonial structure will happen in settler colonies, is always different from how it will happen, for example, in the UK, in the heart of empire.

If we think about this within the university structure, say you absolutely refuse to engage with the REF, the consequence of that would be maybe no career progression and that's something we need to think about and go okay if that's the case, then that should be something we acknowledge and accept as part of our refusal, but also part of that refusal is to not do it alone. The more people who refuse, the more important or significant that refusal can become although there are consequences of refusal. We have to consider if we can bear such consequences or if the potential gains are worth the cost. We have to choose when to resist and refuse in ways that still enable us to survive.

**Evelyn:** Thank you so much for those final thoughts, Foluke. This has been a really important dialogue for me and I am sure, it will be for others to read.

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[1] The REF is a process of review, carried out by panels for academic journal articles. Panels are usually made up of senior academics, international members, and research users.

[2] James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948-1985*

# UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

## BUSINESS SCHOOL

### CASE STUDY

#### WORK SO FAR...

The Business School has taken membership of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), gaining access to knowledge exchange and training related to accreditation, including Assurance of Learning (AoL). They received a £2770 grant from the Decolonising the Curriculum Catalytic Fund to conduct a systematic literature review on the current state of decolonising thinking and practice to inform the implementation of Assurance of Learning solutions.



The Business School's plan of action related to decolonising its curriculum and practices includes establishing a foundation for the Assurance of Learning decolonising project and disseminating findings or results through the Chartered Association of Business Schools, AACSB, and the British Academy of Management. A plan of action is broken down into three stages below.



## PLAN OF ACTION

1

*Deploy the AACSB Assurance of Learning (AoL) framework to review the curriculum at programme and unit level and introduce a systematic process of continuous improvement.*

2

*Use AoL as a tool for embedding values into the curriculum as learning outcomes, evaluating their achievement through periodic measurement (assessment), and taking corrective action through quality assurance processes.*

3

*Establish an explicit feedback loop between decolonising and the learning outcomes: one that is evidence-based and orientated towards continuous improvement.*

WITH THANKS TO DR. PALIE  
SMART



# EVALUATING



EVALUATING  
EVALUATING  
EVALUATING



# BRISTOL DENTAL SCHOOL

## CASE STUDY

The Dental School has recently begun to take steps towards decolonising their practices and curriculum. The first steps they are taking include:

- 1** *Reviewing students' experiences of racism and racist bullying*
- 2** *Understanding the demographic of Bristol Dental School students*
- 3** *Increasing awareness of decolonising within the student body*
- 4** *Decreasing the attainment gap between ethnic minority students and white students*

To begin working on the above, a whole school survey investigating experiences of race, ethnicity and understandings of decolonising. The survey reported the following issues within the Dental School:

- **Belonging** - 19% of non-white students felt little or no sense of belonging versus 0% of white students
- **Teaching materials** - Not representative of all ethnicities or genders
- **Learning Environment:** Not representative. All white Senior Leadership.

- Reported racism from School and Trust staff
- Lack of psychological safety: Current and former students as well as staff have been in touch to share experiences of racism and Islamophobia at the Dental School – points to systemic deep rooted issue.

In response to the findings of the survey, Bristol Dental School's next steps include developing a diverse set of resources for diagnostic knowledge; running an anti-racism subcommittee within the school and annual program reviews.

In April 2023, Bristol Dental School was successful in receiving funding from University of Bristol Decolonising the Curriculum Catalyst Fund to host 3 town hall meetings facilitated by Lara Lalemi, Founder and CEO of Creative Tuition, and expert in decolonising the curriculum.

The purpose of these three town hall meetings was to provide a space where students and staff could come together to explore what we understand about decolonisation and how we can take decolonisation work and implement changes to the dental curriculum.

The first town hall meeting was held on 24th May, and focused on the topic of 'what is decolonisation?'. There we explored the decolonisation movement and the ongoing social, political, historical, cultural and academic legacies of colonialism and its implications for the discipline of dentistry. We were invited to explore our positionality in relation to this debate and reflect upon our power and privilege through a series of guided reflective questions.



BILT CATALYST FUNDED PROJECT

WITH THANKS TO DR PATRICIA  
NEVILLE & DR NILU AHMED.

# BRISTOL BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

## CASE STUDY

So far, there have been three streams of projects which are taking steps towards decolonising Bristol's Biomedical Sciences. Academics from Bristol's three Biomedical schools have been working together on these.

### UNIT REVIEWS

Academics are working with undergraduate students to review units after undertaking training from Creative Tuition, a conscientious and inclusive organisation that centres the experiences of marginalised students.

### EVALUATIVE REPORT

Biomedical Sciences scholars produced a report which detailed unit review outcomes and reflections. It also brought together patterns in students' experiences across the department. The main findings reported that:

- Knowledge and literature from the Global North dominated units and was taught as being 'central' to understandings
- Indigenous knowledge generally not taught with the same level of value or time as other forms of knowledge
- Unit themes related to race, ethnicity or diversity were often stereotypical.

BILT CATALYST FUNDED PROJECT

# THE 3R'S FRAMEWORK

Together, the group has developed the '3Rs framework' following surveys and focus groups with small groups of students who were remunerated for their time. The framework encourages staff to review their units, considering the below 3Rs.

## REDISCOVERY

Alternative canons of knowledge

## REPRESENTATION

Towards a more comprehensive understanding in scientists and data sets

## READINESS

Students as agents of change, ready to undertake change.



LARA LALEMI IN CONVERSATION WITH BRISTOL'S BIOMEDICAL STUDENTS

WITH THANKS TO ZAFAR  
BASHIR, AMES MOSLEY, ALICE  
ROBSON & BRONWEN BURTON

# EMBEDDING WELLBEING IN DECOLONIAL MOVEMENTS

PATTY MIRANDA & EVELYN MILLER

There have been calls within and beyond the University of Bristol to 'decolonise the curriculum'. Decolonisation is defined as 'an active process of critical scrutiny of our curricula and teaching practices aimed at understanding this legacy and beginning the work of dismantling it.' Ongoing, collective decolonial action at the University of Bristol is tackling the colonial legacies which affect the experiences and wellbeing of students or staff.

In this blog, we identify how decolonial efforts in universities have largely focused on fragmented or piecemeal remedies rather than seeking to overturn the hegemonic, colonial hierarchies, and legacies which inform our existence as an institution and academic community. Thus, we propose that the 'active process' of decolonisation requires educators, students, and staff to meaningfully immerse ourselves – individually and collectively – within a larger political project of shifting and transforming current colonial and imperialist practices. This also includes ending extractive and transactional relationships in academia that are fuelling burnouts and breakdowns, while actively silencing our collective pleas for rest, care, and support.

C. Wright Mills famously defined the sociological imagination as demanding of 'the vivid awareness of the relationship between personal experience and the wider society.' Put simply, personal troubles should inherently be considered as public issues. This blog is a stretching and exercising of our sociological imaginations as two University of Bristol students and women of colour of Filipino and British-South Asian heritage. The authoring of this blog has created and held space for a sisterhood and restorative dialogue between us. This space has enabled us to engage with and reflect on the social, emotional, and racialised

aspects of decolonial action which can remain unaddressed or be stigmatised within our various communities. Drawing from this, this blog examines the extractive nature of decolonial work and asks what is the emotional burden or wellbeing cost for those at the forefront of decolonial action? Further, we assert that embedding collective care and restorative wellbeing is a neglected, yet necessary part of decolonisation processes.

In the context of decolonial movements in academia, racialised people are frequently burdened with the 'heavy lifting' of decolonial action without financial remuneration, due recognition, or adequate support for their physical and mental wellbeing. The so-called 'personal troubles' of racialised people leading decolonial action relates to broader public problems. There is a general intolerance to efforts to improve equality and diversity, particularly during times of economic crises or in the face of urgent existential threats within wider society. This intolerance can be mobilised within society to question and threaten the intellect, livelihood, wellbeing and in many cases, lives, of those at the frontlines of social action. Given these, we propose that promoting and embedding wellbeing is a critical, yet often neglected, aspect of decolonial action. Decolonisation efforts will fail, and wellbeing outcomes will continue to plummet within the University (see Wellbeing survey 2021 findings), if there are no equitable programs and environments informed by restorative justice, care, and support.

According to Adebisi, decolonisation 'asks for the structure of knowledge to be opened to resurrect what has been marginalised, to re-centre the world, such that the centre is not the ideological West, but all of us.' Thus, decolonial and wellbeing movements must seek to reimagine the world as free from 'interlocking systems of oppression', such as heteropatriarchy, racism, white supremacy, ableism, and capitalism. Future efforts should thus take a panoptic view when examining racialised inequalities to ensure we move beyond rhetoric, theory and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies to concrete action and sustainable change for our students and staff of colour.



# BRISTOL SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY, POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

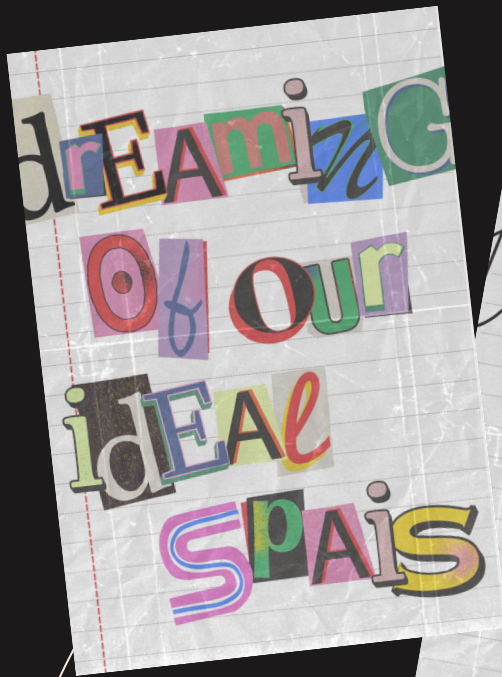
## CASE STUDY

Following renewed and intensified global demands for universities to decolonise, students within Bristol's School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies (SPAIS) took steps to start their own decolonial process during the summer of 2020. The student working group, DecolSPAIS, consisted of predominantly student volunteers, co-ordinated by Lauren Hutfield and Elspeth Van Veeran. Their activities included attending the SPAIS staff-student 'Decolonising the Curriculum' roundtable in 2021 to co-present DecolSPAIS's reports, aims and progress: Decolonising the SPAIS Curriculum: Evaluating Mandatory Units (September 2020) and Decolonising the SPAIS Curriculum 2021: Re-Evaluating Mandatory Units (October 2021).

The reports consist of an assessment of SPAIS' mandatory undergraduate and postgraduate units, analysing the diversity of essential readings, lectures and seminars content. Further, they examine the extent to which colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonialism and intersecting topics formed elements of module content. As part of this work, Nicole Jean-Louis authored a paper reimagining and designing our own 'decolonised' curriculum and Lauren Hutfield co-ordinated an extra-curricular reading group for staff and students alike from all levels of study.



The working group is now inactive since its key players have left the University, directed their focus on other projects or had to withdraw for personal reasons. Decolonising the SPAIS curriculum is an ongoing process of learning and unlearning for everyone which can be part of our everyday university life. Whilst the reports have their limitations, they have provided a framework for acknowledging and challenging the colonial legacies that continue to inform the SPAIS curriculum.



WITH THANKS TO LAUREN  
HUTFIELD, NICOLE JEAN-LOUIS  
AND ELSPETH VAN VEERAN

# BRISTOL LIBRARY SERVICES

## CASE STUDY

Library Services have run a number of decolonising projects which include publishing a zine exploring decolonising Library Services. They are also running some student workshops, *Decolonising research: what is it and how can I do it?* The workshops aim to:

- Deepen students' understanding of decolonisation
- Learn how non-Western scholarship is marginalised
- Share practices and tools to help decolonise their research and work.



**The content of the workshops includes the following:**

- Discussion of decolonisation in theory, supported by key resources
- Examination of structural barriers to using non-Western scholarship
- Explanation of various ways to access and use non-Western scholarship
- Point toward further sources of help.

# LIBRARIES ARE NOT NEUTRAL: A POCKET SIZED GUIDE TO LIBRARIES AND THEIR COLONIAL LEGACY

ZINE PRODUCED BY ROSIE CROW



You can view an e-copy, download a foldable version for print distribution or access the full reference list at:



## Part 1: Libraries in Colonialism

Libraries, as extensions of educational facilities, are "instruments of enlightenment, hoping to spread knowledge and culture broadly to the people." (Biven-Tatums, 2012, quoted in Ettarh, 2018).

While spreading "knowledge and culture" may seem a noble aim, it's crucial we recognise that a facet of colonialism was to dismantle local knowledge, suppressing the knowledge, language and traditions of the cultures it encountered in order to replace them. Libraries played a role in this.

(Mutonga and Okune, 2022).

Colonialism was so detrimental to cultures with oral traditions (CILIP London, 2020), that the worship of the written word can be seen as a characteristic of white supremacy. (Chiu, Ettarh and Ferretti, 2021 p.62).

Image: CO 1069-2-1, The National Archives UK, part of Africa Through a Lens, via Flickr

## Part 2: Colonial Heirlooms in Libraries

The ways we store and define knowledge - where we place value and to whom we give authority, the languages that are chosen for publication, the formats we deem worthy of holding in our collections, how we catalogue our resources - can be seen as "colonial heirlooms"

(Towson, 2021, p.2).

Instead of respecting that different knowledge systems may judge quality using different factors, we tend to rely on "traditional" markers of quality like peer review or citation formats to decide on the academic rigour of research:

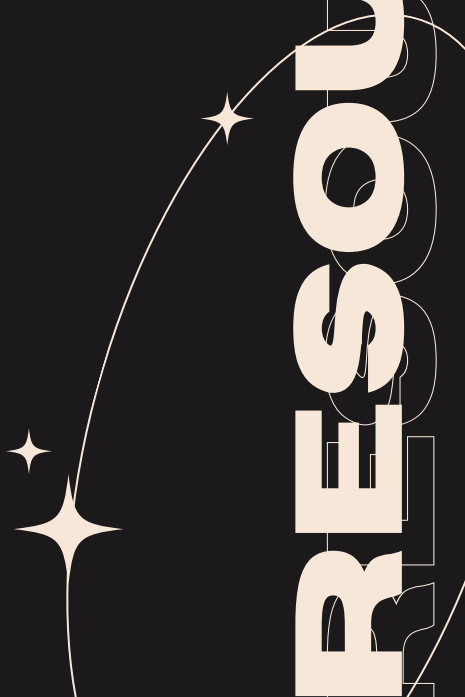
"Confronted with academic journals from countries of the [G]lobal South that they are not familiar with, librarians... often assume that if these quality markers are absent or not recognisable, then the journals are of lesser or even questionable quality. This assumption is wrong, but it continues today."

(An, quoted in Mbao Nkoudou, 2020, p.30)

Image: A woman was trying to convince a man, Thomas Hawk, CC BY-NC 2.0, via Flickr

WITH THANKS TO DAMIEN MCMANUS, SARAH BRAIN, LEWIS COYNE & ROSIE CROW

# RESOURCING



RESOURCING  
RESOURCING  
RESOURCING



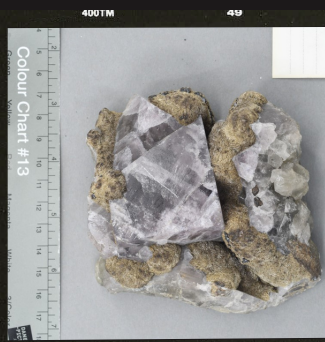
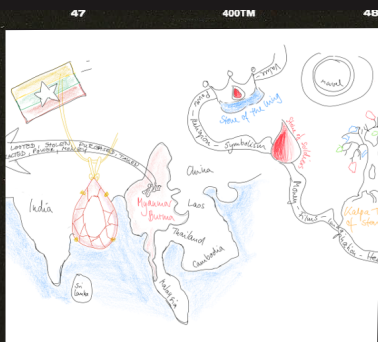
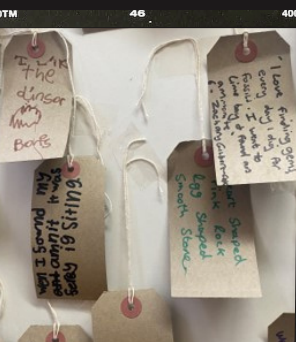
# BRISTOL SCHOOL OF EARTH SCIENCES

## CASE STUDY



*"It is recognised that practice and discipline of geology are strongly linked to past and present colonialism. This includes the study and mapping of foreign lands with colonial and Eurocentric approaches, the economic exploitation and extraction of natural resources overseas or the lack of indigenous knowledge in research publications and archives. There is a lack of diversity across the geoscience sector. Closer to home, the School of Earth Sciences is based in the Wills Memorial Building, which was built from wealth made on tobacco plantations where enslaved labour made up the majority of the workforce."*

Reflections from Claudia Hildebrandt



Bristol School of Earth Sciences are currently working on two projects: **Global Heritage, Local History** and **How to ethically decolonise rock and mineral collections?** Find details of both on the following page.



UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL  
PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH FUND

## **GLOBAL HERITAGE, LOCAL HISTORY**

This project aims to bring global and Bristol-based communities together via an online platform to co-develop new storylines linked to Bristol's global geological collection exploring themes like climate change and social justice, management of natural resources or changes in biodiversity and ecological crisis.

## **HOW TO ETHICALLY DECOLONISE ROCK AND MINERAL COLLECTIONS?**

The aim of this project is to establish an interdisciplinary network of people to explore how the naming, descriptions and scientific classifications of rocks, minerals and fossils have been and are limiting our understanding of these collections in the 21st century.

- Looking to co-create new narratives with source communities and remove curatorial, structural barriers.
- Focus on minerals and gemstones from Myanmar, Sri Lanka and India. The objective is to explore 'categories of knowledge' that are not represented in our collection database and archive, and hence are not accessible for teaching.
- Working with a mix of Student Union groups and Bristol based source communities (e.g. Dhek Bhal) Online - links to museums and communities in the Myanmar, Sri Lanka and India.
- Bristol Culture (Bristol Museum), GCG, poet Alyson Hallett, Diverse Artists Network.

BRIGSTOW SEEDCORN FUND

WITH THANKS TO CLAUDIA  
HILDEBRANDT



# BRISTOL HISTORY DEPARTMENT

## CASE STUDY

The Royal Historical Society 2018 report on 'Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History' found that:

- 1** *Recent research in Black history, histories of migration and ethnicity, and histories of race, imperialism and decolonisation has transformed our knowledge and understanding of the British, European and global past.*
- 2** *Against this backdrop of intellectual change, the racial and ethnic profile of students and staff in UK university history departments has remained overwhelmingly White.*
- 3** *The taught curriculum for secondary school pupils and university undergraduate and postgraduate students likewise fails to fully incorporate the new, diverse histories produced by UK and international researchers.*

In response to the above, Bristol's History department has replaced a Global History unit with a choice of 3 units that look at global history methodologies in relation to Asia, Africa, or Americas. They are also running a series of workshops focused on developing a programme of events for 23/24 and on creating resources for staff and students, particularly around independent research

## WORKSHOP AIMS



- Building on a longstanding commitment to teaching a diverse range of histories (period, place, approach)
- Growing in capacity to teach Asian and African histories
- Ensuring units are more manageable for staff and students, and allow a deeper engagement.
- Pleasingly, fairly equal consideration of student voice.


## WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

*"Brilliant students who stressed need for stories of agency, everyday lives"*

*"Important of guidance on language: this is about sharing and enacting best practice"*

*"Some fantastic ideas for events and resources, pushing us as staff to think more creatively"*

*"Hugely useful in thinking about practical aspects: when and how to embed in curriculum"*



BILT CATALYST FUNDED PROJECT



WITH THANKS TO DR. JAMES THOMPSON

# UNIVERSAL CITY

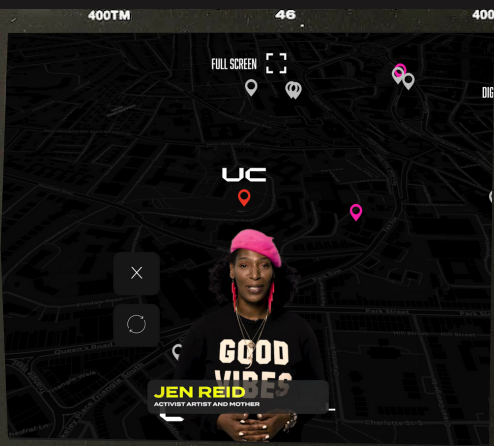
## PARTNERSHIP

Together with CARGO, a collective of artists, poets and filmmakers, The University of Bristol has launched a digital platform aimed at connecting new students and staff with the diversity of the city of Bristol. The UniversalCity platform provides staff and students the opportunity to virtually explore the city via an interactive map. The map showcases a diverse range of locally-owned businesses, community organisations and explores the heritage and history of key points of interest around the city.

# WELCOME TO BRISTOL

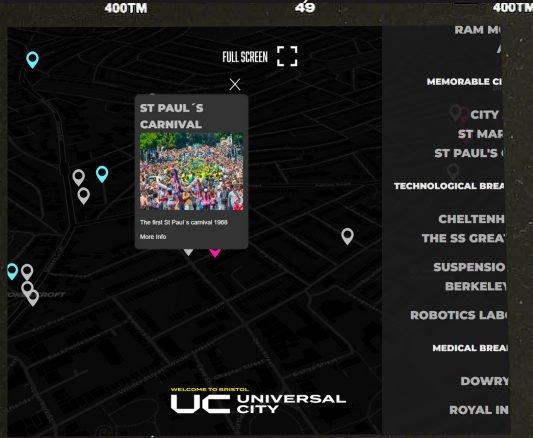
The UniversalCity initiative is part of the University's civic work to critically engage with the history and diversity of the university and the city while strengthening its relationship with Bristol's local communities. The interactive map features tours from Bristol-based activists, creatives and students.





The aim of the platform is to digitally and safely engage with it's newly inducted students, throwing light upon Bristol's chequered past and its legacy, as well as celebrating the variety of voices in contemporary Bristol. The platform was launched with a live online broadcast that was streamed to students and faculty featuring a series of mini documentary's poetry and live music. Once launched the website [universalcity.co.uk](http://universalcity.co.uk) featured a radically different interactive map of Bristol, provided practical incentives for individuals to connect with Bristol beyond the campus bubble.

Charles Golding, CARGO Co-Founder



# BRISTOL VETERINARY SCHOOL

## CASE STUDY

Bristol's Veterinary School has collated a resource for staff to integrate decolonial content into their curriculum based on surveys with students. Some of the key findings from their resources are detailed below.

### CHECKLIST

- Before creating teaching material about a new topic, have you actively researched how colonialism and unjust historical events have affected your field of research, both in the short and long term? How can the new lecture material be connected to colonialism?
- Have you examined how global disparities influence how information is acquired, produced, and disseminated, both academically and by the media, on the topics you are teaching? How and why is the information you are presenting biased?
- Are you double-checking that no triggering language is used in your lectures and that you are not subconsciously placing the blame on communities in the Global South/low- and middle-income countries? There is a lot of work that needs to be done/issued that are rooted in the Global North.
- Have you covered in depth the work of indigenous community-based organisations and indigenous academic colleagues, as well as highlighted the work they had done prior the intervention of international organisations? Have you been making an effort to educate yourself about climate justice and intersectionalism and how they may be incorporated into your work?
- Are you willing to listen to your students and their feedback with an open mind, especially those from minority groups, and value their voices? Are you open to change your opinion and re-learn concepts that you thought were the basics of your field of research?
- **HAVE YOU BEEN ACTIVE?** Are you actively getting informed about current issues raised by minorities in your field and how you can help? Change requires effort and action!

# SNAPSHOT OF RESOURCES

400TM

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400TM

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## DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM: A CHECKLIST FOR ALL TEACHING STAFF

This poster was created by the Bristol Veterinary School of the University of Bristol, as part of the ongoing efforts to improve and update the MSc Global Wildlife Health and Conservation curriculum.

The author is available for suggestions on the next steps to take to continue this journey!

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- ✓ Before creating teaching material about a new topic, have you actively researched *how colonialism and unjust historical events have affected your field of research*, both in the short and long term? How can the new lecture material be connected to colonialism?
- ✓ Have you examined *how global disparities influence how information is acquired, produced, and disseminated*, both academically and by the media, on the topics you are teaching? How and why is the information you are presenting biased?
- ✓ Are you double-checking that *no triggering language is used in your lectures and that you are not subconsciously placing the blame on communities in the Global South/low- and middle-income countries?* There is a lot of work that needs to be done/issued that are rooted in the Global North.
- ✓ Have you covered in depth the work of *indigenous community-based organisations* and indigenous academic colleagues, as well as highlighted the work they had done prior the intervention of international organisations? Have you been making an effort to *educate yourself about climate justice and intersectionalism* (1) and how they may be incorporated into your work?
- ✓ Are you willing to *listen to your student* and their feedback with an open mind, especially those from minority groups and *value their voices?*
- ✓ Are you *open to change your opinion* and re-learn concepts that you thought were the basics of your field of research?
- ✓ **HAVE YOU BEEN ACTIVE?** Are you actively getting informed about current issues raised by minorities in your field and how you can help? *Change requires effort and action!*

(1) Intersectional: the way in which different types of discrimination (e.g. unfair treatment because of a person's sex, race, etc.) are connected to and affect each other. Cambridge Dictionary 2022

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## Science raised in the sciences and

- **Hero Worshiping:** when past researchers and scientists are worshipped for their discoveries and contributions to science, but the problematic aspects of it are not mentioned (e.g. Charles Darwin used his theory to prove the 'supremacy' of the white race and of men over women)
- **White washing of Science History:** when mentioning historical ground-breaking scientific discoveries, mostly (not only) white men are mentioned. Although education and funding was mainly available to this category, BIPOC are often not mentioned in curricula and/or their work is not accredited to them, but rather to their white cis-gender male colleagues.

*These are only some examples of problematic topics that are still often mentioned by the Academic community. It is important to be careful when choosing the vocabulary and the topics to include in lecture materials. The best way to avoid using triggering language and portraying topics in a biased way, is to continue to listen and research, focussing on material published by minorities, and listen to their voices.*

(2) BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. Cambridge Dictionary 2022



## WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH BRISTOL VET SCHOOL?

- Consideration of the human aspect of global wildlife health and conservation is essential and may occasionally lead to conflicts of interest.
- This not only includes local politics, legislations, and ethics, but also traditional practices, human-wildlife conflicts, interactions with local communities and cultural differences.
- It is therefore imperative to take these aspects into consideration when teaching and working, and to respect and include indigenous knowledge and research in the curriculum.
- Additionally, particular attention should be paid to how the colonial past of many countries has played a role leading to the current scenarios we face worldwide.

## Get inspired!

Intersectional Environmentalist: <https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.org/>

Global Just Recovering Gathering: <https://justrecoveringathering.org/>

Union of Justice: <https://www.unionofjustice.com/about/>

Transformative Cities: <https://transformativecities.org/atlas-of-utopias/>

Verify your narrative: <https://www.verifyyournarrative.com/about/>

African Climate Alliance: <https://africanclimatealliance.org/>

Bristol Vets EDI: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1000063707934192>

International Network of Scholars and Activists for African Reparations: <https://www.inosar.ac.uk/>

K. K. Duff. Building a road to recovery for subtle racism in conservation (2020) <https://www.monstera.org/2020/11/building-a-road-to-recovery-for-subtle-racism-in-conservation/>

J. Reddy et al. The extent and distribution of joint conservation-development funding in the tropics. *One Earth*, Volume 3, Issue 6 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.11.008>

A. Corvino Eco-fascism: What It Is, Why It's Wrong, and How to Fight It (2020) <https://www.termspaper.com/story/what-is-ecofascism-explainer>

Beck, R., Mabey, E. & Ekegza, C.C. The global environmental injustice of fast fashion. *Environ Health* 7, 92 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12940-018-0443-0>

C. Murphy What Is White Savior Complex—And Why It Is Harmful? (2022) <https://www.health.com/mind-body/health-diversity-inclusion/white-savior-complex>

Oxfam Media Briefing: EXTREME CARBON INEQUALITY (2015) [https://oxf.files.s3.amazonaws.com/oxfam/2015/public-file\\_attachments/mib-extreme-carbon-inequality-021515\\_en.pdf](https://oxf.files.s3.amazonaws.com/oxfam/2015/public-file_attachments/mib-extreme-carbon-inequality-021515_en.pdf)

Alberna, H. Why we should be wary of blaming 'overpopulation' for the climate crisis. *The Conversation* (2020)

*These are only a few examples of the organisations and individuals working on these topics worldwide. This list should be seen as a starting point of a lifelong journey, rather than a complete list of references.*

WITH THANKS TO FRANCESCA OSELLO

# RESOURCES

These resources archive, reflect on and showcase existing decolonial research and movements at the University of Bristol.

## DECOLONISING EDUCATION: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

FUTURE LEARN COURSE

### What does this course cover?

- Decolonisation of the curriculum: why it's important for social and epistemic justice, what it is and isn't
- Colonialism and its legacy for modern education and knowledge
- Why decolonisation has recently become a flashpoint, nationally and globally
- Identifying and engaging important stakeholders in schools and universities; the importance of combining top-down and bottom-up decolonial approaches; including an institution-wide approach
- Various practical approaches to decolonisation in the social sciences, sciences, health and the arts; their potential limitations and strengths.



### Decolonising Education: From Theory to Practice

Get to grips with the nature of the colonial legacy on our current state of knowledge and learning practices

**ENROL NOW**



BILT also has an archive of case studies of decolonising activities which can be viewed at [www.bilt.online/decolonisation/](http://www.bilt.online/decolonisation/)

## **SUBJECT-SPECIFIC GUIDES**

Together with staff and students from across Bristol University, BILT has created a set of **subject-specific practical resources** for anyone looking to start their journey into decolonising. These resources are aimed at someone who has little or no experience in decolonising their curriculum and is looking for a place to start. They provide a brief introduction to the subject and efforts to decolonise it so far.

### **LAW**



### **LIFE SCIENCES**



### **POLICY STUDIES**



### **HEALTH SCIENCES**



### **SPAIS**



### **FACULTY OF SCIENCE**







EVELYN MILLER

**IN REVIEW: DECOLONISING BRISTOL UNIVERSITY**

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