

Sociology in Action Lecture Series

Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 3:00–4:00 p.m. (CST)

Online Livestream

Please register at: <http://uhouston.imodules.com/sociology021621>



Guest Speaker

Dr. Rashawn Ray

David M. Rubenstein Fellow, The Brookings Institution

Professor of Sociology, University of Maryland

Topic

Bad Apples Come from Rotten Trees in Policing: Pursuing Racial Equity

George Floyd's death significantly shifted public opinion as 76% of Americans (including 71% of Whites) agreed that incidents such as the killing of Floyd are signs of racism within law enforcement. This racial awakening and acknowledgement of racism is further confirmed by police brutality inflicted onto protestors and highlighted in the killing of Breonna Taylor and the shooting of Jacob Blake. While the public outcry often includes the views of the general public, missing, especially in the academic literature, are police officers themselves as well as a proper evaluation of use of force and proposed reforms (such as defund the police). Over the past several years, Dr. Ray collected interview, survey, social media, and virtual reality data with police officers, activists, and civilians. His findings show how implicit bias contributes to racial disparities in policing. His research indicates that police reforms focused on implicit bias trainings and body-worn cameras fall short because they do not address how the structural, cultural, and organizational components of policing obstruct accountability and contribute to over-policing, racial profiling, and racial disparities in policing killings. Dr. Ray concludes by discussing how a series of evidence-based policy prescriptions that focus on reallocating and shifting funding within police department budgets and innovative trainings using virtual reality technology can help transform policing in America.

The Sociology in Action Lecture Series hosts sociologists who have spent their careers using research to facilitate positive change in the world. For more information about the Department of Sociology visit: <https://uh.edu/class/sociology/>

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For additional information, contact: Dr. Maria Monserud at mamonser@Central.uh.edu