"When we revolt, it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe."

– Frantz Fanon

The Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University, stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and all of our brothers and sisters, in grief and protest over the brutal murder of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin, a Minneapolis police officer on May 25. Chauvin kept his knee on Mr. Floyd’s neck while he was handcuffed and lying down for nearly 9 minutes, choking him to death. The murder of Mr. Floyd is the latest incident in a persistent pattern in which black people are killed by police at a rate two and a half times greater than whites. They are killed after being arrested for minor offenses, unarmed and handcuffed in police custody. They are shot dead in the street or in their cars or in their own homes, for no other reason than their race.

The killing of George Floyd—and the killings of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor earlier last month—come in the midst of the nationwide coronavirus pandemic, which has also disproportionately taken the lives of black and brown people. It is now obvious to all of America and the world that the “underlying condition” that leads to these deaths is racist oppression, systemic, historical, contemporary. These are the very subjects of CSER’s curriculum and programs.

We join with the millions of people who are demonstrating to demand an end to racist violence and execution by police. We condemn the excessive use of force against unarmed people across country who are exercising their First Amendment rights. We condemn the tweets and reckless posturing by the president, who has urged more violence by police and white nationalist provocateurs. He now threatens us with martial law.

CSER will continue in our mission, more determined than ever, to provide courses and programming to promote knowledge, solidarity, and activism for social and racial justice.

Look for NEW class offerings this coming year:

- Disease and Difference
- Whiteness: Sentiment and Political Belonging
- US Latinx History

in addition to our regular core classes:

- Colonization and Decolonization (Fall)
• Race and Racisms (Spring)
• Critical Approaches to Ethnic Studies (Fall and Spring)
• Introduction to Comparative Ethnic Studies (Spring)

In peace and solidarity,
Karl Jacoby and Mae Ngai, co-directors