



Dr. Nathan Connolly

“COMMON SENSE”

How Powerful Interests Frame Social Problems: a Twentieth-Century Perspective

Policy Forum Live Session

FRIDAY, OCT. 11
2 P.M. EASTERN

Dr. Nathan Connolly is an Associate Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University. He writes about racism, capitalism, politics, cities and migration in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

For those of us working in the public policy realm, there are certain solutions that seem like “common sense.” Schools should be integrated. Affordable housing should be accessible. Violent crimes should be prosecuted.

But “common sense” solutions can be fraught, says Dr. Nathan Connolly, professor of history at Johns Hopkins University, who researches racism and politics in the 19th and 20th centuries. Those “common sense” solutions can offer a self-congratulatory justification while ignoring or even exacerbating the deeper societal issue of inequality.

In this talk, Professor Connolly analyzes three case studies pertaining to housing segregation, school desegregation, and anti-drug enforcement during the Obama era. In each, he explores how “common sense” solutions to inequality can create perverse incentives for further discrimination and the opening of enforcement loopholes. Attendees will discuss historical examples and their own policy aims, in part, to consider how powerful interests set the terms of “common sense” policy in the first place.

Join us on Friday, Oct. 11 at 2pm EDT for this live talk and discussion about racial inequality and the systems that perpetuate it.



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Read up.

OCTOBER LIVE SESSION READINGS

N.D.B. CONNOLLY

“How Did African Americans Discover They Were Being ‘Redlined’?”

Talking Points Memo, Primary Source (Aug. 9, 2015) <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/primary-source/redlining-holc-fha-wilkins-weaver>

ZORA NEALE HURSTON

“Letter Deploring the Brown Decision (August 11, 1955)”

<https://face2faceafrica.com/article/read-zora-neale-hurstons-1955-letter-to-the-orlando-sentinel-criticizing-the-desegregation-of-public-schools>

MATTHEW D. LASSITER

“‘Tough and Smart’: The Resilience of the War on Drugs During the Obama Administration”

In Julian Zelizer, ed., *The Presidency of Barack Obama: A First Historical Assessment*. <https://appliedresearch.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Lassiter-Obama-Chapter-11-1.pdf>