

**NAACP Berkshire County Branch
White Learning Circle
Syllabus**

Required texts

The Vintage Book of African American Poetry – each member needs to purchase their own copy
(est. \$17 new; used copies readily available for less)

Anti-Racist Daily <https://www.antiracismdaily.com/> -
(each member needs to subscribe; it is free; donations welcome)

Each meeting will have the same general format:

Open with the reading of a poem
Discuss one issue of the previous week's *Anti-Racist Daily*
Reality check with a Black Mentor
Discussion of current topic

Black mentors

The circle is composed of white members only:

- so members do not refrain from honest speaking for fear of “exposing themselves”
- so white members do not look to a Black person to raise the difficult issues and to make white members feel good;

In order to keep the Black experience framed in our discussion, a Black mentor will attend the beginning of most meetings to help with questions and issues that arose from the previous discussion. Most Black mentors will be from the Branch leadership.

Subject matter

- Early sessions will address origins and history of racism, the Black experience and being white;
- Then there will be 7 sessions (one each) for 7 of our “gamechangers”;
- Over the long holiday (Dec.-Jan.) break, the reading will be a classic work;
- Final sessions will be on white supremacy, and anti-racism.

Everyone will read one book from the Resources list for each topic – something you have not read before. If you expect to rely on the library for your books, please plan ahead, so you are able to read the book BEFORE the discussion. Many books have multiple copies available through the CWMARS library network, so you can acquire a copy by placing a hold if your local library does not have it available on the shelf.

Discussion will focus on what we each have learned about racism, and how we are integrating that learning into our own sense of self.

Calendar

- Oct. 4** **Introduction**
Poem
Overview of plan
Personal introductions
Ground rules
Syllabus – discussion and modifications, poem assignments, discussion facilitators
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
- Oct. 18** **History**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Nov. 1** **Being Black**
Poem
Reality check History:
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Nov. 15** **Being White**
Poem
Reality Check: Being Black
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Nov. 29** **Criminal Justice**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Dec. 13** **Education**
Poem
Reality check: Criminal Justice
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Jan. 10** **Classic Works**
Poem
Reality check: Education
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Jan. 24** **Environmental Justice**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion

- Feb. 7** **Housing**
Poem
Reality check: Environmental Justice
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion -
- Feb. 21** **Health**
Poem
Reality check: Housing
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion -
- Mar. 7** **Voting Rights**
Poem
Reality check: Health
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Mar. 21** **Economic Justice**
Poem
Reality check: Voting rights
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- April 11** **White Supremacy**
Poem
Reality check: Economic Justice
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- April 25** **Anti-Racism**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- May 9** **Where should we go from here?**
Poem
Reality check: Anti-Racism
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- May 23** **White Learning Circle – Evaluation**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion