

Minisode: #ScholarStrike

Ilyse R Morgenstein Fuerst: This is Keeping it 101, a killjoy's introduction to religion podcast. Today, we're keeping it 101--and incredibly short--in a special, urgent minisode.

Megan P Goodwin: We're coming at you, as always, from the ancestral and unceded lands of the Abenaki, Wabenaki, and Aucocisco peoples, where we are grateful to live, teach, and record.

IRMF: Hi, hello, I'm Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, a scholar of imperialism, Islam, race/racialization, and South Asia.

MPG: Hi, hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions, race/racialization, and gender.

What's up nerds!? We know we just kicked off season 2, so you're likely asking yourselves: why are these killjoys back? What *else* could they have to say?

Here's the deal. We're using our platform on this here podcast to bring you--our beloved nerds--some information about the #ScholarStrike, an action planned across for September 8-9, 2020 in the US and spearheaded by Profs. Anthea Butler and Kevin Gannon. You might have seen the CNN or Inside Higher Ed articles about it. You may have even signed up to get their emails (and if not, we'll link to where you can do that).

IRMF: Protests and uprisings continue across the country, demanding justice for Black lives. We're watching professional athletes cancel and forfeit games -- and we've watched Black women in particular lead those efforts (if you're not following the WNBA and the National Women's Soccer League, you need to).

Many of us teacher-types have joined protests in our communities, donated to bail funds and other important causes, and urged our own institutions to do more to address white supremacy and racism, ESPECIALLY anti-Black racism, in and on our own campuses.

The #ScholarStrike lets us put our skills and training where our hearts are breaking -- to apply our expertise and experience toward disrupting racial injustice. We wanted to share what we're doing and offer this minisode as a call to action.

MPG: So Ilyse, if I'm a scholar and I want to participate in #ScholarStrike, how do I get involved?

IRMF: If you can, stop all work for your institution (teaching, research, administrative duties) on Tuesday, September 8th and Wednesday, September 9th. As Prof. Butler has said, the Scholar Strike is a literal strike if you are able to do so: don't teach, don't do admin work, and do put up an email autoreply explaining why.

But we know that contingent faculty, vulnerable faculty, and faculty with collective bargaining agreements might not have that option. And that's okay! There are lots of ways to use your resources to *strike at racism*. At its core, the Scholar Strike is a teach-in. Whether or not you teach your classes or go to meetings those days, you can *strike at racism* by *teaching* against racism.

MPG: and teaching is what this collective action is really about, right? We at Keeping It 101 are first and foremost teachers, and we know a lot of our listeners are as well. So even if you CAN'T stop work, you CAN use your social media platforms, your classrooms, your emails, your networks to *strike at racism*. (And we think you should.)

Work stoppage is important, but it isn't enough. We need to use our resources to attack racism from as many angles as we can. If knowledge is power, then knowledge can be weaponized (any tool is a weapon if you hold it right).

Racisms--and especially, in this moment, anti-Black racism--are literally killing our family, friends, colleagues, mentors, leaders, and neighbors. Our training, our expertise, and our knowledge are quite frankly worse than pointless if we do not use them to strike at this unspeakable, homicidal oppression and violence.

Let's use what we have to strike at racism: strike it down, strike at it, strike against it.

Again, there are lots of ways to do this. We're both participating in different ways, and we hope you'll find a way to participate too. Ilyse, what does this strike look like for you?

IRMF: For those of us--like me--who are governed by a union CBA (collective bargaining agreement) or for others of us who are precarious for any numbers of reason, strike may not be able to mean withholding labor. It can mean--and how I will participate--striking at racism by using my platforms, especially on Twitter, to bolster others (duh!), to teach-in about race and racism (expect a bunch of threads with resources!), and to talk to my students about the actions across the country. I will be using the #ScholarStrike hashtag furiously when I am not teaching on Sept 8-9. When I am teaching, I will be talking about the strike itself, racism as it relates to our topic, and why being a student in my religion classes means it is mandatory to think about white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and racism against all people of color.

For full disclosure, I've also volunteered to and will be deployed in striking at racism by managing some social media for the #ScholarStrike. You'll see a lot of me all over the internet on Sept 8-9. I hope you'll add your own content, signal boost the work happening through the hashtag and handles, and make efforts to feature and bolster the work of Black scholars and scholars of color and scholars of race/racism.

MPG: I am NOT governed by a collective bargaining agreement, though there are folks who have been working for years to have full-time non-TT Northeastern faculty protected by a union. So I am stopping work for Northeastern on those days: my classes don't start until Friday, but I'm not fielding emails, attending meetings, or doing administrative work for my department or for Sacred Writes. I'll have an away message up explaining the strike and linking to more information about it; I'll also email my classes this Friday to explain what's going on.

For both of my classes but especially my senior seminar, I'll be drawing connections between the scholar strike and the work that we're doing this semester. My senior seminar is a reworked version of my American minority religions class, which I usually focus primarily on gender and sexuality. This summer, I redesigned the class to explicitly look at how the term "cult" gets weaponized against Black religious innovation and resistance. I'll encourage students to reflect on that while I'm striking.

And then, like you, I'll be using my social media platforms to do some public-facing teaching. I'm planning to tweet through my NUcults syllabus to offer resources for folks looking to expand their syllabi. I'll signal boost the work of Black colleagues, building on that piece I did for FSIR with Yohana Junker. And I'll be amplifying the voices of minoritized folks who are participating in the strike as well.

IRMF: Obviously, nerds, this podcast is committed to anti-racism as a way of being in the world. You've listened to us: this is kinda our thing. We're also just starting our season-long look at race, gender, and sexuality in religion. It shouldn't surprise you that we fully support the #ScholarStrike and are wholly committed to the model of a "teach-in," where we use our networks and our expertise to weaponize knowledge. Expect a fully devoted Twitter and Instagram--where our pod social media is--to the ScholarStrike.

We don't--and can't--always get it right. But we're trying. And we hope you will too. To that end, if you are a precarious scholar, a graduate student, a contingent laborer, or covered (like me!) by a CBA and wish to add content--but *don't* want credit for it. DM us, be in touch, and we will post it.

MPG: We'll open up the DMs on Insta and Twitter and keep an eye out for messages on both days.

This strike's teach in will be across social media platforms, but it is user-generated. We have to create content. We have to rally our colleagues. We need to inform our students--even if we don't cancel our classes--about why, to date, 3K scholars have pledged to participate. If we're teaching those days (I mean, all days but whatever), we need to highlight race and racism, and anti-Black violence, and state-sanctioned killing.

We have to be willing to share what we know, admit what we don't, and share what others do. We have to tweet-thread, retweet, post to facebook, make live videos, post on insta. When you participate, however you participate, please tag what you do and make and circulate with #ScholarStrike. Follow @SCHOLARSTRIKE on Twitter. We will post in the show notes how to sign up so that you can receive emails from the organizers about coordinated messaging.

So here's your homework, nerds: join us on Sept 8-9 however you can, to strike at racism and strike for Black lives.

IRMF: peace out nerds

MPG: do strikes, it's on the syllabus