



# Confronting Inequity: Social Justice Dialogues in a Health Sciences Library

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## OBJECTIVES

- The aftermath of George Floyd’s death acted as a catalyst for nationwide protests and personal self-reflection on the issues of race and racism in this country.
- The Assistant Director of Research and Education Services at the Greenblatt Library proposed devoting a portion of staff meetings to discuss issues in social justice and anti-racism.
- The intention of these discussions was to increase individual and group understanding of systemic racism and promote personal development in recognizing personal biases and beliefs that promote racism.
- These discussions could benefit the department and library as a whole by addressing how they approach the hiring process and engage with staff and patrons.

## METHODS

- Department members generated topics and organized readings or media in an internal LibGuide.
- The initial plan was for each department member to present their topic and readings with planned discussions every other work for a total of 7 discussions. Each discussion lasted between 20 to 45 minutes.
- Each staff member described their motivation in selecting their topic and led the subsequent discussion.

## RESULTS

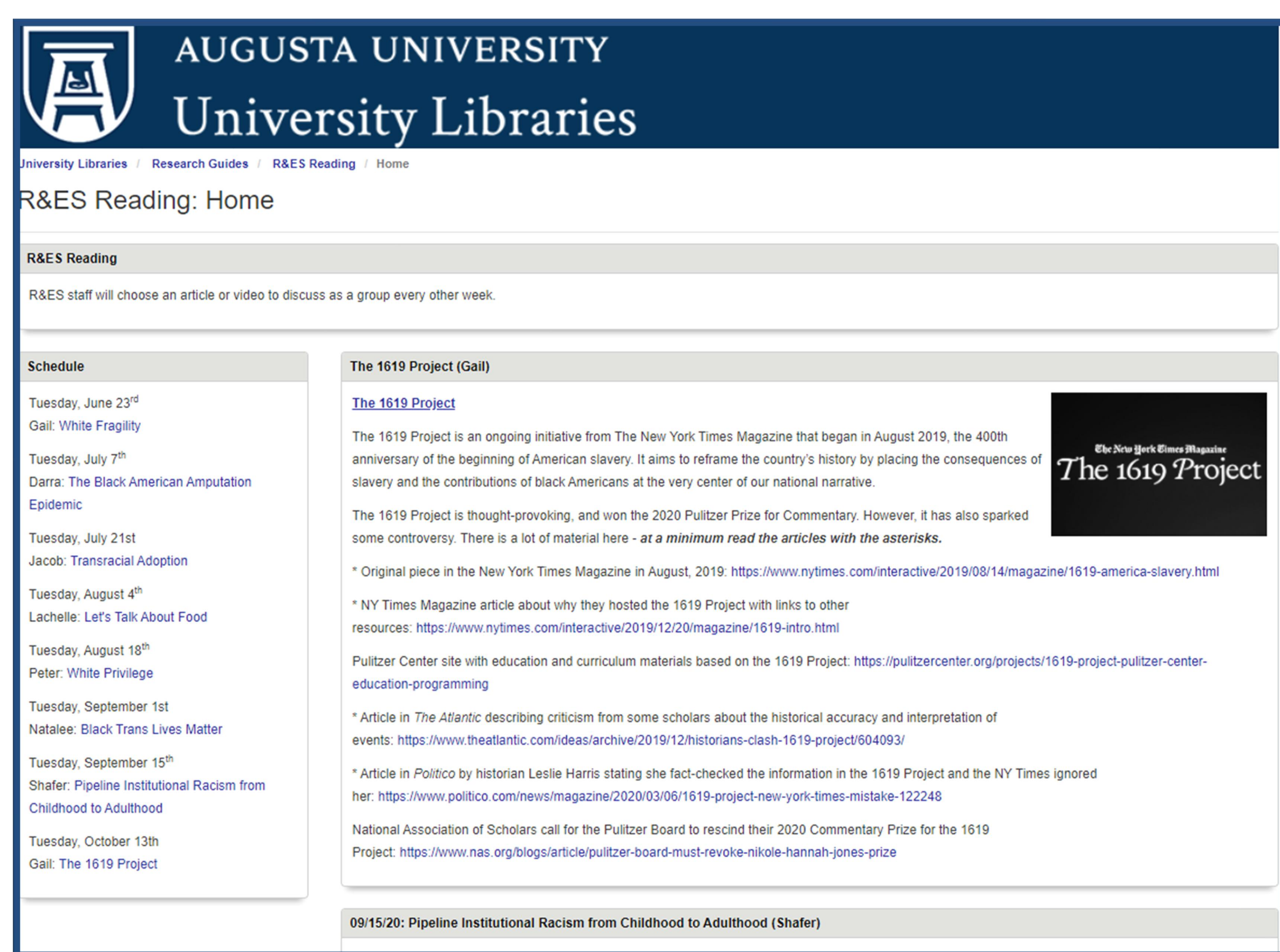
### Discussion Topics



- The readings and discussions revealed marginalized group perceptions and reality are not necessarily willingly acknowledged or addressed by the privileged group.
- Each discussion leader brought their own unique personal perspective, relating how the topics did, or did not, affect their personal or professional lives and why they felt the topic was important.
- The topic of food deserts was identified for follow-up action because of the need in the residential area adjacent to the health sciences campus.
- All resources used in the discussions came from reliable sources including news publications, public radio, and peer-reviewed journals.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Participants felt the topics were timely, thought-provoking, and useful in understanding current imbalances in social equity in health-related and other areas.
- Each department member could identify and share a social justice area of concern. Many of the topics are addressed in critical librarianship scholarship, and lessons from the discussions could be applied to increased understanding of, and service to, marginalized users of their library’s community.
- Department members have agreed to continue the discussions on an ongoing basis after the initial seven topics.



Screenshot of the LibGuide used for the discussion posts