



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2018 Volume I: Race, Class and Punishment

13th and Locking Up Our Own: Argument, Voice, and Perspective in Two Modern Meditations on Mass Incarceration

Guide for Curriculum Unit 18.01.09, published September 2018
by Robert M. Schwartz

Our early society flourished in a rich economy void of the burden of having to pay for its labor. This country, for all its booming rhetoric of freedom, would not be powerful enough to assert such rhetoric if not for its first enslaving people in bonds. Some would argue that these bonds were never broken, simply recast overtime to their current iteration: bars. This curricular unit is meant to educate students about those who make said arguments, while studying their rhetorical styles. The Ava Duverney film *13th* argues that slavery was never abolished, simply redesigned over time, through Jim Crow, and now into modern mass incarceration which to this day relegates people of color in this country in far too large a number to continued unpaid servitude and bondage. *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* by James Forman, Jr. uses our nation's capital as a backdrop to explore the history of crime in a largely black populated city along with the responses by prominent black and white police and politicians that is an insider's view of the evolution of criminal justice to its current state. Through these important works, students will analyze voice, perspective and argument in writing and film, through work with vital and engaging information about mass incarceration and its evolution and consequences.

(Developed for African American History and Literature, grades 11-12; recommended for English and History, grades 11-12)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use