



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2019 Volume II: The Problem of Mass Incarceration

Understanding and Challenging the Overcriminalization of Youth of Color

Guide for Curriculum Unit 19.02.04, published September 2019
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This unit focuses on understanding and challenging criminalization of young people of color in America. Students will analyze the influence of racist and classist ideologies on the creation of the juvenile justice system, on school polices, on the policing of urban ethnic neighborhoods, and on voter repressive laws. The second half of the unit will cover youth activism and empowerment; students will analyze how young people, schools, and community organizations can help in disrupting and dismantling the system. Students will dissect the success of different youth-led campaigns or programs. The unit's final component will ask students to engage in a Youth Participatory Action Research Project (YPAR). Students will conduct on the ground research through surveys and interviews to understand the school needs. Through discussions, analysis of primary and secondary sources, and YPAR, students will come up with a set of proposals (programs and policies that will be adopted if approved by the student senate and school staff) that will help address school-specific issues.

(Developed for Ethnic Studies, grade 9; recommended for Ethnic Studies and Sociology, grades 9-12, and Government, grade 12)

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