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Title: Police Brutality in Brazil and the United States, Talking About the Future of Policing and Its Increase Since Trump and Bolsonaro's Election.

Introduction:

My project is a comparative analysis of police brutality in the United States with what occurs in Brazil. While the study could examine several years of police volatility and control, the focus here covers from 2016 to 2021, the last year of the most recent data. I chose the beginning date because it corresponds with former President Donald J. Trump who, during his period in office, hate crime and police brutality rose (Jones 882; Swain 110). Furthermore, Trump's presidency coincides with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, elected in 2018, who has also shared a similar phenomenon with the state's 45th president, in that police brutality was exacerbated from the onset of his election (Treece 217). Research collected and evaluated will contribute to the discussion of oppression, abuse, and the killing of Black people, a topic that is highly addressed in Ta-Nehisi Coates book, *Between the World and Me*. The text is used in my African American Literature course, and because it is the first book, it is used a foundational piece as the future of Black people in America -- and abroad -- is linked to our relationship with police who are usually white and politically conservative. The contents of the book, along with interviews, research, and observations while in Brazil will be employed in such a way where students will evaluate police brutality, make broader connections to the issue, and deepen their understanding

of its meaning with respect to the text and what exists in their life and the lives of Black people around the world.

Unit Goals:

1. Students will complete two short responses related to police brutality in Brazil and the United States as it pertains to the text of *Between the World and Me*, which explicitly addresses the issue. Ultimately, these responses will fold into a larger five-paragraph essay.
2. Students will read and discuss articles related to police brutality in Brazil and the United States.
3. Students will discuss issues and participate in Socratic seminars addressing police brutality.
4. Students will share their views and opinions with others at the [Steve Biko](#) Institute in Brazil. The institute is called, specifically, the Steve Biko Cultural Institute.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how police brutality is directly linked to Black oppression
2. Develop writing through two edited drafts conducted through peer edit and teacher response on the topic of police brutality.
3. Employ logic to articulate, organize, and support an effective and valid written argument that supports the thesis and responds to probable objections without resorting to distortion.
4. Work with legitimate secondary and primary sources that speak to issues of Brazilian and United States culture of policing.

5. Learn from other students at the Steve Biko Institute in Brazil who will be reading the book at the same time. The institute is a school that prepares Black students for college and the work with a focus on Blackness and what that means in a world that oppresses people who look like them. They believe education is a tool for self-improvement as well as community building.

5. Address issues in writings from a Marxist and racial lens.

6. Make use of standard scholarly styles using MLA documentation and citation and create a correct works cited page.

Essential Questions:

1. Does police brutality look different in the United States than in Brazil?
2. Why does police brutality persist?
3. What might police say to the overuse of force?
4. Who benefits when police use excessive force?
5. What historically has been the relationship between police here and in Brazil?
6. To what extent are the privileged, wealthy, and white see police brutality or policing?
7. Does the data about police brutality suggests this cruelty is coming to an end or evanescing?
8. Why has the rate of police brutality increased since the presidency of Trump and Bolsonaro?
9. How can we address this topic in a way where Black and brown people can face a more understanding and conscious system?
10. What are our biases regarding police officers?

Summary of Police Brutality Similarities in the United States and Brazil:

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Ford Foundation Professor of History, Race and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, says policing became increasingly important when enslaved Black people were emancipated, writing: “What quality of citizenship did they truly deserve? What manner of coexistence should be tolerated? These were the burning questions that animated the minds of many white Americans, especially scientists, journalists, and reformers, a generation after the Civil War (19). Marcio dos Santos, a Bahia, Brazil professor at the local university called Universidade da Integração Internacional da Lusofonia Afro-Brasileira, says Black men in his country and all over the world are preoccupied with death. dos Santos says Black men are afraid of so many things that can spell their end and because of this, it is difficult to know how they should behave as a man. The greatest soccer players here, he says, do not claim blackness even though they are a good degree black, if not entirely. Anything associated positive outside of sports is not a comparison people make about Black men, “Police brutality has always been bad here and no matter who we elect, it’s just part of the culture. If we re-elect Bolsonaro, however, it will be worse than it has been before. He actually incentivizes police who have brutalized Black men.”

Rationale:

The intent of the lesson is to discuss and address what is at the heart of Black marginalization and mistreatment. Police hold the key in terms of keeping Black people “in check” and playing a role in mass incarceration, which absconds thousands of Black men of their rights as a citizen and human. Students will learn and develop this idea through the discussion the text, articles, and cross discussion with other students at the Steve Biko Institute in Brazil.

This unit will be taught over a three-week period in which students will engage in the following:

1. Read *Between the World and Me* in class and listen to it through audible
2. Discuss the content and meaning of the text
3. Share ideas with students in Brazil at the Steve Biko institute
4. Compose notes from lectures, articles, the book, and discussion
5. Write a five-paragraph essay that addresses a key concept of police brutality

Lesson Plan:

Assumptions: Because this is a course in which English Composition I, which addresses writing a formal essay, is required to enroll in African American literature, students should be able to analyze a work of fiction or non-fiction and discuss varying aspects of the text verbally and written.

NOTE: Classes meet in-person twice weekly, Monday and Wednesday.

Week 1:

Monday:

- Discussion and introduction of Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*
- Establish a relationship with students at the Steve Biko Institute in which a class will begin reading the book at the same time as our class and we will discuss it weekly together.
- Read the first chapter in class

Wednesday:

- Discuss the contents and meaning of chapter 1.
- Listen to Coates read chapters 2-3 in class
- Discuss meaning and content in chapters
- Compose notes using Cornell note form to jot down ideas, facts, and other material from the listening.

Week 2:

Monday:

- Take notes on a teacher lecture involving police brutality here and in Brazil
- Meet with Steve Biko Institute to discuss the findings in chapters 2-3

Wednesday:

- Begin writing first paragraph and review your thesis with a classmate during a peer edit
- Compose a five-paragraph essay in class addressing police brutality in both countries and analyzing to what should happen next; submit to me online through Canvas.

Week 3:

Monday:

- Participate in a peer edit to review your presentation with other students, in groups of three.

Wednesday:

- Schedule a time to discuss your final presentation with me during conference hours.

There, we will review the work and offer other considerations as you make final edits to submit a finished draft.

Assessment:

The assignment will be graded as an essay and the rubric will be attached to each paper, evaluating grammar, effective thesis, details, analysis, structure, and persuasion. We would have discussed the rubric prior to the final submission twice, once during week 2 and the other at the end. This assignment is worth 100 essay points, an eight of their overall grades.

Assignment:

Using MLA format, compose a five-paragraph essay addressing police brutality in the United States and Brazil. You should use the Coates' text as the main source to support and drive home your points. This assignment does not simply require you to make a comparative analysis, but asks, based on the book and discussion, what is the future of police and what should be done today in terms of ending – or at least mollifying – police brutality. Highlight your thesis, higher-level vocabulary, sources, and where you used parts of the discussion with the Steve Biko Institute. You will need a works cited, and should have at least eight sources, including *Between the World and Me*. Think about this detail and statement from a young Brazillian black man who I interviewed in Salvador when crafting your essay:

Alaye de Brito, 29, who has been a local activist for several years and studied in America, said in an interview that police use their power to subvert Black people and they lie about their tactics, pointing to an incident that happened late in July when at least 18 people were shot in a low-income housing called a “Favela” (Lopes). Police claimed they were dealing with a

“gang,” but de Brito says that is what they often say when they have killed innocent people.

“They lie and kill us all the time and get away with it,” de Brito said. “It’s what the police do here.”

Grading Criteria:

1. Have you followed the directions of the basic guidelines?
2. Have you attended the Writing Center for assistance on your writing?
3. Do you have a clear thesis with a claim?
5. Do you advance your argument throughout the text?
6. Have you documented appropriately?
7. Have you reconsidered some of your initial ideas before writing?
8. Did you consider using a Venn diagram in demonstrating the likes and difference between police brutality in Brazil and the United States?

Figures



Figure 1 A quilombo resident whose father was killed, many believe by police



Figure 2 Police in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil are stationed throughout the city with large automatic weapons



Figure 3 Police in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil are stationed throughout the city, including in our hotel and nearby



Figure 4 Steve Biko Institute in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

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