

# THE CONNECT

A Center for Critical Race Studies Newsletter



Photo Credit: [The Library of Congress](#)

## CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15**

VIDA ROBERTSON, PH.D.  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

In recognition of the outstanding contributions, achievements, and rich cultures of the Latinx community, the Center for Critical Race Studies joins in the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. The inaugural Hispanic Heritage Week was first observed under President Lyndon Johnson in 1968 and was expanded in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan to include a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15.

The expanded period coincides with national independence days of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Mexico, Chile, and Belize. In an act of cultural solidarity, many Hispanic and Latinx communities in the Caribbean, Central and South America countries jointly celebrate the international holiday “Día de la Raza,” or Day of the Race. In open defiance to the dehumanizing colonization of their native lands, “Día de la Raza” is celebrated on October 12th (Columbus Day) in rejection of European imperialism.

To this end, Hispanic Heritage Month is also a principled sociopolitical assertion that Hispanic and Latinx peoples are invaluable collaborators in our American experiment. The immeasurable contributions of the Latinx and Hispanic communities indelibly shape every facet of US society, culture, politics, economics, and art. It is for this reason that the Center for Critical Race Studies stands in solidarity with and celebrate Latin American families and communities around the world, and particularly those within our beloved UHD community.

## PROTECT HAITIAN MIGRANTS

ANTOINETTE WILSON, PH.D.  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF  
PSYCHOLOGY



Photo Credit: [NY Times](#)

In recent months, Haiti has experienced turmoil and devastation resulting from multiple natural disasters, a presidential assassination, and economic crises that have destabilized the country.

These perilous conditions have forced Haitians to seek asylum in the U.S. in an effort to secure their personal safety and better futures for their families. However, upon arrival at a border camp in Del Rio, Texas, Black Haitian asylum-seekers were met with violence and inhumane, aggressive tactics from border patrol agents.

Horrific [images](#) showed agents mounted on horses using reins as whips to prohibit migrants from entering the U.S. As national outrage grew in response to media coverage of the inhumane treatment of Haitians at the Texas border, many were left with questions about asylum and which groups are granted, or denied, the right to pursue asylum in the U.S.

Seeking [asylum](#) is a human right and it is important that this protection is afforded to all. Furthermore, in order to seek asylum, refugees must be physically present in the U.S. or be seeking entry at a port of entry. **If you are interested in learning more about this crisis, here are ways you can help:**

- Educate friends and family on the crisis
- Contact local, state, and national elected officials
- Donate to or assist organizations helping Haitian migrants at the border such as [Houston Haitians United](#) and the [Haitian Bridge Alliance](#). These non-profit organizations are seeking volunteers, monetary donations, Haitian Creole translators, hair stylists, and cooks to help migrants temporarily housed in shelters in the Houston-area and other US cities.

Together we can take action and support Haitian migrants.



Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

## THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT CRITICAL RACE THEORY

**WE CAN'T DENY THE REALITY OF RACISM IN OUR PAST AND PRESENT**

JONATHAN CHISM, PH.D.  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Recently, critical race theory (CRT) has come under attack by several state governments, politicians, and media pundits. Those who teach CRT have been accused of being racist, fanning the flames of racism, and of promoting un-American propaganda that threatens American democracy. CRT informs my research and teaching as a historian of African American history. Hence, I feel that it is important to speak truthfully about CRT, a movement that developed in the legal academy during the 1970s that aims to examine and resist the racism in the law and societal institutions.

Many persons who are attacking and condemning critical race theory have failed to see that racism remains a problem in our post-civil Rights context. The truth is that the Civil Rights Movement did not eradicate racism. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did not slay racism like Perseus killed the mythical monstrous Medusa. Critical race theory helps us see that racism is not akin to a malicious beast that can be finally put to rest forever. Neither is racism merely perpetuated by a few racist individuals with ties to boldfaced white supremacist organizations. Racism, however, is endemic and deeply embedded in our laws and societal institutions. We cannot resist racism effectively until we face the truth about the nature of its existence in our history and society.

To help students understand the truth about racism and others forms of oppression, it is important to expose them to the perspectives of oppressed persons. This includes the often-muted voices of Blacks, Indigenous Americans, Hispanics, Asians, women, disabled Americans, and others. Many attacks on CRT are grounded in whitewashing, a longstanding scheme to silence oppressed peoples and a hegemonic maneuver to control the narrative so as to maintain white supremacy.

To move toward genuine equity and justice, we must face the truth about racism in our past and present. The American novelist and activist James Baldwin said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." CRT is analogous to a microscope that enables scientists to look beneath the surface of biological matter, detecting bacteria and viruses. It is an excellent tool that facilitates deeper and more sophisticated study of racism and other forms of marginalization.

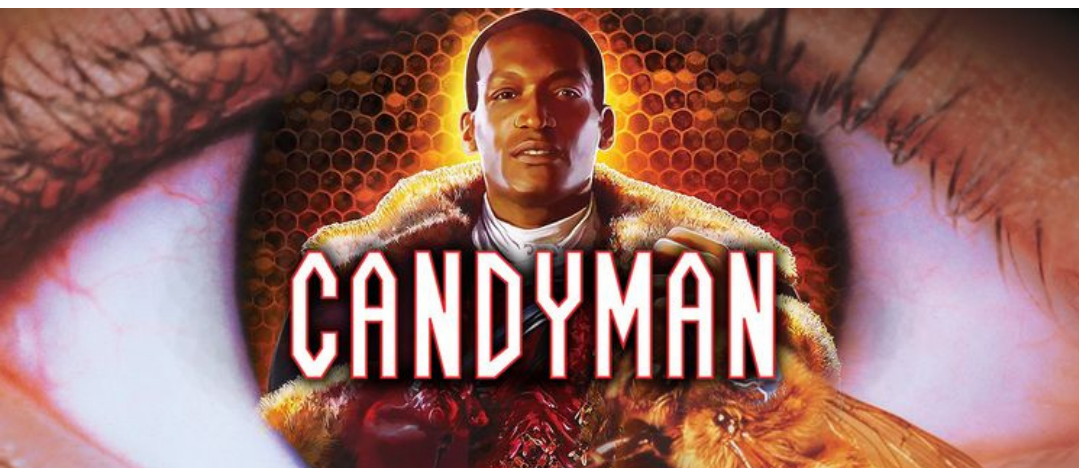


Photo Credit: Collider

## RACE INTO HALLOWEEN HORROR ORIGINAL CANDYMAN (1992) TO SCREEN AT UHD

CHUCK JACKSON, PH.D.  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Jordan Peele's recent direction of two of the most powerful U.S. horror films in the past decade -- *Get Out* (2017) and *Us* (2019) -- make monsters of our nation's most frighteningly entangled expressions of racism, misogyny, class inequality, and sexuality. In both, bodies splatter and the death count runs high, and yet they invite audiences to think alongside, and cheer for, empowered Black protagonists as they come face to face with evil, outwit it, and survive.

Peele's latest horror project, the co-production and co-writing of *Candyman* (dir. Nia DaCosta, 2021), continues his foray into cinematic fear and disgust, creating a sequel to the original film directed by Bernard Rose (1992).

But – why? Why *Candyman*?

After all, *Candyman* is a thirty-year old horror film, and one that adds to Hollywood's longstanding tradition of making Black men into monsters (Tony Todd as the titular Candyman). Even more, the film's white female star (Virginia Madsen as Helen Lyle), told *The Chicago Tribune* in 1992, "I don't think Spike Lee would like this film." What could possibly be the allure of this film, with its skewed sense of identity politics, for Peele -- or for us?

**This Halloween season, join us on UHD's North Deck to find out!**

2021 year marks the 10th Anniversary of UHD's Annual Outdoor Halloween Film Screening, and, following Peele's lead, the film of choice is the original *Candyman*.

Thanks to funding from UHD's Cultural Enrichment Center, with support from UHD's Department of English, this annual event (interrupted by the pandemic, last year) returns -- in person, at sundown, on the blow-up screen, under the stars. *Candyman* maintains our tradition of providing edgy, challenging American horror cinema guaranteed to make those gathered on the North Deck jump, scream, cover their eyes, and call out to characters as they make terrible decisions or fall into cinematic stereotypes based on different combinations of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Horror films are always better with others in public. Our screening this year will keep us as safe as possible outdoors with spatial distancing. Bring your masks, chairs, and blankets. Costumes welcome! Students from ENG 3354: Introduction to Film Studies will be in attendance, so any questions audience members might have about the intellectual value of the screening goes to them!

### **Join us for a movie!**

**What:** 10th Annual UHD Halloween Outdoor Screening, CANDYMAN (dir. Bernard Rose, 1992)

**When:** Thursday, October 25, 2021. Film begins at SUNDOWN (around 7:00pm)

**Where:** UHD North Deck (between the steps and the Student Life Center)

**Cost:** Free!

**UHD**  
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### **LET'S CONNECT**

If you have resources, stories, or inspiration you would like to share with the CCRS community, please e-mail [CCRS@uhd.edu](mailto:CCRS@uhd.edu).

