



## **UNT Peace Studies Program and The Castleberry Peace Institute Statement on the Killing of George Floyd**

We of the UNT Peace Studies Program and the Castleberry Peace Institute are deeply saddened and troubled by the killing of George Floyd at the hands of the police in Minneapolis, MN. That sadness compounds the cumulative weight on our collective souls of the numbers of African Americans, Latinos, and other non-white citizens who have been the victims of police violence and the other forms of discrimination and outright repression of minorities that pervade our society. This epidemic of state violence and discrimination is not new. It has been with us since 1619.

At the same time we are heartened by the protest movement that has emerged in the aftermath of this horrific event, a movement that has spread beyond the confines of Minneapolis to permeate almost every corner of this nation. Indeed, we have even witnessed protests in the name of George Floyd in England, France, Germany, Italy, Brazil and other nations as well.. We hope that this movement will endure and strengthen so that, at long last, our political leaders will be compelled to act for once, to enact legislation that brings about meaningful reform of our police system, our criminal justice system, and the institutional structure in which those systems are embedded.

Beyond that, these events reveal the need to change the culture that allows the discriminatory police and criminal justice systems to endure. Discrimination and repression persist only because our culture condones it. As teachers and scholars, we of the UNT Peace Studies program and the Castleberry Peace Institute are committed to redoubling our efforts to educate students and engage the public on issues concerning the causes of the sort of violence we are witnessing, by the state as well as by groups that seem intent on hijacking the movement for their own purposes through the use of violence as provocation. We will redouble our efforts to heighten awareness of the value and impact of peaceful protest in bringing about meaningful change here and around the globe. We are also committed to teaching and research on the means of conflict resolution, the provision of truth and justice to all people and social reconciliation here and around the globe. And we will continue our research and teaching on the issues of justice that, unresolved, give rise to the sort of state violence we continue to witness here and elsewhere. We will continue to light our candles to shed light on injustices in the US and around the world, in the hope that in time that light will begin to contain the virus of hate, injustice, and violence and give light to a transformation of culture that will enable future generations to live in peace.