

Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice

The Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (Simmons Center) at Brown University is a scholarly research center with a public humanities mission.

Recognizing that racial slavery was central to the historical formation of the Americas and the modern world, the Simmons Center creates a space for the interdisciplinary study of the historical forms of slavery while also examining how these legacies continue to shape our contemporary world.

Since its inception in 2012, the Center has organized hundreds of public programs to examine issues of social justice and racial equality, including the impact of anti-black racism on our nation's educational systems, and racial segregation and its persistent structural legacies. As well we have paid attention to issues around contemporary human trafficking. As part of its mission to examine the history and legacies of slavery in ways that engage a broad public, the Simmons Center has built a global network of scholars, museums, and universities. The Center has initiated joint projects with universities and museums around the world and fostered relationships with high school educators across the nation. Through its research, exhibitions, convenings, and curriculum, the Center has become a leading institution for understanding how slavery's legacy directly impacts all of our lives, yet is "hidden in plain sight."

The Simmons Center's work is organized around research clusters that examine the legacies of racial slavery through scholarship and public engagement; seminar series; public humanities projects such as gallery exhibitions, arts programming, the development of new high school curriculum, walking tours; and the arts initiative that creates art platforms for artists and curators to develop a space for debate and discussion around the history of art, black aesthetics, and new forms of African and African diasporic art.

In the Fall 2024, the Simmons Center welcomed the first cohort of the the Master's in Integrative Studies (Public Humanities) program. The program provides students with an interdisciplinary exploration of issues surrounding race, decolonial practices and social justice with specific references to cultural work in museums and other cultural organizations. Students in this program gain the knowledge and tools to lead institutional change within their organizations.

To learn more about the Simmons Center, please visit <https://simmonscenter.brown.edu/>.