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 **Dr Gavan Lennon. Associate Head of School for Student Experience, School of Humanities, Coventry University.** Dr Gavan Lennon’s research interest include racial activism in 20th and 21st century American Literature, the politics of literary form, and anti-racist pedagogies. He is the author of *Living Jim Crow: The Segregated Town in Mid-Century Southern Fiction* (2020).<ad6347@coventry.ac.uk> **Gavan Lennon’s session:** **Having Difficult Conversations: Using Music to Discuss Contemporary Racial Activism. (4.15 – 5.00pm Thursday 29th September)**The #BlackLivesMatter Movement is the most recent expression of a long, international Black freedom struggle. Since the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 made the movement impossible to ignore, and brought it to the attention of students to an unprecedented degree. While rooted in tragic realities of prejudice and violence, the movement provides an opportunity to engage students in difficult, but necessary, conversations about race, racism, and whiteness. One of the movement’s defining characteristics is a radical reimagining of democracy, and encouraging students to engage with their own responses to the Movement for Black Lives also allows teachers to provide dynamic and inclusive education on the role of democracy in contemporary social movements. This workshop will include an intellectual and cultural history of the movement, centred on practical ways to incorporate difficult conversations into the classroom. The second half of this workshop session will suggest ways to include readings contemporary hip hop songs that actively engage with the movement into secondary-level teaching.  |