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Tina Escaja,

Interim Director of Gender Sexuality and Women's Studies, and Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics

John Gennari,

Interim Director of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, and Associate Professor, Department of English

Katherine Nolfi,

Research Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy

Kathleen Gough,

Assistant Professor, Department of Theatre

Maeve Eberhardt,

Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics

Mary Driscoll,

Critical Race and Ethnic Studies and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program
Administrative Coordinator

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The Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Program

and

The Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program

present

The 12th ANNUAL RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

STUDENT CONFERENCE

Friday, March 18, 2016
Livak Ballroom, Davis Center

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 1:00 p.m. Refreshments
- 1:15 p.m. **Welcome**
Tina Escaja, Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics, and Interim Director of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
and
John Gennari, Associate Professor, Department of English, and Interim Director, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies
- 1:30 p.m. Opening Remarks (introduced by Tina Escaja)
Alisha Lewis, Senior, double major in Environmental Studies and Japanese
- 1:45 p.m. **Panel I**
- 2:45 p.m. Break
- 3:00 p.m. **Panel II**
- 4:00 p.m. Reception
- 5:00 p.m. Keynote Presentation
(introduced by John Gennari)
Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls
"Performing #Black Lives Matter"



About Our Programs

Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) invites students to delve into the history of the construction of race and the evolving meaning of the term in American society and beyond our national borders. A fundamental mission of our program is to interrogate the historical conviction that race is an immutable and easily discernible category of identity. At the same time, students investigate the various ways in which the concepts of race and ethnicity have shaped the contours of lives across the racial spectrum since the inception of public discourse about identity and difference. Faculty throughout the arts and sciences teach courses that hone the analytical tools for understanding race and ethnicity as they relate to economics, geography, literature, music, religion, theatre, and other aspects of American life. Students discover the particular social, cultural, and political implications of racial identity in various disciplines and enlarge their understanding of the theoretical and practical significance of race and ethnicity in our world.

The Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies program (GSWS) offers a unique and wide-ranging way of studying and engaging with the world. We study concepts such as sex, gender, and sexuality; identities such as female, male, gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer; the intersections of these identities with race, class, (dis)ability and other kinds of differences among people; and academic subjects including women's history, the sociology of the family, race and gender in urban space, queer theory, sex and politics, and biological approaches to sex and gender. GSWS is both an academic discipline and a meeting place for students and faculty in every discipline who want to explore these critically important issues. The Program is scholarly, and it is fully engaged with the world in which we live.

Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls



Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls, Assistant Professor of English at St. John's University (Queens, NY), is a scholar, artist, and writer. Her teaching and research focuses on Black popular culture in music, film, visual art, genre fiction, and other aesthetic forms. Dr. Smalls is currently finishing her first scholarly manuscript, *Hip Hop Heresies: Queer Aesthetics in New York City*. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Women & Performance, Criticism, Lateral, American Behavioral Scientist, Suspect Thoughts*, and Oxford University Press. She is a founding member of the [Sexual Politics/Sexual Poetics Working Group](#).

Find out more on [Dr. Smalls's tumblr](#)



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel One

1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

Moderator: **Paul Deslandes**, Chair and Associate Professor,
Department of History

Panelists:

Marissa McFadden, “The Female Threat”

Natasha Geffen, “Cross-Cultural Gender Binaries”

Drew Pizzo, “Loving by Halves – A Case for *Northanger Abby's*
Isabella Thorpe”

Panel Two

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Moderator: **Janice Perry**, GSWS Lecturer

Panelists:

Caroline Dababneh, “When”

Pearl Weggler, “Preserving Herstory or Casting a Spell”

Nyarkoa Mensah-Jorden, “The Call”

STUDENT BIOS

Alisha Lewis is a senior Environmental Studies and Japanese double major from Roseland, NJ. Alisha is a queer POC (person of color) who was born in China and raised in a Japanese American household. She loves socks, stickers, colors, and orange tic tacs. Her role as a student leader on campus includes UVM BORED, Orientation & New Student, and being part of the Davis Center Production Team.

Marissa McFadden is a junior History and Religion double major from New London, Connecticut who has an affinity for studying India and Islam in both her academic fields. The longer version of her paper was written for Professor Abigail McGowan's *Cultures of Colonialism: India* 200-level seminar during the fall 2015 semester. Marissa is also a Middle East Studies minor. She began her studies at UVM as a biochemistry and religion double major but Religion was just WAY cooler, so she said goodbye to biochemistry and added a history major in its place. Marissa recently got accepted into UVM's Accelerated Master's program to study history. She will be starting that in the fall of 2016. In the future, she hopes to pursue a PhD in Religion or South Asian Studies, with her ultimate goal being to become a professor. Marissa is president of the Religious Studies Club, an after-school teacher at the Sustainability Academy in Burlington's North End, as well as an English Language Teacher for the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. Marissa is a marathoner, ballet dancer, and avid reader.

Natasha Geffen is a freshman from Brookline, MA who is studying psychology. She wrote her paper, which addresses the gender binary across various cultures, for GSWS 001 with Professor Elaine McCrate. Her hobbies include reading, art-making, watching cartoons, and writing articles for the art section of *The Cynic*. Her passion for Gender and Women's Studies began in high school, where she joined a club called Students Against Human Trafficking and spent her time learning and educating others about the global issues of sex trafficking.

Drew Margaret Pizzo is a junior English major from central Connecticut. On campus, she spends her time engaging in classroom debates, doing research with Professor Lisa Schnell, and copy editing for the Vermont *Cynic*, where, in addition to removing Oxford commas (much to her chagrin), she often deviates from her role as neutral grammar-checker to take political issue with various articles. Off campus, she volunteers at ANEW Place, a homeless shelter on North Street, and with the program Everybody Wins! Vermont, a role in which she has the opportunity to read with an elementary school student every week. She is also a concessionista at Merrill's Roxy Cinemas, so be sure to say hi if you go to see a movie! She wrote her essay as a final research paper for Professor Eric Lindstrom's Jane Austen course last spring, a course that she loved and that served to inspire the senior thesis she's getting started on. Her paper looks at

homosocial relationships between women in *Northanger Abbey*, and she hopes to explore that theme throughout all of Austen's texts in her future research. She is so excited and honored to be able to present some of her ideas at this conference.

Caroline Dababneh is a junior Theatre and English double major and Philosophy minor from Reading, MA. She wrote her poem as a final project in EDHI (Higher Education) 202: Human Relations in University Residence Halls, a required course for all first-year Resident Advisors. Caroline is a UVM Resident Advisor, Orientation Leader, Program Director for the Dead Poets Society in the Living/Learning Center, and student representative for the Royall Tyler Theatre. She is deeply committed to and passionate about social justice work, and is hoping to pursue a master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs after completing her undergraduate studies next spring. She feels truly honored to be presenting at the Race, Gender, and Sexuality Conference!

Pearl Weggler is an undergraduate senior major in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies program, with a minor in Sociology. In 2014, she received her Associates of the Arts Degree in Liberal Studies at Bard College at Simon's Rock. Her research interests include feminist theory, queer theory, and feminist history. At the 2015 RGS conference she presented an ethnography on how people "do gender" in women's clothing stores. She is currently working on a research project that looks at the Riot Grrrl Movement's production of a Foucauldian "body politic." She is an active member in C.U.N.T.S (College Undergrads Not Tolerating Sexism), performing annually in their production of *The Vagina Monologues*. Her interests include painting, ranting, and contemplating the heteropatriarchy. When she's not studying, she works as a Peer Mentor for the Career Center, a Teaching Assistant for the Sociology Department, and a Research Assistant for Dr. Felicia Kornbluh in the history department. Last semester she interned at H.O.P.E. Works and currently volunteers on their 24/hr. Sexual Violence hotline. Pearl hopes to conduct a research fellowship this summer before she begins graduate school in Fall 2017. "Preserving Herstory or Casting a Spell" was written for Jean Besstte's class *English 281: Feminist History and Memory*. Pearl is from Northfield, Vermont.

Nyarkoa Mensah-Jordan is a singer-songwriter, social worker, dancer, mother, wife, sister and daughter of the Land of Enchantment, on sojourn in the green mountain state. She is in her final year at the University of Vermont's College of Education and Social Services and was recently accepted into UVM's graduate program in social work. She currently works at the Committee on Temporary Shelter. Her deep connection to the earth and its people was born in New Mexico. That is where the songs first came alive, spilling out into the waiting air. The holy blood of three great nations runs through her veins, and she honors them all. She gets great joy from dancing, singing and sharing deep and honest connection with other beings and the earth. Her relationship with God sustains and strengthens her. All is well!