

IRRPP Race and Sexuality Series, 2011-2012

March 16, 2012

IRRPP's Race and Sexuality Series is a multi-format series of initiatives, events and programs that explore the **intersections of race/ethnicity with sexual orientation, gender identity, class and other forms of oppression.**

Brief summary

The IRRPP Race and Sexuality Series this year focuses on the intersection of race and LGBTQ issues. This multi-format series of events includes:

1. a community dialog project in collaboration with local community organizations about issues of racism and youth disenfranchisement in Chicago's LGBTQ communities. This collaboration with UCAN LGBT Host Home Project, Broadway Youth Center, and Affinity Community Services, is supported in part by the UIC Institute for Civic and Public Engagement;
2. a public lecture on the criminalization of queer, trans and people of color;
3. a documentary screening of OutRage 69 with a discussion about race and Stonewall; and
4. a two-day event on the life and legacy of civil rights activist Bayard Rustin (organized by the UIC Gender and Sexuality Center).

1. Community Dialog Initiative: Engaging Chicago LGBTQ communities in a Community Discussion about Racism, Public Safety, and the Rights of Young People

This current collaboration between IRRPP and Chicago LGBTQ and youth organizations was spurred by violent clashes in the summer of 2011 in Boystown, Chicago's most iconic LGBT neighborhood. This community dialog initiative addresses issues of racism and ageism in Chicagoland's LGBTQ communities, tensions over gentrification and LGBTQ youth disenfranchisement, and the reliance, on the part of privileged LGBTQ citizens, on punitive systems of safety (police, hate crime laws, etc.) that disproportionately affect communities of color and young people.

In the summer of 2011, IRRPP identified a community need to address racial and anti-youth tensions in Chicago's LGBTQ communities. This was in response to a series of violent events that pitted mostly white and affluent LGBTQ residents and business owners against low-income, sometimes homeless LGBTQ youth of color in different areas of Chicago. Following IRRPP's engagement model, IRRPP acted as an anchor organization and:

- Contacted the community organizations mentioned below who work at the intersections of race, sexual orientation, class, and youth rights.
- Convened a meeting of these organizations to discuss the best strategies to address the issue. As a result of the meeting, a successful grant proposal was created to fund a series of small, safe dialogs among community stakeholders (youth, youth service providers, community leaders, and business owners and residents) to identify what the basis of the tensions is.
- To date, two community dialog meetings with youth have been conducted in the Lakeview and Kenwood neighborhoods where youth discussed issues of safety, race and sexual orientation as they relate to different neighborhoods in the city. We also held a meeting with youth service providers around issue of policing and surveillance of youth organization buildings.
- While more community dialogs are being planned, IRRPP plans to bring scholar-activists into the conversation, who can both learn from the ongoing work of the community organization and bring to bear their sociological, historical, economic, etc, analysis of what the root-causes of this tension are and how they can be explained.
- As a result of the community dialogs and the scholarly event, IRRPP and the community organizations will design a collaborative project for community mobilization around issues of racism and anti-youth sentiment in

LGBTQ communities. This project could include replicating the community dialogs in different neighborhoods, or devising an educational campaign, or working in partnership with the City of Chicago's Commissioner of Human Relations to sponsor a city-wide initiative. There is also an ongoing conversation with the LGBT city-wide coalition, which is interested in adopting this community dialog model.

Confirmed Project Partners for the Race and Sexuality Series Community Dialogs

- The Broadway Youth Center, a program of Howard Brown Health Center and its community partners, offering comprehensive services to youth, ages 12-24, including a safe space for young people experiencing homelessness;
- Affinity Community Services, a social justice organization that has been serving the Black and Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) communities and allies for over 15 years;
- Gender Just, a member-led, multi-generational and multi-racial grassroots organization of LGBTQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and allied) young people, people of color, and grassroots folks developing leadership and building power through organizing;
- UCAN's LGBTQ Host Home Program, an innovative housing model that provides an alternative to the shelter system for LGBTQ homeless youth, relying on Host Home Volunteers to open their home for a period of time to a youth ages 17-21.

The community dialog initiative is funded in part by UIC Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement.

2. Crime and Punishment: The Attack on Queer, Trans, and People of Color

This panel presentation and book signing event focuses on the criminalization of LGBTQ people, especially trans people and queer people of color. IRRPP invited to campus Dean Spade, author of *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics and the Limits of the Law*, and Andrea Ritchie and Joey Mogul, co-authors (with Kay Whitlock, of *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*). The event was moderated by Erica Meiners, Visiting Scholar in Residence at IRRPP and took place on Thursday, February 2nd, 2012, at 302 Student Center East, 750 S. Halsted St., Chicago.

Dean Spade is assistant professor at Seattle University School of Law. His book, *Normal Life*, critiques current LGBT strategies that rest solely on a "legal rights framework," and explores an organized grassroots trans movement that is demanding the most essential of legal reforms and making more comprehensive interventions into dangerous systems of repression. Setting forth a politic that goes beyond the quest for mere legal inclusion, *Normal Life* is an urgent call for justice and trans liberation, and the radical transformations it will require.

Andrea Ritchie (police misconduct attorney and organizer) and Joey Mogul (director of the Civil Rights Clinic at DePaul University College of Law) draw on years of research, activism, and legal advocacy in their book *Queer (In)Justice*, a searing examination of queer experiences--as "suspects," defendants, prisoners, and survivors of crime. The authors illustrate the punishment of queer expression, regardless of whether a crime was ever committed. Tracing stories from the streets to the bench to behind prison bars, the authors prove that the policing of sex and gender both bolsters and reinforces racial and gender inequalities. A groundbreaking work that turns a "queer eye" on the criminal legal system, *Queer (In)Justice* illuminates and challenges the many ways in which queer lives are criminalized, policed, and punished.

Cosponsored by the UIC English Department, the Department of Criminology, Law and Justice, and the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues.

3. OutRage '69 by Arthur Dong

The screening of the documentary OutRage '69 and the panel conversation with LGBT historian John D'Emilio and LGBT community organizers Precious Davis and Edwin Corbin-Gutierrez are meant to understand, discuss and critique the creation of a single-issue, white gay and lesbian movement after 1969.

The screening and discussion moderated by John D'Emilio happened Thursday, March 1st, 2012 at the Student Center East, 750 S. Halsted St., Chicago.

Out Rage '69, produced, directed, and written by award-winning Asian-American filmmaker Arthur Dong, examines the social and historical environment that gave rise to the current movement for gay and lesbian civil rights in America. 1969 was a landmark year for social revolution. While the war in Vietnam escalated, so did the massive efforts of the anti-war movement, with protests raging on campuses across the country. The Black Panthers and the Young Lords took to the streets to fight for the liberation of people of color. It was the year of Woodstock and the Manson murders. While Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, the fight for sexual freedom and women's liberation swept the nation.

John D'Emilio is a professor of history and of gender and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1982. A Guggenheim fellow in 1998 and National Endowment for the Humanities fellow in 1997, he served as Director of the Policy Institute at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force from 1995 to 1997. D'Emilio was awarded the Stonewall Book Award in 1984 for his most widely cited book, *Sexual politics, sexual communities*, which is considered the definitive history of the U.S. homophile movement from 1940 to 1970. His biography of the civil-rights leader Bayard Rustin, *Lost prophet: Bayard Rustin and the quest for peace and justice in America*, won the Stonewall Book Award for non-fiction in 2004. His and Estelle Freedman's book *Intimate matters: A history of sexuality in America* was cited in Justice Anthony Kennedy's opinion in *Lawrence v. Texas*, the 2003 American Supreme Court case overturning all remaining anti-sodomy laws.

Nathan "Precious" Davis is the Youth Empowerment Outreach Coordinator at the Center on Halsted, where she strengthens community relationships between young people across the city, facilitates groups, and organizes amazing social events. She also keeps busy by spearheading all of the outreach for the OVAH (Our Voices Advocating Health) Program. Precious is a native of Omaha, Nebraska and is a recent graduate of Columbia College Chicago with a Bachelors of Arts in Musical Theatre and Liberal Education. With a strong history in social justice and theatre education for over eight years with the National Conference for Community in Justice and The About Face Theatre, she is glad to engage young people in conversations about bias, bigotry, and prejudice in their communities. Precious also is an iconic staple as a drag performer in Boystown and can often be seen in various performance venues.

Edwin Emilio Corbin-Gutiérrez is the Youth Empowerment Manager at the Center on Halsted. Before joining the Center, Edwin coordinated Strength in Unity, a health advocacy coalition led by The Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA), and worked as a graduate research assistant in Medical Anthropology at Northwestern University. Edwin was a 2005 Fulbright Fellow in Caracas, Venezuela, and received his MA in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and his B.A. from Emerson College. Edwin is training for his third marathon to fight AIDS.

Cosponsored by the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues.

4. Bayard Rustin Centennial Conference

Organized by UIC's Gender and Sexuality Center, cosponsored by IRRPP.

This citywide dialog celebrates the legacy of civil rights leader Bayard Rustin and examines social justice work in changing times.

Keynote address from Mandy Carter, Performance and Reception, Friday March 30th, 6pm, Performing Arts and Social Work Building, 1040 W. Harrison St. Mandy Carter, National Coordinator of the Bayard Rustin Centennial 2012 Project of the National Black Justice coalition will share her thoughts about Rustin's legacy as well as other Centennial events taking place around the country. Following Carter's remarks, an original performance explores Rustin's life through traditional spirituals and uncovered letters composed during his prison stay as a war resister during WWII.

Social Justice Convening and Community Dialog, Saturday March 31st, 10am, UIC Campus. John D'Emilio, Professor of History and Gender and Women Studies begins the day with an overview of Rustin's career as an organizer and activist. Local scholars and community organizers share perspectives on Rustin's legacy and its resonance today. Discussants include Barbara Ransby, Chair of Gender and Women Studies at UIC and Lisa Marie Pickens, co-founder and current board president of Affinity Community Services. For the plenary session, an intergenerational panel of individuals working at the intersections of race, class, fair and sexual identity will discuss current priorities, challenges and strategies in Chicago.