

Initiatives for Racial Justice

WSGS/MLL Faculty: Cristina Lombardi-Diop

At Loyola Level

Participation in Anti-racist pedagogy Workshop (June-July 2020)

Faculty participated and contributed with a Power Point on Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies for anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom in one of the seminars for the workshop (June 7, 2020). The contribution aims at mobilizing critical race theory in favor of classroom instruction and activities that foster racial awareness among white students and advances standpoint knowledge and experiences of students of color.

Academic/ Public Work

Interview on Public Media

Cristina Lombardi-Diop was interviewed by Max Herber of the Swiss National Broadcasting Company (RSI) on the impact of racism in the United States and on her experience as a mother of Black children. In particular, Cristina shared her observations on what it means to teach black children how to protect themselves from police harassment, the daily life impact of race in school and in social interactions, the assumptions about educational success, housing discrimination and neighbor. The aim of the interview was to raise awareness of how racial prejudice affects any black person, regardless of their class and social status. Finally, Cristina argues that racial justice is not just about discrete actions that undo racism, but a constant process of personal awareness and historical acknowledgement of our past and our stories.

The interview aired live on the Swiss National TV

<https://www.rsi.ch/play/tv/redirect/detail/13130979>

An article was also published on the RSI's website.

<https://www.rsi.ch/news/mondo/Nessuno-è-al-riparo-dal-razzismo-13133484.html>

Recent research activities addressing race and racial justice

In Spring 2020, Cristina, in collaboration with WSGS graduate student Gaby Perez Laurent, prepared a presentation to be delivered at the 2020 Annual Conference of The American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA). The presentation, titled "Black bodies at the border," proposes a working definition of racial relations to account for the varied experiences of black and brown migrants at two locations (the Mexican US border, and the Mediterranean) in relation to border policies and practices. The aim is understanding how, in our times, borders

have become apparatus of systemic racial terror through surveillance, identification, enumeration, capture, refoulement, and the spectacle of letting die black bodies by the thousand as a result of racial calculus. The argument is that border racial regimes belong to a long durée of antiblack terror and spectacle, so much so, that their ‘grammar’ seems to repeat itself across different temporalities and spatial contexts, including the antebellum South, Africa’s postcolonial migrations to Europe, and the Mexican/US border.

Much of these concerns inform Cristina’s most recent activities within the scholarly and activist Collective that has formed around the project “The Black Mediterranean.” The first work to published out of a series of conferences (in Palermo in 2018 and in Lisbon in 2019) is a book (*The Black Mediterranean: Bodies, Borders, and Citizenship*) by Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming in September 2020. Bringing together scholars working in geography, political theory, sociology, and cultural studies, the volume takes the Black Mediterranean as a starting point for asking and answering a set of crucial questions about the racialized production of borders, bodies, and citizenship in contemporary Europe: what is the role of borders in controlling migrant flows from North Africa and the Middle East?; what is the place for black bodies in the Central Mediterranean context?; what is the relevance of the citizenship in reconsidering black subjectivities in Europe?

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030513900>

Curricular Changes at Present (fall 2020)

WSGS 201: Women and Migration Through Culture. For Unit 1, which introduces students to key issues in intersectional gender studies and migration studies, diaspora studies, and border studies, I have added new readings on the impact of race for DACA students, race in the US, and the racial underpinnings at the borders of Europe (the Mediterranean Border). For Unit 2, which is about migrant storytelling through writing and the arts, I have added material on Latinx border art, women of color’s stories, and refugee art by POC.

Curricular Changes in the Future (Online Certificate on Gender and Migration)

WSGS 450: The course is one of the four courses that populate the curricular offering of this new Certificate that the Women’s Studies and Gender Studies Program is launching in the fall. The course maps the field of global feminist studies and offers theoretical and critical tools in order to understand, from a feminist perspective, how women in the Global South are affected by and face the challenges posed by the global economic, cultural, and political changes related to globalization, migratory movements, and the racial regimes associated with them. The course is structured around two modules: the first module establishes a theoretical framework that helps us assess the impact of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and economic power on contemporary postcolonial relations. Black feminism, Women of Color feminism, postcolonial, transnational, and decolonial feminisms, as well as Muslim feminism, are some of the theories covered in this module. By exploring the biases associated with racism, ethnocentrism, whiteness, and the lingering divide between ‘first’- and ‘third’ world feminisms, the course highly contributes to

enhance awareness and knowledge of racial injustice around the world.