

COLUMBIA | SOCIAL DIFFERENCE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Photo by Clark Jones



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The Center for The Study of Social Difference is an interdisciplinary research center supporting collaborative projects that address gender, race, sexuality, and other forms of inequality to foster ethical and progressive social change.

The Center's work has two overarching research themes, [Women Creating Change](#) and [Imagining Justice](#).

STAFF



PAIGE WEST
DIRECTOR



CATHERINE LASOTA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



AYAH ELDO SOUGI
PROGRAM COORDINATOR



FAHMIDA HUSSAIN
BUSINESS OFFICER

GRADUATE ASSISTANT: [Tomi Haxhi](#), Slavic Languages Columbia University

2019-20 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

In the face of the extraordinary social, political, and economic challenges and transformations we have seen in the past year, I could not be prouder to be a part of the Center for the Study of Social Difference. We have been, from our inception, a collective of scholars and activists who are committed to understanding the structural underpinnings and causes of violence, oppression, and dispossession, who are also committed to using that knowledge to effect positive change in the world. At CSSD we stand together in the belief that producing knowledge about the world through scholarly collaboration across fields and perspectives is one way to build a better collective future. With that in mind, and with the acknowledgment of the ongoing struggles of many of the communities and the people we hold dear, I want to share with you some of the extremely positive events that have taken place at the Center this year.

This Fall our staff at CSSD grew with the wonderful addition of Fahmida Hussain as our Business Officer. Prior to joining us, Fahmida, who is an economist by training, worked as a finance officer for Councilman Azadur Rahman in Bangladesh. Since joining us she has taken over the day to day management of our finances and human resources operations. With Fahmida onboard, Catherine LaSota, who was named Executive Director of CSSD last summer, has shifted her focus to fundraising and enhancing her liaison work with our partners. Catherine's report about her enormous success this year will follow this Director's Note. Our team is rounded out by Ayah Eldosugi, who continues in her role as Program Coordinator, effortlessly managing a team of dedicated student assistants, including our Graduate Assistant Tomi Haxhi. Ayah spent the year facilitating our working group meetings and events, as well as developing our social media presence. Throughout the Fall we developed an extraordinary collaborative process and worked to grow some signature programs that will allow CSSD to disseminate our work to a broader public. All of this was slowed when in March, the entire university became virtual over the course of a single week.

It is worth noting here that the CSSD staff collective came together this year in the face of family illnesses, technological difficulties, and radically transformed commitments to students and colleagues, and formed what I think of as a model for caring collaboration under extreme duress. Everyone took care to make sure that our colleagues had what they needed to do their necessary work, and had the space to turn their attention to family, home, and other pressing responsibilities when they needed to do that. I personally am proud of our group in ways that I find hard to articulate.

Throughout this annual report you will find descriptions of our working groups and their various projects, events and publications. A number of them worked closely with Catherine LaSota to develop and maintain collaborations with the Columbia Global Centers. Here I want to briefly note that our public events covered topics from migration and mobility to the #MeToo movement to a series on Indigenous filmmaking. We were particularly proud to launch the book *Women Mobilizing Memory* in early November, bringing together authors, faculty, and students to celebrate the forms of scholarship, art, and activist work that can come out of a CSSD working group. Even after the pandemic shutdown of the campus, we were very pleased to be able to host the timely webinar event "Frontline Nurses: Leaders in Pandemic Response." This event, curated by our On the Frontlines working group, brought the voices of nurses from West Africa working on the frontlines of the Ebola outbreak in 2014 to hundreds of people who logged on to gain a better understanding of the crucial work that nurses do during catastrophic disease events.

Next year we welcome three new working groups to CSSD. Black Atlantic Ecologies, our first collaboration with Columbia's Earth Institute, will focus on the enduring effects of coloniality and disparities of power that African diasporic communities confront through ecological crisis and climate change. Vanessa Agard-Jones and Marisa Solomon join the Center as Co-directors of this new group. We also welcome Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi to CSSD as the Director of the new group *Insurgent Domesticities*, within which scholars and activists will examine the politics of 'home,' thinking through histories of solidarity, disobedience, stealth and militancy at multiple scales. Finally, *Motherhood and Technology*, directed by Rishi Goyal and Arden Hegele, continues CSSD's work to bring together scholars from Medicine and the Humanities. This working group will focus on questions of how medical technology has, and has not, altered the experience of motherhood globally.

None of us know what next year will bring at CSSD, Columbia University, or in the world. Yet I know that the crucial knowledge produced by our working groups and made public through our events, both in person and online, will continue to help us make sense of whatever comes our way.

Paige WEST

Claire Tow Professor of Anthropology, Barnard College and Columbia University

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

This past academic year has been a time of great challenges but also incredible growth at the Center for the Study of Social Difference. We have ten active working groups across our Women Creating Change and Imagining Justice initiatives that will continue their efforts into the coming year, alongside three new working groups launching in 2020-21. I continue to be amazed and inspired by the in-depth conversations across disciplines, within the university and beyond, that take place via the Center and lead to the production of new knowledge and real world impact.

One of the strengths of CSSD is our collaborations. I am excited for our newest partnership, with Columbia's Earth Institute, which, as with our partnership with Columbia's Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life, provides the resources to fully fund a new working group at the Center. We proudly continue our membership with the international Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes, whose members have come together online to brainstorm our approaches to remote learning and research. Additionally, support from the Social Science Research Council, the Brocher Foundation, and the United Nations WSSCC, among others, has given our working groups the resources they need to increase the impact of their research globally, through conferences, handbooks, and workshops.

Another strength of the Center is the incredible administrative team at CSSD. Program Coordinator Ayah Eldosougi, who joined the Center during our tenth anniversary two years ago, and Fahmida Hussain, who joined CSSD as our first Business Officer just two months before we temporarily said goodbye to our physical offices, made all of our successes this year possible. I am incredibly grateful to work with such capable and compassionate women.

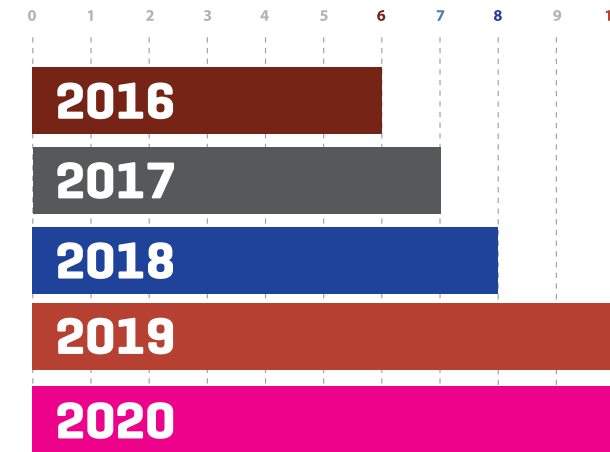
I am grateful also to our Women Creating Change Leadership Council for their tireless support of the work we do at the Center to make sure women's issues are at the forefront, and I welcome our newest members who joined in the past year. Thanks to our generous donors on the Council, we were able to break our Columbia Giving Day fundraising records. I look forward to continuing my conversations with the Council and with new partners in the coming years as we forge ahead into a more just world.

Finally, I am extremely proud of the Media Fellow program we introduced in partnership with Columbia's School of Journalism this year. This project placed Masters of Arts journalism students into our working groups on Menstrual Health and Gender Justice, Racial Capitalism, and Geographies of Injustice, providing context for future reported pieces in arts, politics, and business, and enhancing CSSD's media relationships.

The future is uncertain, but here at the Center, we are prepared for such times, having been part of the important discussions around gender, race, class, and other areas of social difference and inequality for twelve years. Our faculty, students, and staff stand ready to tackle the tough questions that will lead to substantive change.

Catherine LASOTA, Executive Director

NUMBER OF ACTIVE PROJECTS



CSSD will support a record **13 projects** in 2021.

CUTTING ACROSS DISCIPLINES

We're collaborating **across Columbia Schools and Units** on projects and content.



PHOTO CREDIT: Eileen Barroso, Columbia Office of University Publications.

- Columbia Law School
- School of Journalism
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Columbia University Libraries
- School of General Studies
- School of International and Public Affairs
- Columbia College
- Barnard College
- Mailman School of Public Health
- Columbia University Irving Medical Center
- School of the Arts
- Columbia Global Centers
- Teachers College
- Columbia Business School

TURNING IDEAS INTO IMPACT: HOW WE DO IT



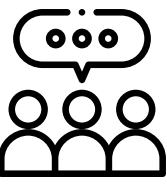
BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



CREATING NEW ACADEMIC COURSES



PUBLIC EVENTS AND WORKING GROUPS



INFLUENCING POLICY AND WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

OUR WORK: BY THE NUMBERS

3 YEAR
DURATION OF OUR PROJECTS

\$75,000
AVERAGE PROJECT COST

40+
PUBLIC EVENTS EACH YEAR

30
PROJECTS & COUNTING



OUR WORK SPANS **8 WORLD REGIONS AND OVER 35 COUNTRIES**

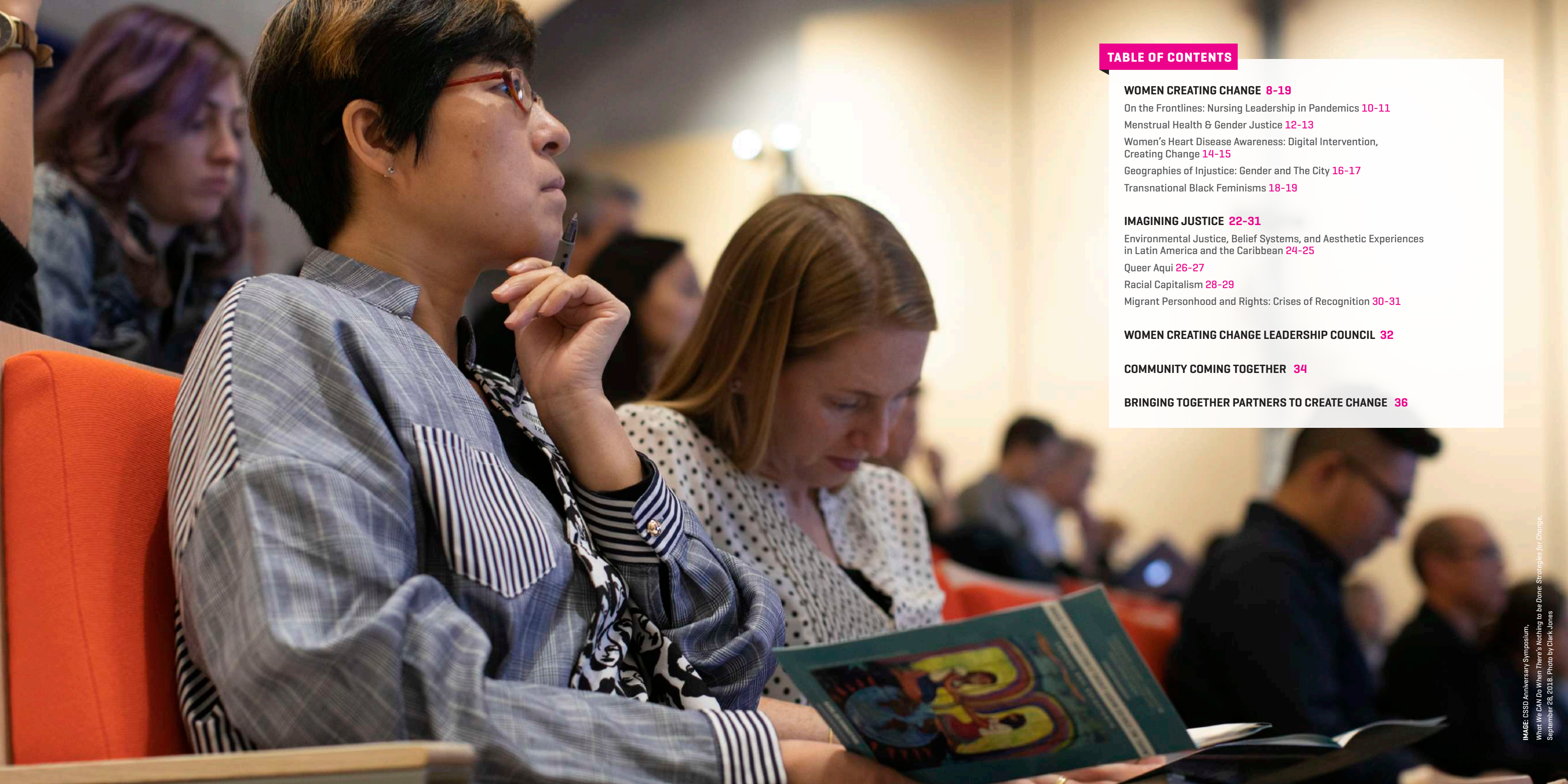


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WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

Women Creating Change, celebrating its seventh year in 2020, engages distinguished feminist scholars from diverse fields throughout Columbia University. With project partnerships across departments and schools, WCC focuses on contemporary global problems affecting women and on the roles women play in addressing these problems.

ACTIVE WORKING GROUPS IN 2019-20:

[On the Frontlines: Nursing Leadership in Pandemics](#)

[Menstrual Health and Gender Justice](#)

[Women's Heart Disease Awareness: Digital Intervention, Creating Change](#)

[Geographies of Injustice: Gender and the City](#)

[Transnational Black Feminisms](#)

NEW WORKING GROUPS LAUNCHING IN 2020-21:

[Insurgent Domesticities](#)

[Motherhood & Technology](#)

ON THE FRONTLINES: NURSING LEADERSHIP IN PANDEMICS

[On the Frontlines: Nursing Leadership in Pandemics](#) seeks to understand the role of nurses as change agents in the prevention, detection and response to pandemic infectious disease outbreaks. Although nurses are crucial to combatting pandemics, their work is often not considered when international leaders gather to discuss global health issues. This is a consequence of both the MD-centered hierarchy of medical practice and the fact that nursing remains a profession in which women predominate (in the US, over 90% of registered nurses are women). This is a dangerous omission, since although nurses are on the front lines of care, little is known about the range of activities they undertake beyond what may be obvious in patient care. Key clinical innovations are overlooked when they should be universally implemented, and there is little record of the painful choices nurses and other health professionals often make between taking care of patients and protecting themselves and their families.

This group formed around an interest in understanding the work of nurses and midwives in the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. In response to recent events, the group has expanded its scope to include a comparative study of the work of nurses and midwives in the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak, conducting oral histories of COVID-19 nurses in collaboration with the Columbia Center for Oral History Research.

DIRECTORS:



JENNIFER DOHRN



WILMOT JAMES



VICTORIA ROSNER

[Jennifer Dohrn](#), Associate Professor of Nursing and Assistant Dean of Global Initiatives, Nursing at CUIMC, Columbia University

[Wilmot James](#), Senior Research Scholar at the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP), Columbia University

[Victoria Rosner](#), Dean of Academic Affairs, School of General Studies; Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

COORDINATOR: [Jeremy Orloff](#), Post Baccalaureate Student, School of General Studies, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC TALKS

- April 16, 2020: "[Oral History of Disasters and Pandemics with Mary Marshall Clark](#)."
- May 6, 2020: "[Frontline Nurses: Leaders in Pandemic Response](#)" webinar featuring Annette Mwansa Nkowane, WHO; Susan Micheals-Strasser, ICAP, Columbia University; and Margaret Loma Phiri, Seed Global Health, among others.

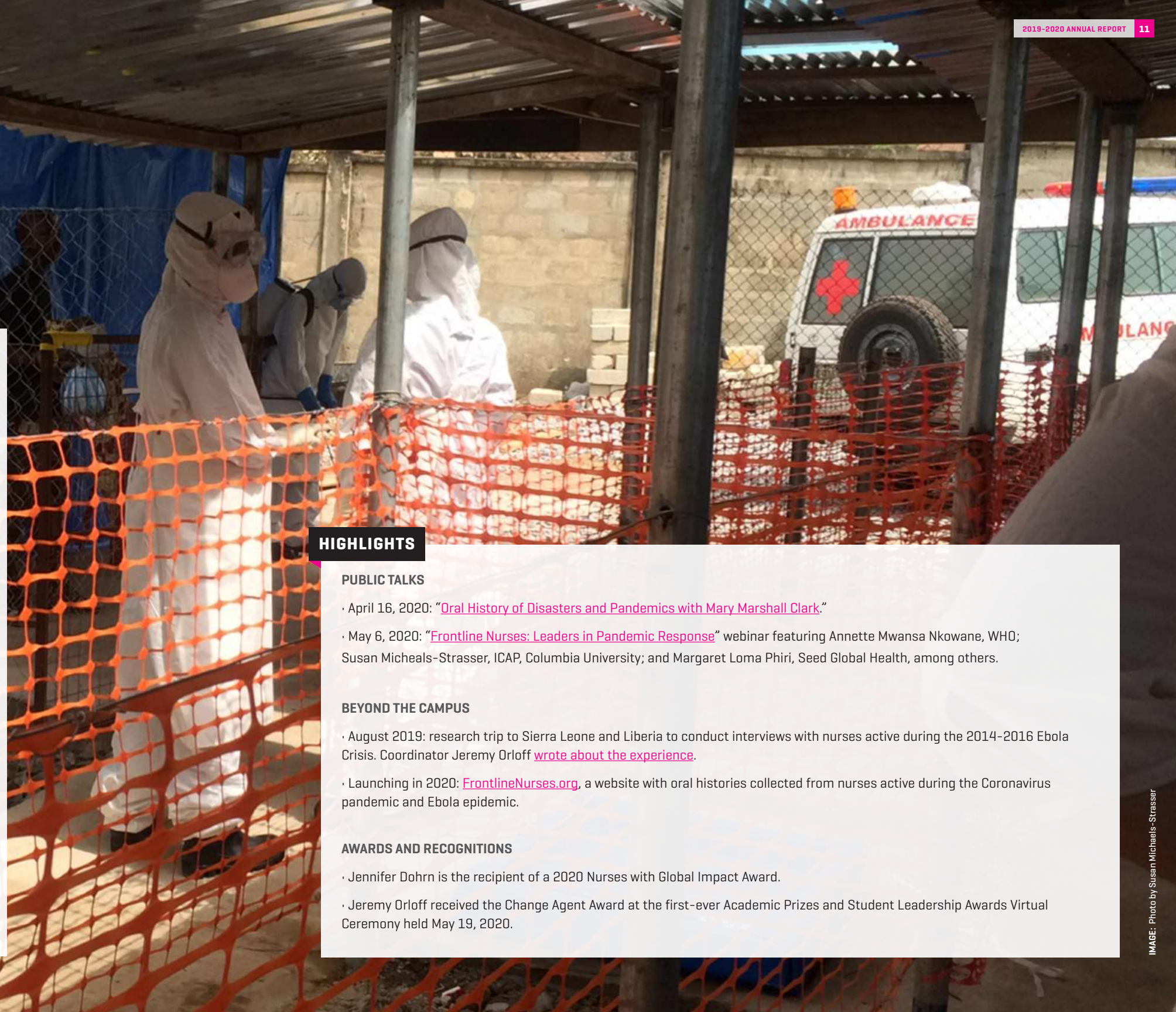
BEYOND THE CAMPUS

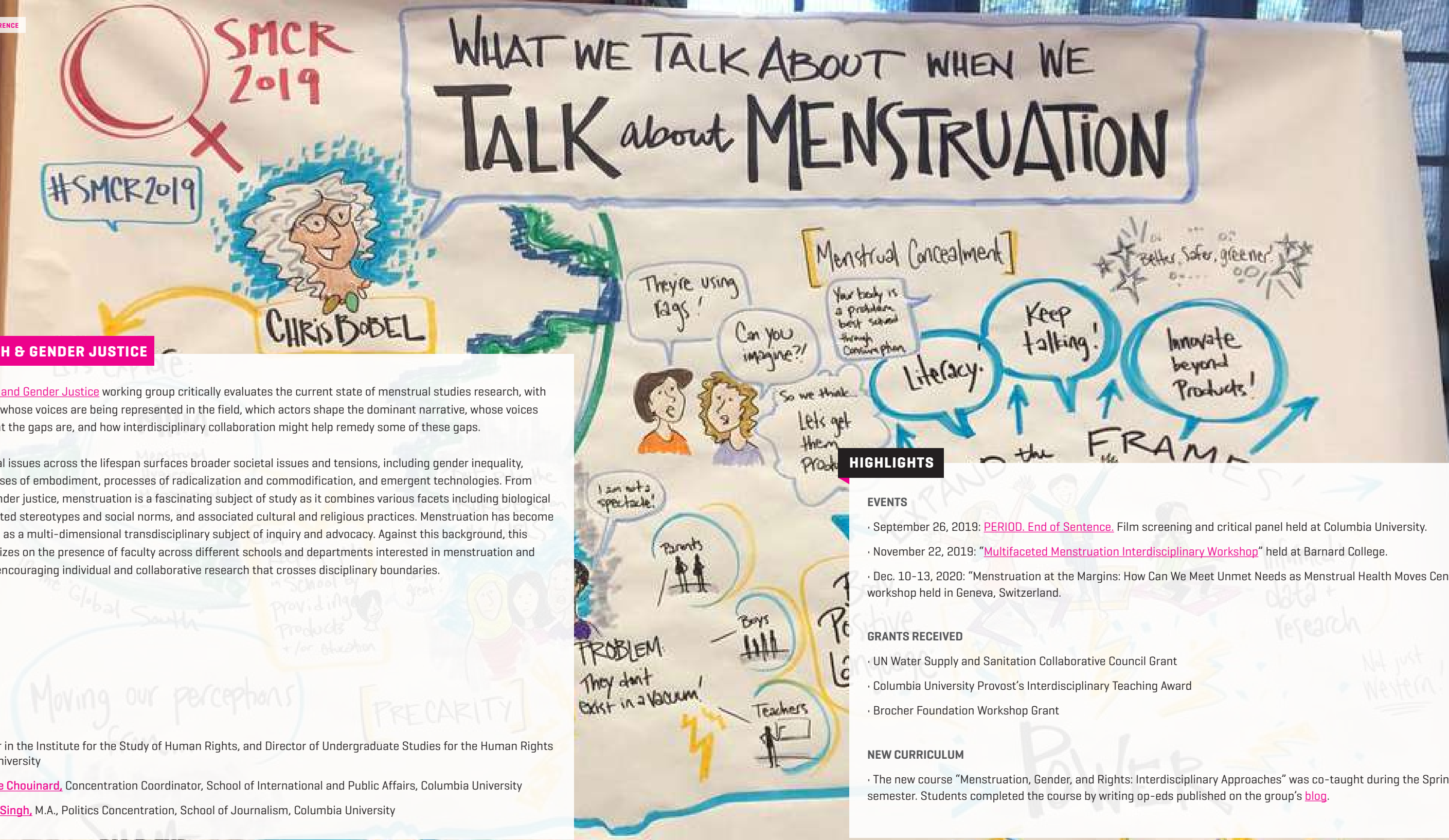
- August 2019: research trip to Sierra Leone and Liberia to conduct interviews with nurses active during the 2014-2016 Ebola Crisis. Coordinator Jeremy Orloff [wrote about the experience](#).

- Launching in 2020: [FrontlineNurses.org](#), a website with oral histories collected from nurses active during the Coronavirus pandemic and Ebola epidemic.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Jennifer Dohrn is the recipient of a 2020 Nurses with Global Impact Award.
- Jeremy Orloff received the Change Agent Award at the first-ever Academic Prizes and Student Leadership Awards Virtual Ceremony held May 19, 2020.





MENSTRUAL HEALTH & GENDER JUSTICE

The [Menstrual Health and Gender Justice](#) working group critically evaluates the current state of menstrual studies research, with interest in examining whose voices are being represented in the field, which actors shape the dominant narrative, whose voices are marginalized, what the gaps are, and how interdisciplinary collaboration might help remedy some of these gaps.

Attention to menstrual issues across the lifespan surfaces broader societal issues and tensions, including gender inequality, practices and discourses of embodiment, processes of radicalization and commodification, and emergent technologies. From the perspective of gender justice, menstruation is a fascinating subject of study as it combines various facets including biological processes, deeply rooted stereotypes and social norms, and associated cultural and religious practices. Menstruation has become a category of analysis as a multi-dimensional transdisciplinary subject of inquiry and advocacy. Against this background, this working group capitalizes on the presence of faculty across different schools and departments interested in menstruation and provides a forum for encouraging individual and collaborative research that crosses disciplinary boundaries.

DIRECTOR:



INGA WINKLER

[Inga Winkler](#), Lecturer in the Institute for the Study of Human Rights, and Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Human Rights Program, Columbia University

COORDINATOR: [Michelle Chouinard](#), Concentration Coordinator, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

MEDIA FELLOW: [Amitoj Singh](#), M.A., Politics Concentration, School of Journalism, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

- September 26, 2019: [PERIOD. End of Sentence](#). Film screening and critical panel held at Columbia University.
- November 22, 2019: "[Multifaceted Menstruation Interdisciplinary Workshop](#)" held at Barnard College.
- Dec. 10-13, 2020: "Menstruation at the Margins: How Can We Meet Unmet Needs as Menstrual Health Moves Center Stage?" workshop held in Geneva, Switzerland.

GRANTS RECEIVED

- UN Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council Grant
- Columbia University Provost's Interdisciplinary Teaching Award
- Brocher Foundation Workshop Grant

NEW CURRICULUM

- The new course "Menstruation, Gender, and Rights: Interdisciplinary Approaches" was co-taught during the Spring 2020 semester. Students completed the course by writing op-eds published on the group's [blog](#).

WOMEN'S HEART DISEASE AWARENESS: DIGITAL INTERVENTION, CREATING CHANGE

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of mortality for women in the United States, accounting for more deaths than breast cancer, cervical cancer, and Alzheimer's disease combined. While the majority of women age 40-60 have at least one risk factor for CVD, very few have had this risk assessed by their doctor. Nearly half of women are still not aware that CVD kills more women than cancer and only about a third of Hispanic and African American women identify it as the number one cause of death.

In order to effect real change, we must not only find ways to increase awareness of heart disease in women, but also identify ways to get women to make lasting changes in their lifestyle. [The Women's Heart Disease Awareness: Digital Intervention, Creating Change](#) group seeks to identify barriers to heart disease awareness and explore pathways to change on a personal individual level as well as a community and population level that lead to improved women's heart health. This group studies whether one specific tool, a mobile health App called [Love My Heart](#), is better able achieve these goals compared with usual care. In addition, this group explores more broadly the ways that digital tools and social media can improve health education and identify what factors, such as fear, empowerment, etc., promote women to exercise more and eat healthier - these are lifestyle changes that historically have been hard to achieve with a more traditional approach.

DIRECTORS



DR. NATALIE BELLO



DR. SONIA TOLANI

[Dr. Natalie Bello](#), Assistant Professor of Medicine, CU Irving Medical Center

[Dr. Sonia Tolani](#), Assistant Professor of Medicine, CU Irving Medical Center

COORDINATOR: [Ersilia DeFilippis](#), Postdoctoral Clinical Fellow, Columbia University Department of Medicine, Cardiology

HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC EVENTS

- October 24, 2019: "[Improving Women's Health: Strategies for Creating Change](#)" with Randi H. Epstein, Rita Kukafka, Carolee Lee, Renata Schiavo, and moderated by Dr. Natalie Bello.
- June 4, 2020: [Caring for the Heart: Women's Health During COVID-19](#) with Dr. Jennifer Haythe, Center for Advanced Cardiac Care at Columbia; Professor D. Prabhakaran, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and moderated by Dr. Sonia Tolani.

GEOGRAPHIES OF INJUSTICE: GENDER AND THE CITY

[Geographies of Injustice: Gender and the City](#) is a working group of interdisciplinary scholars who are interested in asking how spatial politics intersects with inequality and social difference (race, caste, and ethnicity). The members of this group focus on marginalized and stigmatized spaces, for example “slums,” “favelas,” and “ghettos,” and examine the gendering of those spaces, including how motherhood and the family structure are devalued and destructured in these spaces, and how creative life-making strategies might redress histories of stigma and exclusion.

This group asks how we might generate public facing pedagogy and outreach that has the capacity to redress spatial inequality through design, policy, activism, and cultural production. To that end, Geographies of Injustice collaborates with an array of site-specific scholars, activists, urban planners, students, and community organizations to formulate both new pedagogies and research methods to develop strategies for social equity and spatial desegregation. Connections across Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai, as well as collaborations with partners in Jordan and Lebanon, are a special focus of the working group.

DIRECTORS



ANUPAMA RAO



ANA PAULINA LEE

[Anupama Rao](#), Associate Professor of History, Barnard College, and Associate Director of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University

[Ana Paulina Lee](#), Assistant Professor of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS: [Sohini Chattopadhyay](#), Ph.D. Candidate, History, Columbia University

[Iuri Bauler](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University

MEDIA FELLOW: [Jessica Joyce Jacolbe](#), M.A., Arts Concentration, School of Journalism, Columbia University

I ♥ ROCINHA 1930

Salão NIZA Coiffeur.

(JEOVA-NISST "O Senhor é a minha bandeira")

HIGHLIGHTS

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Ana Paulina Lee's [Mandarin Brazil: Race, Representation, and Memory](#) was recognized by the Brazil Section at the Latin American Studies Association with the Antonio Candido Prize for Best Book in the Humanities.
- Professors Ana Paulina Lee and Anupama Rao are inaugural grantees of the Social Science Research Council's New Interdisciplinary Projects in the Social Sciences award for their project "Reconstructing Memory in Dharavi, Mumbai and Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro."
- Graduate fellows of the Geographies of Injustice working group Sohini Chattopadhyay and Laura Yan organized the "[Bombay Indian Ocean Urbanisms Workshop](#)," which brought together participants from the U.S., India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Singapore, England, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan for four days of workshops.

NEW CURRICULUM

- [Subaltern Urbanism](#) was co-taught by professors Ana Paulina Lee and Anupama Rao during the Spring 2020 semester with support from the Center for Spatial Research at Columbia.

TRANSNATIONAL BLACK FEMINISMS

The [Transnational Black Feminisms](#) working group aims to think about how transnational Black feminisms can move us beyond survivability and demands for recognition, and instead generate alternative frames and understandings around belonging, community, justice, and equity. Black feminism has, by necessity, emerged in tandem with political mobilizations: the struggle against slavery and colonialism; demands for government assistance or social services; and opposition to sexual or state violence, including Black Lives Matter. Such struggles have created the conditions of possibility for nurturing a politics of radical social transformation. They have also raised broader, foundational questions about the relationship between theory and praxis, lived experiences and the articulation of expansive visions of social change.

In an era of heightened anti-Black racism—which manifests as systematic police violence, webs of carcerality, discourses of cultural depravity, ghettoization, gentrification, and disposability—it is essential to center a politics of blackness through a feminist, queer, anti-capitalist and anti-imperial lens, as an important vector for the political and social possibilities of imagining and working towards the realization of justice. This working group explores the historic and ongoing intellectual engagements between Black feminism, transnational feminism, queer politics, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism—all of which Black feminisms speak to through Black women's analyses of intersecting oppressions, the simultaneity of oppression, and strategies for reimagining freedom. This group aims to assess the coherence and/or visibility of a transnational Black feminist politic, as well as the convergences and divergences, overlaps and contradictions, and synergistic associations among Black feminism, Indigenous feminism, Latinx feminism, and Asian feminism.

DIRECTORS



CELIA E. NAYLOR



PREMILLA NADASEN

[Celia E. Naylor](#), Associate Professor, Africana Studies and History, Barnard College

[Premilla Nadasen](#), Professor of History, Barnard College

GRADUATE ASSISTANT: [Noni Carter](#), Ph.D. Candidate, French and Romance Philology, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

THE TRANSNATIONAL BLACK FEMINISMS GROUP SPENT 2019-20 IN CONVERSATIONS TO PLAN THESE FORTHCOMING INITIATIVES:

- A collaborative event focused, via black feminist critical analyses, on the realities and ramifications of COVID-19 on BIPOC communities.
- A public event [postponed to Spring 2021] with Beverly Guy-Sheftall and Paula Giddings centered around their forthcoming book on Black feminisms.
- A Black Transnational Feminisms syllabus that will be taught by members of the working group at their respective campuses.
- A website to disseminate information concerning the working group's various topics and pedagogical initiatives more broadly.



“Working with On the Frontlines was an eye-opening and perspective shifting experience for someone on their way to medical school. The stories we collected from the nurses - heroes of the Ebola crisis - will inspire and motivate my own work in global health equity.”

JEREMY ORLOFF
Coordinator, On the Frontlines:
Nursing Leadership in Pandemics

“Since its launch in 2011, the Columbia Global Center | Istanbul has been focusing on gender issues through a collaboration with the CSSD. Through a series of programs and events, such as Women Creating Change, the Center has brought together a diverse network of scholars, students, practitioners, and socially engaged artists to address global issues affecting women and explore how women can create change in their own societies.”

IPEK CEM TAHA
Director, Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul

“The Geographies of Injustice working group expanded my perspective in the ways that the media has covered the favelas in Rio and slums of Mumbai, and the privilege to sit-in on the Subaltern Urbanism class was incredibly helpful.”

JESSICA JOYCE JACOLBE
Media Fellow with Geographies of Injustice:
Gender and the City

“What I value most about the CSSD is the truly welcoming and collaborative space it creates. Schools, departments and other siloes don’t seem to matter, and the resulting exchanges offer much food for thought that’s extremely beneficial for my work.”

INGA WINKLER
Director of Menstrual Health and Gender Justice

IMAGE: Ministruation at the Margins workshop at the Fondation Brocher in Hermansee, Switzerland, December 2019. Photo by Purvaja S. Karavatur



IMAGINING JUSTICE

Imagining Justice brings together scholars, activists, and artists on projects that envision new ways of fighting inequality and promoting gender, racial, economic, and environmental justice in global and domestic contexts.

ACTIVE WORKING GROUPS IN 2019-20:

[Environmental Justice, Belief Systems, and Aesthetic Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) [with support from IRCPL]

[Queer Aqui](#)

[Racial Capitalism](#)

[Migrant Personhood and Rights: Crises of Recognition](#)

[Data, Algorithms, and Social Justice](#) [public events launching Fall 2020]

NEW WORKING GROUPS LAUNCHING IN 2020:

[Black Atlantic Ecologies](#) [with support from the Earth Institute]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, BELIEF SYSTEMS, AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The [Environmental Justice, Belief Systems, and Aesthetic Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean group](#), supported with funding from the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life at Columbia University, studies current struggles for justice that are articulated through the expressive cultures and aesthetic experiences of local communities in these regions. Environmental conflicts have increased dramatically over the past few decades, affecting and displacing indigenous populations, Afro-descendants, women, children, and peasants. Communities have to confront the transnational increase of agribusiness, hydroelectric projects, mining corporations, systematic food injustice, and their entanglement with the drug war and localized armed conflicts. Such struggles are taking place amidst dramatic events provoked by climate change as well as the rise of extremist governments in the Americas, supported by the evangelical right, increasing the number of climate, alimentary, and war refugees and asylum-seekers.

The resurgence and mobilization of what have historically been called traditional, indigenous, and Afro-descendant expressive forms-- songs, rituals, images, objects, feasts, culinary arts, and ceremonies -- has been dramatic, as is the rise of an indigenous film movement in different countries in Latin America. Technologies such as loudspeakers, microphones, hard drives, and other media are changing public and private space. New alliances between artists, scholars, and ritual specialists like shamans or babalaos, and between sound artists and activists, are informing these aesthetic expressions. This working group contends that these forms of aesthetic experience – in narrative form, through visual images, through sounds, through unexpected alliances – give shape to new ways of imagining justice and of imagining the relation between humans and non-humans, including deities and other religious entities.

DIRECTORS



MARÍA VICTORIA MURILLO



ANA M. OCHOA GAUTIER

SUPPORTED BY



[María Victoria Murillo](#), Professor of Political Science and International and Public Affairs, and Director of the Institute for Latin American Studies, Columbia University

[Ana M. Ochoa Gautier](#), Professor of Music and Chair, Department of Music, Columbia University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT: [Maria Fantinato](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Ethnomusicology, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC EVENTS

- October 10-11, 2019: [Water, Sound and Indigenous Film: Ushui](#) film screening and workshop with Ushui film makers José Gregorio Mojica Gil and Rafael Mojica Gil.
- February 2020: “[Year of Water: The Amazon and Its Tributaries](#)” exhibition in collaboration with the Columbia Music and Arts Library.
- February 13, 2020: [Water, Sound and Indigenous Film: Antonio & Piti](#) film screening and Q&A with film director Vincent Carelli.

MEDIA

- September 27, 2019: Co-Directors Ana Ochoa and Vicky Murillo in conversation for [Unpacking Latin America](#) podcast.
- December 10, 2019: Vicky Murillo was [featured in the New York Times](#).
- January 27, 2020: Vicky Murillo interviewed journalist Daniel Alacon for Unpacking Latin America podcast.

QUEER AQUI

[Queer Aqui](#) (formerly Queer Theory: Here, Now, and Everywhere) sets out to discuss, debate and investigate the politics of sexuality and gender in a global frame. This group builds upon the vast network of queer scholars in the New York area and reaches out to groups in Beirut, Buenos Aires, Rio De Janeiro, Quito and Istanbul in order to consider how best to resituate queer studies to respond to shifts in the meanings of family, sexual health, gendered embodiment, religion, sexual practices, gender variance, activism and sexual communities worldwide. This group's main focus is in considering the place of sexuality and gender in both the spread of global capitalism, right-wing populism, and in the activist responses to these new forms of authoritarianism.

Scholars in Queer Aqui have worked on neoliberalism, LGBT law, trans* issues, transnational imaginaries, queer diaspora, negative affects, art and politics, the queer decolonial, temporality and spatiality, phenomenology, and much more. This multidisciplinary group is committed to asking questions about the future of queer politics, the future of queer culture, and the potential of new forms of solidarity, protest and queer thought.

DIRECTORS



JACK HALBERSTAM



MACARENA GÓMEZ-BARRIS



DANIEL DA SILVA

[Jack Halberstam](#), Professor of Gender Studies and English Literature, Columbia University

[Macarena Gomez-Barris](#), Chairperson of Social Science and Cultural Studies and Director of the Global South Center, Pratt Institute

[Daniel Da Silva](#), Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, Rutgers University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT: [Daniel S. Sáenz](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

AWARDS

- Working group fellow [Tey Meadow](#), Associate Professor of Sociology at Columbia, was named a finalist for the 2018 C. Wright Mills Award for her new book [Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century](#) (University of California Press, 2018).
- Working group fellow [Camille Robcis](#), Associate Professor of History and French at Columbia, is a recipient of the 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship.

MEDIA

- Jack Halberstam, "[Off Manifesto](#)" Notes on Feminisms (2020).
- Macarena Gomez-Barris [featured](#) on Democracy Now!

FUTURE PLANS

- A conference and series of workshops with Columbia Global Center | Rio de Janeiro titled "Queer Aqui: Together in Hard Times."

RACIAL CAPITALISM

Since its first usage by antiapartheid activists in South Africa to its elaboration by political theorist Cedric J. Robinson, racial capitalism is a concept that delineates the interlinked relationships of race and class constitutive of global capitalism. The [Racial Capitalism](#) working group is a site of sustained collaborative research and study, with collective work rooted in a commitment to Black radicalism, historical materialism, feminism, and anti-imperialism. This working group theorizes the connections between exploitation and expropriation in interlinked political geographies. With members that include scholars from Barnard, Columbia, and the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics [CPCP] at the CUNY Graduate Center, as well as local scholars, graduate students, organizers, and visiting international scholars, this group seeks to ask: what visions of justice does the critique of political economy enable us to imagine, and to achieve? Through public lectures, seminars, manuscript workshops, conferences, community-based research projects, publications, exhibitions, and a digital archive, the working group seeks to gain clarity on the material and ideological links between Indigenous dispossession, racism, imperialism, and capitalist political economy.

DIRECTORS



JORDAN T. CAMP



CHRISTINA HEATHERTON



MANU KARUKA

[Jordan T. Camp](#), Visiting Scholar in the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard University

[Christina Heatherton](#), Assistant Professor of American Studies, Barnard College

[Manu Karuka](#), Assistant Professor of American Studies, Barnard College

COORDINATOR: [Aya Ouais](#), B.A., History, Columbia University

MEDIA FELLOW: [Larry Madowo](#), M.A., Business Concentration, School of Journalism, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

- October 18, 2019: “White Supremacy Confronted” seminar with Gerald Horne.
- December 6, 2019: “Civil War in the United States” seminar with Andrew Zimmerman.
- Throughout the year the Racial Capitalism working group held manuscript workshops with Jenny Greenberg, Jordan T. Camp, Gillian Hart, Stephanie Weatherbee Brito, Steven Osuna, David Harvey, and Kanishka Goonewardena.

PUBLICATIONS

- Jordan T. Camp and Jennifer Greenberg, “[Counterinsurgency Reexamined: Racism, Capitalism, and US Military Doctrine](#)” *Antipode* 52, 2020: 430-451.
- Christina Heatherton, “[Freighted Love: Bearing the Weight of Neoliberal Urban Landscapes](#)” *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* Vol. 24, Spring 2020.
- Jordan T. Camp, “[Symposium on Clyde Woods’ Development Drowned and Reborn](#),” [with Laura Pulido] *Antipode* 51, 2019.
- Jordan T. Camp, “[The Greensboro Massacre at 40: An interview with Rosalyn Pelles](#),” *Boston Review*, Nov. 2019.
- Christina Heatherton, “[The Death Ship](#),” *Sentencing the Present*, Public Seminar, New School Publishing Initiative, May 2020.
- Christina Heatherton and Jordan Camp, “[The Crisis of Policing in America](#)” *Verso Books Blog*, June 10, 2020.
- Jordan T. Camp, Christina Heatherton, and Manu Karuka, “[Racism, Imperialism, Solidarity: A Response to Nancy Fraser](#),” *Politics/Letters*, May 2019.

MIGRANT PERSONHOOD AND RIGHTS: CRISES OF RECOGNITION

The [Migrant Personhood and Rights: Crises of Recognition](#) working group investigates the community impact of anti-immigrant sentiments and policies. We engage academic research and the expertise of community-based advocacy organizations to question the myths – both positive and negative – that surround migrant communities and to develop novel approaches that address current immigration issues.

Our project stems from the rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment that characterized U.S. political culture over the course of the 2016 presidential election and the preliminary years of the Trump presidency. We ask: How does a nation-state reach the point where it becomes national policy to remove thousands of children from their parents as a deterrent to seeking asylum? How does a nation-state reach the point where it prosecutes individuals for providing water to migrants in a desert? How does a nation-state reach the point that it bans people from entering the country based on their religion?

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, our project has broadened to investigate how our partner communities are directly impacted by the virus and to explore ways we can contribute to the ongoing re-imagining of the U.S. nation-state spurred by the inequities the pandemic has exposed. Currently, we are engaging a variety of stakeholders and modalities to build participatory education initiatives that will culminate in public interventions geared toward imagining justice and recognition for migrants as members of a multitude of communities.

DIRECTORS



THEA ABU EL-HAJ



J.C. SALYER

[Thea Abu El-Haj](#), Professor in Education, Barnard College

[J.C. Salyer](#), Assistant Professor of Practice in Human Rights and Anthropology, Barnard College

GRADUATE ASSISTANT: [Corinne Kentor](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology & Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC EVENTS

- September 11-12, 2019: [Ecologies of Remembrance: the Material Afterlives of Unidentified Death Along the Central Mediterranean Migration Route](#)
- October 24-25, 2019: [The Hosting State and Its Restless Guests: Refugee Education, Migration and Regional Peace in the Global South - The 6th Georg Arnhold Symposium](#)

WOMEN CREATING CHANGE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



“In our current global environment, it is extremely important that we understand the influence of women on the economic, political, and cultural forces that shape our surroundings. Our programs seek to incorporate academic research about women and other underrepresented groups in the classroom and to better inform global decision making.

Our faculty leverage donor [support](#) in an impressive way to produce extraordinary global projects. Please join us in supporting this dynamic research and outreach.”

Ann KAPLAN, Columbia University Trustee Emerita
 Partner, Circle Wealth Management

YOUR SUPPORT

Your gift to the Center for the Study of Social Difference:



Sustains our future Fortifies our research Supports our students

[contact socialdifference@columbia.edu](mailto:socialdifference@columbia.edu) for more information

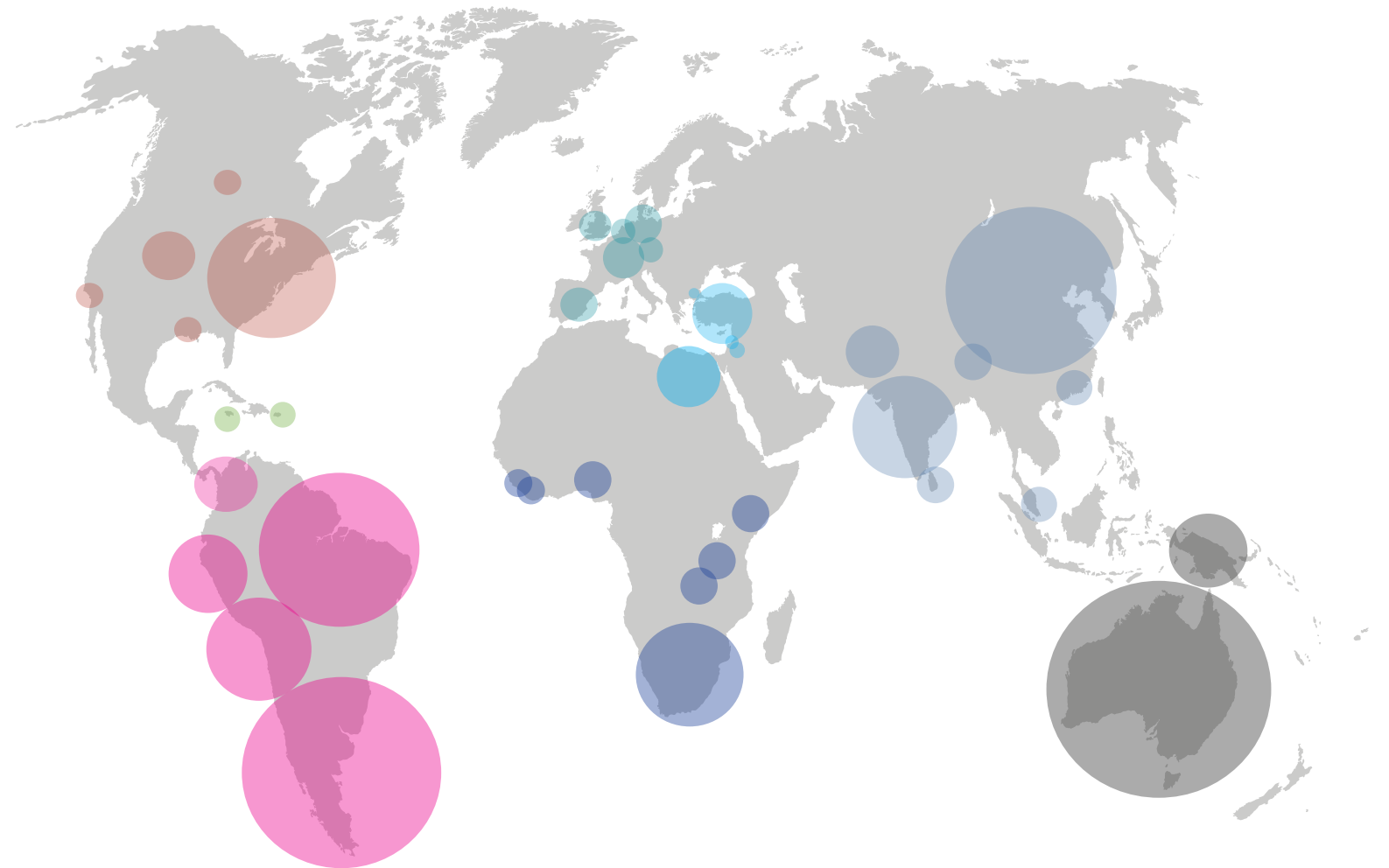
Columbia University’s [Women Creating Change Leadership Council](#) is comprised of individuals who are committed to the exploration of issues which affect women and the ways in which women address global gender challenges. The mission of the Council is to promote interdisciplinary collaborative research and to sponsor events that publicize this important work. Council members will assist the faculty in framing how their academic endeavors can create greater impact. The WCC Leadership Council will provide a critical link between the University’s faculty-led projects and the global business, academic, and civil society.

WCCLC Member List, list alphabetically:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ANN KAPLAN [Chair] , New York | JANICE REALS ELLIG , New York | ALYSON NEEL , New York |
| ANNETTE ANTHONY , London | MELISSA FISHER , New York | LOIS PERELSON-GROSS , New York |
| ANJALI BANSAL , India | AMAL GHANDOUR , Lebanon | PHILIPA PORTNOY , New York |
| JEWELLE BICKFORD , New York | DEBORAH JACKSON , New York | SAMIA SALFITI , Jordan |
| A’LELIA BUNDLES , Washington D.C. | CAROLEE LEE , New York | S. MONA SINHA , New York |
| LISA CARNOY , New York | SAFWAN MASRI , New York | DIANA TAYLOR , New York |
| ISOBEL COLEMAN , New York | CYNTHIA MOSES-MANOCHERIAN , New York | DAVIA TEMIN , New York |
| GEORGINA CULLMAN , New York | MOLLY MATHEWS MULTEDO , Rio de Janeiro & New York | RICHARD E. WITTEN , New York |
| ABIGAIL ELBAUM , New York | DIANA MOREINIS NASSER , São Paulo, Brazil | JACKI ZEHNER , Utah |

GLOBAL REACH: FOOTPRINTS OF OUR WORK IN THE LAST DECADE

Our work spans **35 countries and counting**.



- | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| ASIA
Bangladesh
China
Hong Kong
India
Pakistan
Singapore
Sri Lanka | MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA
Egypt
Jordan
Lebanon
Palestine
Turkey | AFRICA
Ghana
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Zambia | NORTH AMERICA
USA
Mexico
Canada

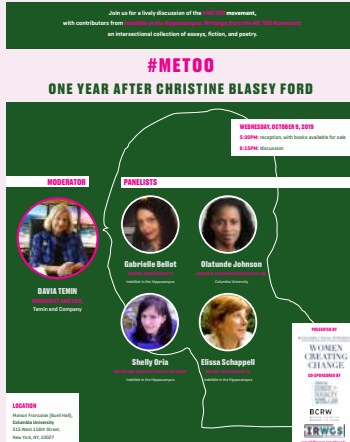
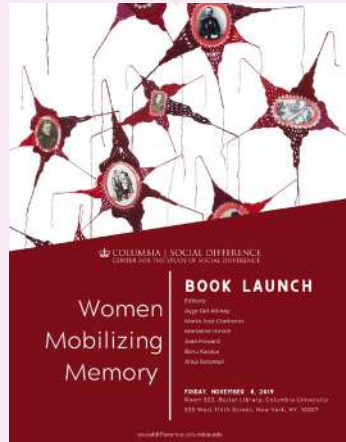
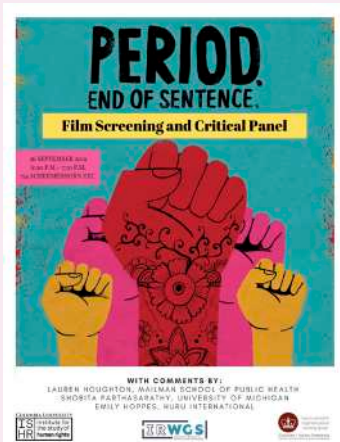
CARIBBEAN
Jamaica
Puerto Rico | SOUTH AMERICA
Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador | EUROPE
France
Greece
Germany
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Spain
Switzerland
United Kingdom | OCEANIA
Papua New Guinea
Australia |
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COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER

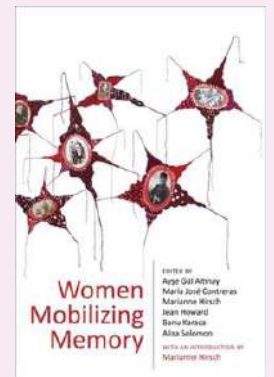
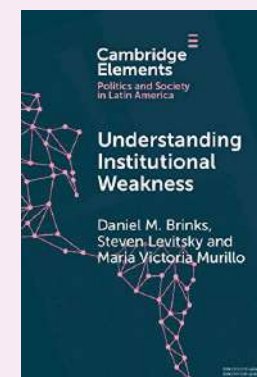
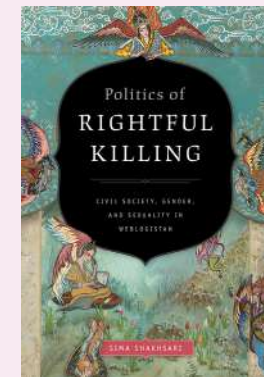
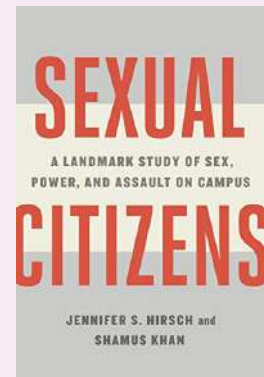
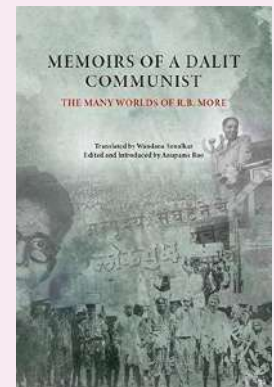
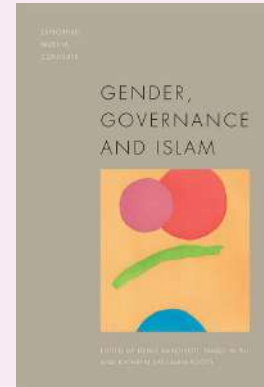
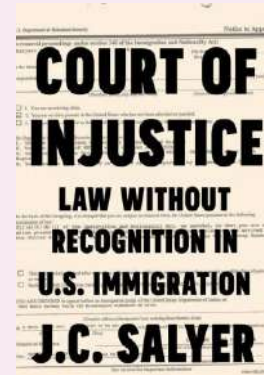
A MESSAGE FROM OUR STAFF JUNE 1, 2020

Part of our core mission at CSSD is the understanding of difference, in all of its forms, through time and across space. Intertwined with that is our desire to understand the social, economic, and political structures that underpin inequalities that are rooted in both real and perceived differences. In the past two weeks we have watched, with the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis, the structures that shore up racism and racist violence in America come to the fore in the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and in threats of violence made toward Christian Cooper in Central Park. At CSSD we stand in solidarity with the families of Mr. Floyd, Ms. Taylor, and Mr. Arbery, and with Mr. Cooper, as well as with the families of all others murdered because of the color of their skin. We believe that Black Lives Matter.

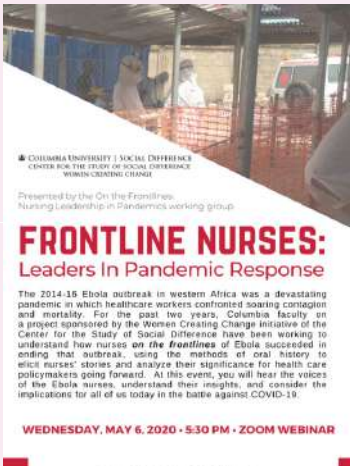
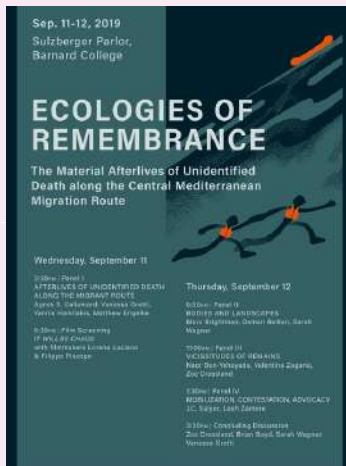
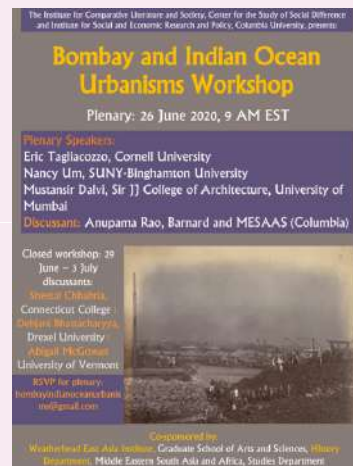
SELECTED PUBLIC EVENTS



SELECTED PUBLICATIONS



ONLINE CONVERSATIONS



SOCIAL MEDIA

- [socialdifference](#)
- [socialdiff](#)
- [socialdifference.columbia](#)
- [Center for the Study of Social Difference CSSD](#)

BRINGING TOGETHER PARTNERS TO CREATE CHANGE

CSDD projects have received **support from external partners** and from Columbia University, including:



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CREATING
CHANGE

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IMAGINING
JUSTICE

COLUMBIA AFFILIATES

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