CSUF News Center

CSUF NEWS SERVICE

New Lecture Series Sheds Light on Topical Issues

Oct. 2, 2015

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is kicking off an annual lecture series to spark a dialogue across disciplines and departments.

"To nurture the intellectual community of our college and model to our students the value of public discourse, the lecture series provides an opportunity for faculty members to share their research and scholarship with one another and with students and to engage in academic dialogue," says Sheryl Fontaine, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

This year's theme, "Interdisciplinary Conversations on Inequality and Violence," was inspired by recent events and past history and resonates with all of the college's departments, she adds. A collegewide call for proposals elicited the variety of topics scheduled for this academic year.

"Our faculty members are productive scholars and engaged members of their own
professional communities," explains Fontaine. "This lecture series creates a space in which to present some of that scholarship and to illustrate the intellectual value of each discipline, as well as the productive value of their intersections."

Presentations by three faculty members are scheduled to launch the series, **Tuesday, Oct. 6.** All talks in the series this fall are scheduled from 11:30 a.m.-12:50 p.m. in Room 360 of the Pollak Library.

Siobhan Brooks, assistant professor of African American studies, will address “Black Women, Mental Health and the Welfare State.”

Alexandro Gradilla, chair and associate professor of Chicana and Chicano studies, will speak on "Black Lives Don't Matter: The Jahi McMath Case and Iatrogenic Violence."

Eliza Noh, associate professor and coordinator of Asian American studies, will discuss "What Does American Suicide Have to Do With Racial and Gender Violence?"

"Asian American suicide is usually rendered invisible in discussions of social violence, because suicide is mostly seen as a problem of individual mental illness," explains Noh. "I will try to expand this limited view by explaining how racial ideology influences suicidality as a form of social violence."

Last year's fatal shooting of Michael Brown and its aftermath in Ferguson, Missouri, is the launchpad for presentations, **Monday, Nov. 2.**

Elaine Lewinnek, professor of American studies, will present “From Ferguson to Fullerton: How Urban History Affects Current Politics.”

Liam Leonard, lecturer in sociology, will speak on "Ferguson: Criminal Justice, Media and Race." His talk is based on his research on the shooting; his findings were
published in *CRIMSOC The Journal of Social Criminology*.

"I think it is important for the college and community to work together to solve social problems. As I say to my criminology class, we must look at all contributory factors when there is a breakdown in policing, rather than just shift blame onto the police or government," he says. "As a sociologist, I am keen to follow Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the 'public intellectual,' who makes a contribution to community debates for the benefit of all."

The lecture series, adds Noh, is important because the campus doesn't exist in a vacuum.

"We have to discuss the issues that currently affect us as a society and be responsive to the needs of our communities," she says. "There are so many recent occurrences of violence — hate crimes, police violence and other forms of institutional violence — that it would be irresponsible for a model comprehensive university, such as ours, not to participate centrally in critical discussions about these issues."

On **Tuesday, Dec. 1**, history professors Kristine Dennehy and Robert McLain will talk about "Violence in the Context of Empire," while Donald Matthewson, lecturer in political science, discusses "Political Populism and Violence."

More information about the lecture series, including spring events, is available [online](http://news.fullerton.edu/2015fa/lecture-series.aspx).