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Real Critical Race Theory

By Gwyn Burns and Dr. Rainey-Smithback

Professor Messer-Kruse (Ethnic Studies) and Professor Jason Whitfield (Communication Sciences and Disorders) have launched a podcast called Real Critical Race Theory, or Real CRT. The Podcast is connected to Dr. Messer-Kruse’s Spring semester graduate course on Critical Race Theory (CRT), and each episode features a guest scholar on CRT and a portion of the class discussion. Professor Whitfield provides the equipment and sound editing for the podcast. Students in the class have had the opportunity to read and engage with some of the most prominent scholars in the field, including David Stovall, Randall Kennedy, and Charles Gallagher.

The recent anti-CRT legislation has peaked interest in CRT, and the podcast is dedicated to both analyzing the contemporary political discourse around CRT and expanding public awareness of the tools CRT offers. According to Professor Messer-Kruse, the goal of the podcast “to provide a way of countering a lot of the misinformation that there is about Critical Race Theory. This misinformation is being spread daily and its being spread from some of the most powerful media organizations in the world.” By producing a podcast, Professor Messer-Kruse hopes to dispel these myths about CRT as well as to “counter this political tsunami of censorship that is happening right now and to counter it with how every bad argument should be countered--with good arguments.”



Caption: Dr. Messer-Kruse’s class

When asked about why Critical Race Theory is important to learn about and think about, Dr. Messer-Kruse replied that “critical race theory is not actually a theory...it is actually a methodology, it’s a way of approaching a question, it’s a way of thinking through a question, it’s a way of actually conceptualizing history and society and culture and government” (TMK). Critical race theory helps us identify and analyze omissions and injustices. The pushback against critical race theory makes it “difficult to do any meaningful lessons about race and racism because the lines are so blurry so no one knows when they cross them” (TMK).

Professor Whitfield echoed Professor Messer-Kruse’s concerns about how CRT is portrayed in mainstream media. He notes that it is important to be “involved in a narrative discourse around what this thing actually is and what it’s not. What utility it does offer analyzing systems of racial oppression?”

News

Popular Culture is pleased to announce that Mr. Peter ‘Pete’ Schwartz ’92 and Mrs. Andrea Hyslop (Donors) are establishing the Peter Schwartz and Andrea Hyslop Scholarship to provide financial support to high-achieving undergraduate students who have declared a major in Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University. Pete received his Bachelor of Arts in Popular Culture from BGSU in 1992. Andrea holds an engineering degree from the University of Michigan. This \$300,000 generous gift will help so many undergraduates at BGSU!

Professors Whitfield and Messer-Kruse hope that the podcast offers some much-needed insight into the history of CRT and what value it continues to offer us today.

The ‘Real CRT’ podcast is released weekly on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and wherever you listen to podcasts.

From Dr. Messer-Kruse:

I would like to announce the podcast my students and I have developed aimed at dispelling much of the misinformation about critical race theory. Our podcast is called Real CRT and is available on all the major podcast apps. We also have a webpage with more info and links to all the episodes and podcast services here: <https://blogs.bgsu.edu/realcrt/>

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4FjlpzDZu6bHZlbfBSLAI>



Thank You!

Finding Your Voice in Social Justice

By Aurora Taylor

This past year, Finding Your Voice in Social Justice created a guide for professors and staff that addresses neurodiversity from the perspective of neurodiverse students and community members. The guide seeks to address gaps in knowledge and common misconceptions about neurodiversity in the classroom setting and beyond.

Although professors and staff try their best to help neurodiverse students, much of the research on neurodiversity, especially on autism, is only conducted on white children aged 12 and under who were assigned male at birth. Marginalized groups, such as people of color, queer and transgender people, and people assigned female at birth, are often left out of the conversation, leading to discrimination, a lack of necessary accommodations and support, and higher incidences of mental health issues.

BGSU students Bug Shoemaker, Cassandra Tenorio, and Gimmick Wilder, who led the project, researched neurodiversity using a variety of methods to create their guide. In addition to traditional research, they interviewed students and community members, conducted online polls, and found inspiration from their own lives to make sure they were centering the experiences of neurodiverse people. “We created this guide as a place for neurodiverse voices to speak freely and to raise awareness in professors and staff,” Bug told me.

Many neurodiverse people find themselves spoken over by neurotypical researchers and organizations,

who often seek to “cure” neurodiversity instead of respecting the rights of neurodiverse individuals. Neurodiverse individuals are often forced to “mask,” which means to “act neurotypical,” in order to navigate a society that is generally biased against them. When added to the lack of knowledge about neurodiversity, it becomes very difficult for neurodiverse students to seek and find the help they need.

Bug, Cassandra, and Gimmick said that “the misinformation of neurodiversity on campus is apparent,” but they made sure to clarify that “the neurodiverse community is strong and will voice their lived experiences if given the chance.” The guide from the Finding Your Voice in Social Justice learning community is a starting place for BGSU’s educators to “learn to collaborate with and accept neurodiverse individuals,” the students added. They urge others to ask if what they know about neurodiversity has been presented by neurotypicals who may not understand the experience of neurodiverse people. A good place to start, they suggest, is the Autism Self Advocacy Network, which includes neurodiverse-led research.

Finding Your Voice in Social Justice is the non-residential Learning Community affiliated with the School of Cultural and Critical Studies. Through coursework offered by CCS, students learn about issues of racism, the patriarchy, classicism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination and engage in practical opportunities to build their skills in social justice and community activism. For more information, please contact yourvoice@bgsu.edu.

Graduating Student Profiles

Meet our graduating seniors in the School of Cultural and Critical Studies



Mika Fitzpatrick

What is your favorite BGSU memory?

My favorite memory at BGSU has to be being a part of the McNair Scholars program. It was a really great opportunity to do research and to learn about grad school.

What was your favorite class for your major?

Two of my favorite courses I have taken for my major are ETHN 4500: History of American Racism and WS 3010: Women, Art, & Culture.

Who is your favorite professor?

Dr. Jessica Birch and Dr. Thomas Edge are my favorite professors/mentors!

What are you planning to do after graduation?

I am taking a gap year and then applying to grad school!



Anthony Michael Lowe

What is your favorite BGSU memory?

The day I changed my major to ACS was a great turning point for me.

What was your favorite class for your major?

I enjoyed the foundational philosophy readings and analysis in Professor Rob Sloane's class.

Who is your favorite professor?

I learn well with Dr. Benjamin Greene in the History department.

What are you planning to do after graduation?

I will foster communication and provide process strategies that allow seemingly disparate groups to work together, or simply function at their best.



Molly Marody

What is your favorite BGSU memory?

My favorite BGSU memory is all the time I've spent with friends cooking, watching hockey games, trying new coffee shops, and exploring.

What was your favorite class for your major?

My favorite class for my major was Feminist Theory

Who is your favorite professor?

My favorite professor is Julie Haught

What are you planning to do after graduation?

I am planning on finding ways to combine the knowledge I've gotten from my English and WGSS degrees to further explore literary activism and the combating the growing list of banned books in the United States.



Kay Norris

What is your favorite BGSU memory?

Taking pictures in the football stadium with my best friends at sunset

What was your favorite class for your major?

Topics in Sexuality Studies, Bisexuality and Culture

Who is your favorite professor?

Jess Birch

What are you planning to do after graduation?

Attending grad school here in the CSP [College Student Personnel] program! :)



Caitlyn Schultz

What is your favorite BGSU memory?

My favorite BGSU memory is from my freshman year when Founders Hall hosted an ice cream social. I reluctantly went with my roommate (the free ice cream was my motivation), but we ended up meeting a girl there who was waiting in line behind us. Flash forward to senior year, the three of us are still best friends. Always go for the free food, you might meet a lifelong friend!

What was your favorite class for your major?

My favorite course I took within my WGSS major was WS 4000, Marginalized Sexualities, with Dr. Rainey. I learned so much information in this class that I wouldn't have learned in any other course.

Who is your favorite professor?

My favorite professor at BGSU would have to be Dr. Rainey. Not only was the education Dr. Rainey provided to me top tier, but the support and guidance was as well. She has made a lasting impact on not only me as a student, but also as a person. I

will forever be grateful for her support, guidance, and knowledge during my undergraduate career.

What are you planning to do after graduation?

After graduation I am planning to attend graduate school to obtain my Social Work Masters. After this degree is obtained, I plan to serve underserved communities in the form of mental health and substance abuse therapy and possibly sex therapy as well.

Accolades and Accomplishments

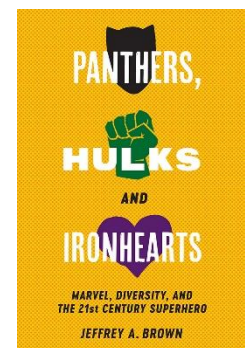
If you would like your achievements to be shared in our newsletter, please email ccs@bgsu.edu with the details!

Faculty Accomplishments

Jeff Brown

Popular Culture Faculty

Dr. Jeffrey Brown released 2 new books: *Love, Sex, Gender, and Superheroes* and *Panthers, Hulks and Ironhearts: Marvel, Diversity, and the 21st Century Superhero*, both with Routledge on February 22nd, 2022. At this double-book-launch event, Dr. Brown spoke about both books and responded to commentary from Dr. Ron Jackson (University of Cincinnati) and Dr. Sarah Rainey-Smithback (BGSU).



Caption: The covers of Dr. Brown's new books

Angela Nelson

Ethnic Studies Faculty; Director, School of Cultural and Critical Studies

The *Popular Culture Studies Journal* published my review of Jeffrey Brown's *Batman: Multiplicity of Identity: The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero as Cultural Nexus* in October 2021. By invitation, I participated in a virtual roundtable sponsored by the University of Southern California Annenberg School of Communication, the USC School of Religion, the USC Levan Institute for the Humanities, and the Popular Music Project of the Norman Lear Center on September 16, 2021. For the roundtable titled "Almost Heaven: Pop Music, Religion, and the Politics of Possibility," I presented a paper, "Shirley Caesar's Ministerial Activism after the Assassination of Martin Luther King." In response to Dr. King's assassination, Caesar did not "march and protest" but chose a style of activism suitable to her talents, gifts, and religious calling. I argue that Caesar's brand of activism was spiritual, therefore, a "ministerial activism" involving singing and preaching.

Also, I presented two papers about the Black woman actor Esther Rolle, known for her portrayal as the wife and mother Florida Evans in the 1970s Black-oriented television situation comedy, *Good Times* (CBS, 1974-1979). I was an invited speaker for the Bowling Green State University Day of Dialogue (sponsored by the Division of Diversity and Belonging) on September 10, 2021. My paper was "The Heresy of Black Feminist Creativity: Esther Rolle and Black Belonging in '70s Television." I presented "Esther Rolle as Black Feminist Creative and Her Criticism of *Good Times*" for the Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association

Conference in November 2021. Both papers are part of a larger project interpreting *Good Times* as a television milestone and Esther Rolle as a Black feminist artistic-activist.

Jeremy Wallach

Popular Culture Studies Faculty

Jeremy Wallach is pleased to report that his chapter in the *Bloomsbury Handbook for Rock Music Research* (2020) was singled out for praise by Simon Frith in a review of the total work published in the *Popular Music* journal. Frith writes, "Wallach's essay is a well-organised survey of the history of rock music in the Global South...What makes Wallach's essay a must read, however, is not its survey of a fascinating field of ethnomusicology but his use of this material to critique rock studies orthodoxy" in a three-paragraph discussion of the chapter (out of a twelve-paragraph review).

Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach

Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach announce the publication of "Facing the Musical Other: Alfred Schutz, Emmanuel Levinas, and the Ethnography of Musical Experience" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Phenomenology of Music Cultures* (Harris M. Berger, Friedlind Riedel, and David VanderHamm, eds., Oxford University Press). The essay attempts to synthesize the social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz with the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas as a way forward for ethnographic research. It constitutes their most intellectually ambitious effort to date and they are eager to receive feedback on the essay from the scholarly community.

Student Accomplishments

Emma Calow

American Culture Studies, PhD Candidate

Emma, who is in her 3rd year of the PhD program, published two articles in 2021. Her article, “‘Well, what was the message *you* got?’: the discursive power of Naomi Osaka and her peaceful protest at the 2020 U.S. Open,” was published in the *European Journal for Sport and Society*, and her co-written article, “Female Testosterone: Contested Terrain,” was published in *Kinesiology Review*.

Judy Clemens-Smucker

American Culture Studies, PhD Student

Judy, who is in her 2nd year of the PhD program, published her article, “*Star Trek: Voyager* – The Monstrousness of Humans in ‘Scorpion, Parts 1 & 2,’” in *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies: A Journal of Criticism and Theory*.

Dylan Miller

American Culture Studies, PhD Student

Dylan, who is in her 2nd year of the PhD program, published “YouTube Family Channels: The New Frontier of Child Labor” in *The Projector: A Journal of Film, Media, and Culture* this winter and has an essay, “The Unkillable Idea of Benny Russell: Afrofuturist Temporalities and ‘Far Beyond the Stars,’” in the upcoming book *To Boldly Stay: Essays on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.

Scholarship and Award Winners

Department of Ethnic Studies

Dr. Robert Perry Scholarships

Surah Marks-Trammell (\$400)

Bug Shoemaker (\$350)

Uzochi Nwauwa (\$250)

Lindsey Hoyer (\$200)

Department of Popular Culture Studies

Ray & Pat Browne Scholarship in Popular Culture

Lily Fritsch

Peter Schwartz and Andrea Hyslop Scholarship

Sarah Piwko

Stoddard & O’Neill Undergraduate Popular Culture Scholarship

Sarah Piwko

Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

WGSS Symposium

Undergraduate Creative Project Award

1st Place: Renae Kapelka (\$270)

2nd Place: Abigail Amundson (\$120)

3rd Place: Helena Katakis (\$95)

Undergraduate Research Project Award

1st Place: Libby Farren (\$270)

2nd Place: Erika Ernst (\$120)

3rd Place: Olivia Rutherford (\$95)

People’s Choice Public Scholarship Undergraduate Award

Mallory Tinnirello (\$320)

Graduate Creative Award

1st Place: Bryan Bove (\$170)

2nd Place: Jeevani Sammeta (\$120)

3rd Place: Marianne Vanderbeke (\$95)

Graduate Research Award

1st Place: Jinx Mylo (\$170)

2nd Place: Jules Patalita (\$120)

3rd Place: Sherrel McLafferty (\$95)

People's Choice Public Scholarship Graduate Award

Jeevani Sammeta (\$300)

Entrance Awards

Frejya Hoffer (\$20)

Debipeeta Rahut (\$20)

Amanda Taylor (\$40)

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Symposium

The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program's annual Symposium features research and creative work from undergraduate and graduate students at BGSU. This year, students submitted their project for judging by a panel of faculty for our cash prizes in each category (research and creative). Students also submitted a one- to two-minute video summary of their research to post on our Virtual Symposium space. The public was invited to view the videos, and post comments and questions as desired, and then vote on their favorite research or creative piece.



Caption: People's Choice Graduate Award winner Jeevani Sammeta with Dr. Sarah Rainey-Smithback



Caption: Dr. Pellerito speaking at the University

This year's keynote address was given by Dr. Elizabeth Pellerito, who is the Director of the Labor

Education Program at UMass Lowell. Elizabeth Pellerito organized university employees including faculty, staff, graduate students, researchers, postdocs, and librarians in Oregon and Michigan before joining the Labor Education Program in 2018. She is on the boards of the Bread & Roses Heritage Festival and the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts. Elizabeth is experienced in training union members and leaders on a wide variety of topics. She is particularly interested in how unions can combat sexual assault, sexual harassment, and intimate partner violence.