

# MLK DAY SYMPOSIUM 2017: BENDING TOWARDS JUSTICE

## **SESSION 1 WORKSHOPS:**

**Asian American Voices.** In this session, we will explore the Asian American perspective during and after the election—how it has impacted the Asian community and why some pockets of the community voted for Trump. Specifically, we hope to examine how AAPIs (Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders) in the US fit into conversations about issues raised during the election, including immigration, education reform, police brutality, and the social climate of the country.

**Beyond the Rhetoric: Latin American Immigration in Context.** Immigration is intimately tied to US policy—both foreign and domestic. Despite social science studies showing a net drop of 140,000 Mexican immigrants from 2009 to 2014, the specter of undocumented immigration, particularly from Mexico and Central America, has been one of the dominating tropes of the current election cycle. What is the role of U.S. support of oppressive regimes or counter-revolutionary terrorist groups on immigration from Latin America? How have American trade policies and the rise/internationalization of criminal gangs impacted immigration? What is the contemporary human experience of being an immigrant, especially amidst some of the current rhetoric surrounding this topic? Join us for a conversation about the recent history of the U.S. as it relates to the story of immigration that's often left outside the contemporary political conversation.

**Breakout Session with Keynote Speaker, Dr. Clarence Jones.** We are truly privileged to offer a breakout session with our keynote speaker, Dr. Jones—civil rights leader, former lawyer, advisor, draft speech writer, and friend to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. Currently a Diversity Visiting Professor at the University of San Francisco, and Scholar in Residence at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research & Education Institute, Stanford University, following his keynote speech, Dr. Jones will continue the conversation in this breakout session. Topics may include what it means to carry on the legacy of Dr. King in the 21st century Bay Area, what multiracial coalition building looks like, what youth activist need to know about building a movement.

**Environmental Justice: High School Activist Case Study.** This workshop will look at examples of environmental activism through the use of the videos from past Goldman Environmental Prize winners starting with the youngest winner, the 2016 North American winner, Destiny Watford, who prevented the building of a waste incineration plant next to her Baltimore High School. Our discussions will focus on the environmental issue for each case study and explore the motivation, obstacles, successful strategies, and future that each activist will face going forward with their grassroots movement.

**Ferguson's Legacy and the 21st Century Fight Against Police Brutality.** Who was Michael Brown, and what did he witness in his last moments after being stopped by police? Which aspects of his experience were unique and which are common place for Black women and men as well as other People of Color when confronted by police? In what ways did the community rally to push back against the killing of a Black boy, police brutality, and the injustice delivered by the hands of the state? How was this pushback portrayed in the media? Is there a difference in the way protests against police are viewed in the United States? How might we utilize the lessons of Ferguson to organize and keep members of our communities safe physically and emotionally from racial profiling as a result of implicit bias and the more intricate aspects of racism? In this workshop, we will discuss the legacy of Ferguson, and participants will be required to place that legacy at the center of their hearts. To do this work, to unpack and begin to address the systematic oppression and degradation of individuals as well as communities of color, participants must acknowledge and accept alternate narratives. At the same time, participants will have to look inward to reflect on how these varied perspectives offer us insights into who we are as people in community.

**Gender: What Is It Good For?** What does being "masculine" or "feminine" mean? Why do people feel the need to apply either of these terms to their lives? What if we're all in drag, all the time? To give us some tools to answer these questions, we will examine our own assumptions about daily life, then look at who's told us that "proper gender identity" exists in the first place—what do the founding texts of monotheism say about it? How have scientists and social scientists defined these terms? We'll take an M/F test to experience an old-style "scientific" perspective from the 1950s. The we'll talk: do these ideas make any sense? What do WE think constitute "gendered" qualities, and to what extent are these useful/oppressive in our daily lives? We will come back to where we started and see what gender does and doesn't do for us all.

**Hood Politics.** In this session, we will trace central themes in rap culture, such as fatherhood, mental health, sexuality and masculinity through an intersectional lens. We will also be deconstructing common narratives and how they influence us as listeners and consumers by asking questions like: How have these narratives changed over time? Do politics belong in rap music? Are artists obligated to be role models for young people? Join us in this workshop that provides a space to think critically about the artists we know and love.

**Moving Forward After the Election.** Whether your response to November's election was to mourn or to celebrate, the fact is that the United States will inaugurate a new president on January 20, 2017. This workshop will explore how we can respond positively and productively to this historic moment. How can we grow more effective at talking honestly, compassionately, and respectfully with people who see the world differently than we do? How can we take powerful action to support the ideals we cherish? What might it look like for each of us to bend the arc of history towards justice in the coming months and years? All perspectives welcome; open ears, heart and mind required.

**Nonviolent Noncooperation.** Come learn about nonviolent change makers. We'll hear from Dr. King, Thich Nhat Hanh, Gandhi, and Tolstoy. If we have time, we may also hear from Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu, and Krishna.

**Revolutionizing Representation: Contemporary Black Artists Challenging the "Western" Canon of Art.** Most surveys of "western" or European art are the history of whiteness. This workshop will attempt to rupture such white-centrism in art by focusing on a number of contemporary black artists who are in conversation with the "western" canon of art. We will explore art that specifically addresses the misrepresentation or complete lack of blackness in visual culture throughout history. A number of these artists address issues of intersectionality as well, specifically gender and sexuality. Artists discussed may include: Kerry James Marshall, Kehinde Wiley, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, and Adrian Piper.

**The Price of a T-shirt.** How much did that shirt you are wearing cost? In this session, we will look into what goes into to making an ordinary t-shirt, and using principles of economics, we will examine what all of the potential costs are that go into making our clothing. From there, we will discuss other pressures that create the current clothing marketplace and potential actions we can all take.

**The "Why?" and "How?" of Anti-racist Activism for White People.** If you identify as white, you might feel uncertain about what your role should be in conversations about race, racism, and white supremacy. In the first part of this workshop, we'll discuss the reasons for the common phenomenon of "white silence" and how to overcome it. Using a short story to springboard our thinking, we'll uncover the ways in which white supremacy is harmful to white people. This will motivate the second part of the workshop by setting up compelling reasons WHY white people need to undertake this work in collaboration with people of color. During the second half of the workshop (during the affinity group slot), we will tackle the HOW question. We'll figure out how to tell when you need to step up and when it is time to step back. We'll look at our spheres of influence and the range of possible goals that anti-racist work can have. The workshop will conclude with each person building their own action plan for the short-, medium-, and long-term. Note: this session is geared towards white people.

**Why 'We Should All Be Feminists'.** In this session, we will watch the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie read her essay, "We Should All Be Feminists," and discuss stigmas and misconceptions about the word "feminism," the importance of all genders working for gender equality, and any other thoughts and reactions we have to Ngozi Adichie's essay.

## **SESSION 2 WORKSHOPS:**

**Affirmative Action 101.** What is Affirmative Action? Why did it come about and where is it practiced? Who is included and who isn't? Does it work? What are the challenges of making

it work? What has happened when it has been abolished? How does it feel to be the recipient of affirmative action, or to think you might be? Why is this such a controversial issue? This workshop will consider all of these questions and more.

**Artists in Times of War.** Taking the lead from Howard Zinn's *Artists in Times of War*, we will look at examples of ways that writers, visual artists, musicians, etc. have used their creative power to resist during times of political unrest. We will look at artwork, hear writers, and see video examples as well as discuss practical ideas for ways that young folks can use art as a vehicle for change.

**Athletes as Agents of Social Change.** From Muhammed Ali to Colin Kaepernick, athletes have voiced their opinions in a myriad of ways. And the responses range from total support to total scrutiny. Are there "right" versus "wrong" forms of protest? Should athletes use their power for social justice? By looking at examples of protest as well as at some of the criticism, we'll come to more informed and nuanced opinion about the role athletes play in society.

**Beyond the Hashtag: the Movement for Black Lives.** In the last few years, "Black Lives Matter" has become a phrase familiar to virtually everyone in this country and many beyond. But is it anything more than just a slogan or hashtag? Short answer: yes! Did you know that a collective of more than 50 organizations representing thousands of Black people from across the country has come together to articulate a common vision and agenda, known as the "Movement for Black Lives?" Are you curious to know the specifics of what this platform is calling for? Well, that's what we will be exploring. We will also discuss the important differences between a political philosophy, an organization, and a MOVEMENT!

**Climate Change, Action, & Innovation.** Climate change is an ever-growing problem. In this interactive session, we will explore a variety of developments in green, sustainable technology. We will then discuss how innovation fits into the larger context of climate action, and brainstorm what our role ought to be in limiting our carbon footprint and holding ourselves accountable -- both as individuals and as a community.

**Incarceration in the U.S.** Why does the U.S. have the highest incarceration rate in the world? What policy decisions have led us to this point? How does what Michelle Alexander calls "The New Jim Crow" tie into today's civil rights movement? To answer these questions, we will watch some video clips and examine history to ground our discussion in facts, and work together to analyze and understand root causes.

**Local White Anti-Racist Action: What Can It Look Like?** Are you interested in learning what white anti-racist action looks like on a concrete, local level? What are white people doing to cultivate the liberation of ourselves and other white people from internalized white supremacy? What are white people doing to work in solidarity with movements led by people of color? In this workshop, you will learn different ways white people who care about racial justice can engage in internal and collective action aimed at creating greater

love and equity in ourselves and our communities. You will also learn ways to foster your own racial identity development. Note: while this workshop is geared towards white people, everyone is welcome.

**Music for Change.** In this workshop, we will explore how music can be a call to action. We will explore how musicians present and past have used their talent to address social change. Bring an instrument, your voice, and/or a willingness to engage as we will play music together during the workshop.

**Queer Theory: Living on the Edge.** What does it mean to be queer? Does it mean living, as Judith Butler describes, “on the edges of intelligibility”? Or as Maggie Nelson posits, to be in “perpetual excitement,” the queer being “a nominative,” “willing to designate molten or shifting parts, a means of asserting while also giving the slip”? In this workshop, we will provide an overview of queer theory and talk about what it means to be queer. We will discuss various medical, social, and political institutions that work to construct and sustain gender norms and to eradicate queerness from society. We will reference various queer theorists and figures, then lead a discussion about these concepts and figures. Finally, we will discuss what it means to embrace a queer society, and what the queer future of America looks like (especially in our new political climate).

**Scientific Facts and Fictions: Evaluating Claims About the Environment in the News and Social Media.** Telling the difference between legitimate scientific reports and misleading/fake stories is not always easy. Responsible citizenship today requires understanding about policies and issues that involve science. This workshop will examine several strategies scientists use to ensure reliability of their ideas and strategies for recognizing unreliable / biased reports.

**Searching for Sanctuaries: Radical Self-Care in Times of Madness.** As various divides continue to surface in the United States, we are called upon to scan the depths of ourselves and our minds to have difficult conversations, participate in activism, and be the best versions of ourselves as students, professionals, family members, and friends. We are encouraged to work harder, faster, stronger, with what seems to be an ever-growing emphasis on improving the individual vs. a community. This is not easy to endure. It’s exhausting. Our psyches bear the weight of intense distress, sometimes manifesting in profound psychological struggle, and even destabilizing our bodies at times. We might feel sick. We might feel mad. And yet, mental illness continues to be stigmatized, and mental health continues to be devalued in this country. How do we take care of ourselves so we can take care of others? Where can we locate self-care that is radically inclusive? The presenters will explore with participants how self-care in the US has been commodified and to some degree, exclusive. We will explore stigmas in various populations and discuss how to create sustainable self-care sanctuaries that support ourselves, our community, and that help to dismantle tenants of white supremacy culture.

**Seeing Everything at Once.** Danzy Senna, in her novel *Caucasia*, describes being biracial as “this yearning for a place that doesn’t exist. I felt that. Still do. I’m never completely at home

anywhere. But it's a good place to be, I think. It's like floating. From up above, you can see everything at once. It's the only way how." What does it mean to be biracial, multiracial or multiethnic? Is it about holding all identities equally? In various amounts? Not at all? Participants will explore their own racial and ethnic identities while acknowledging the various ways individuals experience being "mixed." Possible topics may include Kip Fulbeck's *The Hapa Project*, the ways in which people attribute various identities on to others, a history of being mixed race in America, and common myths and misconceptions about multiracial identity. Note: while this workshop focuses on the experience of mixed race people, it is open to people of all races.

**Water is Life: Standing Rock & #NoDAPL.** What do you consider sacred? To what lengths would you go in order to protect it? In this session, we are joined by San Francisco residents Marvin Paddock (Diné) & Richard Bluecloud Castaneda (Salt River Pima), water protectors who have recently returned from Standing Rock. They will provide us with background information about the Dakota Access Pipeline, share their experiences joining others from over 100 tribes at Sacred Stone Camp, and give us a sense of what may be next for Standing Rock, and for our water.

## SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY

8:15 am – 8:45 am ..... Prep period for workshop facilitators  
8:45 am – 9:45 am ..... Opening Ceremonies/Keynote: Dr. Clarence Jones (Theater)  
9:45 am – 9:55 am ..... Passing period/Break  
9:55 am – 10:55 am ..... Symposium Session 1  
10:55 am – 11:50 am ..... Brunch/Lunch  
11:50 am – 11:55 am ..... Passing  
period  
11:55 am – 12:55 pm ..... Symposium Session  
2  
12:55 pm – 1:05 pm ..... Passing period/Break  
1:05 pm – 1:50 pm ..... Affinity Groups  
1:50 pm – 2:00 pm ..... Passing period/Break  
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm ..... Closing Ceremonies (Theater)