

ResearchConnections

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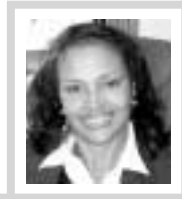
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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Director's Message

DIANA R. JACKSON-LOVETT, PH.D.

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION, CRGE



One advantage of today's digitized age is that most of us understand that the photographic images we see in print and electronic media are not simply one-dimensional "takes," but rather a compilation of thousands of "bits," or pieces of information that together form whole pictures. I thought of this as I looked at photos of the victims of the recent hurricanes, tornados, and floods in the U.S. and of the earthquake in Pakistan. The vivid images of victims of Hurricane Katrina, in particular, were both compelling and devastating, and in the aftermath of the immediate catastrophe, have become symbolic of Katrina as a whole. Fed to us 24-hours-a-day for weeks, those photos and videos revealed more about the horror of the disaster than the multitude of words issued by the officials on-site in Louisiana, Mississippi, and other affected areas. While federal authorities were briefly being lauded for doing "a heckuva job," we were collectively witnessing images of people stranded on rooftops, chronically ill and elderly people left to die on city streets, and houses and vehicles totally submerged, while those who were able walked for miles to find a way out. Many of those images were of people of color—women and children of color, in particular. The images ignited a long-overdue conversation about the glaring, irrefutable socioeconomic disparities that existed in the region long before Katrina came. It is this last point that captures our attention now: How do we help the victims really find "a way out?"

It is to our credit that even in our deeply divided nation—this mural of "red" and "blue" states—we didn't turn away from those victims because of their perceived demographics. Instead, we extended a vast array of resources, through public and private conduits, to help. It is also to our credit as a nation that we realized that the poverty of some of the evacuees was not situational but chronic. It will be to our *discredit*, however, if our short-term aid becomes a substitute for the desperately needed, substantive, systemic response needed to close the widening chasm between the "have's" and the "have-not's" in the region, and by extension the nation. It will be to our great discredit if we do not seek to understand what contributes to such devastating disparities in quality of life, and how to address them. And it will be a *tragedy* if we as a collective citizenry choose to address the problem as we often do: through a single lens—whether that lens be race, gender, class, ethnicity, or another related variable. Unlike the photos we have all seen, the victims of Katrina are not one-dimensional; we know

that their lives are a composite of many variables—some more dominant than others—that together form the whole "picture." It is incumbent upon us then to acknowledge the intersections of those variables as we strategize for long-term change.

It is against the backdrop of this urgent national crisis and dialogue that I have joined The Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity. The Consortium's interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the intersections of dimensions of difference and their relationship to social justice provide a particularly timely and compelling set of analytical tools for grasping the complexities of the phenomena at work. As the academy assists the broader community in making sense of what has been "uncovered" by Katrina, CRGE (and other centers like it) can and *will* play a role in helping to expand the scope of inquiry. We will encourage today's scholars to widen their lenses by supporting and promoting more sophisticated analyses and, through programs like CrISP, in training the scholars of tomorrow.

Toward this end, and as a part of its work with Dr. Patricia Hill Collins (UM's newly appointed Elkins Scholar), the Consortium will host a symposium this fall on the implications of Katrina. In partnership with other UM departments and several external institutions, this symposium is intended to bring together scholars, policymakers, and community agents who will come from our region and the affected regions to not only analyze but also to strategize about long-term solutions. The immediacy of the situation in the U.S. makes the focus of the Consortium and its partners particularly relevant; however, even as we come to understand current phenomena, new situations of social inequality at home and abroad will most assuredly assume prominence on the national and international radar screen. The multidimensional analytic approach of CRGE will continue to serve as an effective model for defining and understanding the intersections of the variables that form the larger picture—the more accurate vision of the landscape.

CRGE is indeed fortunate to be working with a stellar group of established and emerging scholars who are doing research across a range of areas critical to understanding intersectionality and promoting equity nationally and globally. As our work continues, we invite you to "stay tuned" by participating in our colloquia, which are scheduled monthly during the academic year; by taking advantage of our research briefs on various topics; and by using the rich data available from our Web site, which is routinely updated to offer the most current information available from the Consortium. As the newest member of the Consortium staff, I look forward to working with our friends and colleagues on campus and beyond to further the important mission of the Consortium.

I wish each of you a productive and rewarding year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana R. Jackson-Lovett".

Hurricane Katrina and Intersectionality:

UM Symposium

Fall 2006

CRGE is currently pursuing funding to host a symposium on the implications of Hurricane Katrina. We have formed a committee of collaborating partners to draft an overview of how an intersectional approach can bring to the forefront issues of race, gender, and economic inequality—all made worse by a natural disaster. With the Department of African American Studies and the Department of Sociology, we foresee hosting an event fall semester 2006. Please check our Web site frequently for updates. The following document was written October 2005 by the planning committee; we are sharing it with you now to give an overview of the scope of the symposium and to provide an example of how intersectional scholarship is essential in understanding how constructions of race, gender, and class intersect with systems of power to shape the course of individuals and groups of people.

Working Draft: Symposium Concept Paper

During the last week of August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast with an impact that not only wreaked great physical destruction, but also left uncovered the startling inequalities that have shaped the lives of all Americans. The storm revealed what Americans have not wanted to see about their country: the contemporary face of a system based on continuing privilege and disadvantage. *Using an intersectional lens to analyze the wide-ranging fallout of the storm reveals underlying connections to deeply embedded beliefs about critical social issues: whose life is worth saving, who deserves what kind of quality of life, and how structures of race, class, gender, and ethnicity shape opportunity in our society.*

Intersectional analyses provide a crucial analytical framework for understanding these issues. Race, gender, and class mutually shape forms of oppression in our society and have played a critical role in the historical antecedents and aftermath of Katrina.

Intersectionality places the lives of people of color and those who have suffered from systematic discrimination at the center of analysis and interprets their lived experiences as essential to understanding the U.S. history of intertwining racism, gender bias, homophobia, and economic inequality.

Much has been written about Hurricane Katrina, with some attention focused on race, but what is needed is an analysis that considers how and why the impact of the natural disaster varied greatly according to the socially ascribed characteristics of various groups of people involved. A more sophisticated understanding of the social context of its victims is crucial to developing and delivering relevant and effective responses. For example, before the hurricane, African American women in the region were particularly likely to suffer from high rates of poverty, to live in single-parent families, and to hold low-paying jobs.¹ Post Katrina, these same women need considerably more than a temporary shelter to provide a healthy and constructive environment for their families. Policies and programs need to consider the multiple effects that social characteristics can have in individual lives and need to be designed accordingly. Intersectional analyses can provide the insight to study the widespread ramifications of Katrina with particular attention to the following three critical areas:

1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT – What are the antecedents that exacerbated the impact of the storm? The history of the Gulf Coast region, particularly for African Americans, has been one of poverty and neglect, with roots that extend back in time to its origins as a region where slavery was legal. Historically, how did New Orleans become a city with such pronounced race and class differences? Why was so much of the poverty, which appeared in media accounts to be primarily Black, “invisible” prior to the disaster? What social conditions and historical antecedents contributed to the delayed response? How prepared was the U.S. government to address a major crisis in the Gulf region? What federal, state, and local priorities were weighed prior to the storm?

2. THE EVENT ITSELF AND THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE – According to the Wikipedia, “Hurricane Katrina [was] the most destructive and costly natural disaster in the history of the United States. The official death toll now stands at 1,302 and the damage from \$70 to \$130 billion. Over a million people were displaced—a humanitarian crisis on a scale unseen in the U.S. since the Great Depression.”² Many different groups and organizations have responded to the disaster. Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of responses from the local government, the state government, the federal government, the nonprofit aid organizations, and the international community can shed light on the priorities and effectiveness of

Please note that this conference will have a particular focus on the city of New Orleans. While we realize the Gulf Coast region has been affected in its entirety, and that rural poverty complicates much of the recovery efforts in other areas, New Orleans is a location that is home to the greatest numbers of displaced people, has a symbolic importance as the heart of the damage that occurred, and will also be the place where interventions will be focused and evaluated. New Orleans is the focus of much of the coverage of Hurricane Katrina and exemplifies many of the difficulties facing the entire region.

these different types of responses. Important questions to be answered include the following: How soon was aid provided and to whom? Who got out, who didn't, and what has happened since? How are survivors managing the loss of their homes, culture, and way of life?

Additional streams of inquiry should include the following: How were various survivors perceived? What kinds of race and class discourses were made evident during the disaster and its aftermath? Who was considered a victim, a threat, a looter, a provider, etc.? What is the role of Homeland Security within this effort? What did Katrina tell us about how "homeland" and "security" are defined in contemporary society, particularly in relation to race, gender, and class? How can the "homeland" be protected and what is defined as a threat to its integrity? What led to the militaristic response? How does the U.S. response impact American foreign policy? How was the event represented visually in the United States and internationally?

3. THE REBUILDING EFFORT – The devastation brought by Katrina has left much of the city's architectural, cultural, and environmental legacy in jeopardy, particularly if recovery and rebuilding efforts fail to consider the multiple and diverse communities impacted by the storm — especially those most marginalized by the long-term forces of structural, economic, and political oppression.

Social Issues

Hurricane Katrina will have both short- and long-term impact on individuals, families, and communities in the Gulf Coast region. This symposium will include analyses of how the disaster has impacted the following areas of social life: poverty, employment, education, environment, and health. How will long-term persistent poverty be addressed during the rebuilding? What kinds of work are available and will be available in the future? How are people rebuilding the economic infrastructure? Katrina has hit the historically Black colleges and universities in the city hard and their recovery will take much time and many resources. How does that affect the numbers of scholars of color who have benefited from these institutions? Environmentally, there are enormous issues as well: Untreated sewage, decomposing human bodies and livestock as well as a problematic mixture of toxic chemicals and oils from domestic, agricultural, and industrial sources have created a serious health risk across the whole of the flooded area. Long-term threats include biochemical residue that could severely impact surface and ground water, soil, and urban environments. Questions remain as the rebuilding effort begins: How are the serious health and environmental issues being addressed? Who is invited back to live under which conditions?

Historical Preservation

With upwards of 80 percent of New Orleans damaged by tidal surges and hurricane-force winds, most estimates suggest a total of almost \$75 billion dollars in property damage across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and other nearby states. Conservative estimates suggest that a minimum of 200,000 homes were lost across the region with almost 160,000 homes to be replaced in New Orleans alone. Unfortunately, rebuilding is not typically framed or discussed in a participatory process that might include residents in planning or in assessing their particular cultural values. Many urban planners, heritage professionals, and architects, in the wake of most natural disasters, are primarily interested in long-term rebuilding and infrastructure repair while not developing an inclusive, locally based, community driven process as part of their immediate response efforts. Who decides what will be rebuilt and how? Who benefits from these decisions?

Arts and Culture Revival

Understanding the importance of local heritage resources (architecture, music, foodways, arts, etc.) and how they've impacted that city's unique culture, from the perspective of those living in deep poverty, requires immediate attention. Who decides what is of cultural value in New Orleans? How are unique cultural aspects being recorded and preserved for future generations?

Conclusion

For a short period of time, the terrible damage that Katrina wrought blew away the veil that often covers the lives of the underprivileged. We have a unique opportunity to understand and unsettle the legacies of structural racism, the feminization of poverty, the vast disparities in standards of living, and the inequalities in health and elder care. These are just a few of the issues that have stood in stark relief among the images broadcast following the storm. Addressing Katrina with an intersectional lens means addressing injustices that have shaped the very structure of the U.S. and the questions of why and how power, privilege, and resources flow to some groups and away from others. An intersectional approach is crucial to this task because it requires scholars to analyze power and the interconnections among the social characteristics that structure life chances and choices. □

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² Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_29

Domestic Violence at the Intersections of Race, Gender, Ethnicity, and Class

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Beginning in the late 1960s, mainstream *feminist* theory challenged the pathologizing of women who are victims and survivors of domestic violence. They argued that socially structured and culturally approved gender inequality is causative to understanding.¹ Beginning in the 1980s, *intersectional* domestic violence theory began to challenge gender inequality as *the* primary explanation for domestic violence: gender inequality being neither the most important nor the only factor needed to understand domestic violence in the lives of marginalized women (Richie 1985 and Krenshaw 1994).

Gender inequality is only part of the women's marginalized and oppressed status. A battered woman's location at the intersection of systems of social inequality and oppression shapes the way in which she experiences that violence and is responded to by individuals and institutions (Bograd 2005). Moreover, the need to understand the interconnections between marginalized women's locations in the systems of social/societal violence and interpersonal/familial violence are paramount. As Beth Richie argues, poor women of color are the "most likely to be in both dangerous intimate relationships and dangerous social positions." Thus, the domestic anti-violence movement's avoidance of a race and class analysis of violence against women "seriously compromises the transgressive and transformative potential of the anti-violence movement's potential [to] radically critique various forms of social domination" (Richie 2005). The failure to address the multiple oppressions of poor women of color jeopardizes the validity and legitimacy of the domestic anti-violence movement.

In the intersectional domestic violence literature, two sometimes-conflicting objectives emerge: the need to give voice to battered women from diverse social locations and cultural backgrounds and the need to focus on the structural inequalities (i.e., race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality) that constrain and shape, albeit in different ways, the lives of battered women. The first has been described as the "race/class/gender" perspective (the multicultural perspective), which is focused on multiple, interlocking oppressions of individuals and difference; the second has been described as the "structural" perspective, requiring analysis and criticism of existing systems of power, privilege, and access to resources (Andersen and Collins 2001; Mann and Grimes 2001). My work honors both perspectives and demands both "difference" (including culture) and "structural inequality" (through which culture operates) to understand the diverse experiences of battered women typically on the margins of U.S. society.

Intersectional analysis helps us understand and fight against domestic violence in the lives of women from marginalized communities.

¹ Domestic violence is a term that includes physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse.

Structural Contexts

One dilemma is the problem of how to report race and class differences in domestic violence prevalence rates. The literature indicates tremendous diversity among women regarding the prevalence, nature, and impact of domestic violence—even within ethnic, racial, religious, socioeconomic groups and sexual orientations (Hampton et al. 2005; West 2005). Several studies indicate that Black women are severely abused (West 2004) and murdered at significantly higher rates (Hampton et al. 2005; Websdale 1997; West 2005) than the general population or other racial/ethnic groups.

By itself, this information may serve little purpose but to reinforce negative stereotypes about African Americans. One solution to this problem of representation is to *contextualize* these findings within a *structural* framework—one that looks at socially organized systems of social inequality. An emerging body of work offers support, in large part, for an economic or structural explanation of differential prevalence rates. Many studies on intimate partner violence control for socioeconomic factors. In doing so, they find that racial/ethnic differences in domestic violence rates largely disappear (Hampton et al. 2005; Rennison and Planty 2003). This finding suggests that at least one major underlying reason for the greater level of domestic violence among African Americans is not attributable to racial/cultural factors but to the high and extreme levels of poverty in Black communities. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that not only is abuse more likely to be found among impoverished African Americans, but this population is also more likely to be comprised of young, unemployed urban residents (Hampton et al. 2005; C. West 2005). Thus age, employment status, residence, poverty, social embedment, and isolation combine to explain higher rates of abuse within Black communities—not race or culture per se.

That being said, it is also important to understand the profound racism that exists in U.S. society, including the effects of racially segregated communities. For example, the degree of poverty is more intense in the Black community. Whereas 75 percent of poor Blacks live in communities with other poor Blacks—and experience attendant disadvantages, only 25 percent of poor Whites live in poor White communities. Instead, poor Whites are more likely to live in communities with working-class and middle-class White residents, who provide an immeasurable degree of available resources to the community (Rusk 1995). Poverty in poor African American and in poor White neighborhoods is simply not “comparable”—i.e., the oppression and marginalization of communities as the context for understanding what happens in individual families must be taken into account in working toward lowering levels of domestic violence in Black and White communities (Websdale 2005).²

Community Based Alternatives

A second area of concern is that comprehensive culturally competent services be made available to diverse communities. Many new alternatives, which ultimately will help all women, are being proposed for dealing with domestic violence in marginalized communities. Here I mention only one such alternative: the Cultural Context Model (CCM), an approach fostered by Rhea Almeida and her colleagues (1999, 2005). That approach requires abusers to take responsibility for their violence and supports the empowerment of victims, including children, by providing a wide range of comprehensive services to the entire family. The CCM rejects the commonly held belief that domestic violence is the product of “other” cultural traditions by identifying domestic violence as a universal pattern of domination and control. At the same time, this therapeutic model acknowledges the powerful impact that social, cultural, and structural forces can have on families. It links gender ideology and subordination in individual couples with experiences of racial subordination and colonization in marginalized communities, thereby linking the struggle for gender equality with the struggles for racial and economic justice—without requiring the women to choose between cultural identity or group membership and their safety and autonomy.

Given the racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia inherent in (i.e., structured into) the criminal justice system, the CCM offers battered women an alternative approach. A unique aspect of the program includes men’s and women’s “culture circles” where participants can discuss the ways in which structural factors may help shape people’s choices with regard to domestic violence. Participants are also assigned a sponsor who provides ongoing support with a focus on accountability for batterers and empowerment for victim-survivors. While this model places full responsibility for violence on abusers, it also recognizes the impact on families of a number of social forces, including structure and culture. As the authors suggest, “this system of intervention offers a range of new options: the possibility of returning to their now nonviolent partners, the possibility of children rebuilding relationships with their abusive parent, the possibility of having a civil and safe divorce, and lastly, the possibility of maintaining safety through community rather than criminal justice intervention” (Almeida and Lockard 2005). Several programs in the Latino/a community share similar features to the Cultural Context Model (Garza 2001).

Finally, it is important to state that even culturally competent services are inadequate alone: they cannot prevent or stop domestic violence. Domestic violence is part of the larger systems

² This may help to explain some of the divergent findings on race, ethnicity, and domestic violence by Caetano, et al. (2005).

of violence (e.g., imperialism, racism, colonialism, patriarchy) and, as such, domestic violence must be attacked at its root causes: the socially structured systems of inequality — of race, class, gender, sexuality, immigrant status, and the like. We need structural solutions to structural problems, all the while respecting and understanding specific contributions of individual cultures. But most importantly, we must look to understanding the intersectionality of structural and cultural institutions as we struggle against domestic violence in all communities. □

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For more information on this topic, see the extensive bibliography by Natalie J. Sokoloff, *Multicultural Domestic Violence Bibliography*: www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/research/DomesticViolence/.

Instituting a Legacy of Change: Transforming the Campus Climate through Intellectual Leadership

AMY E. MCLAUGHLIN, PH.D.
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CRGE

In September 2005, CRGE was awarded a grant from the Institute for Women's Leadership, Rutgers University to examine the role of faculty agency and interdisciplinary collaboration in bringing about social change in higher education. To illuminate the process of social and institutional change, we draw from the life histories of three engaged faculty members, Dr. Sharon Harley, Dr. Deborah Rosenfelt, and Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill; each has made a significant impact on the diversity climate at this university. The project will trace the growth of their intellectual leadership with the success of their transformative organizations—namely, the Department of African American Studies, the Curriculum Transformation Project, the Department of Women's Studies, and The Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity. For the past seven years, these organizations have received support from the Ford Foundation to create multiple ways of engaging issues of race, gender, nation, and ethnicity through scholarship and action. The institutional history of this collaboration has been central to the careers of these faculty members as well as having created ties to additional avenues of faculty agency on campus. Ultimately, we will produce a document that can be used to facilitate diversity work at Research I Universities and that will provide some useful tactics and ideas for other institutions.

In our preliminary analysis of interview data, we have identified common themes expressed by the faculty members. They cite the importance of the following factors for diversity work in higher education:

- Upper-level administrative commitment
- Access to a community of scholars
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Mentorship for junior faculty engaged in diversity work
- Rewards for faculty engaged in diversity work
- Linking diversity to academic excellence
- Building support through awareness and visibility
- Generating external funding

In addition, the faculty members themselves share life-long commitments to social justice. Combining activism with scholarship, they find that their work creating knowledge about groups excluded from the centers of power is essential to social change. The faculty also describes the interconnected nature of diversity work and asserts that interdisciplinarity based on an intersectional approach is the “wave of the future.” A common concern cited is the conservative political climate that continues to present particular challenges to social justice work (e.g., diminished university and extramural support for diversity initiatives).

Each of these programs has contributed to change on the University of Maryland campus and as Bonnie Thornton Dill says, “...we are trying to do something different in the academy and really trying to make a place for [people's collaborative work] and legitimate it.” Her sentiments are echoed by Deborah Rosenfelt, who comments, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. And that is true of these projects...The fact is this university looks a whole lot different from what it did when we first entered the halls of academia.”

The work of the faculty we focus upon is intertwined with several key diversity initiatives on campus. Consequently, it is a challenge to capture the true complexity of their interconnected work. To address that challenge and create an accurate and rich description, we plan to collect more data—specifically on how this diversity work came about, how it has developed, and its future directions. The final report will be made available to the UM community. □

CrISP Scholars 2005–2006

Top row (L TO R):
ANAYA MCMURRAY,
MELANIE MILLER, AND
TANESHA "TEE"
LEATHERS



Bottom row (L TO R):
VANESSA LOPES,
ANA PEREZ, AND
CRYSTAL ESPINOZA

The Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity (CRGE) is home to an innovative two-year graduate fellowship program designed to develop national and international leaders in the research and scholarship of intersectional analyses. CRGE Interdisciplinary Scholarship Program (CrISP) scholars are typically incoming graduate students from the following academic areas: American studies, family studies, sociology, history, curriculum and instruction, education policy and leadership and women's studies. CRGE faculty mentors work with the departmental advisor of each scholar to help design an appropriate course of study complimentary to the department's expectations and the student's interests. CrISP scholars have played important roles in the development of CRGE grant proposals, colloquia, special events, and online resources. Most recently, their work has been featured as part of the new Intersectional Research Database. Each year, a diverse cohort is recruited to foster scholarship on intersectionality and social justice with the goal of promoting meaningful social change.

Crystal Espinoza (EDUCATION)

Research interests: equity in education, first-generation college students, Chicanos in academia, tracking and segregation in higher education, and the legacy of discrimination within academe

"The CrISP program offers a remarkable opportunity for scholarly growth. As a first-year doctoral student, my experience has been significantly bolstered by the collegiality of my CrISP peers and the mentorship and expertise of CRGE's directors and faculty."

Bianca I. Laureano (WOMEN'S STUDIES)

Research interests: sexual relationships among Puerto Rican couples, the relationship between sexuality and popular culture in Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rican nationalism

"Returning as a CrISP scholar has allowed me the opportunity to demonstrate how my work and research strengthens, expands, and contributes to intersectional theory and frameworks."

Tee Leathers (AMERICAN STUDIES)

Research interests: hip hop, R&B, pop culture, and African American adolescent girls' engagement with aforesaid, American materialism, and the cultural development of young people of color

"Being a CrISP scholar enables me to engage with other scholars in a community devoted to the marriage of theory, research, and praxis. Currently, I am working with our Qualitative Research Interest Group as well as updating our online meta-site on African American visual and material culture."

Vanessa D. Lopes (SOCIOLOGY)

Research interests: social inequality, African diaspora, Black immigrant identity, health disparities

"The Consortium has provided me the opportunity to work side-by-side with faculty and graduate students who have a diverse set of approaches to conducting intersectional research. Through the CrISP program, I have access to formal and informal mentorship, research training, and foundation in intersectionality that is critical to my present and future work."

Anaya McMurray (WOMEN'S STUDIES)

Research interests: African American Muslim women, Islam in Black popular culture, and American hip hop culture

"Being a CrISP scholar has helped me tremendously in my transition to doctoral studies by providing invaluable opportunities for me to improve my research skills and learn from dedicated scholars committed to social justice."

Melanie Louie Miller (HISTORY)

Research interests: American history, immigration, Chinese migration, interracial and inter-ethnic relations, Asian American history, and women's history

"The CrISP program has given me a home where I can talk about race, gender, and ethnicity with others who are also personally and professionally concerned with these issues. Being a CrISP scholar also makes it possible for me to connect my scholarship with a sense of social justice often absent from academia."

Ana Maria Perez (WOMEN'S STUDIES)

Research interests: feminization of poverty among Mexican/Latina women, ethnic and racial relations among Latinos, cultural and gender identity formation

"CRGE has provided me with an ideal intellectual space to engage in intersectional work. In one semester I have already learned an incredible amount from CRGE faculty and fellow CrISP scholars." □

Online Database: Intersectional Research on the Web

This year's launch of CRGE's Intersectional Research Database marks a major achievement in an ongoing initiative to foster a vibrant online community of scholars. The database, created through a partnership with the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), has greatly expanded the information available at www.cрге.umd.edu.

A wealth of intersectional research is now available free-of-charge and accessible from anywhere via the World Wide Web. This research focuses on how intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of social difference shape everyday life.

The database is interdisciplinary and contains entries from the social sciences, arts and humanities, law, medicine, and many other fields of study. Currently more than 100 annotations of articles and books related to intersectional research are included. Future database entries will include sound, video, and additional visual images.

CRGE designed the database for a variety of uses. The database can be used for dissertation research, graduate seminars, undergraduate teaching, and non-academic research, to name a few possibilities. Annotations are composed in such a way that they are simultaneously useful for scholars familiar with intersectionality and comprehensible to audiences whose interaction with the database may be their first exposure to intersectional ideas.

“As I've been studying for comprehensive exams, the Intersectional Research Database has been really valuable,” says Erika Thompson, a doctoral student in the Department of American Studies. “The database has refreshed my familiarity with pieces I read previously, and introduced me to new scholarship that strengthens my understanding of intersectional theory.”

Dr. Martha Nell Smith, founding director of MITH and professor of English, saw the database evolve from concept to reality. “Too often knowledge lies like scattered pieces of a puzzle but remains unknown because its logically related parts are diffused,” says Dr. Smith. “By collecting this scholarship in one place and offering access to the public, CRGE successfully archives and disseminates intersectionality on the Web, providing an invaluable resource that also serves as a model of first-rate interdisciplinary research. I look forward to seeing the many ways this inspiring database will be used in research, classrooms, and beyond.” □

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