Mosaic: Social Justice Symposium
Executive Committee 2017

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Nichole Reader
Morgan Brown
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Mosaic: Social Justice Symposium is a celebration of diverse identities and the individual voices and ideas on our campus. The University of Oklahoma adheres to the belief that “There’s Only One Oklahoma” and, through shared traditions and achievements, we become a unified University community. Though we have this singular connection, our campus is not a melting pot, a collision of cultures that blend and assimilate to create a homogeneous, harmonious culture, with all differences erased. Instead, the University of Oklahoma is a mixture of communities coming together while simultaneously retaining fantastically distinct identities, which are valuable and ought to be celebrated.

Mosaic: Social Justice Symposium is an opportunity for students to learn and discuss issues within social justice. The symposium will challenge the origins of oppression and inequality, empower all people to exercise their own voices, and encourage participants to realize their full potential. It will build social solidarity and foster collective action.

The symposium is not only student planned and organized, but it also encourages undergraduate and graduate students to address and question the vast spectrum that is social justice through presentations, research, and discussion forums. As such, the views presented during the symposium are as unique and individual as our campus community and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gender + Equality Center. Mosaic is a powerful event, as it allows students from all disciplines to come together for one day to learn and grow from the knowledge and experiences of fellow students. With issues such as, but not limited to, human rights, gender disparities, political and cultural oppression, racial discrimination, classism, sexuality, education, economic inequality, ableism, ethnicity, religion, and environmentalism, students on our campus will have a platform and an opportunity to share their passions with their peers, colleagues, and mentors. As we explore the many identities of social justice, we aim to grow collectively stronger to form a perfectly imperfect work of art: a mosaic.
Greetings and welcome to the fifth annual Mosaic: Social Justice Symposium. We, the Gender + Equality Center as well as our Executive Committee, are incredibly excited that you are joining us today. Whether this is your first time attending Mosaic or your fifth, we hope that you learn something new and become an agent of change in your community.

Today, you will engage in discussions facilitated by undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Oklahoma. These conversations and discussions covered a wide range of topics, from race and ethnicity to gender identities to human rights in developing countries in the age of globalization. I challenge you to push your boundaries and expand your perspectives as well as reflecting upon your personal assumptions and beliefs during your time at Mosaic. To be the agent of change in our community, we must allow change to take place within ourselves, to reframe your perspective and transform the way we view ourselves and the world. We hope Mosaic: Social Justice Symposium will provide you the platform for you to do so.

Mosaic would not have been possible without the help from the extraordinary individuals surrounding you, who are making a difference in the lives of others. Thank you to our student presenters and keynote speakers for reminding us that, in whatever capacity, we are all agents of change. We are all passionate about various social issues; and together, we are hoping to change the world to be a more inclusive place for everyone. Thank you to our Mosaic Executive Committee as well as our sponsors for creating a forum where University community can bring the contemporary issues of social justice to the forefront and learn from each other.

In solidarity,

Quan Phan
Mosaic Chair
Mileena Zafra is a queer scholar majoring in Women’s and Gender Studies with minors in the areas of Spanish and Political Science at the University of Oklahoma. When she is not studying for classes, Mileena works with the Revolutionary Baddies, the Gender + Equality Center, and the Title IX and Equity Consortium. These spaces provide opportunities for facilitating education and awareness, critical thought, and community involvement in the fight for social justice and equity literacy. As a Filipina-Colombian-American, Mileena believes balancing decolonized methods of healing and action serves as a mechanism for providing a seat for everyone at the table. She has engaged in international humanitarian efforts intended to meet the needs of refugees and immigrants including participating in art therapy and childcare initiatives. Mileena is passionate about learning from others, traveling the world, and dismantling systems of oppression.

**Kasey Catlett** is the Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs at the University of Texas Arlington. In this role, he is responsible for a number of social justice and diversity initiatives that engage students on critical topics related to the intersections of the LGBTQ community, race, and ethnicity. Kasey advises student groups to promote student development and a space for students to have a voice.

Prior to that position, Kasey served as the Associate Director of LGBTQ and Health Programs at the University of Oklahoma’s Gender + Equality Center. He was charged with overseeing LGBTQ program efforts for the University that included Ally education and awareness initiatives that support, welcome, and celebrate LGBTQ students on campus. In 2016, he singlehandedly trained over 1,000 new Allies.

In 2013, Kasey initiated the first Mosaic: Social Justice Symposium that highlights the contributions of students and brings awareness to contemporary issues of social justice. His work in social justice advocacy and commitment to equality was recognized with the Robert D. Lemon Social Justice Award in 2014. Most recently, he received the Promising New Professional Award from the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals.
**OF HAIKU AND BROWN SKINS**

Megan Ramos - Undergraduate Student

Laugh along while Megan Ramos reads some original poetry and openly shares some of her encounters with racism, growing up through to present day.

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**CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE AND ITS IMPACT ON MARGINALIZED RELIGIO-SPIRITUAL STUDENT IDENTITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Bailey Charvat - Graduate Student
Sarah Kidwell - Graduate Student
Nichole Reader - Graduate Student

This presentation will cover the prevalence and influence of Christianity in higher education, as well as the privilege that accompanies a Christian normative culture. Our presentation will be taking a critical look at academic calendars, “safe places” on campus, language and communication, environmental spaces, and social norms that contribute to institutional systems of oppression within higher education. In assessing Christian privilege, marginalized religio-spiritual identities of non-dominant and irreligious students will be explored. Solutions will be discussed in a student-centered context.

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**RIGHTS AFTER ROBOTS:**

**WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF WORK IN THE AGE OF AUTOMATION LOOK LIKE FOR LOW-SKILLED LABORERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?**

Abby Henderson - Graduate Student

Robots, Robots everywhere and not a job to get. As western policy makers and economists go back and forth on the effects of automation on jobs in their own countries, who is looking out for workers in developing countries that do many jobs that moved from the west? What does the future of work in the age of automation look like for low-skilled laborers in developing countries? We will explore these questions and more together as we dive deeper into the types of automation and innovative technologies that many fear are displacing human workers. We will also try to understand where automation is occurring and how its implementation effects workers in various countries differently. We will also consider whose responsibility it might be to take care of workers who are displaced by jobs. And, finally, we will contemplate a few solutions that are frequently cited in conversations relating to technology and the future of work.
Marketing for social justice causes, though similar to other types of marketing, has several nuances that distinguish it from the other forms. Join us as we discuss how to formulate a campaign from start to finish. Topics will include identifying the problem, choosing the media, keeping the conversation alive, and more.

State actions regarding depleting mental health resources, restricting physical access to assistance and excluding awareness of chronic illness have brought about large tasks and goals within the disability rights movement. Oftentimes, it is easy for the academy and the media to get wrapped up in a standard model of disability that fails to understand fully the impact, intersections, and implications of “ability” in everyday life. This has fostered a wave of underground activism that is unprecedented in growth and diversity. This presentation is aimed to unpack critical questions when it comes to ability, ableism and justice: What does ableism really look like on a structural level? What is the state of the disability rights movement? How do other aspects of identity interact with disability? How should individuals go about advocating for change in the fight for justice and recognition? Through a series of discussions and activities, the goal of the seminar is to explore new ways of thinking about ability and ableism in society. We will explore many topics and disciplines ranging from intersectionality in disability to celebrating and empowering diversity within ability.

The American South, the South, or the Bible Belt? Names all associated with certain cultural perceptions of what it is to be Southern, and what it is to live in the Bible Belt region. Through historical documents and sociological perspectives, this study examines racism, classism, sexism, religiosity, and the political culture that defines the region known as the Bible Belt.
HOW DRUG LAWS LEAD TO A CYCLE OF POVERTY AND CRIME.

Morgan Brown - Undergraduate Student

“The War on Drugs” is a phrase that almost every American has heard. In modern society, this war is the criminalization and incarceration of individuals accused of drug crimes. This is accomplished through labeling people felons as a way to deter others from going down this same path. The flaw in this logic is that people who are actively pursuing these drugs already know of the illegality of their actions. These addicts have an illness that many don’t recognize as a valid disease because society has created such a great stigmatization of substance abuse in American culture. Individuals with criminal records are significantly less likely to get jobs and therefore are not able to afford to make enough money to provide for themselves or their families. Because of this, many turn to illegal means of making money. This mass criminalization leads to a further cycle of crime, poverty, and drug abuse. Plenty of other countries have given us effective systems to help combat these issues but our laws are so strict that we won’t even begin to accept that there might be another way. The United States has the highest incarceration rates in any country in the world. For every 100,000 people in the United States, we imprison 730. The racial disparities of these imprisonments are even more alarming. In a country that is only about 13% black, 43% of people imprisoned are black. We have a problem. Let’s talk about it.
Reproductive Justice: Origins, Meaning, and Importance Today

Sara Raines - Undergraduate Student

When it comes to the reproductive rights movement, the main topics that come to mind are usually birth control and abortion. However, there are so many other factors that affect and involve reproduction other than just the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. Birth control and abortion are important for protecting the rights of people who don’t want to be pregnant, but what about the rights of the people who do want to be pregnant? This is where Reproductive Justice comes in. Reproductive Justice looks not only at rights regarding pregnancy prevention, maternal care, childbirth, and parenthood, but also at the way that issues like economic disparity, accessibility, environmental justice, incarceration, healthcare, police brutality, and education affect those rights. In this presentation, we will explore the social factors and history that led to the development of the Reproductive Justice framework and what all of the things this framework encompasses. We will also review the ways in which it is relevant to and necessary in our activism and our society today.

Black Girl Magic & Black Boy Joy

Christina Craft - Graduate Student; Miles Kelly - Graduate Student; Rodney Bates - Ph.D

Historically white Institutions (HWI’s) historically and contemporarily have not provide space for Black bodies to gather, and operate in our true identities and our authentic selves. Black Girl Magic and Black Boy Joy week was created to intentionally create space for Black bodies to be valued, loved, and celebrated. Additionally we also fostered conversation with other non-marginalized identities, to make aware of oppressive structures; which they are consciously or unconsciously reinforcing. Using framework of intersectionity by Patricia Hill-Collins and residential curriculum called SCOPE, we presented a week long events to foster Blackness in its entirety. The SCOPE framework are: Community, Committed Compassion, Academic Engagement, Identity Exploration, and Intercultural Competence. The week long events shifted the narrative of Black bodies always been seen as a threat, violent, monolithic, or oppressed to a celebration of all things Black.

Social Justice Teaching Practices in Secondary Social Studies and Beyond

Lindsay Williams - Graduate Student

Education is considered a safeguard for democracy. How can teachers in secondary classrooms, especially those that teach social studies, promote teaching practices that inform, empower and inspire? Years of standardized testing have created an environment that can sometimes feel counterintuitive to ideas of choice and individuality. There is evidence that teaching that incorporates culturally relevant pedagogy, authentic teaching practices and social justice goals and processes can promote achievement. But more than that. In the case of social studies instruction, it can be an important catalyst for preparing students for civic life. The National Council for the Social Studies states, “Advocates of citizenship education cross the political spectrum, but they are bound by a common belief that our democratic republic will not sustain unless students are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good. There will always be differing perspectives on these objectives. The goal of knowledgeable, thinking and active citizens however is universal.” This session will discuss research and practice regarding social justice teaching in social studies classrooms and also how these ideas can relate to any teaching environment.


Sarah Short - Graduate Student

This presentation is an overview of my research on Islamophobia in the United States. My work focuses on present conditions of Islamophobia, the sources from which the phenomenon has originated, the social problems that are caused by Islamophobia, and the best approaches to successful integration of Islam and Muslims into American society. My research question is: Do current government policies on the relationship between religion and state affect the prevalence and intensity of Islamophobia among the public, and what government approach best facilitates minority integration into national identity?
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