ETHNIC STUDIES AT UHART

The Humanities Center is happy to present this lecture series in Fall 2022 of nine University of Hartford professors who were awarded a fellowship in Ethnic Studies for the 2022-23 academic year. The fellowship, possible due to generous funding from the A&S dean’s office (the Cardin Fund), promotes the work of humanists whose research and teaching focus on the study of racialized ethnic groups in the United States.

All lectures are 12:45-2:00 p.m. on select Mondays in Fall 2022 and will take place in the Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies. They are free and open to the university community.

For more information, contact Nicholas Ealy, Director of the Humanities Center, at ealy@hartford.edu.

September 19: Amy Weiss, Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies (A&S), will give a talk titled “Jews of Color and American Jewish Life.” Here, she will discuss recent findings that suggest that race, national origin and geographic links all play a role in shaping the identities of Jews of color, who have been excluded in traditional examinations of American Jewish life. Ultimately, her talk will explore how questions regarding race and religion are often intertwined.

September 26: Bryan Sinche, Professor of English (A&S), will give a talk called “Black Self-Publishers in the Nineteenth-Century United States” that emerges from his forthcoming monograph Published by the Author: Black Self-Publishers in the Nineteenth-Century United States. Here, he will discuss little-known Black writers whose unique literary contributions have escaped our attention, explain why self-publishing was an useful tool for these writers, and share some of the challenges he faced researching authors and texts that have been marginalized or ignored.

October 3: Rashmi Viswanathan, Assistant Professor of Art History (Hartford Art School), will give a talk called “Receiving the South Asian Modern,” based on work from her current book project, Receiving the South Asian Modern: Private Politics of Cultural Ambassadorship. Here, she will look at the movement and patronage of modern art between and within South Asia and the United States, along with efforts to cultivate its reception in the latter twentieth century. She will also seek to historicize the canon of Modern South Asian art as well as theorize articulations of the Modern in art across the Global South and North. (lecture will be online, details to be announced)

October 10: Goyland Williams, Assistant Professor of Communication (A&S), will give a talk called “In the Shadows of Crown Heights and the L.A Riots: An Afterword,” where he will reflect on the thirty-year legacy of these tensions as a rich site for intercultural knowledge and learning as well as renewed interdisciplinary attention. In particular, he seeks to bring in Africana and social movement theory to bear on both conflicts as more than a race war or ethnic tensions, but as a fundamental social and political antagonism between ethnic communities.
October 17: Markeysha Davis, Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and Literature (Hillyer College), will give a lecture titled “Who Will Survive America?: Examining American Iconographies in Contemporary African-American Music.” Here, she will explore the ways in which Black musicians (such as Janelle Monáe, Joey Bada$$, Jay Z and Kanye West) have used American patriotic iconography (the flag, monuments, etc.) as a means of building their stories about Black life and struggle all the while staking a claim in their belonging to American society.

October 31: Deepa Fadnis, Assistant Professor of Communication (A&S), will give a lecture titled “Social Media and South Asian Women in the United States.” Here, she will speak on how women from the South Asian diaspora in the United States use social media as a platform for activism, to bolster community, and to alter traditional cultural narratives that have led to their oppression. As such, she will look specifically at how these women use Instagram as a platform for “informal justice” and feminist activism, as well as how their voices and narratives, which have been historically marginalized, are received on social media platforms.

November 7: Rachel Walker, Assistant Professor of History (A&S), will give a lecture titled “Black Americans and the Sciences in the Nineteenth Century.” Here, she will speak about her current book project that examines the historical connections between politics and the human sciences in the nineteenth-century United States. She will explore how Black Americans approached science in ways that embraced, rejected or reconceptualized the dominant scientific narratives of white male thinkers who used the power, prestige and alleged objectivity of science to create, rationalize and justify racial hierarchies.

November 14: Ines Rivera Prosdocimi, Assistant Professor of English (A&S), will give a talk called “Dominican-American Poetry and Identity Formation” where she aims to help shift the conversation surrounding Dominican-American literary studies away from an emphasis on novels (currently the dominant focus of scholars) toward Dominican-American poetry. Focusing on how Dominican-American poets underscore a relationship to language (Spanish/English) and its role in identity formation, she will speak to how the notion of identity relates to broader questions of what it means to be American, who is included and represented in the American nation, and the ways we might expand the concept of “America” to better reflect a diverse majority.

November 28: Dakota Nanton, Assistant Professor of Cinema (A&S), will give a lecture called “Ethnic Studies and the Creative Process,” based on his current project of fusing Ethnic Studies to creativity, with a focus on the cinema classroom. It is his goal to look at the steps needed to reconceptualize the film history cannon (away from an emphasis upon white, male directors toward a more expansive cannon that includes directors of color, female directors and queer filmmakers) and, from there, the ways in which creators and consumers of media can become more aware of the stories with which they interact.