The Freedom School
Thursday, January 23, 2020 ~ Connelly Center, Villanova University
Sponsored by the Center for Peace and Justice Education

10:00 a.m. Sessions

"Understanding the Impact of Microaggressions on Campus"
Sherry Bowen, Ariella Robbins, Terry Nance, & Ariella Robbins, Faculty & Staff, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
10:00 a.m., Connelly Cinema (Lower Level Connelly)
While overt forms of racism and discrimination can be easy to spot, microaggressions are subtle and difficult to address. Often, the perpetrators of microaggressions are not aware of the inflicted damage. To be inclusive and welcoming it is important to be cognizant that unconscious and unintentional behaviors can cause harm to people in our community. Our discussion will examine the ways microaggressions impact our campus climate and consider ways to address them. Following a brief round table, we’ll invite the audience to join the conversation.

"Student Solidarity Against Sweatshops"
Rachel Wolf, Undergraduate Student, Center for Peace & Justice Education
10:00 a.m., Radnor Room (Lower Level Connelly)
The Villanova Student Labor Action Movement (SLAM) believes it is important to stand in solidarity with the workers who produce our university apparel as they fight for better working conditions in factories. As a member of SLAM, I will explain how sweatshops are perpetuated, especially in developing countries, and demonstrate how students have the power to hold brands accountable for their questionable business practices. Through peaceful direct action on Villanova’s campus, we can help protect workers’ rights. Anyone can join the movement as we strive for collective liberation.

"With New Eyes: Responsible Community Engagement and Research Across Difference"
Jaira J. Harrington, Faculty, Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies
10:00 a.m., St. David’s Room (Lower Level Connelly)
With Villanova many students interested in working in solidarity with communities whose backgrounds may differ from their own, it is critical to reflect upon responsible community engagement. Drawing from her extensive immersive field research experience, Dr. Jaira J. Harrington will lead an interactive and engaging lecture. This session challenges participants to consider what it means to fully acknowledge oneself and one’s identity as a researcher or collaborator in communities distinctly different from their own.

"Racism-Exclusion-Synodality"
Arthur Purcaro, Staff, Mission and Ministry
10:00 a.m., Devon Room (Upper Level Connelly)
See: the state of racism in the Catholic church
Discern: Gospel call to inclusion, communion, for all to be truly, fully alive, we need to discover how to be welcoming, embracing, empowering in order to grow together
Act: Synodality as an effective tool for listening; ideas on how to create and enhance structure for listening in order to promote and embrace progress toward a more full life for all.

"Music of the Movement: Celebrating the Role of Sacred Song in the Struggle for Justice"
Naomi Washington-Leapheart, Faculty, Campus Ministry
10:00 a.m., Bryn Mawr Room (Upper Level Connelly)
Sacred songs have provided the soundtrack to movements for justice throughout history. Bring your full voice to this interactive session, where we will explore the idea of sonic resistance and learn music that will enliven both our worship services and our protests.
"We Shall Overcome? Understanding the Effects of Race-Based Trauma on Mental Health"
Camille Burge, Faculty, Political Science
11:30 a.m., Connelly Cinema (Lower Level Connelly)
We define and discuss race-based trauma in the context of discrimination, oppression, and violence. Dr. Taunya Tinsley (Education and Counseling) and Dr. Eloise Berry (Office of Intercultural Affairs) will facilitate a discussion about the impact of race-based trauma on mental health and mental illness. Dr. Camille Burge will explain how these experiences shape collective experiences of emotions, intra-and-intergroup relations, and politics. The session will conclude by equipping attendees with skills to cope with race-based trauma and to assist those who may be experiencing its effects.

Interrupting White Fragility"
Rebecca Irwin-Diehl, Graduate Student, Theology & Religious Studies
11:30 a.m., Radnor Room (Lower Level Connelly)
This seminar takes seriously Robin DiAngelo's charge in WHITE FRAGILITY (2018) that “white progressives cause the most daily damage to people of color” and undertakes to interrupt white fragility, using resources available to us in Scripture, church tradition, and the lived practices of Christian faith to generate antiracist responses that abandon white defensiveness for courageous engagement in conversations about race and racism. Participants will learn to recognize the responses of white fragility and develop new strategies for building racial stamina in racial dialog and justice work.

“Did he (or she) REALLY just say that?? What to do, when we witness offense and injury toward one another”
Krista Malott, Faculty, Education & Counseling
11:30 a.m., St. David's Room (Lower Level Connelly)
Ever been in a situation where you witnessed something hurtful or hateful and didn't know what to do? Did you freeze up in fear or shock, and later regret that you said or did nothing? Yep, us too! This is common, and the statistics show that hateful language and acts have increased over the past years, ensuring that we’ll have more opportunities to hone our skills in speaking up against hatred and injustice. Come learn some new skills with us in this no judgment zone.

"Out of the Archives"
Beaudry Rae Allen, Staff, Villanova University Archives
11:30 a.m., Devon Room (Upper Level Connelly)
The archive is not a passive, neutral institution, but an active ever-evolving site where social power and memory is negotiated, challenged, and confirmed. This session will explore the history of diversity and social justice on Villanova’s campus through material from the University Archives. The session will illustrate how archival practices and bias shape memory, as well as how the University Archives is expanding collecting practices with a social justice lens, so archival collections reflect Villanova’s student experience on campus more broadly.

Paul Sheldon, Faculty, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences
11:30 a.m., Bryn Mawr Room (Upper Level Connelly)
King's 1967 speech at Riverside Church, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence,” challenges us through his linkage of “the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism.” Delivered exactly one year before his death, this speech is as timely today as it was then. As we consider what he said at Riverside, it may help us
understand why at the time of his assassination King was the most hated man in America. Have we white-washed the real King in our public praise of him?

1:00 p.m. Sessions

“Antiracism: The IGR Process of Dialogue”
Alex Iannucci, Celina Alexander, Carol Anthony, Sherry Bowen, Elizabeth Keech, Terry Nance, Miranda Pilupchuk, Ariella Robbins, Steve Sheridan, Shalyssa Smith, Faculty & staff involved in the Intergroup Dialogue Program at Villanova University, students of ACT (Association of Change and Transformation), and students who have taken IGR in the past
1:00 p.m., Connelly Cinema (Lower Level Connelly)
As we work to become a more inclusive community with more diverse students, faculty, and staff, both personal and institutional adjustments will need to be made. Intergroup Dialogue (IGR) is a process of learning how to have sustained meaningful conversations about differences that matter. After a brief framing of the IGR dialogic process, a performance of a dialogue will demonstrate how IGR can effectively address racism encountered on campus. Audience members will have a chance to discuss the scene and engage through dialogue.
[This session will be facilitated by IGR faculty and staff facilitators, with help from students from ACT and previous IGR classes. Through COM 5300, IGR dialogues on topics such as race, gender, and class are held on campus every semester (since 2011). ACT is the organization responsible for the highly acclaimed Touch of Diversity performance during New Student Orientation.]

“Racism, College Sports, and Admissions Scandals”
Rick Eckstein, Faculty, Sociology/Criminology
1:00 p.m., Radnor Room (Lower Level Connelly)
The recent college admissions scandal offers a refreshing angle into a varsity athlete recruitment process that, despite conventional wisdom, is systemically biased against poorer families and people of color. Intercollegiate athletics is rarely a conduit of social mobility for marginalized populations, and rarely a source of community diversity.

“Is God a White Racist? Reflecting on the Theological Nature of White Supremacy”
Naomi Washington-Leapheart, Faculty, Theology and Religious Studies
1:00 p.m., St. David’s Room (Lower Level Connelly)
Many Christians believe that God is particularly interested in freedom for the oppressed. But forty years ago, theologian William R. Jones, in his legendary work, “Is God a White Racist?” demanded that Christian communities reckon with what seemed to be a discrepancy between God’s role as liberator and the lived realities of Black people in America. This session will explore how white supremacy has been woven into Christianity. We will think together about how to rescue God from the clutches of heterosexism, patriarchy, ableism, and racism, and re-imagine faith as true freedom for all people.

“The Interfaith Approach and Heeding God’s Call to End Gun Violence”
Anne Minicozzi
1:00 p.m., Devon Room (Upper Level Connelly)
Co-presenters Bryan Miller, Executive Director of “Heeding God’s Call to End Gun Violence” and ACS professor and CommUNITY Breakfast Collaborative President Anne Minicozzi discuss the opportunities of the interfaith approach in social justice work, particularly with respect to their 2019 work together. How do people of different faith traditions engage successfully? What are the opportunities? The challenges? The VU installation of the “Memorial to the Lost” (tee shirt memorial honoring those Philadelphians lost to homicide by guns) will be discussed as well as legislative work.
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“Augustine on Forming Conscience”
Allan Fitzgerald, Faculty, Theology and Religious Studies
1:00 p.m., Bryn Mawr Room (Upper Level Connelly)
A discussion of how St. Augustine waded into the divided society of his time to give his listeners a way to re-shape their understanding of what it means to be Christian, asking them to step outside their group-think divisions by recognizing that to love God one has to love one’s neighbor and not give in to the angry, even violent temptations. It will be a little history applied to the present-day challenge of negotiating differences in deeply human ways.

2:30 p.m. Sessions

“Antiracism: The IGR Process of Dialogue”
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“Mass Incarceration and the Myth of the Black Male Rapist: How False Stereotypes are Used to Legitimate the Prison System”
Miranda Pilipchuk
2:30 p.m., Radnor Room (Lower Level Connelly)
This session will explore how false stereotypes surrounding sexual violence are used to legitimate mass incarceration. In particular, we will focus on the stereotype that black men are disproportionately likely to commit acts of sexual violence, and how this stereotype is used to justify the disproportionate incarceration of black men. I argue that the false stereotype of the black man as rapist has come to ideologically represent all criminals and has been used to uphold the prison system itself. Together, we will examine how the U.S. government has used the false stereotype of the black man as rapist to strengthen and expand the U.S. prison system.

“Music of the Movement: Celebrating the Role of Sacred Song in the Struggle for Justice”
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“Thich Nhat Hahn’s ‘I Have Lost My Brother’”
Carol Anthony
2:30 p.m., Devon Room (Upper Level Connelly)
Thich Nhat Hahn is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk whom Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 for his protest of the Vietnam war and his work for peace and non-violence. Thich Nhat Hahn begins this short piece from his book, Love in Action, by asking a pine tree what the nature of institutional violence is and ends with a call to help find his brother. This work is profound, provocative, and enigmatic and has much to teach us about the source of the violence that destroys us and how we may become agents of change, but only if we would truly listen.

“Recovering Unity: The Impact of Consociational Democracy in Northern Ireland”
Taylor Hinch, Undergraduate Student, Political Science
2:30 p.m., Bryn Mawr Room (Upper Level Connelly)
The impact of Brexit will be felt for decades. In light of the volatility it’s brought to the region, it’s necessary to examine the stability of Northern Ireland’s consociational power-sharing system. Consociationalism is a democratic system implemented in deeply divided societies that establishes a power-sharing structure between all groups. While consociationalism’s efficacy is debated, it has the potential to fulfill Dr. King’s vision of equality for all by the acceptance of intrinsic human rights. Its success in Northern Ireland and similar societies corroborates this statement.