

EQUITY STUDIES STUDENT UNION



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

YEAR IN REVIEW

2015-2016

ESSU presents

InVerses

A bi-weekly poetry and prose collective that prioritizes the voices of marginalized people.

»»» ROOTS

»»» IDENTITY

»»» BODY »»» COMMUNITY

»»» RACE

»»» GENDER

JOIN US

5th NOV 6-8

2006 Wilson Hall

Encouraging all writers with all levels of experience!

LINKED OPPRESSIONS

IN WHAT UNIVERSE?:
CANADIAN HEALTH CARE & WHO IT LEAVES BEHIND

END OF THE SEMESTER

ACCESS PARTY 07 APRIL

THE CATSEYE AT VICTORIA COLLEGE
FREE ENTRANCE FROM 8:30 - 11PM
DJ AND FOOD
ACCESSIBLE SPACE

Slavic Languages & Literatures
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
ESSU
Present
a Screening of:
A People Uncounted

A PEOPLE UNCOUNTED
THE UNFOLD STORY OF THE ROMANIAN REVOLUTION

EQUITY STUDIES STUDENT UNION PRESENTS

STORIES of RESISTANCE

MARCH 5, 2016

CRISIS AND CRITIQUE

A Double Disability Studies Book Launch

ESSU WELCOMES YOU

The mission of the **Equity Studies Students' Union (ESSU)** is to resist and dismantle colonial imperialist ideologies embedded in the academic realm, as well as to strive towards creating accessible education for all. ESSU recognizes itself as a critical juncture within academia, the student body, our communities, and our identities. We strive to create spaces for marginalized bodies to assert their knowledges and experiences. Through an anti-oppressive framework we seek to deconstruct the sexist, homophobic, ableist, transphobic, and racist ideologies embedded in the structures of everyday life, particularly within the academic sphere. Further, we recognize that most of the theories of oppression and social change that we learn in the classroom have been appropriated from Black and Indigenous communities and grassroots organizing. Thus, we find it imperative to recognize that our work through the Equity Studies program has been made possible through of the labour of Black and Indigenous academics and activists. We also recognize the ways that university programs institutionalize these theories, often making them inaccessible to those very communities.

ESSU works alongside professors, organizations, and community leaders to host events, workshops, and activities that challenge institutionalized forms of oppression and create spaces of creative solidarity and resistance. Between September and April, we invite you to join us at our meetings to contribute to the creation of these spaces. If you would like to get involved with ESSU, please send us an email at uoft.essu@gmail.com. Our executives will also hold office hours throughout the year in Room 500-A at the New College Student Centre located at Wilson Hall, New College, 40 Willcocks St.

Please follow us on social media to stay updated or send us an email for more information!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uoftessu>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uoftessu>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uoftessu/>



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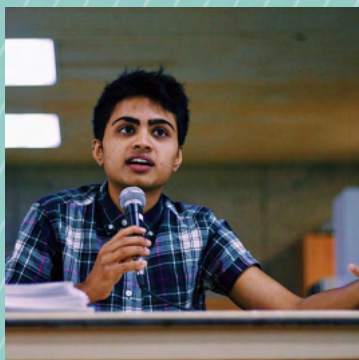
EQUITY STUDIES PROGRAM

Established in 1998, Equity Studies is an undergraduate program that focuses on social justice theory and practice in a variety of local and global contexts. Cutting across a spectrum of academic disciplines, the program uniquely combines classroom based learning with community and activist work so that students can build tools for social change. Course offerings in the major and minor programs focus on disability, social advocacy, and global food equity. With a vibrant student body, a wide range of community partners, and a bold curriculum, Equity Studies at New College is a leading centre for social justice education in Canada.

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DARK MATTER AT UOFT: A WORKSHOP ON INTERSECTIONS



Janani Balasubramanian.



Alok Vaid-Menon

On Friday, September 25th, the ESSU held **DarkMatter at UofT: A Workshop on Intersections**. DarkMatter is a trans south asian performance art duo comprised of **Alok Vaid-Menon** and **Janani Balasubramanian**. Known for their quirky aesthetic and political panache, DarkMatter has been invited to perform at stages and universities across the world.

The workshop was a space for students to reflect on and develop their work in activism. It focused on the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, exploring how the academic industrial complex keeps us reading rather than revolting. DarkMatter facilitated discussion about the ways the university can generate apathy and inaction, and advocated that we instead use the university and its capital to forge solidarity with social movements. Ultimately the workshop emphasized that social justice is not simply an extracurricular activity or a registered student organization; it requires us to constantly brainstorm strategies and formulate practical steps towards change.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM SERIES: MALCOLM X

The Equity Studies Program co-sponsored the **Social Justice Film Series** led by the Multi-Faith Centre at UofT. On October 22nd, the first film screened was *Malcolm X* by director Spike Lee. With over 50 students in attendance, the screening was extremely powerful and led to debates between students as they collectively and individually interpreted what the film and Malcolm X's legacy meant to them. The evening provided students with a safe space to come together and discuss the ways in which inequity can be combatted through discussion and media.

SWEATER WEATHER SOCIAL

As a union focused on representing Equity Studies students, the ESSU regularly holds events to challenge the colonial imperialist ideologies embedded in the academic realm, and is committed to critically examining the intersections of identities through workshops, film screenings, discussions, and activism. The **Sweater Weather Social**, held on October 22nd, was an opportunity for Equity Studies students to connect with each other and learn about future events and workshops.

In addition to art material, mingling and refreshments, the latter half of the social included a screening of *My Brooklyn*. The film is a documentary about director Kelly Anderson's personal journey, as a Brooklyn "gentrifier," who describes the forces reshaping her neighbourhood along the lines of race and class. The film's ultimate questions are about how to heal the deep racial wounds embedded in our urban development patterns and how citizens can become active in fixing a broken planning process.



Students who attended the Sweater Weather Social using art materials

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK: INDIGENOUS AND JEWISH EXPERIENCES



Maurice Switzer

The theme for the 35th annual **Holocaust Education Week** was titled *Liberation: Aftermath and Rebirth*. On November 4th, the Equity Studies Program co-sponsored Indigenous and Jewish Experiences: Change and Continuity. Keynote speaker **Maurice Switzer** addressed the ways Indigenous and Jewish communities adapted and rebuilt in the face of loss and persecution.

Maurice Switzer is a citizen of the Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation and a member of the Sons of Jacob synagogue congregation in North Bay. He has served as director of communications for the Assembly of First Nations and Union of Ontario Indians. He currently writes and delivers public education workshops about the Treaty Relationship that laid the groundwork for the peaceful settlement of Canada. His 2011 graphic novel *We are All Treaty People* has sold over 8,000 copies. Maurice has been honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Anishinabek Nation and is a member of the Nipissing District Human Rights Hall of Fame.

The event encouraged attendees to learn about treaties, sovereignty and the impacts of residential schools on all Canadians while outlining how Indigenous and Jewish experiences are both collective and individual. With a focus on healing and rebuilding, the event proved to be a night of encouragement – to act, to prevent prejudice, and overcome indifference.

The event was co-sponsored by Ve'ahavta; Facing History and Ourselves; and the Winchevsky Centre

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK: A PEOPLE UNCOUNTED

On November 6th, during Holocaust Education Week, the ESSU screened the documentary *A People Uncounted*. The film brought to light the violence the Romani of Europe experienced during the Porajmos, the Romani Holocaust. *A People Uncounted* explores the specific experiences of the Romani People, linking the present erasure and violence to historic xenophobia suffered by their communities. While the film documents the voices of Romani individuals to emphasize their suffering, it also deeply captures their hopes and dreams. This film, screened during Holocaust Education Week, brought awareness to UofT students and faculty about the unspoken inequities the Romani community face and ensured that their stories are no longer ignored.

HART HOUSE COMMUNITY KITCHEN



**COMMUNITY
KITCHEN**

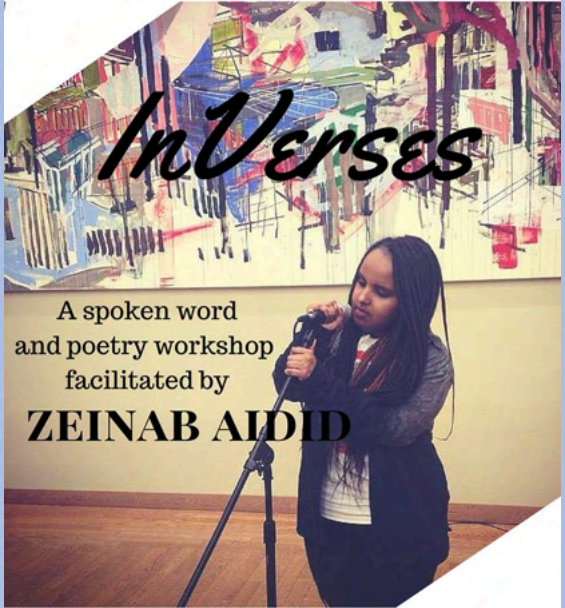
On November 17th, Equity Studies joined the **Hart House Community Kitchen** at Three Sister's House. The evening's programming explored social justice concepts by bringing folks from all walks of life together to engage in critical conversation, cooking, and shared experience. Three Sister's House led the Community Kitchen in a powerful discussion, connecting food to health, community and Mother Earth. The Hart House Community Kitchen takes place on the third Tuesday of every month during the academic year.

INVERSES WORKSHOP

InVerses was launched as a bi-weekly poetry and prose workshop series on November 5th. The workshops provided a safe and creative space that prioritized the voices of marginalized people. InVerses' aim was to end the silencing of our bodies and offer space for writers with all levels of experience to get in touch with their inner Audre Lorde, Sonia Sanchez or any other-worldly artist of their choosing

In late November, **Zeinab Aidid** joined InVerses as a spoken word and writing workshop facilitator and mentor. Zeinab is a Toronto-based writer, speaker, spoken word artist, and educator. Born to Somali immigrant parents, she draws upon her experience navigating the world as a black, Muslim woman. She is inspired by the storytelling of her ancestors as well as the many artists in her life. When she is not performing, Zeinab spends her time facilitating writing and spoken word workshops for youth all around the city. Through her work she guides young people in finding their voice while creating a space for alternative narratives. By day, Zeinab is a student at the University of Toronto completing a double major in Equity Studies and Anthropology. She hopes to blend the worlds of art and academia one poem at a time.

THE EQUITY STUDIES STUDENTS' UNION



InVerses

A spoken word
and poetry workshop
facilitated by
ZEINAB AIDID

THURSDAY NOV. 26 AT 5-7
IN WILSON LOUNGE ROOM 2006

The poster for InVerses with Zeinab Aidid

WALLS TO BRIDGES: FIGHTING STIGMA AND CRIMINALIZATION



Walls to Bridges: Fighting Stigma and Criminalization took place on November 25th, 2015. The event brought together incarcerated women and Equity Studies students as classmates for circle work, dialogue, experiential learning, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Walls to Bridges classes (W2BC) are university and college based courses taught in correctional facilities with both incarcerated and non-incarcerated students. The classes are not taught in the conventional, hierarchical style,

but rather employ a circle pedagogy designed to facilitate egalitarian dialogue and learning with the whole self. The Collective currently has two circles, one in Toronto and another at the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener. W2BC designs and offers community dialogues, public education workshops, and holds an annual five-day W2BC facilitator training. Many students at UofT had never experienced such an organization and were extremely excited for future possibilities and what such a Collective could do to build bridges across communities.

FOOD JUSTICE AND URBAN AGRICULTURE CELEBRATION

On December 7th, New College held a **Celebration of Food Justice and Urban Agriculture** with students and faculty in Wilson Lounge. Alongside a light vegetarian and vegan dinner provided by FoodShare, the evening included an introduction and appreciation of service learning placement supervisors in food organizations and a presentation of policy posters made by students in the Equity Studies course **NEW342: Theory and Praxis in Food Security**.

Following these presentations, the celebration shifted to a panel discussion on food justice and urban agriculture, which has become a very important equity issue. **Alvis Julien** and



Crops grown by the Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective of Toronto



Black Creek Community Farm poster

Andrea Boucaud from Black Creek Community Farm, and Asheda Dwyer from Black Farmer's Collective partook in the panel discussion. The Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF) was launched in spring 2013 and is Toronto's largest urban farm. The farm's mission is to engage, educate and empower diverse communities through the growing and sharing of food. The Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective of Toronto are a group of farmers, growers, small food business owners and food insecure adults and families. The organization provides a central hub for black farmers and all food growers, serves as a resource and information pathway to the public, and works to preserve the legacy of Indigenous African people in Canada and globally.

STEVEN UNIVERSE SCREENING

On February 20th, the ESSU screened the television show *Steven Universe*, the first Cartoon Network show solely created by a woman. The creator of the show, Rebecca Sugar, said her creative intention was "to tear down and play with the semiotics of gender in cartoons for children." *Steven Universe* centers on themes of non-normative love, relationships, and families. Steven lives in a magical temple with his caretakers, and over the course of the show he learns to develop his powers and relationships.

Following the screening, the ESSU led a discussion on gender, sexuality, race and the recent censorship of certain scenes from the show in the UK and France. Those who attended discussed the reality of homophobia, sexism, and racism, and its very real presence and perpetuation in popular media. Popular media, including television shows, reflects the state of our society and the discussion made clear that the state of our society must change. Living in a world where we can raise children free of inequity is an important struggle that requires constant discussion and action.



Steven Universe poster

IN WHAT UNIVERSE? CANADIAN HEALTH CARE AND WHO IT LEAVES BEHIND



Promotional poster for the event In What Universe?

On January 28th, **In What Universe?** was presented as a part of the ESSU's series **Linked Oppressions** which explores intersecting oppressions as they manifest at UofT and beyond. The panellists at the event emphasized that the promise of universal healthcare in Canada is highly prejudicial, comforting the majority while obscuring the still-inadequate health statuses and resources available to many marginalized peoples across the country. The intersection between health, healthcare and oppression shapes the life experiences and expectancies of Canadian minority groups. The panellists argued that discussing this intersection is important, as it allows for a conversation on an issue that remains relatively unexplored. Canadian healthcare is undoubtedly a part of the Canadian identity, accepted and applauded for its existence. However, all speakers agreed that the current system of healthcare is certainly not free for all because universal rights, today and historically, have never treated all individuals the same. The hosts and participants took part in asking the difficult questions about the Canadian healthcare system which many hesitate to ask, because as Linked Oppression has taught us in the past, it is only by asking difficult questions that we can brainstorm solutions.

Panellists for the event included **Ty Smith, Cassandra Nguyen, Mary Jean Hande,** and **Andrea Bobadilla**, who all work or research health care in different capacities.

AND STILL WE RISE: PUBLIC LECTURE WITH PROFESSOR ROBERT A. HILL



Professor Robert A. Hill

On February 26th, Equity Studies co-sponsored a public lecture organized by Caribbean Studies at New College. The lecture was given by **Professor Robert A. Hill**, professor of History at UCLA, Editor in Chief of *The Marcus Garvey* and *Universal Negro*, and Editor of The C.L.R James Archives. Professor Hill spoke on the struggles that Black students have faced historically and how this struggle has been used to generate resistance. He emphasized that education can be a powerful tool, particularly for those who have been denied it historically. Education for Black students today, Professor Hill argued, can be a tool for contesting and revolutionizing a structure that continues to deny them equitable access. All students, whether Black or marginalized in other ways, left with a feeling of hope – that a new time is here, and that education can be key.

STORIES OF RESISTANCE: FUTURITY, REIMAGINING A NEW WORLD

The ESSU conference **Stories of Resistance: Futurity, Reimagining a New World** took place on March 5th, calling for an engagement and exploration of the intersections of resistance and oppression with a special focus on conceptualizing the future through art. The title, *Stories of Resistance: Futurity, Reimagining a New World*, ushers what was once *Decolonizing Our Minds* into a new, inclusive, equitable era and those in attendance could not have agreed more.

The conference began with a spoken word performance by **Zeinab Aidid**. Zeinab is a Toronto-based writer, speaker, spoken word artist, and educator studying Equity Studies and Anthropology at UofT.



Zeinab Aidid performing at the conference

Photo credit: Ruchika Dalawari



*A photo of the panellists at the conference. From left to right: Professor Laura Thrasher, Rosina Kazi, Sharrae Lyon.
Photo Credit: Ruchika Dalawari*

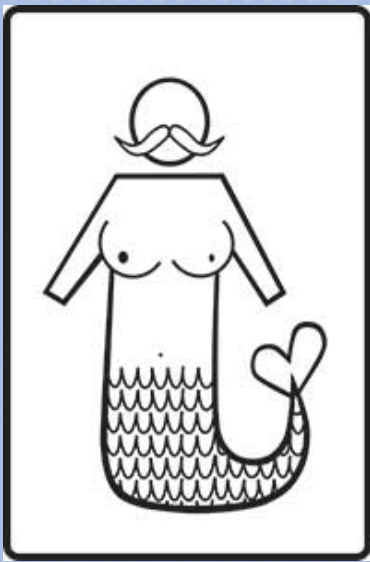


*Sharrae Lyon speaking to the audience
Photo credit: Ruchika Dalawari.*

Following the opening performance was a panel discussion featuring **Professor Laura Thrasher**, **Sharrae Lyon**, and **Rosina Kazi**, who spoke on futurity with a focus on community, activism, and art and how the three topics, while seemingly different, are more interconnected than we realize. Finding the intersection between them is key, and can assist in conceptualizing futurity. **Laura Thrasher** is a professor in the Equity Studies Program at UofT, teaching mostly in the Disability Studies stream. She received her Ph.D. from OISE, UT in the department of Social Justice Education. **Sharrae Lyon** (also known as Gaia) is a multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker, healer, and facilitator who believes that science fiction is a tool that can be utilized to project ourselves into new, alternative futures. These alternative futures, she argues, can create opportunities to heal traumas of the past and present. The final panellist, **Rosina Kazi**, is one of the “behind the scenes” movers and shakers in Toronto’s underground music scene as the lead singer of LAL. In addition, Kazi helps run community art space, UNIT 2, that is geared towards Queer and/or Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and their allies. The combination of these three activists for the panel made for a unique, truly intersectional discussion about what it means to have our collective and/or individual communities partaking in activism through art. After the panel discussion, folks had the opportunity to separate into one of three groups for breakaway sessions.

Breakaway Session 1: Gender Poo: Exploring Gender Through Art with Coco Riot

This fun and interactive workshop explored gender through art in a safe and supportive space. Using gendered bathroom signs to begin, the workshop invited participants to re-envision the signs as they pertain to their own vision of gender. The workshop, which was hands on, allowed individuals to draw their gender adventure by using art materials. They were called to explore their gender, its changes, its desires, and its stories. **Coco Riot**, the facilitator of the workshop, is a queer Spanish artist who grew up with dreams of revolutions, friendships,



*An image of a bathroom sign
from Coco Riot's collection*

and walls to draw on. Using drawing as their primary medium, they love exploring storytelling through different drawing techniques. From mural making, on-site 3D installations and sculpture, to graphic novels and small illustrations, Coco's work aims to tell a story that inspires questions in the audience about their own experience, feelings, and positions in society. Coco is the author of *Llueven Queers*, which is the first Spanish graphic novel on queer life. *Genderpoo* is also an installation that they created. It has been shown and used by activists in South America, Europe, the U.S., and Canada. Coco, like many artists, mixes activism with artwork and tells their story of resistance unapologetically.

Breakaway Session 2: Spoken Word with Zeinab Aidid

Zeinab Aidid leads many workshops with youth within the Toronto District School Board and beyond. In telling her own story of resistance, she called and encouraged others to do the same while teaching them the art of spoken word. She hopes that through her work and workshops she can guide young people in finding their voice while creating a space for alternative narratives- uncommon in the education system. The workshop drew a large and engaged crowd with individuals who have written a lot of poetry and people who have never heard of spoken word before. The workshop focused on personal and political identity and allowed for many participants to create and share powerful poetry with the group.

Breakaway Session 3: Zine Making with benjamin lee hicks

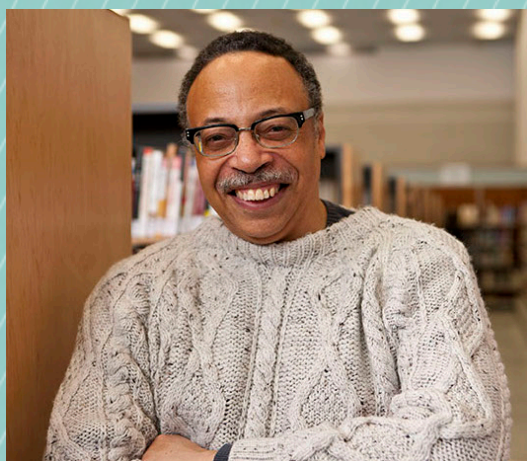
The zine making workshop with **benjamin lee hicks** explored book-making as a creative practice inviting us to let go of the idea that a "book" is a pre-made, static object. Instead, as self-proclaimed "makers" we can reclaim our right to 'write' our own stories in the way that we read them most naturally. While some people write in words, others tell stories in images, objects, shapes, lines and/or equations. The workshop allowed for time to celebrate the different ways of being in the world through the book-like-objects that were created. Each participant had the opportunity to make individual decisions about content and form to begin creating their own hand-bound book or zine during the workshop. From there it became about telling their story the way they wanted it to be told. hicks is a practicing visual



benjamin lee hicks

artist, elementary school teacher and graduate student at OISE, UT. They have been teaching art and creative practices in one form or another to both children and adults for more than eighteen years. Hicks also writes and designs curriculum materials for elementary schools on topics of sustainable community building, queer and trans inclusion, and arts-based activism.

Following these powerful breakaway sessions, participants came back together for a presentation by First Story Toronto. Since 1995, **First Story Toronto**, (formerly The Toronto Native Community History Project), within the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, has been engaged in researching and preserving the Indigenous history of Toronto with the goal of building awareness of and pride in the long Indigenous presence and contributions to the city. First Story Toronto shares this history through a variety of initiatives such as First Story Toronto Tours (formerly The Great Indian Bus Tour of Toronto), walking tours in the city, and making accessible a growing archive of historical materials about Toronto's Indigenous communities, past and present, on their smartphone app. Their presentation focused on creating a new world, and what their role in that new world can, is, and should be as Indigenous Peoples.



Professor George Elliot Clarke

Stories of Resistance concluded with keynote speaker, **George Elliott Clarke**, whose words inspired a sense of power and urgency to create a new world. Ultimately, this new world must be sought and sustained with love and care. George Elliott Clarke is a seventh-generation Canadian of African-American and Mi'kmaq Amerindian heritage. Born in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1960, Clarke's academic career has been devoutly Canadian: Clarke received a B.A. in English from The University of Waterloo, an M.A. in English from Dalhousie University, and a Ph.D. in English from Queen's University. As an esteemed poet, dramatist, and novelist, Clarke has taught African-Canadian diasporic

literature at UofT since 1999, where he is now the inaugural E.J. Pratt Professor of Canadian Literature. His many honours include the Governor General's Award for poetry and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award. In 2016, Clarke was appointed the Canadian Parliamentary Poet Laureate. His speech allowed for Stories of Resistance to make its mark on the hearts of those in attendance and inspired them to become eager in fighting for a new world, a world that is truly decolonized, equitable, and inclusive.

Unlike previous years, Stories of Resistance collaborated with **Textbooks for Change** and hosted a textbook drive. The textbooks collected will be donated to universities in East Africa. The evening concluded with the first open mic night, which allowed for the many bonds formed during the conference to be strengthened.

BIOPOLITICS OF DISABILITY: FROM LIBERAL RESTRAINTS TO NEOLIBERAL INCLUSIONISM

The **Biopolitics of Disability: From Liberal Restraints to Neoliberal Inclusionism** took place on the evening of March 31st, kicking off the **2016 Disability Studies Speaker Series**. **David T. Mitchell** (English) and **Sharon L. Snyder** (Women's Studies), scholars from George Washington University, led the event. The speakers concentrated on how, within the neoliberal era, human worth is measured by its relative utility within global consumer culture. Due to this measurement, select disabled people gain a limited form of entrance into the late capitalist culture. The phenomenon was termed "ablenationalism," and both speakers argued that "inclusion" only becomes meaningful if and when disability is recognized as producing modes of living that are alternatives to governing norms of productivity and independence. Through such discussion, both speakers sought to push beyond questions of impairment (and impairment-effects) and explore how disability subjectivities create new forms of embodied knowledge and collective consciousness. By discussing disability and disability studies in this new light, attendees felt a call to reorient their work toward analyses of the labour of living in "non-productive" bodies within a Post-Fordist culture.



David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder

DISABILITY STUDIES SPEAKER SERIES

On April 2nd, the **Disability Studies Speaker Series** held a two-hour seminar at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE, UT). The seminar was an opportunity to meet and engage in discussion with **David T. Mitchell** and **Sharon L. Snyder** in an informal setting. The seminar began with a screening of a new, unfinished, short documentary created by the two scholars, which depicted a recent visit they made to a "T4" mass murder site in Germany with a group of graduate students. This documentary continued an exploration of the themes raised in their earlier documentary, *A World Without Bodies*, in which they toured the Bernberg Psychiatric Facility and prison in Germany, a mass killing site during World War II. Following the film, the speakers led a discussion around questions of pedagogy, historical knowledge, disability, and global eugenics.

The Disability Speaker Series is a joint initiative with the Equity Studies Program and the Department of Social Justice Education, OISE, UT. This year's series was co-sponsored by Students for Barrier Free Access.

ART, CULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND RESISTANCE ART EXHIBIT

Taught by **Chandni Desai**, NEW441H is a Special Topics Equity Studies course titled “**Art, Cultural Production and Resistance**” that was offered in the 2016 winter term. As part of the course, students were expected to produce cultural artefacts that subverted dominant forms of power. Their work, diverse in form but all equally powerful, was organized into an exhibit that took place on April 5th at Hart House in collaboration with the Hart House Social Justice Committee.

EQUITY STUDIES & WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES ACCESS PARTY

The Equity Studies Program and the ESSU are committed to providing spaces for marginalized bodies to assert their knowledges and experiences in efforts to unlearn the oppressions that are ever so pervasive. While there are many ways the program and the Student Union do this, one means is through celebration – of students, people, and bodies who continuously build relations to fight for a more equitable campus and community. Creating links and ensuring solidarity through celebration is one way that we, individually and collectively, strengthen our bonds but also recognize our differences. Additionally, celebration allows us to recognize the endless work that goes into calling out our oppressors while providing us with a moment's reflection on the ways in which we are slowly revolutionizing the world. On April 7th, the ESSU joined the Women and Gender Studies Department to present an **Access Party** where diverse students from both programs came out to celebrate themselves and each other. It was an afternoon of awareness, collectivity, resistance and solidarity – all characteristics that are ever so integral to pursuing and achieving equity.



ESSU's annual Access Party

CRISIS AND CRITIQUE: A DOUBLE DISABILITY STUDIES BOOK LAUNCH



Anne McGuire speaking at the event



Susan Antebi speaking at the event

On Friday, June 10th, an event was held to celebrate two new books published by professors from UofT. Co-editors **Susan Antebi** (UofT) and **Beth E. Jorgensen** (University of Rochester) published the book *Libre Acceso: Latin American Literature and Film Through Disability Studies*. *Libre Acceso* provides a unique disability studies theoretical framework in its analysis of Latin American literature and film. The contributors to the book discuss topics such as impairment, trauma, illness and the body, performance, queer theory, subaltern studies, and human rights while analyzing literature and film from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru. In addition, Equity Studies' professor **Anne McGuire** read from her award-winning book, *War on Autism: On the Cultural Logic of Normative Violence*. *War on Autism* examines autism as a historically specific and power laden cultural phenomenon that has much to teach about the social organization of a neoliberal western modernity. Bringing together a variety of theoretical perspectives including critical disability studies, queer and critical race theory, and cultural studies, the book analyzes the social significance and productive effects of contemporary discourses of autism as these are produced and circulated in the field of autism advocacy. Those who attended had the pleasure of hearing from Susan Antebi and Anne McGuire, alongside other speakers from the disability studies community. The Equity Studies Program, the Latin American Studies Program, the Department of Social Justice Education, OISE,UT and Students for Barrier Free Access co-sponsored the event.

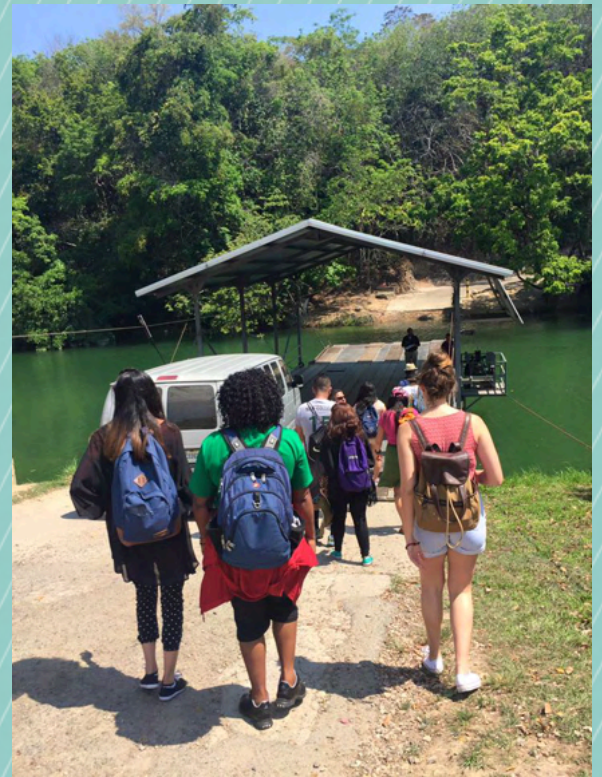
STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAM: BELIZE

For the week of May 7th to May 15th, students from Caribbean Studies, Aboriginal Studies, Human Biology, First Nations House, and Equity Studies visited the Centre for Engaged Learning Abroad (CELA) in Belize. Guided by **Dr. Filiberto Penados** from CELA, students participated in experiential learning activities focusing on issues related to food sustainability, Indigeneity, and health. Students engaged with Indigenous groups, including the Garifuna, Yucatec Maya, and Q'eqchi' Maya, to learn about different practices of gender, health, land use, food sovereignty, sustainability, and development. They gained tremendous insight on the struggles and accomplishments of the Indigenous communities in Belize and made connections to their own lives and academic learning. Upon returning, students have reflected on their experiences, which they will share with other students and faculty in their programs.

New College, the Dean's International Initiative Fund, the E. Anthony Fund for Community Engagement in Belize and the five participating programs funded the program.



Students listening to Dr. Penados in a Belizean rainforest



*Students headed towards a dock on the water
All photos of the trip provided by Melissa Nicholls*



The students participating in the trip pose for a photo with Dr. Penados

SENIOR DOCTORAL FELLOW: JOE CURNOW

Joe Curnow, a PhD student in Adult Education and Community Development at OISE, UT was the **Equity Studies Senior Doctoral Fellow** for the 2015-2016 academic term. Her work focuses on the engagement of youth in social movements, and how individuals become politicized across varying identities. She is interested in anti-colonial and anti-racism studies, community organizing, sociocultural learning theory and participatory research methods. Her publications include “Climbing the Leadership Ladder: Legitimate Peripheral Participation in Social Movements” in *Interface* and “Fight the Power: Situated Learning and Consientisation in a Gendered Communities of Practice” in *Gender and Education*. In 2014, Joe won the **Vanier Graduate Scholarship**, which is the largest doctoral award in Canada. In the winter term, 2016, she taught the Equity Studies course, NEW346S: Community Development in Local and Global Contexts. We have been thrilled to have Joe Curnow as the Equity Studies Senior Doctoral Fellow and look forward to all of her accomplishments to come!



Joe Curnow

TATP TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD: FADY SHANOUDA

Fady Shanouda received the 2016 **Teaching Assistant Teaching Excellence Award** from the Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP), recognizing his work as a Teaching Assistant for Introduction to Disability Studies (NEW 241). The award seeks to value the work of TAs who regularly inspire and challenge undergraduate students. Students led the nomination process for this prestigious award out of a desire to recognize Fady as an extraordinary teacher. The instructor of the course, Professor Laura Thrasher stated, “by asking critical questions, creating dynamic tutorial plans, or through his ongoing commitment to making accessibility a collective concern, Fady created a great learning environment for students in Introduction to Disability Studies.” Congratulations Fady!

JANET LAMBERT BOOK PRIZE: ZAHRA VAID

The **Janet Lambert Book Prize** in Equity Studies is named in honour of a long-serving member of the New College administrative staff, and is awarded to a fourth year, or graduating student, who has excelled, and made a contribution to the Equity Studies Program.

This year's prizewinner is **Zahra Vaid**. Zahra graduated in June of 2016 with a B.A. in Equity Studies and Women and Gender Studies. Zahra has been very active in the Equity Studies community throughout her schooling, and was also the recipient of the **City of Toronto Women's Studies Undergraduate Scholarship**. In 2015, Zahra attended the Indigenous Resurgence and Food Sustainability trip to Belize. She has served as the President for Amnesty International UofT, 2013-2014 and currently works as a counsellor with **315NISAL**, the Muslim Women's Helpline. Zahra is interested in how the intersections of identities encourage or dissuade us from getting involved with our communities. Congratulations Zahra!



Zahra Vaid

PRIDE TORONTO YOUTH AMBASSADOR 2016: JORDYN SAMUELS



Jordyn Samuels

Equity Studies student, **Jordyn Samuels**, was the **2016 Pride Toronto Youth Ambassador**. Jordyn has extensive experience facilitating equity and anti-oppression workshops and training. Her work focuses on implementing equity and anti-oppressive frameworks in everyday life and in political, sexual health, and harm reduction programs. Jordyn was nominated for the Ambassador title by **Supporting Our Youth (SOY)**, a program designed to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans youth in Toronto. A youth ambassador for **SOY HEAT** (Human Rights Equity Access Team) since 2010, Jordyn is a dedicated leader in the youth community. Her most recent endeavour was starting a company called **Journeys InEquity**, which provides specialized education around equity, anti-oppression and LGBTQ inclusion. Congratulations Jordyn!

PROFESSOR ANNE MCGUIRE WINS PRESTIGIOUS BOOK AWARD

Professor Anne McGuire (Equity Studies) has been awarded the inaugural **Tobin Siebers Prize** her book, *War on Autism: On the Cultural Logic of Normative Violence*, published by the University of Michigan (U-M) Press. The award is named for the late Tobin Siebers, who was a disability studies advocate and professor in the English language and literature department at U-M. Professor McGuire's book is an examination of autism as a cultural phenomenon within the power structures of neoliberal western modernity, and what that phenomenon tells us about the social organization in which it occurs. Among the praise for McGuire's work is U-M's Melanie Yergeau's remark that *War on Autism* "will profoundly impact the field of Disability Studies and uproot (unfortunately) dearly-held clinical and educational paradigms that dominate contemporary discourse on autism."

Congratulations Professor McGuire!



Professor Anne McGuire

KNOTS: AN UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF DISABILITY STUDIES

Knots is a disability studies undergraduate journal that aims to highlight original and unpublished work by students. *Knots* works to challenge normative conceptions of disability and embodiment, contributing new and innovative knowledge to the field of disability studies. It is edited and compiled by a team of senior students and faculty advisors in the disability studies stream of the Equity Studies program. A panel featuring authors from



Knots panelists and faculty supervisor pose with copies of *knots* issue #1. From left to right: Katie L, Laura T, Caleigh I, Aysha N, Clementine M, Bonnie C, David P

Knots presented on March 13, 2016 at the **Reclaiming Our Bodies and Minds Conference**. This panel featured five contributors and was moderated by a member of the *Knots* editorial collective. A big thanks goes out to **Caleigh I.** and **Aysha N.** for organizing our participation in this event. The second issue of *Knots* will be officially launched in late September 2016. For more information, contact knots.contact@gmail.com