



EQUITY STUDIES

YEAR IN REVIEW

2018-2019

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Editor's Note

NEHA MOHARIR

Reflecting on the renewal of the Equity Studies program, we must question the ideas around what equity signifies in relation to the (in)accessibility of post-secondary institutions as spaces for mobilizing and conscious building.

This year marks over two decades since the launch of the Equity Studies program. In 1998, the Equity Studies program began and was comprised of courses offered by over 25 departments. Founded by the current Vice-Principal of New College, Professor June Larkin, the Equity Studies program was the first of its kind. The Equity Studies program focused on theoretical principles and praxis towards social justice education at the undergraduate level—over the years, coming to offer courses on anti-racism studies, food justice; community engagement; and disability studies.

Students who enrol and engage in the program enter the academic space from various socio-economic and political backgrounds; all with a passion for social justice. Students on the first day of *NEW241: Introduction to Equity Studies*, will learn the difference between equity and equality. Over time, their definitions and understandings of Equity Studies will expand and change as will their knowledge of global and transnational politics.

As pedagogy provides students with the tools of change and organizing, we must use lessons of the past to combat and organize for the present and future. This means understanding the world beyond our communities, in order to locate the structures that are complicit in all of our oppressions. This includes questioning the institutions in which we learn these tools, and challenging their inclusion and exclusion, as well as the reproduction of knowledge and relations that perpetuate (in)justices.

students in the spotlight

JENN BOULAY



Photo of Jenn Boulay

Equity Studies' student Jenn Boulay was awarded the first Playwright Residency for the *AMY (Artists Mentoring Youth) Project Theatre Program* to develop her new play "*I Am Magnificently Ugly*" from her final paper from the course on *NEW344: Equity and the Body*. Inspired by Equity Studies Professor, Anne McGuire, Jenn's play explores her lived-experiences of living with disability, scars, and a skin condition that is visibly marked on her body and culturally understood as ugly. Drawing from the stories that the scars and skin condition have given her, she weaves the writings of Mia Mingus and Frantz Fanon into the story. The piece experiments with embedding accessibility (audio description) into the show itself—becoming an immersive experience. Throughout the play, the audience will follow Splendid on her journey to finding what it means to be '*Magnificently Ugly*,' guided by an unexpected visitor.

Jenn is an emerging interdisciplinary theatre artist and scholar. She is interested in exploring current political and activist movements through theatre and avant-garde practices. Jenn is currently an undergraduate student studying at the University of Toronto pursuing a specialist in Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies and a minor in Equity Studies. Her current research interests include: intersectional identity politics; disability studies; theatre; and finding ways to make contemporary theatre more accessible for performers and audiences. You can find her published work in *Feminist Space Magazine*, and *Knots*.

students in the spotlight

TAMSYN RIDDLE



Photo of Tamsyn Riddle

Congratulations to Equity Studies student Tamsyn Riddle for winning third prize in the Canadian Disability Studies Association Student Paper Competition for their paper titled "*The Responsible Rape Victim: Institutionalized Ableism and University Sexual Violence Policy.*" Her paper focused on examining the ways in which neoliberal institutions, including institutions of higher education, exclude and make invisible disabled people, and highlighted the neoliberal logic of personal responsibility as it manifests in institutional responses to sexual violence. She bridges these two areas of study to examine the University of Toronto's new Sexual Violence Policy, juxtaposing it against the University's policies relating to accessibility to show how both work to reinforce neoliberal and ableist discourses of independence, empowerment, normalcy, and reason.

Tamsyn is a recent graduate of the University of Toronto in Diaspora and Transnational Studies, Equity Studies, and Political Science. She is an organizer with Silence is Violence, a grassroots anti-sexual violence collective based at the University of Toronto.

students in the spotlight

2019 TORONTO PRIDE FESTIVAL: OUT AT SCHOOL



Photo from the event

In June 2019 Toronto Pride Festival, Professor Tara Goldstein lead a team of 13 performers, two directors, and a technical and publicity team to stage her new verbatim theatre piece *Out at School*. The play was co-authored by Tara and her graduate students, Pam Baer and Jenny Salisbury. It is based on interviews conducted with 37 Ontario LGBTQ families about their experiences in schools. Tara's research team has curated 300 short clips from the interviews which are available on the project's website: www.lgbtqfamiliespeakout.ca

The 2019 Pride performances of *Out at School* contained 21 scenes of verbatim monologues and dialogues, a set of visual images to accompany each scene created by visual artist/graduate student, Benjamin Lee Hicks, and three original songs by singer songwriter/graduate student, Kate Reid. The images and the songs both draw on a number of themes embedded in the monologues and dialogues. Three New College and Equity Studies students, Sandakie Ekanayake, Alanis Ortiz Espinoza, and Charlotte Stewart performed in *Out at School* alongside six professional actors and Tara's graduate students. Sandakie, Alanis, and Charlotte all did a terrific job of bringing the words of a variety of interviewees to life.

students in the spotlight

DAVID CLANDFIELD AWARD WINNER



Photo of Saad Shafiq

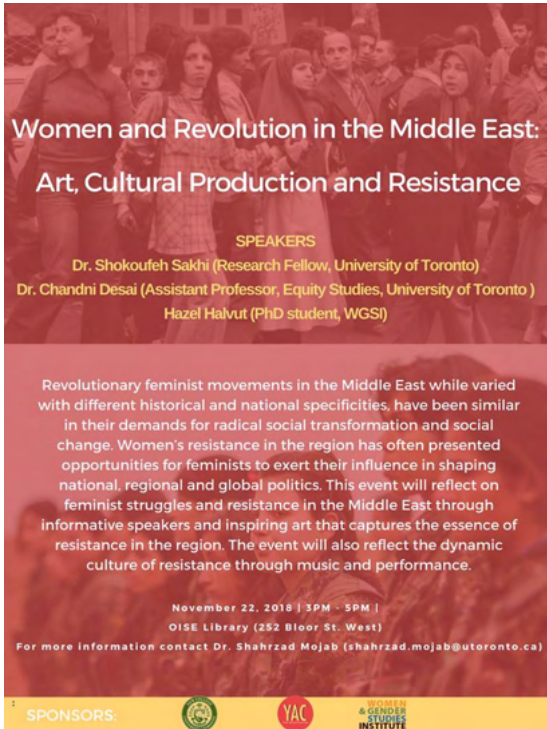
The David Clandfield Scholarship in Scholarly Activism is awarded to a student majoring in Equity Studies entering their fourth year of study based on academic achievement and who shows the potential to contribute to social justice issues through scholarly informed activism. The winner for the 2018 - 2019 academic year is Equity Studies student Saad Shafiq.

Saad is a disability justice activist. As a learning-disabled student, he is passionate about standing up for justice for disabled students at the University of Toronto. He is an active member of the SBA (Student For Barrier Free Access), specializing in helping students with financial assistance, and assisting students for their OSAP repayments. Saad is also a member of the Accessibility Student Advisory Committee. He spoke about disability justice at the 2018 Decolonizing Conference at OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education).

JANET LAMBERT BOOK PRIZE

This years winner of the 2018 - 2019 Janet Lambert Book Prize in Equity Studies is student Allison Bonnell. This annual award honours a fourth year, or graduating student, who has excelled, and made a contribution to the Equity Studies Program.

WOMEN, WAR AND REVOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST



Poster of the Event

program; Dr. Shokoufeh Sakhi, an independent researcher and Hazel Halavut, PhD student at the Women and Gender Studies Institute. Toronto based Egyptian poet, Nari performed at the event through their spoken word act.

Reflecting the effect of humor and satire within acts of resistance, Hazel Halavut narrated the experiences of writing and co-editing for the Turkish website, *5Harfliler*, which was borne out of a need to amplify the voices of Turkish feminists. Meanwhile, Dr. Shokoufeh Sakhi narrated the stories of her experiences as an activist and political prisoner during the Iranian revolution. Emphasizing on the historical and ongoing resistance of Palestinian women, Professor Chandni Desai displayed the use of art, music, and poetry being an integral method within and amongst feminist movements against the occupation and on-going apartheid of Palestine.

The event sparked discussions of the impact of war on women in the Middle East, but also the ways in which feminist resistance continues to evolve and expand.

On November 22, 2018 students from Professor Chandni Desai's class NEW441, Art, Cultural Production and Resistance, along with Professor Shahrzad Mojab's class WGS340, Women and Revolution in the Middle East, organized the event "Women, War and Revolution in the Middle East" to reflect on the significance of art and culture amongst feminist resistance within the region. The event featured presentations and a panel discussion from: Professor Chandni Desai at the Equity Studies

Youth Activism and Community Events



REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLES FILM FESTIVAL 2019



Poster for the Event

From March 22, 2019 to March 26, 2019, Professor Chandni Desai's class, *NEW443: Revolution in the Transnational Context*, hosted the Revolutionary Struggles Film Festival. The festival featured a series of films that documented some of the most significant struggles and movements against colonialism, racism, capitalist imperialism, and military occupation in the 20th century.

The following films were screened and discussed: *Concerning Violence*, *Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, *Naila and the Uprising* and *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*. *Concerning Violence*, directed by Göran Olsson is a documentary covering the most daring moments in the struggle for liberation in the Third World, based on Frantz Fanon's text, *The Wretched of the Earth*. *Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, directed by Stanley Nelson Jr, is a documentary that highlights the Black Panther Party and the rise of its prominence within broader American culture, as well as political awakening for black people. *Naila and the Uprising*, by Julia Bacha, underscored the gendered politics and central role Palestinian women played in the First Intifada. Focusing on Naila's own experience of incarceration, the film narrates the nonviolent women's movement in Palestine's struggle for freedom. The screening featured Majid, Naila's son, who reflected on his mother's experiences. *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, by Alanis Obomsawin, shows the armed stand-off between the Mohawks, the Québec police, and the Canadian army, during Mohawks' unyielding determination to protect their land.

Youth Activism and Community Events



YOUTH RESISTANCE ART GALLERY

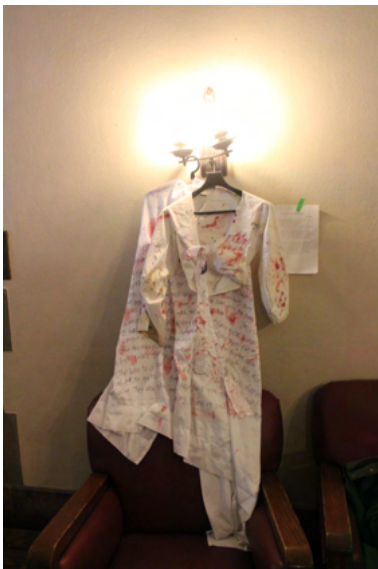


Photo from the Event



Photo from the Event



Photo from the Event

On November 29, 2018 as part of Professor Chandni Desai's class *NEW441: Art, Cultural Production and Resistance*, students organized an art gallery consisting of original student art pieces in the form of visual, film, poetry, music, performance art and more. The art pieces reflected on historical and contemporary international resistance movements, based on the works of revolutionaries such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Barbara Harlow.

The following photos display the artwork presented by the students on issues like immigration detention, the settler occupation of Kashmir, and the Ankh symbol of African consciousness.



Photo from the Event



DISABILITY STUDIES EVENTS

knots undergraduate journal launch
2018-2019



Cover of the Knots Journal

January 31, 2019 marked the launch of the fourth issue of *knots*, the Disability Studies journal. This year, the theme of the journal was "refusal." Contributors to the journal ranged from students in the Equity Studies program, students at the University of Toronto and internationally. The cover of the journal was designed by former Equity Studies student Pruneah Kim, whose drawing aims to depict the refusal to conceal sorrow and pain. Students and contributors presented their works with Professor Anne McGuire, who leads the journal and made opening remarks at the launch. This year's journal was co-edited by Alex Napier and Caleigh Inman.

DISABILITY STUDIES EVENTS



CRIP COMMITMENTS: DISABILITY, THEORY AND POLITICS



Poster for the Event

On March 21, 2019, the New College Disability Studies Speaker Series, in collaboration with the York University's Peripheral Vision Speaker Series, presented the talk, Crip Commitments: Disability, Theory, Politics by Prof. Kelly Fritsch, who is a professor at Carleton University. Engaging in the discussions and frictions of CRIP and disability theory, Kelly Fritsch non-innocently considers the possibilities of radical social change that emerges through knowing and making disability differently.

EQUITY STUDIES STUDENTS' UNION



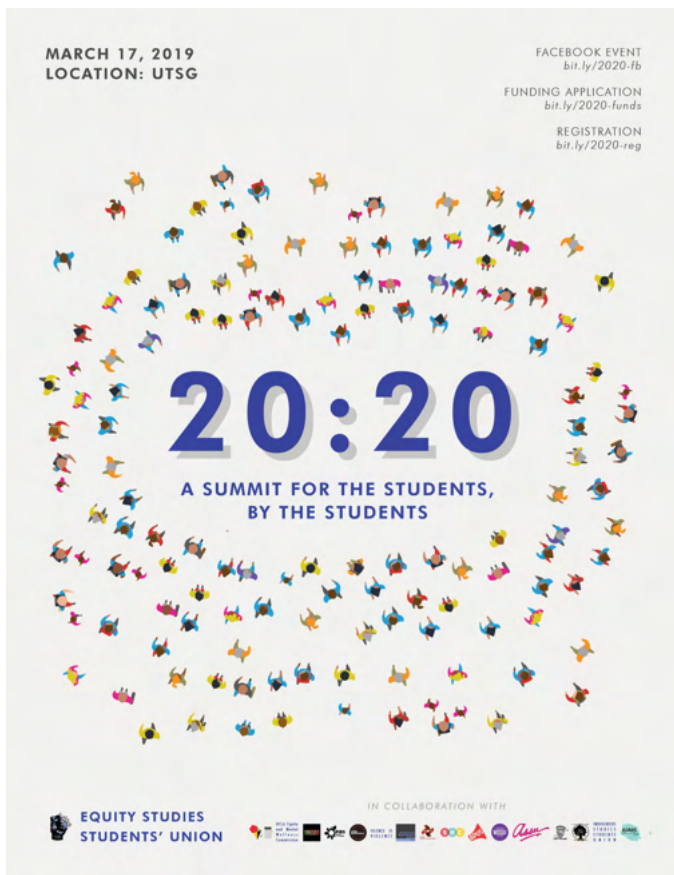
20:20 A SUMMIT FOR THE STUDENTS, BY THE STUDENTS



March 17, 2019 marked the first ever summit held by the Equity Studies Students Union, titled 20:20: A Summit for the Students, By the Students. With the impending attacks on education, healthcare, and access to social services, the proposed policy changes of the Ford Government has increased the precariousness of marginalized students.

As an attempt to reflect on student activism after the completion of 20 Years of the Equity Studies program, and also to strategize for the next 20 years, the Equity Studies Students' Union organized the summit for student activists and community organizers, to get involved in equity-seeking movements. Students and community members from various affiliations gathered together for a day filled with workshops, discussions, and strategizing sessions. The keynote at this summit, Professor Beverly Bain, provided insights on how to organize but also how to reflect on the space of the university as an exclusionary institution itself.

The summit became a space to create a newly formed emerging campus-based coalition, titled "S.E.A.S" (Students for Equity and Access to Services). ESSU hopes to continue the momentum of this initiative in the coming years.



Poster for the Event

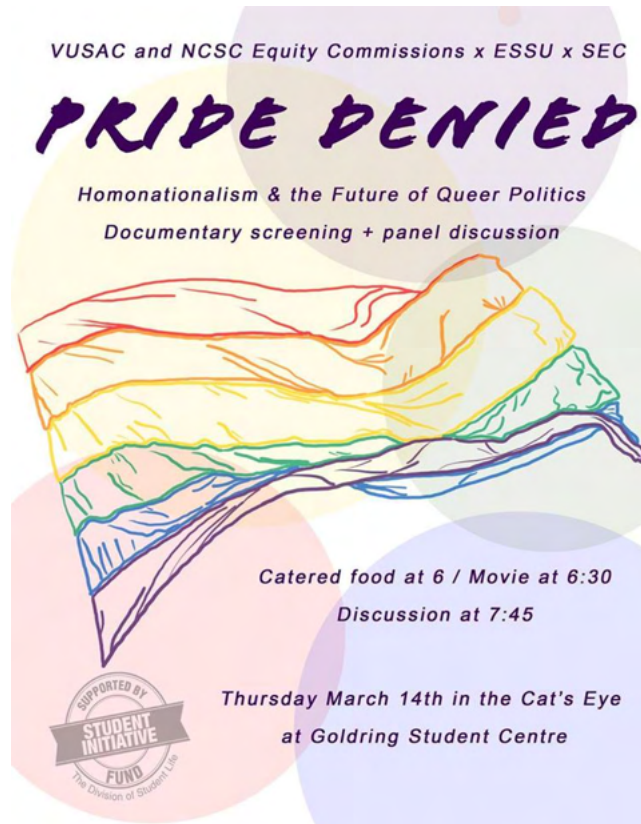
EQUITY STUDIES STUDENTS' UNION



DOC AND TALK: PRIDE DENIED

On March 14, 2019, put together by students from the Equity Studies program, the Equity Studies Student Union, New College Student Council's Equity Commission, the VUSAC Equity Commission, and the Sexual Education Centre, a screening of the film *Pride Denied* was showcased with a discussion afterwards with the director Kami Chishlom. The film *Pride Denied: Homonationalism and the Future of Queer Politics* examined the ways in which LGBTQ2S+ Pride celebrations have become increasingly corporatized and shaped by the interests of the state. Centering the context of the 2014 "World Pride" in Toronto. The documentary features the perspectives of activists, artists, community leaders and academics.

Developed initially as a protest against the way police and social institutions treated the LGBTQ2S+ community, Pride is becoming less accessible to certain members of the queer community, such as individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty, dis/abled individuals, and people of colour.



Poster for the Event

Interview Series

Professor Chandni Desai



Dr. Chandni Desai is currently an Assistant Professor in the Equity Studies program at the University of Toronto. In 2016-2017, Dr. Desai held a Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Social Justice Initiative. In 2017 she received the Outstanding Dissertation Award by the *American Education Research Association (AERA) Division B*; and co-edited a special issue on Decolonization and Palestine for the journal, *Decolonization*. Professor Desai is the recipient of the *2019 June Larkin Pedagogy Award* for her work on radical pedagogies. She is also one of the co-coordinators of the Youth, Activism and Community Initiative (at New College & OISE).

With an academic background in the field of education, Dr. Desai's interests and research focus on cultural resistance within the Middle East, specifically on questions of Palestine and Palestinian liberation struggles. Her intellectual interests revolve around questions of resistance, solidarity, and revolution—particularly understanding the centrality culture has played on the peoples struggle in the absence of the nation, to keep the memory alive. When asked about what drove her to the field of social justice education and the Equity Studies department, Professor Desai elaborated: "my interest comes from my work in the community and my intellectual work around justice.



Photo of Chandni Desai

Equity Studies is a space where we can teach around equity and society, and where we can imagine how structures shape power and social relations. It is also a space where we can imagine and think about struggles for justice as praxis is important for me."

Known for her dynamic lectures, and engaging class discussions, Professor Desai expands on her pedagogical strengths of being able to provide deep theoretical concepts of how to make sense of the world. Her teaching emphasizes analytical tools to understand material realities and social relations; such as capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, and state violence to critique and change all forms of injustices around the world. When asked about the possibility of praxis within the classroom, Dr. Desai explains that she believes the classroom sets up a foundation on how to think critically, but

Interview Series

Professor Chandni Desai cont'

also how to participate in social justice and change. She says, "I hope that my courses and other courses become building blocks for transformative thinking. For example, this year, students used the theories around neoliberalism and capitalism from the classroom and applied it to the OSAP (Ontario Students' Assistance Program) cuts and cuts towards education by the Ford Government. Students were able to think through these shifts and policies, and many of them are involved in organizing. There are multiple phases and stages in the ways we can organize. whether it is a small change or a big change."

When asked about her favourite moment teaching at the Equity Studies program so far, she was unable to pick a single moment, but rather explained that she felt: "the most joy and complete elevation when seeing all of the students final projects." She further explained, "all of my classes have final projects such as art exhibitions, film festivals, or research symposium to articulate the ways you have acquired and applied the knowledge, whether its a campaign, a cultural artifact, or its a research project you have conducted. Seeing the final product is so exciting for me because it shows the commitment and synergy we (the students) had. The call and response aspect of hip hop is the way I describe my teaching where you vibe off of me, and I vibe off of you."

We need that vibing in order for something like that to happen and then you're (the students) able to create and teach me in return." In lieu of the renewal of the Equity Studies program, I asked her on what she envisions for the future of this department. She explained: "A really amazing foundation has been laid, by June Larkins work. I think there are a couple of new directions we have been discussing with Shahrzad's role as the new director, , but one thing I can say is that as the program grows, I think that having more faculty but also new pedagogical spaces for people to participate would be exciting. There are new themes being introduced through the courses, where we will collectively see the Equity Studies program become a robust and engaged space."

Chandni Desai is currently working on her first book "*We Teach Life*." In it she excavates the history of Palestinian resistance culture and its circulation across geographies in the 20th and 21st centuries. Next year, she will be teaching the courses: *NEW340H1F : Youth, Activism and Social Change*; *NEW341H1S: Theorizing Equity*; *NEW441H1F: Art, Cultural Production & Resistance*; and *NEW469: Major Research Project in Equity Studies*.

faculty in the spotlight

EARLY TEACHING AWARD WINNER PROFESSOR ANNE MCGUIRE



Photo of Anne McGuire

Congratulations to Equity Studies Assistant Professor Anne McGuire for her outstanding achievement for being a recipient of the Early Teaching Award 2019 at the University of Toronto. Professor McGuire who joined the Equity Studies department in 2014 focuses her pedagogy on the politics of disability, spearheading the Disability Studies stream at the Equity Studies program.

Professor McGuire’s areas of teaching and research draw on interpretive perspectives in critical disability studies, queer/crip theory, cultural studies, child studies, feminist science and technology studies, and theories of anti-racism, colonialism and governmentality to focus on questions of human vitality and precarity. Her current research traces the emergence of broad spectrum approaches to health and illness and reads these against the backdrop of neoliberal social and economic policies. Professor McGuire’s 2016 monograph, *War on Autism: On the Cultural Logic of Normative Violence* (University of Michigan Press), received the 2015 *Tobin Siebers Prize for Disability Studies in the Humanities*. She was the 2016 recipient of the *June Larkin Award for Pedagogical Development* for her work on advancing access in post-secondary classrooms.

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

2018 Research Excursion Program to Ghana



Photo right to left: Neha Moharir, Sophie Bourret-Klein , George Dei and Julie Usih

Equity Studies students Julie Usih, Sophie Bourret-Klein and Neha Moharir had the opportunity to travel to Ghana with Professor George Dei during the month July 2018. The students stayed in Asokore-Koforidua, the hometown of Professor Dei, where he is currently serving as Chief of the community. This trip served as an experience to understand and learn about indigeniety within the African context.

All three students were able to participate and assist in Professor Dei's ongoing research on the impact of indigenous knowledges in the context of formal and informal Ghanaian education. The students also had the opportunity to meet other Ghanaian youth in social justice education, and visit other areas of the country such as Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Tamale. The trip was funded by New College, Equity Studies and the Deans Fund for International and Indigenous Initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

2019 Belize Food and Indigeneity Program



Photo of students left to right: Hania Eid, Lucie Kim, Charlotte Stewart, Claudia Faleiro, Malia Robinson, Yi Fan Yin-Cheng, James Tavares, Mical Habtemikael



Photo of Dr. Filiberto Penados,

In May 2019, Equity Studies students joined with students from other programs to participate in an experiential learning program on food and indigeneity under the guidance of Dr. Filiberto Penados, Academic Director, *Center for Engaged Learning Abroad (CELA)* in Belize. The trip offered an opportunity for students to learn about the history and contemporary reality of Indigenous people in Belize and its links to local and global factors that have shaped Indigenous food systems. By engaging with knowledge bearers, community members and activists from Indigenous groups, including the Garifuna, Yucatec Maya, and Q'eqchi' Maya, students developed an understanding of Indigenous resurgence in Belize and its implications for food security, sustainability and self-care.

The trip itinerary included a tour of Xunantunich, a historical Maya site; visits to local farms, museums and Indigenous schools; meals with families in a Maya village; and talks with lands rights activists, health care workers and farmers. In group discussion sessions, students connected the program activities to their own lives and academic learning. The students will share what they learned on the Belize trip at the World Food Day event, Thursday October 17, 2019 at 3:00pm – 5:00pm, in the *NEW240Y: Introduction to Equity Studies class*.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SHOWCASE

NEW469 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



Poster for the Event

After working on their independent research projects from September 2018 to March 2019, the students of Professor Chandni Desai's class NEW469 presented their independent research at New College. Students James Tavares, Sarah Edo, Grace Guimond, Helena Mauti, Brianna Lee and Neha Moharir each displayed the findings of their research to peers and

faculty. Their presentations included the process and challenges of doing undergraduate research, an explanation of their topic of research and ultimately their findings and analysis.

James Tavares's research looked at the experiences of MAD students within the University as an Asylum Complex. Sarah Edo's focused on the historical experience of racialized HIV positive individuals and the surveillance of the state in Toronto. Grace Guimond explored the necropolitics of the fentanyl crisis in Canada with an intensive content analysis. Helena Mauti presented her research on the politics of land recognition and Indigenous rights within the Credit Valley conservation area. Brianna Lee examined the impact of the OSAP crisis for racialized post-secondary students. Neha Moharir examined the feminization of labour within South Asian beauty parlours in the Greater Toronto Area.

DECOLONIZING CONFERENCE 2018

DIALOGUING AND LIVING WELL TOGETHER



Poster for the Event

The 2018 Decolonizing Conference took place from November 8 to November 10 2018 at the Ontario Institute for Education . The conference which was co-organized by the Center for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies, New College and the University of Toronto featured 3 days of academics from all over the world who arrived to present their research related to this years theme : Dialoguing and Living Well Together. The three day event featured speakers and panelists such as Sandy Marie Grande, Gloria Ladson-Bilings, Eve Tuck and Sandy Hudson to name a few.

The keynotes revolved around various discussions such as engaging indigeneity and indigenous concepts of living well, reframing intersections and intersectionality, decolonizing our learning spaces and interrogating the "alt-right" and white nationalism.

Professor Stanley Wood-Doyle from the Equity Studies program was one of the co-organizers and plenary speakers of the conference. His plenary focused on the understandings of white logics, the task of thinking through collective lives and a politics of futurity with mutual responsibilities and reciprocity in mind.

Equity Studies student, Jaqueline Siu also had the opportunity to present their undergraduate paper focusing on immigration and anti-racism studies through a narration of their own personal experience.

SENIOR DOCTORAL FELLOW 2018 - 2019

JAMILA GHADDAR



Photo of Jamila Ghaddar

Jamila Ghaddar is PhD student at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information. She was this years Equity Studies Senior Doctoral Fellow. Ghaddar's research looks at anti-colonial Arab histories and third world solidarities through an examination of developments in the global information and heritage order in the mid-20th century.

As a professional archivist and librarian, Jamila has previously worked at the American University of Beirut's Jafet Library, the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto with the Memory, Meaning-Making & Collections Project; and at U of T's Bora Laskin Law Library on the Indigenous Perspectives Collection.