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**Call for Papers/Presentations: Philosophy and Religion in African Traditions Conference 2018**

1 message

**Center for Place, Culture and Politics** <pcp@gc.cuny.edu>

Tue, Aug 14, 2018 at 1:15 PM

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**Call for Papers/Presentations: Philosophy and Religion in African Traditions Conference 2018**

On behalf of friends of the Center for Place, Culture and Politics:

5th Annual Conference

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN AFRICANA  
TRADITIONS*FROM MASS INCARCERATION TO UNIVERSAL  
EDUCATION:**UNLOCKING THE SYSTEM***Friday, October 26**, 10:00 am to 6:00 pmGraduate Center of the City University of New York. [365 Fifth Avenue](#).**Saturday, October 27**, 10:00 am to 6:00 pmMay Day Space, [176 Saint Nicholas Avenue, Brooklyn NY](#).

Mass incarceration in the United States has become a dehumanizing force that is destroying the very fabric of society. Many young lives have wilted and many more are languishing in the penitentiaries for minor offenses and too often for no offense whatsoever. The racialization of the criminal injustice system has resulted in the separation and impoverishment of families and the decimation of neighborhoods.

In many communities one of the greatest barriers to a decent education is the prison-industrial complex. An education that takes into consideration the emotional, psychological, physical and intellectual growth of the individual is essential for human flourishing. To accomplish this, we need to change the trajectory currently leading to mass incarceration, by redirecting it toward universal education, ultimately transforming the social, political, and economic structures of the country. To engage in this process of transformation, we must eradicate monopoly intellectualism and pedagogies of oppression and repression.

Consequently, at the conference we will seek to move beyond policies to effective practice, by exploring such difficult questions as the following:

- Can universal education unlock an entrenched system of unjust laws? Can universal education serve as an essential instrument both in reversing criminalization of the poor and in eradicating the prison-industrial complex?
- Can education be emancipated from cultural imperialism? Can effective resistance be mobilized against harmful institutional models, such as zero tolerance policies and high-stakes testing requirements?
- Are we suffering from a poverty of imagination among many educational “reformers?” Can awareness of available “best practices” encourage more innovative thinking?
- To what extent can socio-economic relationships, political systems and cultural productions be redirected toward empathy, community, cooperation, and human dignity? Can we truly succeed in building a just and humane society?

If you plan to present, please send a title and a brief abstract to:

J. Everet Green at [everet@verizon.net](mailto:everet@verizon.net) by August 31, 2018.

Call for writing: [The Children of the People: Writings by and about CUNY Students on Race and Social Justice](#) from the Autoethnographies of Public Education and Racial (In)Justice research group from the Center for the Humanities at the Graduate Center, CUNY, who is seeking writing for publication from CUNY students, alumni, faculty or staff. [Click here](#) or see below for more

information and to submit. Please note that the **deadline to submit has been extended to Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.**

**Seeking Writing Contributions for Publication: The Children of the People: Writings by and about CUNY Students on Race and Social Justice**

**Extended Submission Deadline: Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, 11:59pm.**

In 1849, Horace Webster, the first president of the Free Academy said of the radical social experiment that would become City College, and later, the City University of New York (CUNY): “The experiment is to be tried, whether the children of the people, the children of the whole people, can be educated, and whether an institution of the highest grade, can be controlled by the popular will, not by the privileged few, but the privileged many.” Since its opening as the Free Academy in 1847, CUNY has served working-class and immigrant New Yorkers by providing an affordable liberal arts education; in turn, its graduates—Nobel laureates, political leaders, artists, intellectuals, and everyday New Yorkers—have contributed to the vibrancy of the city and the nation.

New York’s experiment in free higher education for “the children of the people” was arguably one of the greatest democratic achievements in the United States. However, the opportunity at the start was not extended fairly to all, reserved primarily for the sons of white, European immigrants; befitting its public nature, it would be a black and Puerto Rican student-led movement in the 1960s that would take direct action to radically expand access to minority students. Since the 1970s, public support for CUNY has eroded under a neoliberal agenda seeking to gut the social safety net and to corporatize and privatize public services. As tax dollars began to be diverted from public goods, such as schools, affordable housing, community mental health centers, and social service agencies, to the military-industrial-complex, the prison-industrial-complex and other corporate interests, CUNY became one of the innumerable casualties in the assault on public life.

This systematic shift of funds from public to private is the largely unacknowledged substrate of the media portrayals of CUNY’s crumbling facilities, corrupt administrators and underachieving students. We contend, however, that despite massive divestment from public education, CUNY continues to be a space of radical possibility for teaching and learning. More than 170 years after the founding of the Free Academy, we revisit Horace Webster’s statement to question the outcome of the experiment from the perspective of the students. Who are the children of the people today? In New York City of 2018, in what ways does CUNY still represent “the whole people” that Webster envisioned – the poor, working class, and immigrants? What are the current voices of CUNY and what do they have to say?

This collection of writings is a project of the [Autoethnographies of Public Education and Racial \(In\)Justice](#) research group of the Center for Humanities Mellon Seminar in Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, and it is our intention to publish it as a book. It will feature the scholarly, creative and autoethnographic works of current and past CUNY students, as well as other members of the CUNY community, to highlight the richness and diversity of the nation’s first public university. We hope to feature voices that are typically muted in public debates about higher education.

**We invite scholarly essays, autoethnography, creative non-fiction, performance texts and poetry that speak to the following questions:**

- What is social justice, and in what ways is it implicated in issues of race, immigration, incarceration, nationalism, U.S. imperialism, gender, and LGBTQ rights?
- How does social (in)justice shape students’ lives before and after they arrive at CUNY, and how do their experiences help them to navigate and help change an inequitable society?
- In what ways is social (in)justice at the core of ones most intimate truths?
- How does the lens of personal experience illuminate the structural barriers to social justice and equity?
- What is the role of public education in engaging and shaping issues of social justice?
- How does one teach and learn under conditions of austerity?
- How have Trump policies and “the Trump Effect” impacted life as a CUNY student?
- In what ways has CUNY been a sanctuary?
- What is the experience of being marginalized at CUNY?
- How is the work of caregiving part of the student experience at CUNY?
- In what ways has CUNY failed and how can we radically reimagine the public university?

**Who Is Eligible to Submit:** Writings from CUNY students and alumni will have priority, although we will also consider submissions from faculty, contingent faculty and staff.

**Writing Length:** Final selected pieces can range in length of 2,500 to 6,000 words for prose, and can be shorter for poetry or creative responses. If selected, drafts of 2500-6000 words will be due on October 15th.

**To Submit:** [Please fill out this application form to apply.](#)

**Submission Deadline:** Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, 11:59pm.

**About the Seminar:**

Autoethnographies of Public Education and Racial (In)Justice generates narratives of current and past CUNY students to highlight the richness and diversity of the nation's first public university. This research team is organized around questions of how racial injustice shapes students' lives before and after they arrive at CUNY and how their experiences here help them to navigate and help change an unequal society. Through a range of projects, this initiative looks at the ways in which CUNY students' multitudinous experiences as immigrants, people of color, working class, LGBTQ, and/or formerly incarcerated people have shaped their struggles, aspirations and community interactions.

This research team is led by faculty coleaders Grace M. Cho, Associate Professor of Sociology, the College of Staten Island, CUNY, and Rose M. Kim, Associate Professor of Sociology, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY.

*Sponsored by [Autoethnographies of Public Education and Racial \(In\)Justice](#) research team as part of the Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research from the Center for the Humanities at the Graduate Center, CUNY.*

Thank you,

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[Back to top](#)  [Hr](#)

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