CALL FOR PAPERS

Black Women, Womanist Learning and Higher Education: The Politics of Representation and Community Activism

Birkbeck Gender & Sexuality in collaboration with the Department of Applied Linguistics and Communications, Birkbeck, University of London

One-day conference on Tuesday 13 February 2018 (10-4pm)
Birkbeck, University of London. Room B01, Clore Management Centre, Torrington Square, WC1E 7JL

This one-day conference will explore the role of the black woman in promoting learning development and political activism in the community. It seeks to bring together the work of researchers, academics and activists in the field of gender, ‘race’, education and community development to explore Womanism and the influence of education for building stronger, local communities.

The conference therefore draws heavily on the concept of ‘Womanism’ which acknowledges the need to tackle the under-representation of black women in British feminist research. It will engage with ‘Womanist learning’ – a black feminist approach in education and learning which depicts the ways in which older black women learn whilst at the same time locating their learning in the heart of their communities. In this way Womanist learning becomes synonymous with community activism as the women find ways to help build stronger, local communities and rise above past and current oppression.

It will specifically bring together women in higher education, research students and activists presenting papers and sharing their research in the following areas: Black women, community and political representation; Pedagogies for change: Teaching strategies for Womanist learning; Black women, media representation, social technologies and community; Mothers and sisters in the struggle: Reclaiming black women’s grass roots activism; Black women, sexuality, community and change; Widening access and Womanist participation in higher education: Intersectionality and inequality; Communities in crisis: Black women, youth justice, criminality and society; Womanism and faith based strategies for promoting inclusion; Black women, disability, challenge and the health of black communities.

We are inviting academics, researchers and practitioners to submit abstracts and are particularly keen to encourage a broad and diverse set of papers that engage with (but are not limited to) the following themes:

A. Criminalisation, youth and Policing: Engaging with the Womanist Activist
B. Education, Learning, Schooling and the Wider Community: Lessons for the future. What can we learn from a Womanist approach?

C. Housing, Community and Urban inequalities - A Womanist perspective

D. Faith, Sexuality and Challenge: Womanist strategies to confront discrimination and violence

Presentations will be 20 minutes long with additional time for questions.

If you wish to submit an abstract, please send a title, abstract (150 words) and short CV (150 words) to bisr@bbk.ac.uk by 5pm on Monday 20 November 2017.

Alternatively, for more information you can speak with the conference organiser: Dr Jan Etienne j.etienne@bbk.ac.uk Tel: 0203 073 8355.

**Proposed Target Audience**

Academics in Social Science research, Sociology, Psychosocial studies and Politics; Black women activists working in education, community, health, social work and related areas; Groups focused on constructions of motherhood; Youth and community sector studies; faith, disability, Intersectionality, inclusion, social justice; sexuality; 'race', ethnicity, racism and culture as they impact on educational policy and practice in higher education.

**Supporting the Development of a New Research Network**

This event will be delivered in collaboration with Birkbeck Gender and Sexuality (BiGS) and will support the development of research in this important field. A new research network (comprising black women academics and research students and activists) entitled: ‘Womanism, Activism and Higher Education’ will be established. This network will work closely with BiGS and colleagues from the Research Centre for Social Change and Transformation in Higher Education in promoting research to generate collaboration and facilitate research in this area.

**Important Dates**

Monday 20 November 2017 - Final deadline for abstract submission
Friday 15 December 2017 - Final date for presenters to register