BEYOND INTERSECTIONALITY: RACE, CLASS, AND FEMINIST FUTURES
April 26, 2019
RAJ Conference Room

9.30am

J Finley, American Studies at Middlebury College
Carly Thomsen, Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at Middlebury College

“Travelling While Black (Feminist Theory): A Quantitative Analysis of Intersectionality’s Circulation”

Starting from the position that it is more epistemologically and politically powerful to state that our feminism is anti-racist and anti-capitalist than to say it is “intersectional,” we ask: How are academic and activist approaches alike both emboldened and limited by intersectionality? Finley and Thomsen, along with their Research Assistants Harper Baldwin and Nell Sather, begin to answer this question by drawing on our mixed-methods and multi-sited data set, the first quantitative analysis of “intersectionality.” More specifically, we explore how “intersectionality” circulates in the following sites: feminist, legal, and critical race academic journals; Twitter accounts associated with the 2018 Women’s March and Black Lives Matter movement; explicitly conservative and liberal media; a survey we conducted at Middlebury College; and job application materials submitted for a recent position in Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at Middlebury College. In so doing, we consider the circulation of the term “intersectionality” and the citational practices that have enabled its institutional and political cache.

10.30am

Erin Durban, Dept of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota

“Provincializing Intersectionality”

In this talk, Durban explores the relationship between two central analytical frameworks in contemporary feminist studies: “intersectionality” and “transnational feminisms.” These frameworks are listed side-by-side in feminist studies curriculum documents, job ads, and—less often—scholarship. The “and” in these listings tethers intersectionality and transnational feminisms together in the vision of a robust interdisciplinary feminist studies interested in dynamic understandings of gender and social power, yet the “and” also separates them as distinct domains of inquiry. This talk takes up the genealogies of both frameworks
and the institutional and bordering practices that keep the “and” in place with the question in mind: Can those of us in feminist studies imagine an intersectional, transnational feminist framework or a transnational intersectionality?

11.30am
Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, African-American Studies at Princeton University

“Black Feminism and the Politics of Revolution”

In an age where the politics of socialism have pierced the mainstream and have derived a level of unprecedented popularity in the United States, there is still the tendency to reduce it to its analyses of class and see it as particularly appealing to white people. But what if we understood socialism to be the politics of Black feminists, how would that change our understanding of its radical potential? How would it transform its acceptability as a form of political analysis? How has Black feminism historically shaped the politics of socialism and how do we understand that inheritance in today’s contemporary iteration of socialism and Black feminism.

1pm
Miranda Joseph, Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota

“Articulating Intersectionality: Accounting for Racial Capitalism”

“Intersectionality” has served an important role in feminist studies as a persistent call to attend to women of color and account for the relation between racial and gender formations. Meanwhile, scholars have contrasted intersectionality—which emerges from and may be bound to a US context, a US legal context—with another important analytic framework in the field: transnational feminist cultural studies. And poststructuralist feminists have challenged intersectionality for its stabilization of identity and subjectivity, offering, for example, assemblage theory as a supplement that better captures the dynamism and complexity of social processes. Less attention has been paid to exploring the scope and limits of intersectional analysis in relation to theorizations of capitalism-gender-race relations, such as “racial capitalism” or “articulation.” In this presentation, I explore what these concepts might have to offer our analyses, and, specifically, explore the role of accounting—which is to say allocating social and financial credits and debts—in articulating social formations that are, among other things, gendered and raced.
2pm
Jasbir Puar, Women’s and Gender Studies at Rutgers University

“Intersectionality, Palestine, and Solidarity Scholarship”

Following Jennifer Nash’s luminous reparative reading of what she calls “the intersectionality wars,” in this talk I trace contemporary concerns about the dissemination and circuitry of theoretical concepts more generally and intersectionality in specific. I am especially interested in how intersectionality is being strategically deployed in relation to Black-Palestine solidarity organizing. If, as Angela Davis avers, “movements need to be intersectional,” what does this proposition mean for activist organizing, the travels of theoretical concepts, and the production of knowledge in the service of solidarity?

3pm
Jennifer Nash, African American Studies & Gender and Sexuality Studies at Northwestern University

“Love Letter from a Critic, or Notes on the Intersectionality Wars”

This talk follows the word “critic” around the black feminist archive, endeavoring to trace its myriad meanings by asking: Who are intersectionality’s critics, and what precisely makes those scholars’ works critical? Why has the term “critic” come to circulate and proliferate around intersectionality in recent years? Why are black feminists so deeply invested in exposing the “critic”? The talk explores the affective lure of the term critic, engaging how the term “critic” has become the centerpiece of the intersectionality wars that black feminism has found itself mired in, and asking how the constant invocation of the malicious critic as a pernicious outsider becomes a crucial strategy through which black feminists reassert their territorial hold on intersectionality.

4-5.30
Wrap up Panel with All Participants