

beyond identity

end of year report
fall semester 2017



**the politics of sexual violence
initiative**

Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership

Activities BI

Information Session, February 28th

This information session was the introduction of the program application to the CCNY community. We had the acting Dean of the Colin Powell School making introduction remarks about the program and what it meant for the CCNY community's efforts towards making academic spaces reflect the experiences of students.

Colin Powell School
for Civic and Global Leadership

The City College
of New York

Join us to find out about the new activist-scholar training program. Beyond Identity will train students in identity-driven research, political writing, and movement-building. The goal of the program is to place the gendered experiences of immigrants and U.S.-based minority students at the forefront of political conversations, at a critical moment in the United States. Resources are available for students, including guaranteed financial support for participation in summer activist internships and field research.



**BEYOND
IDENTITY:**
A Gendered
Platform for
Scholar Activists

**feb
15th**

INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES
CONFERENCE ROOM
1:00PM

HOSTED BY POLITICS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE INITIATIVE, THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, GENDER STUDIES, AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, THE COLIN POWELL SCHOOL FOR CIVIC AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

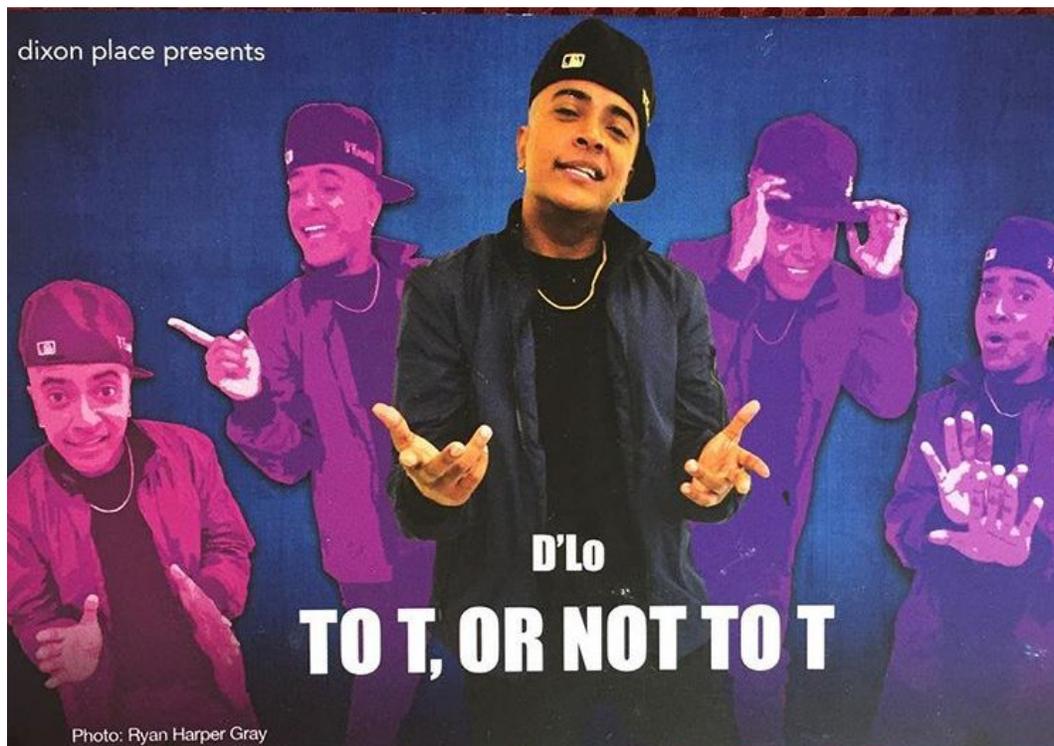
Welcome Reception, May 25th

This reception was for the cohort and faculty to meet each other. Here each professor talked about why they were taking part in the program and what they wanted to contribute. Students got a chance to also meet each other for the first time before classes started in the Fall of 2017.



D'Lo Performance, July 7th

5 cohort members attended this performance at Dixon Place. The tickets were sponsored by the program. D'Lo's work touched upon toxic masculinity and the immigrant experience of growing up queer and brown.



Emissaries of Empowerment Launch, September 13



The Politics of Sexual Violence Initiative
presents

EMISSARIES OF EMPOWERMENT

SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

6-8PM

SHEPARD HALL 350



JOIN KATE CRONIN-FURMAN, NIMMI GOWRINATHAN, AND RAFIA ZAKARIA FOR THE
LAUNCH OF THEIR NEW POSITION PAPER

RSVP: POLITICSOFSVINITIATIVE@GMAIL.COM

EMISSARIES OF EMPOWERMENT EXAMINES THE DE-POLITICIZING, AND RE-FEMINIZING IMPACT OF
CONTEMPORARY EMPOWERMENT-BASED INTERVENTIONS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD AND HOW THESE
PROGRAMS OFTEN REINFORCE, RATHER THAN COMBAT, THE DEEP MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN.

This event commemorated the publication of an opinion paper by BI faculty. The launch was an opportunity for cohort students to engage with the work of their professors. It also gave students a chance to contemplate different forms of publishing work in their academic and professional careers.

Faculty and Cohort Dinner, October 11th

The first faculty and cohort dinner, at Tsion Café, allowed for program participants to check in with each other about the progress of program courses and events. Program director Nimmi Gowrinathan addressed the group regarding upcoming events and expectations for the cohort. The faculty Valeria Luiselli, Anjuli Kolb, Michael Archer and Kate Cronin also attended.

Radical Art: Interpreting Identity, October 18

The Radical Art event brought artists that incorporate politically-informed narratives in their performance work to CCNY campus. After the performance pieces, students and attendees had the chance to ask the artists questions about their creative process and experiences bringing their work to different venues. After the performances BI students as well as CCNY students who attended the event had the chance to talk to the artists and performers in a reception at OSO.

Colin Powell School
for Civic and Global Leadership

The City College
of New York

PSVI PEARL

The Department of Women & Gender Studies
& The Politics of Sexual Violence Initiative
in partnership with People for Equality And Relief in Lanka
present

**RADICAL ART:
INTERPRETING IDENTITY**

Intimate performance and conversation featuring
BHI BHIMAN and D'LO

with
BROOKLYN DREAMWOLF
(YaliniDream & Jendog Lonewolf)

Whose Streets Screening, November 1st

The screening at CCNY was a good opportunity for students to learn about how the Ferguson movement formed. The screening was followed by a Q&A with the director of the movie Sabaaq Folyan. Attendance of the Whose Streets screening was encouraged by faculty member Anjuli Kolb for her course Living a Feminist Life, Writing a Feminist Story.



Student Meetings

Lunch with Cohort, October 30th

Dinner with Cohort, November 16th

In these meeting students discussed their progress in the classes as well as the direction the program is taking for next semester. Potential events were discussed, as well as the upcoming website which will be student led. Student meetings also addressed opportunities for engagement with the wider CCNY campus community. Through student events, the cohort has had the chance to bond and get to know each other better.



#MeToo Panel, November 28th

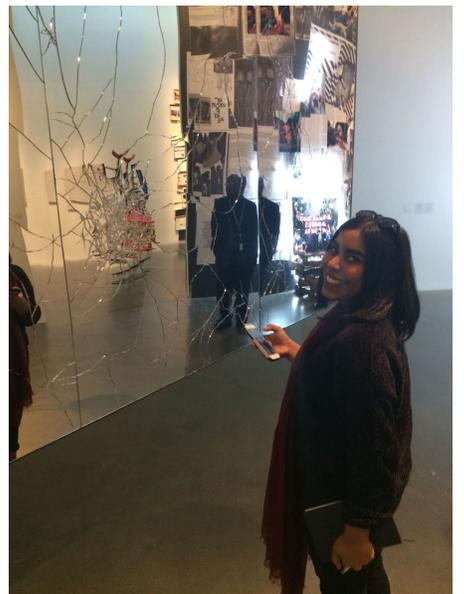
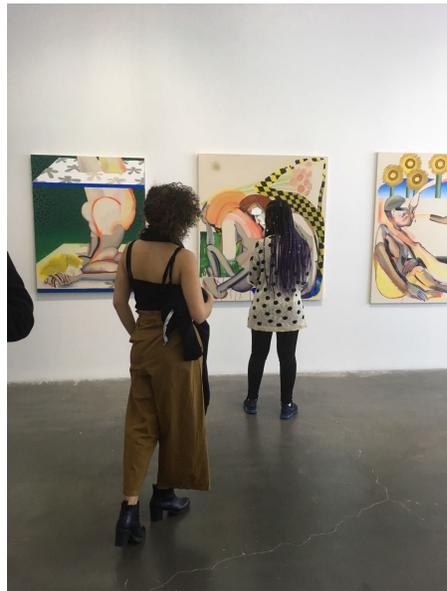
In collaboration with the NCNW and the Gender Resource center, the BI program has the chance to participate in the #MeToo panel. Here students had the chance to discuss the issue of sexual violence and way to address the issue. BI students talked alongside other NY based activists, a member of SEEK, and other community based activists.



Trigger Exhibit, December 1st

The trip to the “Trigger: Gender as a tool and a weapon” exhibit at the New Museum was a mandatory requirement for Professor Kolb's class. Students in attendance included the BI cohort and potential applicants for next year. The guided tour gave students the chance to speak directly with the museum's education coordinator about the process of curating the show. Students were encouraged to incorporate the art pieces as sources of research or inspiration for their own final project. The tour was followed by a dinner at B-Bar. This was the final event of the semester for Beyond Identity. Faculty and program coordinators in attendance included program director Nimmi Gowrinathan, Michael Archer, Anjuli Kolb, Asale Angel-Ajani, Valeria Luiselli and Maritsa Poros.





Last Day of Classes December 13th

The last day of required courses for the BI program seminars was December 13th, 2017. In Professor Kolb's course students delivered oral presentations of their final project proposals for feedback from the group. Following the class, students surprised visiting professor Anjali Kolb with tokens of appreciation. In Professor Archer's writing seminar, students discussed the student-choice readings and final paper progress.





Final presentation in Kate Cronin's class "Helping or Hurting: Human Rights Narratives in Question." The class was open to other non-BI, CCNY students and was an opportunity to bring activist-scholarship to the broader CCNY community through the BI academic program. This class was not mandatory for BI students, the majority of the class were non-BI scholar activists. In the image above students are giving their final presentations on child soldiers in Afghanistan and analyzing children's agency in political movements through the critical framework of existing intersectional human rights narratives critique.

Overview

What is the Program?

The goal of this program is intended to be an intensive engagement in the critical work of developing political solidarities between young women*¹ of color. The program combines elements of Teaching (learning identity-driven research from activist-scholars studying immigration, social movements, protest, gender and violence), Writing (nonfiction narrative writing and political writing from well-established writers from around the world), Activism (movement-building workshops from community organizers), and Public Engagement through student-driven public events, the submission of student's writing for publication, and the presentation of research findings to local and national policy audiences.

The first year's cohort (10 students) have taken two required courses, one to develop their nonfiction narrative skills (in partnership with the Publishing Certificate Program) and one taught by a Gender Studies post-doctoral hire (both of which will be cross-listed to meet major/minor requirements). The first summer students will spend one month conducting guided field research in communities aligned with their activist interests. The second year will have a mandatory course on Gender & Violence, taught by Dr. Nimmi Gowrinathan and a higher level writing course for Political Writing. In the second semester, the students will organize three movement-building/ methods workshops, prepare a policy presentation, and organize public events with the incoming first-year students. The second summer, students will have paid internships with local activist movements (integrated into the Community Change minor). The third

¹ *The category "women" is inclusive of cis-sexual, transgender, and non-binary forms of gendered identities. The Politics of Sexual Violence Initiative does not discriminate on gender or race. All programs are open to all eligible participants without regard to race, gender, national origin, or other characteristics protected by law.*

year (optional) provides the resources for students to extend their work with movements, or develop their own organizing strategies on or off campus.

In both years, scholar-experts who have practiced in the fields they've studied (human rights, humanitarian law, policy) will join the program to offer optional courses to both students in the cohort and those not formally in the program.

During the semester BI students will have to allocate 2-5 hours to the program (not counting class time and subject to change depending on the week) to meet with professors, have debriefs with their Cohort and participate in the monthly events the program offers.

Why This Program is Important Now?

As the nation as a whole moves towards political polarization, fissures within activist movements are particularly worrying, and are increasingly found in organizing centered around narrow understandings of identity. Young activists struggle to navigate speaking to universal struggles of women of color, while holding onto important perspectives born of specific identities and experiences. This program explores how we might create a space to draw on the lived experiences of women of color to move beyond the politics of identity to build stronger political movements (against state violence, militarization, and surveillance), creating solidarity along political lines. The program enables women of color to connect with each other in depth through their intellectual work and create a community of support within City College.

Who is Eligible?

This program is eligible to undergraduate students with two years left at City College, and is open to all majors and transfer students. The program requires a two year academic commitment (including one month of the summer), with a third year option of part-time engagement in student-driven activism. Students

with less than two years left should consider applying, as applicants will be considered on a case by case basis.

What do courses count towards?

Each year, once the topic of each course is determined, the two required courses will be cross-listed and accredited by relevant departments for major and minor requirements (such as Women & Gender Studies) within the Colin Powell School. Writing courses will also be cross listed between English and other departments in the Colin Powell School.

What Support is Available?

First year students receive a \$1000 tuition credit, second year students will receive a \$2000 tuition credit.

Throughout the academic year, students can apply for need-based financial support. Summer funding for research and activist internships is guaranteed for students in the program.

Questions?

You can email us at politicsofsvinitiative@gmail.com

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