Please submit a detailed abstract of your paper or panel to blackstudies@missouri.edu by April 29, 2017.

Individual paper proposals should be no more than 250 words. Panel proposals (including all paper titles and names of panelists) should be no more than 500 words. Additionally, please include a brief biographical statement or CV with your proposal.

On Oct. 13-17, 2017, the MU Black Studies Department will host its annual fall conference. This two-day conference encourages critical dialogue among scholars, community members, undergraduate and graduate students, and sex practitioners on two topics that have remained largely neglected within the field of black/African-American studies: sex and pleasure. The conference will take place on the MU campus in Columbia, Mo. Partnering community groups will be in attendance to provide feedback on available programming and services.

We position Stacey Patton's provocative essay, “Who's Afraid of Black Sexuality” in the Chronicle of Higher Education (2012), as a starting point for thinking through how silence about sex and pleasure has “left a gap in the classroom and in black studies scholarship.” While prominent black feminist scholars have illuminated histories of black women’s sexual violation under slavery and their counter-resistance, few have said anything about “black sexual agency, pleasure and intimacy, or same-sex relationships.”

While this gap has been undertaken in the fields of black (queer) studies (E. Patrick Johnson, Robert Reid Pharr and Cathy Cohen) and queer of color critique (Rod Ferguson) alongside grassroots organizations such as ACT UP, new scholarship in black sexuality studies suggests that “although the dynamics of respectability have evolved they are not any less insidious.” These new inquiries reveal how respectability politics serve as neo-colonialist measures in which respectability becomes a primary technique of power and knowledge.

As such, we invite scholarly works, including performance pieces, visual art and poster boards, which interrogate respectability politics alongside ideas about how to deploy anti-respectability as methodology within black studies.

Topics to be discussed (but are not limited to) the following:

* Religion and spirituality
* Black trans* experiences
* The politics of “recovery work”
* Labor, migration and sexuality
* Race, gender and disability studies
* Youth, black girls and moral panics
* Trans-generational relationships in black feminism
* The AIDS crisis, race and “safe sex” initiatives/criminalization
* Student activism, intramural policing and self-care
* Domestic violence and sex abuse in black churches
* Illicit Eroticism – BDSM, pornography and sex work
* Teaching and researching about black (queer) sexuality studies and/or respectability in the U.S. Midwest/South
* Teaching and researching about black (queer) sexuality in historical contexts
* Institutional research limitations in deploying anti-respectability as methodology

Conference Organizer: Christina Carney, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Black Studies and Women's and Gender Studies, University of Missouri (carneyc@missouri.edu)

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