

Fridays at Newcomb

Spring 2025

Fridays at Newcomb is a speaker series that takes place from noon to 1pm on Fridays in the Diboll Gallery at Newcomb Institute of Tulane University (43 Newcomb Pl., 3rd Floor). The series features new research insights from scholars at Tulane and beyond related to Newcomb Institute's three main research areas: sexual and reproductive rights and health, gender-based violence, and feminist civic engagement. Each talk is free, open to the public, and lunch is provided. For more information, contact Dr. Clare Daniel, Senior Professor of Practice and Director of Research at Newcomb Institute: cdaniel5@tulane.edu.

January 24: Michelle Collins, "The Unequal Journey: Exploring the Unfriendly History of Childbirth for Women"

- Dr. Michelle Collins, Dean at Loyola New Orleans University College of Nursing and Health, is a Certified Nurse-Midwife active in clinical practice, teaching, research, and administration. In addition to her current administrative position at Loyola, Dr. Collins practices as a Certified Nurse-Midwife at Ochsner Baptist. She is a nationally known expert on the use of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) in labor and birth. Dr. Collins also writes an invited blog for the British show *Call the Midwife*, for the PBS website which she has done since the series began 12 seasons ago. She is a Fellow of the American College of Nurse-Midwives, the American Academy of Nursing, and the National Academies of Practice.

January 31: KS James, "Demographic Change and Gender Equity in India: Within and Beyond Household"

- K S James is Senior Visiting Scholar at the Newcomb Institute and possesses extensive research and teaching experience in the field of Demography. Prior to moving to Tulane, he was the Director and Senior Professor of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, India. Broadly, his work examines the interaction of socio-economic and policy forces on the demographic factors including fertility, marriage, gender and ageing focusing on India. He has published widely on demographic transition, demographic dividend and data systems in India in journals such as Science, Lancet Global Health, BMC Public Health, Social Science and Medicine, JAMA Network Open, Journal of Biosocial Science etc.

February 7: Nichole Bauer, "Feminizing Political Institutions: How Women Change Perceptions of Politics and Improve Democracy"

- Nichole M. Bauer is an associate professor of political communication in the Department of Political Science and the LSU Manship School of Mass Communication. She conducts research on gender and politics, specifically

focusing on how strategic political communication affects the way voters form impressions about women in politics. Her research has been published in a variety of journals including the *Journal of Politics*, *Political Psychology*, *Political Behavior and Politics*, *Groups, and Identities*, among other outlets. She is the author of “The Qualifications Gap: Why Women Must be Better than Men to Win Political Office.”

February 14: Amanda Johnson, “North American Indigenous Feminisms During the 1970’s Second Wave”

- Dr. Amanda Johnson is the 2024-2025 Bonquois Postdoctoral Fellow in women’s history for the Newcomb Institute of Tulane. Before arriving at Newcomb, Dr. Johnson earned her Ph.D. in Native American and Women and Gender Histories at Oklahoma State University. More recently her work has been funded through numerous research fellowships with Yale University and the Newberry Library of Chicago. Her current book manuscript, titled, *Beating the Drums for Ourselves: Native American Women and Activism, 1960 – 1985*, is a historical analysis of the Native American women who shaped the movements of self-determination and feminism in the late twentieth century. She also has publications in the *Journal of Ethnohistory* and *Women and Social Movements* where she primarily focuses on how Indigenous women working through inter-tribal organizations have historically advanced the legacy of cultural sovereignty and human rights.

February 21: Sarah Hedgecock, “Life’s a Little Bit Harder When You’re a Girl’: Gendered Self-Understanding in Evangelical Girlhood”

- Sarah M. Hedgecock is the Sawyer Seminar postdoctoral fellow at Tulane. Her work engages the fields of religious, childhood, and gender studies, and she is completing a book project about nostalgia, relationality, and white American evangelical girlhood from the Cold War to the present day. Her work has been supported by the American Examples program at the University of Alabama and the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life at Columbia University, and research grants from Billy Graham Center Archives at Wheaton College and the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives. Sarah received a Ph.D. in religion at Columbia University and holds a B.A. in anthropology from Princeton University.

March 14: Deon Haywood and Laura McTighe, “Women With A Vision’s *Fire Dreams: A Conversation about Black Feminism in the South*”

- Deon Haywood is an activist, human rights advocate, mother and grandmother, and community leader from New Orleans. For more than 30 years, she has advocated for the rights of Black women and girls, poor and working class folks, sex workers, substance

users, and LGBTQ+ communities in the Deep South. Following Hurricane Katrina, Haywood was named executive director of Women With A Vision(WWAV), the groundbreaking HIV/AIDS prevention organization that pioneered harm reduction in the Deep South. Under Deon's leadership, WWAV's work blossomed, connecting HIV/AIDS prevention and education to reproductive justice, youth advocacy, harm reduction, and more. In 2012, WWAV helped organize sex workers to stand up for their rights and defeat Louisiana's archaic "Crimes Against Nature by Solicitation"; statute that victimized poor, Black women and LGBTQ+ individuals by placing them on the sex offender registry. This defeat was a milestone victory for constitutional rights in Louisiana as those affected were removed from the sex offender registry in 2013 and were able to begin rebuilding their lives. Through her relentless advocacy, Haywood has grown WWAV into a leading voice fighting the criminalization of Black women and girls and advancing community-led policy solutions on international and national stages and at home in Louisiana. She has been honored for her work at by the Center for Constitutional Rights, SisterSong, Ms. Foundation, National Organization of Women (NOW), ACLU Louisiana, the Human Rights Campaign, the Red Door Foundation, Philadelphia FIGHT, Planned Parenthood, Forum for Equality, BET.com, Frontline Defenders Dublin Platform, and more. In 2018, she was appointed to the New Orleans Human Relations Commission to advance the body's work on Human Rights and Equity. Essence Magazine named her Hometown Hero and profiled her as a part of its special "Love Letter to New Orleans" issue. "Fire Dreams: Making Black Feminist Liberation in the South," the story of how Women With A Vision organizes for the liberation of its communities, was published in Spring of 2024. Deon lives in New Orleans with her wife Shaquita and their three dogs SoG, Beau, and LavenderG. She loves reading, spending time with her family, and investing in the next generation of radical Black women.

- Laura McTighe is an abolitionist, ethnographer, organizer, and mama, who has dedicated her life to weaving liberatory futures and building the connections that make them possible. She has been a part of the US and global movements to end AIDS and abolish prisons for more than twenty-five years, co-founding multiple projects, including TEACH Outside, *Prison Health News*, Project UNSHACKLE, and the Tallahassee Bail Fund. Now a leading scholar activist in the fields of religion, abolition, and mutual aid, McTighe is an associate professor of religion at Florida State University and the co-founder of Front Porch Research Strategy in New Orleans. Her research, teaching, and service all center collaborative knowledge production as both theory and method for analyzing the violences of gendered racial capitalism in our everyday lives, and for dreaming beyond what is to build together the world that must be. McTighe is the author with the Women With A Vision (WWAV) collective of *Fire Dreams: Making Black Feminist Liberation in the South*, published by Duke University Press in 2024. Her other writings, all deeply collaborative, have appeared in numerous academic venues, including *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society*, *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, *Cultural Anthropology*, the *Journal of the American Academy of*

Religion, the *Journal for the Anthropology of North America*, *Radical History Review*, and *Southern Cultures*, as well as public-facing outlets like *Truthout* and *The Revealer*. Currently, she also serves as Principal Investigator on two major public humanities and social science research projects funded through generous grants from the Henry Luce Foundation: “Creating the World Anew: Religion, Economy, and Mutual Aid,” which she co-leads with Elayne Oliphant and Daniel Vaca, and “The Callie House Project: Religion and Public Health in the Black Experience in the American South,” which she co-organizes with WWAV’s Deon Haywood. Both of these projects align closely with her next book project, *Abolition is Sacred Work*. McTighe is presently living in Baltimore, where she was born and raised. She is a builder of altars and worker of clay, both practices passed down through her maternal lineages.

March 21: Michelle Manno, “A Book Talk for *Denied: Women, Sports, and the Contradictions of Identity*”

- Dr. Michelle Manno (she/they) is the Interim Chief Diversity Officer at Northwestern University. In this role, Dr. Manno oversees The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (OIDI) including The Women’s Center and Native American Indigenous Initiatives. She leads the implementation of diversity accountability processes across Northwestern’s 12 schools and colleges on three campuses.

At Northwestern, Dr. Manno has founded key initiatives designed to advance equity, inclusion, and belonging for all campus members including the Mediation, Conflict Resolution, and Restorative Practices (MCR) Initiative, the Gender Inclusive Initiatives Seed Fund program, and the Religious Literacy Program. She oversees OIDI’s education and training team and provides leadership support to seven staff and faculty affinity groups.

Dr. Manno received her PhD in Sociology from Emory University. Her scholarship focuses on social inequities, with a particular emphasis on race, gender, and sexuality and how systems of oppression influence individuals’ everyday lives. She has presented at both international and national conferences, most recently highlighting innovative initiatives at the intersection of diversity, equity, and inclusion and student well-being within higher education. Dr. Manno is the author of *Denied: Women, Sports, and the Contradiction of Identity* (NYU Press).

April 11: Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell, “Black Maternal Health – We can do better, we must do better,” cosponsored by Mary Amelia Center for Women’s Health Equity Research for Black Maternal Health Week

- Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell is a Board-Certified Obstetrician & Gynecologist and an Associate Professor at Ochsner Health in New Orleans, Louisiana. She is the Senior Site

Lead and Section Head of Women's Services at Ochsner Kenner, the Director of Quality for Women's Services across the Ochsner Health System, and the Medical Director of the Minimally Invasive Center for the Treatment of Uterine Fibroids. Dr. Gillispie-Bell earned her medical degree from Meharry Medical College, completed her residency at Ochsner Health, and holds a Master of Applied Science in Patient Safety and Healthcare Quality from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She also holds certification in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University. Known nationally for her expertise in managing heavy menstrual bleeding due to fibroids, she is highly skilled in advanced laparoscopic and robotic-assisted surgeries in addition to her obstetric care.

As Medical Director of the Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative and the Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review for the Louisiana Department of Health, Dr. Gillispie-Bell is a leading force in addressing maternal health disparities. Her work focuses on improving birth outcomes and eliminating racial disparities in maternal health across Louisiana. Dr. Gillispie-Bell has testified before Congress, led congressional briefings, and was an invited speaker at The White House Maternal Health Day of Action, where she advocated for policy improvements in maternal care and outcomes.

Dr. Gillispie-Bell has held numerous leadership roles on both local and national platforms, and her clinical and advocacy work has earned her wide recognition. She has been quoted in national outlets such as USA Today and The New York Times and has appeared as a featured speaker at the Essence Festival, on Good Morning America, CNBC, Scripps News, and the 1619 Project Docuseries.

April 18: Jennifer Wagman, "Research With, Not On: Lessons from Collaborative Campus-Based Violence Prevention Research"

- Dr. Jennifer Wagman earned her PhD in Reproductive, Perinatal and Women's Health and her Master's degree of Health Science in International Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; and a Bioethics and Health Policy Certificate from the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics. Her postdoctoral training, completed at the UC San Diego School of Medicine, was in alcohol and substance use, HIV and related infections. Since 2000, Dr. Wagman has collaborated with the [Rakai Health Sciences Program](#) to: examine the relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV), reproductive health and HIV infection; create protocols for safe and ethical research on interpersonal violence; and lead intervention research to find effective, combination IPV and HIV prevention approaches in rural Uganda. More recently, Dr. Wagman expanded her research in Uganda to focus on the epidemiology of alcohol use and its association with IPV and HIV transmission, and throughout subSaharan Africa to examine the science of implementing proven successful violence and HIV prevention approaches. In California, Dr. Wagman leads [UC Speaks Up](#), a public health research project to address and prevent sexual assault and dating violence on three University of

California campuses. Since 2016, she has been the Director of Violence Prevention Research with the 10-campus UC Global Health Institute Women's Health, Gender and Empowerment Center of Expertise.

April 25: Anita Raj and Kelli Hall, “Women's Empowerment, Population Dynamics, and Socioeconomic Development: A National Academies of Sciences Report”

- Anita Raj is the Executive Director of the Newcomb Institute and the Nancy Reeves Dreux Endowed Chair in the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Tulane University. She is a research scientist trained in developmental psychology and public health with a multi-disciplinary research focus on gender equity in global health and development. She has led federal grant and foundation-funded studies on gender theory and measurement science, sexual and reproductive health, maternal and adolescent health, women's empowerment, and gender inequalities, including genderbased violence and child marriage. She has approximately 300 peer-reviewed publications and is recognized as one of the most cited social scientists globally. She created and leads the [EMERGE platform](#), which provides open access evidence-based measures on gender empowerment, built indicators on gender empowerment in national surveys for global tracking of SDG5: Building gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls and offers technical assistance to survey researchers and implementers working on gender empowerment. She also created and leads the [Violence EXperiences](#) (VEX) study, now operating in [California](#) and [Louisiana](#), to assess state-wide data on experiences of violence, discrimination, and mental health, to support data-driven policy decision-making on these issues. She has served as an advisor to UN Women, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Blue Shield Foundation of California, and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation on gender equity and health as well as women's empowerment issues, and she has been an invited speaker at the U.N. General Assembly on child, early, and forced marriage. She is also on the International Advisory Board for Lancet Global Health. She is the Co-Chair of the Committee on Gender Empowerment, Sociodemographic Development, and Population Dynamics for the National Academy of Sciences.
- Kelli Stidham Hall, PhD, MS, is the Associate Dean of Research in the School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine, the Thomas Keller Professor in Diversity in the Departments of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences and Epidemiology, and the Co-Director of the Mary Amelia Center for Women's Health Equity Research at Tulane University. Trained as a social epidemiologist and originally an advanced practice nurse, Dr. Hall's research program addresses the social determinants of and solutions for maternal-child and reproductive health equity in the U.S. and globally. Her work advances policyrelevant, community-engaged, and multi-level interventions through interdisciplinary teams and multisector partnerships. To date, she has raised over \$75 million in grant funds to support her collaborative research program, and she currently

serves as the principal investigator on five NIH-funded projects focused on studying the effects of health and social policies, poverty, structural racism, health systems factors, and toxic social stress on disparities in maternal morbidity, mortality, mental, and reproductive health. In addition to her leadership roles at Tulane, Dr. Hall is also the Co-Director and MPI of Columbia University's NIH U54 Maternal Health Research Center of Excellence and the former Founding Director of the Center for Reproductive Health Research in the Southeast at Emory University. In 2020, Dr. Hall was elected as an Emerging Leader in Health and Medicine by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.