



13th Annual
**DISCERNING
DIVERSE VOICES**

SYMPOSIUM ON DIVERSITY

MARCH 9, 2022

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Welcome to the Discerning Diverse Voices Symposium (DDVS) sponsored by the College of Communication and Information Sciences at The University of Alabama. Now in its 13th year, the DDVS is one of our college's signature events that has helped to position C&IS as a leader in diversity, equity and inclusion at The University of Alabama and among our peers.

Our theme this year, Media Platforms as the Message: Creating Meaningful Diversity in the 21st Century, examines how concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion are being portrayed in both legacy and digital media outlets. We have created opportunities for sharing research and sparking dialog about diversity and inclusion for more than a decade. We are fortunate that the virtual conference platform we are using has allowed us to include even more voices than before, and I look forward to engaging in renewed conversations with you.

All of us in C&IS recognize the important role Discerning Diverse Voices plays in providing a platform for students, faculty and staff to showcase the new knowledge being created in this all-important area of study. Several books, book chapters and journal articles now in print were originally presented at this symposium. Clearly, we have created a very effective vehicle for showcasing and advancing the good work of scholars in our college and across the nation.

We are deeply indebted to Dr. Suzanne Horsley for shepherding the event this year. Additionally, a special thanks to Dr. Kristen Warner and Dr. Miriam Sweeney for providing leadership to the organizing committee for this year's event. We thank them for their hard work and dedication to this effort.

Thank you for being a part of the activities today, and best wishes for an excellent symposium!

Sincerely,

Mark D. Nelson, Ph.D.
DEAN & PROFESSOR
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION SCIENCES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022

9:00 CST

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ROOM 1

PAPERS ON MEDIA PLATFORMS

MODERATOR: MIRIAM SWEENEY

“For You” Platforms Not Made For Me: Influencers of Color On the Role of Platforms, Algorithms, and Visibility Mandates in Platformized Work”

AUTHOR: KALEY N. MARTIN, DR. SHAHEEN KANTHAWALA

“Neurodivergence and the Rise of the TikTok community”

AUTHOR: MISHA VIEHOUSER

“Black-on-Black Reporting in the Post-George Floyd Era: Television Network Approaches in Contrast”

AUTHOR: DR. GEORGE L. DANIELS

“Making Them See: A Look at the Novels that Impacted the Civil Rights Movement, 1940-1965”

AUTHOR: BRITTANY HOLMES

ROOM 2

PANEL: ALABAMA FORENSICS COUNCIL (THE DIGITAL DILEMMA)

MODERATOR: TIONNA TAITE

PANELISTS: BHAVANA RAVALA, BRADEN HOPKINS, JAQUACY MINTER

The Alabama Forensic Council (the University’s official Speech and Debate team) utilizes performance activism to make statements about pertinent issues using artistic outlets such as dramatic performances, impromptu speaking, and a unique form of oratory. The panelists will be performing self-written speech and poetry to address misogyny, sexism, and racism in media and in day-to-day lives.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ROOM 1

PANEL: COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE: GRADUATE STUDENT WORKS IN PROGRESS

MODERATOR: DR. MARY MEARES

PANELISTS: CHLOE GOODEN, SARAH MIESSE, ASHLEY OLIVE, JAKE PAUL, LAURA PITTS, GOURAV RATH, AND STEPHEN SHOL

In this panel, the graduate students from the College of Communication and Information Sciences at the University of Alabama will present their current research in progress in the area of communication and culture. Their work ranges from media and interpersonal communication to library management, including work focusing on nonprofits, professional settings, and pedagogical issues.

ROOM 2

PANEL: STORIES BENEATH OUR FEET: COMMUNICATING CAMPUS MEMORY AT PWI AND HBCU INSTITUTIONS

MODERATOR: DR. MEREDITH M. BAGLEY

PANELISTS: MEREDITH MARSH, LAURA STEWART, SAMANTHA BURKE

In this panel, students will share reflections and initial analysis of the ways historically white/segregated campuses like The University of Alabama present their history via campus landscapes.

10:00 CST

11:00-
11:30 CST

BREAK

11:30 CST

DEAN'S WELCOME AND KEYNOTE

(THE DEAN'S WELCOME AND KEYNOTE WILL BE A HYBRID PRESENTATION DELIVERED IN PERSON IN THE YELLOWHAMMER ROOM, GORGAS LIBRARY, AND LIVE STREAMED ON THE DDVS CONFERENCE PLATFORM)

MARK NELSON, DEAN

College of Communication and Information Sciences

DR. ANDRÉ BROCK

Georgia Institute of Technology

MODERATOR: DR. KRISTEN WARNER

The University of Alabama

DR. ANDRÉ BROCK the author of the groundbreaking book “Distributed blackness: African American cybercultures” is an Associate Professor in the School of Literature, Media & Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Brock is one of the preeminent scholars of Black Cyberculture with an interdisciplinary background of M.A. in English and Rhetoric from Carnegie Mellon University and a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His work bridges Science and Technology Studies and Critical Discourse Analysis, showing how the communicative affordances of online media align with those of Black communication practices. His scholarship includes published articles on racial representations in videogames, black women and weblogs, whiteness, blackness, and digital technoculture, as well as groundbreaking research on Black Twitter. Dr. Brock's article, “From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation,” challenged social science and communication research to confront the ways in which the field preserved “a color-blind perspective on online endeavors by normalizing Whiteness and othering everyone else” and sparked a conversation that continues, as Twitter, in particular, continues to evolve.

KEYNOTE: ON RACE AND TECHNOCULTURE

Where does Blackness manifest in Western technoculture? Technoculture is our modern ideology; our world structured through our relationships with technology and culture. Once enslaved, historically disenfranchised, and never deemed literate, Blackness is understood as the object of Western technical and civilizational practices. This presentation is a critical intervention for internet research and science and technology studies (STS), reorienting Western technoculture's practices of “race-as-technology” to visualize Blackness as technological subjects rather than as “things”; hence, Black technoculture. Utilizing critical technocultural discourse analysis, Afro-optimism, and libidinal economic theory, this presentation employs Black Twitter as an exemplar of Black cyberculture: digital practice and artifacts informed by a Black aesthetic.

1:00 CST

DISCUSSION BUBBLE SPONSORED BY THE PLANK CENTER:

ACTIVATING EMERGING PUBLIC RELATIONS LEADERS IN DEI

MODERATOR: ERIC WINKFIELD

This discussion bubble will address questions like- How can emerging leaders position themselves to support the achievement of DEI? How do emerging leaders engage in DEI at this stage of their careers? What kinds of mentorship skills and leadership opportunities are they seeking and where are they finding them?

2:00 CST

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ROOM 1

PAPERS ON REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSION

MODERATOR: DR. LANDON PALMER

“Cowboy Candidates: Re-appropriation of western myths in the racial identities of black political figures”

REBECCA OLIVER

“Courting Social Justice: The NBA Post-George Floyd, the Media and the Protest Paradigm”

MR. WILLIAM C. SINGLETON III

“The Rhetoric and Role of Stadium Spaces and Statues in Commemorating Racial Integration in College Football”

DR. GEORGE L DANIELS, EDWIN LEE

“Library Collection Diversity Audits: Comparing Vendor and Do-It-Yourself Diversity Audit Results”

MS. HILLARY D. RUSSELL

ROOM 2

PANEL: LOOKING FOR MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATIONS IN FILM

MODERATOR: DR. KRISTEN WARNER

PANELISTS: ERIN CODY, KEYANNA DIXON, ANDREW RUTLEDGE

In this panel, the students will present video essays to address meaningful representation in film. Their presentation through a critical lens will focus on how meaningful representation appears in movies and tv series such as Bull, The Paperboy, and Jackie Brown.

3:00 CST

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ROOM 1

PAPERS ON IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE

MODERATOR: DR. PETER JENSEN

“If Prison Walls Could Speak: A Narrative Inquiry into the Life of a Death Row Prisoner”

MS. STEFANIE BINION

“How Do African Student Victims of Domestic Violence Describe Their Experiences to American Counselors?”

MS. BISOLA MARIAM OBINYAN

“Body Esteem of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Non-Affirming Spaces: The Implications of Religion on Sense of Self”

MISHA VIEHOUSER

“Sexual Minorities Sexting Practices: Understanding Sexual Communication, Expectations, and Desires”

DR. LEAH ELINA LEFEBVRE, DR. KATHRYN D. CODUTO

“How Queer is Too Queer?: Trans Identity, Surveillance, and Domestic Genocide in 21st Century America”

MR. JEFFREY JONES

ROOM 2

PANEL: DEVELOPING STUDENT “VOICES” OF WOMEN OF COLOR IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION ADVOCACY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

MODERATOR: DR. BHARAT MEHRA

PANELISTS: CLAUDIA BAWOLE, SHALONDA CAPERS, CARAN KENNEDY, BISOLA-MARIAM OBINYAN, REBA WILLIAMS

This panel includes women students of color who share glimpses of their experiences, perspectives, course projects, and career paths as they navigate the problematic oppressions and circumstances that the world imposes on them in their educational, professional, and personal lives. Panelists will specifically discuss how they have navigated these complexities towards positive directions of growth and development in the communication and information profession.

4:00 CST

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ROOM 1

PANEL: NEW WISDOM, NEW BOOKS ON TEACHING RACE AND GENDER IN COMMUNICATION

MODERATOR: WILLIAM C. SINGLETON III

PANELISTS: NIYA PICKETT MILLER, MICHELLE WALTON, GEORGE L. DANIELS

This panel features three Alabama authors from three different higher education institutions who recently released books that offer new insight and perspectives on topics of race and gender. All working in units where communication is a central focus of teaching, the three authors have documented their ideas in scholarly works that can be a resource for faculty around the nation and the world. In addition to giving brief overviews of their book projects and how they're facilitating learning in the classroom, the three authors will participate in a Question-and-Answer session moderated by a veteran communication professor, who is now also a Ph.D. student himself.

ROOM 2

PANEL: GRADUATE STUDENTS CREATING MEANINGFUL DIVERSITY IMPACTS VIA SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION ADVOCACY

MODERATOR: DR. BHARAT MEHRA

PANELISTS: ANITA DELP, COURT KLEFTIS, SARAH E. MIESSE, JAKE PAUL, LAURA PITTS

This panel will engage the audience in an interactive discussion around the integration of social justice and inclusion advocacy in the communication and information professions. It will elicit their response about issues surrounding the training of future researchers, scholars, educators, administrators, and practitioners as movers-and-shakers wanting to make the world a better place for all via information/communication-related scholarship actions across disciplines in their diverse organizations and communities.

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