

The Wolfe Institute

*The Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities,
in cooperation with the American Studies Program
and the Brooklyn College Chapter of PSC-CUNY,
presents*

Austerity and Its Discontents: The Fight to Reclaim Public Higher Education

SCREW US



AND WE MULTIPLY

Recall Demonstration, Madison, WI, March 2011

9:30-10:45 a.m. -- Debt and Activism
Paula Chakravartty, Ann Larson

11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. -- Austerity and Resistance
Rudy Fichtenbaum, Eleni Schirmer, Michael Billeaux

12:30 p.m. -- Press Conference and Rally
Bedford Avenue

2:15-3:30 p.m. -- Intersections of Inequality
Sandy Darity, Jocelyn Wills, Alan Aja

The current moves to impose draconian fiscal cuts on liberal education and to focus strongly on market-driven curricula pose many threats to the future of liberal education and freedom of research in American academic life. Among the topics addressed will be: austerity in both local and global perspectives, issues surrounding the fiscal policies of the educational system in the states of New York and Wisconsin, how austerity is affecting issues of race, gender, and inequality in education, effects of austerity on academic freedom and tenure, and the impact of student debt on the careers of college graduates.

Thursday, October 15, 2015

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Woody Tanger Auditorium Brooklyn College Library

For information: 718.951.5847 wolfeinstitute@brooklyn.cuny.edu Twitter: twitter.com/Wolfe_Institute

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Alan Aja is assistant professor and deputy chair in the Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies. His areas of expertise include race, gender, and class issues between and among Latino and African American communities; government responses to labor market; immigration and education policies; and sustainable development and collective action/unionization. Before academia, Aja worked as a labor organizer in Texas, an environmental researcher in Cuba, a human rights organizer in Argentina, and in a refugee hostel in London.

Michael Billeaux is a Ph.D. student in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is former co-president of the Teaching Assistants' Association and currently serves on the executive board. His writing has appeared in *Socialist Worker* and *Jacobin*.

Paula Chakravartty is associate professor at the Gallatin School and of media, culture and communications at NYU. Her research and teaching interests span comparative political economy of media industries, postcolonial and critical race theory, and social movements and global governance. She is the co-editor of both *Race, Empire and the Crisis of the Subprime* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2013), and *Global Communications: Towards a Transcultural Political Economy* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), and the co-author of *Media Policy and Globalization* (Palgrave, 2006). One of her current research projects is on mediated activism in India, China, and the Middle East, funded by the Social Science Research Council.

William A. ("Sandy") Darity Jr. is the Samuel DuBois Cook Professor of Public Policy, and holds appointments in African and African American Studies and economics, and is also the director of the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University. He has served as chair of the Department of African and African American Studies and was the founding director of the Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality at Duke. Darity's research focuses on inequality by race, class and ethnicity, stratification economics, schooling and the racial achievement gap.

He has served as an associate editor of the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* (2013). His most recent books are *Economics, Economists, and Expectations: Microfoundations to Macroapplications* (2004) (co-authored with Warren Young and Robert Leeson) and a volume co-edited with Ashwini Deshpande titled *Boundaries of Clan and Color: Transnational Comparisons of Inter-Group Disparity* (2003) both published by Routledge.

Darity lives with his family in Durham, N.C. where he plays harmonica in a local blues band, occasionally coaches youth sports, and especially enjoys reading science fiction and speculative fiction.

Rudy Fichtenbaum is the President of the American Association University Professors (AAUP). He recently retired as a professor of economics after a 35-year career at Wright State University in Dayton, OH, where he served as the chief negotiator for AAUP-WSU until his retirement. In addition to his activities as president of AAUP he works part-time as a senior advisor to the executive committee of AAUP-WSU. He is an expert at analyzing the finances of colleges and universities, has presented numerous workshops for faculty on understanding university and college finances, costing contracts and health benefits.

Ann Larson is co-director of the Debt Collective, a group of activists, researchers and technologists that organized the nation's first student debt strike in 2015. Her writing on education, labor and debt has appeared in *Al Jazeera America*, *Jacobin*, *New Labor Forum* and *South Atlantic Quarterly*, among others. She holds a Ph.D. in English from the City University of New York.

Eleni Schirmer is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in educational policy studies and curriculum and instruction. She is currently working on a project looking at civil rights activists' influence on teachers' unions. Her writing has appeared in *Jacobin*, *The Progressive*, *LaborNotes*, and *Education Review*.

Jocelyn Wills is a professor in the history department, and teaches in the American studies and gender and women's studies programs. Her forthcoming book, *This Way to the Promised Land: A Study in Surveillance Capitalism*, charts the expansion of the military-industrial-academic complex. Her research and teaching interests include the history of capitalism and the collision of the American promise with everyday reality. She serves on the editorial board of *Working U.S.A.*, works with student activists in their fight against the many austerity measures that threaten their collective right to a high-quality, public education, and is currently researching the influence of economic booms and busts on workers and small business operators in post Civil War Brooklyn.

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