

# Queering the Spirit:

## Religion, Race, and Sexualities

University of Maryland Spring 2006

What happens when religion, race, and sexuality—particularly non-normative sexualities—meet up in the public sphere? Or within the often conflicted heart or soul of an individual? In what ways and in what kinds of faith traditions and practices is it fair to say that the spirit has been *queered* or made open to sex and gender variation? How have racism and colonialism shaped attitudes toward homo-sexualities among, for example, religious African Americans, Hindus, Muslims, or the Afro-Cuban practitioners of Santería? What roles has religion played in 20th-century movements for civil rights for racial and sexual minorities?

This year's lecture series in LGBT Studies will tackle these and other challenging questions from a range of disciplinary perspectives.

Take a leap of faith, and join us for a timely and necessary series of conversations.



### John D'Emilio

Bayard Rustin: Radical Agitator for Justice  
4 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9  
ART-SOCIOLOGY 2203

John D'Emilio is professor of history and of gender and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His publications include *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, co-edited with Estelle Freedman; and *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*. His latest book, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin*, a biography of the American civil rights leader and Gandhian activist, has been widely honored. It was a nonfiction finalist for the National Book Award and a *New York Times* "Notable Book" of 2003.

COLLOQUIUM: NOON, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, TAWES 1208



### Political Perspectives on Religion, Race, and (Homo)Sexualities: A Roundtable

4 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23  
DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, TAWES 2102

In the U.S. today, many questions of religion, race, and sexual variation are being worked out in the political arena. How can advocates for LGBT civil rights appeal more effectively to "values voters?" What kind of organizing strategies work best in minority communities of faith? Our panel will feature Sharon Groves, manager of the Human Rights Campaign's religion and faith program; Ruti Kadish, Ph.D., consultant on family equality and diversity education; Lisbeth Meléndez Rivera of Freedom to Mary and Latino Justice; and Meredith Moise of Equality Maryland.

### Ruth Vanita

Together in Life after Life: Ideas of Same-Sex Union in Hindu and Christian Traditions  
4 P.M., MONDAY, MARCH 6  
TAWES 2154

Ruth Vanita is a poet, writer, editor, translator, and professor of liberal studies at the University of Montana. She has written widely on issues of gender and sexuality in India, and has translated many works of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry by and about women, from Hindi to English. Her publications include *Love's Rite: Same-Sex Marriage in India and the West*; *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History* (co-edited with Saleem Kidwai); and *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*.  
COLLOQUIUM: NOON, TUESDAY, MARCH 7, TAWES 1208



### Kelly Brown Douglas

Testifying to the Blues:  
Sexuality and the Black Church  
4 P.M., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5  
TAWES 2154

Kelly Brown Douglas is professor of religion at Goucher College. She recently published her third book, *What's Faith Got to Do With It? Black Bodies/Christian Souls*. Her other books are *The Black Christ and Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*. Douglas holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Denison University, and master's and doctoral degrees in divinity and systematic theology, respectively, from Union Theological Seminary. In 1985, Douglas became the first black woman to be ordained as an Episcopal priest in the Southern Ohio diocese. *Essence* magazine counts Douglas "among this country's most distinguished religious thinkers, teachers, ministers, and counselors."

COLLOQUIUM: NOON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, TAWES 1208



### Salvador Vidal-Ortiz

Bodies Worshipping the Orishas:  
Sexual Minorities in Santería  
4 P.M., WEDNESDAY APRIL 12  
TAWES 2154

Salvador Vidal-Ortiz is an assistant professor of sociology at American University. He earned his Ph.D. from the Graduate Center, City University of New York. His recent journal publications include "On Being a White Person of Color: Using Autoethnography to Understand Puerto Ricans' Racialization" in *Qualitative Sociology* and "Puerto Ricans and the Politics of Speaking Spanish" in *Latino Studies*. He has an essay titled "Queering Sexuality and Doing Gender: Transgender Men's Identification with Gender and Sexuality" in *Gendered Sexualities* and another called "Sexuality and Gender in Santería: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Identities at the Crossroads of Santería Religious Practices and Beliefs" in *Gay Religion*.

COLLOQUIUM: NOON, THURSDAY, APRIL 13, TAWES 1208



### Faisal Alam

Hidden Voices: The Lives of Queer Muslims  
NOON, THURSDAY, APRIL 27  
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, NYUMBURU CULTURAL CENTER

Faisal Alam is a 28-year-old queer Muslim activist of Pakistani descent. He is the founder and former volunteer director of Al-Fatiha, a U.S.-based organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTIQ). Al-Fatiha's mission is to support, empower, and advocate on behalf of LGBTIQ Muslims and to promote progressive Islamic notions of peace and social justice.

"HIDDEN VOICES" IS PART OF THE PROVOST'S CONVERSATIONS ON DIVERSITY, DEMOCRACY, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Pictured from top to bottom: John D'Emilio, Ruth Vanita, Kelly Brown Douglas, Salvador Vidal-Ortiz and Faisal Alam

Each talk will be followed by Q&A and a reception.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO INFORMAL COLLOQUIA WITH THE SPEAKERS. CONTACT THE LGBT STUDIES OFFICE OR CHECK [WWW.LGBTS.UMD.EDU](http://WWW.LGBTS.UMD.EDU) FOR READINGS.

Co-sponsors include the Curriculum Transformation Project, the First Year Book Program, the Office of International Programs, and the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Studies is a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Studies.