

“The Weaponization of Ethnic Studies: A Working Conference”

Kalfou: A Journal of Comparative and Relational Ethnic Studies

University of California, Santa Barbara (with virtual option)

Saturday, October 14, 2023

Please join us for a working conference at UCSB on the “weaponization” of Ethnic Studies.

Despite the proliferation of DEI statements and agencies, we continue to see the neutralization of antiracist and antisexist discourses in order to perpetuate injustice. In various ways, such neutralization attempts to delegitimize radical struggles and the knowledge they produce. For example:

- marginalizing, policing, and/or excluding knowledge production about Palestine within Ethnic Studies,
- mobilizing Black respectability discourses against queer- and trans-solidarities and analyses in order to legitimate trans- and homophobic laws and policies,
- upholding ableist racial and gendered hierarchies,
- criminalizing Critical Race Theory in the name of “antiracist progress,”
- commodifying identity and promoting the tokenized inclusion of people of color as representatives of meritocracy and traditional power,
- and compelling allegiance to US nationalism, militarism, and imperialism.

What happens when ethnic studies-derived arguments are used against the efforts to respond to aggrieved communities and to build solidarities? How has this impacted knowledge production and/or activist work? What radical visions for solidarity and alternative social relations are emerging from ongoing liberation and decolonization struggles? The working conference will focus on the roles played by the state, capital, social structures, *and* social movements in promoting or suppressing social justice. The one-day event will thus create a platform for discussing the struggles, problems, dreams, and hopes embedded inside anti-racist work. As always, we remain committed to expanding frameworks for Ethnic Studies scholarship and communal engagement.

Just as the journal *Kalfou* seeks to build links among artists and activists in the struggle for social justice, the working conference will create a space for participants to develop their ideas in a **dialogic workshop format**.

- This is a collaborative conversation rather than a series of formal paper presentations. Each participant will speak for 5–7 minutes about an idea they are wrestling with, and then the group will provide constructive feedback to help the idea develop.
- Participants will receive feedback from members of *Kalfou*’s illustrious editorial boards in preparation for submission to the journal in relation to our planned special issue on the weaponization of Ethnic Studies.
- To maximize participation from graduate students, artists, and activists, the working conference will be held in-person at UCSB and accessible virtually through an online platform.
- Some \$200 scholarships are available for participants. We are especially eager to support graduate students, early career scholars, K-12 educators, artists, and activists.
- Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Please submit abstracts (350 words max.) to submissions@kalfou.ucsb.edu no later than Friday, October 6, 2023, with earlier submissions preferred. Participants will be notified of their status shortly after submitting the proposal.

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