

Race & Sexuality in the Classroom

Faculty Reading Group

Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching, 2015



Project Overview

A reading group of nine faculty was invited to discuss issues about the unique conditions of teaching about race and sexuality in undergraduate and graduate classrooms.

To support our own development as faculty, we engaged with texts and live performance which offered insights and tools for critical thinking. The formation of the group aimed to develop a network for junior faculty concerned with teaching about race and sexuality.

The reading group provided support for nine pre-tenure faculty representing departments across colleges and departments (LSA, SMTD, A&D).

Participants

Faculty representing a range of disciplinary backgrounds and who teach courses with a focus on race and sexuality were invited to participate in the reading group.

The group members represented several types of diversity, including social identities, scholarly interests, and institutional locations. Members represented the humanities and social sciences; they worked across applied and theoretical contexts, some teaching in studios, some in small research groups, and others in lecture halls.

The scholarly interests of the group were also diverse by time period, nation, and perspectives on issues related to race and sexuality.

Faculty Participants:

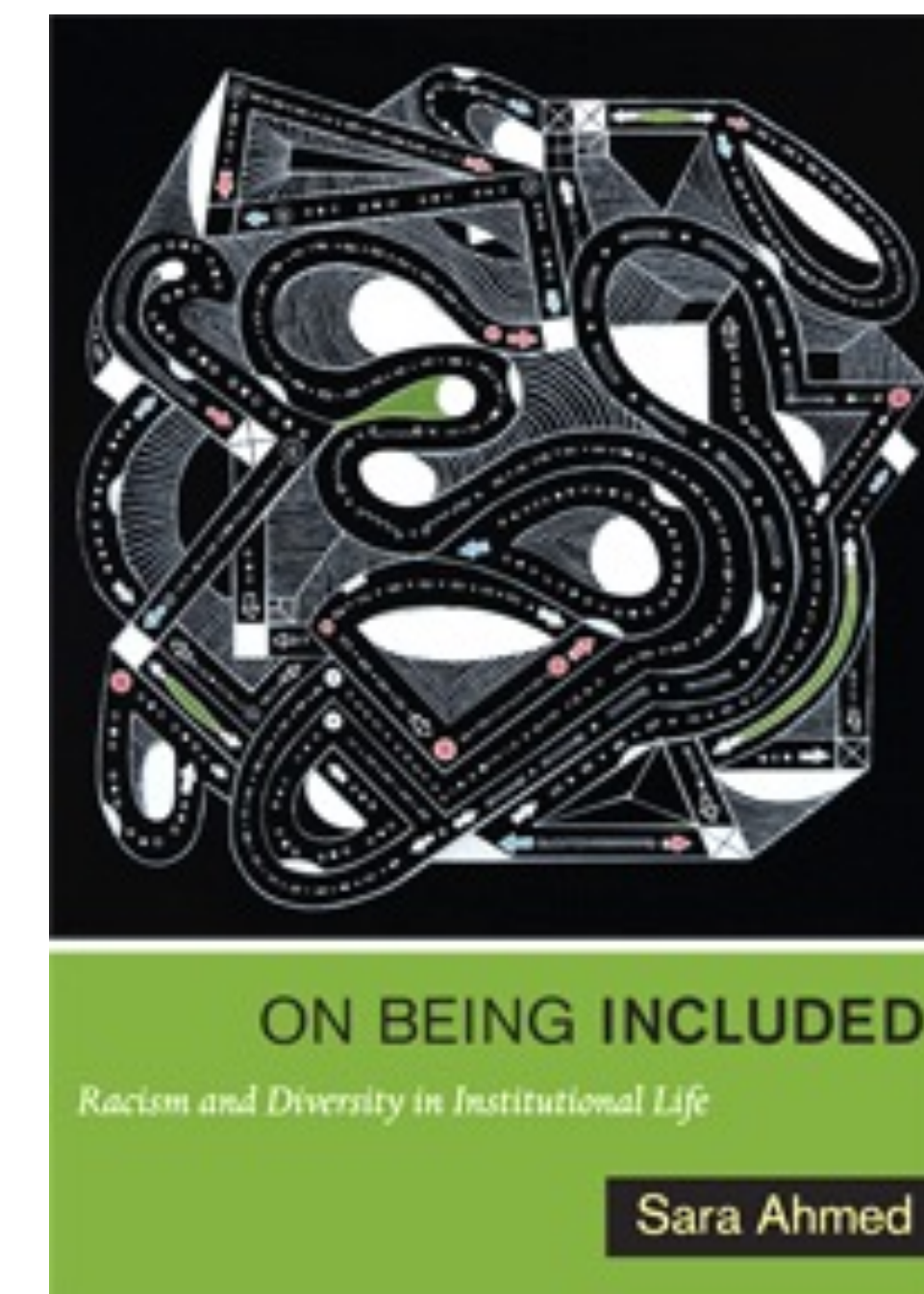
Clare Croft, Dance
Aliyah Khan, English
S.E. Kile, Asian Language and Cultures
Madhumita Lahiri, English
Sara McClelland, Women's Studies & Psychology
Victor Mendoza, Women's Studies & English
Candace Moore, Screen Arts & Cultures
Heidi Morse, DAAS
Tina Satter, Art & Design

Resources



From Kyle Abraham/*In Motion*:
"WHEN THE WOLVES CAME IN," a stand-alone repertory-based program, explores the historical legacy of two totemic triumphs in the international history of civil rights: the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 20th anniversary of the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa.

The works take their inspiration from Max Roach's iconic 1960 protest album *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*, which celebrated the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation and shed a powerful light on the growing civil rights movements in South Africa and the U.S.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

Sara Ahmed offers an account of the diversity world based on interviews with diversity practitioners in higher education, as well as her own experience of doing diversity work.

On Being Included explores the gap between symbolic commitments to diversity and the experience of those who embody diversity. Commitments to diversity are understood as "non-performatives" that do not bring about what they name.

The book provides an account of institutional whiteness and shows how racism can be obscured by the institutionalization of diversity. Diversity is used as evidence that institutions do not have a problem with racism. *On Being Included* offers a critique of what happens when diversity is offered as a solution. It also shows how diversity workers generate knowledge of institutions in attempting to transform them.

Key Insights

- **Meetings provided support for diversity-related concerns in the classroom and in our own research.** As one participant said, "These two aspects of our work are often separated and it was beneficial to consider them in tandem."
- In addition to sharing ideas about inclusive teaching practices, the group's focus was to create a **peer support network** amongst members.
- **Including performance as well as written texts was key to this group.** It offered an important way to develop skills in thinking and creating knowledge that was non-textual and did not rely solely on words to communicate.

Next Steps

- Informal meetings and informal book discussions over the course of the upcoming academic year.
- Syllabus work with one another over the course of the upcoming year(s).

"Now that we've all gotten to know one another, we can call on each other throughout the term for support, advice, and can use one another's expertise in our own class prep and course development."

-Faculty participant

"Emotional labor around issues of race and sexuality often goes unrecognized when thinking about the kind of work that is required of faculty. Our group offered ways to support one another by providing feedback, support, and ideas for how to manage emotional labor issues in the classroom."

-Faculty participant