



**IGDS**  
INSTITUTE FOR GENDER &  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

# GUEST SEMINAR



## **Kaneesha Cherelle Parsard**

is a doctoral candidate in African American Studies and American Studies and a certificate candidate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Yale University. Her dissertation, "Improper Dwelling: Space, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernity in the British West Indies, 1838-1962," examines the landscape, the barrack yard, and the house as spaces that challenge order, social control, and production in British West Indian literature and visual culture between emancipation and the independence period. Her research and writing have been supported by the 2013 Social Science Research Council Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship and the 2015-2016 Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship.

## **Institute for Gender and Development Studies**

St. Augustine Unit  
invites you to an

## **IGDS Guest Seminar**

To excess: Built form and sexual exchange in  
The Beacon group's barrack yard literatures

## **Kaneesha Cherelle Parsard**

PhD Candidate, African American Studies and American Studies Certificate Candidate  
in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Yale University

**Tuesday, November 10, 2015**

11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Throughout the early twentieth century in British West Indian cities, metropolitan and local government bodies scrutinized barrack yards and their residents with concern for housing standards and social mores. This presentation examines *The Beacon* group's barrack yard literatures in conversation with archival documents on British West Indian housing policy to illustrate that the built form and the social life of the yard were interrelated. First, I analyze third person point of view in the barrack yard novels and short stories of *The Beacon* group, a transnational Trinidadian literary collective. The distanced middle-class male observer is a feature of social realism in the works of *The Beacon* group, and is also present in British West Indian housing policy. In contrast to this point of view, which portrays the barrack yard as impoverished and degenerate, I investigate the barrack yard as an example of the informal sector. Constructed with scrap materials, the barrack yard is unplanned housing. Similarly, many of its residents are in kept relationships, providing companionship to people in and outside the yard in exchange for money or other resources. As in my larger project, I highlight the barrack yard as the underside of capitalist labor and respectability in the late colonial British West Indies.

Please feel free to bring your lunch.

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