The French and Italian Graduate Students at the University of Pittsburgh invite you to

ACADEMIA IN ACTION

BREACHING THE IVORY TOWER

A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

MAY 15, 2021

DR. JULIN EVERETT

KEYNOTE
The eruption of anti-racist movements in the public discourse over the past ten years, both in Italy, France, and in a broader context within Western Europe, has incited a re-engagement with the colonial histories of western countries as well as their current racist and anti-immigration policies. The voices that emerged (with public figures such as Assa Traoré in France, Fabrice Vil in Québec, and Rula Jebréal in Italy) all encourage the general public to reflect on the ways in which institutions need to be destabilized in order to make progress in terms of racial equality and criminal justice reform. In the wake of heightened social outrage around the globe, we are requesting proposals for papers which address issues of social justice and activism in Francophone and Italophone communities and contexts. The theorization of complex and important topics such as activism, social justice, equality and their intersections with gender, sex, and race have far too often been limited to the realm of academe—higher education classrooms, books and articles published by academic journals and presses—while in recent years events such as the murders of George Floyd and Adama Traoré, the #MeToo movement, and certainly the global Black Lives Matter movement have taken over the world stage through journalism mediated by social media. Influences from various disciplines such as critical race theory and postcolonial studies have allowed for publications on these topics to swarm public awareness, appearing in the form of children’s books, consumer choice lists, and even taking over best-sellers lists. And yet, the persistence of the voices of these movements might be labeled as “willful” in Sara Ahmed’s sense that “the willful part is that which threatens the reproduction of an order” (5). While popular in the public sphere, these discourses might be seen to “come up against” the wall of those institutions which so love to theorize about them, as these institutions become walls to those who desire change due to their very history of unchanging (9). “The wall is an institutional ‘no’ that does not need to become the subject of an utterance; indeed, you come up against the wall when a “yes” does not bring something about” (12). To extend these important public conversations, and perhaps to contribute to the “willful work” of positing change to the institutions of academe, the graduate students of the Department of French & Italian at the University of Pittsburgh kindly ask that you submit your proposal as a means of engaging with our current socio-political climate. Topics include but are not limited to:

- Achieving institutional activism
- Decentering the ivory tower
- Media & activism,
- Theory in praxis
- Using the literary as political and teaching de-colonially in French and Italian speaking contexts, communities, & classrooms
- Global politics
- Teaching about social justice reform
- Representations of journalism and new media

We invite proposals of 200-250 words, which may be submitted in French, Italian or English. We ask that you submit your proposal in the language in which you intend to present your paper. Presentations will be limited to a reading time of 20 minutes (8-10 pages). Please send your proposal with a tentative title of your presentation along with your academic/departmental affiliation in a word document to:

pitt.frit.conference@gmail.com

by April 30, 2021.

Be sure to include “Submissions: FRIT Graduate Conference” in the subject line of your email.