



Damon City Campus

Friday, April 25, 2014

Featuring Guest Speaker Barbara Zelter

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# Monroe Community College

Inspiring every day.



# SCHOLARS' DAY 2014

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Welcome to Monroe Community College's Scholars' Day, a day devoted to the academic endeavors of its students and faculty. MCC's Scholars' Day was created to promote and encourage scholarship across the disciplines, and to serve as a showcase for academic excellence. The day's events will include presentations, panel discussions, performances, and poster sessions by MCC faculty, staff, and students.

Monroe Community College's Scholars' Day is dedicated to:

- Publicizing the research of our students and faculty.
- Sharing and expanding knowledge within and across different academic disciplines.
- Creating an atmosphere devoted to scholarly activity.
- Further strengthening MCC's local, state, and national reputation as an academically strong, open-access institution.

Thank you for attending today's events and the 6th Annual Scholars' Day, a tradition we expect to see grow. If you are a member of the MCC community, we hope you will be inspired to consider submitting a paper or panel idea, or working with a student or faculty member for the 2015 Scholars' Day.

## **The Scholars' Day Committee**

### **Co-Chairs**

Michael Ofsowitz – Psychology • Jodi Oriel – Student Life and Leadership Development

### **Committee**

James Cronmiller, Biology

Jennifer Hill, Biology

Christopher Kumar, Engineering Science & Physics

Jennifer Markham, Biology

Michael McCullough, Library

Verdis Robinson, Anthropology/History/Political Science/Sociology

David Shaw, Visual & Performing Arts

# Schedule at a Glance

**10:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

**Concurrent Session 1A**

**Room 4154**

Morality: Is Being Good Good for You?

Street Harassment: Male Entitlement in Action

Someday My Prince Will Come, But Not Like I Need Him: A Feminist Perspective on the Modern Reinterpretation of Iconic Literary Characters.

**10:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

**Concurrent Session 1B**

**Room 4153**

The Joseph Avenue Riots: Linking the Past with the Future

Rochester 1964 Riot or Rebellion?

The Spirit of Slavery

**11:10 - 11:50 a.m.**

**Concurrent Session 2A**

**Room 4154**

The Phantom of the Opera: An Evolution from Biblical Archetypes to Secular Values

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, the First Human Rights Activist

**11:10 - 11:50 a.m.**

**Concurrent Session 2B**

**Room 4153**

One Like the Sea: Frederick Douglass' Global Search for Democracy and Equality, 1886-1887

Influence of Vitamin D Receptor (VDR) Polymorphisms on Body Size in African-Americans

**Noon – 1:00 p.m.**

**Race, Faith and Democracy In America**

Ms. Barbara Zelter

Room 4151

**1:00 p.m.**

**Reception with Keynote Speaker**

Room 4193

VOTE for YOUR favorite presentation, and the presenter(s) with the most votes will receive a \$250.00 scholarship.

Voting qualifies you for an opportunity to win prizes throughout the day.

## **Session 1A    10:00 - 11:00 a.m.    Room 4154**

### **Morality: Is Being Good Good for You?**

Ritti Singh, Undeclared

Josiah Klossner, Liberal Arts

Ben Shapiro, Music Performance

**Faculty Sponsor:** Professor Robert Muhlnickel, English/Philosophy

Most everyone thinks happiness directly improves a person's life but doubt that morality does so. This panel presents three parts of an argument for the idea that being moral directly improves an individual's life and is not only good for the sake of getting along with other people. If we don't have good reason to think that morality is good for us as individuals then morality is solely a burden. We'd like to show that there is good reason for each individual to be moral. Ritti Singh first examines Jean Kazez's direct arguments for the idea that morality directly improves an individual life and shows that Kazez's arguments fail. Josiah Klossner then gives an indirect argument for the claim that morality is good for the individual for its own sake. Almost everyone thinks happiness is good for its own sake and Ben Shapiro concludes the panel by arguing that being moral is a very effective means of increasing your happiness and preventing you from experiencing pain. So we have given good reason to be moral even if we doubt it is good for its own sake.

### **Street Harassment: Male Entitlement in Action**

Elizabeth Yonovich, Clinical Laboratory Technician

Carmelo Crassi, Liberal Arts

**Faculty Sponsor:** Professor Robert Muhlnickel, English/Philosophy

Street harassment is not a compliment; it is not just a part of life that women must put up with. Street harassment is common, overwhelmingly done by men towards women, and can lead to violence towards women. We will explore the theory that street harassment stems from the gender norms of male entitlement that operate often unconsciously in our society. Street harassment shows male entitlement through its assumption that men have control over women's bodies thereby restricting women's autonomy. We will also explore the harmful effects that language has on the way that women are viewed and treated in association with street harassment. Three responses to street harassment are reframing it as a men's issue, women's artwork in protest of street harassment and programs that increase awareness.

## **Someday My Prince Will Come, But Not Like I Need Him: A Feminist Perspective on the Modern Reinterpretation of Iconic Literary Characters**

Nicholas R. Imbimbo, Communication and Media Study

**Faculty Sponsor:** Professor James Senden, English/Philosophy

Adaptation and reinterpretation have always been core pieces of the screenwriter's toolbox. In recent years the reinvention of our classic storybook heroines has been a key focus of many television shows and films in a broad range of mediums. Through the lens of feminist literary criticism, this presentation will examine and analyze several of the most interesting reinterpretation of female heroines in Sci-fi/Fantasy television. By using the works of Virginia Woolf and Mary Wollstonecraft as a conceptual framework we will see connections and trends in the depictions of women in *Fate/Stay Night*, *Once Upon a Time*, Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Pandora Hearts*. We will see that though these women are well rounded characters, they are still limited by systematic patriarchal oppression in some form and how they contend with it in our modern context.

### **Session 1B      10:00 - 11:00 a.m.      Room 4153**

#### **The Joseph Avenue Riots: Linking the Past with the Future**

Ebony D. McLarty, Human Services

**Faculty Sponsor:** Professor Verdis Robinson, Anthropology/History/Poli. Science/Sociology

The Rochester riots occurred in 1964, spurred by racial tension. Our Facebook page, "Joseph Ave Riots" (<https://www.facebook.com/josephaveriots>), started as a class project. Our intent is to build awareness of a local historical event and start a community dialogue. We have sought to gather anecdotes from those who experienced this part of Rochester's history. I have interviewed eyewitnesses in person and online about their reactions to the riots and how the riots affected their lives. We also feature the organization FIGHT, which grew out of those riots. Over the decades, FIGHT has promoted racial harmony and job equality in Rochester. After a few months, our page has over 100 friends and several followers, and the riot page has been liked by 100 people. I am also having conversations with the friends on the Facebook page through the message inbox.

## **Rochester 1964 Riot or Rebellion?**

Hilda Singleton, Business Administration

**Faculty Sponsor:** Professor Verdis Robinson, Anthropology/History/Poli. Science/Sociology

This presentation will highlight the circumstances leading up to the events of July 24, 1964. Nassau Street and the area around Joseph Avenue, also known as the "7th ward," was the site of a major uprising on that day. Many claim that it was a riot that started because of an unruly 19-year-old drunken man's run-in with the City of Rochester Police. Others say that there was a foul stench of inequality and invisibility in the air waiting to manifest in the form of a rebellion. I argue that the events of July 24, 1964, were that of a rebellion and not a riot. African American rebels were fighting for equality in housing, education, healthcare, and employment. I further intend to show that the need to be heard and recognized was taken for granted. I will also argue that the very same events leading up to the rebellion of 1964 are prevalent today within the African American community. In conclusion I will offer suggestions to abate the brewing discontentment within the African American community.

## **The Spirit of Slavery**

Rubie Gibson, Liberal Arts

Mia Gooden, Human Services

Anthony McGee, Liberal Arts

George Warnick, Liberal Arts

Ellen Pyatt, Human Services

Paulette Hall, Human Services

**Faculty Sponsor:** Professor Verdis Robinson, Anthropology/History/Poli. Science/Sociology

This presentation will examine the meanings and historical significance of Negro Spirituals and religious faith of enslaved African-Americans. In analyzing and interpreting numerous songs sung by slaves, we gain insight in the heart, mind, and faith of oppression and the role music played in the slave community and culture. We will also conduct a sing-a-long demonstration.

## **Session 2A    11:10 - 11:50 a.m.       Room 4154**

### **The Phantom of the Opera: An Evolution from Biblical Archetypes to Secular Values**

Professor Patricia Drumright, English/Philosophy

The story of the Phantom of the Opera was first recounted by Gaston Leroux in France slightly more than one hundred years ago, yet the story of Eric, who is often described as “a disfigured musical genius,” has been regularly retold since then and remains popular around the world today. Even though the writing style of the original novel, *Le Fantôme de l’Opéra*, is protracted, the reading is laborious, the plot implausible, and the main characters dubious, something about the story has inspired scores of subsequent adaptations—and audiences continue to relate to the title character and his conflict. The reasons for such ongoing artistic interest and for the story’s continued popularity form the basis of a larger project, of which this work is a part. In particular, this paper intends to trace the evolution of the legend of the Phantom of the Opera through a number of its more familiar incarnations, including the Leroux novel, several feature films, and the Andrew Lloyd Webber stage show. This examination should reveal a story that has not only changed with the times, but has also continued to hold enduring cultural significance.

### **Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, the First Human Rights Activist**

Professor Steven Farrington, World Languages and Cultures

This presentation will briefly discuss the life and motivations of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, arguably the world’s first human rights activist. He was a Spanish priest living in Cuba in 1514 who had a revelation: the native Taino of the Caribbean were being wiped out by the Spanish in a kind of genocide that the modern world has come to know only too well, and he had to do something about it. He would spend the next several decades traveling back and forth across the Atlantic and writing extensively to tell the world what was happening and to prevent further loss of life, creating what historians now call “la leyenda negra,” or the “black legend” about the Spanish colonial experience during the time of the conquest and Spanish Inquisition. The presentation discusses a bit of the man’s personal history and possible motivations, and how he helped to shape the modern world.

## **Session 2B    11:10 - 11:50 a.m.    Room 4153**

### **One Like the Sea: Frederick Douglass' Global Search for Democracy and Equality, 1886-1887**

Professor Verdis Robinson, Anthropology/History/Poli. Science/Sociology

This presentation will follow Frederick Douglass across the Atlantic Ocean in search for democracy and equality. In transcribing and analyzing his unpublished travel diary written between 1886-1887 in his own hand, I argue that Douglass' activism did not end with the abolition of American slavery but was discouraged in witnessing the global reach of racism. He returned home with no answers, no solutions, and a pessimistic outlook on the future of race relations in America.

### **Influence of Vitamin D Receptor (VDR) Polymorphisms on Body Size in African-Americans**

Professor Daniel Tyree, Anthropology/History/Poli. Science/Sociology

This study examined whether the *Bsm1* (in intron 8) and *Taq1* (in exon 9) polymorphisms at the VDR locus (12q13-q14) were associated with variability in height, weight, and BMI in a sample of 94 African-Americans from central Ohio. To account for the possible influence of sex, males (n = 31) and females (n = 63) were analyzed separately. Regarding the *Bsm1* (A/G) polymorphism, the results showed no statistically significant association with adult height, weight, or BMI among either sex. Similarly, the results based on the *Taq1* (T/C) polymorphism showed no statistically significant association with adult weight, BMI, or male height. However, a statistically significant association was revealed between the *Taq1* genotypes and height among females. Specifically, females who were homozygous for the *Taq1* "T" allele were significantly taller than females who either lacked this allele ( $161.59 \pm 5.96$  cm vs.  $166.85 \pm 9.21$  cm) or who were heterozygous ( $159.74 \pm 4.81$  cm vs.  $166.85 \pm 9.21$  cm). Based on these results, it was concluded that alleles at the VDR locus may influence adult height variability in African-American females, but not in males.



April 25, 2014

# Scholars' Day Colloquium

Damon City Campus

## Welcome

Kimberly McKinsey-Mabry, Dean of Academic Services, DCC, Interim Dean

## Introduction

Robert Muhlnickel, Professor  
English/Philosophy

## Keynote Address

Ms. Barbara Zelter

## Closing

Verdis Robinson, Professor  
Anthropology/History/Political Science/Sociology



Scholars' Day at MCC is an event dedicated to showcasing the work of student researchers and faculty. Scholars' Day celebrates academic excellence while promoting and encouraging scholarship among MCC faculty, staff, and students.

Scholars' Day continues on the Brighton campus with more presentations by students and faculty beginning at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, April 26, in Building 12.

Scholars' Day 2014 will culminate in a keynote address by Neil deGrasse Tyson, astrophysicist, author, former host of TV's NOVA ScienceNOW, host of TV's *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey*, and an immensely popular science advocate, on Wednesday, April 30, at 7:00 p.m.

## **Ms. Barbara Zelter**

### **Race, Faith, and Democracy in America: Rochester Religious Radicals and the American Justice Tradition**



In 1964 as Rochester experienced an urban uprising some call the “riots,” speaker Barbara Zelter was a young teen, not yet aware of her hometown’s racial dynamics, economy, and social realities.

In 2008, having lived in North Carolina since 1971, Zelter returned to Rochester to re-see her birth home after life work as a community organizer, nonprofit director, and faith-based social justice activist in the South. For her 2010 MA thesis in theology at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Zelter gathered oral histories from Rochesterians about the inter-racial, ecumenical responses to the 1964 urban uprising. She learned about the Black Student Caucus lockdown that challenged the school in 1969 to become the first seminary in America to have a Black Church Studies program.

Her 1964-1969 stories frame a portion of Rochester history.

Zelter is currently a Clinical Assistant Professor at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is also a civil disobedience convict in the North Carolina NAACP-led Moral Monday/Forward Together movement, which is spreading nationally. In North Carolina during the 2013 legislative session, 941 clergy, workers, seniors, students, and others used a religious and moral voice to protest regressive Jim Crow Esquire legislation by the Tea Party state leadership; they were arrested for standing against cuts to education, health care, and environmental protection and the unraveling of hard-fought voting rights.

**The Scholars' Day Committee would like to thank the following people for their generous support and dedication to the success of the 6th Annual Scholars' Day.**

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