The Matter of Black Life and Death:
Epigenetics, Black Women’s Health and American Health Insurance

In this talk I will briefly outline the shape of my next book length research project, tentatively titled *The Matter of Black Life and Death: Race, Biopolitics, and the American Health Insurance Market*, before focusing in on a particular set of arguments I make within it for the implementation of universal health care as a form of reparations within the United States. Employing a critical disability studies approach emphasizing the constitution of both disability and impairment, I will review critical on the potential epigenetic effects of historical trauma and oppression in Black populations – particularly with regards to Black women’s health, and their vastly differential rates of infant and maternal morbidity and mortality. I argue that these kinds of epigenetic considerations introduce a type of temporal porosity with regards to our conceptions of both harm and repair. As a result, such that both must be approached intergenerationally.

Queer Resistance and Refusal in California’s Early 20th Century Eugenics Institutions

Drawing from archival research on eugenics institutions in California, this presentation argues for a queer kinship with those who resisted practices of eugenics in the early twentieth century. I trace some of the evidence of resistance to eugenics that can be glimpsed by reading across the grain in the state archive. Some resistance to eugenics used legal channels and is therefore respectable, but more often resistance was illegal, and not palatable under the terms of respectability because it refused the terms of proper citizenship. I engage in what Lisa Marie Cacho (2012) names as a “re-membering” of these figures of eugenics resistance as important ancestors to the queer movements of today.