This past summer, my office inaugurated a faculty newsletter to help illuminate the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts taking place in the Arts and Sciences. The first issue focused on anti-Black racism and mass incarceration, spotlighting a number of our colleagues doing work on these topics from across all three divisions. That issue also served as an invitation and an opportunity: for faculty members to share their work in these and related areas and, in so doing, help connect us to one another. The response was immediate and engaged. We are looking forward to continuing the series, with each subsequent issue dedicated to exploring a new topic. Our latest issue is focused on the imminent US presidential election. As my office works to prepare future newsletters, we look forward to featuring a range of work taking place in Arts and Sciences and exploring new ways to connect all of us across disciplines.
What are you writing about right now?

I'm working on a book for Columbia University press called *Making Space for Justice: Social movements, Collective Imagination, and Political Hope*. It's about the role that social movements have played in democracy movements. That may be when a society attempts to move from, say, a dictatorship to democracy, or simply when an existing democracy works to meet more fully the demands of justice. And so I'm talking about historical examples from the Civil Rights Movement, to gay liberation, even the French Revolution, as well as Black Lives Matter and recent developments in Chile—such as their effort to write a new constitution.

You refer to hope in your book's subtitle. What is the role of hope in the social movements?

That’s a really hard question. You can build a social movement on nothing but anger and despair. And people like Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, decades ago, pointed that out. But if there isn’t some kind of hopeful vision of the future the movement will not survive; its outcomes will not be lasting and constructive. There's a wonderful quote from Martin Luther King about hope in the midst of circumstances that don't give any obvious grounds for hope. He called it radical hope. And the best orators we've had across time have been people who know how, even the most desperate situation, to invite people to imagine what hope could produce. I think of Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address, I think of Franklin Roosevelt, in his first inaugural, talking about how the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. So you need the people on the ground, acting in the movement, but you also need—I’ll call them moral visionaries, who tell us that even in the darkest times, we've got to hold on to something hopeful.
What are you teaching this fall?
This semester I am teaching a large philosophy of law course that covers everything from Aquinas and Cicero on the idea of natural law all the way up through the problem of mass incarceration, considering the collateral consequences of criminal punishment. In some contexts, we have begun to reproduce something that that we said, as modern citizens, we wouldn’t: civil death. Making one mistake—even after doing your time—means forever damaging your ability to become a responsible member of society. We see state laws that say you can't vote ever again if you have been convicted of a felony. It's a way of excluding someone from citizenship who might know something about the injustices in society and how to remedy them. A society cuts itself off from important sources of knowledge about how to make the world better. That's a collateral consequence of some kinds of criminal sentences that many contemporary legal thinkers and political philosophers are questioning. This is one of my favorite courses.

How has your work been shaped by recent political events and the U.S. election specifically?
The place of elections in the movements I'm studying is a little complicated, because I'm also talking about what happens when a social movement generates backlash. When we want to preserve progress towards justice, what are the good and the bad ways to respond to forms of backlash? One of the main things I've focused on is something I think of as the imaginative constitution of a community: how we remember our past, how we commemorate certain kinds of achievements or accomplishments that may be good or bad for the community. We might think of the kind of anger people have had around Confederate monuments. In South Africa, we might think of statues of Cecil Rhodes. Should we be afraid of the kind of anger that emerges here? Should we try to find ways to re-channel it? In some countries, when people want to rethink the way they've commemorated their past, they don't destroy the statues, they move them somewhere else, or relabel them, or they put up a plaque that gives them a richer, historical framing.

What do you think is at stake in this election in the areas of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion?
There's so much at stake, it's hard to pick out just a few things. I don't think that the current occupant of the White House caused the divisions that are being strengthened at the current moment; some of them go back to the late 1960s. If you're out of a job, and you're in West Virginia, and you're out of a job, and you're on the south side of Chicago, maybe there are things you have in common, that you should not let other people keep you from seeing. I think of some of the Black Lives Matter protests this summer, where you saw people of different races marching together, and saying, this can't go on like this. These reminded me of the civil rights era where people were willing to protest injustice across racial lines. There is something hopeful in that fact; we need to build on that.
Election 2020
An eye toward access and participation this November

Voting Rights
Fredrick C. Harris, Dean of Social Science and Professor of Political Science

Fredrick C. Harris is Dean of Social Science and Professor of Political Science as well as Director of the Center on African American Politics and Society. His area of research is broadly in American Politics with a focus on race and politics, political participation, social movements, religion and politics, and political history. The author of several award-winning books and numerous scholarly articles, Dean Harris has been a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation, a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and a Visiting Professor at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University. He currently serves as a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Dean Harris recently delivered a lecture on the history of voter suppression and the movements for voting rights as part of the Greeley Series on Race & Social Justice at UMass Lowell. Connect with Prof. Harris at fh2170@columbia.edu.

Latinx Voters
Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Professor of English and Comparative Literature

Frances Negrón-Muntaner is a scholar, writer and filmmaker with a broad focus on colonialism in Puerto Rico and the United States. Her work is at the intersections of politics, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. Recognized as a preeminent voice in Latinx and Caribbean studies, Prof. Negrón-Muntaner has received Ford, Truman, Scripps Howard, Rockefeller, and Pew fellowships, as well as Social Science Research Council and Andy Warhol Foundation grants and is recognized with the United Nations' Rapid Response Media Mechanism designation as a global expert in mass media and Latin/o American Studies. She additionally serves as founding curator of the Latino Arts and Activism Archive at Columbia's Rare Books & Manuscripts Library. During the lead up to the election, Prof. Negrón-Muntaner has provided her perspective on Latinx voters, their motivations, and voting turnout in the publication The Americano. She has also written in Politics/Letters, Dissent, Latino Rebels, and has been interviewed in media worldwide about the many crises impacting Puerto Rico. Connect with Prof. Negrón-Muntaner at fn2103@columbia.edu.

For questions contact Natalie Nevarez (nt2569)
For questions contact Natalie Nevarez (nt2569)

Networks
Connecting faculty across Arts and Sciences

Amy Chazkel, Bernard Hirschhorn Associate Professor of Urban Studies, is a historian of Brazilian history, with a focus on cities and urban processes and on sociolegal history. Professor Chazkel has published books and articles on the criminalization of everyday life, policing during the time of slavery and in its immediate aftermath, on the Rio de Janeiro city jail, and on a discriminatory curfew that was in place in the Brazilian capital city for decades in the nineteenth century. She has most recently released a collaborative project titled "Policing, Justice and the Radical Imagination". Connect with Professor Chazkel at ac2227@columbia.edu.

Kevin Fellezs is an Associate Professor of Music and African American and African Diaspora Studies. His most recent book, Listen But Don’t Ask Question (2019, Duke University Press) he explores Hawaiian slack key guitar as a site for the articulation of Hawaiian values throughout the trans-Pacific. He was recently interviewed for the Chilean newspaper El Fénix about protests against police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, as well as by WUSA9 about the role of Black music in social movements. Connect with Professor Fellezs at kf2362@columbia.edu.

Larisa Heiphetz is Assistant Professor of Psychology and principal investigator of the Social and Moral Cognition Lab. Her lab has examined the psychological roots of inequality and how people talk about the criminal justice system. She recently published (along with James Dunlea and Redeate Wolle) a study on the positive feelings that the children of incarcerated individuals have toward their parents, highlighting the need for policies that enable greater contact between incarcerated individuals and their children. Connect with Professor Heiphetz at lah2201@columbia.edu.

Suresh Naidu is Professor in Economics and International and Public Affairs. His research focuses on the economic effects of political transitions, economic history of slavery and labor institutions, international migration, economic applications of natural language processing. He recently published an op-ed in the Washington Post arguing for better pay, protections, and benefits for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Connect with Professor Naidu at sn2430@columbia.edu.

Pablo Piccato, Professor of History, specializes in the history of Mexico. His most recent book, A History of Infamy (University of California Press, 2017), examines crime, justice, and truth in mid-twentieth-century Mexico. He recently co-authored, with Federico Finchelstein and Jason Stanley, an essay for The New Republic discussing the use of the word "fascism" in reference to modern American politics. Connect with Professor Piccato at pp143@columbia.edu.

If you’d like to be included in a future issue, message Natalie Nevarez (nt2569)