

Fighting Inequality: Class, Race, and Power

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May 28-31, 2015. [Registration now open!](#) Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Joint Conference of the Labor and Working-Class History Association and the Working-Class Studies Association.

Economic inequality, while long a challenge for working-class people, has grown and become increasingly central in public life. It has been a theme in struggles for justice for low-wage workers and has shaped policies related to education, housing, health care, and the right to organize.

Fifty years after the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, even access to the most basic democratic right faces new threats. We see concern with inequality growing in religious institutions, and it has been a theme in the media and the arts, as well — in spoken-word poetry about the link between mass incarceration and slavery, in documentaries about individuals and communities struggling to “recover” from economic restructuring, and in a variety of commentaries and reflections.

Fighting Inequality will bring together scholars, activists, and artists to explore some core questions about economic inequality and strategies for resistance, both historically and in the current moment:

- What forces – social, political, economic, and cultural – have contributed to inequality and influence people’s responses to it?
- How do working-class people gain power within democracy when access and rights are limited by policy and ideology?
- How have the complex relationships among class, race, and power sometimes enabled and sometimes constrained working-class resistance?

We welcome proposals that address these questions or other aspects of working-class life through historical, cultural, social, and/or political lenses. Because we will meet in the nation’s capital in a period when past democratic achievements are under assault, we particularly encourage those that wrestle with issues of democracy and public policy. We

invite proposals for varied formats, including roundtables, debates, working groups, workshops, teaching sessions, and performances. Whenever possible, session proposals should involve participants from multiple disciplines and roles, linking scholars across fields and connecting academic research with activism and/or the arts.

Author



Rosemary Feurer

Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, among other books and essays. She is working on *The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940* and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.