

## **The PBKNY Diversity & Inclusion Committee Presents – Cancel Culture, Casting in Film, and Censorship: A Discussion**



Please join the PBKNY Diversity & Inclusion Committee on Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 7PM EDT for an interactive and intriguing panel discussion on the impact of social media, “cancel culture,” and “wokeness” on directors’ casting of actors in their movies and actors’ decisions to play characters from different racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, or religious backgrounds.

For example, consider the following:

Should Lin-Manuel Miranda have been criticized (and then apologized) for not casting Afro-Latinos in the main cast of “In the Heights”? Is it problematic that Eddie Redmayne played a transgender role in “The Danish Girl” or Tom Hanks played someone with a disability in “Forrest Gump”? Are criticisms of James Franco playing Fidel Castro in an upcoming film valid because Franco is not Cuban or Latino? Should Jamie Foxx’s “All-Star Weekend” have been shelved because Robert Downey Jr. plays a Mexican character? Should that same reasoning also apply to Ana de Armas playing Marilyn Monroe in “Blonde”?

What impact does such criticism and limitation on creative thought and artistry have on free speech? Should social media users, other actors, etc. function as a de facto jury on what viewers can and cannot watch (or access)? What are the consequences of setting such limitations on the directors/actors themselves, society as a whole, or us as actual and potential viewers? How should we, as individuals, PBK members, community leaders, react and respond? Does cancel culture and/or “wokeness” stifle discourse, knowledge sharing, and creativity?

Moderated by Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair Nicole Lancia, panelists Dr. Angelyn Mitchell of Georgetown University and Professor Louis Seidman of Georgetown Law will address these challenging questions and more, with an opportunity for audience Q&A at the conclusion of the panel.

We look forward to hearing from the following panelists and moderator:



**Angelyn L. Mitchell** is an associate professor in the Departments of English and African American Studies. Dr. Mitchell's teaching and research interests are in African American literary and cultural studies; African American Studies; Black women writers; Black feminist theories; race and representation, race and politics, African American music, African American history, slavery in the US; the American South; gender and racial politics; and race in America.

Dr. Mitchell is a four-time recipient of the GU Black Student Alliance's Outstanding Faculty Award. She is also a recipient of the Georgetown College Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching (2015). In 2017, Dr. Mitchell was named by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* one of 25 outstanding women leaders in higher education, making "a difference in the world by tackling some of higher education's toughest challenges and exhibiting extraordinary leadership skills." In 2020, Dr. Mitchell received the Distinguished Leader Award from the GU African American Alumni Advisory Board.

A leading scholar of Nobel laureate Toni Morrison's work, Dr. Mitchell has lectured nationally and internationally on Morrison's works and has conducted seminars for audiences ranging from high school teachers to international scholars on Morrison's works. She is a founding member and past officer of the Toni Morrison Society, and she currently serves as a member of the Toni Morrison Society's Board of Directors.

Dr. Mitchell edited *Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present* (Duke UP, 1994), the first anthology of twentieth-century African American literary and cultural criticism, presenting twentieth-century African American intellectual history. She is the author of *The Freedom to Remember: Narrative, Slavery, & Gender in Contemporary Black Women's Fiction* (Rutgers UP, 2002), a study of gender, memory and history in contemporary novels about US slavery by Black women which posits that remembering is foundational to the afterlives of slavery. She is the co-editor of the *Cambridge Companion to African American Women's Writing* (Cambridge UP, 2009), a collection of essays chronicling the literary history and traditions of Black women writers from 18th century to the present. She is currently completing a book entitled "Toni Morrison: A Writerly Life" (Polity Press, forthcoming), and her next book project is "1963: A Racial Biography."

Dr. Mitchell founded Georgetown University's African American Studies Program in 2003 and served as its first director from 2003-2013. From 2001-2021, she directed the Mentoring Future Professors of Color Program (formerly the Minority Mentoring Program), a program for Georgetown undergraduate students of color interested in becoming professors. She is a member of several professional organizations, including the College Language Association, the Toni Morrison Society, the American Studies Association, and the Modern Language Association. She is available as a consultant for diversity training, inclusive teaching initiatives, and progressive curricular reforms, all areas of her expertise.



After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1971, Professor **Louis Seidman** served as a law clerk for J. Skelly Wright of the D.C. Circuit and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. He then was a staff attorney with the D.C. Public Defender Service until joining the Law Center faculty in 1976. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard Law School, The University of Chicago Law School, New York University Law School, and the University of Virginia Law School. He teaches a variety of courses in the fields of constitutional and criminal law. He is co-author of a constitutional law casebook and the author of many articles concerning criminal justice and constitutional law. His most recent books are *On Constitutional Disobedience* (Oxford, 2012); *Silence and Freedom* (Stanford 2007); *Equal Protection of the Laws* (Foundation 2002); and *Our Unsettled Constitution: A New Defense of Constitutionalism and Judicial Review* (Yale 2001). In 2011, Seidman was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



**Nicole Lancia** was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa from Georgetown University in 2007, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, magna cum laude, and minors in Spanish and African-American Studies. She then graduated from Georgetown University Law Center and graduated in 2010. After law school, Nicole joined the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C., where she wrote briefs and presented oral argument in several circuit courts seeking to obtain enforcement of Board orders. For the second half of 2013, served as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Sex Offenses and Domestic Violence Unit. In 2016, Nicole moved back to her native New York to work in the NLRB's Manhattan office, where she was part of the litigation team prosecuting McDonald's USA and several individual franchises, and investigated unfair-labor-practice charges, conducted administrative hearings, and negotiated settlement agreements. From 2020-2021, Lancia worked in the NLRB's Contempt, Compliance & Special Litigation Branch in Washington, D.C., handling U.S. district court litigation on agency rulemaking, circuit court contempt proceedings, and bankruptcy claims. Currently, Nicole is a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Labor, New York Solicitor's Office where she represents the Secretary of Labor in complex FLSA, OSHA, and ERISA litigation arising in New York, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico.

Since 2020, Nicole has regularly participated as a Continuing Legal Education panelist for the New York State Bar Association, Public Law Institute, and City Bar Association of New York. She also chairs the Phi Beta Kappa New York Chapter's Diversity and Inclusion Committee.