



BOSTON COLLEGE

# CHRIJ

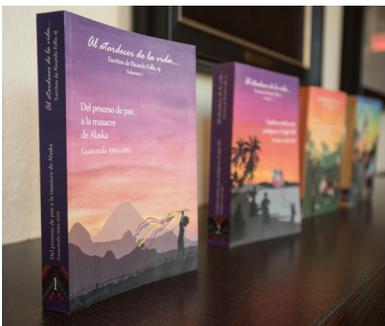
Center for  
Human Rights  
and  
International Justice

## 2018-19 Winter Newsletter

### Guatemalan anthropologist Falla visits BC to reflect on life's work

The Center hosted renowned Guatemalan anthropologist Ricardo Falla, SJ, on October 16 and 17 for two presentations on his experiences in the Ixcán, Guatemala, where he accompanied Mayan people in resistance during that country's civil war, as part of a rare tour of the US.

On the 16th, Falla first contextualized his work by explaining the internal armed conflict. In 1954, Guatemala was invaded by a military group backed by the U.S. government, in the interests of the US company United Fruit Company, which opposed the Guatemalan government's proposed agrarian reform. The war began in 1962 on the eastern side of the country and swept to the western side in 1972, where the indigenous Mayan people were concentrated. Falla clarified that while many of the Mayan people supported the guerrilla groups, most were not combatants as they did not take up arms and as such should not have been targeted by armed forces under the laws of war. Despite that, in 1982, the Guatemalan military carried out a series of massacres, killing thousands of Mayan civilians under the leadership of Army Chief of Staff Efraín Ríos Montt. Some of those who managed to survive fled north to Mexico, others went south to other parts of Guatemala, and others chose to stay and resist the government army in the jungle. Falla expressed that he felt called to stand in solidarity with the Mayan people in Ixcán then in 1983. As the war lingered in pockets across the country, Falla accompanied the villagers who had stayed in the jungle. He explained that around 30 small groups of 50-70 people each were hiding in the jungle and created a network to track the army's movements, continually alerting each other to avoid contact with the army. Throughout the five months Falla spent in Ixcán that year, the Mayan people led him, fed him, and taught him, inverting the traditional hierarchical relationship of clergy to lay people in the Catholic Church. For Falla, this was the meaning of accompaniment, solidarity, and love. Falla's presence countered the narrative perpetuated by the army that the Mayan people were like animals living in the jungle. Falla administered the holy sacraments of baptism, marriage and reconciliation and conducted Mass, and in doing so he blessed them as God's children, as human beings with dignity. For them, the jungle was like Noah's Ark, protecting God's children. Falla's presence affirmed for the Mayan people that their



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Event photos courtesy of BC MTS

#### ABOUT US

The Center for Human Rights and International Justice addresses the increasingly interdisciplinary needs of human rights work through academic programs, applied research, and the interaction of scholars with practitioners. The Center's Co-directors are Law School professor Daniel Kanstroom and Lynch School of Education professor of Community-Cultural Psychology M. Brinton Lykes. Mr. Timothy Karcz is the Assistant Director.

CHRIJ Newsletter Contributors: Audrey Hersman and Elizabeth Wollan

## Center News & Notes

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### » Summer research grants

The Center is offering summer research grants to BC undergraduate and graduate students once again this summer!

Application deadline March 7. More details and how to apply on the Center's website: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/centers/chrij/academics/summergrants.html>

### » Summer internships

Are you a BC undergrad who would like to intern with the Center this summer? If so, apply by February 20! Details and how to apply on the Center's website here: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/centers/chrij/about/opportunities.html>

On **October 19**, Victor Condé, an International Human Rights Lawyer-Educator, gave a presentation on "Freedom of Religion: Kurdistan, Kathmandu and the Masterpiece Cake Shop Opinion: An International Human Rights Law Odyssey."

On **November 7**, the Center hosted filmmaker Miki Dezaki for a screening of his film "*Shusenjo: The Main Battleground of the Comfort Women Issue*," about the struggle of former Korean "comfort women" for recognition and retribution from Japan.

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## Former Center Certificate Student Távora Begins her Post-PhD Career as a Professor in Peru

By Dr. Gabriela Távora Vásquez

This past August I graduated from the doctoral program in Applied Psychology in the BC Lynch School of Education. This occasion also marked the conclusion of my active collaboration with the Center for Human Rights and International Justice (CHRIJ), an institution with which I was affiliated since beginning my studies at BC in September 2013. Looking back at the work I had the opportunity to do through the CHRIJ, and the projects I was lucky to be a part of, I feel enormously grateful for these years of experience and education, which have helped lead me to the current stage of my career.

What primarily drew me to BC was the possibility of working with Lynch School Professor of Community Psychology, and Center Co-director, Dr. Brinton Lykes. I had heard of her work with indigenous women and communities that had been affected by armed conflict in Guatemala, and of the participatory approach she used as a community psychologist. As a young community psychologist myself who was interested in working with communities affected by the armed conflict, I thought I could learn a great deal from Brinton and from the scholars at the CHRIJ. I was not wrong.

During my time working at the CHRIJ I was immersed in several research projects, which were very applied, involving working directly with communities and thinking critically with them about the issues they were facing. This type of work allowed me to interrogate, more than ever, who I was, and who I wanted to be as a professional and scholar. I collaborated on the Migration and Human Rights project, a project that worked with Mayan communities in the Quiché region of Guatemala, which suffered acutely during the armed conflict. During the summer of 2014, with Brinton and small research team from the CHRIJ, we traveled to Guatemala to collaborate directly with the local team there on this project. I had the opportunity to work with Luisa, a local K'iche staff person from Zacualpa, a town in the Quiché. She was accompanying groups of K'iche women "left behind" after their families had migrated to the U.S. Also during this trip, Brinton, Luisa and I traveled further north in the Quiché region to Chajul, a town where Brinton has had a longtime collaboration with Ixil women. There, we facilitated spaces where both K'iche and Ixil women could share their experiences of organizing as indigenous women. Interestingly, the experiences I had with indigenous communities in Guatemala helped me to deepen my reflection about the issues faced by indigenous communities in my home country of Peru. I saw with fresh eyes the reality of a country that shares many characteristics with my own. In the last years of my doctoral program I developed my dissertation, a participatory action research project with an organization of Andean women knitters in Peru. I traveled back to Peru during my last year in the PhD program to conduct extensive fieldwork in a town in the Andes. I would have not been able to propose such a project if it was not for all that I had learned from the CHRIJ's projects I had worked on with Mayan communities in Guatemala. I took all the lessons learned and continue to carry them with me as I continue my work, now as a recent PhD graduate here in Perú.

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Currently I have teaching position at the Psychology Department of the Catholic University of Peru (la PUCP, for its acronym in Spanish). I am teaching a class on Social Exclusion and Psychology, and I will soon start teaching an Intervention Approaches course in the Community Psychology Master's program. Psychology Department faculty are planning collaborations with projects conducted by the UN Refugee Agency with Venezuelan migrants here in Peru through our classes and through work done with students.

Regarding my future research direction, I have recently joined a research group in Community Psychology. From there I hope to continue working with the group of Andean women who collaborated with me during my dissertation. The issues I worked on during my years in the CHRIJ (migration, displacement, armed conflict, among others) are quite similar to the issues and challenges I now find in Peru. It seems that throughout the world we are facing the same global crises. What I have learned about the resistance and struggles of migrants and indigenous groups during my doctoral years will be of great help and will deeply inform my current and future work. I hope to continue the type of work I learned at the CHRIJ by conducting research projects that respond and challenge the realities of injustice we see before us, and by working with people in ways that are more horizontally relational, and more human.



## Motherhood Across Borders: Immigrants and their Children in Mexico and New York

On September 24th, the Center hosted LSOE Professor Gabrielle Oliveira to present her new book, *Motherhood Across Borders: Immigrants and their Children in Mexico and New York*. In addition to Oliveira's presentation, the book talk featured responses from two other experts in the field, Alyshia Gálvez, a Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies at City University of New York, and Mary Holper, an Associate Clinical Professor of Law at BC and Director of the Immigration Clinic. Their discussion drew upon various disciplines such as law, anthropology, and Latin American studies to explore complex and compelling issues of gender, immigration, and transnationalism.

Informed by her ethnographic research, Oliveira highlighted three key themes that underpin the lived experiences of mothers trying to parent their children across borders. The first was the importance of individual stories, both from children and parents, in understanding the nuanced implications of building and sustaining loving families and caring for children when separated by borders. The second theme of her book explored the idea of education as a currency of love, in which children felt a duty to do well in school in light of the sacrifices their mothers were making for them abroad. In some ways, discussing their child's education became a way for mothers to stay engaged and connected, serving as a type of proxy for physical proximity to their children. The third major theme that Oliveira highlighted from her book was the implication of U.S. immigration policy changes over the past few decades on individual families on a microscale. Oliveira developed the concept of "transnational care constellations" to explain the way mothers, grandmothers, and other family members work together to provide a patchwork of care to support children who "remained behind" in Mexico. While appreciating the creative ways transnational mothers exercise parenting choices from a distance, Oliveira also acknowledged that these "transnational care constellations" cannot compensate for physical presence and cannot fully protect against the slow, mundane fracturing of separated families.

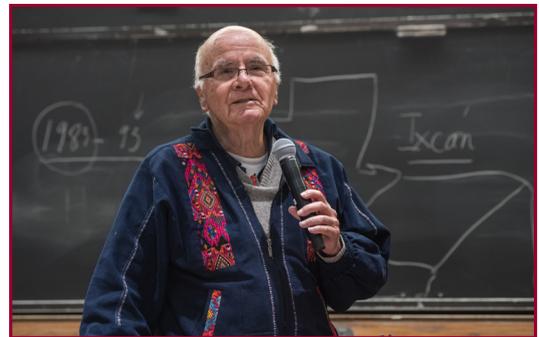
Following Oliveira's presentation, Gálvez placed the book within the broader field of ethnographic research on transnational families, praising Oliveira's deep commitment to a holistic and nuanced understanding of transnational mothering as shown by the unique breadth and depth of her ethnography. Lastly, Holper responded by contextualizing the significance of the study within current political discourse and legal issues regarding immigration in the United States, and specifically, separated families at the border.



## Falla shares insights at BC (continued from page 1)

struggle was a just struggle blessed by God.

At the second event, Falla focused his analysis on the July 17<sup>th</sup> massacre at San Francisco in which 373 Mayan people were killed by the Guatemalan army in one day. Falla traced the components of genocide through the chilling testimonial of a man who witnessed the massacre. Genocide is defined by the UN as the “deliberate destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such.” As Falla pointed out, the “as such” clause makes it incredibly difficult to prove that a genocide has occurred. Still, it is important to identify and name a genocide because the term carries moral and practical significance, calling states around the world to act. The witness told Falla that around 400 men arrived with a helicopter that day, which signified to Falla that it could not have been the guerrillas since they did not have the numbers or machinery. The army called the villagers into the center of the village, encircled them so that no one could escape, and divided them, locking the men in one place and women and children in another. This method of encircling them demonstrated an element of totality; separating the women and men was a systematic method commonly used in massacres, demonstrating to Falla that the killings were not simply spontaneous acts but part of a deliberate policy to wipe out the communities entirely. Then the army raped and murdered the women, and the witness heard their screams. After, they returned and killed the children, which, as Falla cautioned, is a component of genocide because it destroys the “seed of the people.” Lastly, the soldiers came for the men, tore out their hearts, and drank their blood, which served to symbolically strengthen the soldiers and devastate the community. Falla’s analysis demonstrated that the soldiers’ actions could not solely be explained by political rationales. Rather, Falla argued, the excess, cruelty, and symbolism are connected to strong emotions such as racism; and their intent to wipe out an entire racial and ethnic group as such constituted genocide.



## Summer Research Grant Reports

The following are summaries of research findings from last summer's undergraduate recipients of Center summer research grants. The application deadline for summer 2019 grants, for both graduate and undergraduate students, is **March 7**. See Center website for details.

**Hannah Maria Cazzetta, Lynch School of Education, PhD candidate, International Higher Education**

**“Fighting Food and Housing Insecurity in the University Capital of the U.S.”**

Through a critical sample of the Boston College (BC) population, Cazzetta studied the increase in students experiencing food and housing insecurity as a result of rising tuition rates. Focusing on the BC community, Cazzetta surveyed 79 undergraduate students who participate in the Montserrat program, which supports students at the highest level of financial need on campus. The survey included questions geared to gauge if a student was deemed food or housing insecure. Of the 79 survey participants, six were deemed to be at the most severe level of food security. Cazzetta broadened her study to include an assessment of resources in and around BC that contribute to a lack of food and housing security, including a lack of accessible grocery stores near the university and a lack of on-campus support for low-income upperclassmen students without a mandatory meal plan. Her research concluded that while some students have high levels of food insecurity, the majority of students in the survey are moderately food insecure, and housing insecurity was seen to be a less common occurrence. Cazzetta hopes to continue her research on the effects of this trend as it relates to the intellectual capabilities of students affected by food insecurity due to a lack of purchasing power or access to resources. Further, she plans to continue her research to include non-Montserrat students who just missed the cutoff to qualify for program and therefore might be suffering food or housing insecurity as a result.



*KELSEY RENNEBOHM FELLOW*

**María Emilia Bianco Galíndez, PhD candidate in Social Work, School of Social Work**

**“Mothering Across Borders: The stories of Central American Mothers who have crossed the US-Mexico Border with their Children and are Seeking Asylum in the United States”**

Through collaboration with the CLSACC, IIIC, and the Needham Task Force, Maria Emilia Bianco assessed migration experiences of Central American mothers coming to the US. She analyzed the experiences of mothers and children along their migratory journey and observed how these experiences correlated to human rights abuses and an inadequate fulfillment of rights. Her sample focused on seventeen women who crossed the US-Mexico border with their children since 2014 and are resettling in the Boston area after being released from US immigration detention centers. Ranging from ages 21-40 and migrating originally from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, these women crossed the borders with all or some of their children, and all of them had been held in detention centers at the US border. Bianco investigated the mental health of mothers using the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire to measure anxiety, depression, and PTSD, concluding that 11 of the 17 women expressed symptoms of depression or anxiety while four expressed symptoms of PTSD. Each woman cited violence in their country of origin to be the catalyst to their migration, and many cited inadequate responses from local police and governmental institutions. Bianco studied experiences of migrant mothers along each step of their journey, from poor humanitarian conditions while migrating to perilous experiences while in detention. She will continue to analyze how these women have transitioned into their resettlement experiences post-migration and the effects that the journey holds on each migrant mother with regard to their mental health, living situation, and access to resources post-migration. Moreover, she will question the unjust structural conditions that give rise to these experiences and practices using theoretical frameworks from the literature, as she continues her dissertation research.



► **Evey Satterfield, B.S. in Psychology, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences '20**  
**“Clinical Administration of Ketogenic Diet as an Alternative Cancer Therapy in India”**

Satterfield studied the changes in epidemiological and nutritional transitions occurring in India as a result of a rapidly growing economy and an increase in non-communicable diseases. Cancer rates in India have risen to one of the top three killers in both rural and urban India, and when conventional therapies do not manage and treat aggressive tumors, alternative therapies become necessary. Satterfield applied her research in this field to an investigation in the Ayurveda, Oncology, and Operation Theater departments. Satterfield's research analyzed the management and treatment of benign or malignant tumors through these dietary treatments and concluded that practitioners lack knowledge about the administration of the diet. Satterfield analyzed the disconnect between components of the ketogenic the diet and the practical and cultural resistance factors present in India making its adoption difficult. She also discovered needs for more education regarding which foods allow for a state of ketosis to be achieved, and found a lack of discussion surrounding caloric restriction as a treatment strategy, as it is a key way to slow tumor growth.



► **Peter Fay, PhD candidate in Theology, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences**  
**“The Victimization of Major Mental Illness in the United States: A Christian Social Virtue Ethics Response”**

Fay studied the victimization of mental illness in the United States shaped by the framework of Catholic Social Teaching and early philosophers such as Kant and Locke. Through his analysis of those who suffer from schizophrenia or bipolar affective disorder, Fay sought to understand what contemporary Catholic ethics can contribute to discourses about the victimization of mental illness in the United States and the ways in which serious consideration of mental illness in the United States could challenge and/or reshape contemporary Catholic ethics. He attributes the victimization of mental illness through poverty, homelessness, exploitation, and stigma to the deinstitutionalization and closure of inpatient state mental hospitals, a trend beginning in the 1960s. Fay cited Kant, Locke, and Benjamin Franklin as touchpoints to the greater American paradigm of individualistic anthropology, countering this archetype with the Catholic communitarian conception of human rights of thinkers like David Hollenbach, SJ, who support freedom for life in community and espouse duties related to the common good. By combining biblical perspectives, the role of families and local communities, virtues such as courage, and taking a critical analysis of the nation's laws and social structures, Fay seeks to construct a Catholic communitarian ethic to counter the individual-centered victimization of mental illness within the modern United States.



► **Ellie Gutowski, PhD candidate, Counseling Psychology, Lynch School of Education**  
**“Sexual harassment in the new economy: Measuring the impact of precariousness on sexual harassment ”**

Gutowski observed a trend transforming the nature of the global working world—vulnerable employment, otherwise deemed precarious work, has increased dramatically, with women making up the majority of this sector. To understand the susceptibility of women to workplace sexual harassment in vulnerable environments, Gutowski studied whether precarious work environments predict an increase in experiences with sexual harassment. Through her comparative research, she found that an Australian study concluded that workers in short-term contract work experience higher rates of sexual harassment than workers in long-term, standard employment contracts. Gutowski measured “precarious work” using the Employment Precariousness Scale questionnaire and combined it with her study of currently employed U.S. participants using the Sexual Experience Questionnaire to measure participants' experiences with sexual harassment, coercion, and sexist behavior. She examined vulnerabilities in the bargaining power of workers, wages and adequate compensation, and rights in the work environment that assess worker benefits. Her work discovered a significant correlation between sexual harassment and precarious work; specifically, participants who reported more experiences within precarious work environments and limited bargaining power reported more experiences with sexual harassment while other dimensions of precarious work, such as wages and rights, were not predictive of sexual harassment in the workplace. Gutowski concluded that vulnerability appears to function independently from other sub-dimensions of precarious work to predict sexual harassment in the workplace.



## Palestinian Mental Health: Human Rights and Social Justice in Conditions of Continuous Conflict, Siege, and Oppression

On November 20, Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei, Director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, shared his expertise in neuropsychiatry within the sociopolitical context of the Gaza Strip. Opening by explaining the psycho-political space within the conflict, Dr. Abu Jamei explained the life of Palestinians under occupation. With 70% of the Gazan population deemed refugees, Palestinians overall face restrictions on movement of persons and resources, resulting in traumatic psychological ramifications for individuals and families alike. Dr. Abu Jamei outlined items that are denied passage into Gaza, such as shampoo, suitcases, toothbrushes, and makeup. He also attested to the reality that these items are prohibited for Palestinians but not for international staff or Israelis, which, Abu Jamei contends, directly counters the Israeli claim that these actions are on the basis of security.



In another vein, Dr. Abu Jamei addressed his work within the Gaza Community Mental Health Program given the nature of the conflict. Founded in 1990, the program centers around psychological suffering of children and families living under occupation. At the time of its conception, there was only one psychiatric hospital, so Abu Jamei established the program to focus on the approximately one million children and their families living in the Gaza Strip. He referenced the lack of infrastructure and mechanisms to ensure proper psychological support as a main motivation for the program in order to combat challenges of the occupation. Between March 2017-September 2018, between 1,000-3,000 patients filed requests to exit Gaza. These individuals were severely ill and in need of therapy, chemotherapy, and/or large operations that are unavailable in Gaza. All of these procedures are insured but need to be in Palestinian West Bank hospitals, Jerusalem, or in Israeli hospitals, all of which require permits for entry, yet 42% of these patients do not receive permit approvals. Abu Jamei attributes these actions as part of a much larger process of dehumanization of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and has dedicated his work to examining how mental health functions under such conditions. He cites that a third of his patients have depression while many others struggle with psychological effects of trauma, which manifest themselves in PTSD, anxiety, addiction, or drug dependencies. The UN report states that only 10% of Gaza residents have access to adequate drinking water, and that Gaza will be uninhabitable in 2020 due to this and other health and sanitation issues. Yet Dr. Abu Jamei stated he remains hopeful and steadfast in his commitment to protecting Palestinian mental health under Israeli occupation.

## New Wars and New Challenges: Addressing the human rights implications of the overlap between armed conflict and terrorism



On November 2, the Center hosted UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ni Aolian, to share her insights about the troubling lack of human rights oversight within the existing international counter-terrorism architecture. Since Ni Aolian began her work as the new UN Special Rapporteur, she has been working to understand the interplay between the legal regimes of human rights, armed conflict, and terrorism.

Ni Aolian began by explaining how the norms and laws for countering terrorism developed after 9/11 with the passage of a series of UN resolutions. These resolutions, beginning with Resolution 1373, expanded the understanding of threats to peace and security and authorized the UN Security

Council to mobilize. Importantly, Ni Aolian acknowledged that the language in the resolutions shifted from general statements of obligation to specific mandates that states are required to carry out. To support states implementing the counter-terrorism mandates, the Security Council established the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. The CTC operates under the UN Security Council as a highly cooperative and effective body that plays a significant role in shaping the counter-terrorism architecture.

While Ni Aolian recognized the strengths and benefits of the counter-terrorism framework, she also highlighted two key concerns from a human rights standpoint. First, despite the call for state action, Resolution 1373 did not define terrorism. As a result, she stated, “the architecture is enormously accommodating of states’ desire to regulate terrorism in whatever way they want... so we have some really nefarious definitions of terrorism and no human rights oversight.” Second, the CTC and its work have been largely ignored by scholars. While this invisibility helps the committee work efficiently, it also means it is not held accountable to civil society. The lack of engagement or bilateral pressures allows the committee to continue to operate without attention to human rights. As UN Special Rapporteur, Ni Aolian has worked to bring these concerns to the UN General Assembly, encourage NGOs to pressure the UN about the human rights implications of counter-terrorism, and to call for increased civic engagement with and transparency around counter-terrorism bodies.



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## Upcoming Spring 2019 Events



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14**  
**Conflicting religious freedoms? Catholics and Muslims in secular Belgium**

*"Rights in Conflict" Presentation*  
 12:00 PM • Boston College, Campion Hall, Rm 139  
 With Laurie Johnston, Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, Director of Fellowships and Scholarships, Emmanuel College; and Professor, International Studies, Boston College



**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20**  
**Human Rights in Action: Bringing Home a Wrongly Deported US Resident from Honduras**

5:00 PM • East Wing, 115B, Newton campus  
 Special celebration of a 10-year struggle to return a deported man to the US, featuring him and attorneys from Nixon Peabody LLP, who helped win the legal victory



**MONDAY, MARCH 18**  
**The Right of Privacy for Poor Mothers v. The Right of Children to be Free of Abuse and Neglect**

*"Rights in Conflict" Presentation*  
 12:00 PM • Boston College, McElroy Commons, Rm 237  
 With Khiara Bridges, Professor of Law, and Associate Dean for Equity, Justice & Engagement, at Boston University School of Law



**THURSDAY, APRIL 25**  
**Book talk: "Beyond Repair? Mayan Women's Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm"**

4:30 PM • Boston College, Campion 139  
 With authors Brinton Lykes, Center Co-director and Professor of Community Psychology, BC Lynch School of Education and Human Development; and Alison Crosby, School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, York University (Canada)

More details & RSVP for lunch at event listings at <https://tinyurl.com/CHRIJevents>

Join the CHRIJ listserv to receive news and reminders of CHRIJ events via email.  
 Go to [BC.EDU/HUMANRIGHTS/MAILINGLIST](http://BC.EDU/HUMANRIGHTS/MAILINGLIST) and simply enter your email address to join.