

## JUNIOR COMMITTEE

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### Announcing JComm's Symposium Session: "Words We Use To Talk About Race"

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As part Dance/NYC's [annual symposium](#) (Feb 22 and 23 at Hunter College), the Junior Committee is excited to introduce our discussion session: "Words We Use to Talk About Race" (Feb 23, 2-3pm).

In a structured conversation based loosely on a Long Table format, we invite attendees to consider the various terms used to discuss race, as well as the underlying assumptions behind these words. We will be joined by our core participants Ph.D. and performer Charmain Wells, activist Shiyam Galyon, and dance artist J. Bouey.

In discussing this topic within JComm, some critical points have included:

- Who is being excluded from the term ALAANA (non-Arab ethnicities of the Middle East and North Africa, Pacific Islanders, Aboriginal Australians...)? How does this symbolic erasure mirror the violent erasure of many of these groups through forced assimilation and genocide?
- Does the broad use of the term "People of Color" erase its specific origins in a term used to exclude black Americans during segregation?
- How can discussions of colorism, passing privilege, and racial hierarchies help us distinguish between different racial experiences under the broad umbrella of non-whiteness?
- Given that racial categories are culturally specific, what are the challenges of translating the ethnic and racial identities of immigrants into an American racial framework?
- We do not expect attendees to speak on behalf of any group they belong to. Rather, we welcome all to share their own knowledge, opinions, experiences, and feelings surrounding different race-related terms, and to fill in gaps in their own understanding of race (and the words surrounding it).

While we hope that attendees will reconsider the terminology they use to discuss marginalized racial groups in their organizations, the goal of the session is not to agree on a single unproblematic term. Rather, we hope to use terminology--and its failings--as a starting point to acknowledge the people, histories, and complexities often excluded from discussions of race in the dance field.

Stay tuned in to the JComm blog and social media in the upcoming weeks to hear more about our core participants, as well as some reflections on race and language from JComm members!

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