



8 June 2020

Dear City Tech Community:

Gender & Sexuality Studies at City Tech is both interdisciplinary and intersectional. We believe that the study of gender and sexuality cannot be done in isolation from other intersecting factors of human experience, both personal and systemic. Many City Tech students and their families are impacted on multiple fronts as they face racism, classism, sexism, ableism, and other intersecting modes of oppression. We recognize that the classroom can be a space of freedom and power as well as a reflection of these oppressive structures, so we are constantly striving to correct for our missteps and to remain focused on collaborating with students to use knowledge, empathy, and communication as tools for creating a more just world, or as warrior poet Audre Lorde writes, “seeking a now that can breed futures.”

We condemn the most recent series of Black murders at the hands of police and honor the names of those who have been killed, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, Nina Pop, Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and too many others. This violence is not simply a series of individual circumstances but is the result of the racist structures of our institutions which have most recently been made visible through the stark disparities in the impact of COVID-19 on Black communities. Each and every one of these Black Lives Matter. **We further assert that Gender & Sexuality Studies stands unwavering in our support of the Black faculty, staff, and student body of New York City College of Technology, CUNY.**

As we grapple with the most recent effects of deeply rooted, systemic white supremacy in this country, we also pause to remember that the Stonewall Riot of 1969 was an uprising led by Black and Brown trans and queer folks who had been systematically persecuted by police in New York City. Their legacy haunts and informs the uprisings today, reminding us of the long history of revolution led by those who have been impacted most violently. As Audre Lorde wrote in *Sister Outsider*, “Sometimes we are blessed with being able to choose the time, and the arena, and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle where we are standing.”

Gender & Sexuality Studies is committed to leading and supporting the work to exchange knowledge in the classroom as well as to confront these realities and fight for positive social change. As educators and students, we vow to support the fight to dismantle the violent and racist structures that threaten Black lives, especially as these structures play out where we stand. We all stand together in the classroom, and so the battle begins there.

We end with Audre Lorde’s poem, “A Litany for Survival” to reflect our commitment to speak, change, and grow along with and for our students.

In Solidarity,

Dr. Monique Ferrell, Program Designer
Dr. Ruth Garcia, Interim Point Person
Dr. Laura Westengard, Point Person

A Litany for Survival

By Audre Lorde

For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after
seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours;

For those of us
who were imprinted with fear
like a faint line in the center of our foreheads
learning to be afraid with our mother's milk
for by this weapon
this illusion of some safety to be found
the heavy-footed hoped to silence us
For all of us
this instant and this triumph
We were never meant to survive.

And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain
when the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning
when our stomachs are full we are afraid
of indigestion
when our stomachs are empty we are afraid
we may never eat again
when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.