



In these tumultuous times, new forms of activism and political engagement are needed more than ever. Movements to expand the social safety net in response to the devastation of the coronavirus, along with the Black Lives Matter protests, are working both inside and outside of electoral politics, with on-the-ground activists often taking the lead. These new developments join long-standing efforts to reduce inequalities of all forms. In this urgent context, what kinds of coalitions are needed for broad-based change to occur, given the economic, political, and social divides in the country? What are effective models—past and present—for pushing beyond traditional approaches? Spend a day learning from thinkers, scholars, politicians, and activists about ways to build coalitions across issues and lines of race, gender, class, and sexuality in order to create a more equal and democratic society.

PANEL 1 (1:30 – 2:45): THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COALITIONS

The idea and potential of coalitions has been around for decades (e.g., Combahee River Collective Statement, 1977). This panel will provide a broad introduction to the latest work on coalitions – what they are, why they are so important yet often misunderstood and difficult to achieve, and what needs to be done to move forward in creating broad-based change in the future. Panelists will discuss these topics from the perspective of their own work on: forging coalitions across a wide range of issue and advocacy organizations (M. Allyn Brooks-LaSure, Dara Strolovitch); the successful use of coalitions among conservative activists (Alexander Hertel-Fernandez); the psychological barriers to, and facilitators of, coalitional thinking (Jennifer Richeson); and the role of the white working class in coalitional politics (Sarah Smarsh).

Moderator:

Dara Strolovitch

Professor, Gender & Sexuality Studies
Princeton University

Panelists:

M. Allyn Brooks-LaSure

Executive Vice President for Communications
The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights

Alexander Hertel-Fernandez

Associate Professor, School for International and Public Affairs
Columbia University

Jennifer Richeson

Professor, Department of Psychology
Yale University

Sarah Smarsh

Journalist and author of *Heartland*

PANEL 2 (3:00 – 4:15): COALITIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

While political actors are often accused of catering to “identity groups” and “special interests”, this panel will examine how parties, politicians, and policymakers operate in practice and what is required to confront deep social and economic divisions on the one hand and represent broad, popular interests on the other. Panelists will discuss these topics from the perspective of their own work on: the Democratic Party’s historic failure to represent Black Americans (Paul Frymer); the complicated role of the Obama Presidency in forging a more representative democracy (Andra Gillespie); the relationships within and among racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups in urban political coalitions, for instance, around issues of housing, jobs, and green space (Carlos Menchaca, John Mollenkopf); the LGBTQ+ community’s participation in political coalitions (Carlos Menchaca); and the imperative for new political parties and shifting demographics to provoke change from outside the two-party system (Nelini Stamp).

Moderator:

John Mollenkopf

Professor, Department of Political Science

Director, Center for Urban Research

The Graduate Center, CUNY

Panelists:

Paul Frymer

Professor, Department of Politics

Director, Program in Law and Public Affairs

Princeton University

Andra Gillespie

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

Director, James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference

Emory University

Carlos Menchaca

New York City Council Member

Nelini Stamp

National Organizing Director

Working Families Party

PANEL 3 (4:30 – 5:45): COALITIONS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor recently wrote in the *New York Times*, "[we] are witnessing the broadest protest movement in American History." This panel will examine the progress that has been made toward building coalitional movements and durable models of advocacy and activism, both today and in the past, and what remains to be done. Panelists will discuss these questions from the perspective of their own work in building successful campaigns for reproductive justice (Kelley Robinson) and the fulfillment of basic human rights and economic security (Reverend Liz Theoharis). Panelists will also discuss coalitions that involve civic organizations, environmental activists, and labor unions (Hahrie Han, Ruth Milkman) and those that engage more directly with the two-party political system (Daniel Schlozman).

Moderator:

Ruth Milkman

Professor, Department of Sociology and School of Labor and Urban Studies
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Panelists:

Hahrie Han

Professor, Department of Political Science
Director, The P³ Lab
Johns Hopkins University

Kelley Robinson

Vice President of Advocacy and Activism and Executive Director of the Action Fund
Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Daniel Schlozman

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
Johns Hopkins University

Reverend Liz Theoharis

Co-Chair, Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival
Director, Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice
Union Theological Seminary