



CENTER FOR THE  
STUDY OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

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## A CSWS WORKS-IN-PROGRESS TALK

# SHONIQUEA ROACH



**“Unpacking *Pariah(s)*: The Black Queer Feminist Liberation Plot and the Politics of Black (Sexual) Articulation”**

**Friday, January 26, 2018**

**10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

**Jane Grant Room**

**Hendricks Hall 330**

**1408 University St.**

Shoniqua Roach, assistant professor, UO Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, will give a research talk that offers a close, comparative analysis of the *Pariah* short and feature films. Priscilla Ovalle, associate professor, Department of Cinema Studies, will serve as discussant.

Mainstream critics hailed the 2011 release of Dee Rees’s feature-length film, *Pariah*, as a universal coming-of-age drama; an “African-American variation of a familiar story”; and a salient addition to a new black film movement. Equally celebratory, academic critics praised the film’s “universal appeal,” citing it as an important “cinematic contribution” to a wider genealogy of black lesbian image-making and a complex depiction of black queer womanhood.

Few critics mentioned the 2007 short that Rees had made using the same title and basic story. Thus, they made no mention of the transformation of 17-year-old Alike’s mother, Audrey—a strict, religious, and overprotective mother in the 2007 short—into an irreparably homophobic black mother who served as one of the central impediments to Alike’s gender and sexual freedom in the 2011 feature. The addition of the homophobic black mother raises salient questions about *Pariah*, specifically, and the terms and conditions of contemporary black queer women’s cinematic visibility, generally.

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