

THE ETHICS OF REFUSAL

Practices of Freedom Under Conditions of Unfreedom

a lecture by Devonya Havis

Wednesday, 18 September, 15:30 – 17:00

Heritage Lounge, Athabasca Hall
reception to follow

ABSTRACT

The talk is an invitation to explore practices that promote ethical-political interventions into injustices. In exploring these practices, it is crucial to problematize ways that various theories (in the discipline of Western Philosophy in particular) have linked freedom with justice. “Practices of freedom under conditions of unfreedom”, is a means of registering the innovative modes through which historically subjugated peoples “refuse” conditions as they are creating sites of possibility that are otherwise. The Spirituals, Blues, and Jazz offer generative models from which one might characterize ethical refusals that effect theoretical and lived interventions into injustice. This is part of a larger project that engages Black Ancestral Discourses and their philosophical contributions.

BIOGRAPHY

Devonya Havis is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. Her scholarly engagements explore issues in Critical Philosophy of Race, Critical Disability Studies, and Phenomenology. Havis has a forthcoming book, *Creating a Black Vernacular Philosophy*. She teaches to promote social justice, an interest that is especially evident in the Immersion East Side (Buffalo, NY) Ignatian Seminar that she has co-designed and co-directed for the last seven years. The immersion is designed to engage students in the unique rites, rituals, cultural practices, and refusals of Buffalo’s East Side residents (largely Black) who operate in the context of numerous structural, social, and political impediments. The seminar not only explores these realities but also celebrates the historical Black capacity to “create” even in the midst of a desert. Havis serves on the Partnership for the Public Good board of directors and is a member of the Prison Visiting Project Western New York Auxiliary.

