Defective by Definition: Race, Rehabilitation and the Making of the Body Politic in World War One America

Paul Lawrie
Assistant Professor of History, University of Winnipeg

Friday
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12:15 – 1:30
Parker 214

*Light refreshments will be served

This paper examines how federal efforts to rehabilitate disabled African American veterans led to new forms of racial knowledge and racial labor control in postwar America. A key agent in this process was the Federal Board of Vocational Education (FBVE), which was charged with rehabilitating the citizen-soldier into the citizen-worker. FBVE efforts to salvage black veterans for work in the postwar labor force revealed a key attempt to frame social policy along biological lines, and to rationalize racial labor hierarchies as a constituent part of the republican body politic.

Lawrie received his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto and was a Ontario Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto Scarborough. His first book Forging a Fit and Laboring Race: The African American Worker in the Progressive Imagination will be published with NYU Press in Spring 2016. He currently serves as chair of the Committee on Disability and Disability History, Organization of American Historians (OAH).

This event is cosponsored by the UB Center for Disability Studies, the Humanities Institute Disability Studies Research Workshop, and Joining Forces-UB.