



## **“Crack Babies” and the Making of Disability as Racial Damage**

**Lezlie Frye**  
**New York University**



**Wednesday,  
March 4  
145B Student  
Union 1-3pm**

In the decades since the “crack baby epidemic,” many scholars and activists have unveiled the politics of race, gender, and sexuality fueling this national panic. What has gone relatively unnoticed are the discourses of disability that fundamentally shaped the racialized figure of the “crack baby,” which was presumed to be the natural consequence of immorality, drug-use, neglect, and criminal dependence at worst and the tragic outcome of Black poverty at best. Using this case study, Frye argues that the medical discourse of disability became a newly wielded, indispensable mechanism for policing Black female sexuality, reproduction, and motherhood during the 1980s and 1990s.

Lezlie Frye is a Doctoral Candidate of American Studies in the Program of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University and the Predoctoral Fellow at the Fisher Center for the Study of Gender at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Her research and teaching lie at the intersection of gender and sexuality, critical race and disability studies.

**This event is cosponsored by the UB Center for Disability Studies, the Humanities Institute Disability Studies Research Workshop, Wellness Education Services, and Accessibility Resources**