

Name: Michael Pascual

Major: Women's Studies

Faculty Mentor and Department: Marcia Klotz Ph. D Assistant Professor, English.

University: Portland State University

Project Title: Death and Liberal Grief

Abstract:

On October 8th, 2009 the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crime Prevention Act was passed and ratified expanding existing hate crimes prevention laws to recognize hate crimes based on gender, sexuality, and disability. Furthermore, the act allows the federal government to assist local authorities' investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, regardless of where or what the victim was doing at the time the crime occurred. The mobilization of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr.'s archive become emblematic of liberal grieving of violence and death in the U.S. In a demand for recognition of the heightened vulnerability of LGBT communities and modern liberal grieving, LGBT activists pressured the U.S. government to pass the HCPA. Constructing a victim of hate, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr HCPA obscure the heightened vulnerability of LGBT communities, marginalize people of color, and increase State violence through criminalization, thus, renegotiating "spaces of death."
