



University of Kentucky Linguistics Colloquium

Oral History and the Discursive Construction of Identity in Flint, Michigan.

This talk provides a description of the Vehicle City Voices (VCV) project, an oral history and linguistic survey of Flint, Michigan, and illustrates the role of the oral history interview as a critical site for the production of the individual and collective identities of Flint residents. Through this presentation we will explore the discursive tools that oral-history interview participants use to construct and contest mass-mediated representations of their community. In particular, given a media landscape that frequently circulates chronotopic representations (Bakhtin 1981; Agha 2007) that position Flint as a certain kind of city (i.e. "apocalyptic" and in decline) populated by a certain type of person (i.e. dangerous and impoverished) at a certain moment in time (i.e. in its current deindustrializing/post-industrial period), the residents in this study respond by using reported speech and reported thought to challenge and revise these representations while at the same time amplifying the voices of those who are actively working to construct images of a dynamic, living city that transcends its negative reputation.

Dr. Erica Britt

January 21, 2021

1pm

[Online Via Zoom](#)

