**Bio:**

Ashon Crawley is Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at University of California, Riverside. His research is interested in the nexus between Black Studies, Performance Theory and Sound Studies. He is completing his first book, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*, investigating aesthetics performance as modes of collective, social imaginings otherwise.

**Abstract:**

**“The Sound of Ethics”**

Because of the Great Migration that displaced roughly 6 million African Americans from Southern states to urban epicenters like New York City, Chicago and Detroit – folks moving with hopes for job and educational opportunities – the sect of Christianity known as Pentecostalism rapidly spread from its mostly Southern beginnings. This paper will consider the dynamics of urban spatial organization through discussing two kinds of religious cultural zones found in these urban epicenters: the storefront and the cathedral. Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, famous for his work about Negro life in America, in his *The Negro Church in America* placed the then fledgling Holiness/Pentecostal religious movement under the heading “Negro Cults in the City.” And this not simply because the Holiness/Pentecostal movement allowed for women clergy and child preachers, and not simply because of the aesthetic practices of loud dancing, clapping and speaking in tongues, but also because of the architectural spaces in which many of these believers worshipped: storefront churches. Because of these dilapidated, non-standard religious spaces, the religious movement itself was thought to be improper and a general inhibition against the development from the zone of the proletariat into the black bourgeoisie.

To be elaborated in this paper are the ways urban religious spaces are within the crosshairs and trappings of economic logics. On the one hand, this paper will demonstrate how storefront church buildings are evidence of a general theological ideology that allows for any space to be sacralized and made holy, how any space – even those discarded as tattered and indecorous – are recuperable. On the other hand, the paper will consider the ways white flight and abandonment of urban epicenters also made possible the occupying of former Jewish Synagogues, now utilized as Pentecostal worship spaces. In each case, this making holy of the seemingly disregarded spaces serves a more *general* function as they intimate the ways urban space itself, and the people typically impoverished therein, can think themselves as likewise recuperable for holy purposes.