In 2011, Kartemquin Films produced a documentary, *The Interrupters*, which distills the inner-workings of the “violence interrupters” during what was the most violent epoch in Chicagoland history. Violence Interrupters are community advocates who intervene in disputes and disagreements before they become violent. Ceasefire, an anti-violence organization started in Chicago in 1995, began to use violence interrupters in 2004. This film documents the careful methods of these community advocates as they work under dangerous conditions to end violence in their community. While focused on Chicago, the film serves as a great tool to discuss the intersections of race, gender, and violence, the complexities of urban violence, and how policy and community politics conflict/coalesce.

This panel discussion will explore topics pertaining to gender and violence. First, showing excerpts from the documentary, which explores and vividly captures how three change agents (one who will be featured on the panel, Ameena Matthews) are using innovative techniques to help curb violence on Chicago streets. In addition to the film showing, there will be a rich conversation amongst community activists, authors, and scholars addressing violence within our communities, potential solutions, and the role of gender in the representation and reproduction of violence.

Ameena Matthews is featured in the documentary, as she is at the forefront of anti-violence activism in the Chicagoland area. She is one of the key players in the “violence interrupters” initiative. Matthews, the daughter of former Chicago gang leader Jeff Fort, has crafted her own approach and methodology for addressing issues of violence—which are informed by a dynamic understanding of gender relations and identities.