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“Breaking Bad” Actor, “Orange is the New Black” Actress to Speak at USF

The lectures are both free and open to the public.

TAMPA, Fla. (Aug. 31, 2015) – Actor RJ Mitte and actress Laverne Cox will hold lectures at the University of South Florida as part of the student-run [University Lecture Series](#).

Mitte, known for his role in Emmy-winning AMC drama “Breaking Bad,” will deliver a lecture, on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2015, in the Marshall Student Center Ballroom. Cox, recognized for her performance on Netflix’s “Orange is the New Black,” will deliver her lecture on Monday, March 21, 2016, in the same location. Both events are free and open to the public, with doors opening at 7:30 p.m.

Like his character on “Breaking Bad,” Mitte is diagnosed with a form of cerebral palsy. While Mitte will touch on his acting career, his talk will focus on how he overcame adversity in the entertainment industry. ULS selected Mitte as a series lecturer after surveying efforts found that students are interested in social issues and the entertainment industry.

When Mitte found out that bullying was the root of several teen suicides in 2010, he began speaking out against the problem through social media and interviews. Mitte has since become a spokesperson for anti-bullying organizations, including the NAPT Annual Conference for school transportation professionals and PACER’s National Center for Bullying Prevention. Mitte also speaks for organizations that advocate for actors with disabilities, such as the National Disability Institute’s Real Economic Impact Tour and “I AM PWD.”

Cox is not only an Emmy-nominated actress, but she is also the first trans woman of color to have a leading role on a mainstream scripted television show. Cox’s talk will deliver an empowering message about moving beyond gender expectations in order to live more authentically as an individual. In a time where violence continues to be enacted upon trans women of color in communities across the globe, ULS felt that Cox’s influential star status and important message of equality will resonate with students.

Aside from her groundbreaking role on “Orange is the New Black,” she was also the first transgender actress featured on the cover of TIME magazine, the first trans woman of color to produce and star in her own television show (VH1’s “TRANSForm Me”) and the first trans woman of color to appear on an American reality television program (VH1’s “I Wanna Work for Diddy”). Cox is also a producer, and her hour-long documentary, “Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word,” was nominated for a GLAAD media award. She has also received several awards for her advocacy efforts, including the Courage Award from the Anti-Violence Project.

For more information about the lecture series, including the audience policy, visit www.uls.usf.edu. Additional ULS speakers will be announced at a later date.

The University of South Florida is a high-impact, global research university dedicated to student success. USF is a Top 50 research university among both public and private institutions nationwide in total research expenditures, according to the National Science Foundation. Serving nearly 48,000 students, the USF System has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion and an annual economic impact of \$4.4 billion. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference.