The TE-Mathematics Education Search Committee cordially invites you to a talk by:

**Dr. Niral Shah**

Monday, January 6th, 2014
3:30-5:00 pm, 507 Erickson Hall

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**Equity, Identity, and Learning: Racial Narratives in Mathematics Classrooms**

Ensuring that all students have access to the resources needed for learning is of critical concern in educational research, particularly in high-stakes domains like mathematics. Research has shown that identity is a key part of the learning process, in that the nature of students' engagement in classrooms both shapes—and is shaped by—their opportunities to build identities as capable learners. This talk will focus on a study that investigates the everyday racial dynamics of secondary mathematics classrooms, as part of a larger program of research centered on issues of equity and identity in K-12 STEM education.

Research on race in education has tended to emphasize racial performance gaps. However, less is known about the interaction between race and learning processes at the level of social interaction. Participant observation and student interviews reveal that students' sense making about race in the context of mathematics learning is organized around racial narratives (e.g., “Asians are good at math”), which manifest themselves in classroom activity in both explicit and subtle ways. Data suggest that students actively deploy racial narratives in ways that position themselves and their classmates with identities as more or less capable learners in mathematics. Further, there is evidence that these narratives emerge in social interaction as students engage in typical classroom practices linked to learning. Implications of this work for designing equitable classrooms and for teacher education are discussed.

Niral Shah is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Research in Cognition and Mathematics Education (RCME) program at the University of California, Berkeley. His program of research concerns the design of equitable learning environments in STEM education. While Dr. Shah's early academic work was in business and computer science, he became interested in education after teaching high school mathematics at a low-income, urban school in the San Francisco Bay Area. His dissertation work, which was funded by a NAEd/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship, investigated how racial narratives mediate learning in high school mathematics, with an emphasis on identity formation and the racialization of everyday classroom practices. Currently, he is exploring the relationship between status hierarchies and students' opportunities to learn in computer science classrooms, particularly in the context of collaborative learning situations.