

Replace the term “Brown Bag” with a different term for the Friday lunchtime seminars.

*From the Anti-Racism Action Committee to Chair Michael Oskin
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Proposed change: Use the term Friday Lunch Talk to refer to the Friday lunchtime seminars instead. Replace this term where it appears on the website, in emails, and in discussion.

Why: The term “brown bag” is problematic due to racist and classist origins. This may make members of the department or public uncomfortable.

Steps needed:

- Max and Mandy tasked with identifying all current uses of the term “brown bag” on the website and event calendar forms.
 - Many occurrences have already been changed on the website. Thank you to folks who have worked to make this change start to happen.
- Department website team (Janice, Kengshi, Emily) tasked with changing the term.
- Chair announces replacement term, explaining the racist and colorist connotations of the old term and encouraging its use in the future.

Audience: This change will positively impact all members of the department and public. Anyone familiar with the problematic origins of the term “brown bag” who felt uncomfortable with its use should now feel more included and respected as a member of the EPS community.

Background: The term “brown bag” refers to a lunchtime talk where participants bring their own food. It originates from people bringing their lunch in a brown paper bag while listening to a lecture or seminar. It also alludes to the Brown Paper Bag Test (<https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/question/2014/february.htm>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Paper_Bag_Test), a racist and colorist practice of comparing a person’s skin color to the color of a brown paper lunch bag. Those whose skin was darker than the bag would be denied privileges afforded to White people.

Inclusive language is important (see [this short paper](#)) in order to make people feel welcomed and respected. Using a more neutral term for a lunchtime talk will remove racist wording from this particular event, encouraging inclusive attendance and respectful dialogue.