

Women's Studies Program Spotlight on Faculty Series Fall 2011



The Ruling Relations of Healthcare for Native American Women

Dr. Barbara Gurr
Assistant Professor in Residence - Women's Studies, UConn

Monday, September 19, 2011
12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM
Beach Hall, Room 425

Barb Gurr's dissertation research examined Native American women's subjective experiences of reproductive healthcare through the Indian Health Service, a federal agency located within the Department of Health and Human Services. This presentation takes as its starting point the stories of three of her informants from Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Indian Reservations in South Dakota, and uses institutional ethnography to trace the organization of their experiences to funding decisions made by Congress and the President over the last thirty years. Findings reveal the underlying race, gender, class, sexuality and citizenship discourses which inform the provision of reproductive healthcare for Native women in the twenty-first century and suggest the applicability of a reproductive justice framework to both articulate and address the reproductive healthcare needs of women in marginalized communities.

In July 2011, Barbara Gurr successfully defended her dissertation in Sociology here at UConn. Her current work examines family identity tasks for families who are newly queered by the affirmation of a young transgender child. In both of these projects she considers social constructions of the raced, sexed, and gendered body as it is located within and moves through matrices of oppression and privilege. Ultimately, she is interested in how subjective experiences are shaped by social, political, and economic forces, and how these forces are navigated, modified, and resisted on the personal level, the community level, and transnationally. Her work relies on feminist intersectional theory, sociological theories of the body, State theory, and critical race theory, as well as human rights and postcolonial and third world feminism. Dr. Gurr is actively involved on campus, and you will frequently see her at events sponsored by UConn's Cultural Centers and the Women's Center, although student-organized events are her favorite. She has worked closely with students in *Iota, Iota, Iota* (the national Women's Studies Honor Society), the Violence Against Women Prevention Program, and the Human Rights Tour as well as the Community Outreach Program and the Native American Cultural Society.

This event sponsored by the Women's Studies Program.
For more information, please contact the Women's Studies Program
at 860-486-3970 or wsinfo@uconn.edu.