

Women's Studies Program Spotlight on Faculty Series Fall 2011



September 19, 2011 - 12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM

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

Title: *The Ruling Relations of Healthcare for Native American Women*

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 health-care 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.

October 17, 2011 - 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Dr. Rachel Lewis, Postdoctoral Fellow - Women's Studies

Title: *Bordering on Desire: The Cultural Politics of Lesbian Asylum*

Although political asylum for persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation has been on the international human rights agenda since the early 1990s, lesbian asylum cases do not tend to figure centrally in analyses of the relationship between refugee law and international human rights law. During the past few years, however, there has been a substantial growth in cultural production and LGBT human rights activism devoted to the subject of lesbian asylum claims. In this talk, I will discuss how lesbian asylum-seekers are turning towards new media and cultural production in the form of independent filmmaking, theatre and performance art, and online activism as a means of resisting deportation. By showing the complex and often contradictory ways in which media and cultural production can influence social policy, I argue that it is possible for transnational feminist and queer critiques of human rights to intervene in the process through which LGBT asylum claims are evaluated. This presentation is drawn from my current book project also titled "Bordering on Desire: the Cultural Politics of Lesbian Asylum."

November 7, 2011 - 12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM

Dr. Judy Rohrer, Assistant Professor in Residence - Women's Studies

Title: *Homonormals, Homonationals & Healthy Children: Prop 8 and the 'Importance of Being Ordinary'*

If Obama's victory is touted as the climax of civil rights for Black Americans, the simultaneous passage of California's Proposition 8 has been framed as an enormous unexpected set-back for lesbian and gay civil rights. I move away from a rights framework toward an analysis that places gay marriage in a broader context of government regulation of kinship through specifically targeted tactics aimed at particular populations. My contention is that analyzing homonormativity and homonationalism as expressed through Prop 8 politics helps deepen our understanding of the complex machinations of governmentality and biopower in the production of proper (gay) citizens.

Please join us in the Women's Studies Conference Room, Beach Hall 425

If you have any questions, please contact us at 860-486-3970 or wsinfo@uconn.edu.