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New Directions in Gender and Sexuality Studies

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Author

McLean, Lindsey

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New Directions in Gender and Sexuality Studies

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES' 2011-12 COLLOQUIUM WILL FEATURE

JOAN ROUGHGARDEN AND E. PATRICK JOHNSON IN FALL QUARTER

SINCE ITS EMERGENCE in the 1970s from feminist, gay, and lesbian social movements, women's studies has had an substantial influence on disciplines across the academy. The UCLA Department of Women's Studies has developed a year-long colloquium for AY 2011-12 with the specific aim of showcasing cutting-edge scholarship and demonstrating the wide range of disciplines and systems of knowledge for which gender and/or sexuality provides a critical lens or conceptual framework. "The forum will seek to address the kinds of contributions that traditional disciplines can make to transdisciplinary fields such as women's, LGBT, and gender studies and, conversely, consider how the transdisciplinary fields are transforming disciplinary knowledge," says Jenny Sharpe, Chair of the UCLA Department of Women's Studies and Professor in the

Departments of English and Comparative Literature at UCLA, and organizer of the colloquium. "How can we conceptualize gender and sexuality studies in terms of multiple sites of intersecting but irreducible methods and practices? What are the theories that address the full range and complexities of gender roles and sexual identities in different cultural settings, geographical sites, and historical moments?"

The series features internationally renowned scholars whose innovative approaches in gender and sexuality studies have opened up new paths of critical inquiry: Joan Roughgarden, Professor Emerita of Biology at Stanford University; E. Patrick Johnson, Professor and Chair of Performance and African American Studies at Northwestern University; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, University Professor of Comparative Literature at

Columbia University, Rebecca Jordan-Young, Associate Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Barnard College; Alondra Nelson, Associate Professor of Sociology and Institute for research on Women and Gender at Columbia University; Devon Carbado, Professor in the School of Law at UCLA; and Kathryn Stockton, Professor of English at the University of Utah.

The colloquium is supported with a generous grant from the Andrew K. Mellon Foundation and cosponsored by the Department of Anthropology, Center for Society and Genetics, Center for the Study of Women, the Department of English, School of Law, LGBT Studies, Mellon Postdoctoral Program in the Humanities, Williams Institute, and the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance.



JOAN ROUGHGARDEN

Joan Roughgarden will be giving a presentation, entitled “Evolution of Social Behavior: Not the 1970’s Anymore,” with a response from Abigail Saguy, Associate Professor of Sociology at UCLA, on October 5 from 4 to 6 pm in Royce 314.

Roughgarden is well known not only for her work in the fields of biology and ecology but also for coming out as a transsexual woman in 1997 at the age of 51. Already a highly respected biologist and ecologist, she found that her transition began to inform her work in those fields. Relaying a story about attending her first Gay Pride Parade in San Francisco she said, “I looked at this tumultuous, gargantuan group of people and said, ‘There they are! There *we* are!’ And then I said, ‘But aren’t we all impossible? Doesn’t science, doesn’t Darwin’s theory of sexual selection, tell us we shouldn’t ex-

ist?’ And then I said, ‘Well, if science says so many people are wrong, maybe it’s not the people that are wrong—it’s the science that’s wrong.’” Her *Evolution’s Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and in People* (University of California Press, 2nd edition, 2009), attacked the Darwinian notion of sexual selection by documenting the range of homosexual behavior in animals, developing a biology of sexual diversity, and exploring the role of communal bonds in evolution.

In 2000, the *New York Times* described her as “one of the world’s most influential theoretical ecologists,” and in 2005 she was the recipient of the Stonewall Book Award for *Evolution’s Rainbow*. According to *Stanford Magazine*, “Roughgarden’s wide-ranging interests have produced pioneering research on barnacles and Caribbean lizards, along with textbooks on population genetics, evolutionary ecology and the environment. She’s also been instrumental in uniting ecology and economics, helping communities find practical solutions to environmental quandaries.” Her recent books are *The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness* (University of California Press, 2009) and *Evolution and Christian Faith: Reflections of an Evolutionary Biologist* (Island Press, 2006). Since her retirement, after almost 40 years at Stanford, she has been developing the Roughgarden Lab, a way to hold “virtual lab meetings” to further her social-selection project. More information about this project can be found at www.stanford.edu/group/roughlab/.



E. PATRICK JOHNSON

With a presentation entitled “Camp Revival: Queering Gender in the Black Church,” E. Patrick Johnson will speak on November 16 from 4 to 6 pm in Royce 314. Respondent is Uri McMillian, Professor of English at UCLA.

Author of *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Duke University Press, 2003), Johnson has made important advancements in the fields of performance studies, critical race studies, and queer studies. *Appropriating* won several awards, including the Lilla A. Heston Award and the Errol Hill Book Award. In his review, Dwight A. McBride, coeditor of *Black Like Us: A Century of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual African American Fiction*, wrote “With *Appropriating Blackness*, E. Patrick Johnson has given us a book worthy of the breadth its title signals. It

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES
PRESENTS 2011-12 COLLOQUIUM ON

NEW DIRECTIONS IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

Tues • Feb 28 • Royce 314 • 4 to 6 pm

REBECCA JORDAN-YOUNG

Associate Professor, Women's, Gender, and
Sexuality Studies, Barnard

RESPONDENT: **JULIET WILLIAMS**

Wed • Oct 5 • Royce 314 • 4 to 6 pm

EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:
NOT THE 1970'S ANYMORE

JOAN ROUGHGARDEN

Professor, Emerita, Biology, Stanford

RESPONDENT: **ABIGAIL SAGUY**

Wed • Nov 16 • Royce 314 • 4 to 6 pm

CAMP REVIVAL: QUEERING GENDER
IN THE BLACK CHURCH

E. PATRICK JOHNSON

Professor, Performance Studies and African
American Studies, Northwestern

RESPONDENT: **URI MCMILLAN**

Wed • Jan 11 • Royce 314 • 4 to 6 pm

SITUATING FEMINISMS IN NEW DELHI?

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

University Professor, Comparative Literature,
Columbia

RESPONDENT: **MICHELLE ERAI**

Wed • Mar 14 • Humanities 193 • 4 to 6 pm

THE POSTGENOMIC FAMILY

ALONDRA NELSON

Associate Professor, Sociology and the Institute for
Research on Women and Gender, Columbia

RESPONDENT: **AISHA FINCH**

Thurs • Apr 12 • Royce 314 • 4 to 6 pm

WHAT'S LEFT OF FEMINIST
LEGAL THEORY?

DEVON CARBADO

Professor, School of Law, UCLA

Tues • May 15 • Royce 314 • 4 to 6 pm

KID ORIENTALISM: AFRICAN-AMERICAN
HIV CHILDREN V. THE CHILDREN OF
WORLD DOCUMENTARIES

KATHRYN STOCKTON

Professor, English, University of Utah

RESPONDENT: **PURNIMA MANKEKAR**

is written in an excellent and refreshingly clear prose style which sacrifices nothing in the way of complexity of the ideas being presented. Johnson makes his observations about the relatedness of performance and blackness more compelling with each successive case study.”

His newest book is *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—An Oral History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008). For the book, Johnson travelled across the South, conducting interviews with more than seventy black gay men between the ages of 19 and 93. The stories effectively subvert the notion that gay subcultures flourish primarily in northern, secular, and urban areas. By expanding our knowledge of the sexual history of the South, *Sweet Tea* reveals how a congregation of black gay men deal with their sexual, racial, cultural, and religious identities. The book

has garnered much praise, with the *Journal of American Ethnic History* calling the book “a treasure trove of primary sources for those interested in the intersection of race, region, and gay experience in the twentieth century.” *Publishers Weekly* also lauded the book, saying “this fascinating . . . oral history subverts countless preconceptions in its illustration of black gay subcultures thriving in just about every imaginable rural and religious milieu in the South. . . . The courage and honesty of Johnson’s interviewees humble, and readers will find much to treasure in the stories.”

A renowned performance artist, Johnson has developed two shows. In *Strange Fruit*, he combined personal narrative, poetry, dance, music, and visual media to call into question essentialist notions of authenticity in blackness, sexuality, and masculinity. Before retiring the show, Johnson

performed it at over twenty colleges and universities. In it, he illustrated how identities are bound to political agendas that circulate within various communities. His most recent performance piece, “Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Tales,” is based on excerpts from *Sweet Tea*. In it, Johnson depicts different characters spanning multiple generations and explores the relationship between blackness, sexuality, and Southern culture.

For more information on Johnson’s research and performances, visit <http://www.epatrickjohnson.com/> and <http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/faculty/?PID=EPatrickJohnson>

For more information on the colloquium, visit www.womensstudies.ucla.edu.