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New Directions in Gender and Sexuality Studies: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Rebecca Jordan-Young, and Alondra Nelson Will Be Featured in Winter Quarter

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# New Directions in Gender and Sexuality Studies

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK, REBECCA JORDAN-YOUNG,  
AND ALONDRA NELSON WILL BE FEATURED IN WINTER QUARTER

**S**INCE 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. It is supported with a 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 Postdoctor-

al Program in the Humanities, Williams Institute, Department of World Arts, and Cultures/Dance. In Fall 2011, the colloquium featured Joan Roughgarden, Professor Emerita of Biology at Stanford University and E. Patrick Johnson, Professor and Chair of Performance and African American Studies at Northwestern University. In Winter 2012, the scheduled speakers are 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 will be speaking in Spring 2012.

# GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak will be starting off the Spring Quarter of the Women's Studies Lecture Series with her talk, "Situating Feminisms in New Delhi?" at 4 pm on January 11, 2012 at Royce Hall, room 314.

Spivak is a University Professor and a founding member and Director of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University. She is perhaps most well known from her highly influential essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" which is a critique about the role of the postcolonial critic in postcolonial studies, a critique of the sloppy use of the word subaltern, and the history of the discipline of postcolonial studies and for *Of Grammatology*, a translation with critical introduction of Jacques Derrida's, *De la Grammatologie* (1976). Her recent books include *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), *Death of a Discipline* (2003), *Other Asias* (2005) *Nationalism and the Imagination* (2010), and *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (forthcoming 2012). She describes herself as "para-disciplinary, ethical philosopher" and her work is cited across a broad range of disciplines. For a full biography of Spivak and a list of her publications and interviews please visit <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Spivak.html>.



Spivak's talk for the series uses the catachresis of marriage as a resource for a comparative feminism that distinguishes nation-spaces in globality and moves us away from the contemporary irregularity of a synchronic modernity. She will

address the European Enlightenment as an instrument that came into being in the service of colonialism and free trade, a deconstructive politics of reading Mary Wollstonecraft, and Judith Halberstam's recent work on queer failure as taking the



critical to be an invitation to passivity. Finally, her talk conveys how, in Delhi, Beijing, and Cape Town, she has insisted that the lessons learned in the field of activism are not simply to be ignored as an embarrassment.

## REBECCA JORDAN-YOUNG

Rebecca Jordan-Young will be continuing the Women's Studies Lecture Series with her talk, "Plasticity and the Gendered Brain: Trading Essence for Potential" at 4pm on February 28, 2012 in Royce Hall, room 314.

Jordan-Young, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at Barnard College, is a sociomedical scientist whose research includes social epidemiology studies of HIV/AIDS, and evaluation of biological work on sex, gender and sexuality. Prior to joining the faculty at Barnard College, she was a Principal Investigator and Deputy Director of the Social Theory Core at the Center for Drug Use and HIV Research of the National Development and Research Institutes, Inc., and has been a Health Disparities Scholar sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. She teaches courses in science and technology studies, sexuality, gender theory, and HIV/AIDS. In the spring of 2008, Young was a Visiting Scholar at the Cognitive Neuroscience Sector, International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy, and a featured speaker in the FEST Trieste International Science Media Fair.

Her talk at UCLA will consider contemporary approaches to studying and describing sex/gender in relation to neuroscience. In spite of the growing emphasis on plasticity, there is still widespread credence given to

the notion that some subsets of sex/gender-linked factors are fundamentally “hardwired”. If we began with the evidence, would a theory of “male” or “female” brains emerge? This talk will consider this notion of an “innately gendered” brain from three directions. First, it reviews the evidence that the hardwiring theory is not consistent with empirical research on humans. Second, it considers what is actually known about the shape and variation of male-female differences in cognition and personality. Finally, it looks at the “norms of reaction” concept, established for many decades in biology, to consider how we could address research questions that are more genuinely interactionist than current studies allow.

## ALONDRA NELSON

Alondra Nelson will wrap up the Spring Quarter of the Women’s Studies Lecture Series with her talk, “The Postgenomic Family” that will take place at 4pm on March 14, 2012 at Royce Hall, room 314.

Nelson is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Columbia University and holds an appointment in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWaG). Her areas of specialization include race and ethnicity in the U.S.; gender and kinship; socio-historical studies of medicine, science and technology; and social and cultural theory. Nelson studies the production of knowledge about human difference in biomedicine and





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**

technoscience and the circulation of these ideas in the public sphere: Her research focuses on how science and its applications shape the social world, including aspects of personal identification, racial formation and collective action. In turn, she also explores the ways in which social groups challenge, engage and, in some instances, adopt and mobilize conceptualizations of race, ethnicity and gender derived from scientific and technical domains.

Nelson's lecture at UCLA will consider "the family" in a postgenomic era. In her talk, she will

employ postgenomic as a temporal, technological, and symbolic marker that signals the decoding of the human genome as well as the proliferation of the logics and techniques of genetic science. The postgenomic is a historical and socio-technical juncture at which the family is remarkably flexible yet deeply intractable. Nelson will take up a discussion of this paradox of the postgenomic family against the backdrop of kin-keeping practices (e.g., genetic genealogy); novel forms of affiliation (e.g. biosociality); and uses of kinship as both a health risk and a health resource.

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Jane'a Johnson and Lindsey McLean are Graduate Student researchers at CSW.