

## **2018-2019 Call for Applicants - IRW Global Scholars**

### *Public Catastrophes, Private Losses*

Institute for Research on Women

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Each year, the Institute for Research on Women (IRW) invites several individuals to join us as IRW Global Scholars for four to nine months. While Global Scholars are expected to provide their own funding, IRW offers office space, institutional affiliation, access to the Rutgers library, and participation in a lively interdisciplinary feminist community. The theme for our discussions from September 2018 through April 2019 will be "Public Catastrophes, Private Losses." We invite applications from university scholars and scholar/activists whose work is compatible with the theme.

### **About the IRW**

IRW promotes innovative scholarship on women, gender, and sexuality through interdisciplinary forums, lectures, and conferences. IRW's weekly seminar allows Global Scholars to discuss drafts of their work with Rutgers faculty and graduate students, all of whom are working on writing projects related to the annual theme. In addition, our Global Scholar Program provides an opportunity for postdoctoral scholars and activists to benefit from Rutgers' unique resources related to the study of women and gender. The IRW is a member of the Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL), a consortium of 9 different Rutgers units focused on women and gender, also including Douglass Residential College, the Women's and Gender Studies Department, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Center for Women and Work, the Center on Violence against Women and Children, the Center for Women in the Arts and Humanities, and the Office for the Promotion of Women in Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

### **IRW Global Scholars**

IRW Global Scholars typically hold jobs or academic appointments elsewhere but wish to be in residence at the institute for a semester or a year. Global Scholars do not receive any financial support from Rutgers or the IRW, but we are happy to arrange access to University libraries and recreational facilities, provide office space, and extend invitations to participate in university lectures, colloquia and seminars. Scholars also receive university email accounts and modest photocopying and long-distance telephone support. Former IRW Scholars have received funding through Fulbright, IREX, other local foundations, and their own institutions. University regulations limit our ability to accept applicants who are not funded through their home institutions or through external grants, fellowships and awards, but we can usually accept one scholar in this situation per academic year.

We invite applications from prospective scholars whose individual research or activism is compatible with the theme of our interdisciplinary research seminar. We expect that Global Scholars will

participate in the weekly seminar along with Rutgers faculty and graduate students whose work explores the seminar theme from a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. Located within the Women's Scholarship and Leadership Complex at Rutgers, our Global Scholar offices surround an open conference room that is available for scholars' meetings. Next door to the Institute, the gracious Wittenborn Scholars Residence is available to house individual scholars affiliated with the IRW on a first come, first served basis.

### **IRW Interdisciplinary Research Seminar**

IRW's twenty-second annual interdisciplinary seminar takes as its theme "Public Catastrophes, Private Losses." Wars, genocides, forced migration, and terrorism, as well as health epidemics and natural disasters remake lives. In the aftermath of physical and emotional dislocation, how do people process a sense of loss and rebuild their lives? A growing body of scholarship suggests that the impacts of catastrophic events vary across different contexts, bleeding into multiple domains. This seminar looks at the ways public catastrophes imprint themselves on lives, how individuals, as members of groups, narrate, process, and grapple with legacies of loss, and how states and non-governmental organizations address such events, serving the needs of some populations better than others.

Inspired by feminism, we are particularly interested in the ways the personal and public are intertwined, and how, in the aftermath of catastrophe, families and communities become repositories for loss, silence, mourning, witnessing, reconstruction, and reparation. What are the conditions that make it possible for ordinary people to make sense out of overwhelming events or processes that have profoundly disrupted the life of their family, community or nation? How can states and other social institutions best respond to their needs? Recent social movements, such as Black Lives Matter, suggest that social inequalities shape understandings of whose lives count, and what kinds of deaths are grievable. We live in a precarious world, where the lives of so many are considered expendable.

In the 2018-19 IRW seminar we will build upon this important work. Studies may examine any time period(s) or geographical location(s) and be rooted in any disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach(es). Some possible topics relevant to the seminar theme include, but are not limited to:

- The effects of migration, exile, and dislocation
- Post-disaster recovery efforts
- Family memories of catastrophe
- Disasters and environmental racism
- Reparations
- "Disaster capitalism"
- Exceptional versus the "everyday" trauma
- False memories and the politics of witnessing
- Necropolitics
- Therapeutic culture and victimhood
- Sexual abuse during times of war
- Epigenetics and the intergenerational transmission of trauma
- Analyzing and archiving survivor narratives

- PTSD and the medicalization of trauma
- Trauma-descendant groups and memory work
- Museums and memorialization
- Trauma-based social movements

### **Application Procedures**

Postdoctoral scholars working in any discipline may apply. Applications should be sent by email to [irw@sas.rutgers.edu](mailto:irw@sas.rutgers.edu) with “Global Scholars” in the subject line. They should include the following: letter of intent specifying project title and proposed dates of visit; project description (five pages maximum, double-spaced); curriculum vitae and email address; names and contact information of four professional references. Prospective global scholars are invited to discuss the relevance of their project to “Public Catastrophes, Private Losses” as part of their application. Applicants interested in further information about this program or the IRW are invited to visit our website <http://irw.rutgers.edu> or contact the institute by email ([irw@sas.rutgers.edu](mailto:irw@sas.rutgers.edu)) or phone (848-932-9072).