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*IRW Seminar  
2017-18*

*The Perils of Populism: Feminist Perspectives on  
the Current Political Crisis in the West*

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## Call for Applications Institute for Research on Women

The Institute for Research on Women (IRW) announces its twenty-first annual interdisciplinary seminar, “The Perils of Populism: Feminist Perspectives on the Current Political Crisis in the West.” A rightwing populism that scapegoats society’s most vulnerable populations is emerging across the west and enjoying growing political power. Drawing upon age-old themes of racial resentment, such movements pose nationalism as the solution to economic and social malaise. In the United States, the resurgence of populism has resulted in a dramatic rise of violence, harassment, and hate speech directed against immigrants, people of color, Muslims, Jews, LGBT people and other marginalized communities. How can a feminist lens diagnose the current political moment, and help us to move beyond it? What, if anything, can we learn from the ways feminists have challenged reactionary populism in Europe, as well as in South Asia, the Middle East and Latin America? Might feminism help us combat hatred and despair and move toward a more just future?

As observers have argued, globalization, growing social inequality, the changing media universe, and other factors contribute to the rise of reactionary populist movements. Though not always explicitly articulated, gender plays a central role as well, as it does in all aspects of political life. Gender shapes how the powerful mobilize, how social issues are framed, and whose narratives—and lives—count. Gender also intersects with race, sexuality, nationality, and class in organizing support for such movements, and resistance to them. Rage against the political system is frequently articulated in gendered terms as a defense of hegemonic forms of masculinity, reinforcing gender binaries and shunning gender transgression.

Feminist analyses have helped identify strategies for organizing, movement building, and the pursuit of policy change. Some feminists suggest that in order to oppose growing reactionary political tendencies, women must be elected to public office. Others have mobilized around salient gender-related issues, such as reproductive rights, employment equity, sexual harassment, and violence. Still others have played leading roles in movements with broader political objectives, from the LGBT movement to Black Lives Matter. Feminism has helped scholars and activists conceptualize powerful visions of a more just world.

In the 2017-18 IRW seminar we will build upon this important work, looking specifically at the roles feminist knowledge and praxis can play in a period of rightwing populism. We particularly welcome contributions that look at how activist projects can imbue our scholarship, and how scholarship can advance activism. Some possible topics relevant to the seminar theme include, but are not limited to:

- gendering support for rightwing populism
- masculinity and foreign policy
- feminism, the state, and democracy
- the role of the feminist scholar in a time of repression
- gender and sexual migrants across national boundaries
- gendering Islamophobia
- genocide, ethnonationalism, and collective memory
- sexual violence and the politics of everyday
- the gender of racism and the racism of gender
- feminist organizing and coalition building
- gender, social media, and the (anti?) democratic public sphere
- affective politics: anger, rage, and embodiment
- gender and the mass psychology of the far right
- religious freedom and dissent
- human and civil rights
- class and urban/rural divides

**We invite applications from faculty and advanced graduate students (ABD status required) whose projects explore aspects of our theme.** Individuals from all disciplines, schools, and programs on all Rutgers campuses are welcome to apply. The seminar will support up to eight Rutgers Faculty Fellows and up to four Graduate Fellows from the New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark campuses. Seminar fellows are expected to attend all Thursday morning seminar meetings during Fall and Spring Semesters 2017-2018, provide a paper for discussion in the seminar, and open a seminar session with an extended response to another scholar's paper.

Graduate students will receive a \$5,000 stipend for the year as seminar fellows. Faculty fellows will receive either \$4,000 in research support or a one-course teaching release for one semester to enable them to participate in the year-long seminar. In the latter case, departments will be reimbursed for instructional replacements at the minimum contractual PTL rate. Financial arrangements will be made in advance of the seminar with the department chairs and/or appropriate deans.

Applications should be received at the IRW by **Thursday, February 23, 2017**. All decisions of the selection committee are final. 2017-2018 Seminar Fellows will be notified by **Friday March 3, 2017**. Please contact IRW at [irw@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:irw@rci.rutgers.edu) if you have any questions or would like more information.

**RUTGERS**  
School of Arts and Sciences

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Please review the guidelines in our online FAQ (<http://irw.rutgers.edu/programs/interdisciplinary-faculty-graduate-seminar/18-programs/seminar/55-frequently-asked-questions-about-the-irw-s-seminar>).

- 1. Rutgers graduate students:** Please complete sections A and B, sign the form and acquire your department chair or mentor's signature. Submit with a project title and 150-word abstract, a project description of up to five double-spaced pages, and an updated curriculum vitae. To be eligible for a stipend, students must be ABD by or before December 15, 2016.
- 2. Rutgers faculty members:** Please fill out sections A and C, sign the form and acquire the signature of your department chair, director or dean [if no dept. structure]. Submit with a project title and 150-word abstract, a project description of up to five double-spaced pages, and an updated curriculum vitae.

Please use the subject line: IRW Seminar Application <Your last name> to email the documents and this application form (PDF format preferred) to [irw@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:irw@rci.rutgers.edu) by **Thursday, February 23, 2017**. Receipt will be confirmed via return email; please contact us at 848/932-9072 if you do not receive an email confirmation.

**SECTION A** (All Applicants)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department and School: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus address and phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

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**SECTION B** (Prospective Rutgers Graduate Students only)

- I am/will be ABD by December 15, 2016 and agree to participate in weekly seminar meetings, Thursday mornings from 10:30 to noon, during both Fall and Spring semesters

My dissertation committee comprises of the following: \_\_\_\_\_

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**SECTION C** (Prospective Rutgers Faculty Fellows only)

If accepted as a Faculty Fellow of the IRW Seminar, I will participate in weekly seminar meetings, Thursday mornings from 10:30 to noon during both the Fall and Spring semesters.

- I am requesting one course reduction for the 2017-2018 Fall or Spring semester (circle one); the IRW will arrange for coadjutant funding at an approved level for instructional replacement.

**OR**

- I am requesting research funds of \$4,000 from the IRW in support of my seminar project.
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**SIGNATURES** (All applicants)

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**ADMINISTRATIVE ENDORSEMENT FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR, DIRECTOR, OR DEAN (FACULTY) OR MENTOR (GRAD STUDENT)**

In signing this application, department chair or mentor indicates support of the candidate's research proposal and candidacy for the seminar and that the department accepts the terms of seminar participation and support requested above.

Name (please print or type) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_