

IRW Seminar

2010-2011

The Art & Science  
of Happiness

# Call for Applications

## Institute for Research on Women

The Institute for Research on Women (IRW) announces its fourteenth annual interdisciplinary seminar, "The Art & Science of Happiness." What does it mean to be "happy"? What are the biological, physiological, psychological, emotional, social and cultural factors that contribute to making a person or community "happy"? Do these factors vary by gender, age, class, ethnicity, nationality, or sexuality, and if so, how? How do humor, laughter, economic security, political stability, friendship, family, children, careers, health, drugs, hobbies, community involvement, sex, personal fulfillment, social connections, and other domains contribute (or not) to one's sense of being happy? How is happiness expressed and represented in music, art, literature, film, performance and other domains? What does the comparative study of "happiness" across time and space tell us about commonalities and differences in the human experience?

This seminar will explore how attention to "happiness" includes but also moves us beyond "desire" and "pleasure" as defining tropes in studies of women, gender and sexuality to consider other motivations, emotional states, and ways of being. Moreover, by bringing together scholars focused on the "science" of happiness with those who explore the "art" of happiness, we hope to provoke and inspire a comparative, interdisciplinary inquiry into a key motif in human experience.

We invite applications from faculty and advanced graduate students whose projects explore aspects of the art and science of happiness. Such studies may focus on any time period(s) or geographical location(s) and be rooted in any disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach(es). *We especially invite scholars from the sciences to apply.* Possible questions relevant to the seminar theme might include:

- What are the biological, physiological, psychological and genetic bases of happiness, if any? Do these differ between men and women, and if so, how?
- How is happiness expressed in artistic, poetic, visual or literary forms? How do these aesthetic forms in turn produce happiness? Is there a gendered component to this dynamic?
- How is happiness defined, communicated, understood and experienced by different people and societies across the globe and throughout history?
- What are the promises and perils of making happiness, however defined, a central aspiration for an individual, community or, even, as in the case of Bhutan, nation-state?

Individuals from all disciplines, schools, and programs on all three Rutgers campuses with projects related to the seminar theme are welcome to apply. We invite applicants from a wide range of backgrounds, including the natural sciences and engineering, humanities, social sciences, arts, medicine, public health, education, business, social work, information technology, engineering, public policy, law, and other fields. We also welcome proposals from Rutgers-based writers, artists, performers, and activists.

The seminar will support up to eight Rutgers Faculty Fellows and up to four Graduate Fellows from Rutgers professional schools and SAS departments/programs on the New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark campuses. Seminar fellows will attend the Thursday morning seminar meetings during Fall and Spring Semesters 2010-2011, 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 Monday, November 16th, 2009. All decisions of the selection committee are final. 2010-2011 Seminar Fellows will be notified by December 7th, 2009. Please contact the IRW at [irw@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:irw@rci.rutgers.edu) if you have any questions or would like more information.

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