
*IRW Seminar
2016-17*

*Feminist In/Security: Vulnerability, Securitization,
and States of Crisis*

Call for Applications Institute for Research on Women

The Institute for Research on Women (IRW) announces its twentieth annual interdisciplinary seminar, “Feminist In/Security: Vulnerability, Securitization, and States of Crisis.” We live in a time of fear, when “security” has become a keyword, promising to alleviate threats of violence at home and abroad. Securitization has also become big, transnational business. Techniques, methods, and technologies of securitization are mobile and adaptable, and they travel alongside experts and expertise within a global market that brings together various—and sometimes surprising—actors. During the 2016-17 academic year, IRW will look at questions of international and domestic security from a range of feminist and queer perspectives. How might feminist and queer analyses and methods help us better understand regional, international, and transnational crises—from Ebola to the spread of ISIS to the mass movement of refugees? How do concepts such as homonationalism (Puar) or methods derived from “queer intellectual curiosity” (Weber) disrupt conventional understandings of sexuality, power, statehood, and international politics?

Feminist and queer scholarship have challenged and re-conceptualized many of the key assumptions of international security discourse, critiquing mainstream debates and revisiting constructs, including political realism (Tickner, Peterson), militarism (Enloe), post colonialism (Alexander, Talpade Mohanty), and human rights (Thoreson, Aradau). Influenced by feminist scholars and activists, the United Nations has broadened its interpretation of security, incorporating aspects of human security, such as freedom from rape, environmental degradation, and poverty, into a definition typically associated with the territorial integrity and autonomy of states. Yet despite its lip-service to gender equity, the UN’s approach often conceals gender-based injustices (including those related to gender identity and expression) and regularly ignores the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and legal status. Indeed, gender is often introduced into studies of international and human security in ways that are trivial and tokenistic rather than addressing the complex realities of vulnerable subjects globally. Although these approaches aim at securing women or sexual minorities, technologies and theories of securitization are often articulated through class, racial, and gender difference. Old problems gain new descriptions: under- and unemployed young men, for example, are no longer threats to the health of a national economy but become security threats (Amar).

At the level of the state, feminist and queer scholars and activists have used the concept of security to critically examine a variety of issues, including mass incarceration, profiling, domestic violence, and sex work. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement developed an explicitly feminist

analysis of state violence under white supremacy and the ways communities of color are acutely susceptible to police brutality. Within a transnational context, scholars have demonstrated how the migration apparatus of the United States inflicts violence and terror on migrant families, often in the name of “security” for the homeland (Schmidt Camacho, Golash-Boza). Trans Studies scholars have noted similarities between the policing of national borders and the policing of genders, and described how gender-nonconforming bodies can disrupt systems of surveillance utilized in the name of national security (Aizura, Beauchamp). Indeed, surveillance technologies are increasingly used both to terrorize women and to profile populations of South Asian and Middle Eastern descent, resulting in heightened surveillance and the increasing vulnerability and criminalization of already marginalized communities. Yet while vulnerability can prove dangerous, “brittle,” or insecure, scholars also note its potential to reorient relationships between self and others, creating generative spaces for feminist interventions through solidarity and resistance (Ahmed, Butler).

We invite applications from faculty and advanced graduate students (ABD status required) whose projects explore aspects of our theme. Such 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:

- Cybersecurity
- Vulnerability and grievability
- Precarity
- Black Lives Matter
- Masculinities, secularization, and crisis
- Tourism and leisure studies
- Economic development
- International relations theory
- Border studies
- Migration
- Human trafficking
- Refugees and asylum
- The carceral state
- Hurricane Sandy and human security
- Latin American financial crises
- Food systems
- Governance and biopolitics
- Trauma, fear and its multigenerational legacies
- Domestic violence
- Militarism
- Virality
- Settler/colonial studies
- Terrorism/the war on terror
- Environmental threats

Individuals from all disciplines, schools, and programs on all Rutgers campuses 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, public policy, law, and other fields. We also welcome proposals from Rutgers-based writers and activists.

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 2016-2017, 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 **Friday, February 5, 2016**. All decisions of the selection committee are final. 2016-2017 Seminar Fellows will be notified by **Friday February 26, 2016**. Please contact IRW at irw@rci.rutgers.edu if you have any questions or would like more information.

RUTGERS
School of Arts and Sciences

Institute for Research on Women
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
160 Ryders Lane
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555

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2016-17**

**Feminist In/Security: Vulnerability, Securitization, and
States of Crisis**

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, 2015.
- 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 by **Friday, February 5, 2016**. 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: _____

SECTION B (Prospective Rutgers Graduate Students only)

- I am/will be ABD by December 15, 2015 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: _____

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 2016-2017 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 _____