
*IRW Seminar
2019-20*

*This is What Democracy Looks Like:
Feminist Re-imaginings*

Call for Applications Institute for Research on Women

In January 2017, when millions of women took the streets to protest the Trump presidency, they chanted “Show me what democracy looks like! This is what democracy looks like!” But what *does* democracy look like? And what *should* it look like?

Today democracy is under attack across the globe. The weakness of traditional political parties has enabled the rise of aggressive and stridently nationalistic strongmen. At the same time, politics increasingly takes the form of positional warfare, making compromise impossible. We will reflect upon democracy’s history and potential futures during the Institute for Research on Women’s twenty-third interdisciplinary seminar, “This is What Democracy Looks Like: Feminist Re-imaginings.” How do we imagine democracy, construct it, critique it, and defend it? How can feminism help us to think through, and reclaim a sense of common purpose, cultivate empathy, and care for the most vulnerable?

While enabled by electoral mechanisms and constitutions, many argue that democracy is much more than that: it is a way of thinking, a set of values, and even a way of being. For the political philosopher Hannah Arendt, the right to act and speak in public in ways that matter is the essence of democracy. Others focus on ideals of equality, fairness, or justice, or on processes such as deliberation and protest. Feminism has reinvigorated such discussions by enlarging the scope of the political imagination to include women, people of color, as well as the economically vulnerable, engaging many of those who have long been marginalized. But a focus on identities, without a sense of the common good, can also lead to fragmentation and the shrinkage of the “demos.”

What is the role of democratic citizenship in a global world that is now rife with nationalism? How can we acknowledge the role of gender, race, class, sexual, and other differences, while reclaiming a sense of our commonality?

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:

- The ethics and politics of democracy
- Classical and contemporary democracies in perspective
- Facts, falsehoods, and the erosion of trust
- Borders, belonging, and citizenship
- Democracy in art and the literary imagination
- Money, corporations, and politics
- Psychology, therapeutic culture, and technologies of democratic selfhood
- Sexuality and citizenship
- Civic education and political socialization

- Exclusion as a threat to democracy
- Elections and electoral processes
- Environmental democracy
- Nationalism, transnationalism, and the mass media
- Women and social movements on the left and right
- Community organizing, movement building, and transformative politics
- Emotions, apathy, and participation
- Social media, political ideologies, and public opinion

Individuals from all disciplines, schools, and programs on all Rutgers campuses are welcome to apply. 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, RBHS, Camden, and Newark campuses. Seminar fellows are expected to attend **all** Thursday morning seminar meetings during Fall and Spring Semesters 2019-2020, 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 IRW by **Thursday, January 31, 2019**. All decisions of the selection committee are final. 2019-2020 Seminar Fellows will be notified by **Friday, March 1, 2019**. Please contact IRW at irw@sas.rutgers.edu if you have any questions.

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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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, 2018.
- 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@sas.rutgers.edu by **Thursday, January 31, 2019**. 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, 2018 and agree to participate in **all** 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 **all** 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 2019-2020 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 _____