

Call for Applications Institute for Research on Women

Care work is essential work. It enables us to raise children and support the sick and disabled. It is the hidden backbone of our economy and our society. While care is necessary for the survival of our families, our communities, and the species, national leaders rarely prioritize care, and many are downright hostile to it. Witness the Trump administration's policy of forcibly separating children from their parents at the Texas-Mexico border, and former First Lady Melania Trump's jacket proclaiming "I really don't care, do you?" on visiting children in an immigrant detention center.

In contrast to this performance of callous disregard, care has long been a focus for feminists. In the 1980s, psychologist Carol Gilligan argued that women and girls were more likely to employ an "ethic of care" which made them attentive to the needs of others. Similarly, Sara Ruddick argued that "maternal thinking," a set of values and ethical judgments derived from the ties between mother and child, should inform feminist models of ethics, politics, and policy. Another strain in feminist thinking about care foregrounds women's domestic labor, which tends to be un- or undercompensated. According to feminist economist Ipek Ilkkaracan, women's unpaid care work, including household production, and volunteer and community work, encompasses over 16 billion hours per day, or approximately 2 billion full-time jobs. The language of care can obscure the racialized and gendered power relationships that structure domestic labor and are residues of slavery, writes feminist historian Premilla Nadasen.

Indeed, most domestic workers in the United States are women of color. Debra Lancaster from the Rutgers Center for Women and Work notes that 95 percent of home health aides in NJ are women, more than half are immigrants, and more than 70 percent are Black or Latina. Paid care workers, such as home health aides who care for the sick and the elderly, are among the lowest paid workers. Increasingly, low-income women from the Global South leave their families to care for the children of more affluent families in the Global North. As Rhacel Salazar Parreñas notes, the "international division of reproductive labor" tends to benefit rich countries at the expense of poor countries. When migrant women attempt to provide care for their own children in their countries of origin as well as their employers' children in the Global North, it creates a "care deficit" for the former.

Clearly, care-work is a political matter. "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare," wrote Audre Lorde in 1988. Recently, some have described a "care crisis," precipitated by the growing pressures on family life, specifically mothers, and exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic. This crisis emerges in relation to the high cost of childcare, the shortage of childcare workers and caregivers for elderly and disabled populations, and the absence of a national childcare policy in US. Still, many low-income families have always been in survival mode. While some seek government solutions, others—often out of necessity—have pursued collective care projects. From STAR house, founded by trans activist Marsha P. Johnson in 1970 to provide sustenance, care, and community for New York City's trans youth, through the queer communities of care created in response to the AIDS crisis, to the Ballroom communities of the present, care has been an important aspect of queer life. Writing in the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic, trans scholar/activist Dean Spade, advocates for mutual aid to help people meet "each other's needs based in shared commitments to dignity, care, and justice."

This seminar will address feminist and queer approaches to care. **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 “care crisis”
- Racial capitalism, care, and survival
- Welfare states’ comparative social policies around childcare
- Impacts of COVID on care work
- Care and the political imagination
- Caring as a human rights and humanitarian issue
- Transformations of masculinity and the work-family divide
- “Self-care” and the limitations of individualism
- Demographic shifts and rising demand for paid carers
- Globalization of care work
- Emotional labor and the intimacy of care work
- Environmental stewardship and caring for non-humans
- Speculative futures and “planetary care”

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 six 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 2022-2023, 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 **Friday, January 28, 2022**. All decisions of the selection committee are final. 2022-2023 Seminar Fellows will be notified by **Friday, March 4, 2022**. 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

**IRW Seminar
2022-23**

Care

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, 2021.
- 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 **Friday, January 28, 2022**. Receipt will be confirmed via return email.

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, 2021 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 2022-2023 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 _____