

*The Northeastern University Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and
the Forum on Feminist Thought present*

A one-day symposium

**FROM PATRIARCHY TO PUSSY RIOT:
GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

March 14, 2014 | 8:30 am – 5:30 pm

Northeastern University

The John D. O'Bryant African American Institute Cabral Center

40 Leon Street, Boston, Massachusetts

*Reception to follow at the Northeastern University Visitor's Center, West Village F
Lobby, 40A Leon Street, Boston, Massachusetts*

Schedule of Events

Friday, March 14

8:30-9:00 am

Arrival and check-in

Coffee and light breakfast will be provided.

9:00 am – 9:30 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks

*Uta Poiger, Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern
University*

*Suzanna Walters, Professor of Sociology and Program Director of WGSS, Northeastern
University*

9:30 am – 11:00 am

Panel #1: Queer Citizenship in an Age of Tolerance

Moderator: Sarah Jackson, Northeastern University

Citizen Gay: immutability, rainbow weddings, and the trouble with tolerance

Suzanna Walters, Northeastern University

This talk argues that theories of sexual identity as predetermined and immutable (the “born this way” discourse) have become the common-sense ideology in American culture such that ideas of volition and choice have been banished from our vision of sexual freedom and citizenship. Further, these discourses are tied up with a resurgent gender essentialism that together form a formidable obstacle to feminist and queer understandings of gender and sexual fluidity and liberation. Even more detrimentally,

this new common-sense “truth” underlies the current quest for GLBT rights, a quest framed around a theme of “tolerance” that offers a weak and attenuated vision of a gay-friendly future. Immutability is the handmaiden to tolerance; both actively disempower more radically integrationist and challenging models of sexual and gender freedom. This talk offers a critique of citizenship as immutable but therefore acceptable difference, and examines the ways in which that ideology has provided the ballast for a tepid homonormativity.

Sodomy, Marriage, and Sex Offense: Anthony Kennedy's Judicial Tolerance

Peter Campbell, Northeastern University

This presentation examines some of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy's development of a limited rhetoric of constitutional tolerance through his opinions in cases including *Lawrence v. Texas*, *United States v. Windsor*, and *Smith v. Doe*. Through a reading of Kennedy's arguments about due process, equal protection, and double jeopardy—as well as some related judicial rhetoric about the ongoing criminalization of "sodomy" in Massachusetts—I suggest a relationship between state and federal judicial rhetoric about lesbian and gay marriage, and recent increases in the severity and sophistication of sex criminalization in the service of U.S. politics of mass incarceration.

11:00 am – 11:30 am

BREAK

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Panel #2 The State Bashes Back

Moderator: *Laura Green, Northeastern University*

The Clash of State and Society in Russia Today: Masculinity as Performance and Counterperformance

Elizabeth Wood, MIT

Vladimir Putin, the bare-chested “national leader” of Russia, is well known to viewers around the world. In his first ten years in power his prestige was predicated in large measure on a hypermasculine image in a number of spheres. Yet in 2011 when he announced that he was intent on returning to the presidency, protesters began to question this very hypermasculinity, creating songs, videos, and signs for demonstrations asserting alternative masculinities and feminist demands. This clash of masculinities shows the degree to which performance can be contrapuntal as multiple sides react and interact in formulating their views and their image.

“Bury Their Hearts”: Some Thoughts on the Spectre of Homosexuality Haunting Russia

Laurie Essig, Middlebury College

Russia's anti-gay propaganda laws and anti-gay sentiment have shocked many in the West. They shouldn't have. In Soviet Russia, the homosexual was seen as a sign of foreign pollution, a temporary aberration- like a criminal or a disease- that will disappear in a more socialist future. As a result, queer Russians were not so much the stable homosexual species that we saw in the West as much as momentary communities of

desire. In the post-Soviet era, this history of the homosexual as foreign is now confronted with American understandings of gays and lesbians as “born this way” as well as American homophobia that posits the homosexual as a threat to children and the “traditional” family. By examining the clash between Russian and American histories of sexuality, we can see that the current anti-gay politics in Russia was not predetermined by its history, but certainly shaped by it.

Logics of the Sexual State: Re-criminalizing homosexuality in India

Jyoti Puri, Simmons College

A decade-long legal struggle to decriminalize homosexuality in India resulted in the recent Supreme Court judgment upholding the anti-sodomy law. Accounting for the dismaying outcome, this presentation explores the ways in which governing sexuality helps secure the idea and indispensability of the state.

1:00pm-2:00 pm

Lunch and informal discussion

Lunch will be provided.

2:00pm-3:30pm

Panel #3: Asylum, Immigration, and the Liminal Citizen

Moderator: *Aziza Ahmed, Northeastern University School of Law*

Invisible Intersectionality in US Lesbian Asylum Claims

Sara McKinnon, University of Wisconsin-Madison

This talk addresses the experiences of lesbians in the US asylum system and demonstrates that gay women's cases are evaluated against the sexual orientation genre conventions of gay male asylum seekers' cases. These conventions shape what immigration judges expect to be present in claimants' comportment, what they expect to hear in the content of the case, and what the evidence will reveal about the context of persecution. Lesbians, when read against these conventions, are often caught in the invisible intersection between gender and sexuality, making it ultimately hard to win asylum relief as gay women.

Queering Crimmigration: The 1950s Convergence of Immigration Enforcement and Local Policing

Rachel E. Rosenbloom, Northeastern University

Immigration scholarship over the last decade has increasingly focused on the convergence of immigration enforcement and criminal law enforcement, or “crimmigration.” Most accounts ascribe the advent of this convergence to the 1980s and '90s. In this paper, I argue that our understanding of crimmigration can be deepened by a consideration of earlier transformations in interior immigration enforcement that took place in the 1950s. In particular, I look at a cluster of cases in which men arrested for sexual activity with other men found themselves the target of investigation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). I argue that these cases, among the first in which lawful permanent residents were placed in deportation proceedings solely on the basis of arrests for minor criminal offenses,

suggest a link between the Lavender Scare of the 1950s – which represented an unprecedented level of cooperation between federal administrative agencies and local law enforcement, as well as the convergence of discourses of national security and crime – and the emergence of the crimmigration paradigm.

3:30pm-4:00pm

Panel #4 Creating Sexed Subjects

Moderator: *Phyllis Thompson, Northeastern University/Harvard University*

Semiotics of Motherhood: Transnational Surrogacy and Sexual Citizenship

Sujata Moorti, Middlebury College

Through a focus on media representations of the transnational surrogacy industry, this talk goes beyond the ethical and moral dilemmas posed by the phenomenon. Analyzing documentaries portraying this industry and counterpoising them with social media produced by surrogates and the surrogate industry I outline the parameters of transnational motherhood. I argue that the different women involved in the surrogacy industry – surrogates, agents, egg donors, prospective parents, and doctors – each are differently located in discourses of citizenship although they are all equally implicated in transnational circuits. Informed by postcolonial feminist scholarship, I contend that the surrogates are civic and sexual exiles, neither belonging to the nation nor cosmopolitan subjects.

Making Homes and Undermining Blackness

Faith Smith, Brandeis University

Why/how has what we might call queer home-making produced so much anxiety for the arbiters of colonial self-making, and postcolonial citizenship? Drawing from the Caribbean, this talk engages questions of race, sexuality, and citizenship in and around issues of “home” and kinship.

5:00pm-5:30pm

Closing Panel and Wrap Up Discussion

Reimagining Sexuality and Citizenship: Dialogues and Conversations

Members of the Sexual Citizenship Collaborative Research Cluster, Northeastern University

5:45 pm:

Cocktail reception in the Northeastern University Visitor’s Center, West Village F Lobby, 40A Leon Street

Please join us for a cocktail reception on campus to conclude the symposium.

Panelist and Moderator Biographies

Aziza Ahmed, Associate Professor, *School of Law, Northeastern University*

Ahmed is an expert in health law, human rights, property law, international law, and development. Her interdisciplinary scholarship focuses on issues of both domestic and international law. She teaches Property Law, Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, and International Health Law: Governance, Development, and Rights. In addition to this work, Professor Ahmed also examines challenges facing Muslim minority communities post 9/11.

Peter Campbell, Post-Doctoral Fellow, *Department of Communications Studies, Northeastern University*

Campbell is a Postdoctoral Teaching Associate in the Department of Communication Studies, where he teaches rhetoric and public speaking. His current research focuses on judicial arguments about race, sexuality, and incarceration in U.S. constitutional law.

Laurie Essig, Associate Professor, *Departments of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies and Sociology, Middlebury College*

Essig is the author of *American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards and our Quest for Perfection* (Beacon, 2010) and *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and the Other*. *Queer in Russia* examined how sexual otherness is imagined differently in Russia than in the US. *American Plastic* considered how neoliberal economics and philosophy played out on the bodies and bank accounts of Americans in the form of cosmetic surgery. Essig has written on a variety of topics in a variety of academic and popular outlets including the *Washington Post*, *Salon*, *Forbes* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and blogs as Love, Inc. at *Psychology Today*.

Laura Green, Professor and Chair, *Department of English, Northeastern University*

Green is the author of the books *Literary Identification from Charlotte Brontë to Tsitsi Dangarembga* (2012) and *Educating Women: Cultural Conflict and Victorian Literature* and her essay on George Eliot, gender, and sexuality recently appeared in the *Blackwell Companion to George Eliot* (2013). She writes about women, gender, and sexuality, particularly in Victorian literature, and about the tradition of English realist fiction.

Sarah J. Jackson, Assistant Professor, *Department of Communications, Northeastern University*

Sarah J. Jackson studies how race and gender are constructed in national debates around citizenship, inequality, and social movements. In particular, her work examines how race is talked about in political campaigns, how rape and sexual assault are understood in the public sphere, and how political protest is covered by the media. Her book, *Black Celebrity, Radical Politics, and the Press*, will be available in June 2014.

Sara McKinnon, Assistant Professor, *Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

McKinnon works in the areas of intercultural rhetoric, globalization/transnational studies, legal rhetoric, and transnational feminist theory with expertise in critical rhetorical, qualitative, and performance-based methods. She has recently finished a book manuscript entitled, *Subjects between States: Gender-Related Asylum in US Law and Politics*, which charts the emergence of gender as a political category in US asylum law within the context of broader national and global politics. Her essays have appeared in *Women's Studies in Communication, Text and Performance Quarterly*, and the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.

Sujata Moorti, Professor and Chair, *Department of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, Middlebury College*

Moorti has published extensively on media representations of gender, sexuality and diasporic formations. She is currently completing a manuscript on *iFeminism* where she teases out the ways in which social media are altering understandings of feminism around the world. In this manuscript she explores the transnational circuits of activism and knowledge production that social media technologies engender, altering our conceptions of gender and agency. She is completing two other monographs on gendered violence. She is the author of *Color of Rape: Gender, Race and Democratic Public Spheres* (SUNY Press, 2002) and has co-edited *Global Bollywood: The Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008) and *Local Violence, Global Media: Feminist Analyses of Gendered Representations* (Peter Lang, 2009). She teaches courses on feminist cultural studies, diasporic media studies, and postcolonial theory.

Jyoti Puri, Professor, *Departments of Sociology and Gender/Cultural Studies, Simmons College*

Puri writes and teaches in the areas of sexualities, states, nationalisms, and transnational and postcolonial feminisms. Her books include, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India* (Routledge 1999) and *Encountering Nationalism*. Her current book, *Sexual States: Governance and Anti-Sodomy Law in India's Present*, is under contract with Duke University. She is a co-editor for the journal, *Foucault Studies*.

Rachel Rosenbloom, Associate Professor, *School of Law, Northeastern University*

Rosenbloom teaches courses on immigration law, refugee and asylum law, and administrative law. Her recent scholarship has focused on the intersection of criminal law and immigration law, the possibilities and limits of transnational legal advocacy in advancing the rights of deportees, and the role of race and immigration enforcement in the construction of U.S. citizenship. Prior to coming to Northeastern, Professor Rosenbloom was a Human Rights Fellow at the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College, where she served as the supervising attorney for the Center's Post-Deportation Human Rights Project.

Faith Smith, Associate Professor, *Department of English, Brandeis University*

Faith Smith edited *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean* (2011), and is working on a book project on Caribbean people's conceptions of modernity across multiple imperial registers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She teaches in African and Afro-American Studies, English, Women's and Gender Studies, and Latin America and Latino Studies at Brandeis University.

Phyllis Thompson, Visiting Scholar, *Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Northeastern University*

Thompson holds degrees in American Studies and History from Brown and Harvard. Her research interests span 19th and 20th century American cultural history; representations of gender, race, and class; the history of sexuality; the body; the family and domesticity; childhood; the histories of love, intimacy, beauty, and taste; the relationship between text and image; photography; food culture.

Suzanna Danuta Walters, Professor and Program Director, *Department of Sociology and Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Northeastern University*

Walters's work is centered on questions of gender, sexuality, family, and popular culture. Her forthcoming book, *The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions are Sabotaging Gay Equality* (NYU Press) explores how notions of tolerance limit the possibilities for real liberation and deep social belonging. Walters' previous book, *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), examined the explosion of gay visibility in culture and politics over the past 15 years. Her other works include books on feminist cultural theory (*Material Girls: Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory*), mothers and daughters in popular culture (*Lives Together/Worlds Apart: Mothers and Daughters in Popular Culture*) and numerous articles and book chapters on feminist theory, queer theory, and popular culture.

Elizabeth Wood, Professor, *Department of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Elizabeth Wood is Professor of Russian and Soviet History at MIT where she also co-directs the MIT-Russia Program. She is the author of two monographs, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Indiana University Press, 1997) and *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Cornell University Press, 2005). Her current work centers on the performance of power under Vladimir Putin in Russia today.

The Sexual Citizenship Research Cluster, funded by the Humanities Center of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Northeastern University, has been meeting since the fall of 2013 to engage a wide range of interdisciplinary questions around sex, gender, and citizenship. We are law professors, graduate students, sociologists, media studies scholars, English professors and everything else in between. The symposium has been collectively organized by the Research Cluster.

Our current membership:

- Aziza Ahmed, *Associate Professor, School of Law*
- Amy Barber, *Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Communications Studies*
- Kimberly Brown, *Assistant Professor, Department of English*
- Peter Campbell, *Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Communications Studies*
- Laura Green, *Professor and Chair, Department of English*
- Denise Horn, *Assistant Professor, Program in International Affairs*
- Sarah Jackson, *Assistant Professor, Department of Communications Studies*
- Shun Kiang, *PhD Candidate, Department of English*
- Lori Lefkowitz, *Ruderman Professor and Director, Department of Jewish Studies; Director, Humanities Center – College of Social Sciences and Humanities*
- Phyllis Thompson, *Visiting Scholar, Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*
- Suzanna Walters, *Professor, Department of Sociology and Director of Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program; Chair of CRC*

The Forum on Feminist Thought is a collective project of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Program at Northeastern University dedicated to working across disciplinary boundaries to bring together feminist intellectuals in the Boston area and beyond. The Forum will work broadly to create and promote programming and opportunities relating to feminist pursuits and interests. The Forum aims to enhance the presence of feminism on campus by inviting those at Northeastern and in the Boston area and beyond to engage in discussions and collaborations relating to feminist theory and politics.