Title
New Directions in Gender and Sexuality Studies

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Since its emergence in the 1970s from feminist, gay, and lesbian social movements, women’s studies has had a substantial influence on disciplines across the academy. The UCLA Department of Women’s Studies has developed a year-long colloquium for AY 2011-12 with the specific aim of showcasing cutting-edge scholarship and demonstrating the wide range of disciplines and systems of knowledge for which gender and/or sexuality provides a critical lens or conceptual framework. “The forum will seek to address the kinds of contributions that traditional disciplines can make to transdisciplinary fields such as women’s, LGBT, and gender studies and, conversely, consider how the transdisciplinary fields are transforming disciplinary knowledge.” says Jenny Sharpe, Chair of the UCLA Department of Women’s Studies and Professor in the New Directions in Gender and Sexuality Studies Department to of Women’s stuDies’ 2011-12 Colloquium Will feature Joan roughgarden and E. Patrick Johnson in fall quarter

The colloquium is supported with a generous grant from the Andrew K. Mellon Foundation and cosponsored by the Department of Anthropology, Center for Society and Genetics, Center for the Study of Women, the Department of English, School of Law, LGBT Studies, Mellon Post-doctoral Program in the Humanities, Williams Institute, and the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance.
Joan Roughgarden will be giving a presentation, entitled “Evolution of Social Behavior: Not the 1970’s Anymore,” with a response from Abigail Saguy, Associate Professor of Sociology at UCLA, on October 5 from 4 to 6 pm in Royce 314.

Roughgarden is well known not only for her work in the fields of biology and ecology but also for coming out as a transsexual woman in 1997 at the age of 51. Already a highly respected biologist and ecologist, she found that her transition began to inform her work in those fields. Relaying a story about attending her first gay Pride Parade in San Francisco she said, “I looked at this tumultuous, gargantuan group of people and said, ‘There they are! There we are!’ And then I said, ‘But aren’t we all impossible? Doesn’t science, doesn’t Darwin’s theory of sexual selection, tell us we shouldn’t exist?’ And then I said, ‘Well, if science says so many people are wrong, maybe it’s not the people that are wrong—it’s the science that’s wrong.’” Her Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and in People (University of California Press, 2nd edition, 2009), attacked the Darwinian notion of sexual selection by documenting the range of homosexual behavior in animals, developing a biology of sexual diversity, and exploring the role of communal bonds in evolution.

In 2000, the New York Times described her as “one of the world’s most influential theoretical ecologists,” and in 2005 she was the recipient of the Stonewall Book Award for Evolution’s Rainbow. According to Stanford Magazine, “Roughgarden’s wide-ranging interests have produced pioneering research on barnacles and Caribbean lizards, along with textbooks on population genetics, evolutionary ecology and the environment. She’s also been instrumental in uniting ecology and economics, helping communities find practical solutions to environmental quandaries.” Her recent books are The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness (University of California Press, 2009) and Evolution and Christian Faith: Reflections of an Evolutionary Biologist (Island Press, 2006). Since her retirement, after almost 40 years at Stanford, she has been developing the Roughgarden Lab, a way to hold “virtual lab meetings” to further her social-selection project. More information about this project can be found at www.stanford.edu/group/roughlab/.

E. Patrick Johnson will speak on November 16 from 4 to 6 pm in Royce 314. Respondent is Uri McMillian, Professor of English at UCLA.

Author of Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity (Duke University Press, 2003), Johnson has made important advancements in the fields of performance studies, critical race studies, and queer studies. Appropriating won several awards, including the Lilla A. Heston Award and the Errol Hill Book Award. In his review, Dwight A. McBride, coeditor of Black Like Us: A Century of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual African American Fiction, wrote “With Appropriating Blackness, E. Patrick Johnson has given us a book worthy of the breadth its title signals. It
is written in an excellent and refreshingly clear prose style which sacrifices nothing in the way of complexity of the ideas being presented. Johnson makes his observations about the relatedness of performance and blackness more compelling with each successive case study.”

His newest book is *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—An Oral History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008). For the book, Johnson travelled across the South, conducting interviews with more than seventy black gay men between the ages of 19 and 93. The stories effectively subvert the notion that gay subcultures flourish primarily in northern, secular, and urban areas. By expanding our knowledge of the sexual history of the South, *Sweet Tea* reveals how a congregation of black gay men deal with their sexual, racial, cultural, and religious identities. The book has garnered much praise, with the *Journal of American Ethnic History* calling the book “a treasure trove of primary sources for those interested in the intersection of race, region, and gay experience in the twentieth century.” *Publishers Weekly* also lauded the book, saying “this fascinating . . . oral history subverts countless preconceptions in its illustration of black gay subcultures thriving in just about every imaginable rural and religious milieu in the South. . . . The courage and honesty of Johnson’s interviewees humble, and readers will find much to treasure in the stories.”

A renowned performance artist, Johnson has performed it at over twenty colleges and universities. In it, he illustrated how identities are bound to political agendas that circulate within various communities. His most recent performance piece, “Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Tales,” is based on excerpts from *Sweet Tea*. In it, Johnson depicts different characters spanning multiple generations and explores the relationship between blackness, sexuality, and Southern culture.


For more information on the colloquium, visit [www.womensstudies.ucla.edu](http://www.womensstudies.ucla.edu).