

## WRG Faculty Seminar Speaks Spring 2009

January 30, 2009

**Marcia Inhorn and Sallama Shaker**

“Arab Women Facing the Challenges of Globalization in the 21st Century”

Sallama Shaker is a Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies and Middle East Studies. Since 1971, she has served in the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most recently as Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Americas. Her publications include *Canada and the Middle East, Aid, Privatization, and Development in Turkey 1979-1990*, and *State, Society, and Privatization in Turkey, 1979-1990*. In 1993, she received her PhD from School of International Service, the American University, Washington D.C.

Marcia C. Inhorn is the William K. Lanman Jr. Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs and Chair of the Council on Middle East Studies (CMES) in the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies. As Past-President of the Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) of the American Anthropological Association, Inhorn is the Program Chair of the SMA conference on “Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Celebrating 50 Years of Interdisciplinarity,” which will be held at Yale from September 17-20, 2009. Inhorn is the founding editor of *JMEWS (Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies)*, the professional journal of the Association of Middle East Women’s Studies (Middle East Studies Association); associate editor of *Global Public Health*; and co-editor for the Berghahn Book series on “Fertility, Sexuality, and Reproduction.” Inhorn’s research interests revolve around science and technology studies (STS), gender and feminist theory (including masculinity studies), religion and bioethics, globalization and global health, cultures of biomedicine and ethnomedicine, stigma and human suffering. She is currently writing a book entitled “Reconceiving Middle Eastern Manhood: Islam, Assisted Reproduction, and Modern Masculinities”, which serves as an ethnographic challenge to received wisdoms and neo-orientalist stereotypes in a post-9/11 world.

February 6, 2009

**Neloufer de Mel**

“Securing Community: Conditions of Labour, Gender and Religion in Sri Lanka”

Neloufer de Mel is the Director of Studies for the Faculty of Arts, a Professor of English, and a Lecturer for the Postgraduate Diploma and MA in Women’s Studies programs, at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. She was a 2006 Associate in Global Women’s Studies at the Five College Women’s Studies Research Center and a Fulbright Senior Research Fellow with Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies at Yale University. Previously, she has served as a Visiting Scholar with the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University and a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers University. Her recent publications include *Militarizing Sri Lanka: Popular Culture, Memory and Narrative in the Sri Lankan Armed Conflict (2007)*, ‘Between the War and the Sea: Critical Events, Contiguities and Feminist Domains,’ *Intervention: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies (2007)*, *Gendering the Tsunami: Women’s Experiences from Sri Lanka with Kanchana Ruwanpura (2006)*, *Bearing Witness: Women’s Experiences of Armed Conflict in Sri Lanka, Kelaniya & the Hague (2005)*, and ‘Sri Lanka: Mother Politics and Women’s Politics,’ in *Gender Mainstreaming*

in Conflict Transformation (2005). She has co-edited *At the Cutting Edge: Essays in honor of Kumari Jayawardena* (2007) and *Writing an Inheritance: Women's Writing in Sri Lanka 1860-1948* (2002). Professor de Mel's work has been presented at many international conferences and cited in both national and international peer reviewed journals. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, holds an MA from University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and a Ph.D. on Nationalism and Postcolonial Theatre from the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK.

February 20, 2009

**Lila Abu-Lughod**

“The Social Life of ‘Muslim Women's Rights’”

Lila Abu-Lughod's work, strongly ethnographic and mostly based in Egypt, has focused on three broad issues: the relationship between cultural forms and power; the politics of knowledge and representation; and the dynamics of gender and the question of women's rights in the Middle East. Her first book, *Veiled Sentiments*, was about the politics of sentiment and cultural expression in a Bedouin community in Egypt that made an argument about the complexity of culture. Her second book, *Writing Women's Worlds*, framed as a feminist ethnography, used individual stories to make a larger argument about “writing against culture” (writing against typifications of social structure and cultural form by attending to internal argument, individual lives, and complex social dynamics) as a means of intervening in vexed discourses about a maligned region as well as challenging transnational feminist representations of women in Arab societies. Her third ethnography, *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt*, a contribution to the anthropology of nations and to media ethnography, explored the tensions between the social inequalities that bedevil nations and the cultural forms that aspire to address them. In a number of edited books, as well as in her teaching, she has pursued these themes further to examine questions of gender and modernity in postcolonial theory, of anthropology and global media, and of violence national/cultural memory. Currently, as part of an effort to use anthropology to contribute to larger political debates, she is focusing on critiques of the universalist claims of liberalism and on the ethical and political dilemmas entailed in the international circulation of discourses of human rights in general, and Muslim women's rights in particular.

March 27, 2009

**Jan Holton**

“Pleasing God: Refugees, Bridewealth, and Economic Security in Southern Sudan”

Jan Holton's most recent research focuses on the dynamics of trauma and resilience in refugee populations. For her dissertation, “Nowhere Left to Run: Pastoral Theology Interprets Community and the Lost Boys of Sudan,” Professor Holton conducted field research among the Lost Boys in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. She has also conducted fieldwork in such war- and disaster-ravaged areas as Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Nicaragua. Her other research and teaching interests include intercultural pastoral theology (especially ethnographic perspectives of suffering), medical anthropology, pastoral care in times of crisis (death, dying, grief, addiction, the transition of hope, hospital ministry), and ritual in pastoral care. Her pastoral and clinical

experience includes chaplaincy at a level-one trauma center. Professor Holton is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church.

April 3, 2009

**Andy Blanch**

“The Role of Women of Faith in Building Conditions of Sustainable Peace in the Middle East”

Andrea K. Blanch is the President and Director of the Center for Religious Tolerance, a non-profit organization promoting understanding among the world's religions and helping religion to become a force for peace. She is also an Associate Professor at the University of South Florida. From 2004-2006, she was the Executive Director for the Center on Women, Violence and Trauma, a national center funded by SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services. She has previously served as the Executive Director of the National Trauma Consortium, and as Director of the Collaborative for Conflict Management in Mental Health at the University of South Florida. She also sits on the Steering Committee of the Sarasota Coalition on Inclusion and Diversity. Her recent publications include 'Towards healing trauma in the Holy Land', *PsyCritiques: The American Psychological Association Contemporary Journal of Reviews* (2008), 'Transcending violence: Emerging models for trauma healing in refugee communities', *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* (2008), 'Integrating religion and spirituality in mental health: The promise and the challenge', *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* (2007), 'The political as personal: The human side of suicide among young Palestinians', *PsyCritiques: The American Psychological Association Contemporary Journal of Reviews* (2006), and 'Beyond the conflict: Women spiritual peacemakers in the Holy Land', *Elixir* (2005). Professor Blanch completed her undergraduate studies at Cornell University, and holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Vermont.