

# The Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute

*exploring theory and practice*

The Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute is an annual, week-long, residential course that focuses on a conceptual study of sexuality. It examines the links between sexuality, rights, gender, and health and their interface with socio-cultural and legal issues. Participants will critically analyze policy, research and program interventions using a rights-based approach.

## Course Content

Sexuality is a complex field of study that spans multiple disciplines and areas of work. Accordingly, the course content of the Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute will focus on a conceptual and theoretical study of sexuality drawing from different social science disciplines and the intersections between them. Faculty members from the global South and the U.S.A. will teach the course, using different pedagogical methods including classroom instruction, group work, case studies, simulation exercises, fiction and films.

- Sexuality, gender and rights
- Sexuality, gender and legal systems
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Agency and victimhood
- Representation of sexuality
- Sexual diversities and rights
- Sexuality and disabilities
- Case studies of program interventions

## Organizer

Founded in the year 2000 in India, **CREA** is a not-for-profit organization that aims at empowering women to articulate, demand and access their human rights by enhancing women's leadership and building networks at the local, regional, and international levels through training, advocacy, and research. CREA works on issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights, violence against women, human rights and social justice.

## Background

The first Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute was held from February 2 – 9, 2007 in New Paltz, New York, USA. The Institute is based on the Sexuality and Rights Institute that CREA and TARSHI (Talking about Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues) have conducted for six years in India. For more information, visit [www.sexualityinstitute.org](http://www.sexualityinstitute.org).

## Participants

Individuals working on issues of sexuality, rights, health or gender are eligible to apply. Twenty-four participants will be selected based on their application forms. Participants are required to stay for the duration of the course. (See attached application form)

## Costs

All participants are required to pay a Registration Fee of USD 150. The total cost per participant for the course (inclusive of tuition, boarding and lodging) is USD 2750. Please note that this is a subsidized cost for participation. All participants must cover their own travel costs. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are available on a need basis. Priority will be given to individuals who are interested in working on issues of sexuality and are working in small, community-based, domestic U.S. organizations. The Institute is supported by the Ford Foundation and an anonymous donor.

## Venue

The Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute will be held at Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, New York, U.S.A. ([www.mohonk.com](http://www.mohonk.com)). Participants will stay in double rooms. Mohonk is close to New York City and easily accessible by bus, train, and car.



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April 7-14, 2008. New Paltz, New York

Organized by:  
CREA



## Participating Faculty

**Amber Hollibaugh**, Senior Strategist for the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, is an activist, artist, public intellectual and community organizer working on sexuality and gender issues. She previously worked at SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders), Gay Men's Health Crisis, and the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Amber won awards for her book *My Dangerous Desires – A Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home* (2002) and documentary film on women's sexuality and HIV/AIDS, *The Heart Of The Matter* (1994).

**Cynthia Rothschild** is Senior Policy Advisor at the Center for Women's Global Leadership. A sexuality activist, trainer and former Board member of Amnesty International USA, she has worked with UNIFEM and various NGOs on gender and human rights. Cynthia authored *Written Out: How Sexuality is Used to Attack Women's Organizing* and "Abstinence Goes Global: The United States, the Right Wing, and Human Rights," and co-authored *Strengthening Resistance: Confronting Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS* and Amnesty International's *Crimes of Hate, Conspiracy of Silence: Torture and Ill-Treatment Based on Sexual Identity*.

**Geetanjali Misra** is a co-Founder and Executive Director of CREA and co-Director of the Sexuality and Rights Institute in India. She has worked at the activist, grant making and policy levels on issues of sexuality, gender and human rights. Geeta is a co-Founder of Sakhi for South Asian women in New York. She is President of the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and on the Board of Directors of Reproductive Health Matters and Women's Dignity Project. She co-edited *Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and South East Asia* (2005).

**Joo-Hyun Kang** is a consultant, trainer and activist whose work has been primarily in the areas of racial/gender justice, anti-police/state violence, and LGBTST liberation. Her current political work is as a member of CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities. She served as Director of Programs through 2007 at the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. Previously, she was Executive Director of The Audre Lorde Project, an organizing center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two Spirit and Transgender People of Color communities.

**Lynn P. Freedman** is Director of the Averting Maternal Death and Disability Program and Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. As Director of the Law and Policy Project at Columbia University since 1997, she has worked extensively with women's, health and human rights NGOs internationally. Lynn has published widely on issues of maternal mortality, gender, health and human rights. She served as Senior Adviser to the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Child Health and Maternal Health and was lead author for the Task Force's report, *Who's Got the Power? Transforming Health Systems for Women and Children*.

**Mauro Cabral** a philosopher teaches at the National University of Cordoba, Argentina. He is an activist who works with political organizations, including the Regional Working Consortium on Intersex Issues and Mulabi, the Latin American Space for Sexualities and Rights. He participated in the experts' seminar that proposed the Principles of Yogyakarta on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Human Rights. Having published several articles on trans and intersex issues, Mauro is currently editing a book focused on intersex issues in Latin America.

**Meena Seshu** is the general secretary of SANGRAM, an organization that works on sex workers rights and people living with HIV/AIDS. SANGRAM's Centre for Advocacy on Stigma and Marginalisation (CASAM) advocates for the reduction of stigma, violence and harassment of marginalized communities, especially those who have challenged dominant norms. In 2002, Meena was awarded the Human Rights Defender Award from Human Rights Watch. She is on the faculty of the Sexuality and Rights Institute in India.

**Pardis Mahdavi**, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Pomona College. Her research includes sexuality, human rights, transnational feminism and public health in the context of changing global and political structures. Her dissertation at Columbia University focused on the new sexual and social revolution among urban Iranian young adults. She has published in the *Encyclopedia of Women in Islamic Cultures*, *Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World Review*, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, and *Anthropology News*. Her forthcoming book with Stanford Press is *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution*.

**Radhika Chandiramani** is Founder and Executive Director of TARSHI (Talking about Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues), Director of the South and Southeast Asia Resource Centre on Sexuality and co-Director of the Sexuality and Rights Institute in India. A clinical psychologist, Radhika works and writes on issues of sexuality, sexuality education, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. She co-edited *Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and South East Asia* (2005). She is also the editor of *In Plainspeak*, the quarterly magazine of the South and Southeast Asia Resource Centre on Sexuality.

**Shohini Ghosh**, Ph.D. is Dr. Zakir Hussain Professor at the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre at Jamia Millia Islamia (Central University), New Delhi. She is a Special Lecturer at the Sexuality and Rights Institute in India. Shohini co-founded Mediastorm Collective, India's first all women documentary production collective. Her first independent feature-length documentary, *Tales of the Night Fairies* (2002), is about the struggle for sex workers' rights in Calcutta. She is a media scholar and writes extensively on popular culture and the media in academic journals and the popular press.

**Svati P. Shah**, Ph.D. is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Women's Studies at Wellesley College. She completed her Ph.D. in Columbia University's joint anthropology and public health program in 2006. Svati's work has been published in a range of scholarly and progressive journals, including *Gender and History*, *Cultural Dynamics*, *Rethinking Marxism*, and *SAMAR: South Asian Magazine for Action and Reflection*. She is currently working on a book on sex work and migration in Mumbai's informal sector. Svati works with progressive, LGBT and feminist grassroots organizations in the U.S. and in India.

Applications are due by February 10, 2008

