



# Sociology Colloquium

Friday, 11 September 2009, 3 p.m.

Sociology Lounge (room 6112)

CUNY Graduate Center

## Ananya Mukherjea, Ph.D.

The College of Staten Island

# The Social Politics of Pandemic Influenza: The Question of International, Inter-species, and Interpersonal Boundaries

This talk presents a critical analysis of media and popular science coverage, since 1997, of the threat of another influenza pandemic with a high transmission and mortality rate. Until 2009, almost all this writing focused on avian influenza viruses (particularly H5N1) and on planning to prepare for a major pandemic, should one occur again. In 2009, attention turned to the new pandemic H1N1 virus, which many people expect to make another, and much more intense, trip through the northern hemisphere this winter.

I will consider: 1. the ebb and flow of public panic that flu news both responds to and generates; 2. responses from local and national administrations and of international bodies; 3. the role of large-scale and industrialized meat farming; 4. the implications of using animal "culling" and quarantine as major modes of containing infection; and 5. the usefulness of general public health advice for limiting person-to-person infection (smothering coughs and sneezes; wearing face masks).

Refreshments will be served after the talk.

Ananya Mukherjea graduated from the Graduate Center's sociology program in 2005. She is assistant professor of sociology and women's/gender studies at the College of Staten Island. She has published on HIV/AIDS organizing and on popular culture, and her ongoing research is in the sociology of viral epidemics—such as influenza, HIV, and HPV—and their management. This talk is taken from her chapter in the volume she is editing—*Understanding Emerging Epidemics: Social and Political Approaches*—as part of the book series, *Advances in Medical Sociology*, that Barbara Katz Rothman edits for Emerald Group Publishing.

After her presentation, Ananya will take questions not just on her talk but also about transitioning from doctoral studies to full-time faculty.

*After the first colloquium...*

*There will be food and drink in the lounge, as always...*

*Then meet your fellow students, both 'old' and new, during our MIXER!!! Join us for a quick train ride to the Lower East Side for snacks, schapps and sociability at Piano's (158 Ludlow Street at Stanton).*



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