

The CUNY Graduate Center
Postcolonial Studies Group Colloquium Series 2011-2012

The Postcolonial Studies Group presents:

Catherine Raissiguier

New Jersey City University

**Troubling Borders:
The Case of the *sans-papiers* in France**

February 28 AT 2 P.M.

CUNY Graduate Center, Room 5409

All are welcome.

Increasingly restrictive immigration policies in France have turned large numbers of migrants, among them many women, into “illegal” denizens of the country. By increasing police scrutiny and symbolically constructing certain immigrants as criminals and outsiders, recent immigration laws have intensified the forms of civil and economic *précarité* many of them experience. This talk engages the surprisingly successful narrative of a “French exception” in terms of immigration and citizenship and the ways in which the *sans-papiers* (undocumented immigrants) in France help us see fissures and contradictions within the narrative. By focusing on the *sans-papiers* movement and the critical arguments *sans-papiers* inserted within immigration discussions in France, the talk aims to challenge Franco-French understandings of citizenship, national belonging, and equality. Raissiguier argues that, against the backdrop of global economic transformations, the construction of Europe, and increased national anxieties, hegemonic discursive and material practices anchor and strengthen national borders. Such practices, she further argues, turn certain migrants as impossible subjects of the Republic. Finally, the talk pays close attention to the gendered underpinnings of these border constructions and the ways in which they affect immigrant women more specifically.

Catherine Raissiguier is Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at New Jersey City University. She has taught Women's Studies at SUNY/Buffalo, the University of Michigan, Middlebury College, University of Oregon, and Oregon State University. Most recently, she was the Associate Director and Graduate Program Director of the Center for Women's Studies at the University of Cincinnati. She is currently the Coordinator of the Ethnic and Immigration Studies Program at NJCU. The author of *Reinventing the Republic: Gender, Migration, and Citizenship in France* (2010) and *Becoming Women/Becoming Workers: Identity Formation in a French High School* (1994), Dr. Raissiguier's work explores how concepts of citizenship and nationality intersect with gender and immigration in twentieth-century France. She is also published in such journals as *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *Radical History Review*, and *Educational Foundations*. Dr. Raissiguier completed her undergraduate education in France and holds a M.A. in Women's Studies/American Studies and a Ph.D. in Comparative and International Education from the SUNY/Buffalo.

The CUNY Graduate Center is located at 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016. The **Postcolonial Studies Group** is a chartered organization of the Doctoral Students' Council. Please visit our website at www.opencuny.org/psg

Questions? Email Tracy Riley at triley@gc.cuny.edu.