



*James Barnett Lecture Series on
Religion and Public Discourse*

Presents

CATHY GUTIERREZ

New York Public Library

May 2, 2016

2:15-3:45 pm

The Humanities Institute, Austin Bldg, Rm 301

**The Perfect Problem:
Eugenics and Utopia in Religious Discourse**

For many religious groups, the nineteenth century brought a heady ethos of progress, ranging from technological inventions like the steam engine to utopian ideals in which perfection itself was in reach. The focus on continual improvement in both body and soul created real opportunities for particularly women and an unprecedented public discourse about children and child rearing. In this lecture, Gutierrez looks at two religious groups, the Spiritualists and the Oneida Community, to examine how liberal American religions responded to Darwin's theory of natural selection and how that discourse turned inwards to the breeding of children. Attempting to hurry a perfect future, proponents of eugenics instead betrayed a peril in the heart of progress.

Co-sponsored by: Public Discourse Project, UConn Humanities Institute, Department of Anthropology, and the James Barnett Endowment for Humanistic Anthropology

PLEASE RSVP to uchi@uconn.edu or 860-486-9057

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