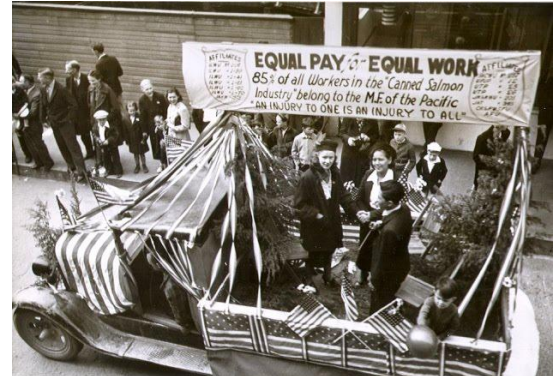


The Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study in Society and Culture (CISSC) Working Group on Socio-Legal Studies, in collaboration with the Department of Political Science, Department of History, and the Political Science Student Association presents:

Beyond Legal Mobilization: Rethinking Rights and Power

with Michael W. McCann
University of Washington
and Princeton University

March 1, 2012 1:15 pm
H1220, Henry F. Hall Building
1455 De Maisonneuve, W.



Much contemporary scholarship about group struggles over rights relies on a “legal mobilization” approach that leans heavily toward instrumentalist analysis, emphasizing unilateral adversarial legal action through actual or threatened litigation. This paper will make the case for a somewhat modified type of study regarding rights. Our commitment is to emphasizing the *context* in which rights struggles take place, through thick, multidimensional, dynamic analysis of power relations in which rights are embedded, displaced, denied, discounted, contested, and/or reconstructed in ongoing relational practice. This effort to “thicken” institutional and ideological power can benefit from examining contexts of rights practice over longer historical periods, across multiple spatial and institutional settings, and along multiple lines of legal policy. This approach will draw on my study (with George Lovell) of Filipino workers’ struggles for rights over eighty years in the Philippines and U.S. mainland, examining their struggle in multiple policy domains—criminal, labor, immigration, constitutional civil liberties, and anti-discrimination—of law. This approach arguably facilitates more complex and rich understandings about the ways that rights do and do not “matter” for subaltern groups struggling amidst increasing global interdependence.

Prof. Michael McCann is the Gordon Hirabayashi Professor for the Advancement of Citizenship at the University of Washington, a fellow at Princeton University’s Program on Law and Public Affairs (LAPA), and the President of the Law and Society Association. In addition to over forty scholarly articles, Michael McCann has authored *Rights at Work: Pay Equity Reform and the Politics of Legal Mobilization* (1994) and *Distorting the Law: Politics, Media, and the Litigation Crisis* (with Bill Haltom)(2004), both of which have won Best Book Awards from the Law and Society Association and the American Political Science Association. Prof. Michael McCann is a previous recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and the Distinguished Teaching Award of the University of Washington.

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