The Department of Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh Series on “Queering Religion” presents...

LUCINDA RAMBERG

Associate Professor of Anthropology and Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies
Cornell University

Monday, September 18, 2017, 602 Cathedral of Learning

12:00 noon

Workshop: Given to the Goddess: South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion
Open to faculty and graduate students.


Advanced readings available at religiousstudies.pitt.edu

5:00 pm

Lecture: Who and What is Sex for? Notes on Theogamy and the Sexuality of Religion
Free and open to the public. Reception to follow.

Drawing on her own research into a contemporary South Indian practice in which girls are married to a goddess, as well as other ethnographies and histories, this talk takes up the question of sex in the house of religion. It traces a genealogy of the term sacred marriage as a category of comparative religion and considers the ways sex and religion have been produced as discrete from each other. Religious and sexual propriety are tied together, it argues, and religious practices or scenes organize, normalize, and naturalize forms of sexual conduct and misconduct thereby producing their possibilities and powers.

Lucinda Ramberg is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies at Cornell University. Her research projects in South India have roots in longstanding engagements with the politics of sexuality, gender and religion. Her first book, Given to the Goddess: South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion (Duke University Press 2014) focuses on sacred prostitution and its reform in Karnataka. Her current book project turns to the revival of Buddhism in South India and questions of religious conversion in relation to projects of social transformation, caste radicalism, and sexual politics.

Cosponsored by the Provost’s Year of Diversity, Humanities Center, University Honors College, Asian Studies Center and Indo-Pacific Council, Departments of Anthropology and Sociology, and Programs in Gender, Sexuality & Women’s Studies and Jewish Studies.