

THE WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES PROGRAM PRESENTS

PROGRAMS OF LIFE: POST-GENOMIC SCIENCE AND THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY

with Patrick R. Grzanka, Associate Professor of Psychology,
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CLOSE-HIPP 464 & VIA ZOOM

A 2019 *Science* study on the genetics of same-sex behavior suggested a kind of paradigm shift in the science of homosexuality. The paper—widely received as a pathbreaking, landmark project—harnessed the power of the "genome-wide association study" (GWAS) method to analyze thousands of genetic data points and conclude that multiple parts ("loci") of the genome are associated with same-sex sexual behavior, rather than a single "gay gene" as had been previously hypothesized. This talk, part of larger interdisciplinary project on the implications of "born this way" discourse for public understandings of sexual equality, will trace the social life of the GWAS to understand its motivations and diverse consequences. Though its proponents celebrate GWAS technology for ushering a post-genomic epistemology, interviews with scientists and public writing about the GWAS suggest that such purportedly post-genomic logic may remain intimately intertwined with longstanding bioessentialist renderings of human sexuality.

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