

CALL FOR PAPERS

Aging as a Feminist Concern

January 21-22, 2011

Emory University School of Law

Atlanta, Georgia

Aging is a feminist issue. The elderly, especially the oldest of the old, are disproportionately female. Among the elderly, women are more likely than their male peers to face a number of challenges, including poverty, disability and isolation. Yet, the legal academy, including feminist legal theorists, is only just beginning to pay attention to old age and its implications. This workshop will advance this agenda by bringing together a diverse group of scholars to explore the relationship between feminist theory, law and policy, and the concerns of the aging. We will focus on understanding how the relationship between age and gender can be theorized, as well as exploring how feminist legal theory can inform policy and law in the U.S. and abroad.

Feminist legal theorists are in an excellent position to advance progressive and transformative theories about aging. The form and content of the negative stereotypes older adults are frequently subjected to parallel negative stereotypes about women. Like women, the elderly (both men and women) have traditionally been cast as mentally inadequate, frail, and in need of protection by outsiders. Both age and gender – and out-dated conceptions of each – have historically been cavalierly used as convenient proxies for other, more germane, characteristics. In addition, older women face many of the same gendered inequalities of younger women in contexts ranging from domestic violence to employment discrimination. Further, the growing population of older women raises distinct issues of caretaking whether the older woman is serving as caretaker or as the care recipient.

WORKSHOP CONTACTS:

Martha L. A. Fineman, Emory University School of Law
(mfineman@law.emory.edu);

Naomi Cahn, George Washington University Law School
(ncahn@law.gwu.edu);

Nina A. Kohn, Syracuse University College of Law
(nakohn@law.syr.edu).

SUBMISSIONS PROCEDURE:

Please email a paper proposal of several paragraphs length by October 1, 2010 to: mfineman@law.emory.edu, ncahn@law.gwu.edu, nakohn@law.syr.edu, and cdomozi@emory.edu. Decisions will be made by October 15, 2010.

Working paper drafts to be duplicated and distributed prior to the Workshop will be due January 3, 2011.

WORKSHOP DETAILS:

The Workshop begins Friday at 4PM in room 575 of Emory Law School, followed by dinner in the Hunter Atrium. The Law School is located at 1301 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA. Presentations and panels continue on Saturday from 10AM to approximately 5PM. Lunch will be provided.

PAPER TOPICS:

Potential contributors are encouraged to think creatively about the relationship between aging and gender, and how feminist legal theory can be brought to bear on understanding old-age policies. To this end, possible paper topics include:

What characterizes a feminist approach to aging and how does this differ from other approaches?

How do current discourses and practices of domestic violence, family law, employment/labor law, sexuality, masculinity, and political theory engage or fail to engage with the elder population?

How does the law reinforce or enhance the vulnerability and marginalization of the elderly?

What arguments can be made for and against the proposition that the government must support caretaking and caretakers of the elderly? How do these arguments differ from those made on behalf of the caretakers of children or the disabled?

How should government "protect" older adults, what are the implications of such protection, and how might feminist legal theory inform and guide our understanding of protective policies?

How should family responsibility be structured in old-age policy?

What are the implications of health care reform for older adults aging?