

The Centre for Feminist Research and Sexuality Studies present:

CONTESTING NEOLIBERALISM,
RELINQUISHING RESPECTABILITY:

“WORKING FAMILIES,” WISCONSIN, AND WHAT’S LEFT

Visiting Scholar, Sexuality Studies and the Centre for Feminist Research

David K. Seitz

Wednesday, March 1, 1:00pm-2:30pm, 626 Kaneff Tower

Introduced by Sexuality Studies Coordinator Dr. Allyson Mitchell

For a few short weeks in February 2011, global attention turned to Madison, Wisconsin, where over 100,000 people took to the streets to protest Governor Scott Walker's harshly anti-union austerity measures. On the heels of the Arab Spring and just before the dawn of the Occupy Movement, the Wisconsin protests inspired many progressive-Leftists as a refreshingly bold "no" to neoliberalism. Yet in the past six years, Walker has cruised to two statewide electoral victories, and in 2016, the longtime union stronghold state was key to the deindustrialized bloc that catapulted Donald Trump to the presidency.



What happened? Rather than retreading exhausted and unproductive debates about putative impasses between class politics and identity politics, this paper suggests that a careful, intersectional analysis of the cultural politics of neoliberalism in Wisconsin points to the limits of liberal and even progressive-Left investments in respectability politics, broadly conceived. In particular, I track the trope that suffused the imagery generated by Democratic Party and mainstream union activists and ordinary people: the “working Wisconsin family.”

David K. Seitz is a Visiting Scholar in Sexuality Studies and the Centre for Feminist Research at York University. He is a Lecturer in Sexual Diversity Studies, Women and Gender Studies and Human Geography at the University of Toronto. His writing appears in *Society and Space* and the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

RSVP to juliapyr@yorku.ca. Light refreshments provided. This event counts towards GFWS seminar requirements.