

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES
FEMINIST RESEARCH SPEAKERS SERIES 2016-2017 PRESENTS

SCREENING RAPE CULTURE: Misogyny & Sexual Violence in Indian Cinema

a lecture by Dr. Asma Sayed

Friday, November 4, 3:00 – 4:30

Senate Chamber
(Arts and Convocation Hall 3-26)

Abstract:

The representation and popularization of sexual violence against women in Indian cinema is indicative of broader socio-cultural issues and rape culture more generally. *India's Daughter* and the public outcry after its release last year in March 2015, with the Indian government banning it, has brought these issues to the fore, raising tension around women's issues and human rights in India. This documentary film, both in its content and its enormous impact, raised questions about the role of popular culture and cinema more generally as a tool to perpetuate or transform society. This presentation will use *India's Daughter* as a jumping-off point to discuss how mainstream Bollywood film popularizes rape culture, opening to a discussion about how art and independent "advocacy" film might play a role in disrupting Indian patriarchal family and social structures and empower Indian women more generally at the intersections of ethnic, religious and class-caste differences.

Biography:

Asma Sayed (Ph.D., University of Alberta) is a scholar of Comparative Literature and Film Studies, whose interdisciplinary research focuses on Indian Ocean Studies, postcolonial literature and theory, Islamicate cultures, and Indian cinema. Sayed's work has appeared in leading academic journals and various anthologies. Her latest edited book, *Screening Motherhood in Contemporary World Cinema*, published by Demeter Press, Toronto in January 2016, discusses the maternal on film and looks at the cross-cultural representations and realities of women's lives. She teaches Women's and Gender Studies at Athabasca University, and English and Comparative Literature at MacEwan University where she is also the Chair of Academic Women's Network.



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