

Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, UBC
Fall 2010 Public Lecture Series

Wednesday, October 20th, 2010. 12:00 – 1:00 pm

At the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies
2080 West Mall (028) lower level, Jack Bell Building

“Please note new location of Lecture Series”



Everyone welcome

Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, Associate Professor of Social Work and Family Studies, UBC

Memory Traces of Ethnic and Gender Violence in Columbia's Armed Conflict

Women are untouchable according to the customary laws of the Wayuu indigenous peoples of the Guajira region in Colombia. The massacre of six Wayuu, four of them women, and the forced displacement of the entire community from their ancestral territory in April of 2004 radically dislocated these principles and the sense of the everyday life in a warrior society that have resisted military, religious or educational occupations of their land since colonial times. In this presentation, I examine the living memories of this massacre, the forms of sexual violence exercised and, the resistance strategies and memory and memorialisation work led mostly by Wayuu women. The aim is to discuss the ethnic and gender dimensions of armed conflicts and the relevance of exploring variations in sexual, ethnic and regional violence as observed in the Colombian case.

Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, PhD in Anthropology from UBC (2000) is an associate professor at the School of Social Work and Faculty Fellow in Residence at the Liu Institute for Global Issues. Her research interests include the lived experience of violence, displacement and exile, the politics and practices of memory in societies divided by armed conflict and local strategies of social reconstruction and repair. Her work focuses mainly in Latin America. Interested in the exercise of public pedagogy and the practice of research as collaborative process of knowledge construction, professor Riaño also explores the development of conceptual and methodological approaches for participatory and community based research. Pilar is currently collaborating with the Colombian Commission of Historical Memory.