

# Empire of Rights: The convergence of neoliberal governance, 'states of exception,' and the Disability Rights Movement

Dr. Rachel Gorman, UB Center for Disability Studies  
Affiliated Fellow

Friday October 29 – 4 pm – Park 280



In this innovative research project, Dr. Gorman draws on feminist articulations of disability rights in the Kurdish region; US, World Bank, Cuban, and local responses to disability and disaster in Haiti; and Palestinian articulations of mental health and war trauma to argue for an analysis of Disability Rights regimes as a site of potential neoliberal governance. Through the 1990s and 2000s, articulations of 'inclusion' as the goal of the Western-focused Disability Rights Movement emerged alongside ideologies of 'inclusion' expressed as EU, UK, and World Bank policies intended to expand capitalist market relations and the reserve army of labour. In the most 'global' articulation of the Disability Rights Movement—the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities—disabled subjects are rearticulated as the *potentially able* through an emphasis on the demand for and consumption of products that will enhance social/market 'inclusion.' Disabled people, who through gendered, raced, and classed relations to global capital and empire, are not 'potentially able' are dropped out of the 'disabled' identities articulated in Western/white-focused Disability Studies and Disability Rights projects.

**Prof. Gorman** is pleased to be joining the Center for Disability Studies as an Affiliated Fellow for (AY) 2010-2011. Gorman recently completed a three-year Lectureship at the Women and Gender Studies Institute of the University of Toronto, where she served as Undergraduate Coordinator and taught courses on gender and disability, gender and neoliberalism, postcolonial studies, and contemporary social movements. In 2007, Dr. Gorman was a Research Fellow at the Education and Social Research Institute of Manchester Metropolitan University; and in 2005-2006, she held a two-year Postdoctoral Fellowship funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada exploring disability, gender, and national liberation struggles in a transnational context, with a specific focus on Kurdish political movements. Gorman completed her doctoral research at the University of Toronto, where she created the first two courses for the university's emerging Disability Studies concentration.