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Sansom Institute Visiting Researcher Seminar

Date: Wednesday 16th February 2011

Time: 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Place: PM-06, Playford Building
City East Campus
University of South Australia
Frome Road, Adelaide

RSVP: 15th February 2011
sansominstitute@unisa.edu.au

The Sansom Institute for Health Research is pleased to invite you to a Visiting Researcher Seminar.

Assoc Prof Deborah Laliberte Rudman

Associate Professor and Faculty Scholar
University of Western Ontario, Canada

Re-thinking the 'positive' in positive aging: A critical analysis of productive aging

Deborah Laliberte Rudman is an Associate Professor and Faculty Scholar in the School of Occupational Therapy and Graduate Program in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada. Her primary research interests relate to the occupational lives of aging adults; that is, to understanding environmental and personal influences on what people do as they age and the implications of what they do for identity, community participation, health and well-being. Her research program addresses 3 major areas: contemporary structuring and negotiation of retirement; community mobility in later life; and the negotiation of chronic disability. Her work inter-links critical social theory, social gerontology and occupational science, attending to power relations through which possibilities for identity and everyday occupation are shaped and negotiated.

The social construction of aging has implications for research agendas, policy directions, service provision, and the everyday negotiation of activity and health in later life. 'Positive' aging discourses, emphasizing the possibility and positivity of continued participation, health, self-reliance and youthfulness, have pervaded policies, popular media and academia in many national contexts. This presentation problematizes the ways 'positive' is being understood and promoted, drawing on a Canadian study combining critical discourse analysis and narrative inquiry to examine 'productive' aging, a particularly pervasive variant of positive aging. Concerns are raised regarding the ways aging is constructed as an individual problem and morally-laden responsibility, obscuring structural and health inequalities, shaping new forms of ageism, and creating differentially achievable demands for 'positive' aging.