Prof. Mayanthi Fernando  
(UC Santa Cruz, Anthropology)  

Neither Whores Nor Doormats: The Commensurable Difference of Secular Muslim Women in France  
Wednesday, February 3rd  
12-1:30 PM  
3341 Humanities Gateway  

This talk examines the recent emergence of “secular Muslim women” (musulmanes laiques) in the French public sphere, focusing in particular on the association Ni Putes Ni Soumises (Neither Whores Nor Doormats). Prof. Fernando analyzes how secular Muslim women serve as symbolic and politically efficacious counters to the problematic presence of veiled women within a highly gendered discourse of immigrant integration. In relation to ideologies of French citizenship and of the secular nation, secular Muslim women represent and embody a kind of commensurable Muslim difference that defers the racial and religious particularity undergirding the ostensibly universalist Republic. In taking up these issues, the project attends to the co-articulation of secularization and racialization in the production of Muslim subjects (both commensurable and incommensurable) in France.

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