The Department of Anthropology

Presents:

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Friday, February 10
2:30 pm
27 Macbride Hall

The Reproduction of Inequality in New York City’s Child Welfare System

Although the stated purpose of the child welfare system is to protect children from abuse and severe and intentional neglect at the hands of their parents, these systems primarily deal with less clear-cut cases of neglect (a category that is difficult to separate from poverty), and primarily investigate only the poorest families who are disproportionately African American and Native American. This is so despite evidence that child abuse occurs across racial and class lines. In this talk, I examine the history of and current practice in the child welfare system in order to understand why this situation persists and the consequences it has for children and families. Drawing on intensive fieldwork in family courts and support groups as well as on interviews with attorneys, caseworkers, and parents, I demonstrate how this system reproduces race, class, and gender inequalities while making family lives more insecure among the most vulnerable members of our society.

Co-sponsors for this event are Global Health Studies Program and International Programs.

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