

Liette Gidlow

"Brunch with Barry Goldwater": Representing Women's Citizenship in Presidential Campaign Advertisements, 1952~2004



Monday, March 20, 2006
 2:30 pm

McMaster Room (308)

Bowen-Thompson Student Union

How did presidential campaign ads represent female citizenship in the Cold War, during the upheaval of the 1960s, the women's movement of the 1970s, the conservative backlash of the 1980s, and in recent presidential campaigns?

How have they constructed women as citizens and what do these advertisements reveal about the status of women in civic life?

The first television ads promoting U.S. presidential candidates aired in 1952. From the beginning, women have figured prominently in them. Campaign ads enlisted and appealed to women in a complex and telling manner. For example, Jackie Kennedy appealed to Spanish-speaking voters in 1960 to "Voten por Kennedy!," Geraldine Ferraro pledged to bring "a new fairness to America" in 1984 as the first female nominee for the vice presidential slot on a major party ticket, and both John Kerry and George W. Bush used ads to appeal to "security moms" in 2004. In "Brunch with Barry Goldwater," Professor Gidlow explores how these ads can be read as national narratives about democracy, national identity, and citizenship that document the changing role of women in American civic life.

Liette Gidlow is Associate Professor of History at BGSU and a 2005-2006 Fellow at ICS. She is the author of *The Big Vote: Gender, Consumer Culture, and the Politics of Exclusion, 1890s-1920s* (Johns Hopkins, 2004). This book examines how the "Get-Out-the-Vote" campaigns of the 1920s transformed political culture. Professor Gidlow has won numerous grants and fellowships, including the Berkshire Conference fellowship at Harvard. Her current book project builds on political and cultural history, women's and gender history, communication studies, and studies of narrative and social movements to create a history of U.S. presidential campaign advertising.

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