



# Boyle to speak on women and politics, 1880-1920

Dr. Sarah Boyle, associate professor, history, will talk about women and politics, 1880-1920, and the WCTU in November.

## Dr. Sarah Boyle

wrote her doctoral dissertation on the Woman's Christian

Temperance Union and women's use of political power in the late 19th century. The JCCC associate professor of history will share her expertise in two lectures of wide appeal, especially to Midwesterners, as part of the JCCC College Scholars Program:

- *Making the Whole World Home-like: Women and Politics, 1880-1920* will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18, in the Hudson Auditorium, the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art. A reception precedes the lecture at 6:30 p.m. in the Atrium.
- *A Feast of Fat Things: The Debate over Partisanship in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1880-1892* will be at 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 19, in Craig Community Auditorium, second floor of the General Education Building.

Boyle's research into women's political activism explores the ways in which middle-class white women became an important force for change during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her particular focus is on Midwestern politics and the ways in which the Midwest provided fruitful ground for these activists to advance a program of political, religious and gender reform. Very often women's political history during the post-Civil War period has focused on the suffragists – a very small fraction of politically active women. Instead, Boyle says the majority of female activists at this time were either missionaries or members of the WCTU. By studying those groups of women, scholars can gain a better

understanding of women's political culture both now and then and women's use of religion and church affiliations to build movements and shape reform agendas.

In her evening lecture, Boyle will look at how the United States began its transformation from an agrarian society into an industrial world power after the Civil War and how women reformers styled themselves as wives and mothers to create a public sphere that was responsive first to the needs of the family and second to the needs of big business. The result of what Boyle terms the "maternalization of politics" transformed Americans' relationship to their government and contributed to the rise of the welfare state.

The scholar's daytime lecture looks at the two factions of the WCTU – Frances Willard, the WCTU's national president, who worked to align the WCTU with third-party politics, v. J. Ellen Foster, president of the Iowa WCTU, who contended that the WCTU should remain nonpartisan and work within the systems for change.

Boyle earned her bachelor's degree from American University, Washington, D.C., and her master's degree and PhD from Binghamton University, New York. Before entering graduate school, she worked for two years at the National Archives researching and writing a traveling exhibit on women's petitions to the government for 1776-1920.

For more information about the JCCC College Scholars program, contact Karen Martley, director, Staff and Organizational Development, 913-469-8500, ext. 3467. 