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Media opportunities during Controlling Sexuality and Reproduction, Past and Present conference

Alberta has its own dark history of controlling sexuality, starting with the Alberta Sterilization Act enacted in 1928. While the act was repealed more than 40 years ago, organizers of the Controlling Sexuality and Reproduction conference felt it was time to explore the current situation concerning people's sexual and reproductive rights.

"It's a human right to have access to sexual and reproductive autonomy, to have the capacity to make choices about your sexuality and your family life," says Dr. Claudia Malacrida, a University of Lethbridge sociology professor who, with Dr. Suzanne Lenon of the Women and Gender Studies department, is organizing the conference set to run from Aug. 12 to 14. "We're seeing that in new ways around things like gay marriage but there have always been groups of people for whom such autonomy is not permissible."

The Controlling Sexuality and Reproduction conference will bring together presenters in a variety of disciplines, including history, sociology, women and gender studies, anthropology, law, and disability studies, from around the world. Media are welcome to attend any session and the [conference schedule](#) provides more details on speakers and session topics.

"We have people from all of those disciplines represented, speaking about varied ways of constraining perceived troubled sexuality and reproduction," says Malacrida. "The conference really does address all kinds of notions about what 'normal' looks like and what kinds of privileges are conferred upon those deemed to be normal, while the rest are left to struggle to obtain their rights."

The conference opens on Aug. 12 with a keynote speech from Dr. Paul Lombardo, a professor of law with Georgia State University who has written about the legal history of the American eugenics movement. The next two days will be filled with almost 60 presentations, poster displays and several workshops. Presentation topics include everything from transgender reproduction to the birth control movement in China. In addition, an information and book fair will be available Thursday. Closing keynote speaker Dorothy Roberts, a professor of law and sociology at the University of

Pennsylvania and author of 'Killing the Black Body,' is a social justice advocate whose work touches on law and the intersections of race, class and gender.

In addition, a gala on the evening of Aug. 13 will showcase performance-based artists, poets and dancers. Included in the lineup are CRIPSiE, an Edmonton-based inclusive dance organization and Kathy Austin, a spoken word artist.

The opening reception, keynote speeches, academic talks and the information and book fair are open to the general public.

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