

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Center for Gender in Global Context

presents the Spring 2018

COLLOQUIA SERIES

**NEW RESEARCH ON WOMEN AND GENDER**

**GLOBAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES**

**FRIDAY, March 16**

**1:30-3:00PM**

**303 INTERNATIONAL CENTER**

**Kristin Mahoney**

**Department of English and Center  
for Gender in Global Context**

## **Queer Community and the Remaking of Marriage: The Mackenzies on Capri**

Following the trials of Oscar Wilde, the Italian island of Capri operated as a refuge for sexual exiles from across Europe who retreated from persecution and criminal proceedings into Capri's permissive expatriate community. In the 1920s, Henry Gauthier-Villars described the island as "a Geneva or a Moscow of the future internationalism of homosexuality," and he argued that this bewitching setting was capable of remaking "normal [couples]" in its image." His comments on Capri speak directly to the experience of British writers Compton and Faith Mackenzie, who moved to the island in 1913, became enmeshed in its queer cosmopolitan community, and began conducting extended relationships with other partners with one another's approval. In this talk, I will discuss the role that the island of Capri played in the Mackenzies' reconstitution of their bond. Acknowledging that expatriate visitors to Capri fetishized and exoticized the Italian island and its inhabitants, conceiving of the location as mystical, primitive, and destabilizing, I will interrogate the intermingling of cosmopolitanism and "Mediterraneanism" in the Mackenzies' representations of the transformations their marriage underwent during their time on Capri.

**Kristin Mahoney** is Associate Professor of English at Michigan State University and a Faculty Fellow in MSU's Center for Gender in a Global Context. She has published essays on aestheticism and Decadence in *Victorian Studies*, *Criticism*, *English Literature in Transition*, *Literature Compass*, *Nineteenth Century Prose*, *Victorian Review*, and *Victorian Periodicals Review*. Her book *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2015. She is currently working on a project entitled *Queer Kinship after Wilde: Transnational Aestheticism and the Family*.

**This event is free and open to the public.**