

MASTERCCLASS

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: PROMOTING PUBLIC HEALTH OR CRIMINALISING DEVIANCE?



Wednesday 15 April, 10am – 12pm

Room W356 Callaghan Campus

**RUTH BEECHER
& STEPHANIE WRIGHT**

SH+ME



Sexual violence is often seen through the lens of criminality, as a violation of criminal law to be dealt with by the justice system. Yet sexual violence is also an assault on the body, and often comes with medical consequences. The victims of sexual violence are both patients and complainants; the body both a crime scene and a site of physical and psychological injury. As a result, the victims and perpetrators of sexual violence are often subjected to medical and legal scrutiny, coming into contact with doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists, as well as police officers, jurors, and judges.

How do the intersecting (and often competing) jurisdictions of the medical and legal professions shape the ways in which different societies respond to cases of sexual violence? How do we reconcile the need to attend to the medical needs of victims with the need to prosecute perpetrators? And how do these competing understandings of sexual violence as both a public health and criminal justice matter affect our work as scholars? In particular, what are the ethical and methodological considerations we must take into account?

In this workshop, we will seek to address these issues, drawing on historical case studies of sexual violence in two very different settings: Francoist Spain and modern Britain. The event is open to all, and we particularly welcome PhD students and early career researchers.

DR RUTH BEECHER and **DR STEPHANIE WRIGHT** are Wellcome Trust postdoctoral researchers on the SHaME project at Birkbeck, University of London (shame.bbk.ac.uk).

Ruth is a social and cultural historian with interests in the history of race, gender, children and families, sexuality, and popular culture in the US and UK in the twentieth century. Her current research focuses on the ways that nurses, doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists since the 1960s in the UK and the US have responded to (or ignored) the possibility that a child is being sexually abused by a family member.

Stephanie is a social historian of modern Spain with broader interests in the history of psychiatry, disability, sexuality, and gender. Her current project seeks to understand the ways in which Spain's context of Civil War and National Catholicism shaped medical and legal approaches to sexual violence, looking specifically at the role played by forensic doctors and psychiatrists in court cases linked to sexual assault.

RSVP by Monday 6 April to elizabeth.roberts-pedersen@newcastle.edu.au.

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