

GPACS Colloquium Series

Presents

Carol Burke

UCI Department of English

“Sex on the Fob”

(Fob – Forward Operating Base)

No detail of military life—even as minor as a haircut, the pitch of a sailor’s cap, or the chants sung out in basic training—is without significance, whether its meaning is imposed from above or smuggled into the barracks or onto the parade ground by ordinary G.I.’s, Marines, Airmen, or Sailors. Members of the military distinguish themselves not only by the jobs they do but by the rituals they share, the anecdotes they exchange, even the slang that lards their everyday conversation. In December 2008 and January 2009, I embedded with a combat unit in Iraq, hitching a ride onto every convoy going “outside the wire” that would take me along. In 2010-11, I took a leave from my teaching post at the University of California, Irvine to embed with two combat units in Afghanistan. It was on that extended deployment that I saw how the U.S. Army conducts a war of counterinsurgency and how typical soldiers go about their daily lives “down range.” Based on that ethnographic work, I will discuss the official proscription, the implicit toleration, and the base banter that relate to the sexual practices of Americans deployed in these recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thursday, November 17, 2016

12:30 – 1:30pm

SST 777

(light lunch served)