"Democracy and Its Discontents: What feeling uncomfortable can (and cannot) teach us about social justice"

One of the crucial challenges for democratic life, and for intimate life, too, is to learn that disagreement does not kill you—and that you need not kill someone who disagrees with you. This is a deceptively difficult lesson to learn, let alone practice. Nor should it be confused with either civility or “tolerance,” in which a dominant majority allows minorities to come into the national fold on the condition that they hide or disappear the ways in which they differ. In this talk, I'll examine ongoing debates in the United States that pit gender and sexual equality “against” religious liberty. This opposition is more than rhetorical, but even lies at the heart of the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate cases—Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc. and Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp. v. Sebelius—which the Supreme Court hears on March 25, 2014.