

The University of Michigan Program in Culture, Health and Medicine
2003 Lecture Series
presents

Susan M. Squier

Brill Professor of Women's Studies and English
Pennsylvania State University



Meditating on Disability

March 21, 2003

12:00 p.m.

2239 Lane Hall

In recent years many disabled people have taken up meditation as a form of therapeutics and life enhancement, and have begun writing about their practice as well. Starting with such memoirs as Lorenzo Milam's *Crip Zen: A Manual for Survival* and Joan Tollifson's *Bare-Bones Meditation*, Professor Squier will explore how people disabled by a range of conditions have found comfort and help in meditation, and will consider more broadly what the fields of disability studies and the cultural studies of medicine have to teach (and learn) from each other. Disability scholars and activists have worked to redefine disability not as a condition to prevent or treat, but rather as the disadvantage and oppression that results from society's response to the material conditions of biological or psychological impairment. The resulting shift in identity construction for disabled people has played a part in the broader project of the cultural studies of medicine, which is to decenter medical practice from its exclusively positivist model.

Brill Professor of Women's Studies and English at Pennsylvania State University, Professor Squier has research interests in cultural studies of science and medicine, feminist theory, disability studies, and modernism. Her publications include *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation* (1989), *Babies in Bottles: Twentieth Century Visions of Reproductive Technology* (1994), *Playing Dolly: Technocultural Formations, Fantasies, and Fictions of Assisted Reproduction* (1999), and *Communities of the Air: Radio Century, Radio Culture* (forthcoming). She is an Editorial Board member of the *Journal of Medical Humanities*, and Executive Board member and past President of the Society for Literature and Science. With Anne Hunsaker Hawkins, she co-directed the NEH Institute on "Medicine, Literature and Culture" at Pennsylvania State University's Hershey College of Medicine, in summer 2002.

The UM Program in Culture, Health and Medicine comprises a new undergraduate curriculum, lecture series, and set of ongoing scholarly activities, whose purpose is to integrate how notions of "difference" contribute to the construction of illness and health. For more information about the Program, please contact Jonathon Metzl (jmetzl@umich.edu) or John Carson (jcarson@umich.edu).

This lecture was made possible with the generous support of the UM Life Sciences Values and Society Program and the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.