This is the first in a series of four annual workshops sponsored by the Feminism and Legal Theory Project and the Race and Difference Initiative at Emory University. The series will focus on varying issues related to the concept of vulnerability and the search for a post-identity paradigm to address growing inequality in the United States and internationally.

This workshop will explore how understandings of dependency and vulnerability as inevitable aspects of the human condition do and should affect our understandings of and aspirations for equality in the twenty-first century. For example, how does a focus on vulnerability and dependency challenge dominant paradigms of independence, self-sufficiency and autonomy? Are the claims that vulnerability and dependency are a fundamental and inevitable part of the human condition at odds with anti-essentialist and post-structuralist analyses that stress contingency and fluidity in understanding individuals and groups? How do conceptual and theoretical approaches to equality that begin with an understanding of vulnerability as their bases differ from those in current political, cultural and academic ascendancy?

**Possible paper topics include:**

- What are human vulnerabilities and dependencies?
- Is there a feminist approach to vulnerability?
- What is the relationship between vulnerability and dependency?
- What is the relationship between vulnerability and disability?
- How does vulnerability or dependency relate to other classifications, such as subaltern citizens, race, or sex?
- What does feminist theory contribute to answering these questions?
- Can “vulnerability studies” undermine the divisive tendency of current classifications and provide a potentially more universal, less alienating approach to claims for substantive equality and human dignity?
- How should governmental or societal responsibility be characterized in the shadow of assertions of inevitable dependency and universal vulnerability?
- What are the dangers, shortcomings, or strengths of a vulnerability approach?
- Can the concept of vulnerability be used broadly, for example, to address issues concerning the environment; state regulation, or capitalism?
- Can dependency and vulnerability escape stigma or will they merely replicate, even deepen, existing hierarchies?
- Does the nature of the human condition look different through a Western (U.S.) lens? If so, in what ways?

**WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS:**

- Martha L. A. Fineman, Emory University School of Law
- Ani Satz, Emory University School of Law
- Nancy Kaymar Stafford, Emory University School of Law

**SUBMISSIONS PROCEDURE:**

Please email a paper proposal of several paragraphs length by September 17, 2007 to:

- mfineman(at)law.emory.edu
- asatz(at)law.emory.edu
- nstaffo(at)law.emory.edu

Working paper drafts to be duplicated and distributed prior to the Workshop will be due November 12, 2007.

**WORKSHOP DETAILS:**

The Workshop begins on Friday afternoon at 4 PM with a panel discussion to be held in the Law School’s Faculty Library –Room 575 – 1301 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA.

There will be a reception and dinner that evening at the Law School. All interested participants are welcome.

Saturday there will be two or three panel presentations convening at 9 AM in the faculty library.