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Yale Professor to Speak on Frederick Douglass & Photography

Feb. 2, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— The co-director of the Yale Public Humanities Program, [Laura Wexler](#), will visit Illinois Wesleyan University Feb. 9-10 as part of the [Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar Program](#).

Wexler is professor of American studies, professor of film and media studies, and professor of women's, gender and sexuality studies at Yale. She is founder and director of the Photographic Memory Workshop at Yale, and the former co-chair of the Yale Women Faculty Forum. She has received numerous fellowships and awards, including a Henry R. Luce Foundation Grant for a three-year project on "Women, Religion and Globalization." Since 2011, she has been principle investigator on a project to make a web-based interactive research system for mapping, searching and visualizing more than 170,000 photographs from 1935-1945 created by the Farm Security Administration and Office of War Information. Wexler holds M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University in English and Comparative Literature.

She will present a talk entitled, "Frederick Douglass: On Photography" at 4 p.m. Feb. 9 in Beckman Auditorium. In the 1860s, Douglass gave several public lectures where he discussed the importance of the then-new invention of photography. In "Pictures and Progress" he shared his vision of the role he hoped photography would play in fostering a more democratic society after the Civil War. Wexler's lecture engages with his critical thought in the context of his time, and ours. The presentation is free and open to the public.

The purpose of the Visiting Scholar Program is to contribute to the intellectual life of the institution by making possible an exchange of ideas between the Visiting Scholars and the resident faculty and students. The Visiting Scholars spend two days on each campus and take full part in the academic life of the institution. Founded in 1776, [Phi Beta Kappa's](#) mission is to champion education in the liberal arts and sciences, to recognize academic excellence, and to foster freedom of thought and expression. Illinois Wesleyan's Phi Beta Kappa chapter received its charter in 2001. Wexler's visit to Illinois Wesleyan is also a co-curricular programming event associated with Illinois Wesleyan's intellectual theme [Women's Power, Women's Justice](#).



Laura Wexler

By Reilly Kasprak '17

