



Winter 1-24-2005

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Recommended Citation

Boelter, Leslie, "IWU Reconceptualizing Transnational Identity" (2005). *News and Events*. 3494.

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IWU Reconceptualizing Transnational Identity

January 24, 2005

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - What does the term "home" mean to someone who has been influenced by many different cultures? That's a question to be addressed in an International Studies panel discussion at Illinois Wesleyan concerning transnational identity.

The development studies team of Illinois Wesleyan's International Studies Program is sponsoring the panel, which will take place on January 27 at 4:00 p.m. in Beckman Auditorium of The Ames Library, 1 Ames Plaza, Bloomington.

The panelists will be Illinois Wesleyan Professor of German and Russian Marina Balina, Associate Professor of Mathematics Zahia Drici, Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies Sobeira Latorre, and Visiting Scholar and Associate Professor of Political Science Tatah Mentan. Professor of Educational Studies Irv Epstein will moderate the session.

Transnationalism, according to the definition with which the panelists will be working, refers to the multiple ties and interactions that link peoples across borders. It serves to challenge conventional assumptions regarding the importance of traditional borders and boundaries in defining who we are, how we think, and with whom we associate.

Some of the questions the panelists will be tackling are: How does your home define who you are? Is there really "no place like home" as the International Studies theme suggests? Assistant Professor of Economics, Ilaria Ossella-Durbal, who helped organize the panel, said, "When we talk about transnational identity we're talking about people who identify with more than one culture, more than one country, it goes beyond the borders of a certain country, beyond your practical borders."

The panelists will address the definition of transnational identity and then will be given questions to think about in terms of this definition. Panelists will have approximately ten minutes to give their views on the subject before the discussion is opened up to the audience for questions.

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