

2-16-2011

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Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "02/16/2011 - Politics Of Vaccination.pdf" (2011). 2011. 13.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2011/13

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Riccio Memorial Lecture to Discuss "Politics of Vaccination"

Feb-16-2011

The Barry D. Riccio Memorial Lecture Series at Eastern Illinois University continues its tradition in 2011 with "The Politics of Vaccination in American History," a presentation set for Monday, Feb. 21.

Admission to the presentation, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Doudna Fine Arts Center Lecture Hall, is free and open to the public.

The talk will be presented by Robert Johnston, associate professor of history at the University of Illinois-Chicago, who has written extensively on the emergence of the U.S. middle class and the history of alternative medicine movements, including the anti-vaccination movement. His work, although focused on the early 20th century, speaks directly to the political and cultural battles of today, including persistent concerns over the link between vaccinations and autism.

Johnston is the author of "The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and The Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon" (Princeton University Press, 2003), the winner of the 2002 Social Science History Association President's Book Award.

EIU's Department of History is sponsoring Johnston 's lecture, made possible through the Barry D. Riccio History Fund.

Riccio joined Eastern's history faculty in 1995. The author of "Walter Lippmann: Odyssey of a Liberal (1994)" and numerous articles, he was a devoted student of American ideas, politics and culture. At Eastern, he proved almost immediately himself an outstanding teacher and wonderful colleague.

Following Riccio's death from cancer in 2001 at the age of 46, his friends, family and colleagues established the Barry D. Riccio History Fund in his honor. In conjunction with the EIU Department of History, the fund sponsors a lecture series with an emphasis on the history of ideas. Beginning with the inaugural lecture in 2003, the generosity of fund donors has allowed the department to bring "many of the leading lights of American intellectual history" to Eastern's campus.