

**Confucius Institute of Rutgers University (CIRU)
Distinguished Lecture Series Fall 2014**

**“The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's
Disappearing Collective Past”**

Gail Hershatter
University of California, Santa Cruz

Tuesday, September 23, 4:30 pm
Lecture Hall 401, Alexander Library

169 College Ave, New Brunswick, NJ



Gail Hershatter is Distinguished Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her books include *The Workers of Tianjin, 1900-1949* (1986), *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s* (with Emily Honig, 1988), *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (1997), *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (2007), and *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (2011). She is a former President of the Association for Asian Studies (2011-2012).

Abstract: What can we learn about the Chinese revolution by placing a doubly marginalized group—rural women—at the center of the inquiry? And how does an examination of collectivization in China help us to understand the rapidly changing countryside today? In this talk, Gail Hershatter explores changes in the lives of women in rural Shaanxi province during the early decades of state socialism, the 1950s and 1960s, comparing them to the lives of women in contemporary rural China. She asks whether rural Chinese women had a revolution, and if so, when and what sort of revolution it was. Such questions encourage us to consider others that preoccupy historians: when is gender a useful category of historical analysis? How is the historical record shaped in interactions with the present moment? What counts as an event worth remembering? Who gets to decide?

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