

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**“Letter Writing and Politics in the Campaign against Slavery,”
lecture by visiting scholar Mary Freeman**

Mary Freeman will present “Letter Writing and Politics in the Campaign against Slavery” on October 29, 2014 at noon in the Special Collections Research Center on the sixth floor of Bird Library. Her presentation is part of the CNY Humanities Corridor Visiting Scholars Brownbag series.

Freeman’s doctoral research focuses on letter writing as a form of political action in the decades leading up to the Civil War. For people in the mid-nineteenth century United States, letter writing was more than simply a means of transmitting information from point A to point B. Letters were crucial venues for intimate discussion, self-reflection, and, in certain instances, political action. During this period, Americans of many different backgrounds joined a national collective in opposition to slavery. Letter writing provided a space for abolitionists to trade information, articulate their organizational vision, and, most importantly, to stake claims as participants in this national political collective.

The correspondence of prominent abolitionists like Gerrit Smith and Samuel May as well as the letters of lesser-known activists including members of the Post and Porter families of Rochester, New York equally shed light on the question of what opponents of slavery thought their letter writing could accomplish.

Mary Freeman is a doctoral candidate at Columbia University studying nineteenth-century U. S. history. She received her BA from Williams College. Her research interests include letter writing, the history of slavery and abolition, women’s history, and the American Civil War. She also works as a research assistant and processing intern at the Columbia Rare Book and Manuscript Library and as a tour guide at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

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