In 2015, debates about so-called safe spaces found their way into the mainstream. A concept previously most associated with social and health services, online forums, and activist subcultures, the term became both rallying call for student organizing all across the country and shorthand for media pundits bemoaning what they saw to be the shortsighted goals of contemporary youth activism. And despite the now wide circulation of the term, the majority of public commentators attribute the concept to the history of feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) political organizing.

In fact, debates about safety have been a central issue in LGBT politics, and have been anchored in claims to space, in particular in urban neighborhoods since the 1970s. This talk explores the relationship between these two trajectories – calls for “safe space” in restructuring cities and in restructuring universities – highlighting the at once central and vexed role of LGBT/queer communities and activism. Hanhardt asks what this history reveals not only about social movements, cities, and sexual politics during this period, but also about the status and uses of queer critique today.

CHRISTINA B. HANHARDT
Associate Professor of American Studies
University of Maryland, College Park

THURSDAY MARCH 3 2016
RECEPTION 5 – 5:30PM
LECTURE 5:45 – 7:30PM

George Washington University
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Labor History Research Center
Gelman Library 702

RSVP
www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b45acac2eabf58-collected
Presented by the Department of American Studies