

2016 Undergraduate Lecture with Erin McKenna, Professor of Philosophy

# *Cows and Chicks*

*An Ecofeminist Pragmatist Perspective on Livestock*



**Friday, May 6**

**3:00-4:30 PM**

**Living Learning Center South Performance Hall**

This talk will examine some of the important connections among women, cows, and chickens. For much of humans' agricultural history, milking cows and raising chickens was considered women's work. Further, milk and eggs are the "products" of female animal beings. For some ecofeminists this creates a special connection and a special obligation not to partake of these agricultural products. Since the 1950s cows and chickens have been transformed into industrial animals and women have been replaced with automated industrial systems. There are many consequences of this change: cheaper milk, meat, and eggs; more concentrated waste products affecting the environment; less freedom for chickens and cows; and limited interactions between humans and the animal beings used in agricultural production. This distance has allowed for further objectification of the animal beings and increased consumption of them. In the case of cows and chickens, they are often presented as sexualized females, and human women are sexually objectified in advertisements promoting their consumption. An ecofeminist/pragmatist perspective will be used to examine the history and consequences of this intertwining of the lives and deaths of women, cows, and chickens and to suggest some possible changes in the human relationship with cows and chickens that would increase the possibility of respecting their lives, as well as the lives of human women.