ACORN: Working-Class Politics in America's Second Gilded Age

Dr. Marisa Chappell
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12:30-1:30 pm

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In this talk, Chappell will explore the history of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), once the nation's largest social justice organization. Launched in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1970, ACORN set out to build a broad, multiracial working-class political movement. For forty years, its members – predominantly women of color – used protest, lobbying, negotiation, and coalition-building to win resources for working-class communities and to fight for members' vision of fairness and democracy. ACORN's history challenges popular understandings of working-class politics in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. ACORN's successes, challenges, and the opposition it faced, offer new insights into the past and offer important lessons for the present.

Marisa Chappell is Associate Professor of History at Oregon State University. She is the author of *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), one of *Choice* magazine's Outstanding Academic Titles for 2010, and co-author of *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents* (Routledge, 2010). She has published essays and articles in various academic outlets, including *The Journal of Women's History*; *The Journal of Policy History*; *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States*; and *Shifting Notions of Social Citizenship: The Two Wests* (Columbia University Press, 2017), and popular venues, including *The Washington Post* and *Jacobin*. She is a 2020 Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation, where she is working on a book manuscript tentatively titled *ACORN: Working-Class Politics in America's Second Gilded Age*.

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