This talk uses Philadelphia as a case study to demonstrate how pocketbook politics, viewed from street and storefront level, played a critical role in black and Latino rights struggles in the late twentieth century. Drawing on community organization records and newspapers, I trace how several overlapping consumer advocacy projects attracted wide participation. By holding businesses accountable for their crooked practices and pressuring negligent landlords, residents adapted a broader interest in consumer rights to their particular struggles over purchases and housing. These small-scale advocacy efforts offered a concrete way for residents to blunt the impact of structural economic change while also creating conduits for interethnic alliances.

Wednesday, March 7th at 7:00 pm
Campus Center 301 & 302