In this talk, Ryan Hilliard explores how single women in eighteenth-century Paris acknowledged, negotiated with, and responded to prescriptive sexual norms in their daily lives and in moments of crisis. Unmarried women utilized legal action to protect their reputations against accusations of sexual impropriety. In the complaints they filed with Parisian police commissioners, single women linked public perceptions of sexual honor with community membership, financial stability, and social status. In doing so, they represented sexual honor as an important facet of their social capital. Ryan explicates how single women attempted to defend themselves against injurious claims and interrogates why their enemies employed this specific type of attack during interpersonal conflicts. Moving from pervasive discourse to individual disputes, Ryan positions unmarried women as proactive participants in the eighteenth-century realm of public opinion.

**Ryan Hilliard** is a doctoral candidate in the UCLA Department of History whose research focuses on the history of women, gender, and sexuality in early modern France. Her dissertation, entitled “By Choice or By Circumstance: Single Women in Early Modern France,” explores the social and cultural history of unmarried women living in Paris during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

*Lunch will be served. Please RSVP to Ryan Hilliard (rhilliard@ucla.edu) by Tuesday, May 28, 2019 if you plan to attend and include any dietary restrictions.*