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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Midwifery, Politics of Genetics To Be Explored in Two Talks at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Barbara Katz Rothman of the City University of New York will explore the world of midwives and social and political issues related to the human genome project in two separate talks, both set for Tuesday, May 20, at Cal Poly.

Rothman will speak on the "Midwifery and the Politics of Knowledge" from 11:10 a.m. to noon in the Erhart Agriculture Building, Room 220.

"We tend to think of the miracle of birth as the making of babies," Rothman said, "But midwives understand the miracle of birth to be the making of mothers -- strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and know their inner strength." In her talk, she will explore how midwives in non-medicalized settings organize and conduct their practice to reflect that philosophy.

Rothman's second talk, titled "Through a Crystal Darkly: The Racial and Gender Politics of the New Genetics," is scheduled from 4:10 to 5:30 p.m., in Room 106 in the Manufacturing Building.

In this talk, Rothman will look at some of the issues raised when the much-heralded completion of the human genome project was completed in 2000. She will explore such questions as:

- How do we control the uses of the potentially healing but also likely destructive and highly marketable information that genetics brings us?
- If the history of genetics is one in which scientific knowledge has been used to create and maintain systems of oppression, what role should that history play in the decision-making practices of new genetic technologies?

Rothman's work is both interdisciplinary and international in scope, focusing on issues in medical sociology, bioethics, and gender, and the sociology of knowledge. She earned a Ph.D. in sociology from New York University and is a faculty member at Baruch College and the Graduate School at the City University of New York.

The talks are free and open to the public. They are sponsored by Cal Poly's Ethnic Studies Department, Biological Sciences Department, Women's and Gender Studies Department, Women's Programs and Services and the College of Liberal Arts. For more information, contact Jane Lehr in the Ethnic Studies Department at 756-6442 or jlehr@calpoly.edu.

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