In South Africa, polygamy is legal for cultural groups who have traditionally practiced this form of marriage. It entered the public discourse primarily through the marriages of Jacob Zuma, president of South Africa and leader of the African National Congress, and has drawn much attention from the local (and international) news media since he became deputy president in 1999. Potential contradictions between the traditional and the modern in Zuma’s life present rich material for a case study on media, culture, politics and gender in South Africa. In this presentation, Margaretha Geertsema-Sligh examines the reaction of the South African news media to Jacob Zuma’s polygamy and the implications for gender equality. Results show coverage that varied from speculation about which wife would be considered First Lady, to questions about the burden on taxpayers, to descriptions of Zuma’s children and wives as his “kindergarten” and “harem.”

Tuesday, November 27
Noon-1 p.m.
AU111 (UClub)

Students, staff and faculty are all welcome. No RSVP necessary.