

The **Baldy Center** Working Group on
International and Comparative Legal Studies
Invites faculty, law, and graduate students to a
Work-in-progress luncheon presentation

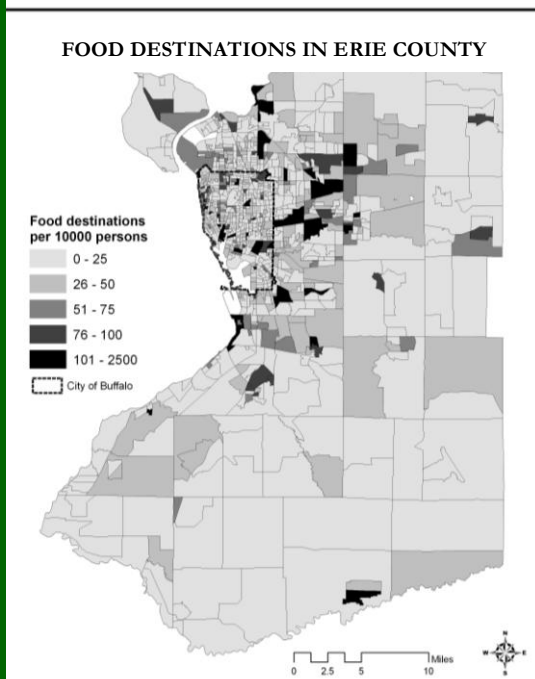
Wednesday, February 27, 2008

12:30 – 2:00 pm

lunch available at noon

509 O'Brian Hall

RSVP for lunch to ekausner@buffalo.edu



Racial Disparities in Food Access: Lessons from Erie County, NY

Samina Raja

UB Urban and Regional Planning

Introduced by **Claude Welch**

SUNY Distinguished Service Professor

UB Political Science

The metaphor 'food deserts,' used to describe neighborhoods with few supermarkets, has captured both public and academic attention in recent years. Planning solutions designed to alleviate food insecurity and promote food justice may be misguided without an understanding of disparities in food environments. Professor Raja investigates the difference in food accessibility between neighborhoods of color and other neighborhoods, using Erie County, New York as a case study. She tests the hypothesis that access to food retail destinations in predominantly black and mixed-race neighborhoods differs from that in predominantly white neighborhoods, while controlling for factors such as income, population, and area. Raja finds an absence of supermarkets in neighborhoods of color when compared to white neighborhoods. The study reveals an extensive network of small grocery stores in neighborhoods of color. Professor Raja's research suggests that supporting small, high quality grocery stores, rather than soliciting large supermarkets, may be a more effective strategy for ensuring access to healthful foods in neighborhoods of color.

Trained as a civil engineer and an urban planner, Professor Samina Raja's research, teaching, and community engagement focuses on planning and designing communities that promote food justice, and facilitate healthy living for all residents. Her recent projects have examined racial disparities in food environments and their implication on health outcomes. Professor Raja works with local community groups to design, implement, and evaluate strategies to strengthen Buffalo's community food system. Her research is funded by the National Institute of Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.