



DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS' LECTURES



Prof. **Mary Ellen Curtin** received her PhD from Duke University, and currently teaches in the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies (CRGC) at American University in Washington DC. Broadly speaking, her research examines African American life in the South after emancipation, with an expansive view of how Black communities both endured and responded to ongoing racist oppression and violence. Her most recent book, *She Changed the Nation: Barbara Jordan's Life and Legacy in Black Politics*, (2024) examines Jordan's emergence as a nationally recognized southern Black woman political leader, orator, and leading Democrat, who sought to move the Black struggle from protest to electoral politics. She is currently a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar in Humanities and Social Sciences at the Faculty of English, AMU.

A BLACK WOMAN REIMAGINES POWER: BARBARA JORDAN AND THE ART OF POLITICAL PERSUASION

Prof. **Mary Ellen Curtin**

American University in Washington DC

■ Wednesday March 19, 2025, 13:15 pm

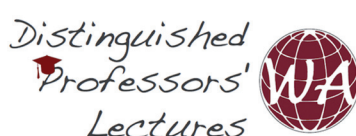
■ Aula, Collegium Heliodori Świącicki, Grunwaldzka 6

This talk identifies and analyzes some of the specific rhetorical devices, ideas, and Black cultural practices employed in the public speeches of Congresswoman Barbara Jordan of Texas, the first Black woman from the South to serve in Congress and a major figure in the Democratic party during the 1960s and 70s. Jordan has been celebrated as one of America's greatest orators, but few have exam-

ined how she constructed her particular messages about America's political future or asked- why was she so persuasive? At a time when progressive women in American politics seek to provide alternative visions for the future, and establish their right to leadership, Jordan's unmatched ability to persuade minds and inspire listeners to take action deserves special scrutiny.



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