

The Emory University IRB, the Emory University Center for Ethics,  
and the Rollins School of Public Health

present

## **Susan M. Reverby, Ph.D.**

Marion Butler McLean Professor in the History of Ideas  
Professor of Women's and Gender Studies  
Wellesley College



### ***Escaping Melodramas: The U.S. STD 1946-48 Experiments in Guatemala and their Aftermath***

**Thursday, March 1, 2012 at 5:00 PM  
Emory School of Medicine – Room 120**

Between 1946 and 1948, the U.S. Public Health Service conducted human subject experiments in Guatemala that involved the use of diseased sex workers, inoculation of unsuspecting subjects with bacterial inoculum, and failure to treat participants when infection followed. The results of the study were never published and the study was unknown until historian of medicine **Susan M. Reverby** unexpectedly discovered records of the study among the PI's papers at the University of Pittsburgh. In this lecture, Reverby will discuss how she found the papers, brought them to the attention of the CDC, and witnessed the aftermath--apologies at the federal level and the swift investigation by the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, of which the Vice Chair is Emory President James W. Wagner.

Reverby will reflect on the cultural processes that create narratives of melodrama through which society views scientific endeavors and especially its ethical missteps. The daughter of a cardiologist and microbiologist and the first hire in Women's Studies at Wellesley, Reverby has nearly 30 years of teaching and scholarship on which to base her carefully researched and reasoned thoughts about what the Guatemala study may mean for how we consider research ethics in America today.

Reverby was previously best known for her articles and books on the PHS "Tuskegee Syphilis Study" (1932-72), which has become a central metaphor for distrust of the American health care system and research. A full academic biography will be made available at the lecture. Registration is not required.

For more information, contact Sarah Putney at [sputney@emory.edu](mailto:sputney@emory.edu) or Kathy Kinlaw at [kkinlaw@emory.edu](mailto:kkinlaw@emory.edu).