

## Stockton's Faculty to Celebrate Two New Books at Program on Master's in American Studies

Prospective Students Invited to Learn About the Program on Oct. 1

### ***For Immediate Release***

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**Galloway, NJ** – Stockton University's American Studies program will be celebrating the publication of books by two of its faculty members, Deborah Gussman and Sharon Musher, at the program's annual Meet and Greet on **Thursday, Oct. 1**, at 4:30 p.m. in F-111.

Gussman's book is a scholarly edition of 19th-century author Catharine Maria Sedgwick's novel, "[Married or Single?](#)" published by University of Nebraska Press. Sedgwick was one of antebellum America's first and most successful woman writers. Insisting on women's right to choose whether to marry, "Married or Single?" rejects the stigma of spinsterhood and offers readers a wider range of options for women in society, recognizing their need and ability to determine the course of their lives.

Musher's book is "[Democratic Art: The New Deal's Influence on American Culture](#)" (University of Chicago Press, 2015). Throughout the Great Recession, American artists and public art endowments have had to fight for government support to stay afloat. It wasn't always this way. At its height in 1935, the New Deal devoted \$27 million—roughly \$469 million today—to supporting tens of thousands of needy artists, who used that support to create more than 100,000 works. Why did the government become so involved with these artists, and why weren't these projects considered a frivolous waste of funds, as surely many would be today?

"Democratic Art" explores these questions and uses them as a springboard for an examination of the role art can and should play in contemporary society. Musher argues that those engaged in New Deal art were part of an explicitly cultural agenda that sought not just to create art but to democratize and Americanize it as well. By tracing a range of aesthetic visions that flourished during the 1930s, this new book outlines the successes, shortcomings, and lessons of the golden age of government funding for the arts.

Gussman, a professor of American Literature, is the current director of Master of Arts in American Studies (MAAS), and Musher, an associate professor of History, is the program's founding director. Click for more information about the [Master of Arts in American Studies program](#). # # #