



# "PUSHING" THROUGH THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE:

*How Race, Class, and Gender Hierarchies Shape How We are Born*

**Rosalynn A. Vega**

**Rosalynn A. Vega** is Assistant Professor of Medical Anthropology at the University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley. She is the author of *No Alternative: Childbirth, Citizenship, and Indigenous Culture in Mexico* (University of Texas Press, 2018).

Recent anthropological scholarship on "new midwifery" focuses on how professional midwives in various countries are helping women reconnect with "nature," teaching them to trust in their bodies, respecting women's "choices," confronting and defying hegemonic biomedical structures, and

fighting for women's right to birth as naturally as possible. Rosalynn A. Vega uses ethnographic accounts of natural birth practices in Mexico to complicate these narratives about new midwifery and illuminate larger questions of female empowerment, citizenship, and the

commodification of indigenous culture, by contrasting the vastly different birthing experiences of upper-class and indigenous Mexican women, and showing how alternative birth actually reinscribes traditional racial and gender hierarchies.

**March 6, 2019, 11:30-1:00, McElhinney 111**