10/1 - Elizabeth McAlister - Wesleyan University
"American Evangelical Spiritual Warfare and Vodou in Haiti"
5:30 pm, Hoagy Carmichael Room, Morrison Hall

A network of global evangelicals understands the world to be a spiritual battleground in which they are the chosen warriors in Christ’s army. This talk draws on recent ethnographic fieldwork to look at how American prayer warriors train for the spiritual battlefield. It describes how Americans engage evangelicals in Haiti to fight against the creole religious tradition called Vodou, which they consider a Satanic enemy. Spiritual warfare theologians and warriors imagine an invisible, more real realm with spiritual entities and legal codes that, once understood, can give a believer access to the same powers as Jesus Christ himself.

Elizabeth McAlister is Professor of Religion, and also teaches in American Studies and African American Studies at Wesleyan University. McAlister’s recent research is on religion in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, on telethons in the U.S. after the quake, on the recent interest in zombies in American pop culture, and on the thought and interactions between American and Caribbean evangelicals who perform “spiritual warfare” in and for the nations of Haiti and the United States.