

# **Are you feeling special today? Underwear and the 'fashioning' of female identity**

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011, 1pm**  
(Refreshments provided from 12:30pm)

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**Venue:** School of Business and Economics, BE0.53

**Book your place:** For catering please email [Kay Harris](#) to book your place.

**Abstract:**

This paper explores underwear - a neglected (at least by academic literature) aspect of clothing - and the ways it is implicated in the (re)production of women's identities. Although underwear is ostensibly hidden from view, as part of women's clothing we argue that it functions as a resource for identity construction. We present data from three focus groups to discuss some of the socio-psychological reasons for choosing and wearing the 'right' underwear. The analysis is based on three themes: the significance respondents attribute to underwear according to whether it is hidden or visible; the sensations it induces for the wearer; and the varying mobilisations of underwear to support aspects of the female identity project. We argue that underwear can be seen as a technique of the body or a technology of the self and that a woman 'learns' through the embodied experience of wearing different underwear how to (re)construct various elements of her identity.