Discourses about risk and responsibility are evident in the recent social panics around childhood obesity where youth are constructed as necessary targets for saving. The public is not only asked to accept the problem of obesity but, often we are also asked to believe that only a highly sensationalized intervention can counter it. In this talk I will argue that the obesity industry uses media to represent the ‘problem’ of obesity in ways that ultimately serve corporate interests and in ways that are antithetical to the well-being of youth. This phenomenon is made possible by the colonization of neoliberal ideologies in the social and cultural milieu of the USA. I argue that neoliberalism is a system of cruelty that gets theatrically enacted through reality television - a television subgenre that increasingly casts youth as its subjects. I analyze the show Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution in an attempt to capture one manifestation of the exploitative damages of neoliberalism as well as to highlight its contradictory and harmful messages, especially as they relate to youthful bodies and their regulation.

PRESENTED BY:
Associate Professor Carolyn Vander Schee
Northern Illinois University

Carolyn Vander Schee is an Associate Professor of Education at Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, IL, USA. Her research interests are focused on understanding the ways in which school health priorities are justified and legitimated in policy documents and discourse. In particular, she is interested in analyzing how interest groups advocate for and endorse school health policies and practices and, in so doing, shape notions of youth, their health and the responsibilities and obligations of schools. Recently, she has been involved in research projects that have explored physical education and nutrition policies, HIV/AIDS curriculum and the corporatization of public schools.

WHEN:
Wednesday, January 29, 2014
12.30pm

WHERE:
Building 25
Room 128