

The 2009-2010 Teaching American History Historian Lecture Series

March 2, 2010

4:30-6:30

CUNY Graduate Center

**The Chinatown Trunk Mystery:
The Murder of Elsie Sigel and the
"Chinese Problem" in New York City**

Professor Mary Ting Lui

Departments of American Studies and History
Yale University



Photo Illustration by Charles George/News

In 1909, police discovered the body of Elsie Sigel, a young missionary in the midtown apartment of her reputed Sunday school student and lover, Leon Ling. Historian Mary Ting Yi Lui employs this unsolved murder case to examine the politics of race, gender and sexuality in the formation of New York City's Chinatown during the Chinese exclusion era. The talk explores the widespread public concerns about interracial, social and sexual mixing during this era and how this event incited a far-reaching skepticism about government regulatory efforts to limit the social and physical mobility of Chinese immigrants and white working-class and middle-class women in the city. At the same time, the lecture will also address the response of local Chinese leaders and officials in confronting the surveillance and harassment of their community as a result of the police manhunt and public unrest.

Registered participants will receive a document packet, a copy of the speaker's book, "Chinatown Trunk Mystery," and refreshments.

To register, please visit protraxx, the DOE's on line registration system, at: <http://pd.nycoit.org/>. Once you log in, type "Historian Lecture Series" in the title field and select "Social Studies" for the department field. This will bring up all the lectures in the 2009-2010 series.