

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Anna Farneski; afarnesk@ramapo.edu

February 16, 2011

**NOTED HISTORIAN TO SPEAK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AGAINST THE
BACKDROP OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND PARTITIONS**

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Eric D. Weitz, Distinguished McKnight University Professor of History at the University of Minnesota, will speak at Ramapo College of New Jersey in March.

In his talk, “Toward a Critical History of Human Rights: On the Problems of Self-Determination and Territorial Partitions,” Weitz will explore how self-determination and partitions demonstrate the entwining of rights with what we would now label crimes against humanity, notably, the practice of forced deportations of targeted populations and the creation of huge refugee streams.

In order to achieve a more nuanced history of human rights in the contemporary world Weitz will pursue the following avenues: 1) an intellectual and political history of the concept of self-determination, and 2) an examination of the post-1945, ethnically-based territorial partitions, namely, India/Pakistan, Palestine/Israel, Rwanda/Burundi. Underlying this approach, Weitz emphasizes, is the presumption that human rights is not a singular thing, but a series of phenomena and concepts replete with tensions and contradictions.

Weitz is Distinguished McKnight University Professor of History at the University of Minnesota. Since 2001 he has also been serving as the Arsham and Charlotte Ohanessian Chair in the College of Liberal Arts. Currently, he is on sabbatical at the Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University and writing “A World Divided: A New Global History from the French Revolution to the Present.” The book, under contract to Princeton University Press, is a combined history of human rights and the segmentation of populations in the modern era. His previous books include “A Century of Genocide” (2003) and “Creating German Communism, 1890-1990” (1996), and most recently, “Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy” (2007), all published by Princeton University Press.

Weitz will speak on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, 1-2 p.m. at Ramapo College in the York Room of the Birch Mansion under the auspices of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the History Club. The presentation is free and open to the public. For more information or to reserve a seat, please call 201.684.7409.

###

Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fourth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business,

humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work, and as courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers four graduate programs and articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.

Undergraduate students choose to concentrate their studies in one of five schools with more than 700 course offerings and 40 academic programs. Ramapo College boasts an average student/faculty ratio of 18:1 and average class size of 23, affording students the opportunity to develop close ties to the College's exceptional faculty.

###

For media inquiries, contact Anna Farneski, assistant vice president, Marketing and Communications, 201.684.6844.