

Lectures Feature Distinguished Speakers

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The Newcomb College Institute and the Tulane Law School are each bringing distinguished speakers to the uptown campus this week for lectures that are open to the public.

Author **Barbara Ehrenreich**, who wrote the bestseller *Nickel and Dimed*, is the Newcomb College Institute's 2010 [Spring Powerhouse Speaker](#). Her lecture will be at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday (March 24) in the Lavin-Bernick Center's Kendall Cram Lecture Hall.

On Thursday (March 25), **Thomas E. Perez**, assistant attorney general for civil rights, will visit the [law school](#) and talk on "Civil Rights in the Obama Era" at 4 p.m. in room 110 of Weinmann Hall.

Ehrenreich captured America's attention in 2001 when she wrote *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. The bestseller chronicles Ehrenreich's attempt to live on minimum wage by working such jobs as a waitress, motel maid and home health aide. The book was influential in the debate and eventual passage of minimum wage legislation and has become required reading at more than 600 colleges and universities.

Her new book, *Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America*, looks at the downside of the positive-thinking movement. In 2006, Ehrenreich wrote *Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream*, which exposed the phenomenon of white-collar unemployment.

Sworn in by Congress last October, Perez previously spent 12 years in federal public service. He worked as a civil rights prosecutor under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration. More recently, he served as secretary of Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, where he was a principal architect of a sweeping package of state lending and foreclosure reforms to address the foreclosure crisis in Maryland.