

WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES

at Louisiana State University

A Letter from the Director



Rita Culross

From my vantage point it is a very exciting time to be part of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at LSU. Under the leadership of Becky Ropers-Huilman, the National Women's Studies Association Journal (NWSAJ) began a three-year residence at LSU this year. Editing NWSAJ positions WGS and LSU to be a leader in producing and disseminating interdisciplinary, multicultural feminist scholarship.

WGS also welcomes four new joint hires who bring energy and expertise to a growing program: Kristen Hogan (English/WGS), Dana Berkowitz (Sociology/WGS), and Heather Ondercin and Challen Nicklen (Political Science/WGS). Their presence has also allowed WGS to expand undergraduate and graduate offerings to permit more students to access WGS courses earlier in their experience at LSU and to allow majors and minors an expanded array of courses throughout the year.

Even WGS' physical facilities are getting a much-needed upgrade. New paint and carpeting have brightened the offices and provided a more welcoming environment to new and prospective students. Coupled with the proposed new facilities for the Women's Center, Women's and Gender Studies are receiving increased visibility on campus.

As Interim Director I look forward to working collaboratively with my colleagues within the program and across campus to advance the academic excellence that is WGS.

Volume 5, Issue 1

Fall 2007

4 Questions with WGS' Newest Joint Faculty Members

Kristen Hogan

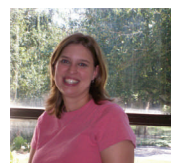


PhD in English with a Graduate Portfolio in WGS University of Texas, Austin
Dissertation: "Reading at Feminist Bookstores: The Feminist Shelf, Women's Studies, and the Feminist Bookstore Network"

- 1. What are your research interests?** I study feminist print culture with a focus on bookstores and publishers, feminist activism, queer and feminist theories, and U.S. and Canadian women's literature in the 20th and 21st centuries.
- 2. Describe your dream course to teach.** I'm teaching them! During the fall semester I'm teaching Queer Theory & Survey of Women's Literature. Next semester I will teach an Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies course including a transnational focus and a service-learning component (we'll be working with the BR YWCA) and a graduate course on the Feminist Literary Public Sphere. I am particularly excited about the Feminist Literary Public Sphere course, because it is an opportunity to get students thinking and talking about the relationship of literature to public reading, discussion, and social change. We will also talk about the role of distribution and the book market in mediating the feminist literary public sphere. I think

continued

Heather Ondercin



PhD Dual Degree in Political Science and Women's Studies Pennsylvania State University
Dissertation: "The Changing Social Definitions of Men and Women and Their Effect on the Partisan Gender Gap, 1953-2003"

- 1. What are your research interests?** My research interest focuses on political behavior in the United States, specifically the political behavior of men and women. Political behavior encompasses a wide variety of activities, including when and how people participate in politics, who they vote for, which political party they identify with, and attitudes and public opinion. I am particularly interested in the role context plays to shape these behaviors. My current research project examines how men and women have identified with the political parties in the United States over the past fifty years. I argue that men's and women's partisan attachments are shaped by the social and historical constructions of gender. Additionally, I am interested in the election and representation of women in the United States and methodology.

on page

Dana Berkowitz



PhD in Sociology with a WGS Graduate Certificate University of Florida
Dissertation: "Gay men: Negotiating procreative, family, and father identities"

- 1. What are your research interests?** I am a qualitative feminist researcher interested in the social construction of gender, sexualities, and families.
- 2. Describe your dream course to teach.** My sociology of gender course this semester is my dream course! But, if I had to choose another one it would be a sexualities course that would critically explore the social, historical, political, and economic constructions of sexual knowledges, norms, institutions, and identities.
- 3. What do you think WGS should focus on as it continues to develop the program?** I would like to see Women's and Gender Studies to place more emphasis on men's studies; after all, men are gendered too! Otherwise, WGS should continue to foster a critical analyses of gender as it is shaped by other axes of oppression and privilege and encourage scholarship as well as activism.

2

"I think those of us who value women's literature and who depend on publishing need to get informed about the book market, because we can be advocates for change and for alternative media."
-Kristen Hogan



New Faculty, continued

those of us who value women's literature and who depend on publishing need to get informed about the book market, because we can be advocates for change and for alternative media.

3. What do you think WGS should focus on as it continues to develop the program? I'm interested in participating in a larger discussion about the program with the faculty who have established and developed the program. I'm excited about its growth and about its increased focus on transnational women's movements and issues. This focus along with attention to the work, scholarship, and lives of women of color, discussion about the relationship between queer theory and feminist theory, and a conscious and well-articulated practice of anti-racist feminism in our organizing will place us in the company of cutting-edge women's studies programs.

4. If you could recommend one book to WGS students, what would it be? Everyone should pick up the new edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, by Gloria Anzaldúa, published by Aunt Lute Books, a multicultural women's press since 1982. The groundbreaking queer/feminist mixed-genre text combining English and Spanish is a gathering of words for Chicanas' lives. For those of us listening in, too, it is a mentor, a visitation, and an invitation to make a new world: "if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture -- *una cultura mestiza* -- with my own lumber my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture" (44). New in the third edition, the book begins with ten women's writings on their relationships to *Borderlands*; authors including Ana Castillo and Sandra Cisneros join their voices with scholars including Norma Alarcón (formerly of Third Woman Press) and AnaLouise Keating. This is a gathering of council on the twentieth anniversary of *Borderlands*' 1st publication.

(Ondercin continued)

2. Describe your dream course to teach. This is a hard question and the answer for me probably changes daily. I would really like to develop a graduate level class that looks at the concept of feminist methodology.

3. What do you think WGS should focus on as it continues to develop the program? One of the things that I have always cherished about WGS programs that I have been associated with in the past is the interdisciplinary nature. It is an impressive thing to have a group of feminist scholars gather together and share their research. I am always amazed at how much overlap there is among the research when it is coming from such different fields of study and how much we can learn from each other. So, I would hope that as WGS grows it still remains an interdisciplinary program that fosters the exchange of ideas among a diverse set of scholars.

4. If you could recommend one book to WGS students, what would it be? *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbra Kingsolver

WOW and The Women's Center hosts The Clothesline Project, a public art installation project against domestic and sexual violence.



(Berkowitz continued)

4. If you could recommend one book to WGS students, what would it be? I would have to say *Black Feminist Thought* by Patricia Hill Collins because she integrates the standpoints of black women poets, novelists, and musicians in a way that makes you forget you are reading an academic text.

NWSA-J Arrives at LSU

In May 2006, the **National Women's Studies Association Journal** moved to LSU. Housed within the LSU Women's and Gender Studies program and edited by Becky Ropers-Huilman, who is now at the University of Minnesota, the journal staff at LSU includes Nina Asher, book review editor; Kate Bratton, senior associate editor; Angeletta Gourdine, MaryBeth Lima, Margaret Parker, and Helen Regis, all associate editors; Brenda Macon, managing editor; and Ashli Dykes,

editorial assistant. The journal, published by Johns Hopkins University Press and affiliated with the National Women's Studies Association, is known nationally and internationally for its focus on interdisciplinary and multicultural feminist scholarship that is directed toward understanding women's lives. More information on the journal, including subscription information and submission guidelines, can be found at <http://www.nwsaj.lsu.edu>.

Selective Faculty Accomplishments

ARTICLES.

Hendry, Petra Munro (2007). Engendering Wisdom: Listening to Kuan Yin and Julian of Norwich. In C. Eppert & H. Wang (Eds. *Cross-Cultural Studies in Curriculum: Eastern Thought, Educational Insights*. New York: Lawrence Earlbaum. pp. 207-227

Mohan, Brij. 2007. Globalization, democratization, and human rights: Human-made disasters and a call for social justice. In Elisabeth Reichert, Ed. *Challenges in Human Rights: A Social Work Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press, Pp. 239-257.

Ondercin, Heather. "Gender Gaps in Senate Elections, 1988-2000: The Impact of Campaign Level and State-Level Factors" with Jeffery Bernstein. *Politics and Gender*. 3(1): 33-53.

Otero, Solimar. "Getting There and Back: The Road, the Journey and Home in Nuyorican Diaspora Literature." In *Writing Of(f) the Hyphen: Critical Perspectives on the Literature of the Puerto Rican Diaspora*, eds. Jose L. Torres-Padilla and Carmen H. Rivera. Seattle: U of Washington P 2007, pp. 274 -292.

Plummer, Carol A., & Eastin, Julie. (2007). System Problems in Cases of Child Sexual Abuse: The Mothers' Perspectives. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(6), 775-787, DOI: 10.1177/0886260507300753.

Plummer, Carol A., & Eastin, Julie. (2007). The Effect of Child Sexual Abuse Allegations on the Mother/Child Relationship. *Violence Against Women*, 13(10), 1053-1071.

AWARDS.

M. Jill Brody received the 2007 Individual Achievement in the Humanities Award from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities

Heather Ondercin received the Sophonsiba Breckinridge Prize for the best paper on women and politics presented at the 2006 Midwest Political Science Association Meetings.

PRESENTATIONS.

On September 24th, **Carol Plummer** delivered the opening plenary address at the First International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse.

Petra Munro Hendry presented "Jane Addams and Memory Work" at the American Educational Research Association Conference in April.

Sue Weinstein is an invited panelist at the Hip Hop for Hope Community Forum in New Orleans on November 2, sponsored by Teach for America and the Ashe Cultural Arts Center.

COMMUNITY.

Elaine Maccio and **John Larkin** both participated in the "Homosexuality and/in Society" Public Forum at LSU on September 19th

Sue Weinstein now serves on the Program Council for the new Belfair "Free Dreams" Teen Center in Baton Rouge, a project of Big Buddy, Heath Centers in Schools, and BREC.

Under the Radar: A Queer Speakers' Series

Three new WGS and English faculty members, Myriam Chancey, Kristen Hogan, and Eldon Birthwright, have developed an alternative speaker's series entitled "Under the Radar," featuring guest speakers working in the area of Queer Studies. Within each event, writers and speakers drawn from the Louisiana community will also be featured as part of an overall effort to link and create a dialogue on a wide spectrum of diversity issues. The first in the

series featured Lambda Literary Award Winner **Sharon Bridgforth**, LSU MFA student **Penelope Dane**, and local poets from Big Buddy's **WordPlay** Teen Writing Project. Truly a success, the event was standing room only!

The second event in the series will be on October 17th and will feature **Laura Harris**, author of *Notes from a Welfare Queen in the Ivory Tower*, and **Jamey Hatley**, a recent MFA graduate from the LSU.



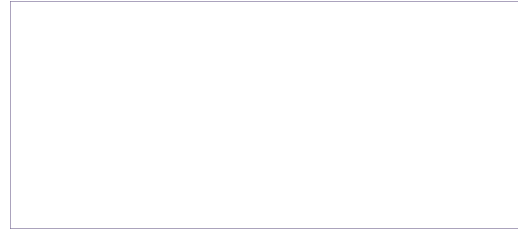
WGS Students, WGSOG Members, and WOW members at NWSA: Kate Wilson, Elizabeth Domangue, Ashli Dykes, Meredith Anderson, Jessica Ketcham Weber, Paige Pruitt, Racheal Hebert, Jessica McKelvie Kemp, and Morgan Moreau McCann presented at and attended the National Women's Studies Association Conference in St. Charles, Il in July.

Women's & Gender Studies

Louisiana State University
238 Himes Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone: (225) 578-4807
Fax: (225) 578-4804
E-mail: wgs@lsu.edu

Visit our new website:
www.lsu.edu/wgs

tune in
to KLSU
91.1 FM
Wed nights
11-1am
for BR's
only
feminist
radio
program:
VGI



.WOW and WGSGO.

WOW: Women Organizing Women's purpose is to promote feminist awareness and community activism at LSU. In recognition of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, WOW collaborated with the Women's Center for **The Clothesline Project** to make a visual statement against sexual and domestic violence. Up next is **FEMmenstruation: Period Power!**, a week-long celebration meant to encourage discussion, challenge media portrayals of menstruation, and educate the LSU community about alternative menstrual products. For more information about WOW or upcoming events, email wow@lsu.edu.

In October, WOW and WGSGO members participated in the annual **Take Back the Night** march and candlelight vigil for victims of violence.



Melissa Cameron, Danielle Dick, Racheal Hebert, Morgan Moreau, and Mariah Stidham pose with Mab Segrest, Author, Activist, and Professor at Connecticut College

WGSGO & WOW are also co-sponsoring an **Academics and Activism** Dialogue-Share-Vent Session on October 27th.

Following a successful **Feminist Theories Summer Series Reading Group**, **WGSGO: The Women's & Gender Studies Graduate Organization** has an active semester planned. Fall programming includes an interdisciplinary, biweekly **writing group**, participating in a service project called **Women Build**, a partnership between Engineering at LSU and Habitat for Humanity, and co-sponsoring with WGS a **Graduate Student Luncheon** on November 15th to discuss with new WGS faculty issues such as the transition from grad student to professor, finding interdisciplinary jobs, and the needs of WGS students. To get involved or find out more information, email lsuwgsgo@gmail.com.