

WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES

at Louisiana State University



Director's Notes with Kate Bratton

This spring, we are teaching almost 600 graduate and undergraduate students in a wide variety of courses across levels and topics—a truly interdisciplinary set of course offerings. WGS is well known on campus for its commitment to innovation and excellence in teaching. As faculty and students plan ahead for the fall 2013, be sure to keep an eye out for our fall course offerings! And a special kudos to our graduate students, for their clear commitment to building an intellectual community across undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff—and for demonstrating that commitment both within the university, and within the larger community. Events like the Literary Salon and graduate student workshops, mentoring programs, travel programs, and involvement in community events—these are crucial elements of what makes WGS such a vibrant program.

I want to call your attention to two spring semester events. Deirdre McCloskey will be at LSU for the Gray Lecture; Professor McCloskey is the Distinguished Professor of Economics, History, English, and Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Professor of Economic History at Gothenburg University, Sweden. See <http://www.deirdremccloskey.com> for more info about Dr. McCloskey's experience and career. The date for the visit is February 21st and look for more details on our Facebook, webpage, and via email! And, we are co-sponsoring the visit of Dr. Pomeroy, Distinguished Professor of Classics and History, Emerita, Hunter College & The Graduate School, CUNY. Dr. Pomeroy is the author of six books and thirty scholarly articles, including *The Murder of Regilla: A Case of Domestic Violence*; *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*; and *Spartan Women*. Dr. Pomeroy will be giving a public lecture on Monday, February 25, at 4:30, in 103 Design. She will also hold a "seminar" for a small group of students on Tuesday the 26th, 10:30-12:00 noon in 120 Design. Both of these lectures promise to be excellent opportunities for students and faculty alike! If you have any questions, suggestions, comments—please email or come by and let us know. Or, just come by to introduce yourself, or say "hi". I'm very much looking forward to what promises to be a terrific spring.

Volume 10, Issue 1

Fall 2012

WGS Events on Campus

Engendering Scholarship Series



Professor Marianne Fisher-Giorlando gave a talk on September 13th entitled "Women at the Walls: Convict Women in the Louisiana State Penitentiary 1835-1862." Professor Fisher-Giorlando teaches courses in criminal justice at Grambling State University. She was given the Governor's Award for Excellence in honor and recognition of her twenty years of service in rehabilitating Louisiana inmates.



Professor Rachel Hall delivered our second Engendering Scholarship presentation on November 8th. The title of her talk was "Terror and the Female Grotesque: Introducing Full-Body Scanners to US Airports." Professor Hall teaches in the Department of Communication Studies at Louisiana State University. Her research interests include issues of fear and security as well as gender.

Social, Historical, and Demographic Factors Shaping Women's Reproductive Choices

Tuesday, March 19th, 1:30-3:00PM

Carolyn Lewis, Assistant Professor in History

Pathology and Pregnancy: Rethinking Joseph DeLee's Views on Childbirth

Ginny Engholm, Instructor in English

The "Irregularities of Nature": Passionlessness and the "Unnatural" Message of Birth Control Advertisements in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Katherine Stamps Mitchell, Assistant Professor in School of Social Work

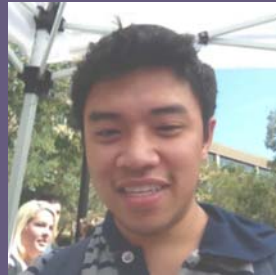
Patterns of Women's Pregnancy Intentionality

A note from WGS GO President Monica Miller!

Fall semester was an engaging one for WGS GO. In October, Professionalization Co-Chairs Jordan Von Cannon moderated a faculty-graduate student roundtable discussion led by graduate student (and Professionalization Co-Chair) Laura Marks, Professor Caroline Lewis, and Professor Birgitta Baker. We continued our very successful faculty-graduate student mentoring groups, and began a new program of graduate-undergraduate mentoring. Regular writing and walking groups met, and the new graduate student "accountability buddy" program has become quite popular; we all look forward to these programs continuing in the spring. Our reading group had lively discussions of the infamous Atlantic "Women Having It All" article and Naomi Wolf's *Vagina: A Biography*. Graduate students Cara Jones and Penelope Dane and Professor Kate Jensen hosted enjoyable literary salons, another fun activity we look forward to continuing. Finally, Treasurer Stephanie Osburn spearheaded a wonderfully successful yard sale, which raised \$120; this will allow us to provide refreshments at next semester's activities, which we hope may boost attendance. Spring semester, in addition to continuing these regular activities, we look forward to hosting a graduate student scholarship spotlight. Be on the lookout for more information about all of these upcoming events.

WGS at Fall Fest!

WGS was present at Fall Fest in September to kick-off the new semester! In addition to providing information about the Women's and Gender Studies program at LSU (and some delicious candy for good measure!), we also initiated our "This is What a Feminist Looks Like!" campaign. WGS provided a light-hearted list of feminist descriptors in an effort to combat the stereotypical image of feminists as militant bra-burning women. Students were able to see that many of the values they hold about women are central tenets of feminism. The campaign was a huge success and we collected photos of over forty students! Drawing attention to the cutting-edge, dynamic, and interdisciplinary nature of WGS has driven enrollment in our WGS 2500 classes up significantly and we hope to continue to see our numbers rise over the next academic year.



Revamped WGS Website!

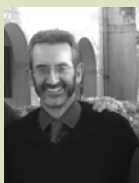
The Women's and Gender Studies website has undergone a complete overhaul as part of the university-wide effort to standardize all LSU online materials. Our new site contains streamlined information regarding WGS faculty, the undergraduate concentration and minor, the graduate minor, student and faculty resources, and course descriptions. We are continuing to update the website this spring, and welcome any feedback that you might have!

In the Classroom

Examples of Special Topics WGS Courses for Spring



WGS 4500-1: Laura Moyer, Assistant Professor of Political Science, is teaching a course this spring on "Gender, Sexuality, and the Law." Courts play an important policy making role as they define the legal parameters for relationship recognition, equal employment opportunities, domestic violence, reproductive and sexual freedom, child custody, and economic and educational equity. This course examines how legal policy both reflects and shapes norms related to gender and sexuality, and analyzes the public policy implications of court decisions related to gender and sexuality, drawing on state and federal case law, as well as empirical scholarship from the social sciences.



WGS 4500-2: John Protevi, Phyllis M. Taylor Professor of French Studies, is teaching a course this spring on "Sport and Gender." This course examines the diverse ways in which gender is constructed through sport and sport is constructed through gender. The class will critically analyze how our lived experiences are shaped through the practices of sport and gender. Particular emphasis will be paid to how class and race affect the gender/sport relation. LSU will be used as a laboratory for examining the interplay of sport and gender, race and class. There will be 4 main sections: History; Theory; Elite competitive sports (NCAA, Olympics, and professional sports); Everyday sport and fitness (for example, the LSU Student Rec Center).

WGS Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council is responsible for various aspects of the WGS program, including professional development for faculty, the annual WGS awards ceremony, and undergraduate as well as graduate advising. The Council is comprised of joint and affiliated faculty members who serve two-year terms. If you are interested in serving on the Coordinating Council, please contact Barbara Craig at wgs@lsu.edu.



Kathleen Bratton
Director



Dana Berkowitz
Programs



Challen Nicklen
Curriculum/
Undergraduate Program
Advisor



Sarah Becker
Faculty Development



Katharine Jensen
Graduate Studies



Carrie Wooten
Graduate Assistant
for Programs and
Curriculum



Benjamin Kahan
Faculty Development



James Rocha
Awards and Publicity

WGS Graduate Student Travel Funds

WGS is pleased to announce the availability of two \$100 travel awards for students traveling to conferences this spring semester to present work in Women's and Gender Studies. If you are a WGS minor presenting a paper that deals with topics in Women's and Gender Studies, please submit the following materials to Kate Jensen (kjensen@lsu.edu) by Friday, March 15:

1. Abstract/proposal with a brief statement about how this work advances scholarship in women's and gender studies
2. Proof of acceptance (email, conference schedule with your name on it)
3. Request to Travel Form

Awards will be selected based on the following criteria: strength of proposal, merit of conference, relevance of proposal to WGS topics, seniority.

Selected Faculty & Graduate Student Accomplishments

Michelle Massé's essay, *'All Things Visible and Invisible': Believing in Higher Education*, has been reprinted in *The Critical Pulse: Thirty-Six Credos by Contemporary Critics*, edited by Jeffrey J. Williams and Heather Steffen (Columbia 2012). Michelle has also been appointed a member of the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission as a designated member for the Louisiana Commission on Higher Education.

Dana Berkowitz was awarded tenure. Congratulations, Dana!

Christine Corcos published a chapter entitled *Prosecutors and Psychics On the Air: Does a "Psychic Detective Effect" Exist?* in *Law and Justice On the Small Screen* 173 (Jessica Silbey and Peter Robson eds.; Hart Publishing, 2012).

Laura Mullen published the new book *Enduring Freedom: A Little Book of Mechanical Brides* (OTIS / Seismicity fall 2012). Taking ---and twisting---the title of an Iraq operation for its own, Laura Mullen's seventh book might be summed up in the phrase Andre Breton famously applied to Frieda Kahlo: "a bomb with a ribbon around it." An extraordinarily comprehensive, sympathetic and scathing, catalog of brides, this collection of poems is also an examination of the emotional costs of a sustained attention to party planning in the face of an almost invisible war. Influenced equally by Italo Calvino and Martha Stewart, playing with conceptual poetry as well as Romance clichés, Mullen's poetic environment, and the language that sustains it, is as remarkable as it is disquieting.

June M. Pulliam's essay *Blood and Bitches: Sexual Politics and the Female Lycanthrope in Young Adult Fiction* was recently published in *Speaking of Monsters: A Teratological Anthology* (Caroline Picart, editor. New York: Palgrave, 2012).

Monica Miller presented papers at two conferences this fall. Her paper for the Berry Southern Women Writer's Association conference was entitled *What Men Seldom Realized: Beauty (and Its Lack) in Gone with the Wind*. Her second paper, "Lopsided and Squint-Eyed: Some Aspects of Ugly Women in the Short Fiction of Welty and O'Connor," was presented at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference.

Jaime Cantrell delivered a paper at the National Women's Studies Association conference for the Lesbian Caucus Special Session entitled "*Lesbis Sustineo!* Naiad Press Authors Remember Barbara Grier." This research offers a salient and timely contribution to scholarly dialogues reflecting on the significance of Barbara Grier's editorial and publishing roles from both within and outside of the press itself. Drawing from semi-structured interviews with some of Naiad Press's most celebrated authors, Jaime's project aims to sustain an ongoing remembrance of Grier's life and work by encouraging memory exploration—a symphonic blending of the printed and spoken word.

Kirsten T. Edwards presented at the Curriculum & Pedagogy Conference in Akron OH. Her work *Silver and Gold and 'Sapphire Bound!': Critical Race Theory as Method in Uncovering Multiple Forms of Black Intellectual Resistance* focused on multiple forms of resistance/epistemology for Black women intellectuals.

Megan Feifer presented a paper at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association conference. Her paper, entitled *The Re (Membering) of Bones: Memory, Trauma and Dreams as National Narrative in Edwidge Danticat's, The Farming of Bones*, explored how the multiple narratives in the text offer an additional history: a narrative of historical events that not only records formal dates and peoples impacted by such violence, but also an illustration of the severing of personal intimacies, familial relationships and notions of belonging and home.

Lauren Hellen Marks presented a paper at the South Central Modern Language Association. Her paper, *Initiating Gender: The bildungsroman in Pornographic Film and Literature*, identified a popular subgenre of pornographic film; what Marks refers to as the "initiation" genre. These films, while diverse in tone and approach, tend to follow a (usually female) protagonist - often the performer playing herself - on a journey of exploration. This *bildung*-like narrative reframes the narrative of maturation as a sexual one, and in turn depicts the acquisition of certain notions of gender and sexuality in erotic terms.

Jordan Von Cannon attended the Society for the Study of American Women Writers "Citizenship and Belonging" conference and presented a paper entitled "'A person among people': Working for Identity in Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers*." This paper examined the interdependency of work and identity in Anzia Yezierska's *bildungsroman Bread Givers*. Sara Smolinsky, a Jewish immigrant establishes an identity through her "work" that helps her to belong in turn-of-the-century America. Jordan explored the development and interconnectedness of each term (work and identity) throughout the novel's three "books" in relation to recent scholars' work on the immigrant "counter narrative" and the intersection between ethnic and assimilated American identities. This interrogated female identity construction and the formation of a new American citizen for the twentieth century.