

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWSLETTER



Gender on Film

As part of the Women's Center Gender on Film series, and with the help from various groups on campus, a screening of *The Mask You Live In* was presented on Sept. 15th as part of We're Committed Week. Followed by a panel on Masculinity, attendance this year was once again fantastic, with refreshments being served and many good conversations happening afterwards!

The Mask You Live In follows boys and men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while navigating America's narrow definition of masculinity. It opens up the conversation about what could very well be invisible to not only men, but to many people in America.

Following the film, campus activists, scholars and advocates spoke with attendees on how they could be involved in the conversation on masculinity in America. The panel featured Dr. Dana Berkowitz, Dept. of Sociology and WGS; Joseph Eaglin, our Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Sociology graduate student, and Andrew Bock, the Residential Advocacy Coordinator for Res Life. They spoke largely on the intersections of femininity and masculinity, mentioning how members of the LGBTQ community play a huge role in these conversations. Our panelist urged for students to have those difficult conversations with their friends and community members, and never be afraid to ask questions.

This event was made possible by [Student Government](#), [We're Committed](#), [WGSGO](#), [Residential Life](#), [The LSU Women's Center](#), [the Dean of Students](#) and [the Department of Sociology](#).

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Acting Up and Acting Out



This past summer and fall have been marked by a series of events that have resulted in several of us taking action. In this newsletter's introduction, Joseph and I try to reflect on the conversations we've had about our own actions, and the actions of those around us, as we think about what it means to "act up" and "act out".

Jackie: Acting up.

I recall numerous examples of people "acting up" in the past few months. But, in addition to the traditional sense of acting up, i.e. causing trouble or reacting defensively, there have been those who have been acting *up*—as in the meaning of the preposition "up": moving toward something. WGS's faculty and students' action this semester reflect more of the moving toward something as you will see in this newsletter—we are acting *up* to support one another and our mission and our community - not only with film viewings and the speaker series, but also with the individual actions our faculty and graduate students bring to their classrooms each day.

Joseph: Acting Out

When I say "act out" I don't just mean make a ruckus or to make more noise. Acting out is a method and an ongoing process, we act out every day even if we aren't aware of it. Acting out against the systems that seek to dismantle our lives is the goal, daring to exist in a world that says otherwise is the goal. To act out in the name of freedom and justice is to understand that your actions send out ripples to so many different people. From my time as the new Undergraduate Program Coordinator, I have witnessed the many instances of acting out in our program.

Want to help us act up and act out, be sure to get engaged with our faculty and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



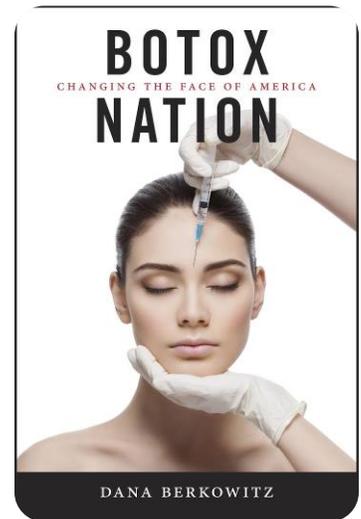
In and Around the Community

Our faculty members have been busy acting up and acting out in their own unique ways this semester!



Dr. Sarah Becker was [recently profiled](#) for her work in the community gardens of Baton Rouge!

Dr. Dana Berkowitz's was [interviewed by The Guardian](#) about her upcoming book!



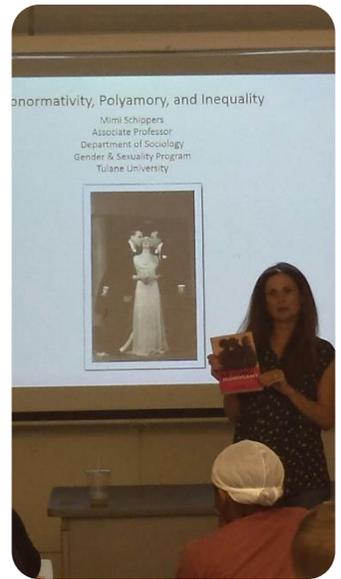
The Dean of the Graduate School, **Dr. Michelle Massé**, leads the conversation in the Identity, Empowerment, and Justice Workshop. **Dr. Shannon Walsh**, is right next to her tuning in!

Engendering Scholarship

As part of our engendering scholarship series for Fall 2016, **Dr. Mimi Schippers** [of Tulane University](#) was invited to give a lecture on her book, *Beyond Monogamy: Polyamory and the Future of Polyqueer Sexualities*.



Mimi during her lecture.



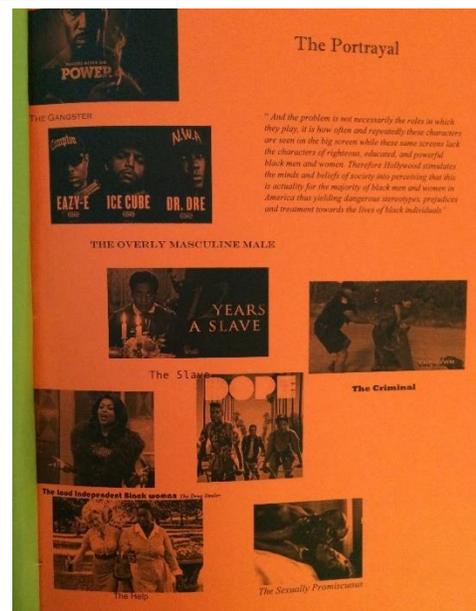
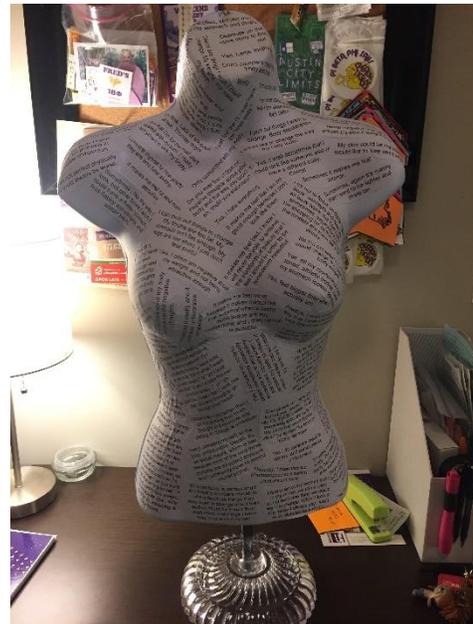
Our own **Dr. Dana Berkowitz**, introducing Dr. Mimi Schippers and her book!



Various topics ranging from race and class homogeneity in polyamorous couples to how transgender people influence the subject were discussed!

Because Women's and Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary field, this semester I asked my students to complete final projects engaging with the course material in a way that reflected their own interests. After the midterm, I asked students to respond to three questions: What WGS topics have interested you the most so far? What are your interests outside WGS? And what kind of work do you like to do? These questions prompted students to consider how the WGS topics intersect with their interests outside of the classroom. I equipped my students with a mental map of potential genres: documentary interviews, zines, podcasts, creative writing, visual arts, music, and design. After answering the preliminary questions and looking over the mental map, which linked to models, how-to guides, and resources, students met with me individually to outline the scope of their final projects. While they were skeptical with the open-ended nature of the project at first, they soon solidified their own ideas and became more enthusiastic. I believe the flexible model for our final projects created a sense of ownership which motivated students to continually work toward their goals throughout the second half of the semester.

Some of their projects were based on service: a group of seven students created a Clothesline Project to bring awareness to violence against women, and two students volunteered at STAR. Another student who is also an RA at LSU organized a conversation between her residents and representatives from Lighthouse and other campus organizations about sexual assault. Two more students used the project to become involved with Generation Action, the LSU Planned Parenthood organization, and they wrote about their experiences distributing condoms and advocating for reproductive health and sex education.



In the Classroom *cont.*



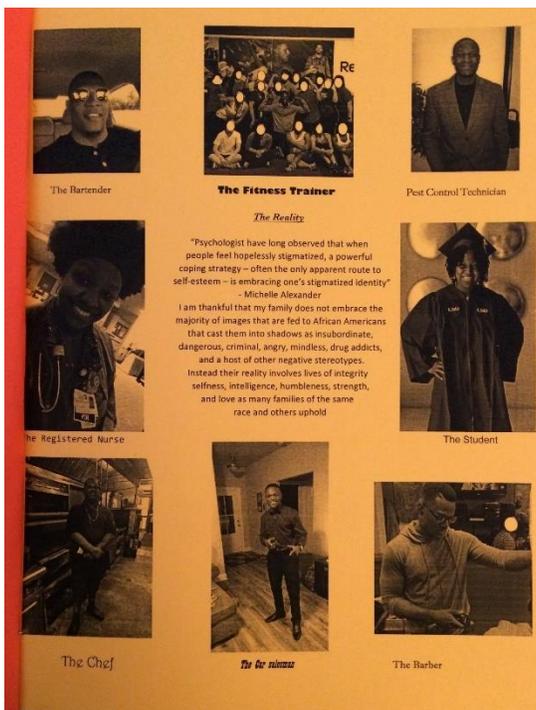
Some students opted to create a zine or visual art project.

One zine explored how gender roles differed in communities around the world; another explored the cultural significance of men who wear makeup and make makeup tutorials. Another student explored how gender roles have changed over time, and yet another explored double-standards in gender expectations. By juxtaposing images of black male stereotypes next to images of her brothers, another student effectively critiqued representations of black men in popular culture through images emphasizing the vast difference between representations and reality.

Each week, we set aside a little bit of class time to check in and discuss how the projects were progressing.

Throughout the semester, I was pleasantly surprised by their innovative ideas and their enthusiasm for and dedication to their projects. The 40 students in my WGS 2500 course demonstrated through their projects and reflections a remarkable ability to connect WGS concepts to their experiences outside of the classroom. Together, I

believe these projects allowed students to develop a critical-conversational tone which will enable them to find opportunities to engage with WGS concepts and continue effectively advocating for equality in their communities.



SPRING 2016 SPECIAL TOPICS

WGS 4500(1)

Gender, Violence, and Resistance

Gender, Violence, and Resistance is an interdisciplinary course that examines gender-based violence in the United States. Students will explore the construction and perpetration of sexual and intimate partner violence against both women and men, focusing on the unique intersections of gender-based violence and race, class, ability, sexuality, and other categories of analysis. Students will examine how both individuals and institutions perpetrate and perpetuate violence. A significant portion of the course will focus on different community responses and resistance to gender-based violence.

Catherine Jacquet

W 3:00pm-5:50pm

WGS 4500(2)

Gender, War, and Militarism

War is not a neutral phenomenon, but instead a highly gendered one. Gender is a salient factor in all dimensions of war: preparation for war, the practice of war, peacemaking, and the overarching public ideology of militarism. In this course, we will examine the gendered dynamics of all stages of war. Topics include women's experiences as fighters as well as victims of war, the use of sexual violence by militaries as well as within militaries, and the gendered dimensions of the aftermath of war including peace activism and peacemaking.

Challen Nicklen

MWF 10:30pm-11:20pm

For a full list of courses and descriptions, [visit the WGS website](#).