

# WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES AT LSU

## at Louisiana State University



Director's Notes  
with  
**Kate Bratton**

Volume 9, Issue 2

Spring 2012

## Currents in WGS on Campus & in the Community

### WGSGO Springs into Action

This semester, WGSGO sprang into action and continued its commitment to feminist scholarship by hosting a film screening, reading and writing groups, job workshops, and graduate research panels. Activism was also a central focus as members participated in a state rally with Unite Women as well as campus projects and marches against gender based violence.



#### *Miss Representation*

In April, WGSGO hosted a screening of the acclaimed documentary *Miss Representation*. The film explores how the media's misrepresentations of women have led to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence, and this screening proved to be a big hit on campus. 152 Coates hall was packed to standing-room only as over one hundred viewers, ranging from undergraduate students to graduate students to tenured faculty members to community members, viewed in rapt attention. Afterwards, Dr. Elaine Maccio moderated a Q&A session, paneled by Cara Jones (PhD candidate in English and WGS), Monica Miller (PhD student in English and WGS), and Dr. Solimar Otero (English and WGS).



#### Unite Against the War on Women Rally

This semester's activism culminated with the Unite Against the War on Women Rally. Unite Women—a new grassroots women's rights organization—formed in February of this year held rallies in all 50 states on April 28 to protest recent anti-women legislation, including attacks on reproductive choice and birth control. Ashley Baggett, a WGS graduate minor and the State Director of Unite Women, organized the rally to feature several speakers (including LSU's WGS and History Professor Dr. Alicia Long), informational tables on women's issues, and music. Many people contributed their time in attending, participating, and working at the rally, including LSU professors, LSU graduate and undergraduate students, and groups such as WGSGO, Feminists in Action, and Voices for Planned Parenthood (VOX). Approximately 150 people attended.

*(continued on page 6)*

# Looking Forward to the Fall

## WGS 1001 Evolution of Sex and Gender

An interdisciplinary course covering the biological and cultural aspects of sexual difference, including such topics as reproduction-related evolutionary change, diversification of the mammals, genetics of sex, sexual dimorphism, reproductive strategies, anatomy and physiology of human reproductive systems, and sex and gender in culture. There will be four roughly equal sections, each taught by a different faculty member, a paleontologist, two zoologists, and an anthropologist. This course meets general education course requirements for Natural Sciences.

Judith Schiebout	9:00-10:20 TTh
John Larkin	E137 Howe Russell E
Ginny Listi	
Kathy Thompson	

## WGS 2200 Gender and Popular Culture

This course explores popular cultural forms from a women's and gender studies perspective. Students will analyze the intersections of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and age in media such as popular literature, film, television, advertisements, digital media, and the internet.

Heather Durham	10:30-11:50 TTh
	253 Himes

## WGS 2300 Gender and Health

In this course, we will explore health concerns that are related to gender, including disparities and differences in health needs and responses, historical and contemporary ideas about health and gender, and how gender and health intersect with class, ethnicity, age, and place.

Mona Rocha	2:30-3:20 MWF
	226 Tureaud

## WGS 2500 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to how ideas about gender and sexuality affect our lives as women and men, family-members and co-workers, students and citizens. Questions of identity, ethics, economics, education, and social change are explored in a gendered frame. This course meets general education course requirements for Humanities.

Section 1:	11:30-12:20 MWF
Tara Smithson	200 Tureaud
Section 2 (Service Learning Option):	12:00-1:20 TTh
Sarah Becker	253 Himes
Section 3:	12:30-1:20 MWF
John Fletcher	253 Himes
Section 4:	3:00-4:20 TTh
Shannon Lewis	201 Tureaud
Section 5:	1:30-2:20 MWF
Mona Rocha	226 Tureaud
Section 6:	4:30-5:50N TTh
Dana Berkowitz	125 Tureaud

## WGS 2900 Gender, Race, and Nation

This course explores differing gendered experiences across racial, ethnic, cultural, and class divides. In the course, students will explore the question: What does it mean to think "globally" about the experiences of women? We will explore the similarities and differences among women's experiences across a variety of topics. Some of the topics considered in the course include body image across cultures, women's political participation across nations, women's experiences of war and conflict, women and economics, and women's activism across national and international contexts. This course meets general education course requirements for Social Sciences.

Section 1:	9:30-10:20 MWF
Mary T. Wilson	117 Tureaud

One of the objectives of women's studies is to uncover the experiences of women. Since women make up 50% of the population, it is impossible to speak about women as a singular group. There is no such thing as a woman's experience, and what it means to be a woman and a man varies across time, place, and space. The purpose of this course is to explore the differing gendered experiences across racial, ethnic, cultural, and class divides. We begin the course with a consideration of the social construction of categories like gender and race. We then move on to explore how these differences shape individuals' experiences across a wide array of issues including health, militarism, labor, economics, politics, and migration. This course meets general education course requirements for Social Sciences.

Section 2:	10:30-11:20 MWF
Challen Nicklen	253 Himes

## WGS 4500 Special Topics in Women's and Gender Studies: Psychologies of Gender

What does it mean to identify ourselves (or be identified as) feminine or masculine, straight or gay? Are our feelings, abilities, and ambitions dependent on whether we are born women or men? Can nurture outweigh nature? Are we able to change our identities? Do we want to? Do they change over time in ways we don't always realize? We will consider responses to these and other questions by classical analysts such as Sigmund Freud and Karen Horney, as well as those by contemporary theorists such as Jessica Benjamin, Lynn Layton, Lee Edelman, and Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. Discussion format. Required work includes daily journal, 3 essays, take-home final, and attendance/participation.

Section 1:	1:30-2:50 TTh
Michelle Massé	112 Tureaud

## Sex and Sexual Modernity, 1000-2000

This seminar will focus on historiographic methods and theoretical difficulties with imagining the long durée of sexuality, exploring continuities and differences across a 1000 year period. The course would ask whether writing such a long history of something we might tentatively call "sexual modernity" is indeed possible, while also interrogating the uses to which such a history could be put. In the last ten years, historians of sexuality have shifted from micro-historical frames to much longer views often encompassing over a thousand years (Alan Bray's *The Friend*, Anna Clark's *Desire*, David Halperin's *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, Elisabeth Roudinesco's *Our Dark Side*). With this scholarship in view, we will ask whether it is possible to speak of a sexual modernity or set of

## Fall 2012 WGS Courses (continued):

modernities. What are the historical, chronological, and geographical parameters of such a modernity? We will place these diachronically sweeping histories in conversation with chronologically shorter histories in order to attempt to suture together the ambitious project of narrating sexual modernity. We will pay particular attention to the gaps, fissures, and harmonies both between these micro and macrohistories as well as between chronologically adjacent microhistories.

Section 2: 6:00-8:50N T  
Benjamin Kahan 116 Prescott

### WGS 4900 Independent Reading and Research

PERMISSION OF DEPARTMENT REQUIRED

### WGS 7150 Seminar in Feminist Gender Theory

This course provides an overview of feminist theory. We will examine liberal, radical, socialist, Marxist, and psychoanalytic approaches to feminist theory, and use those as a foundation for exploring postmodernism, poststructuralism, social constructivism, postcolonialism, and transnational feminism. Throughout the semester, we will examine the development of concepts such as woman/women, the body, gender, nature, labor, oppression, and power, and we will pay particularly attention to how the development of feminist theories reflects a more general theoretical development across fields of study.

Kathleen Bratton TBA

### WGS 7900 Independent Reading and Research

PERMISSION OF DEPARTMENT REQUIRED

## WGS End-of-Year Awards Party



### Ann Veronica Outstanding Gender Studies Dissertation Award

*Natasha Bingham*



### Award for Outstanding Feminist Activist

*Ashley Baggett*



### Annette Massé and Beatrice Remillard Award for Outstanding Returning Student

*Monica Miller*



### Award for Outstanding Faculty or Affiliate Contribution to WGS

*Dan Novak*



### Award for Outstanding WGS Graduate Minor

*Jaime Cantrell*



*Cara Jones*

### Award for Outstanding WGS Graduate Teaching Assistant

*Andrea Berringer*

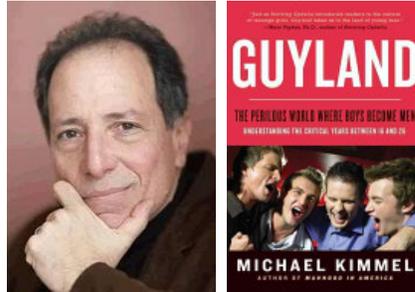


## Out of the Classroom

### WGS Engendering Scholarship Spring 2012 Lecture Series



Aisha Beliso De Jesus



Michael Kimmel

This semester WGS invited scholars to the university community through lectures organized by Solimar Otero and Dana Berkowitz. In February, Professor Aisha Beliso De Jesus from Harvard Divinity School, a friend and colleague of Solimar Otero, began the series with "Imperialist Feminisms and the Policing of Cuban Misogyny: The Iya Onifa Debate in Transnational Santería Communities." In April, Michael Kimmel visited LSU to speak about his most recent book "Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men." According to Kimmel, in 1950, most Americans had completed the transition from adolescence to adulthood by age 21 or so. Today, it's more likely to be by age 30. It's a new stage of development, and Kimmel was the tour guide in this presentation based on his best-selling book, GUYLAND. Based on interviews with more than 400 young people across the country, Kimmel offered a glimpse of why so many guys are adrift through their 20s and a road map towards a more conscious adulthood. Kimmel also visited Dana's Men & Masculinities class to speak to her students about *Guyland* and they loved it!

## WGS Retreat

Thirteen faculty and graduate students gathered at lovely Hemingbough, 20 miles north of Baton Rouge, for the Annual WGS Spring Retreat. The day began with introductions and discussion concerning the research of Dana Berkowitz, Kate Jensen and Maud Walsh. The afternoon session focused on feminist pedagogy. Participants shared effective teaching strategies and offered ideas for confronting challenging situations. In addition to dynamic discussion and the generation of great ideas, traipsing around the serene property was also a highlight of the weekend.



## Selected Faculty & Graduate Student Accomplishments

**Jackie Bach** has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. In addition, she, along with J. Broussard and M. Hundley, will publish a chapter titled "Buffy Versus Bella: Teaching Place and Gender through Adolescent Fiction, Film, and Television" in *Essays on Using Fantasy/Pop Culture in Teaching* (working title), edited by Emily Dial-Driver, Sally Emmons-Featherston, Jim Ford (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Press., 2012).

**Ashley Baggett** has been named the Louisiana State Director of Unite Women, a new grassroots women's organization that seeks to promote equality for all. She was one of the main organizers of the rally that was held downtown on April 28. The rally garnered a pretty good turnout and some great speakers such as Dr. Melissa Flournoy and Professor Alecia Long.

**Sarah Becker** received an Excellence in Teaching Award from the LSU Department of Sociology. She also did a talk this past April ("Women and Crime: Illegal Opportunity Structures") at the Women in Corrections Symposium at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (sponsored by the Louisiana State Penitentiary Museum). In addition, in May, she gave a talk ("Community Gardens as Anti-Crime Activism") at Graterford Maximum Security Prison in Philadelphia.

**Dorota Heneghan** published an essay titled "Fashion and Femininity in Emilia Pardo Bazán *Insolación*" in the prestigious *Hispanic Review* and received the LSU Tiger Athletic Foundation Undergraduate Teaching Award (2012) for excellence in teaching undergraduate courses.

**Carolyn Herbst Lewis** has been selected to receive an American Postdoctoral Fellowship from the American Association of University Women for the 2012-2013 academic year. The AAUW provides one of the world's largest sources of funding for academic women and the awards are highly competitive. Professor Lewis will spend the fellowship year researching her next project, "The Gospel of Good Obstetrics: The Chicago Maternity Center and American Medicine, 1895-1975."

**Cara Jones** received a travel grant from the North East Modern Language Association to present her paper "Erasing Endometriosis: Disability, Invisibility, and Lesbian Existence in Endometriosis Self-Help Literature." This spring, she was also selected for a \$20,000 AAUW dissertation fellowship for the academic year 2012-2013 to complete her dissertation *From Wandering Wombs to Female Troubles: Hysterical Discourse in Endometriosis Self-Help Literature and Memoirs from the Intersections of Queer and Disability Theories*.

**Elaine Maccio** has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure.

**Laura Helen Marks** was awarded the LSU Dissertation-Year Fellowship for the academic year 2012-2013. In addition, her special session proposal "Pornographic Genre," written with English PhD student Kristopher Mecholsky, was accepted for the 2012 SCMLA conference. Laura will present her paper, "Initiating Gender: The bildungsroman in Pornographic Film and Literature," at this session. She also hosted a workshop, "Queer Porm," at the Louisiana Queer Conference.

**Brigitte McCray** defended her dissertation, *Queer Utopian Geographies and Cold War Poetry*. She graduated in May and is headed to Rock Island, IL, where she will begin a two-year fellowship in English and Creative Writing at Augustana College. Her book review of *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* recently appeared in the fall 2011 issue of *Ecozone@:European Journal of Literature, Culture, and Environment*.

**Monica Miller** was selected as the recipient of the 2012 Eudora Welty Research Fellowship, funded by Eudora Welty Foundation and co-sponsored with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. This award will allow Monica to travel to Jackson, Mississippi, this summer, and do research in the Welty archive there. Monica also won the Jim Springer Borck Essay Prize at the 2012 LSU Mardi Gras Conference for her paper, "Rewriting the Romance in the Neoslave Narrative." This June, Monica will be presenting her paper, "Cloche Call: Millinery Matters in Edith Wharton's *House of Mirth*" at Wharton in Florence Conference in Florence, Italy. This past year, she presented papers at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference in Atlanta and the Society for the Study of Southern Literature conference in Nashville. In addition, Monica will be publishing a chapter, "Feminist Fairy Tales in *Who Killed Amanda Palmer*," in the book *Death, Desire, Fury, and Delirium: Feminism in the Worlds of Neil Gaiman*.

**Solimar Otero** has published her essay, "The ruins of Havana: representations of memory, religion, and gender," in the latest issue of *Atlantic Studies*, June 2012, 9(2): 143-163. She has also been elected to the Board of the American Folklore Society and has just won a fellowship from the Ruth Landis Memorial Research Fund to conduct research in Washington, DC and Cuba.

**Martha Pitts** published a review of the 19th century hairdresser's memoir *A Hairdressers Experience in High Life* in *Callaloo* (Winter, 2012) and a post about black Barbie in Ms. Magazine blog (December 2011).

**June M. Pulliam** is the new editor of *Dead Reckonings: A Review Magazine for the Horror Field*. In addition, she recently published two essays: "Blood and Bitches: Sexual Politics and the Female Lycanthrope in Young Adult Fiction" in *Speaking of Monsters: A Teratological Anthology*, edited by Caroline Picart (New York: Palgrave, 2012) and "All Grown Up: Filmic Interpretations of Roald Dahl's Novels" in *Roald Dahl Casebook*, edited by Ann Alston and Charles Butler (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

## WGSGO Springs into Action *(continued)*:

### The Clothesline Project



This semester WGSGO hosted The Clothesline Project, which brings awareness to gender based violence. In the 2012 project, a constant stream of students and members of the community viewed and decorated shirts. By seeing the decorated shirts, people are forced to confront

the suffering many women and men have quietly held onto, and hopefully, these witnesses will be compelled to take a stand against sexual, physical, and verbal attacks. Moreover, the project enables survivors to tell their story with the words or pictures they create on the t-shirt. One individual from the community received needed information on resources in the Baton Rouge area, and after decorating a shirt, she smiled widely saying how relieved she felt in finally speaking about the abuse she experienced.

### Walk a Mile in Her Shoes



This semester WGSGO also participated in STAR's Walk A Mile in Her Shoes, a men's march against sexual assault. WGS grad minors Natasha Bingham and Ashley Baggett tabled a booth at the event with the Clothesline Project. Participants of the walk stopped to read or

decorate a shirt, and the presence helped to bring awareness and generate needed discussions about gender based violence.

### Reading Group

This past year, the WGS reading group generally met every two weeks. Faculty and graduate students discussed Judith Butler's *Undoing Gender*, Siobhan Somerville's *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*, and Patricia Yaeger's *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990*. We plan to continue our reading group in the fall--most likely starting with Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.

### Writing Group

WGSGO's writing group also met regularly this semester. Using a "no homework" model, participants arrived with copies of 5 pages of anything they were working on from abstracts to journal articles, conference papers, and even dissertation chapters. The WGSGO Writing Group plans to continue next fall. Please contact Cara Jones ([cjone69@lsu.edu](mailto:cjone69@lsu.edu)) or Monica Miller ([mmil132@lsu.edu](mailto:mmil132@lsu.edu)) for more information.

### WGS Job Workshops

WGSGO organized two job workshops for graduate minors in WGS this spring. The first, hosted by Dr. Sarah Becker, explored the benefits and drawbacks to the "F-word" in academia. We explored whether marketing oneself as a feminist helped or hindered one's job prospects. The PowerPoint from this presentation is posted on the WGSGO Community Moodle. The second job workshop focused on "alternative academic" (or alt-ac) jobs, which are jobs related to universities but are not the typical tenure-track route as well as non-academic jobs for PhD students in the humanities. Facilitated through teleconferencing by Dr. Dan Novak, Dr. Lauren Coates, and Dr. Len Vraniak, PhD students in the humanities were urged to think of the skills acquired by obtaining a PhD and to use them creatively to find employment outside of the academy.

### Graduate Research Panel

WGSGO also continued our Graduate Research Panel this semester, to give graduate students working in gender studies a chance to present their work to peers and faculty. In April, Laura Helen Marks presented a selection from her first chapter "Gender, Class, and Spatial Transgression in Postmodern Pornographic Appropriations of the Victorian;" Jordan VonCannon presented her paper, "Fighting the 'flippant idlers of fashionable life': Prescriptive Education in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Clarence: A Tale of Our Own Times*," and Penelope Dane talked about her current research on "The Lesbian's Burden" in Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Louise Erdrich's *Shadow Tag* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, to an engaged audience. The event was facilitated by Monica Miller.

### WGSGO Community Moodle

The WGSGO Community Moodle page is now streamlined and organized to help you find useful resources. There you will find minutes from past WGSGO meetings, teaching resources by course, and general feminist academic resources. To be added to the Community Moodle page, please contact Cara Jones ([cjone69@lsu.edu](mailto:cjone69@lsu.edu)) or Monica Miller ([mmil132@lsu.edu](mailto:mmil132@lsu.edu)).

### New Officers

WGSGO is pleased to announce the incoming officers for the 2012-2013 academic year. Please welcome: Monica Miller (President), Penelope Dane (Vice President), Stacey Amo (Secretary), Stephanie Alexander (Treasurer), Jordan VonCannon and Laura Marks (Pedagogy / Professional Development Co-Chairs), Megan Feifer and Tara Smithson (Social Co-Chairs), and Emily Beasley (Service Chair).