



The University of Kansas  
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

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# NEWS & NOTES

Spring 2008

## Director's Notes/Ann Cudd

We began the Spring semester with a new name for the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, and a new abbreviation (WGS). This is a very significant development for us, and the decision to change our name was not easy. In our letter to Dean Steinmetz explaining request to change the name, we explained and justified this change, and I would like to share that justification with you:

Women's studies, gender studies, and sexuality studies are distinct but overlapping fields. *Women's studies* examines the roles, contributions, and experiences of women. It includes topics such as women's history and women's literature. *Gender studies* uses gender as an organizing principle for understanding the world. It includes topics such as gender role development and institutionalization and relationships between the sexes. *Sexuality studies* examines cultural representations and individuals' experiences of sexuality. It includes topics such as sexual attitudes and behaviors, sexual orientation and identity, transsexual and intersexual identities, and queer theory. Women's studies, gender studies, and sexuality studies are all interdisciplinary academic fields; they all analyze both cultural representations and people's lived experiences of these phenomena; and they all analyze how these concepts relate to each other and to other concepts, such as race, class, politics, and power.

Women's Studies Programs at many universities have adopted names reflecting these developments in the field, such as Women and Gender Studies (University of Colorado, University of Missouri), Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (Yale University, University of Minnesota), Gender Studies (Indiana University), and Feminist Studies (Stanford University). Our name change would similarly reflect the evolving field.

We hope that by changing our name and thereby

revealing our broader intentions and focus better, we will attract a more diverse population of students to our major and continue to attract high quality faculty. Students, faculty in other fields, and the general public often think that Women's Studies is by women, about women, and for women. We do not wish to send this exclusionary message. While it was once important, when women were an often unwelcome minority in the larger campus, for there to be an exclusionary space for women students and faculty, we believe that this is no longer the case. It is now crucial for our Program and our University that the study of women, gender, and sexuality be seen for its vital contribution to mainstream and universal academic and social understanding.

Part of the justification for the name change includes our new Human Sexuality Minor, which was approved in December by the Board of Regents and will begin this semester. Professors Charlene Muehlenhard (WGS and Psychology) and John Younger (Classics) wrote the proposal for the minor and serve as the first co-coordinators of the program. They will advise students and oversee the curriculum and course offerings for the Minor. A brief overview of the Minor is included in this newsletter.

Now for an update on our faculty ranks. We have been most pleased to welcome Professor Akiko Takeyama, who is jointly appointed with Anthropology this academic year. Akiko has just completed a dissertation on Japanese host clubs, and will strengthen our international profile, particularly in East Asian studies. We have just concluded our search for a tenure-track 100% line in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies this year, with a specialization in some field of Global Feminism, and will be welcoming Ayu Saraswati to our Program in the Fall. Ayu will also strengthen the vital and growing international gender studies component of our program.

We have three graduate teaching assistants with us this year. Nichole Kathol and Ryan Weaver are

both PhD students in Communication Studies, and both of them also have a graduate certificate in Women's Studies. Milton Wendland, PhD student in American Studies, has returned as a GTA in WGS to teach a course he designed entitled Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual Cultures in the U.S. He is collaborating with his students and our bibliographer, Tami Albin, on an exciting oral history project that is described elsewhere in this newsletter. In the Fall semester Heather Yates, who is an advanced graduate student in Political Science, assisted Barbara Ballard with her popular course on Women in the Legislative Process, in which students have the opportunity to network with state government officials, including Governor Kathleen Sebelius, while studying the legislation and campaigning issues surrounding women.

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies has enjoyed strong and continuing support from the administration of the College and the University. With that support we have built a solid undergraduate major and minor, and a graduate certificate program. We are now in the process of proposing a PhD program, which we hope to begin in Fall 2009. We will need the support – intellectual, financial and moral — of all of our friends in this challenging and pathbreaking endeavor. Please consider a generous contribution toward our graduate scholarship funds.

## The New Human Sexuality Minor

In December 2007 we got approval to offer a new Human Sexuality Minor! This minor is consistent with our recent name change to the “Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program.” It reflects the intersection between scholarship on sexuality and scholarship on gender. Creating this minor was suggested by Ann Cudd and was coordinated by Charlene Muehlenhard (from WGS and Psychology) and John Younger (from Classics).

We identified 36 courses (plus 13 special topics courses) at KU related to human sexuality. These courses come from 19 different academic units (African and African American Studies; Applied Behavior Science; American Studies; Anthropology; Classics; Communication Studies; East Asian Languages and Cultures; English; French; History; Health, Sport, and Exercise Science; Humanities and Western Civilization; Philosophy; Political Science; Psychology; Religion; Sociology; Social Welfare; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies). There are at

least 26 KU faculty members—plus numerous graduate students—who teach courses related to sexuality.

Students earning a Human Sexuality Minor need to complete 18 hours of course work related to sexuality:

- a general survey course on sexuality (3 hours),
- three core courses (9 hours) with a primary focus on sexuality (including at least one humanities course and one social or biological science course), and
- 6 hours of additional courses, research, or service learning related to sexuality.

For more information, you can contact the Coordinators of the Human Sexuality Minor, Charlene Muehlenhard, (785) 864-9860, [charlene@ku.edu](mailto:charlene@ku.edu), or

John Younger, (785) 864- 3263, [jyounger@ku.edu](mailto:jyounger@ku.edu), or you can go to the WGS home page ([www.womensstudies.ku.edu/](http://www.womensstudies.ku.edu/)) and click on [Human Sexuality Minor](#).

## Graduate Certificate Program

Since beginning the Graduate Certificate Program in Fall 2002, we have conferred sixteen certificates, including a class of six this past Spring semester. Our most recent class of graduates are: **Ryan Gaston, Erin Gingrich-Gaylord, Jan Hovden, Nichole Kathol, Elizabeth Miller, and Ryan Weaver**. The pipeline of students includes 10 students in the first course for the certificate program, WS 801, this fall. Certificate students have come from a wide range of disciplines in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Education, and we hope to attract students from other Schools in the University as well. We have devoted a page on our website listing the names of our graduates and links to their certificate research, if available.

## Student Internships and Service Learning

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies seeks to expand opportunities in service learning and internships by combining efforts with existing programs and adding service learning components to selected courses. Some of this work by students is displayed

on our website in the form of digital posters ([http://www.womensstudies.ku.edu/service\\_learning/](http://www.womensstudies.ku.edu/service_learning/)). These experiences are valuable ways for students to activate and expand their knowledge and serve the community at the same time. We would encourage any Friends or colleagues who could sponsor a service learning or internship student to contact us to discuss a possible link with us.

## WGS Faculty Highlights

### *Omofolabo Ajayi*

I am currently working on the body of works of Efua Sutherland, a Ghanaian playwright and a pioneer of modern theatre in Africa. (I have an entry on her in the *Oxford Encyclopedia Of Women in World History*). My major focus during my sabbatical next year, is to produce a book manuscript tentatively titled “Emerging Perspectives on Efua Sutherland,” exploring her contributions to theatre studies and theories of performance in Africa and the Diaspora.

This past year, working as the Associate Director of the Kansas African Studies Centre, I initiated the “African Writer’s Series,” and the South African writer, Zakes Mda’s visit in December 2007, was the second in the series.

### *Ann Cudd*

My book, *Analyzing Oppression* (Oxford University Press, 2006) was awarded the Byron Caldwell Smith Award in October, 2007, and was named a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2007. I am currently working on two book projects. One is tentatively titled *Capitalism For and Against: Feminists Debate*, which I am co-authoring with Nancy Holmstrom of Rutgers University, and is an attempt to look at how capitalism affects women and other vulnerable populations in the world and assess its value for a progressive future. The other is a book on intervention, in which I look at the paradoxical nature of interventions, which violate a person’s or nation’s autonomy in order eventually to restore it. I focus on domestic violence interventions to draw lessons for international interventions.

This year I have been serving as the chair of the University Senate Athletics Committee and looking especially hard at the progress of women student-athletes and women’s opportunities for athletics under Title IX. I have also been the keynote speaker at conferences on feminist philosophy this year at Florida State University

and at the University of Kentucky, where I have spoken on freedom and on the difference feminism has made to mainstream political philosophy.

### *Hannah Britton*

I am currently beginning a new project examining how state institutions in southern Africa are working to fight gender-based violence. Using the cases of Namibia, South Africa, and Botswana, I am examining different strategies for implementing national programs of action and for working with civil society organizations to combat rape, sexual violence, and domestic abuse. Given the rich history of women’s movements in southern Africa and the new role of women’s participation in national governments, these cases promise to show us how women are able to work for their rights and freedoms in democratizing contexts. Last summer, I traveled to Namibia and South Africa doing some preliminary fieldwork, and this summer I will travel to Botswana.



*Hannah with Taylor Price, who worked as her research assistant last summer in Namibia. Taylor was a history and political science student who graduated May 2007, and completed her honors thesis on the role of women in the transition to democracy in Namibia. They are pictured at the offices of Sister Namibia, one of the leading women’s organizations in Namibia.*

### *Tanya Hart*

I was awarded a New Faculty General Research Fund grant for summer 2007, and used it to conduct

research and writing in New York City. As part of ongoing work on infant and maternal health care programs that were created for women of African and Southern Italian descent during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, I focused on the archives of the Nursery and Child's Hospital, housed at New York Presbyterian Hospital. These contain information on their work among parturient and recently delivered women and their babies in Columbus Hill, an old neighborhood in midtown Manhattan. I will discuss some of my findings in a paper for the Health and Humanities and Gender seminars at the Hall Center for the Humanities on May 14, 2008. It will also be used as historical background for a journal article questioning whether race should be considered as a defining marker in contemporary public health care, or for genetic research and therapies.

During spring semester 2008, I had total knee replacement surgery and now have two new knees. Yahoo!

### **Ann Schofield**

During the summer of 2007 I traveled to the University of Swansea in Wales to present a paper at a conference sponsored by the Centre for Research into Gender in Culture and Society. About seventy feminist scholars from as near as Swansea and from as far away as Australia, Japan and Kansas assembled to discuss and share scholarship on *The Merry Widow: Rethinking Widowhood in History, Culture and Society*. The interdisciplinary nature of the conference was reflected in paper and keynote titles: "Sad, Bad, Dangerous to Know? Representations of the Widow in Literature and Art", "You are the Saviour's Widow: Religion, Sexuality and Bereavement in the Eighteenth Century Moravian Church", "The Senegalese Widow: Widowhood in Mariama B's *Une se longue letter*, and my own paper, "Women in black: A Comparative Study of Class, Gender and Mourning in Britain and the United States."

### **Akiko Takeyama**

I am writing a book based on my doctoral dissertation, "The Art of Seduction and Affect Economy: Neoliberal Class Struggle and Gender Politics in a Tokyo Host Club." This ethnographic study examines the accelerating commercialization of affect — feelings, emotions, and romantic relationships — that lie at the intersection of the country's postindustrial consumer culture and neoliberal globalization. Much of the material is based on

fieldwork conducted in Tokyo between 2003 and 2005, in which I explored Japan's host club scene, where mostly young, working-class men and their female clients mutually seduce one another to foster a commodified form of romance and cultivate their desirable selves. The goal of my project is to contribute to and expand the burgeoning critical theory of affect, class and gender politics in consumer culture, and neoliberal globalization.

### **Marta Vicente**

I am currently working on the writing of the book manuscript *Playing Maria: Staging Sex and Gender in Early Modern Spain* which examines the construction of sexual identity among cross-dressers, hermaphrodites, sodomites and over-sexualized actresses in early modern Spain (1500-1800). In explaining their sexuality, early modern Spaniards did not always have a clear cut, universal definition of man and woman. Although most recognized sexuality as the product of nature, lawyers, scholars, clergymen, and ordinary men and women recognized other circumstances could shape a person's sex. Family upbringing, education, work, and lifestyle could make men effeminate and women masculine; in rare cases, they might even alter nature, making men into women, and women into men. Based on this historical evidence, my study will contribute to current debates on the historical construction of gender and sex by arguing for the need to recognize how gender performance could change something as apparently unalterable as one's sex.



Marta with "Mystics to Feminists: 1600-Present" students, University of Southern California, Fall 2007.

### **Visiting Professor Fatou Diop**

Senegal Professor Fatou Diop was at KU in the fall semester as a visiting professor, teaching a course

entitled “Gender and Development: Challenges for African Women” (AAAS 320/520). She and WGS Director Ann Cudd formally agreed to exchange information, news, and course materials between the Women’s Studies program at the Universite Gaston Berger and our Women, Gender, and Sexuality Program, and to look into other ways to collaborate and opportunities for exchange.



*Senegal Prof. Fatou Diop and Ann Cudd.*

## **WGS Students Contribute to Oral History Project**

Milton Wendland (doctoral student in American Studies) is teaching WGS 396 (Studies in: Lesbian & Gay Cultures in the United States) this semester. One of the issues faced in such courses is that most histories and studies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people focus on coastal cities like New York and San Francisco, overlooking the Midwest and Kansas. The truth, however, is that Kansas and the midwest have been and continue to be home to all types of LGBTIQ people living a variety of lives.

Tami Albin (KU Undergraduate Instruction & Outreach Librarian) is founder and director of the “Under the Rainbow: Oral Histories of GLBTIQ People in Kansas” Project, a grant-funded oral history project designed to document and make available digitally the lives and experiences of GLBTIQ Kansans. This digital collection will be the first of its kind in KU ScholarWorks, and will be accessible for use by scholars, researchers, and lay people around the world.

Tami and Milton worked with Andi Witzczak (Director of the KU Center for Service Learning) and Rebecca Schulte (University Archivist) to develop a way for the students to contribute to this groundbreaking project while also developing research, service-learning, and practical skills that will make their resumes and graduate school applications shine. Each student is developing an individual project description in which they describe how they will do research using primary sources housed in the Kenneth Spencer Research Library and at a later stage in the project other sources (e.g., databases) available through other KU Library locations, and the students will file periodic progress reports documenting their research and discovery process as well as reflection essays in which they connect their research with concepts covered in my classroom. Their efforts will culminate in final projects, currently envisioned as contextual, content-based information that will allow all users of the digital archive to link to relevant context information as they use the digital oral history archive. The goal of the Service Learning project is to connect the Under the Rainbow oral histories with major LGBTIQ events (legal, political, social, and otherwise) in Kansas and the nation. Researchers using the Under the Rainbow oral history collection will have instant connections and links to contextualize the under-represented history of GLBTIQ people in Kansas in the larger history of LGBTIQ people. In addition, this new digital project will highlight the vast richness of the collections of the KU Libraries, the University of Kansas, and the state itself.

To honor their important work and recognize their contributions to KU, to the study of gender and sexuality, and to the general body of knowledge, select students will present their work at a research reception at **11 a.m. on Thursday, April 24th in the North Gallery of the Spencer Research Library.** WGSAB members and friends are invited to attend.

## **Alumnae Notes**

### **Jessie Funk:**

I spent Spring 2008 working as an intern with Amnesty International at the Midwest Regional Office in Chicago, where I spent time as a Women’s Campaign Assistant. My focus was on doing research and organizing for the Maize of Injustice campaign, which works to prevent violence against Native American women.

## Jenna Sheldon-Sherman:

After graduation in 2006, I joined Teach for America and was assigned to teach 9<sup>th</sup> grade English in Charlotte, NC. During my time with Teach for America, I was named West Mecklenburg High School New Teacher of the Year. I am currently serving as an AmeriCorps\*VISTA at the Center for Service Learning working to ensure that community-engaged learning becomes a priority and core practice at the University of Kansas. Following my year of service, I plan to pursue a law degree specializing in juvenile law at Michigan, Northwestern, or Stanford.

## Zoë Peterson:

Zoë Peterson, Ph.D., former Women's Studies GTA and a member of our first class of Graduate Certificate students, has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at University of Missouri-St. Louis. She holds a joint appointment in the Department of Psychology and the Institute for Women and Gender Studies.

We invite other alumnae/i to contribute their notes to this space.

## Gender Seminar

### Spring 2008 Speakers:

- Wed., Mar. 12 **Alesha Doan**, Political Science  
"Queer & Political: Public Attitudes toward Gay and Lesbian Candidates"
- Mon., Mar. 24 **Ann Russo**, Women's and Gender Studies, DePaul University  
"Feminism, Whiteness and Power: Cultivating Accountability"  
\*Hall Center Conference Hall  
Co-Sponsored by the Philosophy & Literature Seminar
- Mon., Apr. 7 **Rupaleem Bhuyan**, Social Welfare  
"Structural Constraints on Empowerment in Domestic Violence Advocacy with Immigrants"
- Wed., May 14 **Tanya Hart**, Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies/American Studies  
"Correcting the *Contadina*: Southern Italian Women and Public Health Care in New York City, 1910-1930." Co-Sponsored by the Health & Humanities Seminar.

All Sessions are held in the Hall Center Seminar Room from 3:30-5:00p.m. unless otherwise noted.

The Gender Seminar studies gender as a basic concept in humanistic scholarship and/or as a fundamental organizing principle in social life. If you would like more information, contact Hannah Britton (Political Science, 864-9016, [britton@ku.edu](mailto:britton@ku.edu)) or Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka (Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, 864-2691, [omofola@ku.edu](mailto:omofola@ku.edu)).

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## Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Endowment Funds

Our Endowment funds make possible projects, scholarships, and social occasions that help us build a community beyond the classroom. Thanks to our

Endowment funds we are still able to support several important events and awards. Among the events were our traditional New Women Faculty Potluck and our end of the year annual Awards Banquet, along with the visits of three candidates for the Global Feminism faculty position. At the Awards Banquet, **Jesse Jones** was presented with a Virginia's Purse Award, and **Elizabeth Carey** was presented with the Honors Essay Prize, which includes a cash award along with publication of the essay on our website. **Stacy Lynn Burke** received a \$1,500.00 "Service Learning" Award and a \$1,000.00 General Scholarship fund, contributions from Student Senate's Education Opportunity Fund. The graduating seniors: **Jennifer Bedwell** (WS), **Shannon Berquist** (WS), **Samantha Birchfield** (WS & English), **Kristen Brouhard** (WS & English), **Holly Cramer** (WS), **Kathleen Lynch** (WS & French), **Marcy Quiason** (WS/Political Science & Pre-Law) were also recognized. The Harley S. Nelson Family Fund Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences, which recognizes a rising senior in each department, was presented to **Jeanine Lacore**.

Your ongoing support of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program is greatly appreciated. If you would like to contribute, please send your tax-deductible contribution to KU Endowment, c/o Kathleen Brady, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, Kansas 66044-0928. Please write in our mailing code: 7WS in the memo line of your check.



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