

Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Department

February 2021

Welcome from the Interim Chair:

When I agreed to return to WGSS for a year so that Nick could enjoy a well-deserved research leave, I was imagining a repeat of a happy year in Blake with lovely colleagues and students. My 2016/2017 term as Interim Chair now belongs to a lost era full of joyful pleasures: doors wide open, students coming and going, unexpected conversations in doorways and hallways. Now we interact with each other almost exclusively online, occasionally dropping books and small offerings on each other's porches, and try to learn new ways to be optimistic. My current hopefulness centers on the upcoming series of campus-wide spring 2021 workshops on "Revolutionizing Academia: Engaging Anti-Racism and Restructuring Curricular Practices" (led by Professor Chanelle Wilson of Bryn Mawr College and co-sponsored by WGSS and the Center for Teaching Excellence). The need for the workshops, identified by WGSS graduate students soon after the horrific murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many other innocent people, is a painful reality. Our graduate students also helped us see how our curriculum sometimes tilts too heavily toward the cis white western feminist canon. It has been wonderful to watch the faculty respond quickly to student needs, resolving, for example, that the theory course for next fall would be Ayesha Hardison's course on Black Feminist Theory. Our hope is that Chanelle Wilson's workshops will point us in new directions regarding pedagogy, course design, outreach, and ways to help prepare students of color for teaching in predominantly white institutions. A highlight on our calendar this spring is a talk by Susan Stryker, hosted by WGSS in connection with KU's annual February Sisters celebrations. Please join us for the talk on Zoom on



Upcoming Events:

February 12th @ 2:00 pm
Online zoom workshop

Revolutionizing Academia
Workshop #1, featuring
Chanelle Wilson

February 25th @ 5:00 pm
Online zoom lecture

February Sisters Lecture,
Featuring Susan Stryker

March 4th @ 3:00 pm
Online zoom lecture

Gender Seminar, featuring
Akiko Takeyama

Are you a WGSS alum?

Let us know what you're up to! We are reaching out to our WGSS graduates and would love to hear from you.

If you'd like to be included on our our alumnae/i page, please email our Administrative Associate, Emma Piazza, at epiazza@ku.edu.

Welcome from the Interim Chair (cont).

Thursday, February 25 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Stryker's talk, "Frances Thompson: Transness, Race, and Disability in the Long U.S. Civil War," will deal with a black trans woman outed in 1876 in Memphis, Tennessee, whose story becomes weaponized in the contested presidential election that year. We hope to see you there. If you would like the link to the event, please email Emma Piazza (epiazza@ku.edu).

The pandemic has been hard on our students, but we are so grateful to the thoughtful donors who speedily came to the rescue by helping out with our students' emergency expenses. Thank you so much for thinking of WGSS. If you are able to contribute this year, please watch for our March 2021 funding appeal for summer support for graduate students or contact me directly.

Best wishes for more hopefulness in 2021,

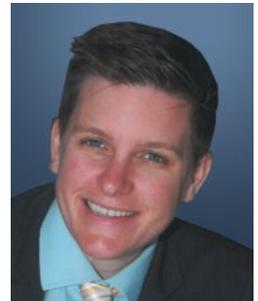
Pam Gordon

pgordon@ku.edu

What's Happening with WGSS faculty:

Katie Batza:

Dr. Katie Batza started off 2020 thrilled to teach a newly designed (and unexpectedly prophetic) course called Making a Pandemic for which she had custom designed a number of interactive games and innovative teaching tools. Initially, the course focused predominantly on the AIDS epidemic, but COVID-19 quickly became another case study for the class as it charted how structural inequalities, government responses, and public health strategies played out in real-time. Batza continued exploring this theme in the Fall in an Honors Seminar entitled Pandemics of Inequality as well as teaching the Introduction of WGSS. Beyond the classroom, she continued her work as Director of Graduate Studies and as the driving force behind the Big Ideas Incubator, completed her tenure as the Co-Chair for the Sexuality and Gender Diversity Faculty Staff Council and as a board member for the Committee on LGBT History, and became an Honors Program Faculty Fellow. While the pandemic significantly impacted the research landscape, Batza continued to make progress on her three main projects: a book on the early AIDS epidemic in the United States Heartland, a Reproductive Justice Audiowalk of Boston, and an interdisciplinary analysis of barriers to healthcare for LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people. She also wrote several book reviews, presented at a conference in New York City before the pandemic canceled the other conferences she planned to attend, and gave talks (via Zoom) to audiences as far-flung as the University of Glasgow and as local as Topeka. Over the course of 2020, she had an article published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, a chapter included in a volume from the University of Pennsylvania Press, another chapter in production, learned how to create podcasts, and applied for



multiple grants. In 2021, she looks forward to teaching the Introduction to WGSS, reviving her Skin, Sex, and Disease course, releasing her Reproductive Justice Audiowalk of Boston, and diving into her research in earnest once the pandemic recedes. Most of all, she can't wait to be in an actual classroom with students again and in Blake with her wonderful colleagues!

Hannah Britton:

Professor Britton is the Director for the Center of Injustice at KU. CSI is currently the home of the Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Initiative, the Center for Migration Research, and The Qualitative Research Working Group. Prof. Britton's book, *Ending Gender-Based Violence: Justice and Community in South Africa* was released last spring, and she continues her research on how to prevent human trafficking and extreme exploitation. Two articles published this year are online: "[Understanding Risk and Prevention in Midwestern Antitrafficking Efforts: Service Providers' Perspectives](#)" and "[A Prototype Comparison of Human Trafficking Warning Signs: US Midwest Frontline Workers' Perceptions](#)". Additionally, Prof. Britton is also a collaborator on Prof. Hyunjin Seo's Center for Digital Inclusion's project "Collaborative Research: Technology Education for Women in Transition," building tools and curricula on digital literacy to assist women transitioning from incarceration back to the workforce and society.



Sarah Deer:

Sarah Deer, J.D. has a dual appointment in WGSS and the School of Public Affairs and Administration. In May 2020, she was named a University Distinguished Professor by Provost Barbara Bichelmeyer. During the past year, she has worked on an important 2020 Supreme Court decision regarding the reservation status of her own tribal nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. After filing two amicus briefs on this matter, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation was victorious in the case – *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, a case which many Indian law scholars see as the most important Indian law case of the past 100 years. Subsequently, Professor Deer was appointed to the Mvskoke Reservation Protection Commission by the Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation David Hill. She serves on two committees for the commission, chairing the Violence Against Native Women committee and serving as a member of the public safety and law enforcement. In April 2020, Professor Deer was awarded a fellowship from the Carnegie Foundation – a prestigious fellowship which comes with a 2 year release from teaching, allowing her to work on her next book about gender, democracy and Indian nations.



Alesha Doan:

Professor Doan's interdisciplinary research program is situated at the intersections between gender, public policy, and organizations, with a substantive focus on reproductive politics, sexual violence, and gender & the military. Her research examines the ways in which gender is infused into the social and political structures that shape formal and informal practices. Professor Doan interrogates how these gendered practices create obstacles for people that limit their decisional autonomy, and create inequities in organizations, policies, and the lived



experiences of people. In 2020, Professor Doan was promoted to full professor. She published three articles examining two timely and enduring issues: abortion politics and sexual assault. Professor Doan is currently working with colleagues on an edited book, *Managing Sex in the Military* (University of Nebraska Press). She is also working on several reproductive politics projects and continues to work with a collaborative research team on a three-year grant (2019-2022) investigating gendered eating disorders in the military.

Pam Gordon:

Pam Gordon, Professor of Classics is this year's Acting Chair of WGSS. She writes: The closing of campus last March interrupted my graduate seminar on the ancient Greek writer Herodotus, who is often cited as the founder of history writing as a discipline because of his *historia* (literally, "inquiry") into the origins of the conflict between Greek and Persian cultures. The course focused on narrative style and Herodotus' presentation of gendered and ethnic polarities. Moving from a seminar room filled with ten energetic graduate students to the Zoom screen was sad, but we made the best of it by occasionally joining the "Herodotus Helpline," an international seminar based in Scotland and London. Meanwhile, finding it hard to concentrate with so many logistical challenges and so much bad news around us, I was happy to be able to see two small writing projects through the copy-editing and page proof stages. One, an article on Diogenes of Oenoanda, has just appeared in the *Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism*. Currently, I am working on a talk for an Endowment for the Arts Big Read program at the Wichita Public Library. The book is Madeline Miller's novel *Circe*, and my talk is about representations of the goddess Circe's powers in ancient Greek vase-painting.



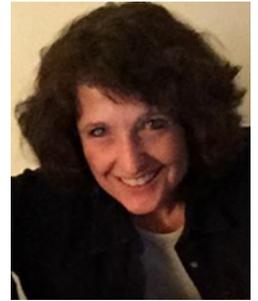
Ayesha Hardison:

Ayesha Hardison is an Associate Professor with a joint appointment in WGSS and English. She is also editor of [Women, Gender, and Families of Color](#), a multidisciplinary journal centering the study of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian American communities, hosted in WGSS. Her research and teaching focus on African American literature and culture with particular interests in gender, genre, and historical memory. In 2020, she guest-edited "Zora's Legacy: Black Love as Critical and Creative Inquiry" with Randal Maurice Jelks for a special issue of *The Langston Hughes Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1. She also published the essay ["Robert Hayden: Paradise Valley/Detroit, MI"](#) as part of *The New Territory's* Literary Landscapes series and the blog ["The Big Idea: Coupling Jim and Jane Crow"](#) as part of Humanities Kansas's Movement of Ideas. Additionally, she participated on panels discussing Black women and civil rights (sponsored by KU's Emily Taylor Center for Women & Gender Equity and the Office of Multicultural Affairs); African Americans and the vote (sponsored by the Topeka Chapter of the Links, Incorporated); and making learning more equitable as part of the "Forward: Creating Feminist Futures" conference (sponsored by The Women's Place at Ohio State). In July 2021, she will co-direct [Hurston on the Horizon: Past, Present, and Future](#), a three-week virtual National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute on the works of Zora Neale Hurston.



Charlene Muehlenhard:

Like many of us, I have spent much of the past year sitting on a chair Zooming! Not what we had planned! My students and I have continued working on projects related to sexuality, sexual ambivalence, consent, and coercion—for example: gay and bisexual men's experiences with being sexually coerced: the outcomes that they reported and their reasons for telling or not telling anyone; how individuals choose their sexual orientation labels, and how this relates to their conceptualizations of sexual orientation and gender identity; how sexual encounters initiated on Grindr compare with in-person initiation, especially related to issues of sexual consent; decision making when sex is painful: the meanings that individuals attribute to having or not having "sex" in the context of a relationship; sexual rejections: when individuals try to initiate sex with their partner, what factors are associated with feeling positive versus negative if sex does not happen; strategies individuals use to influence their future sexual behavior when they want to have sex but think that they shouldn't—or don't want to have sex but think that they should. On other fronts, I am in the middle of a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS). We have dealt with a lot of difficult issues (e.g., how to move our annual conference online because of COVID-19; whether our listserv should be "policed" for controversial statements and if so, what the guidelines should be).



Nick Syrett:

Nick Syrett has stepped away from chairing the department for the 2020-21 academic year while he's on a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on his next book, a biography of nineteenth-century America's most famous abortionist and female physician, Madame Restell. Last academic year he published coedited journal forums/articles in the *American Historical Review* (on the history of chronological age and gender) and in *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* (on intergenerational same-sex sex), as well as in a number of edited collections. His third book, *An Open Secret: The Family Story of Robert and John Gregg Allerton*, will be published by the University of Chicago Press in March. He looks forward to returning to the chair's office and to the classroom in August; right now he's very grateful to Pam Gordon for stepping in as chair this year.



Akiko Takeyama:

Akiko was on research leave in 2020 under the SSRC-Abe Fellowship. During this time, she has published her journal article, "Marriage, Aging, and Women's Pursuit of Commercial Sex in Japan," in *Sexualities*, and two book chapters, "Possessive Individualism in the Age of Postfeminism and Neoliberalism" (*Feminist and Queer Theory*, Oxford University Press) and "Doing and Writing Affective Ethnography" (*Studying Japan*, Nomos). She also has gotten an advance contract for her second book project, *Involuntary Consent: Legal and Pornographic Illusions in Japan's Adult Video Industry*, and an offer of Japanese translation of her first book, *Staged*



Seduction: Selling Dreams in a Tokyo Host Club (Stanford University Press, 2016). She appeared in the Podcast by Kansas Public Radio to discuss her current work in relation to essential workers, "When Experts Attack #25: Are 'Essential Workers' Treated Like Performers in the Porn Industry?" Akiko will be teaching WGSS 802: Feminist Methodologies and WGSS 601: Capstone in Spring 2021. One of her chapters in the new book, "Affective Violence: Unfree Speech and Pornographic Illusion in Japan's Adult Entertainment Videos," is scheduled to present at the Gender Seminar at the KU Hall Center on March 4th.

Stacey Vanderhurst:

Like a lot of us, Stacey spent the last year reorganizing research and teaching plans to meet the demands of the global pandemic. In March 2020, she was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to research a second book project on feminist protest movements in Nigeria. Though she has had to decline this award due to travel restrictions, she looks forward to resuming the work virtually through a collaboration with AAAS faculty member James Yeku and funding from the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities. She also integrated more digital methods into the new all-remote version of our undergraduate methods course, keeping WGSS majors and minors on track with their own research and graduation goals. Finally, as Director of Undergraduate Studies, she has been working closely with Grad Director Katie Batza and a team of exceptional WGSS doctoral students to build digital resource center for our GTA instructors. She's grateful for the work folks have put in to stay connected to each other and to our students this past year, but she can't wait to get back into Blake Hall on the other side of this thing.



Marta Vicente:

I am happy to report that in 2020, and despite the ongoing pandemic, I was able to write three articles, two are presently under consideration by two major journals in the WGSS field: "Transgender: A Useful Category?," under consideration by *Transgender Studies Quarterly* and "Transgender Narratives: the Limits of Representing Nature in Early Modern Europe," under consideration by *Gender and History*. The third article, "The Medicalization of the Transsexual: Patient-Physician Narratives in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," was accepted by the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* and it will be published in 2021. In 2020 I was also able to advance the writing of my book manuscript *Trans Confessions from the Inquisition to the Internet*, which I am planning to finish in 2023. One of the most remarkable achievements academic wise was the interview in December 2020 by the producer of the [New Books Network](#), one of the most popular podcast sites in Europe.



WGSS Graduate Students:

Abigail Barefoot: Abigail Barefoot is a doctoral candidate and is currently working on her dissertation exploring victim-survivors experiences with transformative justice practices for sexual violence. This past summer, she was awarded an NSF Law and Social Science Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant and a KU Office of Graduate Studies Summer Research Scholarship

to support her research in San Francisco. Due to COVID-19, Abigail shifted her research plans to online fieldwork for the foreseeable future. In the fall, she presented her research at The Hall Center and The Institute for Policy & Social Research and was scheduled to present at NWSA before the conference was canceled. Abigail contributed a chapter to the book, *Feminist Geography Unbound: Discomfort, Bodies, and Prefigured Futures* which is tentatively scheduled for publication in March. She also will present her talk "Challenging Expertise: Addressing Sexual Violence with Transformative Justice" at the Hall Center's Gender Seminar in May.

Grace Branham: Grace Branham is a second year PhD student. From February, she has served as treasurer of a non-profit consumer rights organization, the Gender Care Consumer Advocacy Network. Over the summer, she worked as a research assistant to Dr. Sasha Goldberg for her work on butch identity and the cis/trans binary. In the fall, she was a teaching assistant for WGSS 101 and began collaborating with a clinical psychology doctoral candidate from the University of Bath on research into detransition.

Amber Brown: Amber is a second-year PhD student in the WGSS department. This year Amber began coursework toward her concentration in public policy and has begun thinking about her future dissertation topic and committee. Amber plans to compare abortion policy in the United States' federalist system to that of policy in unitary systems of government. This year Amber is the instructor of record for WGSS 339: Feminism and Social Change and one of the GTAs for the WGSS Capstone with Professor Akiko Takeyama. Amber looks forward to continuing her coursework post-qualifying exam and gaining more teaching experience in her remaining time at KU.

Kelsey Carls: Kelsey Carls is a third-year doctoral student and is currently wrapping up coursework in her concentration area of Communication Studies. She has spent the past year expanding her knowledge of public policy theory and process by taking courses in the School of Public Administration and Affairs as well as the School of Social Welfare at KU. She plans to incorporate this knowledge into her dissertation project, which will focus on the discourse of activist groups in the US working to pass legislation decriminalizing the sex trades. She was awarded an MA last spring after successfully completing the program's Qualifying Examination and is now in the process of preparing for her Comprehensive Examination, which she plans to take in the coming year. Kelsey was also selected to participate in the Hall Center's Applied Humanities Boot Camp for summer 2020 and is excited to explore career opportunities outside the academy in the coming years. Beyond this, she remains a proud member of the Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition (GTAC) union, AFT local 6403, and is very much looking forward to the time when she can once again teach in-person and rejoin students safely in the classroom.

Melinda Chen: Melinda Chen is a 3rd year Dean's Doctoral Fellow and PhD Candidate. Melinda's dissertation examines the ways in which victim advocates support marginalized and minority survivors of sexual violence. In particular, Melinda examines how clinical and carceral values at rape crisis centers affect interpersonal, direct advocacy practices during crises for marginalized and minority survivors in order to develop inclusive and diverse advocate training and policies. Despite the challenges of 2020, Melinda successfully earned her M.A. in WGSS in January 2020 and completed her PhD concentration in East Asian Languages & Cultures (EALC) in May 2020. In April

2020, Melinda was awarded the Emily Taylor Women's Memorial Award. In November 2020, Melinda successfully defended her comprehensive exam and has begun her fieldwork. In addition to coursework and her dissertation, Melinda published two journal articles: an open-access piece entitled, "[The Power of Words: A Discussion of Chanel Miller's Know My Name \(2019\)](#)", published in the fiftieth anniversary of WGSS anthology, *Persistence is Resistance*; and [a review critiquing the new monograph](#), *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan* by Amy Brainer, published in the *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*. In fall 2020, Melinda taught WGSS 327: Perspectives in LGBTQ+ Studies and WGSS 355: International Women's Rights. Melinda continues to conduct research on behalf of the Native Justice Project with Professor Sarah Deer. Melinda has volunteered as a victim advocate at both the Sexual Trauma & Abuse (STA) Care Center in Lawrence, KS and the Crisis Center, Inc., in Birmingham, AL, and serves as a representative on the Queer & Trans People of Color Caucus (QTPOC), National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), as well as several university organizations.

Mariah Stember: With the support of a Fulbright grant, Mariah Stember (Crystal) conducted her doctoral research in Namibia from August of 2019 until March of 2020. Mariah returned to Lawrence early from her fieldwork in Namibia due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortunately, she collected ample interviews and archival documents prior to her departure to write her dissertation. During the fall of 2020, Mariah taught WGSS 333: The Politics of Physical Appearance and WGSS 355: International Feminisms. Her co-edited volume, *African Women and their Network of Support: Intervening Connections*, was also published in 2020 by Lexington Press. Currently, Mariah is writing her dissertation, and applying for academic positions, with an eye on spring 2021 graduation.

Pere DeRoy: Pere DeRoy has progressed into her third (3rd) year as a doctoral student in the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Thus far, Pere believes this year has been one of tremendous personal, academic and professional growth. As Pere has prepared for her Comprehensive examination, she has taken on the role as an Instructor. Pere believes taking up this role during the Covid-19 pandemic has presented sufficient challenges for her to learn and reflect on pedagogical practice that will keep the most vulnerable in the classroom in the most productive ways, and for her to continue to think deeper about the relevance and purpose of the research she is interested in. Additionally, in this year, Pere continues as a Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) Fellow where she studies Haitian-Creole and Caribbean literature and issues in ways that will allow her to produce and disseminate decolonial anti-racist anti-sexist knowledge as a Transnational scholar. She also has taken up a new Fellowship under the Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR) as a Doctoral Research Fellow. As Pere works to complete her third year, she focuses on putting her exam committee and student portfolio together, while focusing on developing her writing and pedagogical skills. Above all else, Pere plans to put her health (in its broadest terms) first to survive the Covid-19 Pandemic. She looks forward to what the 2021 has to offer.

Elise Higgins: Elise is a PhD candidate in their fourth year in the program with a concentration in Public Affairs and Administration. In addition to defending her dissertation prospectus and passing her comprehensive exam, Elise won an Emerging Scholars in Family Planning grant from the Society of Family Planning that will help to fund her dissertation research on abortion stigma in the Kansas Legislature. They are working with Professor Sarah Deer and Thomas White on an article

analyzing editorials about the Indian Child Welfare Act, and are working with Dr. Alesha Doan, Dr. Lindsay Orchoswki and Dr. Kevin Mwenda at Brown University, and Katherine Bogen at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on multiple articles regarding Georgia's 2019 abortion ban. Elise has begun teaching WGSS 640: Politics of Reproductive Policy, and is enjoying the experience enormously. She continues to be, along with many of her colleagues, a proud member and steward in the Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition (GTAC) union, AFT Local 6403. Outside of KU, Elise serves as the Vice President of the Kansas Abortion Fund.

Marcy Quiason: Marcy Quiason is a PhD Candidate in the WGSS department. She has been focusing on completing her dissertation this year. Her current research agenda focuses on the anti-colonial theory, humanitarian politics, and NGOs. Through qualitative interviews with NGO workers and participant observation of two anti-trafficking NGOs, Marcy explores how affectual bonds are central to ensuring that NGOs get the labor and funding they need to survive. Her dissertation research has been funded by various grants from the KU Graduate School, Hall Center of the Humanities, and the Research Excellence Fund. She has also begun a survey experiment project exploring the ways in which NGO framings of human trafficking survivors elicit affectual responses amongst the public. Marcy taught WGSS 101: Introduction to Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies and WGSS 333: The Politics of Physical Appearance during the fall of 2020. She will be teaching WGSS 583: Love, Sex and Globalization and WGSS 333 during the spring 2021 semester.

Shawna Shipley-Gates: Shawna is a second year PhD student with goals of passing her qualifying exams and earning her M.A in Spring 2021. In Fall 2020, she was appointed the graduate student representative for the department DEI committee with Dr. Hannah Britton and Dr. Alesha Doan. Shawna was accepted to present at the 2020 National Women's Studies Association annual meeting with her presentation titled "Represent Your Cupcake: A sex-positive workshop promoting HIV/AIDS awareness from the black feminist perspective" but it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through much consideration, Shawna selected psychology as her concentration and decided to obtain a graduate certificate in health psychology with Dr. Nancy Hamilton. Lastly, Shawna was hired as the social media representative for the *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* journal with editor Dr. Ayesha Hardison.

Rachel Trusty: This year I completed my coursework and prepared for my comprehensive exam, which will be in the spring of 2021. In 2020, I presented my research on Queer Abstraction and Felix Gonzalez-Torres at the College Art Association Conference in Chicago, IL and at the Coalition of Master's Scholars Symposium online. I was awarded the Graduate Scholarly Travel Grant from the University of Kansas to attend the CAA conference. Considering the impacts of the pandemic on interactive work, my think-piece "What will become of Interactive Art when Museums Reopen?" was published on the American Alliance of Museums blog in May. I continue to develop my visual art practice around themes of sexuality, gender, and materiality. I participated in the Shelter-in-Place virtual artist residency where I collaborated with other artist-activists to consider the role art in social change. I participated in several group exhibitions including those at the Sager Braudis Gallery in Columbia, MO, The Watkins Museum of History in Lawrence, KS, and the Baum Gallery of Art in Conway, AR. My work was also featured in Phototrouvee Magazine and Candyfloss

Magazine. This spring, I will be excited to complete my comprehensive exams and continue work on my dissertation on the artistic genre of Queer Abstraction. I will be participating in exhibitions at the Windgate Museum of Art in Conway, AR and the Bradbury Art Museum in Jonesboro, AR.

New Graduate Cohort 2020-2021:

Jessina Emmert: Jessina is concluding her first semester as a Chancellor's Doctoral Fellow in the PhD WGSS program. Under instruction from Dr. Ayesha Hardison, Jessina has been working on assembling an annotated bibliography that focuses on Black identities and Black performance studies. Jessina is considering a concentration in American Studies and is looking forward to taking courses within this field in the Spring semester. Prior to enrolling in this program, Jessina received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Arizona and her Masters of Arts degree from University at Albany.

Agnes Phoebe Muyanga: Hi everyone, Fall 2020 was my first semester in this PhD program. As much as I was excited about starting this academic journey at KU, I think many of us will agree that 2020 was one of the most challenging years of our lifetime. However, I am still grateful for the lessons I learned from 2020 and choose to pick up the pieces and move on to a better 2021. As a new person in the department, I would like to thank WGSS for welcoming our cohort - I felt supported by the faculty and fellow students both virtually and, on a few occasions, had socially distanced in-person meetings. In addition to the semester classes this year, I plan on presenting my unfinished papers in three conferences during the Fall and Summer semesters and a WGSS brown bag in addition to all the activities WGSS will offer. Have a better year ahead.

Korbin Painter: Korbin is a first-year PhD student and University Graduate Fellow. Prior to enrollment in the program, Korbin attended the University of Kansas as an undergraduate student, earning B.A.s in history and German studies in 2018. In May 2020, he graduated from the University of Iowa with a M.A. in history. His work focuses primarily on twentieth century U.S. history, African American history, LGBTQ studies, and the social and political movements of the postwar era. He is thankful for the friendship of his fellow first-year students, the compassionate mentorship from KU WGSS faculty, and the robust intellectual communities fostered in his WGSS coursework so far. He is thrilled to be attending KU once again, and he looks forward to coursework, teaching, and research opportunities in the future.

Mie Takikawa: Mie is an international MA student in the WGSS department. She is currently interested in researching Japanese women's sexuality who love male characters' homosexual relationships in anime and manga with the guidance of her advisor, Dr. Akiko Takeyama. Prior to enrolling in this program, she earned her Bachelor of Intercultural studies degree from Kanto Gakuin University.

WGSS Graduates, Awards & Activities:

Class of 2020 Graduating Seniors:

Isabelle Bauguess (WGSS BGS), **Emily Beckman** (WGSS BA), **Anna Clark** (WGSS BA), **Rachel Clowers**

(WGSS & ENGL BA), **Madison Crees** (HSX BA), **Sarah Curry** (WGSS BGS), **Emily Depew** (WGSS BGS), **Amber Draper** (WGSS & HIST BGS), **Alyssa Evans** (WGSS BGS), **Belinda Flores** (WGSS BGS), **Eleanor Fogel** (WGSS BA, JOUR BJS), **Megan Gaddis** (WGSS BGS), **Lizzie Harris** (WGSS & PSYCH BGS), **Rachel Henderson** (WGSS BA), **Julia Morgenstern** (WGSS, SOC & REL BGS), **Natalie Opich** (WGSS BGS), **Sophie Peterson** (WGSS BA), **Sophie Raines** (WGSS BGS), **Carla Rivas-D'Amico** (WGSS & HIST BA), **Kemper Robertson** (WGSS & AMS BGS), **Melissa Saldana Fuentes** (WGSS BA), **Kelsey Savastano** (WGSS BGS), **Mallory Sconzert** (WGSS BGS), **Olivia Shaffer** (WGSS BA), **Sarah Shorter** (WGSS BA), **Madeline Tierney** (WGSS BGS), **Nikki Vuong** (WGSS BGS), **Alicia Whitson** (WGSS BA)

Departmental Honors: WGSS BGS graduate **Emily Depew** graduated with Departmental Honors in WGSS for her paper, "Dole's Decisions: How Elizabeth Dole Saved Over 400,000 Lives Through Safety Belts, Air Bags, and Raising the Drinking Age to Twenty-One."

LGBTQ Studies Prize winners: Award given to the best LGBTQ paper or project produced by an undergraduate KU student for a WGSS course during the year. **Avery Poindexter** was the 2020 recipient of the LGBTQ Studies prize.

Virginia's Purse Award: Award for outstanding WGSS or Human Sexuality Major who excels through their activism, scholarship, and/or leadership in WGSS. The award was given to **Rachel Henderson**.

Class of 2020 Graduating PhD candidate:

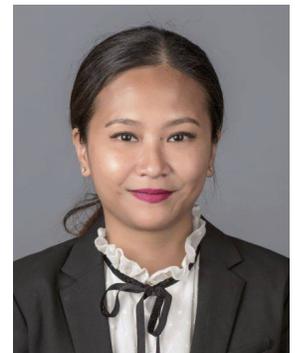
WGSS PhD candidate **Josephine Kipgen** graduated in spring 2020. To celebrate Jo and her accomplishment, here is a blurb about her research and next steps:

My name is Josephine Kipgen, and I am an international scholar from Manipur, India. I graduated with a Ph.D. in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from the University of Kansas in August 2020.

My research interests include transnational and postcolonial feminisms, reproductive politics, feminist body politics, and gender-based violence. My Ph.D. dissertation explores the full context within which sex-selective abortion (SSA) occurs in India. I examine the historical forces, political movements, government policies, and gender regimes that have shaped SSA. My study uses qualitative research methods within a feminist methodology, including in-depth interviews with service providers, scholars, and professionals and a content analysis of three national newspapers.

As far as teaching goes, I thoroughly enjoy teaching introductory classes to WGSS. I also appreciate teaching courses that challenge students to think beyond the mainstream, western, and primarily white models of feminism. Specifically, I like my classes to account for and pay particular attention to the works and perspectives of women of color and non-US feminist scholars.

At the moment, I am making small steps of turning my dissertation chapters into journal papers. I am identifying which chapters would serve as an appropriate stand-alone article, and which journal to submit to. Since I have a heavy 4-4 teaching load at the University of Wisconsin-Eau



Claire, I want to remain realistic and ensure that I will be able to make time and commit to writing. I am also busy preparing the syllabi for the two courses that I will be teaching at UWEC this Fall: Introduction to WGSS, and Feminist Theories. I am looking forward to starting this new chapter of my life as Assistant Professor of WGSS at UWEC. Relocating to a new city with my family and starting a new job during a global pandemic comes with its own sets of challenges, but I am truly grateful and look forward to thriving in this new chapter of my life as Assistant Professor of WGSS at UWEC!

Spring & Fall 2020 Graduate Certificate Recipients:

Haruka Nagao (Political Science), **Amina Seck** (Global & International Studies), **Hannah Soyer** (Creative Writing), **Darcy Sullivan** (Sociology), **Ashley Unmacht** (Higher Education Administration)

New WGSS Employment:

Under the auspices of the College Office of Graduate Affairs, Cornelius Baker joined the WGSS Department. Cornelius is taking over the Graduate Academic Advisor position from Megan Wilson beginning in the spring semester of 2021. Cornelius graduated from the University of Kansas in 2016 with a B.A. in Psychology. After graduation he spent time working as an Educational Program Assistant in the Office of First-Year Experience. In this position he helped incoming students to find their own unique path at KU through orientation and welcome programming. Afterwards Cornelius started work on his Master's in Social Work at Columbia University where he studied forensic social work and supported youth involved in the criminal injustice system. Cornelius has a passion for social justice education, particularly with queer and trans individuals, and prefers dog walking as a stress relieving and grounding hobby. Cornelius' work focuses on assisting people so that they may succeed in their endeavors. He is incredibly excited to become a part of the WGSS family and work with the department.



Alumni Spotlight:

The WGSS department has started an alumni/ae spotlight project that features one alumnus or alumna per newsletter. This project also crosses over into our KU website. There is now a dedicated page for prospective and current WGSS students to see which careers our WGSS graduates have gone into since their time at the University of Kansas. This is designed to show our students the many opportunities that are available to them with a WGSS degree. See the webpage [here](#).

Our second alumna spotlight is **Loren Bornstein**.



Q: Which program(s) did you graduate from at KU and when?

I graduated from the WGSS and Sociology programs in 2010.

Q: What was your first job after your degree?

I actually bartended for a while. When I graduated, I had no real idea how to apply what I'd learned in the job world, but I was (and am) a strong writer. I applied to a lot of writing jobs, but the freelance world then vs now and technology was a lot different. It was not easy applying for jobs. It was that weird time where you could still use paper resumes but also apply online but the online app process was awful. FYI—my degree was hugely helpful as a bartender. You hear so many stories and work with a ton of people. It kept me sharp about what I'd learn and it made it so I can never work somewhere without considering others. Hospitality is awesome for WGSS folks.

Q: Where do you work now?

I've been in tech for a few years, and it's pretty common to work at a startup that has layoffs. I was most recently with a really rad company called MarketMuse, and I am currently in interview processes with a few companies looking at analyst and customer success roles. Which basically means I'm a people person and I combine data and customer experience to advise about company product.

Q: How has WGSS influenced your work?

I would not be as good at what I do without the incredible education and impact WGSS had in my life and career. Knowing people, understanding people, respecting and learning about others and coming from an intersectional perspective is critical to me doing what I do. Whether it's discussing gender pronouns in work signatures, making sure ability and access are on point, and keeping up to date on the latest in various marginalized communities, no company will be successful if they aren't considering beyond the "societal norms".

Q: What is one thing you enjoyed about Lawrence/KU?

I grew up in Lawrence. There's so much. But. Cream cheese pizza with jalapeños and black olives from Pizza Shuttle. You're welcome. But also, getting keys to the Campanille to play the bells for a semester. Yes. It is cool and yes, it is a beautiful view.

Q: What do you remember most about your WGSS classes?

Ailecia Ruscin taught my WGSS 201 class and it changed my life and education career forever. She opened my eyes beyond traditional education and once you see just how important it is to stand up and change problematic systems, you can't look back. I remember my mind being blown about learning all the different ways we have erased women, people of color, LGBTQ+ and more. There's so much history we need to know. I remember every class being hugely impactful to me. They fueled my passion for wanting to help others and honed my knowledge.

Q: Is there anything you wish you had known at the start of college about your career path?

Starting the WGSS program and during my time at KU, I experienced a lot as then-thinking I was a cisgender, lesbian. Definitely not that. In the decade+ during and since my time at KU as a queer transgender man, a lot has changed and without my WGSS path, I would have been really out of

sorts without the knowledge of the LGBTQ+ community. Specifically when Milton Wendland was teaching. It was my first time meeting transgender people and learning about their experience. It's true what they say: How can you ever fully know yourself or the world if you aren't given the actual history of the world and people. Had I known more about LGBTQ+ people when I was younger...just imagine...had we all known more about gender and sexuality at a younger age, we'd definitely see a decrease in sexual violence, gender and sexual issues and so much more.

I am so grateful for my time and experience. It's immeasurable.

WGSS Campus Events & Initiatives:

Annual February Sisters Lecture

February 25th, 5:00 pm, Online lecture

The annual February Sisters Lecture honors the thirty women from faculty and staff, and four children who occupied the East Asian Languages Building on February 4th, 1972 and issued demands for changes in KU policies affecting the lives of women on campus. Calling themselves "The February Sisters," their demands galvanized action already in motion at the university regarding the need for an affirmative action office, a women's studies program, a free day-care center, a health care program sensitive to women's needs, more women in administrative positions, and greater equity in women's salaries.

This year's lecture is "Frances Thompson: Transness, Race, and Disability in the Long U.S. Civil War," featuring **Dr. Susan Stryker**. Susan Stryker is Professor Emerita of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Arizona, and currently holds the Barbara Lee Professorship in Women's Leadership at Mills College, 2020-2022. Stryker is founding executive editor of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, author of *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, and co-director of the Emmy-winning documentary film *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*.

"Revolutionizing Academia: Engaging Anti-Racism and Restructuring Curricular Practices":

Friday, February 12, 2:00-3:30: CTE Workshop #1

Friday, March 5, 2:00-3:30: CTE Workshop #2

Friday, April 2, 2:00-3:30: CTE Workshop #3

This Spring, the WGSS department and the Center for Teaching Excellence are teaming up with Dr. Chanelle Wilson to offer multiple Anti-Racism Workshops over the course of the semester. This series of workshops will examine the history and processes of colonialization that have shaped our contemporary world. These workshops will explore how to identify and dismantle colonial legacies in high education and pedagogy. Participants will workshop their own course design and syllabus development within an anti-racist, decolonizing framework. These workshops will provide: Information about the history of colonialism and racist ideas in schooling and higher education; participant collaboration and discussion of strategies for transformation, using principles for

decolonization and anti-racist pedagogy; investigation of individual syllabi, curricular and pedagogical choices, programmatic norms, and institutional structures.

Dr. Chanelle Wilson is an Assistant Professor of Education in the Bryn Mawr/Haverford Colleges Education Program, and the Director of Africana Studies at Bryn Mawr College. Chanelle has served as a public school practitioner, teaching secondary education students, in the US and around the world. She enjoys facilitating knowledge in a way that encourages personal connections, promotes critical thinking, and necessitates justice. Her current scholarship focuses on race and anti-racism in education, decolonization of schools and the mind, students as teachers and learners, culturally relevant pedagogy in international schooling contexts, and multicultural education in K-12 settings.



The Gender Seminar at the Hall Center for the Humanities:

The Gender Seminar for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 is co-directed by Brian Donovan (Sociology) and Stacey Vanderhurst (WGSS). The Gender Seminar studies gender as a basic concept in humanistic scholarship and/or as a fundamental organizing principle in social life. The seminar promotes the study and application of gender as a viable analytical tool that not only provokes new scholarship in its primary base of women, feminist, and sexualities studies, but also explores possible research dimensions in fields such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class, and (dis)ability. The Gender Seminar is open to faculty, graduate students, and staff.

Gender Seminar Speakers:

Fall 2020:

- Marie Grace Brown, History, "My Black Boy: Masters, Servants, and Domestic Intimacy in Sudan"
- Hannah Bailey, American Studies, "Industrial Girlhood: Race and Labor in a Kansas Carceral Institution"
- Sylvia Fernández, Institute for Research in the Digital Humanities, "Recollecting the Atemporal Feminist Legacy of the mid-21st Century"
- Jessica Gerschultz, African and African-American Studies, "Women in Abstraction: Fiber Art/Soft Art"

Spring 2020:

- **Thursday, February 4, 3:00 pm:** Karma Chávez, Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies - University of Texas at Austin, "The Borders of AIDS: Race, Quarantine, and Resistance"

- **Thursday, March 4, 3:00 pm:** Akiko Takeyama, Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, “Affective Violence: Unfree Speech and Pornographic Illusion in Japan's Adult Entertainment Videos”
- **Thursday, April 1, 3:00 pm:** Nick Syrett, Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, “Childhood, Abortion, and the Notorious Madame Restell, 1812-1878”
- **Thursday, May 6, 3:00 pm:** Abigail Barefoot, Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, “Challenging Expertise: Addressing Sexual Violence with Transformative Justice”

Strip Your Letters Initiative

Inspired by the national protests for racial justice over the summer, a group of women at KU created a movement to dismantle discrimination within Greek life on campus. The movement, titled Strip Your Letters, was formed after the KU Panhellenic Association's executive board failed to take adequate action regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. Strip Your Letters began as a call for sorority women to disaffiliate from their sororities by removing their letters from their Instagram bios and not wearing their sorority's letters as a form of protest. The co-founders of the movement are Grace Reading (Business major & WGSS minor) and Hannah Feldman (2020 CLAS graduate). To read more about their initiative, you can read this [Kansan](#) article and follow the Strip Your Letters [social media](#).

