

Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Department

March 2022

Welcome from the Chair:

As I write this message during Spring Break, I am hopeful that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. The WGSS Department is largely back to teaching in person, though some of our events—including department meetings—continue to be on Zoom.

On April 5, 7, 12, and 14, WGSS is partnering with the Emily Taylor Center for Women and Gender Equity, the Hall Center for the Humanities, and many faculty emeritae and alumnae to celebrate the February Sisters. We had originally wanted to mark this occasion in February but decided to postpone due to the surge in the omicron variant of COVID-19. You can find all the details for "Fifty Years of the February Sisters" here: <http://wgss.ku.edu/50-years-february-sisters>. The celebration begins with a panel on April 5 at 6:30 pm featuring a number of February sisters and will be followed by a reception in the Centennial Room of the Memorial Union. All are welcome.

There have been some changes on the third floor of Blake Hall and more changes yet to come. In the summer of 2021, our administrative associate (and WGSS grad) Emma Piazza resigned and is now working with Habitat for Humanity in Kansas City. On July 1, we were joined by Amara Simons, the new part-time WGSS Administrative Associate. Amara is a KU graduate and comes to us with years of experience at various other KU offices, most recently at the School of Music, where she administered its graduate program. Amara is also a freelance copyeditor, which, along with her cats Pearl and Sally, occupy her time when she is not in Blake Hall. Please join me in welcoming Amara to WGSS.



Upcoming Events:

Celebrating 50 Years of the February Sisters:

April 5th 6:30 pm: Kickoff panel featuring three February Sisters and Robin Morgan, author of *Sisterhood is Powerful*.

April 7th 6:30 pm: "Listening to All Voices: Women & Politics"

April 12th 6:30 pm: "We Demand: The Call for Healthcare, Childcare, Affirmative Action & Leadership Reforms at KU"

April 14th 6:30 pm: "50 Years Later: Current Student Activism at KU"

See Page 13 of the newsletter for locations.

Are you a WGSS alum?

We would love to hear from you!

If you'd like to be included on the alumnae/i page of our website, please email us at wgss@ku.edu.

Welcome from the Chair (cont).

Also new to the WGSS team are graduate program coordinator Jess Wagner and undergraduate academic adviser Nicole Evans. Though Jess and Nicole work for the College Office of Graduate Studies and College Advising and Student Services respectively, WGSS is among the departments that they serve, and we are delighted to have them as part of our team. Welcome to both Jess and Nicole!

Speaking of welcomes, we will soon be joined by not one, but *four* new colleagues. Aimee Armande Wilson, currently an assistant professor in the Humanities Program, will join WGSS officially this fall, as Humanities is discontinued. Aimee, who holds a PhD in English from Florida State University, is a specialist in gender, reproductive politics, and modernist literature and already cross-lists classes with WGSS and has served as affiliate faculty since her arrival at KU in 2016. She is the author of many articles, book chapters, and the monograph *Conceived in Modernism: The Aesthetics and Politics of Birth Control* (2016). We are excited also that Aimee will be stepping into the role of Director of Graduate Studies beginning this fall.

This year the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences also granted us the ability to hold a job search for a specialist in queer and/or trans cultural studies. The result of that search is that we will be joined by three new colleagues in the fall. Jeanne Vaccaro will be appointed jointly as an assistant professor of WGSS and Museum Studies. Jeanne holds a PhD in Performance Studies from NYU and is the author of numerous articles and book chapters, curator of many shows, a co-editor of a special issue of *Social Text*, and the co-founder of the New York Trans Oral History Project. She comes to us from a position as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Southern California and scholar-curator at the ONE Archives. Her book in progress is called "Handmade: Feelings and Textures of Transgender."

Abraham Weil will begin as assistant professor of WGSS in the fall. Abe holds a PhD in Gender and Women's Studies from the University of Arizona and is a co-editor of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*. He has also published numerous book chapters and articles in journals like *Abolition*, *TSQ*, and *Angelaki*. He is currently coediting three different projects, which include the second edition of *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* (under contract at Edinburgh University Press), and anthologies dedicated to transgender theory (under contract at Bloomsbury) and "Feminist Studies: Foundations, Conversations, Applications." Abe is currently working on two book projects, entitled "Transmolecular Revolution" and "On Jargon," respectively. He comes to us from a position as assistant professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at California State University, Long Beach.

Finally, Kelly C. Sharron will join us as a lecturer and academic program associate, jointly appointed with the Department of Sociology. Kelly holds a PhD in Gender and Women's Studies from the University of Arizona. She has published chapters in *Making Abolitionist Worlds* and articles and reviews in *Somatechnics*, *TSQ*, *Abolition*, and the *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*. Kelly's work brings feminist theories of care to bear on questions of police brutality and the carceral state, using the events in Ferguson, Missouri as a case study to examine how the discourse of caring can be utilized by both the oppressor and oppressed. With Abe and other colleagues, Kelly is also a coeditor of "Feminist Studies: Foundations, Conversations, Applications."

Kelly also comes to us from Cal State, Long Beach, where she has been a lecturer in Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. We are enormously excited to welcome all four new

colleagues to the WGSS Department and are in the process now of trying to expand our office space to accommodate all our new colleagues.

While you can read all about faculty accomplishments on pages 4 through 7 of this newsletter, I do want to highlight a couple new leadership positions taken up by our faculty. Akiko Takeyama began her role as Director for the Center for East Asian Studies in the fall. While she continues to teach in WGSS, she also now devotes considerable labor to administering CEAS, scheduling programming, and working to secure federal funding for language programs. In January Alesha Doan took on a new role in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as Associate Dean, overseeing departments in social and behavioral sciences. Finally, this year Ayesha Hardison took on a new position as Director of the History of Black Writing, a research center in KU's English Department that focuses on the recovery and promotion of African American writing. Congratulations to Akiko, Alesha, and Ayesha on these new leadership positions!

The heart of the Department continues to be our students. We currently have fifty majors and eight-five minors studying both Human Sexuality and WGSS, and twenty students enrolled in the certificate in gender, law, and social policy. We also have a thriving Ph.D. program as well as our longtime graduate certificate program. While we did not admit any new graduate students this fall due to the pandemic, we are wrapping up the admissions process for Fall of 2022 right now and expect to welcome a new class in August. As this newsletter goes to press one of our PhD candidates, Elise Higgins, has begun a new position as the Director of Reproductive Rights at the State Innovation Exchange and Marcy Quiason has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. A third, Abby Barefoot, will be Assistant Professor of Legal Studies at Northwestern University in the fall. Congratulations to Elise, Marcy, and Abby!

Finally, if you are an alum of our department and you have news to share, please email me at syrett@ku.edu. We continue to update our website and want to include as complete a list as possible of departmental alumnae/i; the goal is to demonstrate to prospective students the great variety of possible careers available to those with a BA in WGSS or Human Sexuality. Please email if you would like to be included!

Best Wishes,

Nick Syrett

What's Happening with WGSS faculty:

Katie Batza:

Katie Batza won a Hall Center Resident Faculty Fellowship for Spring 2023 and has been granted a sabbatical for Fall 2022. During this time, Katie hopes to complete her book manuscript entitled *AIDS in the Heartland* that explores the early AIDS epidemic in the Heartland area. Batza has also been regularly contributing to an interdisciplinary research team studying how to minimize health disparities for LGBTQ people with disabilities. This research team has resulted in several publications in medical, public health and disability studies journals. In the next couple months, Dr. Batza will also publish her audio walk, a podcast walking tour of the history of reproductive justice in Boston.



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. Hannah Britton's scholarship focuses on community strategies to end gender-based violence, government policies and programs to address inequality and exploitation, and critical approaches to anti-trafficking studies. This year, she has focused her teaching on research methods courses, African politics, and transnational feminism. This spring, she is teaching the University Honors Seminar, *Justice or Reconciliation? Building Sustainable Peace after Conflict*. For more information on her scholarship, please visit the Center for the Study of Injustice: <http://ipsr.ku.edu/CSI/>



Sarah Deer:

Professor Deer is continuing work on a book manuscript while she remains on leave due to the generosity of the Carnegie Foundation. She has continued her *pro bono* services on several Supreme Court amicus briefs pertaining to tribal criminal justice authority. Sarah also is one of three editors for a book called *Feminist Judgments: Criminal Law*, scheduled for publication later this year. This book is made up of "rewritten" canonical criminal cases from a feminist perspective, all written by prominent feminist legal scholars. She looks forward to returning full time in Fall 2022.



Alesha Doan:

In 2021, Professor Doan became an associate dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. She collaborated on an edited book, *Managing Sex in the Military: Gender, Identity, and Behavior* (forthcoming 2022), and published an article examining how resistance to gender-neutral bathrooms in male-dominated organizations is deployed to re-gender the workplace and maintain gender inequity. Professor Doan continued to work with a collaborative research team on a three-year grant (2019-2022) investigating gendered eating disorders in the military and serves as the lead qualitative researcher on another three-year grant (2021-2024). As abortion rights hang by a legal thread, Professor Doan has begun a new project examining how abortion care providers navigate the tensions between delivering services to clients, implementing increasingly restrictive state policies they oppose, and contending with antiabortion harassment.



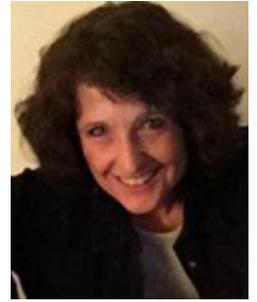
Ayesha Hardison:

Ayesha Hardison's research and teaching focus on African American literature and culture, with particular interests in gender, genre, and historical memory, and Black feminist theory. Accordingly, she is an Associate Professor with a joint appointment in WGSS and the Department of English. In July 2021, she became the director of the [History of Black Writing \(HBW\)](#), a research unit in English, committed to recovery work in Black literary studies, digital humanities, and public programming. Also, last summer she co-directed the three-week virtual National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute [Hurston on the Horizon: Past, Present, and Future](#), which explored Zora Neale Hurston's work as a writer, folklorist, anthropologist, and filmmaker with 25 higher education faculty participants. Hardison is also the 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. The journal recently dedicated two issues to the theme "The Unexpected Caribbean." Hardison published the scholarly essay "New York and Brooklyn," a chapter in the edited book *Richard Wright in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2021) as well as two public facing essays: "Why Maya Angelou Partnered with Hallmark: For One Thing, She Liked a Challenge," in [Humanities](#) magazine, and "The Big Idea: Coupling Jim and Jane Crow" for [Humanities Kansas](#). Her public engagement also included speaking at a meeting for the Lawrence chapter of the NAACP. This talk drew on her book-in-progress examining representations of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. Hardison is also planning an exhibit for the [Stories for All: A Digital Storytelling Project for the Twenty-First Century](#), which is a partnership between the Hall Center for the Humanities and the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities at KU, sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Charlene Muehlenhard:

In the last year, I continued to work with my students on several research projects. Nicolette Zangari and Araba Kuofie defended their dissertations and are on internship. Eddie Wright and Alli Smith are working on their dissertations and have been accepted for internships. Hannah Clark defended her master's thesis with honors. Johanna Ramirez and Nikki Cohen are planning their dissertations. Undergraduates Samuel Clark and Gloria Gantt are analyzing data for their senior honors theses.



In April, I will be traveling to another university to accept a research award. I have been so sedentary during COVID that the suit I was planning to wear no longer fits! :-0

Update: In the 2020 newsletter, I mentioned being a pro bono expert witness in a #MeToo-type case. A woman had spoken out about harassment by her mentor/employer. Subsequently, he sued her for \$2,000,000 for defamation. Fortunately, in 2021, she won a summary judgment in the Eastern District of New York. According to her attorneys, this decision has “the potential for a sweeping, positive impact on First Amendment rights generally and the rights of anyone who has been abused to speak about their own experience.”

Nick Syrett:

Supported by a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies, Nick Syrett spent the 2020-2021 academic year working on his next book, a biography of Madame Restell (Ann Lohman), nineteenth-century America's most famous female physician and abortionist. The book is now under contract at the New Press. In the spring of 2021, he published his third book, *An Open Secret: The Family Story of Robert and John Gregg Allerton* (University of Chicago Press), which received some early press attention in the *Chicago Tribune* in honor of both Gay Pride month and Father's Day. He also published chapters in the edited collections *Heterosexual Histories* (NYU Press) and *Amherst in the World* (Amherst College Press). In the summer of 2021, Nick became a coeditor, with Ishita Pande of Queen's University, of the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. He is currently co-chairing the conference planning committee for Queer History Conference 2022, which will take place at San Francisco State University in June of 2022. He was also elected Vice-President and President-Elect of the Society for the History of Children and Youth. With coeditors, he continues to work on *American Queer History: A Reader in Documents and Essays*, which will be published by Wiley-Blackwell next year, and *The Cambridge History of Sexuality in the United States*, which should appear in 2024. He remains grateful to Pam Gordon of the Classics Department who stepped in as interim chair during the period of his fellowship.



Akiko Takeyama:

Akiko Takeyama is President-Elect/President of the Association for Feminist Anthropology (2021-2025) at the American Anthropological Association. She also directs the Center for East Asian Studies at KU. For that role, she and YiYang Chen (co-PI and music faculty) recently won a KU Racial Equity Research grant for a collaborative work entitled "Prelude," which celebrates female Asian music composers and the collective oral life histories of the Asian experience in the Midwest. For her own research, her second book, *Involuntary Consent: The Illusion of Choice in Japan's Adult Video Industry* (Stanford University Press) is slated for publication in late 2022. Her other publications (forthcoming) include "Involuntary Consent: Contract Making in Japan's Adult Video Industry" (*Current Anthropology*) and "Extramarital Romance: Juggling Femininity, Marriage, and Commercial Sex in Contemporary Japan" (an edited volume, *Opting-Out: Women Messing with Marriage around the World*, Rutgers University Press). She taught WGSS 701 Feminist Ethnography in Fall 2021 and is currently teaching ANTH/WGSS 583 Love, Sex, and Globalization (Spring 2022) and will be offering WGSS 801 Feminist Theory in Fall 2022.



Stacey Vanderhurst:

Stacey's last year of teaching has focused on developing undergraduate student research, first in the fall semester's research methods class and then in the spring senior capstone seminars. After so many months of isolation, this cohort of students has chosen topics that seem especially grounded in community, from local programs like the Lawrence Public Library's drag queen story hour or mutual aid at the Ladybird Café, to virtual communities built through queer fan fiction sites or feminist Reddit threads. Stacey was especially proud of the pop-up museum that her first-year honors seminar made to document the student protests against sexual assault that roused the KU campus in September. Some pieces that they curated will even be preserved in the University Archive inside the Spencer Research Library. Stacey's own research program is next on the agenda, with a return to fieldwork in Nigeria scheduled for an upcoming sabbatical. Until then, she's putting the finishing touches on her book, *Unmaking Migrants: Nigeria's Campaign to End Human Trafficking*, due out with Cornell University Press this summer.



Marta Vicente:

In Fall 2021 I had two journal articles published: "Transgender: A Useful Category? Or How the Historical Study of "Transsexual" and "Transvestite" Can Help Us Rethink "Transgender" as a Category," published in *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, as well as "The Medicalization of the Transsexual: Patient-Physician Narratives in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," published in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, both articles were featured in KU News <https://today.ku.edu/2021/12/09/language-categorizing-transgender-people-needs-evolve-historian-argues>



<http://news.ku.edu/2021/10/01/transgender-relationship-between-patient-and-physician-explored-%E2%80%98medicalization%E2%80%99-history>. A small piece on teaching strategies also saw the light in Fall of 2021: "Spinning in the Classroom: Recollections," published in *Detours: Social Science Education Research Journal*.

WGSS Graduate Students:

Abigail Barefoot: Abigail Barefoot is a doctoral candidate in the WGSS department and is currently working on her dissertation entitled "Transformative Justice: Beyond Carceral Responses to End Sexual Violence." Her research explores the intersections of carceral feminism and prison abolition through an ethnography of a transformative justice program in Southern California that addresses sexual violence. This past year she presented her research at the Law and Society Association (LSA) conference, the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference, and Imagining Abolition, an interdisciplinary conference. In the fall, she designed and taught the new undergraduate course, Gender, Sexuality, and the Prison Industrial Complex.

Amber Brown: Amber is a third year PhD student in the department, and after successfully passing her qualifying exams last spring, Amber received her second MA in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in May 2021. She was a fellow in the Hall Center's Applied Humanities Boot Camp over the summer, and she has continued progressing through coursework for her concentration in public policy. As she continues working toward her PhD in WGSS, Amber has also joined the MPA program at KU. She is excited to see where this path will lead her. In addition to coursework, Amber was able to attend the Reproductive Ethics Conference for the second year in a row and hopes to present at the conference in the future. She has been an enthusiastic member of the 101-teaching team this year, and she is serving as a graduate representative on the Department's DEI Committee.

Kelsey Carls: In 2021, Kelsey became more actively involved in supporting the efforts of KU's Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition (GTAC - AFT Local 6403), serving on the Executive Board as Treasurer for the 2021-2022 academic year. She remains committed to building grad worker power on campus and advocating for fair and sustainable working conditions for all graduate workers at KU. In addition to this, Kelsey has been preparing for her Oral Comprehensive Exam, which she hopes to complete soon. She has been drafting a prospectus, compiling reading lists and bibliographies, and building out a research plan for her dissertation research. Beyond this, she has enjoyed teaching in-person and online courses on Perspectives in LGBT Studies. She continues to support her students in and beyond the classroom, having written letters of recommendation for several who will go on to pursue law degrees on full scholarship.

Melinda Chen: Melinda Chen (she/her) is a 4th year doctoral candidate in WGSS. Her dissertation explores victim advocacy for marginalized survivors of sexual assault (e.g., BIPOC, LGBTQ+) under the present U.S. neoliberal landscape. For fall 2021 and spring 2022, Melinda taught WGSS/GIST 355: International Women's Rights and participated in the Revolutionizing Academia Learning Community, hosted by the Center for Teaching Excellence, where she will present her work at the May 2022 Celebration of Teaching. This past year, she won awards from the Office of Graduate

Studies and the Hall Center for the Humanities, among others, to carry out her research, totaling \$8,500. Melinda presented at the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference in October 2021 about methodological quandaries faced by researchers of sexual violence, and presented at the Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Conference on "Care" hosted by the University of South Dakota in March 2022 about victim advocates who identify as survivors. She also continues to host monthly writing retreats for the NWSA Queer & Trans People of Color Caucus, as Co-Chair. Melinda has released an open-access brief about secondary traumatic stress experienced by victim advocates, which can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/1808/32170>, and continues to make progress on her dissertation. As always, Melinda remains a steadfast advocate for survivors at her local rape crisis center.

Pere DeRoy: When my environment starts to change faster than I can comprehend, my first response is to be still. Such stillness allows me to understand what is required of me to as I adjust to the new changes presented by the global Covid-19 pandemic. So, I would say that my year of 2021 was spent being still and re-evaluating my academic journey. During this period, I spent time concluding my coursework requirements and assembling my dissertation committee. Additionally, two major changes occurred during this time: (1) I changed the central focus on my dissertation research from transnational anti-trafficking policy responses to maternal mortality policy responses (both subject areas I have explored through research), and (2) I became a parent. With the mentorship of faculty, 2021 witnessed me examining what it means to be a Black diasporic scholar writing from the political locations of transnational and de-colonial feminisms in the US. My research examines transnational reproductive policy responses to maternal mortality through the Reproductive Justice Framework (RJF) with Guyana as a case country for analysis. My three research expertise areas are: Transnational and decolonial feminisms; reproductive policy/justice, and intersectional policy formulation. By the end of 2022, I hope to have completed my comprehensive exam and to commence fieldwork and participate in research area conferences. I am excited to keep pushing on little by little in my academic journey in WGSS.

Jessina Emmert: Jessina is a second year PhD student and a Chancellor Doctoral Fellow who has recently passed her qualifying exams and will be earning her M.A. in Spring 2022. In Fall 2021, she was a discussant at the "Feminist Fright Fest" for the short film *Hair Wolf*, which was hosted by the Emily Taylor Center for Women & Gender Equity. Additionally, Jessina was one of the graduate student representatives for the department DEI committee and was the graduate representative for the graduate committee. Jessina plans on being a part of a panel discussion alongside other graduate students in the department for the 2022 NWSA Conference.

Elise Higgins: Elise is in her fifth year in the WGSS PhD program and has moved from the data collection to analysis portion of her dissertation writing. This February, she accepted the Carlin GTA Award for the 2021-22 academic year, for which the department nominated her. In March, Elise will begin a new role as the Director of Reproductive Rights at State Innovation Exchange, where she'll train and connect state legislators from across the country who will commit to a reproductive health, rights, and justice values platform and elevate this issue in order to create a mandate for positive change. Elise will complete her dissertation and the program, but on a longer timeline. Long live WGSS!

Agnes Phoebe Muyanga: Agnes Phoebe Muyanga (She/Her) successfully completed her Qualifying Exams and is motivated about moving forward with her academic work. As she finalizes her coursework in Spring 2022, Agnes Phoebe anticipates preparation for her Comprehensive Exams in Fall 2022. This year, she has presented some of her research and informational talks to several audiences such as: the Midwest Music Research Collective (MMRC) and Musicians for an Anti-Racist College (MARC) virtual lunch lecture series (February 22nd), Gender Studies in Africa Conference, a hybrid event held at Makerere University in Uganda (February 23rd), Jayhawk Breakfast Rotary Club - Lawrence, KS (March 3rd). Her upcoming conference/workshop presentations include the 11th Annual KASC Graduate Research Workshop (March 25th) the Women & Gender Studies Consortium 4W Conference in (April 8th) National Women Studies Association (NWSA) conference in Minneapolis and African Studies Association (ASA) Conference in Philadelphia, PA, both to be held November 2022. Agnes Phoebe is grateful for the Chancellor Doctoral Fellowship, her advisor Dr. Hannah Britton, several mentors, and the KU WGSS department more broadly for the support they give her during this academic journey.

Marcy Quiason: Marcy is a PhD candidate in the WGSS department. She will be defending her dissertation and graduating in summer 2022. This spring, she was awarded the 2021 Carlin Graduate Teaching Assistant Award for excellence in teaching. She also presented her research at multiple universities over the last year and at the 2021 American Political Science Association meeting. Marcy also shared her research at the Hall Center's Gender Seminar last semester. As she has been completing her dissertation, Marcy taught WGSS 101: Introduction to Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies and WGSS 333: The Politics of Physical Appearance. Marcy is also happy to announce that she accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at Lawrence University and will begin her appointment in the fall of 2022.

Shawna Shipley-Gates: In my third year, I accomplished milestones, strengthened skills, and joined collectives. I increased my knowledge in quantitative data analysis through the PSYC 790 Introduction to Statistics course with Dr. Jeffrey Girard using the R coding system. At the end of Fall 2021, I completed my coursework and started preparing for my comprehensive exam and dissertation prospectus. I am scheduled to continue my role as the graduate student representative in the WGSS DEI committee. Also, I served as a co-facilitator for a CTE workshop series with Dr. Kim Warren to discuss experiences and strategies with KU GTAs, staff, and professors on how to teach and thrive at a pre-dominantly white institution. On October 15, 2021, I presented for the first time at NWSA on my work titled: "Represent Your Cupcake: A sex-positive workshop promoting HIV/AIDS awareness from the Black feminist perspective." Recently, I was accepted to present at the KU LGBTQ Research Symposium on my work titled: "Uses of the Digital Erotic: Black Queer Women's Resistance Against Sexual Oppression." As my first publications, my contribution of two chapters on the National Survey of Sexual Behavior and the representation of women's health in popular culture for a textbook edited by Jillian M. Duquaine-Watson, *Women's Health: Understanding Issues and Implications* were published earlier this year. In Spring 2022, I started teaching the Sex and Gender in New Media course which aligns with my research interests in Black feminist theory, sexuality, and digital humanities. My goals are to pass my comprehensive

exam and dissertation prospectus in March 2022, design my own course on feminism and women's health, and progress through my dissertation.

Mie Takikawa: My future research compares women's complex sexualities in Japan and the United States who are enthusiastic about "Boys' Love." "Boys Love" is a genre featuring male-male romantic and/or sexual relationships in various media, including Japanese anime, manga, novels, musicals, movies, and games. My research aims to reveal women Boys' Love fans' complex sexual desires toward male characters that are sometimes incongruent with their sexual identities in public and domestic spaces. Since Spring 2021, I have conducted in-depth interviews with women who prefer Japanese anime, manga, and Boys Love fantasy in Japan and the United States. My future Ph.D. dissertation combines ethnographic research methods, feminist theory, and critical legal studies and explores women Boys Love fans' socio-historically stigmatized and marginalized subjectivities in Japan and the United States.

Rachel Trusty: Rachel Trusty is a fourth-year Ph.D. Candidate. This past year she worked toward completing her dissertation project. Trusty had a solo art exhibition at the Stephens Gallery in Clarksville, AR, and participated in group art exhibitions in Conway, AR, Lawrence, KS, and Jonesboro, AR. She was awarded the Brousseau Award by the Spencer Museum of Art for her artwork that was included in the exhibition *Reclaiming and Redefining the Body*. Trusty presented research and papers at the LGBTQ Research Symposium and the Hall Center for the Humanities at the University of Kansas. She also was a guest artist speaker at the Regional Art Museum in Fort Smith, AR, the Windgate Museum of Art in Conway, AR, and the Bradbury Museum of Art in Jonesboro, AR.

WGSS Graduates, Awards & Activities:

Class of 2021 Graduating Seniors:

Ellie Beck [WGSS BA], **Erica Boos** [WGSS BGS], **Matthew Canedy** [WGSS BGS], **Adrian Cisneros** [WGSS BA], **Alyssa Evans** [WGSS BGS], **Megan Gaddis** [WGSS BGS], **Elizabeth Harris** [WGSS BGS], **Chloe Hessman** [WGSS BGS], **Grant Hussong** [WGSS BA], **Muriel Kelly** [WGSS BA], **Samantha Leyerle** [WGSS BA], **Chally Miller** [WGSS BA], **Madison Moore** [WGSS BGS], **Jeremy McLeod** [Human Sexuality BA], **Zoe Mulkey** [WGSS BA], **Shelby Otte** [WGSS BA], **Sydney Schranz** [WGSS BA], **Niccole Scott** [Human Sexuality BGS], **Tomare Wright** [WGSS BA]

Departmental Honors: WGSS BA graduate **Jessa Case** graduated with departmental Honors for her paper, "Early Women in Aviation: War Work and Gender Roles." WGSS BA graduate **Jade Groobman** graduated with Departmental Honors for her paper, "Jews of Color: Experiences of Inclusion and Exclusion." Human Sexuality BA graduate **Emerson Karsh-Lombardo** graduated with Departmental Honors for her paper, "Creating Accessible Kink Education to the KU Community."

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 **Emerson Karsh-Lombardo**.

Spring & Fall 2021 Graduate Certificate Recipients:

Haruka Nagao (Political Science), **Kelly Noland** (Education and Human Sciences), **Giang Nguyen-Dien** (American Studies), **Derek Wilson** (Sociology), **Ashleigh Wilson** (Graduate Certificate),

New WGSS Employment:

Jess Wagner joined the COGA team in December of 2021 as a Graduate Program Coordinator for the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Political Science, and Leadership Studies departments. She received her Bachelor's in Music Education from Missouri State University in 2012 and a Master of Music in Voice Performance from KU in 2016. During her time as a student at KU, she performed in several operas in the School of Music and worked as a GTA teaching applied voice lessons. After graduating from KU, she worked for various arts organizations around Kansas City and held a position on the Local Arts committee at Johnson County Library in Overland Park, KS. Jess currently lives in the Kansas City area with her wife Rachel and a regular rotation of foster dogs. When not at work, you'll find her hanging out with her dogs, keeping up with new movies, and fully leaning into becoming a plant person. She is happy to be part of the WGSS department and loves supporting students to achieve their goal of completing their graduate study and going on to do work they're passionate about out in the world.



Nicole Evans (she/hers) has been an undergraduate advisor for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences since 2019. In that time, she's served as an advisor for multiple departments, including: History, Humanities, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Russian, Eurasian and Eastern European Studies, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Classics and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Nicole attended KU and received her undergraduate BGS degree in English in 2015 and is currently a part-time MFA candidate for Fiction. As a queer, first generation student and current non-traditional student, she loves working with students, especially helping them navigate the confusing waters of KU and higher education at large. When not working, she's both writing and reading books, playing video games or getting a new tattoo. She currently lives in Lawrence with her partner Edward, their two demonic cats and a dog that she is obsessed with, Dovahkiin.



WGSS Campus Events & Initiatives:

February Sisters 50th Anniversary Celebration

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, WGSS is partnering with the Emily Taylor Center for Women and Gender Equity, the Hall Center for the Humanities, and many faculty emeritae and alumnae to present a series of events honoring the 50th anniversary of the February Sisters. The celebration begins with a panel on April 5 at 6:30 pm featuring a number of February sisters and will be followed by a reception in the Centennial Room of the Memorial Union. You can find all the details for "Fifty Years of the February Sisters" here: <http://wgss.ku.edu/50-years-february-sisters>. All are welcome.

50 Years of the February Sisters

Tuesday April 5th, 6:30 – 8:00pm: "Celebrating 50 Years of the February Sisters:"

Featuring three February Sisters and Robin Morgan, author of *Sisterhood is Powerful*. Panel Discussion and reception. KU Memorial Union, Centennial Room.

Thursday April 7th, 6:30 – 8:00pm "Listening to All Voices: Women & Politics"

Lawrence Public Library, Auditorium

Tuesday April 12th, 6:30 – 8:00pm "We Demand: The Call For Healthcare, Childcare, Affirmative Action & Leadership Reforms at KU"

KU Memorial Union, Centennial Room

Thursday April 14th, 6:30 – 8:00pm "50 Years Later: Current Student Activism at KU"

KU Memorial Union, Centennial Room

The Gender Seminar at the Hall Center for the Humanities:

The Gender Seminar for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 is co-directed by Akiko Takeyama (WGSS) and Marie Grace Brown (History). 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 2021:

- **Thursday, September 2, 3:00 pm:** Lieba Faier, Geography – UCLA
- **Thursday, October 7, 3:00 pm:** Marcy Quiason, WGSS – University of Kansas, “Playing the Victim: NGOs and Narratives of Victimization”
- **Thursday, November 4, 3:00pm:** Maki Kaneko, Art History – University of Kansas, “Unnameable Friendship: The Relational ‘Autobiography’ of Jimmy Tsutomu Mirikitani”
- **Thursday, December 2,** La Shonda Mims, History – Middle Tennessee State University, “Racing Queer: Balancing Race and Labeling in Queer Histories”

Spring 2022:

- **Thursday, February 3, 3:00 pm:** Rachel Trusty, Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies - University of Kansas, “Performative Objects/Performative Bodies: Queer Abstraction as an Intervention into Subjecthood and Resistance”
- **Thursday, March 3, 3:00 pm:** Lisa Corrigan, Communication – University of Arkansas, “Orval Faubus and the Language of Segregation: Homonationalism, Sexualized Violence, and Racial Anxiety during the Little Rock Crisis”
- **Thursday, April 7, 3:00 pm:** Elaine Nelson, History – University of Kansas, “Indigenous Women in Black Hills Tourism”