



Words from the Chair

I write as the new chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies to brag about our amazing students and faculty and share news of some exciting initiatives we are undertaking this year. First, I must thank Hannah Britton for her hard work and steady hand at the helm last year as our interim Chair. I am lucky to build upon the strong organization, insight, and leadership of Hannah, and have the continued help of our new administrative associate, Krystofer Meadows. As I settle into the first full year of my five-year term, we find ourselves in a continued period of growth and of profound consequence. Challenges to the communities we embody, study, and love are intensifying, and thus, so does our work!

Just in the Fall semester, our faculty published four books (Hardison, Syrett, Takeyama, and Wilson), organized an art installation at the Spencer Museum (Hardison), enjoyed an artist's residency (Vaccaro), published several academic journal articles (Britton, Doan, Meuhlenhard), and edited three academic journals (Hardison, Syrett, and Weil). Our graduate students also flourished! Pere DeRoy won a Fulbright Dissertation Fellowship to study in Guyana, Shawna Shipley-Gates secured a post-doctoral fellowship that starts in the Fall of 2024, and we had multiple students publish and present nationally. Not surprisingly, our alumnae also prospered: Dr. Corinne Schwarz became our very first PhD graduate to publish a book, with Dr. Jo Kipgen right behind her! To find out more about our amazing faculty, graduate students, and alums, their research and impact, please check out their profiles.

We do this work individually, collectively, and with the ongoing support of our alumnae, donors, and community. THANK YOU to our donors! This year we created the WGSS Solidarity Fund, a fund designed to ensure WGSS continued growth even as the challenges facing the communities we study increase. The WGSS Solidarity Fund, once endowed, will sustain our support of undergraduate and graduate students in crises, research efforts by students and faculty, and allow us to respond to the needs of our community with meaningful programming. Please consider donating whatever you are able! As we continue to make our public engagement more robust, we hope to create opportunities for our larger community (meaning you all!) to gather, learn, have fun, and create change.

Stay tuned!

WGSS Receives \$1M Mellon Grant

In the late autumn we learned that WGSS at the University of Kansas is one of only three recipients of \$1,000,000 grants from the Mellon Foundation to build out our Trans Studies Initiative. This grant will allow us to engage our community through outreach, programming, and providing community grants in ways that will strengthen our ties to the larger community and help it thrive even as we see so many in this community under attack. In addition, this grant will also enable our department to hire another trans studies scholar, further bolstering our claim to the largest concentration of Trans Studies scholars in the world. The influential Trans Studies Quarterly (TSQ) journal has, as of this fall, moved to the University of Kansas under the editorial acumen of managing editor Abe Weil. In short, we are responding to the growing threats around us with our scholarship, teaching, and public engagement with the goal of creating a more equitable and empathetic world for us all.

WGSS Solidarity Fund

Arising from the activism of the February Sisters, who sought equity and social justice for women and marginalized groups, WGSS is committed to interrogating the boundaries that limit the personal and political well-being of individuals and communities. We strive to connect academic analysis and activism, to inform one another.

In 2023, WGSS launched the WGSS Solidarity Fund. This fund supports students in need and in crisis; nurtures innovative teaching by our faculty and graduate students; and propels research at all levels while ensuring lasting community engagement. Your donation in any amount will help us fund this work now. Just scan our QR code below and be a part of our expanding reach towards the future.



Sarah Deer Named Distinguished Professor



An Exploration of Tribal Statutes on Sexual Violence.
an inaugural lecture presented by:

SARAH DEER, J.D.
University Distinguished Professor

MONDAY
04 March 2024

TIME
05.30 Pm

MALOTT ROOM,
KU MEMORIAL UNION
University of Kansas

[REGISTER NOW](#) 

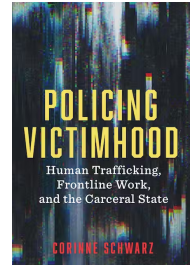
Appointment as a distinguished professor is a significant honor, reflecting the recipient's many valued accomplishments and contributions to the University and the field.

To learn more about Deer, check out her profile and watch her [testify](#) before Congress.

WGSS Alumni News

Two WGSS Alums have published books!

Congrats to Corinne Schwarz and Jo Kipgen! Kipgen contributes to an understudied area in Reproductive Politics in India: The Case of Sex-Selective Abortion. In Policing Victimhood, Human Trafficking, Frontline Work, and the Carceral State, Schwarz examines critical issues in crime and society.



Are you a WGSS Alum?

We would love to hear from you. Please let us know what you are up to!

Click the [alumni update button](#) on our website or, or email us at wgss@ku.edu and let us know how you are doing since receiving your degree and stay up-to-date with WGSS.

WGSS Graduate Student News

Please join us in congratulating the following WGSS Graduate students as they further their careers:

Pere DeRoy

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Award, and Sherman and Irene Dreiseszun Scholarship from the Truman Foundation

Jessina Emmert

The Hall Center's Sias Graduate Fellowship

Agnes Phoebe Muyanga

KU's Office of Graduate Studies Summer Research Scholarship, and Sherman and Irene Dreiseszun Scholarship from the Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Fdn.

Sameen

KU's office of Graduate Studies Graduate Travel Fund Award

Shawna Shipley-Gates

AAUW American Dissertation Fellowship from The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

WGSS Faculty Highlights



Katie Batza
Chair

This academic year I have jumped into the WGSS Chair role with both feet. Coming off my sabbatical and Hall Center Faculty Fellowship the previous year, I was well-rested and excited to learn this new position, especially as I submitted my completed manuscript for my second book, *AIDS in the Heartland*, to the University of North Carolina Press. While I await the final stages of the publication process, I have also been digging in to teaching. I taught *The History of WGSS as a Field*, a graduate class I hadn't taught in several years. I also designed a new Honors class called *Food, Community, and Politics* which was a lot of fun. Spring Semester I have gotten to teach the Senior Capstone class- a wonderful treat that I have never done before. It is such a joy to see all of our seniors design their own research projects and write on topics that excite them! In other big news, I have been collaborating with several of my colleagues to apply for and win the \$1 million Mellon Foundation grant that will allow us to really expand our Trans Studies Initiative in exciting and important new directions in the coming years. These are all things that buoy me in these times of tremendous violence around the world and here at home.



Sarah Deer
University Distinguished Professor

Sarah Deer has a dual appointment in the Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and the Indigenous Studies Program. Sarah's highlight from the past year was joining Professor Anita Hill and Professor Crystal Feimster for a public conversation at Brandeis University on October 24. The title of the event was "Slavery, Citizenship, and the Afterlife or Gender-Based Violence" and took place at the Brandeis Heller School. Click [here](#) for more information

Sarah also served as a panelist at a symposium hosted by the Yale Journal of Law and Feminism at Yale Law School in March, focusing on tribal courts and Indigenous feminist legal studies. Other highlights include a presentation in Sacramento for a conference on sexual assault hosted by the Inter-Tribal Council of California. She also gave talks about Native people and sexual violence at the University of Arkansas and the University of South Dakota. In October, Sarah provided a keynote presentation to the Tilford Conference held at Washburn University.

Sarah also co-authored an amicus brief for the United States Supreme Court in the case of *United States v. Rahimi*, a case challenging the federal law which prohibits firearm possession by a person who is subject to a protection order. She also authored a foreword to the American Bar Association's new report on Native women in the legal profession.



WGSS Faculty Highlights cont.



Hanna Britton
Professor
Director, Center for
the Study of Injustice

Hannah Britton was very happy to hand off leadership of the WGSS department to the capable talents of Katie Batza. Hannah is excited to be back in the classroom full time this year, teaching in classes in her two departments: Political Science and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Hannah was able to return to South Africa in the summer of 2023, after several years and post-COVID restrictions. She was able to reconnect with many research partners and establish the groundwork for future projects. Hannah is eager to relaunch in-person research related to the [Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Initiative](#) in the Midwest. Hannah recently published an article with KU WGSS graduate Prof. [Corinne Schwarz](#) (now at Oklahoma State), KU Research Project Coordinator [Christie Holland](#) (Institute for Policy & Social Research), and Oklahoma State University graduate student [Eden Nay](#). They examined how anti-trafficking organizations and sex work advocacy organizations pivoted to assist their constituents during the early days of the COVID pandemic. Hannah continues to work on building a network of support for graduate students and faculty using [qualitative methods](#) in their research. After several years of coordination, Hannah is also transitioning leadership of the Center for Migration Research to a new unit on campus.



Akiko Takeyama
Professor
Director, Center for East
Asian Studies
President, Association of
Feminist Anthropology

My new book, *Involuntary Consent: The Illusion of Choice in Japan's Adult Video Industry* (Stanford University Press), was published in July. My book talk tour included appearances at University of California, Los Angeles, Indiana University, Sophia University in Tokyo, and the University of Manchester, UK. My journal article, "Involuntary Consent: Contract Making in Japan's Adult Video Industry," was the featured publication with commentary/response in the flagship anthropology journal, *Current Anthropology*. I was grateful for the opportunity to talk about my research at the Jana Mackey Distinguished Lecture Series at KU, organized by the Emily Taylor Center for Gender and Sexual Equity. As Director of the Center for East Asian Studies, I enjoyed hosting public events, including a New Year's Party and Harvest Moon festival, among others, and organizing a Public Health symposium and Migration film series. These events brought East Asianists together to brainstorm ideas in the 21st century context of "Global Asia." I'm also delighted to serve as the President of the Association of Feminist Anthropology in the American Anthropologist Association. On a personal note, I enjoyed visiting Brazil to learn Afro-Brazilian cultures and teaching a Japanese Society course in English at Tsuda University in Japan over the summer.

WGSS Faculty Highlights cont.



Jeanne Vaccaro
Assistant Professor

In fall of 2023, Jeanne was an Artist in Residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts. At Headlands she completed the catalogue for *Scientia Sexualis*, the exhibition she is co-curating for the Institute of Contemporary Art. The volume includes her scholarly writing alongside commissioned essays by Riley Snorton, Amber Musser, Eva Hayward, Joan Lubin, Hil Malatino, and Leticia Alvarado. Jeanne's essay, "The Sexological Floorplan," co-authored with Joan Lubin, is forthcoming in the 10th anniversary issue of *TSQ*.



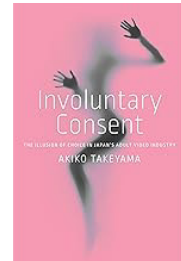
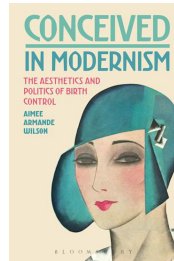
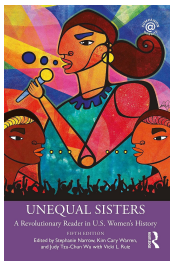
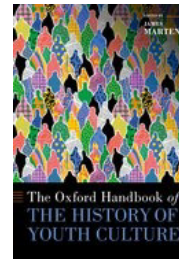
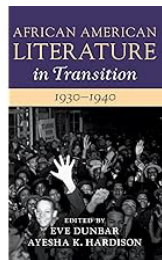
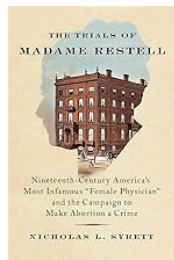
Aimee Wilson
Director of Graduate
Studies

Aimee Wilson is excited to publish her second book in December 2023. *Masculine Pregnancies: Modernist Conceptions of Creativity and Legitimacy, 1918-1939* (SUNY Press) considers depictions of mannish pregnant women and pregnant men in the works of Djuna Barnes, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, and Ezra Pound. This book highlights a fact that is still rarely acknowledged in literary criticism or elsewhere: not all pregnant people are feminine people. Wilson also published a piece in the journal *Modernism/modernity* titled "It's My Moment! Archives and Conspiracy Theories in Post-Roe America." Wilson delivered three invited lectures in 2023, including the Seaver Lecture at the Hall Center for the Humanities. During the Fall 2023 semester, Wilson is on sabbatical and is using the time to develop her next major research project, the focus of which is a digital archive of an early twentieth-century magazine called the *Birth Control Review*.



WGSS Faculty Publications

WGSS faculty consistently contributes thoughtful discourse in numerous publications, academic journals, and articles. Here are a some:



Recommended Reading

We polled our faculty, staff, and students for books they would recommend and we came up with this wide and varied list for your enjoyment!

- Parable of the Sower, Octavia Butler
- Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility, Johanna Burton and Reina Gossett
- The Life of Plants, Emanuele Coccia
- A Discovery of Witches, Deborah Harkness
- Vita Comtemplative: In Praise of Inactivity, Byung-Chul Han
- Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought
- Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, Dr. Joy DeGruy
- Place, Race and Story, Ned Kaufman
- From a Native Daughter, Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask
- The Fraud, Zadie Smith
- How the Word is Passed, Clint Smith
- Trans Care, Hal Malatino
- Peculiar Places, Ryan Lee Cartwright
- The Queerness of Home, Steven Vider
- Lavender and Red, Emily Hobson
- Dead Weight, Emmeline Clein
- Hey, Hun, Emily Lynn Paulson
- Against Technoableism: Rethinking Who Needs Improvement, Ashley Shew
- Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex, edited by Eric A. Stanley and Nate Smith
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WGSS Graduate Student Highlights



Amber Brown

Amber is a 5th year PhD student and MPA candidate in the School of Public Affairs and Administration. Over the last year, she completed her coursework for the WGSS PhD program and began interning with the Family Planning Program at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. As part of her internship, Amber is drafting a report on the state of Title X in Kansas, which she will present at the Governor's Public Health Conference in March 2024. This report will also be the first chapter of Amber's dissertation, which focuses on the reproductive health disparities Black women face in the United States. Amber is currently building her dissertation committee and preparing for her comprehensive exam, and she plans to take the exam during the next year. Upon graduating with her MPA in May 2024, Amber hopes to start her career as a policy researcher and analyst as she continues working toward her PhD. In the meantime, she enjoys engaging with her students and building community on and off campus. She is part of the Student Advisory Board at the Dole Institute of Politics, where she has been fortunate to meet world leaders, attend exciting lecture series, and volunteer for special events, such as the Dole's annual Veteran's Gala. Amber has made the most of 2023, and she looks forward to what's to come in 2024.



Kelsey Carls

For Kelsey, 2023 was another year spent dedicated to her fellow grad workers, her students, and her research. This year, she remained active as Executive Board Treasurer for KU's Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition (GTAC - AFT Local 6403). She served the first half of the year in this capacity and later stepped down at the end of her 2-year term. She remains a proud member of the union and is deeply committed to building graduate worker power on campus. Kelsey also enjoyed teaching a special topics course she designed on the Politics of Sex Work (WGSS 396) and hopes to continue doing so as long as she is at KU. In the fall, Kelsey was also delighted to teach an honors section of the department's introductory course (WGSS 102). As ever, she is wowed by the curiosity and earnest engagement of WGSS students. Finally, she continues to make progress toward her comprehensive exams, and plans to defend early next spring. She is looking forward to this last milestone before researching and writing her dissertation on sex worker led activism, rhetoric, and public policy.



WGSS Graduate Student Highlights cont.



Jessina Emmert

Jessina Emmert is currently a third-year Ph.D. candidate and passed her comprehensive exams and defended her dissertation prospectus in May 2023. Currently, she has received a fellowship from the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities and is working on curating a story map connecting her dissertation chapters. In October 2023, she presented her paper “Courtrooms of Resistance: Fancy Girls’ Racial Performances” at the annual National Women’s Studies Association Conference. Additionally, she has received a Travel Grant from The Hall Center for Humanities to conduct archival research at the University of North Carolina and has also received the Doctoral Student Research Fund from the Graduate College to conduct further archival research at the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans.



Sameen

It’s that time of the year again when you need to reflect on the last 365 days of your work life in a couple hundred words. So, let’s try to recap who Sameen is and what she was up to this past year. Sameen is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of WGSS. This year marked the completion of the Qualifying Exam for her, and she couldn’t be more relieved, but it also means that she really needs to start working on her Comprehensive exam now. She presented her paper “Husband, Wife, and Marital Rape: Analysis of the Portrayal of Marital Rape in Indian Movies” at the NWSA Conference 2023. She also became an instructor of record for the first time this academic year and taught WGSS 355: International Women’s Rights from the Fall of 2023 to the Spring of 2024. She still aims to research the nexus of sexual violence, kinship, and the nation-state by looking at the absence of Marital Rape Laws in India. Her research and methodology are taking better shape now as her work on embodied, decolonial, and queer methods grows. The year was personally eventful for her as well: she got engaged and also got pretty homesick after not visiting her family in India for almost two years in a row now. In 2023 she realized that it takes a village to adult, so she continues to work towards building a community in Lawrence, KS.



Community Ties

Beyond our work as individual scholars, our department is strengthening our community on campus and beyond. The roots of our department and field provide a long tradition of merging scholarship and activism. However, renewed attacks on women, sexual and gender minorities, along with increased racism and neo-colonialism make interrogating the boundaries that limit the personal and political well-being of individuals and communities even more critical right now. To connect to larger communities in our programming as well as our scholarship, we are partnering with the Emily Taylor Center for Women for the annual February Sisters events that will include both a lecture by renowned scholar Dr. Charisse Burden-Stelly and a student zine workshop, release, and reflection program. We have also joined with our local Lawrence bookstore, the Raven, to build a WGSS community reading list and provide public programming. Our graduate students have done much public facing work, including film screenings in Kansas City, collaborations with Amplify Lawrence, and organizing to protect reproductive rights in Kansas. We hope that through increasingly greater engagement, we can deepen conversations and catalyze change on campus, locally, and regionally.



Hannah Britton. Contemporary Feminist Political Theory class at the Spencer Museum discussing the Common Work of Art and the History of Black Writing exhibit

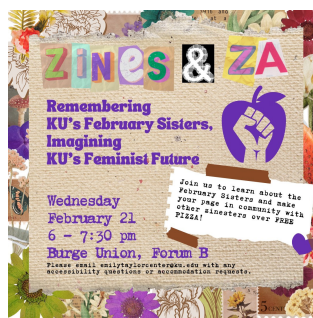


WGSS First Annual Fall Picnic



February Sisters 2024

To commemorate February Sisters this year, WGSS co-sponsored a collaborative zine release party with the Emily Taylor Center - "Remembering KU's February Sisters, Imagining KU's Feminist Future."



The February Sisters Lecture in honor of Women's History Month featured Dr. Charisse Burden-Stelly, an Associate Professor of African American Studies at Wayne State University and a 2023-2024 Charles Warren Center Visiting Scholar at Harvard University.



Dr. Burden-Stelly's talk, "Against Triple Oppression: Black Women, Radicalism, and Resistance" was a comparison of the analysis, activism, and agitation experienced by mid-century, radical Black women in the U.S. with the current realities of Black working women.

This event was sponsored by: Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Emily Taylor Center for Women & Gender Equity, and Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

About the Annual February Sisters Lecture in honor of Women's History Month, The February Sisters, a group of 30 women and 4 children, occupied the East Asian Studies building at the University of Kansas for thirteen hours on February 4, 1972. This peaceful protest, accompanied by six non-negotiable demands, challenged "the continuing sex-based inequities perpetrated by this university" and pressured the administration to establish new "resources to meet the pressing needs of women." As a result of their demands, the February Sisters brought about important institutional change at KU, including the establishment of Hilltop Day Care Center, the development of a Women's Studies program and major, the accessibility of birth control pills and gynecological exams through Student Health Services, the appointment of more women administrators, and the implementation of a federally mandated affirmative action program.

For more information, see [Celebrating 50 yrs of February Sisters](#) on YouTube

Giving to WGSS

WGSS is dedicated to challenging and dismantling boundaries that limit personal and political well-being in our communities. In today's world, these boundaries are shrinking, making our work even more important.

Teaching is at the heart of our mission. WGSS faculty are committed to excellence in and beyond the classroom to prepare our talented and diverse students for careers in community and government service, academics, medicine and the arts to name a few.

Your gift will ensure we can sustain and expand our work by providing scholarships for national and international study, internships, conferences, research and more.

Every gift helps! Your gifts are tax-deductible and the process is safe, secure and fast! To donate, select any of the funds listed below.

**TO DONATE, SELECT FROM ANY
OF THE FUNDS BELOW:**

WGSS SOLIDARITY FUND



The WGSS Solidarity Fund champions our research, students and outreach and ensures the expansion and sustaining work of our department.

WGSS GENERAL FUND

Gifts to our General Fund allow us to offer student scholarships and awards, fund scholarly travel, and sponsor learning and career activities on campus and beyond.

VERNE WAGNER VISITING SCHOLAR FUND

The Verne Wagner Visiting Scholar Fund allows us to bring a leading scholar to campus for one to four weeks to engage with graduate and undergraduate students, and give a public talk or other activity open to the community.

ANN SCHOFIELD FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FUND

Gifts to the Ann Schofield Faculty Development fund allow us to support faculty initiatives with travel and research funds.

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