As we bring another busy and productive fall semester to a close, this edition of the newsletter highlights academic and community work by our WGS students and our core and affiliated faculty. These ongoing endeavors help to further social justice practices and awareness on the RU campus and beyond.

This fall, our program welcomed new students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and implemented an updated curriculum for the WGS minor. The program also gained three new affiliated faculty members, Sandra Frink of the History Department, Pamela Robert of the Sociology Department, and Jill Coleman of the Psychology Department. These affiliated faculty members help our students build connections to committed faculty in multiple disciplines across the university. Creating pathways for intellectual exchanges, the teaching, scholarship, and activism of these affiliates benefits students and faculty alike. Keep an eye out for their cross-listed courses, and please introduce yourselves to them at our events and gatherings.

Looking forward to the spring semester, I would like to encourage all of our newsletter readers to mark their calendars for the third annual undergraduate symposium and to check the CFP at the end of this newsletter for details on submitting work. “Trans(formations): A Symposium for Undergraduate Student Work in WGS” will be held March 1, 2013. WGS faculty and the WGS Minors Advisory Board have been working hard to plan the event, which will feature a keynote speaker, a day of panels showcasing the creative, academic, and activist work of our dynamic undergraduate students, and the much-celebrated, highly competitive WGS Trivia luncheon.

On behalf of our program faculty and students, I extend sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the semester’s successful courses and events. Best wishes for a relaxing and enjoyable winter break.

Ellen O’Brien
Director, Women’s and Gender Studies
A Google search on October 25 of “War on Women 2012” turned up 1,370,000,000 hits. Over a billion: that’s a lot of discourse. This course will analyze that discourse (both visual and textual) through a variety of feminist rhetorical lenses. Currently in the United States (US), the “War on Women” describes the legislative and rhetorical attacks on women and women’s rights taking place across the nation. And this course will look at this “war,” but we will also look at other “wars” being waged on women at home and abroad, including war—war without quotation marks.

Several years ago I taught a course on Women, Gender, and Violence. One of the texts we read was Ann Russo’s Taking Back Our Lives, and we were lucky to have her come and speak to the class. I was really taken with one of things she said: “We need to revision the rhetoric around rape and recovery, move it away from grief and depression to a discourse of strength.” Ever since then I have been listening carefully to the rhetoric around women, gender, and violence. From the gendered rhetoric around the “war on terror,” to the ways in which violence in the media is so often gendered, to, of course, the rhetoric around women (and the poor) in the US 2012 presidential election, what I have been hearing has been increasingly disturbing. I think of my horror at the mainstream responses to the photographic representations of the torture inflicted upon Iraqi detainees by U.S. soldiers at the Abu Ghraib facility near Baghdad in 2004, and my disgust at how the rape of women reporters in war zones is treated. Among other questions that can be asked is why is the public presentation of the “war on terror” suffused with sexualised racism?

Given the current political state I think the time is right now for a course like this.

The discourses around war and the war on women and are related and not simply rhetorically, but an analysis of the rhetoric surrounding these events can reveal the depth of the relationship. The upcoming Spring 2013 course, “The War on Women: Rhetorics and Home and Abroad”, will look at mainstream media, but rather than focus on advertizing or “body image,” we will look at the sexual rhetoric of news coverage, online media (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.), and the language of public policy. What will an analysis of these discourses reveal about ideas of gender, sexuality, religious and political identity and the role of the state in the US and abroad? But what about discourses outside of the mainstream? What might a feminist perspective sound like? To answer this we will read Dorothy Allison’s Bastard Out of Carolina and Cynthia Enloe’s Nimo’s War, Emma’s War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War.

-Carrie Brecke, Instructor in Women’s & Gender Studies
Sandra Frink’s interest in Women’s and Gender Studies extends back to her undergraduate days at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she received a BA degree in both History and Women’s Studies. She also holds an MA in History from the University of Memphis, and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a cultural and social historian of the United States whose teaching and research interests include the study of public space, particularly in urban environments, the history of women, gender and sexuality, the history of immigration and ethnicity, African American history, and the history of popular culture. She also teaches chronological courses in United States history before 1865. She regularly offers a course on the History and Politics of Women in the United States (HIST 383), offered with a WGS attribute, and has taught a graduate course on gender and sexuality in the nineteenth century US and Europe. Her recent research examined the multi-ethnic and multi-racial spaces of nineteenth-century New Orleans in order to analyze the relationships between public power, urban landscapes, and community development and conflict. She looks forward to getting to know the students in WGS and to finding additional ways to contribute to the program.

-Sandra Frink, Assistant Professor in History/Affiliated Faculty in WGS

Pamela M. Robert holds a B.A. in Sociology from the College of St. Rose and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University at Albany, State University of New York, where she was a Jacob K. Javits National Graduate Fellow. While at the Center for Women and Government, Robert’s research on disability oppression in the workplace, including the effects of gender, was funded by The National Institute on Disability & Rehabilitation Research. She is the co-author of Disability in Work Organizations: Barriers to Employment Opportunity and the findings presented therein were cited as evidence in the Amici Curiae Brief of the National Federation of The Blind, National Association of Employment Lawyers and Other Amici Curiae in Support of Respondents (Garrett) in the U.S. Supreme Court Case, Garrett v. the University of Alabama, Birmingham for unconstitutional employment discrimination. Her work has also been published in The Sociological Quarterly, Work and Occupations, Critical Sociology, and Science & Society.

Robert’s current research explores the intersection of assisted reproductive technologies, liminal statuses, and the expansion of social (i.e., non-genetic) forms of kinship, relatedness, and sociality. Her teaching interests include: Families & Kinship; the Body; Society and the Individual; and Contemporary Global Issues.

-Pamela Robert, Assistant Professor in Sociology/Affiliated Faculty in WGS

Jill Coleman began her academic work in Women’s and Gender Studies while she pursued her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology at Loyola University Chicago. In addition to completing a Women’s Studies minor, she helped organize Loyola’s Take Back the Night Event and volunteered at a local shelter for women in need. She did her graduate work at the University of Illinois, where she completed a Women’s Studies minor while earning her M.A. and Ph.D. in Social Psychology. She held positions at Middlebury College and Ohio State University Newark before joining the faculty at Roosevelt University in 2009. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in Social Psychology as well as Psychology of Racism and Psychology of Women (PSYC 345/445). Her research is related to theories and applications of gender stereotypes. Her dissertation research was on how people’s perception of gender differences as being biologically or socially determined influenced their use of gender stereotypes. More recently, she has been studying how gender stereotypes influence behaviors in romantic relationships and attitudes about relationship violence. She has done research on how women protect themselves from partner violence and is currently conducting research on how stereotypes of Black and White women influence women’s tendencies to protect themselves from partner violence. She is excited to work with WGS students and get more involved with the program.

-Jill Coleman, Assistant Professor in Psychology/Affiliated Faculty in WGS
**In the Classroom:**
**Students Review Course Texts**


This semester, I had the immense pleasure of reading Maisha Winn’s *Girl Time: Literacy, Justice, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline* for Deana Lewis’ SOC 421: Gender & Education. The book traces Winn’s time working with the Atlanta theatre program Girl Time, a collective of teaching artists from diverse backgrounds who host two-day play writing workshops at regional youth detention centers (RYDCs) throughout the southeastern United States. Winn worked with Girl Time for over two years, conducting interviews with participants and teachers as part of her doctorate research. The book is divided into five acts, tracing the history of the program up through an epilogue that showcases three of the short plays written by former Girl Time participants. Winn’s interviews with the girls in the program are arguably the most affecting “act” of the book. She observes that the girls “launched [into the Q&A] without hesitation almost as if they had been waiting for an opportunity to tell their side of the story” (Winn 72). *Girl Time* is a must read not just for individuals working with incarcerated youth, but for anyone with an interest in using theater, writing, and performance as tools for social change. Further, it illuminates the intricate and intersecting ways in which the school-to-prison pipeline operates in the lives of youth in communities of color, in particular young girls.

- Linnea Kennedy, WGS MA Student


In Deana Lewis’ SOC 421: Gender and Education class I read *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls*. The book is based on research completed by Myra and David Sadker in which they attempted to reveal the sexist structures in schools and their curriculum that negatively impact how girls learn and achieve academically. Issues like equal classroom attention, testing, and sexual harassment are explored through analysis of the information provided through interviews of students, teachers, and school administrators. The authors seek to discover how gender biases impact the way male and female students experience schools. I found the historical background provided by the authors most useful especially in recognizing the legacy of gender bias in schools. I especially enjoyed the possibilities for change offered in the last chapter. It shows that with some effort and recognition of the inequality between the sexes, teachers, parents, administrators, and students can work together to create an environment that challenges sexist bias.

- Ashley Blair, WGS MA Student
STUDENT PROFILE: NELA TASKOVSKA
INTerns WITH CHICAGO Council ON GLOBAL Affairs

Three months ago I became an intern in the program’s department of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs after inquiring online on how to become more involved with their NATO Summit series. The Council represents one of the oldest and most prominent international affairs organizations in the country and is dedicated to facilitating events on political dialogue, global economies, gender issues, social leadership and international diplomacy.

My work at the Council is very dynamic and is most closely associated with planning upcoming events, facilitating research on political issues, writing biographies for upcoming speakers and being closely involved with the Global Women’s and Development Forum that represents a part of the Council. Working closely with the women’s forum I had the unique opportunity to prepare biographies and attend several events including the “Chicago Women Changing the World Panel” that incorporated esteemed female CEO’s of non-profit organizations in Chicago. I have also had the opportunity to conduct research and prepare program pamphlets for events that included speakers such as the Honorable Melanne Verveer, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues in the US Department of State.

Having been able to experience the work of the women’s forum and meet distinguished speakers that have shed light on different issues that women are experiencing on a global level has allowed me to use my valuable knowledge gained in WGS classes and ask crucial questions on women’s political and social status in the world. This internship has truly helped me place all my WGS studies in perspective and has allowed me to hear exceptional stories, analysis and cultural interpretations from female leaders and entrepreneurs who challenge the male-dominated political system on a daily basis and emerge as active social voices. -Nela Taskovska, WGS MA Student

STUDENT PROFILE: ANNA RANGOS REIGNITES “FEMINIST UNITED”

The following is an interview with Anna Rangos, Director of the Feminists United club on campus.

-How long has Feminists United been in existence? About how many students attend meetings?
The reboot of FU began this fall, though I am unaware as to how long FU was in existence previously. Feminists United currently has an average of five or six people attending meetings. However, we need more students to attend meetings, and dedicate themselves and their skills to FU.

-When/where does FU meet? How does the group conduct meetings?
Currently we meet on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 in room 518, however this is subject to change next semester. FU conducts meetings by having one person facilitate the discussion, and informs the group of what FU is currently working on. From there folks in the group engage in discussions on what they want FU to look like and brainstorm ideas for events or assist in the planning of events.

-What events do you have planned for this semester? Thoughts on next semester?
This semester FU partnered with RU Proud to create a Trans* month. (See pg. 6-7 for an interview about Trans* month). Next semester we hope to have a body/fat positive week. We are also looking at the idea of having events focused on educating students on rape culture. Our biggest hope is to educate students at Roosevelt on the gender pay gap amongst professors. We have begun groundwork, however, there is much more to be done.

-How did you personally get interested in feminism?
My interest in feminism began in high school when I joined my school’s Amnesty International chapter. That was the first time I seriously learned about the state of women across the globe. As time progressed I became passionate about feminist issues, and eventually began an activist career.

-What is the importance of having a student feminist club on campus?
What role does feminism play in the university’s social justice mission?
Students need to have a place to learn about feminism outside of WGS classes. There needs to be a place where students can actively engage in feminist-based activism. Our students need to be educated about the injustices on the Roosevelt campus, so that students can learn to think critically to restore social justice at Roosevelt. Between the recent sexual assaults, gender biased pay gap, lack of body positive education, lack of support for non-binary gender expression and overall rape culture, we need a feminist club at RU.
The following is an interview with Lucas Barnhill, President of Roosevelt’s student group, RU Proud.

-What was the impetus behind RU Proud’s month of trans events? Was this due to student interest, or a need that RU Proud members sensed in the university community?

Trans* Month came about from both student interest and as an educational tool for our university. As an organization, we have done a lot of trans* based activism on campus from gender neutral bathrooms to gender inclusive housing. I have noticed that each time I talk about these initiatives, I find myself explaining trans* issues to students that know little to nothing about them.

On a more personal level, I’ve noticed a lack of education about trans* issues in the way that I, as a trans* person, have been treated on campus. I’ve noticed that the more trans* based education I do on campus, the easier it’s been for me to be out as trans*. I hope the same is true for other trans* students on campus now and in the future.

-How was it decided what types of events would be offered?

As an organization in conjunction with Feminists United, we felt as though there were so many diverse issues within the trans* community that it would be impossible to educate our student body without offering a multitude of programs with varying viewpoints. We tried to offer as many unique and new perspectives on the community as we could, such as a Genderqueer 101 workshop and a workshop on Transnormativity. Feminists United did an awesome job of incorporating our local queer community into the month to really help us give light to issues that are affecting us right now. We also wanted to make sure we did a Nacho House Series event, which is RU Proud’s most popular event, to get a more diverse group of students in to learn about trans* issues. It’s a collective of all kinds of queer art, including live music, poetry, spoken word and physical art. We had nearly 80 people in attendance. It was phenomenal and our biggest turn out at any event we’ve ever had! Really, we want to have a variety in the types of events and issues that we would cover to help keep students interested in our events, and to really provide an insight into our community and the issues that we face.
-Has RU Proud partnered with Feminists United before? What role do you see both of these student organizations playing in social justice on campus as a whole?

We have, but in the past. This is the first time we’ve worked with the new Feminists United. It helps that we already knew each other, as many of the FU members have been RU Proud members. I believe that both RU Proud and Feminists United play a vital role in ensuring our campus stays focused on social justice. It is important to have a variety of perspectives, and the queer and feminist perspectives both do a great job of keeping privilege in check and ensuring that we are doing our part to make the world a better place.

-Who are you hoping will attend the month of events, primarily students, or faculty and administrators as well?

All are welcome to our events though they are all geared towards students. Thus far, we’ve had students, faculty, staff, administration and non-RU students come to our events. We’ve had a great turn out overall, and I’m really impressed! I hope that this is the first step of many to help make sure that RU is a safe and welcoming environment for trans* individuals.

-What is your personal view about RU Proud’s role on campus in promoting a just campus?

I believe that change in a university comes from students, not from administration. It’s our job to keep them on track to ensure that future generations of students don’t have to go through the same trials as we have. We’re the ones experiencing these types of scenarios, after all, and we have to do what we can to make our voices heard and to make sure we do our part to make sure that change happens.

-Interview conducted by Linnea Kennedy, WGS MA Student

**About Face Theater will be remounting full performances of “What’s the T?” this upcoming May in 2013. The show was originally produced last summer 2012 and is being brought back to due popular demand. Performances of “What’s the T?” hope to create dialogue about issues surrounding race, class, age, sexuality and gender.**

WGS graduate assistants and newsletter editors Linnea Kennedy and Molly Barnard would like to thank all the students and faculty who contributed to this issue.
CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND PARTICIPATION

Trans(formations):
A Symposium for Undergraduate Student Work in Women’s and Gender Studies

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Friday, March 1, 2013
Roosevelt University – Chicago Campus –AUD 244

Paper submissions are welcome on creative, academic, and activist work in women’s and gender studies, including the following topics:

- Transnational & Global Feminisms
- Transgender Theory and Activism
- Transformative Justice
- Race, Class, and Intersectionality
- Gender and Sexuality in Popular Culture
- Environmentalism, Sustainability, and Eco-Feminism
- Masculinities & Feminism

**Paper Submission Deadline: February 10, 2013 by 10pm**

- To propose an individual paper presentation, please submit a document including participant’s name, email address, undergraduate major/minor, paper title, and a short paragraph description of your paper topic.

- Paper presentations should be 10-15 minutes long (or 5-7 double-spaced pages).

Email proposals to WGS Graduate Assistant, Linnea Kennedy, at lkennedy02@mail.roosevelt.edu

For more information, contact Professor Ellen O’Brien, at eobrien@roosevelt.edu

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For more information about the program and to view course listings, please visit http://roosevelt.edu/wgs