As we bring another productive semester to a close, we again take this opportunity to highlight program news and celebrate our accomplishments. The pages that follow offer a glimpse of the interesting and innovative work of our WGS community.

WGS faculty members and students have spent this academic year considering our curriculum and programming while developing a timeline for creating an undergraduate major in WGS. This work culminated in an external review process, which brought two WGS faculty-administrators to campus in March to meet with our students, faculty, and administrators and to generate a report with specific recommendations for future development. The focus of their visit and the review is the creation of more diverse paths and resources for undergraduate education and programming. The process of reviewing our program and discussing our successes and challenges with external reviewers has been a positive affirmation of our work. In the process, our university administration has acknowledged the strengths of our interdisciplinary work and expressed enthusiasm for our future plans. Overall, the process provided a great opportunity to work on revisions to the program, to brainstorm new ideas, and to set the stage for putting the evaluators’ recommendations into action. Thanks to everyone who contributed to our review process!

As we look forward to the next academic year, I am very pleased to announce that Marjorie Jolles will be serving as Acting Director of the WGS Program in the Fall 2014 semester while I am on research leave. Marjorie’s dedication to our program and the field of WGS will provide excellent leadership as we begin to formulate and implement our new plans.

Please mark your calendars for the annual WGS Social to be held Wed, Sept 10, 2014 from 4:30 to 5:30 in the Gender Justice Space (AUD 670). Thanks to everyone who contributed to program successes this past year, and best wishes for a relaxing summer!

-Ellen O’Brien,
Director, Women’s and Gender Studies
Friday February 28th marked the fourth annual Women’s and Gender Studies Symposium for Undergraduate work. The theme of this year’s symposium was (En)gendering Social Justice, and it consisted of three panels of nine students presenting their original work in a range of disciplines, including Integrated Marketing & Communications, Psychology, Journalism, English, and Political Science. The symposium is designed for undergraduate students to gain experience presenting their work in a conference setting, and to allow them the chance to network with fellow students and faculty who are engaged in related work across different majors.

This year, the symposium highlighted works through three different panels. The first, titled “Transgressions & Intersections” featured work by students about the criminalization of trans* people, men’s role in feminism, and the experiences of women in color in the professional BDSM community.

The second panel, “Representations” brought together work analyzing women’s roles and issues of consent in Requiem for a Dream, the de-emphasis of gender in Mary Rowlandson’s work, and the portrayal of black women in popular culture.

“Methods & Theories” was the third panel at the symposium. This panel consisted of a presentation on gender dimorphism, a cultural critique of “Gaga Feminism”, and a group presentation by students who engaged in academic activism through performing a readers theater last fall.

Immediately following the three panels was Professor Carrie Brecke’s renowned trivia lunch! Symposium attendees were divided into five teams to answer trivia questions across a variety of topics, including popular culture, female singer songwriter trivia, international politics, and current events. The trivia lunch is always a highly anticipated part of the symposium each year, allowing students the chance to socialize with their peers and faculty members outside of the classroom.
4th Annual Women's & Gender Studies Symposium for Undergraduate Work

9:00–9:50am: Panel 1: Transgressions & Intersections
Moderator: Anna Rangos
Bri Miers - "Systemic Stigmas: The Wrongful Persecution & Conviction of Transgender Individuals"
Grant Ladniak - "Men in Feminism"
Taylor Massa - "I'm Exotic: Women of Color in Professional BDSM"

10:00–10:50am: Panel 2: Representations
Moderator: Kaitlin Vens
Peter Saunders - "Consent to Catastrophe: The Schism of Gender in Requiem for a Dream"
Kathlynn Thomason - "Mary White Rowlandson, Psalms, and David"
Nyameer Puok - "Oh No You Didn't: Representation of Black Women in Film and Popular Culture"

11:00–11:50am: Panel 3: Methods & Theories
Moderator: Taylor Massa
Donovan Snyder - "Gender Revolution: A Call for Gender Justice and an Expanse of Gender Theory"
Caitlyn Hill - "The Problem with Going Gaga"
Gianna Chacon, Danielle Cooperstock, Erin McGuire & Brenden Paradies - "Rethinking the American Dream and Feminist Research through a Readers Theater"

12:00pm–1:00pm: Carrie Brecke's World Famous Trivia Lunch!
FACULTY PROFILE: ELLEN O’BRIEN

This upcoming fall semester, Professor Ellen O’Brien will be taking a research leave to study outlaw feminisms. I was able to ask Professor O’Brien about her upcoming projects. —Molly Barnard, WGS MA student

What will you be researching during your leave?
I will be working on a project on “outlaw feminisms” in the Victorian era. This work explores what Henrietta Mueller, writing in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885, called the “outlawed political condition of women,” while also highlighting the imagining of outlaw women in Victorian poetry, fiction, and political writings. I will be examining how the outlawing social, political, and economic structures of nineteenth-century Britain were scrutinized as writers and activists acknowledged or collapsed the distinction between the outlawed and the outlaw. In doing so, I look at texts across multiple genres to fully consider the range of feminist critique, protest, and strategy in the Victorian era.

How did you become interested in the topic(s) you are researching and how does it relate to your work in the Women’s and Gender Studies program?
My primary field of specialization is Victorian literature. Over the years, I have noticed a constellation of outlaw figures throughout canonical and non-canonical texts—I have been collecting examples and thinking about potential connections and meanings. They have led me to consider two general questions: 1) what particular contributions did the outlaw woman make to literary or popular representations of femininity and masculinity and 2) what possibilities did she hold for redefining cultural models or influencing legal conceptions of gender and sexuality? I am also struck by the extent to which the most current innovations in feminist theorizing within the field of WGS don’t always find their way into current Victorian textual scholarship in explicit ways. I am interested in making that connection.

What do you think will be the most enriching part of doing research during your leave?
Most enriching for me is the time to search for new materials, linger over texts, and to spend extended periods of time in contemplating my sources and in drafting my articles. I also find it energizing to engage histories of feminist thought and to think about connections between contemporary gender debates and their historical counterparts.
Jeanine M. Love is an Assistant Professor of Public Administration. She received a BA in Philosophy from Ohio State University, and she holds a MA in Public Policy and a PhD in Public Policy and Public Administration from George Washington University. Underlying all of her research is an ongoing interest in analyzing ideas of individualism in policy and politics, paying particular attention to the ways in which such rhetoric reinforces social marginalization as well as systemic economic and power imbalances. Her work primarily focuses on issues of economic justice and community empowerment, exploring possibilities for enhancing participatory democracy. Her current work centers on identifying and exploring participatory practices that are built on assumptions of interdependence rather than on hierarchy or competition. Prof. Love will be offering PADM 411/ POS 311, Poverty Policy, in Spring 2015, and looks forward to developing more course offerings for WGS.

WGS ALUM SPOTLIGHT: NELA TASKOVSKA

Wanting to contribute to the cause of gender equality in my home country of Macedonia, WGS Masters alum, Nela Taskovska recently became a part of a Mentorship Project Program entitled “We Are the Future Leaders and Agents of Change in Our Communities” implemented by the Macedonian Women’s Lobby and sponsored by UN Women. As a key lead mentor and a strategic trainer in this program, she has had the opportunity to collaborate with female governmental leaders and the Parliamentary Commission for Equal Opportunities in Macedonia in order to organize thematic workshops, capacity building sessions and public debates. The relevant topics that have been addressed have ranged from women’s health, prevention from mobbing and extortion at the workplace, achieving balance between women’s careers and personal life to increasing the number of women in Parliament and in the political sphere. This mentorship project reaches cities and municipalities from all parts of Macedonia with a main goal of encouraging and enhancing the capabilities of women leaders to become a significant part of the governing units in their civic societies. This highly relevant program aims to remedy the low political participation of women in the local governmental structures and strengthen women’s confidence to apply and become elected to mayoral and national council positions by increasing their knowledge in gender issues and strengthening their capabilities in diverse human rights topics. As a lead mentor in this program, she strives to transcend and share the knowledge she has gained to ensure that women may gain a status of relevance and political equality in leadership positions in the Republic of Macedonia.
Graduate Profile: Molly Barnard

Sexual violence is a problem that is completely preventable but the social structures in our society have allowed people to take advantage of their positions in society to take away the autonomy of others. "Rape is When Sex is Used as a Weapon: Sexual Violence Prevention Programs in Chicago's Non-Profit Sector" is a qualitative research project that sought to understand how prevention programs in Chicago are currently run, how they may be limited, and how they can improve in the future. I interviewed two prevention educators at non-profit organizations in Chicago and asked about their experiences working in their careers. Both educators found that including feminist theory and theories of anti-oppression were extremely important for educator and volunteer, but find it difficult to use theory to explain sexual violence to their general audiences. The goals of the educators revolved around changing the mindset of participants’ as the first step toward change, creating a safe space during presentations, and acknowledging the need for self-care. Challenges included staying professional when working with difficult audiences and being flexible. Both organizations are committed to serving the underserved, particularly minority groups, but noted that working with religious groups and the prison population are the most difficult communities to gain access to. Non-profits have a difficult time evaluating the effectiveness of their programs due to the sensitive nature of the topic. In addition, I discovered that much of the limitations felt by the non-profits came as a result of the non-profit industrial complex—a system in the U.S. that regulates and stifles how non-profits spend their money from the government and foundations. I recommended that non-profits continue to work closely with underserved populations while reaching out to others currently out of reach, and to continue working to incorporate theoretical explanations of sexual violence, while relating those to the tangible realities in Chicago communities.

-Molly Barnard, WGS MA Student

Graduate Profile: Jane Whitford

"The Cultural Analysis of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault" is a curriculum project designed and developed for entry level college students to investigate and critically examine why society continues to witness the subjugation of women and the negative behaviors which result in physical violence and sexual assault. Same-sex relationships and the disabled are also negatively affected by learned behaviors that contribute to the perpetuation of power and control of one partner over another. The focus for the students engaged in this curriculum is to become aware of and understand the inequities that exist within partnerships. Predetermined, prescribed roles based on gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation will be looked at to uncover a social and political system of oppression. The students’ lessons are based on theoretical research and pedagogical practices combined to provide a foundation of unquestionable evidence of an embedded patriarchal ideology. This evidence determines how gendered, cultural norms and reinforcement of these representations impedes the rights and mobility of others.

Throughout this course the students will meet the curriculum’s objectives from a feminist perspective introducing them to a socially constructed system that demonstrates a historical trajectory of abuse. Students will identify areas of abuse, the systems that generate exploitation, and the need for restorative justice as an alternative to a penal system that perpetuates a legacy of abuse. The curriculum highlights the realization that a one-time assault produces life-long health problems including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affecting adolescents and the aging. The curriculum’s units pose a platform on many levels, which substantiates how negative behaviors continue to plague society. Students will compare and analyze to arrive at a place of knowledge and truth through scholarly readings, in-class discussions, and group work that encourages change through dialogue and social activism.

-Jane Whitford, WGS MA Student
GRADUATE PROFILE: AMANDA MARQUEZ

My paper, “Cruel and Unusual Punishment: Pregnancy Within Prison” is a literary analysis of why women in the U.S. enter prison, the reproductive injustices pregnant incarcerated women experience, and an overview of why these abuses occur. I studied various feminists, criminologists, psychologists, and social justice experts. By conducting this literary analysis, I learned that women enter prison on account of a multitude of social, economic, and institutional factors. I examined variables such as: education, motherhood, racism, patriarchy, poverty, homelessness, the feminization of poverty, the Drug War policies, addiction, abuse, and mental institution shutdowns. I then explained the reproductive injustices pregnant incarcerated women experience. These injustices included the negligence and substandard care provided by staff members, as well as the cruel and unusual punishments of shackling and excessive workloads. I followed this section by explaining why these practices occur. I then focused on reform, where I presented additional issues that correlate with the reproductive injustices mentioned previously in my paper, so that the reader could fully understand the depth of the issues, and so that it may inspire change. I correlated this information with suggestions for reform, so that society and prisons can better address these women’s needs. I suggested comprehensive health care, doula care, wormer’s approach, writing and artistry, gender specific programming, and non-prison alternative programming. I concluded the paper with a section on advocacy where I argued that society should uphold previous court rulings that insisted prisoners have a decent standard of care and that their rights not be disintegrated once entering the prison environment. I also argued that society not allow their prejudices to dictate whether a pregnant woman in prison receive adequate health care and for people to become politically active in hopes that it may create change and discontinue the abuse towards pregnant prisoners.

- Amanda Marquez, WGS MA Student

GRADUATE PROFILE: JENNIFER WATJEN

“Empowering Elementary-Aged Girls Through Feminist Conscious Programming”, explores my experiences with an organization called Smarty Pants Yoga (SPY). The goal of the organization is to provide girl specific programming to elementary-aged girls through a feminist conscious lens. The organization does this by providing literacy enrichment, yoga, and social-emotional mentoring to prepare the girls for combating gendered issues they will continuously face throughout their lives. SPY also understands that elementary-aged girls often fail to be a part of the larger conversation regarding female empowerment and therefore tailors its program to meet their needs. As an intern, I was given the opportunity to attend SPY classes and experience the positive impact this organization was having on the girls. This was an opportunity for the girls to discuss gendered issues that were relatable to each and every girl in the room. Issues that all of the girls were trying to navigate regardless of their race, ethnicity, or economic status. In my paper, I explore the area of Girl Studies and how this area examines issues such as relational bullying and body awareness, both topics that were continuously discussed by the elementary-aged girls during my interactions with them. I do this by applying personal narrative from the girls and discussing those issues in the context of current research. My paper also explores SPY in relation to other programs that are reaching out to elementary-aged girls and the methods they are using to join the fight in empowering elementary-aged girls. Regardless of the approach these organizations are using, all of them are joining a common fight to assist in combating gendered messages and unite young girls together through feminist conscious programming.

-Jennifer Watjen, WGS Graduate Credential Student
WGS HAPPENINGS

At the beginning of this academic year, Roosevelt University formed a task force of faculty, staff, and students to review, revise, and re-evaluate our Sexual Respect and Title IX policies. Many from the Women’s and Gender Studies program have been involved in this effort including program director Ellen O’Brien who helped spearhead the project and was the Chair of the Policy Committee. WGS core faculty member Marjorie Jolles also served on the committee and the Procedures Committee. Graduate Assistant Molly Barnard was chosen to serve on the committee as well, and helped prepare for the university to have a Peer Educators program, starting in Fall 2014. This task force is a continuing project with the promise to students, faculty, staff, and visitors that Roosevelt maintains its social justice mission and is taking steps to not only better respond to assaults, but prevent them as well.

The Women’s and Gender Studies program would like to congratulate all the WGS MA, Graduate Credential, and Minors graduating this weekend. A special congrats to WGS Minor Brenden Paradies who was selected to give the speech at Commencement this Friday, May 2nd.

Congrats to all!

The Women's and Gender Studies Program is pleased to announce the winners of our second annual Awards for Student Writing!

Molly Barnard won the graduate writing award for her MA Project, “‘Rape is When Sex is Used as a Weapon’: Sexual Violence Prevention Programs in Chicago’s Non-profit Sector”

Samantha Benduha won the undergraduate writing award for her narrative essay, German Culture through Oma's Apfelstrudel"

The awards were presented at our May 1st graduation ceremony.

WGS graduate assistant Molly Barnard thanks all the WGS students and faculty who contributed to this newsletter issue.

Women’s and Gender Studies Program at Roosevelt University

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