

## Director's Column

by *Ranjana Khanna, Margaret Taylor Smith* Director of Women's Studies

One of my favorite events of the year in Women's Studies is **In Print**, a celebration of significant faculty publications related to questions of gender. I am always impressed by the range of topics colleagues have been working on and sharing with students in their classes and faculty in discussion over the last few years. The appearance of the publication announces a different phase for the work, for the scholar, and for those with whom s/he interacts. This year, we had a broad range of topics represented, from feminist theology to feminist critical biography; to the politics of counting dead bodies and reporting on death numerically in times of war in Guatemala, to nationalist understanding of the novel form and the importance of other genres in eighteenth-century Europe.

The core faculty in Women's Studies have gone through a particularly productive period over the last couple of years with some beautiful and stimulating books appearing that have already had an impact on our students and colleagues. Some of you will have been in classes in which these ideas germinated, and others will no doubt now turn to these print or electronic forms to learn more about the topics and the scope of scholarship undertaken in our program. I would like briefly to honor those who have recently published books: **Frances Hasso** for *Consuming Desires* (2010); **Kathy Rudy** for *Loving Animals* (2011); **Kathi Weeks** for *The Problem with Work* (2011); **Robyn Wiegman** for *Object Lessons* (2012), and **Tina Campt** for *Image Matters* (2012), even though Tina has left us for Barnard. These books have been part of the life of the program and have expanded and informed our sense of Women's Studies. Different aspects of each have been discussed in our reading groups and classes, in the hallways and over meals, in obsessive questions after talks, in the pleasures of downtime, and in how we organize our lives.

This is the fifth year I have been directing the Program in Women's Studies and I have had the pleasure of learning so much from these works as they progressed from small ideas to fully elaborated and researched arguments. Sometimes it feels as if time for research and writing is snatched in between preparation for class, grading papers, reading a dissertation chapter, advising students, attending a meeting, or simply getting on with the business of living. But of course the thinking for these books goes on in all these venues. Well done everyone!

Next year I will devote more time to writing myself as I am taking a sabbatical. Professor **Anne Allison** has kindly agreed to serve as interim chair, which will

be fantastic for the program. Anne is the Robert O. Keohane Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Professor of Women's Studies. Currently, she is working on a book about precarity. In Anne's own words:

"Coined by activist Amamiya Karin from the Italian autonomist movement, the term "precariat" has come to stand for the un(der)employed and working poor in Japan whose ranks have skyrocketed since the onset of the country's economic decline. While referring to the insecurity of job, livelihood, and wage faced by the irregularly employed, the word "precariat" implies more: a deeper sense of social disconnection and existential unrootedness experienced by Japan/ese more broadly in the post-Bubble era. Unmoored from the kinds of affiliation and lifestyle that were a signpost of Japan Inc.—lifelong jobs, intact nuclear families, consumer excess—people have also felt socially hollowed-out: stranded in what is called Japan's "lonely," "relationless" society (muenshakai). Despite a widespread sense of social precarity in Japan both before, and following the triple crisis (earthquake/tsunami/nuclear reactor accident) of March 11th, 2011, there are also signs of hope and hopefulness as well. People are coming together to help one another survive hard times in what are sometimes new ways of being social and living collectively: a politics of survival I examine in my research."

Be assured, through our undergraduates, graduate scholars, postdocs, and faculty, the work of the program will thrive.

## OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

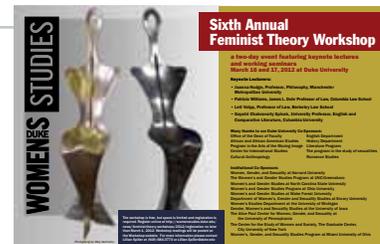


**Rest assured this group of Women's Studies majors won't be sitting still for long!**

Top row: Courtney Douglas, Jolene Doedens, Maria Suarez  
 Middle row: Destani Bizune, Brooke Fodor  
 Bottom row: Aerin Spruill, Athira Nair, Denver Dunn

**Spring Events**

- 1/26 **In Print: A Celebration of Gender-Related Publications by Duke Faculty** Srinivas Aravamudan, miriam cooke, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Kimberly Lamm, Diane Nelson, Sumathi Ramaswamy, Kathy Rudy, Jacqueline Waeber, Kathi Weeks
- 2/8 **The Features (and Shorts) of the Feminist 70s Film Series** *Sex & Revenge Rape* (Joann Elam) and *Foxy Brown* (Jack Hill) *Co-sponsored by Screen/Society and Duke University Libraries Future of the Feminist 70s*
- 2/9 **Miles Parks Grier** Provost & WST Postdoctoral Associate 10-12 “Some Guy Named Art: Joni Mitchell and Female Masculinity in Classic Rock” *Future of the Feminist 70s*
- 2/16 **Stephanie Gilmore** WST Postdoctoral Associate II-12 “Beyond the Friedan Mystique: Writing New Histories of the National Organization for Women” *Future of the Feminist 70s*
- 2/16-2/18 **Arab Springs: Revolution and Repression conference** *Sponsored by Duke University Middle East Studies Center (DUMESC)*
- 2/25 **Winning Women’s Weekend** Reception hosted by **Margaret Taylor Smith** *Co-sponsored by Duke Alumni Affairs*
- 2/29 **Pre-Print Kimberly Lamm** “Feminist Hieroglyphs: Rereading the Seventies in *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1975) and *Post-Partum Document* (1977)” *Future of the Feminist 70s*
- 3/16-3/17 **The Sixth Annual Feminist Theory Workshop** Keynote speakers: **Joanna Hodge** (Manchester Metropolitan University), **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak** (Columbia University), **Leti Volpp** (Berkeley Law School), **Patricia Williams** (Columbia Law School)
- 3/23-3/25 **“Communist Feminism(s) in a Transnational World” Duke-Rice Faculty and Graduate Workshop at Rice University** Organizers: **Tani Barlow** (History Department, Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University) **Anna Krylova** (History Department, Duke University)
- 3/28 **The Features (and Shorts) of the Feminist 70s Film Series** *Utopia Holding* (Connie Beeson) and *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden) *Co-sponsored by Screen/Society and Duke University Libraries*
- 3/30 **Anne Firor Scott lecture** by **Regina Kunzel**, Professor of History, American Studies & Chair of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota “In Treatment: Psychiatry and the Archive of Modern Sexuality” *Sponsored by the Department of History*
- 4/9 **Tim Dean** Professor of English, University of SUNY-Buffalo “Queer Theory Without Names” *Sponsored by the program in the study of sexualities*
- 4/11 **Carol Mavor** Professor of Art History and Visual Studies, University of Manchester, England “Blue Is a Color Where It Is Hard To Find Anything Missing: Chantal Akerman’s *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), Agnès Varda’s *Le Bonheur* (1965) and Patricia Patterson’s paintings of the Aran Islands (1962-present)” *Future of the Feminist 70s*
- 4/13-4/14 **Acting Across Borders: A Celebration of the Meredith Tax Papers at Duke** The 5th Symposium of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture *Future of the Feminist 70s*
- 4/21 **Duke Alumni Reunions Weekend panel** “Reliving the Tumultuous 70s: Recalling Life at Duke” with Duke alums *Future of the Feminist 70s*



*Please check our website for more information.*

# Senior Stories



## Destani Bizune

My path to Women's Studies began in summer camp when I was fourteen. I took a sociology class titled *Race and Social Justice in America*; we learned a little about how race, gender, and class structure our society. We chanted slogans against the death penalty, protested the ban against gay marriage, and ran around shouting, "Fight the power!" However basic these ideas were, it was the first time I had been asked to question the world around me. Things that I once thought to be stable fixed parts of life were suddenly complex and mutable. To say that my world was changed would be an understatement. **This was the first class that taught me to challenge everything, and I carried this rebellious inquisitiveness with me to college.**

I came to Duke intending to be premed, like 120% of my class. However, unlike some of my classmates, luckily I had already gained an appreciation for the humanities.

I started taking courses on race, ethnicity, gender, and class and it wasn't long before I noticed that the majority of the classes I found most appealing were all under the "simple" heading of Women's Studies. Little did I know that I would spend the next four years exploring how complex this field actually is.

The first Women's Studies class I took was *Race, Gender, and Sexuality* from Women's Studies postdoc Svati Shah. It was probably not the best class to take as a freshman, as I spent much of that year in office hours, just learning how to read and write about feminist theory. Despite my initial struggles, I felt at home reading Hortense Spillers, Gayatri Spivak, and Audre Lorde. The way these women saw the world was fascinating; I had to learn more and I knew—without a doubt—that Women's Studies should be my major. Had I been able to declare my major in my first year, I would've done so the first day of class. Every Women's Studies class I've taken at Duke has been invaluable. Each course presents new theories, new ways of thinking, new ways of looking at the world. In *Interpreting Bodies* with Tina Campt I unpacked the ways in which culture inscribes value upon our bodies. *Money, Sex, and Power* with Kathi Weeks made me question capitalism and its organization of labor. Robyn Wiegman in *Thinking Gender* did the impossible and somehow managed to imbue in me an appreciation for Freud.

I am often asked by others what I plan on doing with a degree in Women's Studies. The implication of course is that a background in gender can never be useful. They couldn't be more wrong. **At its heart, Women's Studies endeavors to improve the lives of all marginalized peoples. This major has taught me how to think: to question the norm and complicate the usual.** Whether I will go to medical school or enter a program in public health, I'm not certain, but no matter what my graduate experience will be, I'm embarking full steam ahead with complete confidence that my education in Women's Studies has prepared me for anything.



## Brooke Fodor

Like so many of my peers, I came to Duke intending to do something else. My original aspiration was to become a French major. Why?—Because I was good at it, great even, and to a certain degree I enjoyed it. Yet, **despite my love for dissecting French literature and poetry, finding hidden rich subtleties within the text, and immersing myself into its words, I wanted more.** What that "more" was however, is somewhat intangible. It is difficult to articulate and not easily defined, but I found it without a doubt in the Women's Studies Program. Originally I had enjoyed dissecting, analyzing, critiquing, and exploring different works simply for the sake of it. Nonetheless, I didn't want to be doing something simply for the sake of it, what I wanted was to have a "stake" in it. **I wanted to be deeply and personally invested in what I was doing in college, and now thanks to the Women's Studies Program, I am.** And so, I became a Women's Studies

major. Why?—Because I was good at it, great even, and I absolutely, positively, 100 percent enjoyed it. Initially I was content with just that. I was resolved to enjoy myself, but not to push myself.

Writing a thesis was out of the question; now that would be pushing myself. It was really only because of Professor Kathy Rudy's encouragement to think about a topic, even hypothetically, that I became inspired to do so. I am now in the process of writing an honor's thesis on anorexia with the help of Professor Robyn Wiegman. In my work I attempt to depathologize the condition and render dominant theories about it, be they biological, psychological or cultural, unstable. **I am now not just doing something for the sake of it, but am doing it because I have a deeply personal stake in it. And I cannot stress enough how frightening, enjoyable, frustrating and self validating that experience can be.**

I cannot say definitely what I will do after moving on from Duke. I would say that I hope to do one thing, but then as my undergraduate education has proven to me in spades, I would inevitably end up wanting to do more. **That desire to want more led me to the Women's Studies Program, and I am absolutely certain that it will lead me to exactly where I need to be in the future.** (Graduating Fall 2012)



## Athira Nair

**Deciding to major in Women's Studies was the conclusion of a transformation that began when I was a freshman. As I started college, I knew I wanted to choose a career in which I could impact others.** Because I had gone to a math and science high school, I thought the natural choice for me was medicine. After my first semesters at Duke, I found that **despite my ability to do well in pre-med classes, I wasn't engaged by what I was studying.** Regardless, I didn't know what would be a suitable alternative, and consequently, I stuck with my pre-med status for two years.

While taking pre-med classes, I was also taking advantage of the multitude of other opportunities that were available to me at Duke. It started with a pre-orientation program I did through the Women's Center called Project Change, when I got to explore the racial and social history of Durham and work with local organizations. I did volunteer work in Durham Public Schools through Project Child and got to see what public school education is like in North Carolina. The summer after my freshman year, I did DukeEngage Ireland through the Kenan Institute for Ethics and explored refugee rights in Dublin.

These were the activities that I felt truly engaged with, but it wasn't until boredom with my classes reached an unbearable peak that I found the courage to reject my parents' well-intentioned expectations of me and started taking the classes I wanted to take, reading the books I wanted to read, and writing the papers I wanted to write. Recognizing my academic interests allowed me to find other activities at Duke that I felt passionate about. I became one of the resident assistants for the Women's Housing Option as a junior. As a senior, I wrote an article about living wages for women in the Dominican Republic, which was published in the undergraduate ethics magazine.

When I started taking Women's Studies classes, I didn't have a specific career goal in mind. **I simply knew that in order to live an informed life, I needed to know how the social, political, and economic systems I live in work and how to navigate their constraints effectively to get where I want to go. Between my major in Women's Studies and my minor in Political Science, my worldview has been transformed as I have studied and written about the nature of power and ideology—and as I have contemplated how gender affects the workplace, the classroom, and the domestic sphere.** I have had the chance to study activism at its finest and at its worst and have been able to refine my own positions on social issues. Regardless of what career I embark on, I will use the knowledge I have gained to better understand the world and to contribute to solving the myriad problems of our time.



## Denver Dunn

When I came to Duke in 2008 the last thing on my mind was Women's Studies. I wasn't sure what I wanted to study—History, Political Science, Economics, etc—but Women's Studies wasn't on my radar. **I don't know if I had any preconceived notions about what Women's Studies actually was, I just knew what I wasn't—a Women's Studies student.** To me, a Women's Studies student was either (a) a feminist, (b) gay, or (c) both. While I had always identified as a feminist, I certainly did not want to risk identification with either of the latter categories. To a large degree, my reticence to explore gender and sexuality was tied to a parallel unwillingness to challenge these categories of identification within myself. As a closeted gay man, the last thing on my mind was questioning gender norms—I was all about embracing the rules of sex and flying under the radar. But the times changed. I came out of the closet, and began to learn what

it meant to be openly gay at a place like Duke. I began to notice things about gender, things about the way gay and straight women and men acted. I increasingly linked the homophobia I perceived on campus to a type of gender cleansing with racial inflections. I began to interrogate these practices. In Fall 2010



## Joline Doedens

My decision to become a Women's Studies major came as a shock, both to me and to my family and friends. I came to Duke confident that I would take the necessary pre-med classes and then move on to medical school, but that wasn't the right path for me. **I was the middle-school student who refused to listen to any radio station besides NPR; I was the thirteen-year old who couldn't even imagine getting her ears pierced because that would involve poking holes in her body, just to be considered "beautiful" by others; I was the high-school student who refused to wear make-up or adopt any "feminine" mannerisms**, because she thought they were plain ridiculous. As such, **after four years of Women's Studies courses, it is now no longer surprising to me that I chose to major in a field that not only addresses the aversions I had as a child, but also offers me the opportunity to mold these childhood dislikes into productive principles.** I realized that my

aversion to listening to anything but classical music, news stories, and *Car Talk* was born from the fact that I couldn't tolerate the way woman are portrayed and objectified in popular culture. I realized that my aversion to getting my ears pierced and adopting feminine mannerisms came from my belief that a truly independent woman physically presents herself in a way she is comfortable. It wasn't until I came to Duke that I realized the deep connection between my personal convictions and my academics. Without the analytical and interdisciplinary foundations of Women's Studies, I would have missed an opportunity, not only to identify as a feminist, but also to understand how feminism is more than its popular image.

More than anything else though, Women's Studies has allowed me to develop my ability to rethink everything, from my daily habits to Freud's (mis)understanding of femininity. I have learned never to discount or accept a point of view outright, but to always look for the holes, both positive possibilities for reinterpretations and alternative applications, and negative gaps and omissions that render the argument vulnerable. Women's Studies has taught me to think critically; in fact, **the major difficulty I've faced throughout my four years is to choose from the overabundance of possible interpretations. The fact that I have these choices, energizes me with the possibility of change, and challenges me to risk my own argument in favor of a particular interpretation. I hope that my desire to confront and rationalize these multiple interpretations will guide me through my study of international and comparative law.** Upon graduation from law school, I plan to use my legal knowledge to continue advocating for women's rights on a global scale.

I enrolled in **Interpreting Bodies** with Professor **Kim Lamm**, and began to consider gender and sexuality in earnest. That semester I became involved in founding a new Selective Living Group at Duke, the Nexus, which is Duke's first SLG to allow for multi-gendered roommate pairs.

**My coursework in Women's Studies has prepared me not only to challenge gender norms, but any and all norms. I'm no longer content with learning just about "History," or "Political Science" or "Economics." I've learned exciting new ways to think about and beyond social interactions, institutions and practices.** I have studied women, men, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals. I have written on the political mobilization of American women of color. I have studied art history and practice, literature, history, economics, philosophy, theology and psychoanalysis. **I have explored the depths of inter-disciplinary analysis and interrogated the identity of "truth" itself. And I've learned to apply this method of knowing to my day-to-day analysis of culture.** Currently, my research interests include analyzing the use of online social media by closeted gay men in the age of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." What's next? Right now I'm considering several teaching fellowships. I'd also like to spend some time abroad, and eventually continue my studies in either a JD or PhD program. Whatever I do, however, the skills and knowledge provided to me by the Women's Studies Program at Duke will guide my thoughts and ethics.



## Maria Suarez

At age six, I broke into tears when I heard about a man who nearly beat his wife to death with her heels and a pair of scissors. At age eight, I was offended to find out that Kellogg's wasn't a Colombian-owned company and that my home country was called the "third world." At age twelve, I was enraged that my best friend - also twelve - had to walk across the US-Mexican border illegally three times while taking care of her younger siblings. **When I came to Duke, I knew I would pursue Women's Studies because I was much too familiar with injustice.**

**I found my major to be a profoundly personal challenge and a great source of empowerment.** It was through Women's Studies that I gained a language to speak about my frustrations and name my experiences; I could now translate my sadness and anger to concepts of oppression, patriarchy, colonialism, and privilege, among others. This field has pushed me to think differently. **Gender in Popular Culture** and **Race, Gender, and Sexuality** helped me examine my assumptions and encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone. I learned about paradox within feminism, not to take information at face value, and to question everything. **I am grateful that I found Women's Studies because it has nourished my intellect. I appreciate how much diversity there is in the classes I have taken and topics I have discussed. I've not only learned about women, but also about the environment, technology, world poverty, a variety of art forms, from zine-making to Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, and so much more.**

**Today, I am still fascinated by the topic of gender, our countless cultural investments to make it seem normal to be a man or a woman, and by how uncomfortable people become when those differences are not clearly defined.** I want to attend graduate school and get a PhD in Women's Studies. Eventually, I hope to share my knowledge so that young people can encounter discussions about gender and feminism earlier in life. Through a career in Women's Studies I hope to contribute to the lives of others and produce valuable writing in the field. Above all, I will be fair to the women and men that came before me, whether they fought for my rights or not, and honor the feminist spirit I inherited from my mother and the women in my family. (Graduating Fall 2012)



## Courtney Douglas

Growing up in a household of feminists peaked my interest in learning about women and women's history at a young age. This translated into my academics early on. **In elementary school, I researched Amelia Earhart, Joan of Arc, and Gloria Steinem for class presentations.** Outside of school, I was the girl who loved playing soccer and watching my favorite movie *A League of Their Own*. **I was fascinated by these strong women leaders and wanted to grow up to be just like them. The decision to major in Women's Studies at Duke was easy for me.**

Knowing that I wanted to take a course in Women's Studies, I enrolled in **Rachel Seidman's class Women As Leaders.** This class satisfied my interest in women's history and allowed me to see issues I was learning about on Duke's campus, like the role of women leaders in campus dialogue. After declaring my major, I expected that all of my classes would be about history and theory. What I didn't realize about my major was that it would enable me to take classes in cultural anthropology, public policy, sociology, theatre studies, etc. and would introduce me to passions I didn't know I had. Luckily, I've been able to incorporate these passions into my major, through analyzing film and television, writing an essay on the male gaze present in *Californication* and *Sex and the City*, or the Freudian theory present in *Toddlers and Tiaras*. Even more, the range of classes allowed me to double major in Sociology.

While I have spent much of my time outside the classroom involved in The Chronicle, the independent daily newspaper at Duke, **I had a stimulating summer internship at the Feminist Majority Foundation. There I was able to further explore the issues I had become passionate about** (reproductive rights and abortion access) through my coursework and **that work experience brought nearly everything I had learned in my courses to light.** Additionally, both my courses in women's studies and my internship allowed me to develop my skills in web design and communications. My time as the Web Intern for a feminist organization that was actually trying to make change and help women all over the world was priceless.

Thanks to my Women's Studies major, I will graduate with a broad education of diverse interests and passions that I never expected to have before arriving at Duke. When telling friends and family my major, I'm often asked, "Well what can you do with a Women's Studies major?" To be honest, at first I wasn't too sure. Now, after four years, a feminist internship and many Women's Studies courses later, my reply is "Anything." **While I don't know where or what I will be doing after graduation, maybe I'll follow the steps of my childhood heroes and use the skills and knowledge I learned through my major to help change the world.**



## Aerin Spruill

When I came to Duke, I was going to be an obstetrician-gynecologist. My freshman year, I took the traditional pre-medicine coursework, and while my footsteps continued forward, my heart was not behind each step and my grades reflected that.

Lacking self-confidence academically and feeling as though my childhood dreams were fading away, I explored taking other classes. **I enrolled for my first Women's Studies course, *The Study of Sexuality*, in the spring of my first year. It was my first encounter with the ways in which feminism grapples with sexuality as a social construction, a conversation that consistently negotiates with systems of power, race, gender, economics, and governments.** As the proud "black sheep" in my family, it seemed to be fate that I stumbled into a class and department that was invested in

challenging the normative structures of society. Uplifted and invigorated in ways I had never been, it seemed apparent that I needed at least one course in Women's Studies a semester to remain sane.

I cannot even begin to count the number of arguments (disguised as "conversations") my parents and I have had regarding acceptable behavior for little boys and girls. Women's Studies finally gave me the opportunity to articulate why I wanted to be able to ride a blue bike instead of a pink one. Finally I could debate and win my parents over about gender stereotypes using language and ideas that were indisputable. The discussion over choosing not to be pre-med, however, was not one I was ready to have yet.

It was not until fall semester my senior year, (after declaring my first major as Public Policy) that I could no longer deny my true investment in Women's Studies and became a double major. The concepts I have had the opportunity to explore through Women's Studies, paired with those in my Public Policy experience, have given me tools and lenses to view a multitude of issues that we all encounter every day. Both disciplines have given me the opportunity to decide whether I will stand idly by while injustice is rampant, or not. **Both Public Policy and Women's Studies have given me the words to articulate the fact that my academic career has culminated into a single major I like to refer to as "People: the study of the lived experiences of different people, the ways in which people interact with larger systems of power, and how people interact with one another."**

**This interdisciplinary training has given me important knowledges for addressing inequality, by teaching me how to think in ways that link history, economics, sociology, law, political science, gender, and policy.** I will be taking a year off to develop my skills with a social justice fellowship and then return to graduate school to further my education—and my engagement with the subject of "People." (Graduating Fall 2012)

**Become a Friend  
of Women's Studies**

**If these stories tell us anything about these students, it's that they found a home in Women's Studies—a place of intellectual challenge, academic support, and life-changing experiences. Your support helps make it all possible. Our deepest thanks to:**

Hillary Archer • Mary Courtney Bailey • Dr Annie L Cotten • Dr Elizabeth (Betty) Estrada • Karen Garber • Sarah Lin Hanawald • Blair Sachs Hanewall & the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation • Linda E Harris (for the past 23 years!) • Amanda Jaffe & ADP • Sumathi R Jones • Martha Kay Shaw Kribs • Manjusha Kulkarni • Dr. Karen L. Roberts • Sally D Robinson • Dr. Kathryn P. Scott • Margaret Taylor Smith • Nancy J White & Full Circle Associates • Patricia Willis

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## An In-Depth Look at WST 150S Feminist Art in the 1970s

**“Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.”**

This jarring statistic released in 1989 by the Guerilla Girls, (a feminist group famous for wearing gorilla masks and retaliating against sexism in art museums through satirical propaganda) prompted one of the Guerilla Girls’ critiques—to create a poster asking: **“Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?”** Could this statistic possibly be true? Why are women excluded from the art historical canon?

In the course **Feminist Art in the 1970s** taught by Professor **Kimberly Lamm**, we examined the works of women artists who questioned the gender, sexual, racial, and class-based inequities in mass media.

Our classroom was at the Nasher Museum studying the exhibition, “The Deconstructive Impulse: Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power, 1973-1991.” It was truly remarkable to critically examine a slice of feminist art and then physically see and interact with the works we were studying in the course. We not only focused on feminist art in the 1970s, but also on their intellectual, historical and political contexts. Unique to Lamm’s course was our active engagement with the artwork we were reading and studying. For instance, after studying the feminist group the Guerilla Girls, we had the opportunity to watch the Guerilla Girls perform ‘in full jungle drag’ at the Nasher Museum—revealing their thinking behind their books, posters and feminist activism.

Professor Kimberly Lamm, engaged the class in dynamic discussions about unfamiliar ideas with intelligence and passion. Feminist art, a movement that began in the 1960s and flourished in the 1970s, is a branch of the second wave of feminism that calls attention to the effects that visual representations have on women and their relationships to power. Lorna Simpson’s artwork “Stereo Styles” provides freeze-frames and snapshots of the back of a young woman’s head, displaying various hairstyles. Simpson’s work exemplifies the preconceived ideas associated with

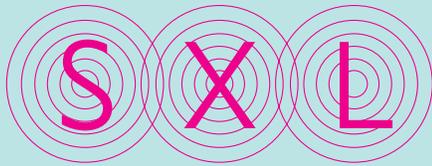


a woman’s image working against the historical media image of a woman as ‘sexually available’ and an ‘object’ for men to visually prey on. The course prompted me to think about what the representations of women in mass media do to women.

Although I pinned “feminist art” as a very specific art category, I learned that there is a wide array of artistic practices and messages. I was surprised at the variety of art media in the exhibit that included compiled video clips of Wonder Woman, the text “When I hear the word culture I take out my checkbook” juxtaposed over a photograph of a ventriloquist’s dummy, and a representation of Warhol’s famous Marilyn Monroe portrait.

Through *Feminist Art in the 1970s*, we studied how feminist artists interpret the images of women in the media to question why women are viewed as purchasable commodities and what the implications are of gender stereotyping. Lamm endowed us with the tools to look at and write about the multiplicity of feminisms that are visible through contemporary feminist art.

*by Colleen O’Connor  
(2014/Psychology and Women’s Studies)*



the program in the study of sexualities at duke

The program in the study of sexualities sponsored (or cosponsored) these recent events:

- The South African Constitutional Court Justice, **Edwin Cameron**'s talk on "Constitutionalism and Diversity: Sexual Orientation in South Africa."
- The historian **Judy Wu** on, "Rethinking Global Feminism: The Vietnam Women's Union and the Cultivation of International Women's Peace Movements"
- **Profiles in Sexuality Research** with **Laura Micham**, who is the Merle Hoffman Director of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture, where she is the Curator of the Gender and Sexuality History Collections.
- The cultural anthropologist, **Jafari Allen** from Yale University speaking on "The Ethnography of Black Queer/Diaspora: Tracing the Circuits of Desire"

These events reflect the program's strengths in sexual politics, the humanities, the interpretive social sciences, and history. The SXL program continues to explore ways to expand our coverage of research on sexuality in the sciences and behavioral sciences. The director met with **Bob Cook-Deegan**, Institute for Genome Sciences and Policy, to discuss potential collaborations in events and curriculum. The Spring 2012 Profiles in Sexuality Research event also furthers the outreach to sciences, hosting Professor **Christine Drea** of Evolutionary Anthropology and Biology, who spoke about her research on animal sexuality.

by Ara Wilson, Director

Each semester, we continue to offer a full roster of courses – most of them filled to capacity. In Fall 2011, SXL offered seven courses on topics ranging from vampire stores to the middle ages. The Spring 2012 courses also exhibit an exciting range, including:

- the Introduction to the Study of Sexualities, taught by the director
- a topical course on gender and sexuality in Israel, taught by a graduate student, **Netta Van Vliet**
- a course on sexuality and society taught by Professor **Rebecca (Becky) Bach** in Sociology;
- the capstone to the certificate on Queery Theory, taught by **Antonio Viego**;
- and the very popular seminar on Clinical Issues for LGBTQ, led by the director of the Center for LGBT Life, Dr. **Janie Long**.



**Note:** After directing the program in the study of sexualities for six years, Ara Wilson will step down as director at the end of Spring 2012. Professor Wilson was brought in to revamp the SXL program and join Women's Studies in 2006. Highlights of her two terms include structuring a wide-ranging undergraduate curriculum; working on collaborative projects with programs at Duke and UNC; designing a theme year on transnational sexualities; hosting an annual queer theory lecture; the Profiles in Sexuality Research series at the LGBT Center; and integrating representation from the biological and behavioral sciences in SXL. This semester, the director, advisory board, and stakeholders are working to shape the next generation of a program that can best advance Duke's strengths in courses, student interest, and faculty scholarship in the field of sexuality studies.

## Spring 2012 Courses

<b>WST 49S</b>	<b>Gender &amp; Avant Garde Poetics</b> – Kimberly Lamm	<b>WST 162S</b>	<b>Gender and Popular Culture</b> – Victoria Hesford
<b>WST 109S</b>	<b>Study of Sexualities</b> – Ara Wilson	<b>WST 163S</b>	<b>Interpreting Bodies</b> – Kimberly Lamm
<b>WST 135S</b>	<b>Clinical Issues for LGBTQ</b> – Janie Long	<b>WST 165</b>	<b>Gender and Political Theory</b> – Kathi Weeks
<b>WST 140</b>	<b>Women at Work</b> – Martha Reeves	<b>WST 170AS</b>	<b>Queer Theory</b> – Antonio Viego
<b>WST 150</b>	<b>Dean's Course: Food Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Why, What &amp; How We Eat</b> – Kathy Rudy/Charlie Thompson	<b>WST 185S</b>	<b>Women in the Public Sphere</b> – Rachel Seidman
<b>WST 150S</b>	<b>Femme Fatale in Literature &amp; Film</b> – Calina Ciobanu	<b>WST 190S</b>	<b>Women/Health in American History</b> – Shannon Withycombe
<b>WST 150S</b>	<b>Gender/SXL/Politics in Israel</b> – Netta Van Vliet	<b>WST 195S</b>	<b>Senior Seminar: Future of the Feminist 70s</b> – Kathy Rudy
<b>WST 150S</b>	<b>Violent Acts: Race/Nation/Gender</b> – Johanna Schuster-Craig	<b>WST 205</b>	<b>Debates in Women's Studies</b> – Kathi Weeks
<b>WST 159S</b>	<b>Thinking Gender</b> – Robyn Wiegman	<b>WST 220</b>	<b>Foundations in Feminist Theory</b> – Robyn Wiegman
		<b>WST 290S</b>	<b>Interdisciplinary Research Workshop</b> – Robyn Wiegman

## Meet Frances Hasso



*In spring 2011, **Frances Hasso** joined the faculty at Duke as Associate Professor of Women's Studies, International Comparative Studies, and Sociology. Coming from a background in sociology and political science, and interdisciplinary training in Middle East studies, her research has focused on states, social movements, and gender and sexuality issues in the Arab world.*

**You came to Duke after spending ten years at Oberlin. Besides the usual**

**adjustment and transition issues, what's been the greatest challenge/biggest difference academically?**

Undergraduates at Duke and Oberlin are equally bright, busy, and committed to learning, and they come from a similar range of socio-economic backgrounds. They have like capacities to impress and pleasantly startle in the classroom. The significant differences I have noticed in my brief time here relate to undergraduate student culture and attitudes toward grades. Students at Duke are much more anxious about grades. They also seem to be less likely to give themselves the freedom to build independent creative, intellectual, and social communities among themselves. This probably has something to do with the dominance of Greek and athletic culture. A few students have expressed a loss they cannot quite name in this regard.

**You have published two books: *Resistance, Repression, and Gender Politics in Occupied Palestine and Jordan*, which explored the different social change strategies and cultural and gender politics in the Jordan and Occupied Territories branches of a Palestinian nationalist organization and its affiliated women's organization; and *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East*, which focuses on the rise of new sexual and marital subjectivities and practices among Sunni Muslims, especially in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, and critically examines the way different social sectors in each society explain these changes. Where do you see your work moving next?**

Last summer I began a new research project related to the gender and sexual dimensions of the Arab revolutions, with an empirical focus on Egypt.

I presented initial findings at the Middle East Studies Association meeting in December 2011 and expect to do more research, analysis, and writing in the next year. I am considering a book project that examines these aspects of the Egyptian revolution, possibly comparing it to other revolutionary projects, such as in Tunisia. It is certainly an exciting time to be a Middle East specialist and social movement scholar.

**Recently you were appointed Director of International Comparative Studies. How do you see the intersection of your work in ICS with your work in Women's Studies?**

**I am thrilled to be part of two such exciting and dynamic programs. I see a natural synergy between Women's Studies and International Comparative Studies as interdisciplinary and transnational projects. My own intellectual and personal interests in gender, feminism and transnationalism developed together.** I see potential for some student overlap given my own location in both projects. Women's Studies has already been an exciting intellectual home for me and I expect things to get even better. I am especially looking forward to teaching a graduate seminar on **Feminism and Freedom** in fall 2012.

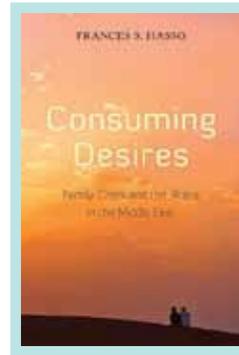
**The past four decades have seen the evolution of Women's Studies programs in academic institutions across the US. According to the National Women's Studies Association, there are now 661 Undergraduate, 43 MA, and 15 PhD programs...quite a proliferation. In your mind what has been the biggest impact these programs have had?**

**Women's Studies programs have been the premiere space for interdisciplinary work that actively engages the nexus between power and knowledge given their emergence from movements for social justice. Given these**

histories, Women's Studies programs do not allow us to avoid questions of power and politics! At the same time, the programs reflect an uncommon rigor and interdisciplinary theoretical sophistication. Feminist approaches are now difficult to ignore even within most of the traditional disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, something that I believe was facilitated by the rise and development of Women's Studies programs and departments.

**There is talk about the inevitable next revision of the undergraduate curriculum at Duke... in your mind do you think that a course in gender & sexuality should be required of all undergraduates?**

You have to consider the potential consequences. There are already many wonderful courses that could fulfill such a requirement—but if students resent the requirement, then what's to be gained? I also believe that no one course can do all the work that is needed with respect to the broad range of feminist concerns and approaches. We'll know how far we've moved when courses on almost any topic in the social sciences and humanities would be understood as not well done without some engagement with the



dimensions offered by gender and sexuality scholarship.

**Where do you see Women's Studies moving in the future?**

I'm not sure except to say that **I think the field at its best is constitutively dynamic and remains crucial. I know that Women's Studies offers students a unique education**

**that applies in a broad range of fields, academic and professional, but also transforms the way one thinks and lives.**

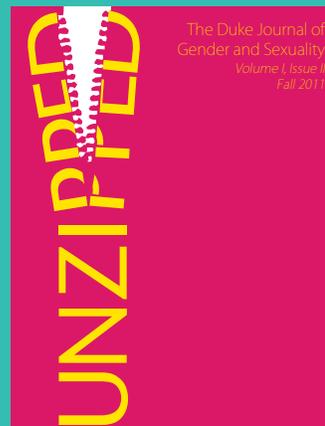
I know from ten years of experience that my Women's Studies students are running organizations, in academia, physicians, designers, journalists, social workers, lawyers, chefs, researchers, psychologists, musicians, actors, and teachers. I'm in touch with so many of them on Facebook! Women's Studies is particularly important for women students going into a range of fields because (when it's done right) they will not get elsewhere what they receive from a training in Women's Studies.

*Interviewed by melanie mitchell*

**Starting Fall 2012**

**Feminism and Freedom is the 2012-2013 theme** and the focus of WST 960 which will be taught by Professor **Frances Hasso** Fall 2012. The topic was conceived in response to the uprisings in North Africa and West Asia, but will also include investigations on how feminism has fought for various forms of freedom, scrutinized its historical emergence, and deployed the term in a variety of discursive contexts. Also relevant are analyses that address the anti-feminist dimensions of freedom projects. We will be examining the transnational, intersectional, and interdisciplinary research that takes an innovative approach to understanding the social, political, economic, and cultural implications of freedom.

**The second issue of Unzipped The Duke Journal of Gender and Sexuality...**



was published under the able leadership of Editor-in-Chief, Ilka Felsen and Managing Editor, Rachel Bangle (who is taking over as Editor-in-Chief now that Ilka has graduated)... congratulations to both and the staff!

## The Features and Shorts of 70s Feminisms

by Shilyh Warren (Graduate Program in Literature, Certificate in Feminist Studies 2010)  
Shilyh teaches film studies courses in the English Department at NCSU and in the AMI Program at Duke. She also works at the Duke Writing Studio.

The seventies were an explosive time in the history of women's cinema. Before 1969 fewer than 20 feminist films existed; by 1976, over 250 films by women circulated, and the number of feminist filmmakers rose from less than 40 in 1972 to more than 200 in 1976. Throughout the seventies, audiences filled auditoriums, classrooms, and town halls as films made by women began to circulate as a result of newly forged distribution collectives such as Iris Films, the Women's Film Coop, New Day Films, and Women Make Movies (the last two are still going strong!). Vibrant women's film festivals also proliferated throughout the US and the UK, and the written programs at those women's film festivals were among the first published writings on the topic of women and cinema.

Curating the series, **The Features (and Shorts) of the Feminist Seventies**, allowed me to bring together a wide range of women's films, which demonstrate the diverse aesthetic and political pursuits of the feminist seventies. I included powerful cinematic calls for collective, anti-racist, pro-labor feminism (*I Am Somebody*, *The Woman's Film*, and *Born in Flames*); experimental meditations on time, place, and being (*News from Home* and *Wanda*); and furious responses to sexual violence against women (*Rape* and *Foxy Brown*).

I chose films that I felt had the power to inspire, surprise, and challenge us as viewers. For me, films about the seventies have always worked in two directions. On the one hand, I'm struck by the courage and audacity of women filmmakers – many of whom had little technical experience, and others, who used their expertise to literally rewrite the conventions of the medium and the political hearts of their audiences. On the other hand, I am shocked that the critiques and concerns that resonate in these films apply just as well to our present political climate. Watching these films today should make it plain that not only is the work of feminism unfinished; it has multiplied exponentially in the 21st century.

For me, it has been a great pleasure to share these films, some of which are available only in their original 16mm format. Rich and eloquent introductions by **Victoria Hesford**, **Kimberly Lamm**, and **Ara Wilson** framed our viewings in important ways, and in the conversations that took place after the screenings, we participated in the kind of work that took place constantly during the feminist film movement of the 70s. We shared reactions and concerns, we developed and challenged bonds between us, and we emerged from the theater with new thoughts and ideas about the relationship between feminism and cinema.

Ideally, anyone seeing these films will come away with a complex vision of seventies feminisms, and watch contemporary screens with renewed attention to the questions raised by 1970s women's films:

**How does feminism intersect with other discourses of liberation?**

**How do the conventions of cinema deny or construct women's subjectivity?**

**Is a "women's cinema" possible, or even desirable?**

**And, finally, what do feminists mean when we say "we"?**

### The Features (and Shorts) of the Feminist 70s

Curated by Shilyh Warren



In collaboration with the 2011-2012 Women's Studies Initiative, this series showcases a range of films that focus on issues at the center of 1970s feminisms, including race, class, labor, sexuality, and revolution. Highlighting a broad scope of aesthetic and thematic concerns, these diverse films present a complex vision of 70s feminisms. Together, these shorts, documentaries, experimental and feature films also reveal a shared interest in exploring the contours of women's subjectivity and potential for collective political action.

Films screen at 8pm in Richard White Auditorium and will be followed by Q&A sessions.

#### October 5 - Firsts

*I Am Somebody* (Madeline Anderson, 1969, 30 min.)

The first contemporary documentary made by, for, and about black women workers, *I Am Somebody* centers on a hospital workers' strike in Charleston, South Carolina, and offers a unique opportunity to reconsider the intersections between feminism, union activism, and the civil rights movement in the late sixties.

*Wanda* (Barbara Loden, 1971, 102 min.)

In her directorial debut, Loden, who was born in North Carolina, stars as Wanda, a passive coal miner's wife and mother adrift in an industrial wasteland. A stark and beautiful study of dystopia, this radical revision of a road movie embeds an urgent argument for feminist political action.

#### November 9 - The Personal is Political

*The Woman's Film* (SF Newsreel, 1971, 40 min.)

In this "consciousness-raising" documentary, women of color and working class women inhabit the very center of women's liberation. *The Woman's Film* puts realist aesthetics to work at the service of a radical political vision of feminist politics.

*News from Home* (Chantal Akerman, 1976, 85 min.)

A languorous study of life, family, time and space, this film juxtaposes observational shots of everyday life in New York City with readings of letters from Chantal Akerman's mother, written from the filmmaker's native Belgium. With its defining absence at the center, *News from Home* meditates on the possibilities of a cinematic becoming.

#### February 8 - Sex & Revenge

*Rape* (Joann Elam, 1975, 25 min.)

Fusing documentary and experimental conventions, this rarely screened film stirred considerable excitement among feminist reviewers in the mid-70s. Three women speak out about rape in a film that analyzes sexual assault in the U.S., and refutes the usual, exploitative depiction of rape in cinema.

*Foxy Brown* (Jack Hill, 1974, 94 min.)

Pam Grier raises hell in Los Angeles in this classic Blaxploitation film and landmark rape-revenge fantasy. Here feminism meets black power at the crossroads of cinema's infatuation with sex and violence.

#### March 28 - Utopia

*Connie Beeson, Making* (1971, 13 min.)

One of the earliest filmic explorations of lesbian lovemaking, this experimental film suggests that where bodies – human, geographical, and temporal – come together, possibilities emerge.

*Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borten, 1983, 90 min.)

In Bordon's futuristic sci-fi feminist drama, "the revolution" has failed to secure the socialist-feminist, anti-racist aspirations of the Woman's Army. Shot in the language of documentary verité, *Born in Flames* is a gritty call to arms, a jarring wake up call, and a classic instance of feminist cinematic insurrection.

Co-Sponsors: Duke University Libraries, Duke University Screen Society, The Center for International Studies, International Comparative Studies and the Department of Cultural Anthropology

## Graduate Scholars Colloquium 11-12 *by Colloquium Leaders Lindsey Andrews (English) and Tamar Shirinian (Cultural Anthropology)*

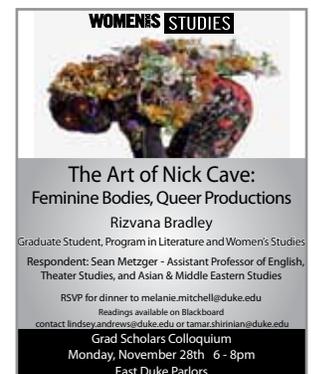
Now in its eighth year, the Women's Studies Graduate Scholars Colloquium continues to be a vital space for graduate students and faculty across disciplines to share their work. The 2011-2012 colloquium has been no exception to the longstanding tradition of diverse presentations and lively discussion. We kicked off the year in September with **Ara Wilson**, Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Cultural Anthropology and also the Director of the program in the study of sexualities, presenting a chapter-in-progress from her latest work, "Sexual Latitudes: The Erotic Politics of Globalization," which considers how matters of sexuality and sexual health have increasingly shifted from national to global corporate contexts by analyzing corporate and transnational projects such as international sex surveys and anti-AIDS campaigns. **June Hee Kwon**, (Women's Studies and Cultural Anthropology), responded to Wilson's paper, highlighting the ways in which the new international corporate contexts investigated by Wilson continue to interact with local and state governments, as well as at intimate registers among individual people. The discussion blossomed into a consideration of the contemporary difficulty of shifting analytic models from long-standing critiques of the state to new and much more complex networks that span the globe. The talk and conversation were of great interest to those interested in new directions for sexological work, queer analyses, and interdisciplinary questions of economy and scale.

Our October meeting was a chance for graduate students to meet and engage this year's Women's Studies Post-Doctoral Associates, **Stephanie Gilmore** and **Victoria Hesford**. Gilmore and Hesford shared readings that questioned the ways in which the history of feminism, and in particular the pivotal decade of the 1970s, has been narrated, and spoke about their own approaches to telling that story differently today. **Katherine Costello** (Women's Studies and the Program in Literature), offered a response that contextualized these works through one another asking "What permits the persistence of these narratives that we know to be partial and sometimes inaccurate?" The discussion that followed considered the relationship between feminism's past and its future, focusing especially on continuing questions of the role of liberation, politics, affect, ethics, and story-telling for feminism today. Questions about the institutionalized and disciplinary embeddedness of feminism in the academy were also raised and opened up the topic for many future discussions.

In November, **Rizvana Bradley**, a longtime colloquium participant (The Program in Literature, African and African-American Studies, and Women's Studies), rounded out the semester by presenting work from her dissertation, "Corporeal Resurfacings: Thornton Dial, Faustin Linyekula and Nick Cave." Focusing on the "sound suits" of performance artist Nick Cave and his method of collage, Bradley offered a reading of skin and flesh as racialized and gendered sites that could be disrupted and re-thought through Cave's queer artistic practice. **Sean Metzger**, Assistant Professor of English, Theater, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, responded, noting the complexities and utility of thinkers such as Franz Fanon and Linda Hart for Bradley's analysis and highlighting the importance of economy, circulation, and agency for Cave's work. Metzger's response opened the way for a productive and exciting discussion that questioned the relationship between Cave's garments and drag, the performative experience of wearing the unwieldy suits, and the ways in which new and unfamiliar sensorial experiences can contribute to our understandings of femininity and queerness.

In January, **Johanna Schuster-Craig** (German Studies and Women's Studies) presented her work on the Heroes Project in Germany, entitled "Heroes is Becoming a Movement: Men, Feminism and Social Work in Berlin." This presentation served as a practice job-talk for Schuster-Craig, who is applying for academic jobs, and allowed her to present her work on the Berlin project and the ways in which issues of "honor culture," "honor killings," and integration politics are approached by the social work project. The audience first acted as the mock-audience for the talk, and then the discussion opened up to feedback on her performance. **miriam cooke**, Professor of Arab Cultures and the Director of the Middle East Center at Duke, responded to the content of the presentation focusing on the ways in which Schuster-Craig opened up many questions on Islamophobia and the possibility of allowing for a shift in this direction rather than on "integration." The commentary of the audience emphasized the interdisciplinarity of the job talk and highlighted potential new directions for Schuster-Craig's thinking, which included investigating questions of race, religion, and "honor" as a genealogical force or shifting the talk to make gender the primary focus.

To finish out this year, at the last two colloquium meetings we will be hearing from Women's Studies Dissertation Fellows, **Leah Allen** (Program in Literature) and then **Paige Welch** (History). It has been a fruitful and inspiring year for the colloquium and we look forward to the continuation of these conversations within and (as is its intention) beyond the colloquium.



**What You Missed!**

With so many events and only two newsletters a year there's always more to share than we have room for...here are a few moments you missed. If you're traveling to Durham or nearby, please let us know and come join us this spring!

*Simone de Beauvoir Today, 25 years after her death.*

*The speakers gathered for a brief moment following the day-long examination of de Beauvoir's influence today.*



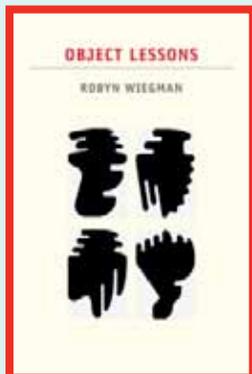
From left to right: Linda Zerilli (University of Chicago, Political Science), Nancy Bauer (Tufts, Philosophy), Ranji Khanna (Duke) Ashley King Scheu (French) Azeen Khan (English/ Feminist Studies) Ali Mian (Religion/Feminist Studies) Emily Apter (NYU, French) Amey Victoria Adkins (Divinity/Feminist Studies) Stella Sandford (Kingston University, Philosophy) Toril Moi (Duke) Ursula Tidd (University of Manchester, French)

*At In Print we were delighted to celebrate recent publications by Duke faculty on gender-related topics.*

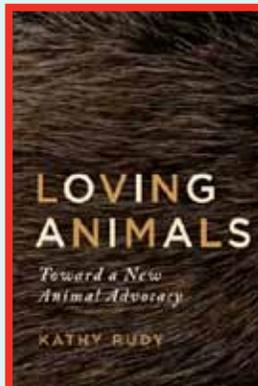
From left to right: Kathi Weeks, Kimberly Lamm, Jacqueline Waeber (Music), Diane Nelson (Cultural Anthropology/Women's Studies), miriam cooke (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies), Srinivas Aravamudan (English/Romance Studies/Literature), Sumathi Ramaswamy (History), Mary McClintock Fulkerson (Theology/Women's Studies), Kathy Rudy



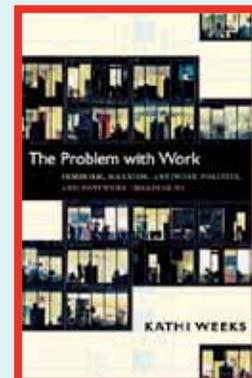
*Our faculty have been busy with the publication of these books:*



**Robyn Wiegman**



**Kathy Rudy**



**Kathi Weeks**

## Congratulations!

We are delighted that adjunct in Duke Women's Studies **Banu Gokarikel** has been promoted to Associate Professor of Geography at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Cultural Anthropology, African & African American Studies and Women's Studies Professor **Charlie Piot**'s book *Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa after the Cold War* (U. Chicago Press, 2010) has been awarded the 'Best Book on African Politics published in 2010' prize. This award is given by the African Politics Conference Group (APCG) of the American Political Science Association, the International Studies Association, the Midwest Political Association, and the African Studies Association. Well done Charlie!

**Alvaro Jarrin** (PhD Cultural Anthropology 2010, Dissertation Fellow and Certificate in Feminist Studies 09-10), is a visiting Assistant Professor, Union College Schenectady, NY. His research focuses on how perceptions of beauty in Brazil reflect both the existing social inequalities and the struggles to produce a more egalitarian society. His work is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/ACLS Early Career Fellowship Program.

And congratulations to the **2011 Anne Firor Scott Award Winners!** This award is administered by History and we're delighted that two of the recipients (in bold) are also Certificate in Feminist Studies scholars.

**Kathleen Antonolo, Romance Studies, "The Making and Unmaking of Colette: Myth, Celebrity, Profession"**

Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell, History, "A Most Outrageous Offense: Child rape, black families, and South Carolina's segregating courts, 1885-1905"

Amanda Hughett, History, "To Spend a Hard Earned Dollar: African American Women's Property in the Post-Emancipation South"

Emily Margolis, History, "Dishonoring Her Sex: Southern Antebellum Women as Agents of Violence"

**Stephanie Ryhlahti, History, "Radical Congregants: Lesbianism and Church in the South, 1970s-1980s"**

Ashley Young, History, "Consuming Identities: Women, Race and Ethnicity in post-war America"



**Shannon Withycombe** is an ACLS [American Council of Learned Societies] New Faculty Fellow in History and Women's Studies at Duke for 2011-2013. She comes from the University of Wisconsin, where she completed a PhD in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology. While at Duke, Shannon is teaching in the History and Women's Studies departments, including classes on women and health, the history of the body, and reproductive technologies.

Shannon is spending part of her time working on her research on nineteenth-century women's health. She is particularly interested in bodies and identities and how the two are constructed in thinking about reproduction and science. Shannon is finishing

a book project on the history of miscarriage—exploring the personal meanings of miscarriage, its connections to death, motherhood, and illness. It also investigates physicians' roles in the event, and their interests in obtaining miscarriage materials for scientific research. She will begin the research for her second book, which will examine early embryology in nineteenth-century America and all of the actors involved in the professionalization of the study of human embryos. She is interested in gaining access to the concerns of biologists in the nineteenth century, but also to better understand the trade networks between pregnant women, midwives, doctors, and scientists. All of these players became involved in passing around fetal tissues that became embryological specimens, and an examination of these networks can provide us with new knowledge about the rise of scientific authority as well as the social value of different groups of mothers. The project will explore how women functioned in this developing field, both directly in their decisions to hand over tissues, and more indirectly through the considerations and anxieties of the scientists.

Spring 2012 Newsletter

## In Memoriam

### Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans (1920-2012)

The whole of this newsletter does not have enough space to catalog the plethora of ways **Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans** was a philanthropist and friend to the Duke and Durham communities. A graduate of the Women's College in 1939 (entering at the age of 15!), Mary was an advocate for education, race relations and the arts, among many others. In addition to our East Duke Parlors being created in her mother's honor, her mother's Foundation (once led by "MDBT" as she was fondly referred to) last year supported a group of international emerging scholars to attend the 2011 Feminist Theory Workshop and the year prior, the Josiah Charles Trent Memorial Foundation (which she started in memory of her first husband), did the same. She will be greatly missed—her legacy (and her penchant for bright colors) will live on.