

Director's Column

By Ranjana Khanna, Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies at Duke

Women's Studies at Duke University was launched in 1983, and this year we mark the twenty-fifth year of the program. Looking through the archives, it becomes clear that there has been a commitment to women's education at Duke since the nineteenth century, and that commitment was formally consolidated in 1930 with the establishment of the Women's College. Various events marked this commitment to women's education. The Duke Alumni register of 1939 announced a "Woman's Symposium" planned for 1940, with a section on women and leadership. Invited speakers included various distinguished intellectual, civic, and political women who did not necessarily represent feminist causes, but had accomplished a great deal in their areas.

In the early days, "Women's Studies," as a field nationally, was at times somewhat narrowly conceived, and the political drive to redress an imbalance dominated. Neglected women artists and writers, scholarly blindspots, rethinking philosophical assumptions, became the foci of attention in ways that sometimes over-exaggerated the sexual division of thought, even as it drew attention to neglect and bias. While one can certainly say that many barriers remain for women, one can also say that women's leadership has not always been advantageous to women as a group, nor has it necessarily highlighted gender issues beyond existing political models of success, or beyond static identity categories. While the leadership framework for women's education remains in some quarters, many began to acknowledge that issues of feminism and gender were not necessarily addressed by successful women.



Director Ranjana Khanna

When Women's Studies as a field transitioned to the intellectual pursuit of feminist theory, gender and sexuality studies, it came as a result of the training of new feminist scholars, many of whom had benefited from the existence of Women's Studies programs. It was also at the urging of the university that came to understand that Women's Studies needed to go beyond the leadership model to be taken seriously as an academic field with a broad research agenda. Without such an agenda, women's studies would not be seen as having the academic foci core to a university's mission.

This evolution of the Women's Studies agenda also broke new ground with its interdisciplinary attention to scholarly and political questions. It thus paved the way for newer approaches to intellectual life today, and began questioning how to understand the basic categories it had used in its own analysis, such as "woman" and "success." Some questions focused on issues of identity; others on how the category of gender functioned in economics, philosophy, history, literature, science, anthropology, religion, politics, medicine, and the arts in ways that shape the world we live in. It became increasingly evident too that the world could not be conceived

for Women's Studies in terms of the status of women "over here" and "over there," because the ground of understanding was so different that feminists had frequently and ironically adopted racist and indeed sexist stereotypes that spoke to class, race, and colonial privilege. It also gradually became clear that "woman" as a group and as a category of analysis needed to come under question. Our annual theme of transnational sexualities is one of the ways Women's Studies at Duke is addressing the complex and complicit genealogy of feminism.

Each moment of Women's Studies has demonstrated a level of commitment to education about gender distinctions in different ways. Today, it has become clearer in the US (perhaps belatedly compared to most places in the world), that prominent women figures promoted by the leadership model can often reinforce the status quo. Women's

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Studies today does not shy away from the study of difficulties and complicities, nor does it dwell endlessly on issues of identity, even as the intersection of various identities remains critical. It still performs an important task of maintaining a space for the study of gender, with both our undergraduates and graduate students telling us that they are uniquely able to follow a path of study with intellectual comradeship with other students. They are able today to be broad and far-reaching in terms of what gender scholarship means, and specialized and focused in their own interests.

When programs and "new" fields become established at universities, they sometimes run the risk of losing their critical edge, or losing that which made them controversial and challenging. They can often start resting on their laurels rather than changing with and against the times, while still being historically responsible. Today, we can see that the impact of Women's Studies on the disciplines has meant that the initial impetus (to include more women writers etc.) has "succeeded" in a way, even as the major feminist challenges of feminist theory, the argument with liberalism, and feminist political economy (rather than an identified group—women) continue to be neglected. Women's Studies today still pushes for a reorganization of knowledge, and an imaginative embrace of the sometimes unknown challenges of "gender." We take on the question of how gender relates—beyond identity, beyond the human species, and beyond the environment we currently know—to risk imagining what Women's Studies may be in the future to come.

The Year of Transnational Sexualities

The Women's Studies Program theme for 2008-2009 is "Transnational Sexualities," the first of four years of themed foci with postdoctoral scholars in residence. Throughout the year we will be exploring the way we understand sexuality in different regions. We will address the global flow of ideas around the topic of sexuality across regions, analyze differences among these regions, as well as forms of thinking in different periods and in varying pre-national, national, and post-national sites.

This year we welcome two postdoctoral scholars to our program, Elisabeth Engebretsen and Svati Shah. Each will teach an undergraduate course on this topic and as a core of our theme, Women's Studies faculty member and Director of the program in the study of sexualities, Ara Wilson, is teaching WST 360 **Interdisciplinary Debates: Transnational Sexualities**, a graduate-faculty seminar. Together they will coordinate a series of public events which will allow a full thematic integration of interests, as well as a vertical integration between the faculty, graduate and undergraduate student bodies. This integration corresponds to the university's strategic approach to interdisciplinarity.

Fall 2008 Courses

WST 49S	Gender and Sports - Donna Lisker	WST 150S.06	Gender, Sexuality and Politics in the Modern West - Marie Hicks
WST 90	Gender and Everyday Life - Tina M Campt	WST 160S	Feminism in Historical Context - Jonna Eagle
WST 130	Women and the Political Process - Nora Hanagan	WST 162S	Gender and Popular Culture - Jonna Eagle
WST 150S.01	Utopias - Kathy Rudy/Kathi Weeks	WST 163S	Interpreting Bodies - Tina Campt
WST 150S.02	Religion and the Moral Status of Animals - Kathy Rudy	WST 164S	Race, Gender and Sexuality - Svati Shah
WST 150S.03	Sex Work: Economies of Gender and Desire - Kinohi Nishikawa	WST 300	Politics and the Humanities - Robyn Wiegman/Michael Hardt
WST 150S.04	Aging, Sex and Popular Culture - Erin Gentry Lamb	WST 360	Interdisciplinary Debates: Transnational Sexualities - Ara Wilson



Svati Shah

My PhD was awarded in 2006, from Columbia University's Department of Sociomedical Sciences. The Department of Sociomedical Sciences is part of Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health; I completed a joint-curricular degree in this

department, between Anthropology and Public Health, with emphases on Medical Anthropology and Sexuality Studies. My current project is on sex work and migration among day wage workers in the city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). I'm also interested in laws and policies that impact migration and trafficking in India, as well as broader discourses about borders, citizenship, and nationalism.

This fall, I am teaching **Race, Gender and Sexuality** (WST 164), an interdisciplinary overview of the keytexts, topics, debates, and politics that inform the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

The transnational sexualities position at Duke is the first postdoctoral fellowship in sexuality studies that I am aware of; garnering resources for fellowships of this nature is more and more challenging, so the existence of this fellowship is unprecedented. Having known about the annual Feminist Theory Workshop, I was looking forward to the possibility of being part of Duke's Women's Studies program, given the reputation of its faculty.

I'll also benefit from the time and resources the fellowship here will offer me to complete my book project provisionally entitled "Seeing Sexual Commerce: Sex, Work, and Migration in the City of Mumbai." The book is based on my dissertation research, which explored the intersections of day wage work and sex work in Mumbai, India. The book will engage with questions of sex work, caste, migration, and urbanization in India, and aims to contribute to discourses on prostitution, citizenship, and state regulation of urban publics. I know I will benefit from the space to talk through my own work, and to hear about that of others.



Elisabeth Engebretsen

Transnational Sexualities is my middle name, figuratively speaking. Recently, I earned my PhD in Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics with a thesis titled

"Love in a big city: Sexuality, kinship, and citizenship amongst lala ('lesbian') women in Beijing." My undergraduate and postgraduate studies are in Chinese, Gender Studies, and Anthropology in my native Norway, China, the US, and the UK. I am interested in gender, sexuality, feminist theory and methodology within and beyond the discipline of anthropology. Culturally and geographically speaking I focus on China in a comparative perspective. In my postdoctoral work I am focusing on the theme of sexuality and citizenship in China in the context of globalization.

I have been drawn to working in the US for some time, as sexuality studies are more established and diverse

here, including in the field of anthropology, which I consider my 'home discipline.' The transnational sexualities program at Duke speaks very much to my work and interests, and has already proven highly inspiring and thought-provoking. I am already in conversation with a broad range of people — students and faculty who have similar interests and research experience in an interdisciplinary context — and I hope this will continue throughout the year. This is of course highly stimulating for my own thinking, in terms of developing my doctoral work further into a new research project, and to probe ideas and literature that I perhaps had less time and incentive to pursue previously.

During the year I plan to develop my doctoral thesis material into a book/monograph manuscript, book chapters, and journal articles, as well as attend more talks and conferences. I will be teaching an interdisciplinary course titled **Cultures of Gender and Sexuality** in the spring, which will mainly concern non-normative gender and sexual cultures, and I am looking forward to discussing literature and ideas with students here. I also hope to find a job on this side of the Atlantic by the time the fellowship concludes.

MOVING INTO YEAR THREE

By Ara Wilson, Director

In fall 2006, the program in the study of sexualities (SXL) found a new institutional home in Women's Studies, relaunched its certificate program and became a hub for interdisciplinary conversations about sexuality studies on campus. We began by revamping the curriculum with an introductory seminar (which has had waitlisted enrollments four semesters in a row) and earmarking a capstone course for the future.

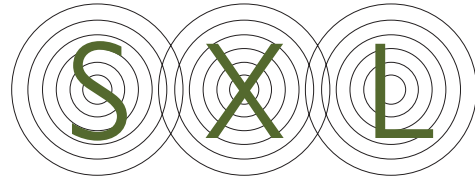
Each semester, we offer approximately four SXL courses and a number of cross-listed or approved courses from departments across campus. Examples of popular courses include **Primate Sexuality** in Biological Anthropology, Rebecca Bach's **Sex and Society** in Sociology in which students engage in service-learning projects, and, initiated this spring by Janie Long the Director of Duke's LGBT Center, a course considering LGBT issues in clinical psychology and counseling. In the first two years, the program grew from zero to nine students and awarded the first two certificates to two graduating seniors last spring (see below).

To cohere faculty and graduate student interest in the field, in the first year and a half, the SXL program also hosted an occasional reading, often meeting to discuss the works of guest speakers Judith Butler, Lisa Rofel, or Jasbir Puar and others. Duke's sexuality studies programming uses work on sexuality as a platform for

SXL GRADUATES

In April 2008, the program in the study of sexualities awarded certificates to two students in a graduate ceremony that was combined with the WS Graduation ceremony. **Ashlee Walker**, a psychology major at Duke, is moving to Chicago, where, she tells us, "I will be working at a health clinic in a middle and high school, and I will be helping out with the sexuality issues in the clinic and teaching sex ed in the classrooms." Ashlee hopes to pursue professional clinical studies and become a sex therapist.

Kimberly Burke, a Women's Studies major, has begun an MA program in Women's Studies at San Diego State. She writes, "so far I'm loving it ... I'm nervous but excited. SDSU is huge!" Kim plans to pursue a PhD in Women's Studies and to continue to focus on sexuality studies.



the program in the study of sexualities at duke

investigating a range of interdisciplinary questions and for exploring the conjunction of sexuality and other critical reflections in scholarship. This year we have chosen a particular focus on discussions grappling with the transnational scale of social phenomenon. SXL and Women's Studies are cosponsoring the Transnational Sexualities series: in addition to the WST 360 seminar, the public will be invited to a range of talks (see Fall Events).

For this academic year, SXL has its most ambitious slate of events so far. Before the first week of classes had ended, we held our first event in August with the journalist Linda Villarosa, who discussed her novel, *Passing for Black*, and her career as an out black lesbian writer at *Essence* and *The New York Times*. SXL has also introduced a new series with the Center for LGBT Life, called **Profiles in Sexuality Research**. This series features Duke faculty discussing their scholarship on sexuality with students. Fall features faculty members from Economics, English, and Psychology, introducing students to a range of ways that sexuality is an object of scholarly investigation — and ideally encouraging them to consider such research themselves.

Over the past half year, the program acquired a striking new logo and just this summer, rolled out its website at <http://sxl.aas.duke.edu/>. In keeping with the times, SXL created a Sexuality Studies Facebook group and more than 100 members worldwide joined in a few days. This venue broadcasts Duke's activities not only to students but to others in the field worldwide. Within days of its start, the Facebook group had posts from Vietnam and Europe exchanging information about events. In its third year, the Duke program in the study of sexualities has arrived both on campus and in virtual reality.

In spring 2008, the program in the study of sexualities at Duke continued to collaborate with the Minor in Sexuality Studies at UNC through funding from Women's Studies and a Robertson Collaborative Award. The key event was a packed workshop on Muslim women's sexuality that featured speakers at the Marketing Muslim Women conference as well as Duke graduate student Attiya Ahmad.

Fall Events

“Vision and Design: A Year of Bloomsbury”

is a campus-wide series of events celebrating the contributions of the Bloomsbury Group, a set of British artists, writers and intellectuals that included Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster and John Maynard Keynes.

Between September 2008 and April 2009 events will include panel discussions, theatrical programs, a film series, an online book chat and a related exhibition at Duke Library's Perkins Gallery. The inaugural event of this series was “**Bloomsbury, Gender, and Sexuality**,” a panel discussion organized by the Women Studies Program and the program in the study of sexualities and moderated by **Ara Wilson**. **Jeffrey Escoffier**, director of marketing for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and author of *John Maynard Keynes* (Chelsea: 1994) spoke on “Keynes the Immoralist: Probability, Economics and Homosexuality.” **Victoria Rosner**, Visiting Professor of English, Columbia University and Associate Professor and Associate Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of English at Texas A&M University, presented on Virginia Woolf's “Retreat: Writing, Renovating and Resisting at Monk's House”; and **Ranjana Khanna** discussed “Bloomsbury and Psychoanalysis.” [Check our website for the link to listen to the panel on iTunes !]

These events surround the Nasher Museum of Art's premier exhibition, “A Room of Their Own: The Bloomsbury Artists in American Collections” organized to coincide with the 100-year anniversary of Bloomsbury's beginnings.



9/9

Elisabeth Engebretsen “A Queer Sense of Belonging: Intimate Desires, Conjugal Ideals, and National Identity Amongst lalas (‘lesbians’) in Urban China” *Transnational Sexualities*

9/11

Sahar Amer Professor, Asian & International Studies UNC-CH, “Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women” *Transnational Sexualities*

9/16

“**Bloomsbury Panel on Gender and Sexuality**” (see left)

9/29

Svati Shah and Elisabeth Engebretsen “New Directions in the Anthropology of Sexuality” *Cultural Anthropology Colloquium*

10/2

Ann Stoler Professor, Anthropology and Historical Studies, The New School for Social Research, “Imperial Dispositions of Dis-Regard” *Transnational Sexualities*

10/3

Seth Sanders Professor, Economics and Public Policy Studies *Profiles in Sexuality Research*

10/15

Armistead Maupin discussing his book *Michael Tolliver Lives* *Durham County Library and the program in the study of sexualities*

10/22

Ranjana Khanna, Ara Wilson, Elisabeth Engebretsen and Svati Shah *Transnational Sexualities*

10/28

Fatimah Tuggar Assistant Professor, Art at Winston-Salem State University and Franklin Humanities Institute Fellow

10/30

Everett Zhang Assistant Professor, Anthropology SUNY-Buffalo, “Flows between the Clinic and the Media: Desiring Production in Beijing” *Transnational Sexualities*

10/31

Page Dubois Professor, of Classics and Comparative Literature: Greek; Feminist Theory; Psychoanalysis; Cultural Studies UC San Diego plenary address “Empire Without End” conference

11/4

Sharon Holland Associate Professor, English and African & African American Studies *Profiles in Sexuality Research*

11/12

Jocelyn Olcott Associate Professor in History *Pre-Print*

Please check our website for upcoming events.

Second Annual Feminist Theory Workshop

March 21-22, 2008

by Paul Lai

Over my spring break these last two years, I have traveled back down to Durham from my current home in Saint Paul, Minnesota to attend the Feminist Theory Workshop. I make the long journey south to participate in the vibrant discussions that always characterize Duke Women's Studies events and to catch up with old friends associated with the program. Held at Duke's Sanford Institute from March 21-22, 2008, the second annual Feminist Theory Workshop again included keynote lectures, catered dinner and snacks, seminar discussions, and a closing roundtable—all of which offered opportunities for sustained dialogue, in formal and informal settings, about feminist theory as a scholarly domain of inquiry.

The workshop began with a videotaped introduction by the director of the Women's Studies program, **Ranjana Khanna**, who unfortunately could not be present for the event as she was hospitalized with pregnancy complications. Khanna referenced speakers from the previous year's inaugural workshop and echoed their calls for considerations of feminist theory and its futures. As opening questions for the workshop, she asked what is at stake in calling certain work "theory." She wondered how much of theory is "philosophy," what is elided in calling theory philosophy, and what it means for feminist theory's center to shift across disciplines from literary studies to anthropology and political science. She concluded by inviting those in attendance to think of feminist theory as a site of explorations rather than as a particular kind of work within women's studies.

The workshop's keynote lectures offered different provocations for thinking about feminist theory as explorations. Faculty members at Duke introduced the speakers with thoughtful biographies and overviews of their critical oeuvres. In the first keynote lecture, "Underbelly: Notes on Feminism and Biology," **Elizabeth Wilson** (University of New South

Wales, now at Emory) argued that feminist studies has long held biological studies at arm's length—not without reason or political usefulness—and suggested a turn to research on how the biological substrate offers rich possibilities for feminist intervention and critique. Taking up Melanie Klein's work on infant's bodies and affect, Wilson asked how we might situate the stomach-mind in relation to abstract symbols. The question and answer period was particularly animated as participants pushed back against Wilson's characterization of the analytical split between nature and nurture in feminist thought as something that is not neutral but weighted in such a way as to preclude potentially useful and important feminist inquiry into the biological sciences.

In the second keynote lecture of the first day, **Ratna Kapur** (Centre for Feminist Legal Research, India) queried the unexamined assumptions of women's studies, discussed how specific social movements challenge the work of the field, warned scholars and activists about the faulty tools of liberal democratic reform, and offered postcolonial feminism as a way to emphasize self-critique within women's studies. Kapur's location outside of the United States also called to attention some of the insularity of feminist discourse in this country.

On the second day, **Toril Moi** (Duke University) revisited the work and figure of Simone de Beauvoir in her talk, "I am not a woman writer': About Women, Literature and Feminist Theory Today." Moi traced feminist theory's increasingly complicated accounts of the incoherence of "woman" while noting how women's studies scholars continue to structure research and

Feminist Theory Workshop: Hold the Date!

The Third Annual Feminist Theory Workshop will be held March 20- 21, 2009. Confirmed keynote speakers to date are:

- **Wendy Brown** - Charles and Louise Travers Professor, Department of Political Science, University of California at Berkeley
- **Drucilla Cornell** - Professor, Women's & Gender Studies at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- **Neferti Tadiar** - Professor of Women's Studies, Barnard College, Columbia University

We will once again be having a mixture of keynote speakers, a roundtable closing session, and speaker-led seminars around selected readings. The Workshop is free of charge. Check the Duke Women's Studies website for updates!

teaching around “women writers.” Diagnosing this juxtaposition as a problem, Moi set out to offer a more theoretically rigorous defense for focusing on the “woman writer,” offering de Beauvoir’s response, “I am not a woman writer,” as a diagnostic tool for understanding what is at stake in such enunciations.

Finally, **Joan Copjec** (SUNY Buffalo) took up a critique of post-revolution Iranian film, thinking through Lacanian psychoanalysis and affect theory in understanding the logics of hijab, modernity, and the subject. Copjec was especially interested in how Iranian cinema has adopted the technology of film despite the lure of the gaze (as antithetical to a system of modesty) as a component of Iranian modernity.

The workshop ended on the second day with a roundtable discussion led by **Anna Parkinson** (UNC-Chapel Hill), **Kathryn Stockton** (University of Utah), and **Ara Wilson** (Duke University). Each discussant laid out thoughts about the ideas raised by the keynote lectures and discussions she had heard over the course of the workshop.

The workshop also offered seminars that met once each day. Scholars from across the country led these seminars as small discussions organized around short readings provided in advance. The topics of the seminars ranged from metacritical discussions of the field of women’s studies to specific interventions offered by various theories. These seminars allowed for more exchanges between the participants about their own work in feminist theory.

Watching established as well as junior scholars ask each other questions and push against each other’s arguments was helpful for understanding what is at stake in feminist theory for different people. Yet the questions raised after keynote lectures often seemed to show a reluctance in taking up new explorations for feminist theory, especially ones that challenged established ideas about feminist thought. My experiences at the two feminist theory workshops lead me to wonder how much I am beholden to certain kinds of arguments at the loss of hearing about new interventions in feminist theory. I look forward to future workshops that continue to push for these new sites of exploration.

Paul Lai is an instructor of English at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota and a former graduate instructor and Certificate recipient in Women’s Studies at Duke.

WOMEN'S STUDIES GRADUATE SCHOLARS COLLOQUIUM

FALL 08 SCHEDULE

1 SEPTEMBER 22, 12:00-1:30 PM
LUNCH WITH VISITING SCHOLAR MIA LIINASON
Staging "gender" - Some reflections on the relationship between the nation/state, the academy and feminist scholarship in Sweden.

2 SEPTEMBER 29, 6-8 PM
PROFESSOR RANJANA KHANNA
Discussing her project, "Asylum: the Concept and the Practice."
Reading her article "Indignity," *Positions* 16:1 (Spring 2008)

3 OCTOBER 27, 6-8 PM
MICHELLE KOERNER, LITERATURE
Discussing her project, "The Uses of Literature for Feminist Theory."

4 NOVEMBER 17, 6-8 PM
ALVARO JARRIN, CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Discussing his project, "The Rise of the Cosmetic Nation: Beauty, Surgery and Inequality in Southeastern Brazil"

ALL EVENTS
RSVP: Melanie.Mitchell@duke.edu
PLACE: East Duke Parlors
READINGS: available on Blackboard
MORE INFO: Leah.Allen@duke.edu or Lorien.Olive@duke.edu

Lorien Olive and Leah Allen co-organizers

The Women’s Studies Graduate Scholars Colloquium is an interdisciplinary series dedicated to supporting the work of graduate students engaged in research on gender, sexuality, and feminist studies. The Colloquium community is a vibrant and energetic group of graduate students from across the university who share their work and engage in an on-going intellectual exchange with student scholars and faculty participants. This year, we got underway with an exciting flyer announcing our presentations this semester. And for the first time, we have invited graduate students from all academic programs at Duke to submit proposals to be considered for presentation at the January and February meetings of the Colloquium. Presenting work at the colloquium provides grad students with the opportunity to share their research with their peers, receive feedback, and discuss feminist scholarship across disciplinary boundaries.

In addition to the presentation of dissertation research, we ask participants to situate their work within the historical trajectory of women’s studies of their discipline. In doing so, we hope to foster grounded discussions of the unique constraints and possibilities of each discipline represented in the Colloquium, and to facilitate the translation of feminist scholarship from one disciplinary perspective to a multiplicity of others. We hope creating an open method for selecting presenters will result in the participation and attendance of feminist scholars from under-represented disciplines and programs. We welcome all students committed to advancing gender, sexuality, and feminist studies in the university, to come, share with their colleagues and make new connections.

Marketing Muslim Women An International Conference

On April 10 and 11 Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in collaboration with The Journal of Middle East Women's Studies (JMEWS) co-hosted an international gathering of over 90 scholars working on issues concerning Muslim women and the market. In May 2007, a small group had met at Duke and UNC-CH to present papers on the topic of marketing Muslim women and it was decided that this would be an excellent topic for a more formal conference. The call for papers drew over 40 abstracts of which only 20 could be accepted. Clearly, the topic is of current concern.

Participants from the US, Canada, Kuwait, Jordan, Japan, and England examined the cultural, political, and economic forces that manufacture Muslim women's images for consumption and how women both produce and consume these images. The conference had three goals:

1. to provide a forum for exploring how gender is constructed and contested in Islamic tradition and how certain images circulate both within and beyond Muslim cultures;
2. to bring Islamic Studies scholars into conversation with those in other disciplines whose work may not focus on Islam or the Muslim world but who share interests in gender, culture, and power; and
3. to provide many constituencies opportunities for different levels and styles of engagement with these issues.

The conference featured four keynote speakers, **Tayyiba Taylor**, **Nawal El Saadawi**, **Shireen Ebadi** and **Minoo Moallem**. Taylor is the founder and editor of *Azizah* magazine, the first magazine designed for American Muslimahs. She gave a brief history of the magazine, explaining the importance of showing another face for

Muslim women who are too often represented in the US as dour and drab. Her gallery of images of brightly dressed smiling women drew some criticism for producing a derivative discourse. Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian writer and activist, argued that women and men of all faiths are in the market. She was particularly concerned with the recent trend of "Books on Islam by Muslim feminists that have become profitable ... especially with their covers displaying veiled women." Complaining that some of her own books have such covers despite her best efforts to resist the publishers' demands, she added the "free market has its visible and invisible powers that can lead you to stop writing altogether." She called for linking women's issues to global and national problems: "Religious fundamentalism and neocolonialism are two faces of the same coin." Her attack on the veil as particularly dangerous at a time when the world is at war over religion brought strong reactions from the audience. Ebadi, 2003 Nobel Peace laureate, spoke about the coming of Ayatollah Khomeini to Iran and her utter disbelief when she read the new laws that discriminated so strongly against women. She lost her job as a judge and became a court clerk. Insisting that there is no room for outside intervention in the affairs of Iran today, she called upon her audience (who at that point made up about a third of those in attendance) to fight for their rights through Islam. There was some concern afterwards at the very negative picture she had drawn and her no more than passing reference to the women's movement. Moallem's "Scopic Economy and the Politics of Mediation" addressed the commodification of Muslim women's labor and suffering through an analysis of the production and marketing of Persian carpets. Her talk elicited lively debate about the politics surrounding the representation of Muslim women today.

There were six panels and three workshops. The workshops, on fashion, commodities and history gave participants the opportunity to meet twice in discussion groups around topics of mutual interest. They also provided a breathing space where keynotes and papers could be informally discussed.

Conference organizers **Ellen McLarney** and **miriam cooke** (Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Duke University) and **Banu Gokariksel** were delighted with the suggestions that the conversation not stop. There will be a roundtable at MESA 2008 and possibly a follow-up conference in a Muslim-majority conference.

miriam cooke is Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Education Director, Duke Islamic Studies Center, and affiliated faculty of Women's Studies. Co-sponsorship of this conference was made possible by the Women's Studies Research Fund.



Omid Safi

Representing the Unpresentable

Negar Mottahedeh, Assistant Professor in Literature and Women's Studies, has won the Latifeh Yarshater Award for her first book, *Representing the Unpresentable. Historical Images of National Reform from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Syracuse University Press 2007).

The award was instituted by the Persian Heritage Foundation to honor the memory of Latifeh Yarshater and her lifelong dedication to the improvement of Iranian women's human rights. The purpose of the award is to encourage scholarship in Iranian Studies focused on the condition of women in Persian speaking societies and to promote women's rights in these societies. The award is granted biennially to a work of superior scholarship or literary value published within two years prior to the award.

Book Review by Madhumita Lahiri

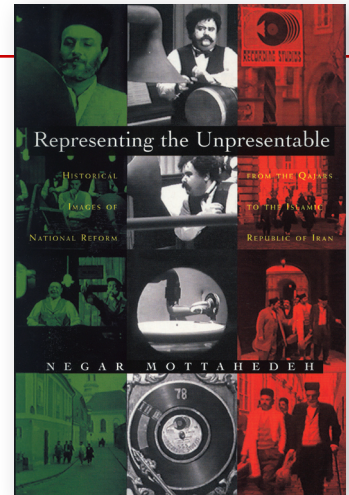
Representing the Unpresentable: Historical Images of National Reform from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic of Iran, demonstrates the ways in which techniques of the visible and the visual were used in the constitution of the Iranian nation. Negar Mottahedeh's text, which is as much at home in Iranian studies as in women's studies or film studies, is emphatically antidisciplinary, embracing both the complexity of her objects and the complexity of the argument she develops in accounting for Iranian modernity's particular form.

Mottahedeh's chronology begins with the religious movement called Babism, established in 1844 by the Bab, which was brutally persecuted by the Shi'ite clergy and the Qajar monarchy but left an indelible imprint upon the Iranian nation. This faith established a new order of time, space, and language which replaced earlier Arab referents with emphatically Persian ones. Moreover, the messianism inherent in Babism "produced the now-time of Iran's modernity as Judgment Day, a day of religious revolution and social reform, a day coincident with the messianic cessation of time."

The movement, moreover, is famously associated with the unveiling of the Babi woman leader Qurrat al-'Ayn Tahirih which accompanied her assumption of power within the movement, and through which "the image of 'the Babi' became connected to a sartoriality that connoted difference, indeed foreignness." The Babi became, in late nineteenth to early twentieth century Iran, a derogatory shorthand for the unwelcome aspects of European modernity. It is the messianic and emphatically Persian elements of this religion, and its accompanied scandal of unveiled Iranian womanhood, which constitutes the figure of "the Babi," and "it was in fact against 'the Babi,' an image of the self as the embodiment of the nation's 'object other,' that modern Iran could emerge as homogenous and whole."

Mottahedeh introduces us to the movement and the historical impact it produced in popular discursive constructions. In particular she focuses upon the ways in which Babism has posed a challenge for traditional disciplinary approaches, combining as it does a multi-leveled archive and particular demands on belief, experience, and temporality. She engages the narratives of Qurrat al-'Ayn Tahirih's unveiling and the ways in which they have been deployed in nationalist discourse and academic scholarship. Mottahedeh uses in particular the theories of Walter Benjamin to analyse the ways in which history and the nation are experienced through images and visual forms.

The book focuses on three different modes of "representing the unpresentable": the ta'ziyeh, the photograph, and the cinema. The ta'ziyeh, a type of Shi'ite passion play performed during Muharram, operates as "not only a nationalistic site for identification and disidentification, but also as an imaginary stage on which the culture of the other is donned and shed." The commemorative aspect of the ta'ziyeh, combined with its address to the audience as both part of the performed events and spectators to it, operate towards a reconfiguration of time and space which continues, most notably, in the celebrated modalities of post-revolution Iranian cinema. Photographic technology, in contrast, operates by trafficking between the forbidden (haram) and the public (zahr): the nineteenth century photographs of the Qajar monarch Naser al-Din Shah, for instance, bring the intimate spaces of the harem into those of the public. The process of "representing the unpresentable," in both its spatial and temporal dimensions, is traced by Mottahedeh in Iranian post-revolutionary cinema, and it is this paradoxical yet constitutive process which is foundational to the modern Iranian nation.



Faculty Notes

Tina M Camp, Associate Professor Women's Studies and History just returned from a very productive year on leave as the William S. Vaughn Fellow at the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities at Vanderbilt University, where she made significant progress on her monograph "Image Matters: Archive, Photography and the African Diaspora." She'll be presenting part of the manuscript as the keynote for a conference called "Rediscovering the Domestic: Interdisciplinary Reflections on Contemporary Global Cultures," Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK. Another essay from the book will appear this spring in an upcoming issue of *Social Text*. This year, Camp is also a faculty fellow in the three-year research project at the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference at Columbia University. Focusing on gender, sexuality, race, and archival practices, "Engendering The Archives" explores how categories of difference and differential power relations determine what societies remember and what they forget. Additionally, Camp co-edited two journal special issues that will publish essays from two conferences she organized. "Essays from the Diasporic Hegemonies Project" will appear this fall in a special issue of *Feminist Review* (co-edited w/Deborah Thomas), and essays from the Reconstructing Womanhood Conference will appear in a spring issue of *small axe* (co-edited w/Saidiya Hartman).

Ranjana Khanna, Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies and Professor, English, The Literature Program, and Women's Studies continues to direct the Women's Studies Program. She has upcoming speaking engagements at USC, UC Davis, Brown, SUNY, and the University of Southampton in the UK. She is currently at work on three articles. One employs a Marxist-psychoanalytic-feminist perspective to explore the notion of disposability through psychoanalytic categories of waste for the feminist journal *differences*. Another assesses psychoanalysis from 1900-1966 for the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*. The third is about Isaac Julien's film, *Paradise Omeros* for the catalogue of the Goetz Collection. She continues to work on her two book projects: "Asylum: The Concept and the Practice" and "Technologies of Unbelonging." 2008 has been a big year for her with the publication of her most recent book *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation 1830 to the Present*; her promotion to full professor; and the arrival of a baby boy called Nachiketa.

Kathy Rudy, Associate Professor, continues working in the field of feminist theory, animals, and ethics. She has written a review of two new feminist books on animals for *Women's Review of Books* which will come out this fall, and continues work on her book, "The Ethics of Earthlings." Rudy taught a course this summer on local food called **What's for Dinner: Culture and Agriculture** in Duke's Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program highlighted by a "local-only" dinner attended by local farmers and a caterer/chef who works exclusively with local and organic foods. This fall she is co-teaching a new course with Professor Kathi Weeks on the question of **Utopias**, and will continue to be involved in The New Ecofeminism Series which began two years ago.

Kathi Weeks, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies is looking forward to her year as a faculty fellow in the 2008-09 Franklin Humanities Institute Seminar on **Alternative Political Imaginaries**. She is also excited about co-teaching a course on

Utopias with Kathy Rudy this fall. The class explores utopian, dystopian, and anti-utopian themes from samples of utopian fiction, social and political theory, popular culture, and film. It pays special attention to the ways that these forms can help us to think both critically and imaginatively about the organization of gender. She continues to enjoy serving as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Women's Studies Program.

Robyn Wiegman, Professor, Women's Studies and Literature spent the summer as a visiting faculty fellow at the University of Washington in Seattle, where she did volunteer work for the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network, painted a friend's house, and worked on various research projects, including the soon to be completed "Object Lessons." This fall, she will keynote at the International Feminist Politics Workshop in Aberdeen, Scotland and give a seminar and lecture at the Gender Institute at the London School of Economics. She is also co-convening with Michael Hardt, the 2008-09 Franklin Humanities seminar on **Alternative Political Imaginaries** (see page 14), and team teaching a graduate seminar on **Politics and the Humanities**.

Ara Wilson, Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Cultural Anthropology and Director of the program in the study of sexualities has several articles forthcoming on established and new research directions. Two forthcoming articles that draw on her long-term ethnography in Bangkok are "The Sacred Geography of Bangkok's Markets" (forthcoming *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*) and "Plural Economies and Gendered Resistance in Bangkok" in a new volume edited by Kum-Kum Bhavnani et al, *On the Edges of Development* (Zed Press). Another essay, "Medical Tourism in Bangkok" is forthcoming in *Asian Biotech* (ed. Aihwa Ong and Nancy Chen, Duke U Press), represents early work on a new project on international travel for medical care and cosmetic surgery. She is delighted to be teaching the WST 360 seminar on **Transnational Sexualities**, which dovetails with her current book project, "Sexual Latitudes."

We are delighted to announce that **Donna Lisker**, PhD and WST Adjunct Faculty is now Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education at Duke. Her responsibilities are to work with Dean Nowicki to better integrate all aspects of the undergraduate experience: academic, residential, social and cocurricular. Donna's specific projects include the Faculty-in-Residence program and the Baldwin Scholars among many others. **Ada Gregory** replaced Donna as Director of The Women's Center after working in the criminal justice and violence prevention field for more than fifteen years as an officer with the Durham Police Department, an administrator for the Violence Against Women Act in North Carolina, and as an executive director for a local non-profit serving victims of violence.

This year's recipients of our Women's Studies Dissertation fellowships are **Fiona Barnett**, the Program in Literature, "Infectious Images: Contagion in Film, Gender and Theory" and **Alvaro Jarrin**, Cultural Anthropology, "Cosmetic Citizenship: Beauty, Surgery and Inequality in Southeastern Brazil." (Read more about Alvaro's work on page 12.)

An in-depth look at Exchange of Chains

The ways in which the “transition” in economic, political, and social systems has impacted women in Eastern and Central Europe is the topic of the course WST 150 **Exchange of Chains**. Many of the impacts on women have stemmed from changing discourses from an emphasis on socialist solidarity and state paternalism towards a more neoliberal emphasis on individualism and reductions in the welfare state, as well as a renewed focus on nationalist goals as nation-building takes place. In addition, in the strive to join the European Union there have been continued orientalist attitudes in the process, as the West is used as a preferred model for creating a market economy and a democratic government, while the East is viewed as underdeveloped and is exoticised. Exchange of Chains explored how these “transitions” have simultaneously impacted gender relations, noting that gender relations themselves are in a period of transition. Will this entail greater equality and opportunities for women? Will patriarchal notions that were often suppressed under the socialist rhetoric of gender equality now intensify and will new forms of sexism emerge?

Our semester started by building on feminist theory, Marxist frameworks, and postcolonial thought to use in analyzing women's status in the economic, political, and social spheres. Within the economic realm, “transition” has emphasized neoliberal market ideals of deregulation and privatization. Throughout the semester, students were able to make use of the concepts of neoliberal individualism and nationalism and often discussed new policies in Eastern and Central Europe that were based on Western models. Many of these policies upheld neoliberal individualism by emphasizing the role of the family in providing for itself rather than relying on the state to make provisions. At the same time, many countries in Eastern and Central Europe also have based their nation-building on concepts of nationalism that focus on women's roles as the reproducers of the nation both through child birth and childcare while men are called on to provide military and income-earning activities. Students often were able to point out the ways in which policies that implicitly (or explicitly) rely on individualism and nationalism often disadvantage women. Students

noticed that women could use these policies and the underlying discourses of individualism and nationalism to shape new concepts of the policies and new understandings of what it means to be a “woman” in Eastern and Central Europe.

Students came away from the class with a new understanding of concepts of individualism, nationalism, and orientalism, and the ways in which these specific discourses have shaped women's experiences in Eastern and Central Europe since the “fall of the wall.” Students who came to the class with absolutely no understanding of these concepts now use these theoretical concepts of individualism, nationalism, and orientalism when they read or view news clips about Eastern and Central European women or even when they watch television shows or movies that depict women in Eastern and Central Europe. I look forward to teaching Exchange of Chains in the spring of 2009.

Genna Miller, Visiting Instructor in Women's Studies. This course is generously supported by the Peggy Jones Thesis Endowment.

JOINING THE FOLD

Women's Studies is pleased to welcome Melanie Mitchell as our Program Coordinator. A 1974 graduate of Finch College in New York City, Melanie has been a writer, editor, video producer, media consultant, and K-12 classroom teacher. Before working with the Office for Institutional Equity on special assignment the past six months, Melanie spent over a decade at the Kenan Institute for Ethics where she was responsible for organizational development, communications, and a wide range of programming including conferences, workshops, and lectures.



In addition to creating *Middle School Visions*, a character development and civic engagement curriculum for adolescents, Melanie is a writer of creative non-fiction and an avid thrift-store art enthusiast. Melanie and her husband Scott live in Durham and have nineteen-year old twins, Tom at Denison University and Julie at Clark University, who are now in their sophomore year. Please stop by to meet Melanie or feel free to contact her at melanie.mitchell@duke.edu.

These are selected reports from grateful recipients of Women's Studies Awards

*Alvaro Jarrin graduate student Cultural Anthropology,
Women's Studies Dissertation Fellowship*

In February of 2007, I was participating in one of the blocos de rua, the traditional street parties that claim the city during the yearly Carnival celebrations in Rio de Janeiro. I was particularly struck by a recurrent costume where men would try to dress up as the ugliest women they could muster, and in their presence people would exclaim, "Aren't you hot!" amidst a burst of laughter. The way these men performed "ugliness" was to cross-dress as fat, matronly women with decaying teeth, outdated hairdos, unibrows and unfashionable outfits. It was also common for these men to wear blackface and fake afros, borrowing from the globalized imagery associated with comedic minstrel shows. As Diane Nelson argues in *A Finger in the Wound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), examining why something is humorous can reveal the anxieties that structure the body politic, because a joke is meant to unconsciously reassure the identities of those who express the joke in detriment of those whom the joke is about.

The joke was on whom, in the case of the outfit representing "ugliness"? The outfit is funny because rather than avoiding being unattractive, the costume attempts to heighten aesthetically undesirable qualities – embodying a gendered, raced and classed caricature that links ugliness to the very presence of undesirable bodies at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The Carnival costume depicting 'ugliness' personifies a subtle form of discrimination that systematically denies opportunities to poor, racially mixed men and women, by marking them as having an "unsuitable" appearance for any jobs that could

provide them with upward mobility. My working class female interviewees would argue that appearance was everything nowadays and that one's beauty was unfortunately a clear marker of one's social origin. They did not have the money or free time, they argued, to frequent a gym and "purchase beauty" through cosmetic treatments like wealthy



women did, and the strain of years of physical work left its mark on their bodies, wearing them down and leaving them acabadadas or "finished/spent." Beauty was a privilege of the rich, in their opinion, while it was something they had to struggle to modestly attain.

In this social hierarchy based on beauty, where economic situation or social background is assumed to be marked on the body and made visible to others, everyone flees from the stigma of ugliness and the social devaluation associated with it. The consequence is a huge boom in the beauty industry, particularly in plastic surgery, as women and increasingly men as well from all social backgrounds attempt to produce the "good appearance" that, according to my interviewees, is crucial for job interviews, for romantic relationships and even for making friends. Plastic surgery is not perceived as unnatural, but rather as an indispensable improvement of the self, where it would become nearly irresponsible not to submit to certain "corrections" over the course of time. Beauty is associated with success to such a large extent that mothers bring their children in for surgeries that they told me would give their child more opportunities later in life – surgeries that the parents themselves were likely to have had already at a younger age. A thinner nose and less prominent ears are understood not as de-racializing the patient but as bringing "harmony" to the face as a whole. Today, plastic surgery has become a regular complement to the haphazard work of genetics, allowing people to make "improvements" at will. My interviewees would frequently remark, "If I can improve myself, why not?"

The discourse on improvement implies a conception of the body as plastic and malleable, able to remake itself at will, almost blaming the 'ugly' for their inability to fix their flaws. The "democratization" of plastic surgery, however, is redefining what should be considered beautiful in the first place, as working class women reclaim the more buxom ideal of the Carnival mulatta for themselves. Perhaps the Carnival costume portraying "ugliness" reveals a certain anxiety that the bodily markers which traditionally reified social difference are becoming undone over time, and attempts to create a reassuring caricature that is easy to mock. In the end, however, the joke is on everyone, as the politics of beauty creates a society where no one is exempt from the disciplining gaze of power on their bodily imperfections.

*Ka Man Calvin Hui graduate student,
Literature & Women's Studies Certificate*



During my visit to Hong Kong, China, in July and August, I participated in a conference called “Literary Travel, World Imaginary” organised by the Hong Kong Book Fair. The keynote speaker, Professor David Der-Wei Wang, from the Department of East Asian Studies at Harvard University, presented to the audience the critical concept of Sinophone (Chinese cultural productions, including literature, formulated outside mainland China) and introduced several important Sinophone writers from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and the U.S. The emerging critical concept of Sinophone in the field of Chinese Studies allowed me to see the construction of Chinese (post-) modernity in a completely different way. Rather than using ethnicity as a figure to track Chinese diasporic experience in various parts of the world, it is then possible to use language, hence Sinophone, as a trope to animate the transnational movement of capital,

commodities, and human beings. In this book fair, I also joined a seminar called “International Exchange Programme for Sinophone Writers.” Moreover, I used the summer grant to do archival work in the University of Hong Kong Library, as well as the Hong Kong Film Archive. I did research on two important film-makers and documentary-makers in contemporary China, namely, Jia Zhangke and Li Yang. All these works engaged in current intellectual conversations in transnational feminist and sexuality studies, and pursued the very important questions of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class formations in the context of post-socialist China (1978 – present) and further augmented my theoretical trainings in Women’s Studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry.

Made possible by the Knapp Fund

Gender & Race Award:

Danielle Terrazas Williams graduate student History

From June 9th-August 5th, I conducted archival research in Mexico with a Gender and Race Award from Women’s Studies. These funds helped to subsidize an invaluable research trip that might not have taken place otherwise. The purpose of this trip was to ascertain the viability of expanding the domain of my dissertation project entitled, “Few But Not So Far Between: Free Black Women of Means in Colonial Veracruz.”

I began my work at the library of Yanga in Yanga, Veracruz. The town of Yanga is of particular interest as it was the first free town of the Americas and founded by an African maroon in 1609. The head librarian assisted me in locating works that cannot be located in US libraries.

At the Instituto de Investigaciones Historico-Sociales (IIHS), a center affiliated with the Universidad Veracruzana (UV) in Xalapa, the director granted me access to the center’s special collections as well as access to the UV’s vast collection of secondary materials housed in the central library, USBI. Although my main goal was to survey primary sources at the IIHS and USBI, the secondary materials I located were equally important

considering that many publications in Mexico have smaller “runs” and never make it to US libraries.

During the course of locating and photocopying the primary documents I already had citations on, I also unexpectedly found numerous other documents concerning the lives of Black women in Xalapa and its environs during the colonial era. These new documents demonstrate promise for the expansion of my project, particularly with regards to the micro-historical aspect of my dissertation project.

Additionally, the IIHS also housed archival indexes for the cities of Orizaba and Cordoba, two of the cities I will expand to for my year of dissertation research. Although I had not anticipated working with these guides on this trip, these finds allowed me to do some preliminary work in areas that I will continue to work on when I return to Mexico in the fall.

Overall, this trip was incredibly instructive. Although finding documents was a key concern, the experience I gained regarding protocol and bureaucratic procedures at local archives and the professional relationships I established with archivists in Xalapa as well as the historians at the IIHS were even more important than the “document-hunt.”

*Andrea Dinamarco Women's Studies Minor
Baldwin Scholar, 2008 Duke Law School*



During Spring Break 2008, I, along with three sophomores, attended the Women as Global Leaders conference (March 10-12, 2008) hosted by Zayed University located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. In previous years, student leaders from more than 180 countries have come together to partake in workshops, roundtable discussions, and panel presentations led by scholars and non-profit professionals from

the most prestigious institutions in the world, including the Kennedy School at Harvard, Doctors without Borders, UNICEF, and the United Nations. This year's theme was "Learning Leadership" and featured keynote speakers Jane Fonda and Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York.

Julia Chapman, Clare Murray, Brittany Hesbrook, and I offered an organized panel presentation entitled "A Cross-Cultural Examination of Women as Political Leaders: Brazil, United States, and United Arab Emirates." The panel was divided into three papers united by the common theme, barriers to women in politics. The first paper was my senior honors thesis submitted for distinction in the International Comparative Studies department. Julia, a Biomedical Engineering major; Clare, an Art History major; and Brittany, a Political Science major organized the second paper, which explored the campaign process of Carol Moseley-Braun and Hilary Clinton in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. A third paper, "UAE: The Preclusion of Women in Government and Family

Perceptions," was written by Fatema Saleh Al Marzooqi, a Zayed University student and friend who attended the conference with me in March 2006. Together, the three research projects shed light on barriers associated with high-profile positions that transcend the cultural practices of a particular political system.

My research paper, "Marta Suplicy and Benedita da Silva: Paths to Political Power and Electoral Success in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro" explores the different obstacles women in politics face when seeking elected office in Brazil by comparing two contemporary women who have created long-lasting, successful political careers. Benedita da Silva, an Afro-Brazilian, was born to extreme poverty and hardship in a favela in Rio. Marta Teresa Smith de Vasconcellos Suplicy, on the other hand, is a white-Brazilian born and married into two of the richest and most influential families in São Paulo. Suplicy earned a Master's degree in psychology from Stanford University and hosted a popular morning television program that offered sex advice to callers. Benedita's devout evangelist beliefs contrast greatly to Marta's liberalist social agenda. In spite of radical differences, both women have overcome gender barriers to win the support of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), led by Brazil's current President, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. Research for this project is primarily based on various personal interviews with politicians and other key players in the political system, data collected from the Department of Politics for Women in Brazil, and academic literature on women in politics.

By studying the exception, it is possible to gain insight as to 'how' women forge successful careers when common wisdom suggests winning is impossible.

Made possible by the Judy Woodruff Fund

Alternative Political Imaginaries

*Grant Samuelson, Associate Director Franklin Humanities Institute**

Alternative Political Imaginaries co-convened by Professor of Women's Studies Robyn Wiegman and Professor of Literature Michael Hardt, is Duke's Franklin Humanities Institute tenth Annual Seminar. This 2008-09 FHI Seminar will explore the ways in which both people and things—ideas, documents, discourses, disciplines, theories, movements—turn toward and are transformed by their relation to the question of politics and to the political as a domain of social acts and ideals.

According to FHI director Srinivas Aravamudan: "The Annual Seminar is our crown jewel, in which select groups of scholars explore a broadly defined theme of mutual significance. This year, the group will address a set of crucial structural conditions of the humanities today: why and how are the humanities politicized? When does the presence of politics in the humanities lead to cynicism and melancholy and when do alternative political imaginaries become consequential for the humanities?"

More selected reports from grateful recipients of Women's Studies Awards

Song Kim undergraduate Women's Studies/Biology

Thanks to the funding awarded by Women's Studies program. I had the fortune to spend a month at the Madras Christian Council of Social Services in Chennai (MCCSS), India to gauge my interest in the trafficking of sex workers that is plaguing women in Southeast Asia.

During my month-long placement at MCCSS, I was exposed to hands-on non-profit/social work for underprivileged women of all ages. My work at the Christian NGO was twofold – rehabilitation of young rescued victims and education of local citizens on trafficking and related issues. I joined MCCSS's "Prevention of Trafficking in Women and Children" team, designing and partaking in anti-trafficking campaigns. Our group of counselors and social workers, visited over twenty secondary schools, universities, and community halls during the month of July alone to promote awareness about exploitation of women. I launched a bimonthly newsletter titled "Trafficking in Greater Chennai and Beyond" to highlight latest developments as well as setbacks in the efforts of those working to eradicate sex trafficking. As 90% of public reports are published in English, I was able to utilize my journalism background to produce an online newsletter geared towards youth receiving education in an English medium. Though I worked primarily with the MCCSS, on weekends I traveled with another team of "STI/HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control" social workers to conduct fieldwork in areas documented to be at high risk for STDs. Through one-on-one interactions with poor women, I gained an insight into the inextricable link between poverty and the trade of sex workers.



Another focus of my "work" was to provide a series of after-care services for rescued victims of sex trafficking, most of which included socializing with residents of the drop-in shelter. In spite of the language barrier, the girls were not too shy to offer their friendship as they pined for personal affection and protection denied by their families. Collaborating with an intern from SUNY New Paltz, also a women's studies major, I completed preliminary work on "romance vs. infatuation" workshops. Had my stay been longer, I would have been able to conduct them myself, not to mention to spend more time with a group of energetic teenage girls.

Even though my internship at MCCSS was brief, it was an experience so stimulating that it has significantly influenced the shape of my long-term goals. Now I am going back to Duke with a reaffirmed commitment to women's empowerment, and thus greater enthusiasm for the many wonderful courses and opportunities availed by Women's Studies.

Made possible by the Knapp Fund

The FHI's Annual Seminar is a thematic, multidisciplinary program that is co-convened by a team of Duke Faculty members, includes up to eight Duke Faculty Fellows in the Humanities and Social Sciences, faculty fellows from Duke's professional schools and from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke graduate fellows, and two external postdoctoral fellows.

From Women's Studies the 2008-09 FHI Seminar Fellows include co-convenor **Robyn Wiegman**, Professor of Women's Studies & Literature; **Kathi Weeks**, Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Director of Graduate Studies; **Karla Holloway**, James B. Duke Professor of English & Professor of Law and WS Associated Faculty; Postdoctoral Fellow, **Ceren Özselçuk**, PhD, Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst who will teach WST 150S.05 **Feminist Political Economy** in spring 2009; and Graduate Fellow **Kadji Amin**, Romance Studies and Women's Studies Certificate scholar.

*Inspired by John Hope Franklin, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of History, the *John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University* enables serious humanistic inquiry and promotes a heightened awareness of the centrality of the humanities to the quality of human life, social interaction, and scholarship in all fields. Through an array of innovative programs, with an emphasis on facilitating interdisciplinary cross-fertilization examining issues of social equity, race, and ethnicity, FHI seeks to encourage the conversations, partnerships, and collaborations that are continually stimulating creative and fresh humanistic research, writing, and teaching at Duke.

Environmentally Conscious

Perhaps you'll notice two changes to our newsletter this issue: first, we've made the switch to 100% post consumer waste (PCW) paper. This means that our paper stock is made entirely from recycled product. Before, we were using 30% PCW but have decided to go 100%, even though our paper will no longer have that crisp white look. Second, no more pledge envelopes. Though we still would love to have your contributions to the program we want to eliminate the extra paper. While those envelopes were convenient, we've opted for asking you to visit our website (see web address at right) or call 919-684-3655 and we'd be happy to help you help us!

Whether inside the classroom, within the office or out in the community, Women's Studies is doing its part to be environmentally responsible.

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Or you can send your check to Duke University, Alumni and Development Records, Box 90581, Durham, NC 27708. On memo line please indicate **Tech code NWS, Fund code 399-2735**. We thank you for thinking of us!

Jennifer Fitzgerald (1975-2007)

Almost a year ago the Women's Studies Program was saddened by the untimely death of Jennifer Fitzgerald (PhD in Composition with a Women's Studies Certificate from Duke University) who passed away unexpectedly on December 23, 2007, following an extended battle with cancer.

An accomplished composer and pianist, as well as co-founder and director of pulsoptional (a new music ensemble and composers' collective), it was fitting that in September, Women's Studies co-sponsored a memorial concert featuring Fitzgerald's work given by pulsoptional to celebrate Jen's life and accomplishments.

WOMEN'S STUDIES

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