

## Director's Column

By Robyn Wiegman, Margaret Taylor Smith  
Director of Women's Studies at Duke

I have never been a procrastinator. Until now. Or perhaps I should give myself a break and say that I have become a procrastinator in this instance, on the occasion of my final newsletter column as the Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies. **Something about endings—or more precisely, about completions—invites us to step back to cultivate both the pleasure of the moment and everything we have done to arrive here.** But I find myself wanting to think differently about academic work and institution building, and to speak not about the past but about the ongoing work of the present and what its urgencies require us to do. **So let me reflect here on what I still want, after nearly six years of program leadership, for Women's Studies, for Duke, for our students, and for all of you who have learned from Women's Studies both how and why gender, race, and sexuality matter.**

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## My Daughter, a Women's Studies Major

By Corinne Kahn, mother of Amy Levenberg '07

I was in high school, living in New York City at a time when virtually every weekend there was some sort of protest march near Central Park. On one particular day, I went to a Women's Rights march and all of a sudden Betty Friedan handed me a banner, and we, along with Gloria Steinem and hundreds of women, marched behind it, shouting, "Out of the kitchen and into the streets!" A couple of years later when I attended college, there were no Women's or Gender Studies programs at my university, though they were beginning to show up at a few others. Our academic choices were so limited that I chose engineering and was the only woman in my classes. I did not remain in engineering, however, and instead majored in education and sought my MRS, thereby fulfilling society's expectations of young women at the time. I later pursued my law and MBA degrees and have been practicing law ever since.

Fast forward thirty years as my own daughter goes to college to pursue my dream of becoming an engineer. However, after six months, it was clear that something big was missing from Amy's academic life. As a Duke freshman learning formulas and working in labs, Amy was missing a large part of her psyche.

My daughter has always been interested in gender and racial equality. Dinner time discussions were always filled with Amy describing and fighting against any sort of prejudice. In elementary school, when someone would make a racist or sexist comment or joke, Amy was always the first to speak up and remind that person of the errors of such thoughts and judgments. Even in middle school, when kids pair up with other kids just like them and form groups based on their similarities, excluding those who are different, Amy formed clubs and friendships that would foster diversity and conversation, often revealing how those differences are really similarities if viewed closely.

I always hoped that Amy would cure some loathsome disease. Imagine my shock when she announced during her freshman year that she was switching to the Women's Studies major. Yet, what a different person Amy became when she studied something about which she was passionate! Amy found happiness and fulfillment with the Women's Studies major. And in a new light it seems maybe she will cure a loathsome disease after all: that of prejudice and inequality.

One of my proudest moments was when Amy was asked to be a teaching assistant for the Women's Studies program in her senior year. I thank the Duke faculty for creating a challenging and interesting curriculum. Amy's face lights up when she quotes passages from assigned texts or proudly reads the assignments she has written—an effect chemistry experiments never produced for her!

*Corinne Kahn works part time as a lawyer and is, according to Amy Levenberg, "the best mom in the world."*

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## Teaching the Young About Aging

“ In a curriculum that so vigorously investigates issues of race, class, gender and sexuality, it is puzzling that Women's Studies as a field has not paid more attention to age as a marker of social difference, especially when “old” is a subject position we will all someday occupy (if we are so lucky!). What lies behind the “social amnesia” about aging? ”

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## Director's Column

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Most simply and perhaps most obviously, I want the issues of gender, sexuality, and race to matter more, much more. I want them to matter not only in the context of social diversity, where we must cultivate a more inclusive campus culture, including a more diverse student body and faculty. I want these issues to matter more intellectually and academically, which means creating a learning environment in which the study of "difference," to use the language of contemporary feminist theory, is indispensable to our very understanding of educational excellence. Currently Duke has a new strategic plan called "Making a Difference," which offers us the opportunity to acknowledge the fields that have given depth and complexity to what difference, as a rubric for thinking about social worlds both past and present, might mean. Women's Studies. African American Studies. Latino Studies. Sexuality Studies. I want these fields to matter more to how the university understands academic inquiry, such that the intellectual value of the study of difference can be registered within classrooms and course syllabi, and the estrangement between academic and social life can begin to be healed. Making a Difference indeed!

In this context, I must also say that I want a world for students in which they can experience affirmation among their cohort and in their communities for both the rigor and passion they bring to the study of difference. This semester I have had the good fortune to teach the senior seminar, where we are focusing on the theory and politics of Women's Studies. We are exploring the history of the field, its debates, its animating categories of analysis, and some of the arenas of its most vexed inquiry, such as sex work, genital surgery, and surrogacy. The students have had long and heated debates about what the field is, which women it typically studies, the status of masculinity in our critical pursuits, and the field's long standing relationship to contemporary politics. What I have loved is that they never settle for the obvious. They never simply trumpet a line of thinking that they have inherited from elsewhere. They want Women's Studies to be a field which they can own, so their investments have to do with living in some of the most complex areas it has studied.

Consider, for instance, what Women's Studies might say about sex work. The exploitation and objectification of women, right? Well not exactly. In our discussions, we have considered the complicated scholarly archive on sex work, from that of the feminist anti pornography campaigns in the late twentieth century to the labor debates that approach the issue from a broader reflection on women's situation in consumer driven economies. We have put these critiques in dialogue with the historical discourse of "pro-sex feminism" and the burgeoning scholarship in sexuality studies on the transnational cultures of public sex, neither of which sides with forms of analysis that can be used for legislative change in the name of governing sexual activity, no matter its kind. These issues challenge not only assumptions about how the field operates and what it purports to know, but some of what we often take to be the defining values of who we think we are.

My interest in Women's Studies has always come from those moments when it drew me into consideration of a world outside the realm of the one that I already knew, when it gave me more than what I already had, when it opened whole new ways of thinking to me. It is for this reason, I suspect, that I remain, like the students I teach, enthralled by Women's Studies, living the mode of learning it has long been teaching me and wanting more, yes, much more of it!

Let me end, then, by thanking all of you who have made my directorship an opportunity for continued engagement with the challenging project of Women's Studies. I owe a great deal to our staff, Lillian Spiller, Cassandra Harris, Gwen Rogers, and Susan Perry (and to Pat Hoffman before her),

for making the work of everyday institution life a scene of both enormous accomplishment and, quite honestly, a good deal of fun. Our alumnae have taught me new ways to understand the transformative work that we do, and it is no understatement to say that through your adventures in living I have come to see consequences of Women's Studies that I had not known. I thank my colleagues for thinking and organizing with me, and my students for being moved so deeply by visions of making a difference in the world that they commit themselves to social change and critical thinking as a life long pursuit. And to our new director, Ranji Khanna, I wish you a few good months of solid sleep before you begin your term on July 1!

## Ranjana a To Succeed Wiegman as the Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies

Women's Studies is pleased to announce that Ranjana Khanna will assume the Margaret Taylor Smith Directorship of Women's Studies in July. Professor Khanna, who holds a PhD in Women's Studies from the University of York, is an Associate Professor in English, Literature, and Women's Studies at Duke University. Currently a research fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, Professor Khanna is a specialist in transnational feminist studies, psychoanalysis, and Marxist feminist analysis. Her second book, *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation 1830 to the Present*, will be published by Stanford University Press later this year. Her well received first book, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*, was published by Duke University Press in 2003.

"I am delighted," Khanna writes, "to have the opportunity to build on the wonderful work Robyn Wiegman has initiated in Women's Studies at Duke in the undergraduate and graduate programs, in faculty research groups, and in national and international collaborations with centers of feminist scholarship around the world. Besides consolidating the strength of all the rich program building of the past six years, I am excited to be introducing a new institute into Women's Studies, which will highlight feminist research. Over the next few years, Women's Studies at Duke will formalize the recruitment of postdoctoral fellows and visiting scholars in a variety of fields from diverse cultural and political contexts. The new institute promises to enhance both the pedagogical and research missions of the program and the university."

In addition, Khanna says that she is looking forward to working more closely with the Women's Studies undergraduate and graduate students "and contributing in some small way to their intellectual formation, which is so important for the future." She is also excited to connect with program graduates who are currently using their Women's Studies knowledge and training in a variety of life pursuits. The fall 2007 newsletter will feature extensive coverage of Khanna's vision for the program's future.

# SENIOR PERSPECTIVES:

## *On Women's Studies, Campus Culture, Politics, and the Future*

**RACHEL WEEKS,  
WOMEN'S STUDIES 2007**

To repeat the practice of telling an "institutional origin story" in Women's Studies, I will begin by telling mine. When I was in seventh grade, my sister was a



Women's Studies major at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro located near our home in the same city. One evening, she brought home a few books she was reading for class and suggested that I take a look: work by Naomi Wolf, Susan Faludi, Barbara Ehrenreich, and others. She also brought home poetry by women that I liked to think of back then as "feminist poets" (read: they sometimes wrote about anger): Margaret Atwood, Marge Piercy, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton. As an oh-so-pubescent middle school student, I latched on to the poetry far more quickly than the nonfiction in my newfound identity as a "third wave feminist." Upon reaching high school, I founded a Women's Studies Club that met bi-weekly to discuss such topics as "The Gender Police," "Women in Afghanistan," "Girls in the Classroom," and other topics that in retrospect I can hardly believe I had the nerve to talk about prior to any formal training in the study of women and gender.

After almost ten years, now, of both informal and formal training in Women's Studies, I have retained that activist streak while becoming a much more conscientious, critical student of feminism. Although I was drawn to the Women's Studies major because of my early liberal politics, it has been the treatment of knowledge production and theory that has sustained my intellectual interest in the field over the past four years. As a field, Women's Studies has also challenged me to think about the future in a utopian way, to find potential in different ways of thinking that can be put to political work in everyday life. For me, then, Women's Studies often means thinking about

how I, "we," "us"—maybe even my kids—might enact critical politics in the period of late capitalism.

During my time at Duke, I completed two internships that were intimately tied to my experience with the major. My first internship was with BUST Magazine in the summer following my freshman year and again during the fall of my junior year, when I returned to New York through the Duke in New York Arts and Media Program. During my time at BUST, I launched the still-running "Hair Hopper" column, which tells the history behind vintage hairstyles and teaches readers how to create them. I also inaugurated BUST's Reaching Academia Program and the BUST College Street Team, both designed to increase BUST's visibility among Women's and Gender studies programs nationwide. Working at BUST taught me an immense amount about a particular generation of third wave feminists and their "Do-It-Yourself" campaign to offer a contending feminist response to popular culture on the same shelf as Cosmo.

My most recent internship last summer with the Women's Edge Coalition in Washington, D.C. completely re-oriented my research and career interests at a moment when I least expected it. In my work with the Coalition's Global Opportunity for Women Campaign, I had the opportunity to envision ways of mobilizing individuals, businesses, and nonprofits to end global poverty by investing in the world's women. I conducted fair trade research for the campaign that has facilitated collaborative plans with a number of fair trade companies that Edge hopes to propel into larger retail markets in the coming months. Another angle of my work involved gaining insight about corporate social responsibility (CSR) trends and socially responsible apparel manufacturing practices.

This experience was so powerful that midway through the internship, I changed my senior thesis topic from a documentary on Doris Duke to "Fashion, Free Trade, and Feminism," a research project that not only explores the often dichotomous feminist treatments of production/consumption discourses in relation to the apparel industry,

but challenges feminism to reimagine consumerism as a political tool. I have had the great opportunity to have Robyn Wiegman serve as director of this project, with Gary Gereffi from sociology acting as second reader. Robyn's expertise in feminist theory and Gary's unique perspectives on the sociology of global trade have proven to be indispensable resources over the past few months, and I look forward to presenting my work to the community at the distinction presentations this spring.

Finally, this past fall I acted as teaching assistant with another Women's Studies major, Amy Levenburg, for Kathy Rudy's Gender and Everyday Life course. This assistantship was not only a chance to get my academic feet wet while leading a discussion section and even lecturing, but it allowed me to work with Kathy in a new and valuable capacity. As a mentor to me over the past four years, Kathy was the driving force behind my decision to become a major and I will always be indebted to her for her never-ending support of my academic and extracurricular pursuits. It is with the typical graduate-to-be's emotional medley of sadness, excitement, and anxiety that I look forward to saying goodbye to the familiar faces of everyone who has made my experience in our program so phenomenal.

**SHADEE MALAKLOU,  
WOMEN'S STUDIES AND  
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
2007**

Change. It's a simple concept, but a difficult endeavor. As a graduating senior, I am exceedingly thankful for the professors and experiences that Women's Studies



has afforded my graduating class. We have been encouraged to make a difference in our immediate surroundings—a trying attempt on Duke's socially stifling campus.

**SENIOR PERSPECTIVES**

*Senior Perspectives continued from page 3*

I remember entering freshman year wanting to be inspired. Like most naïve first year students, I searched for inspirational professors in some of the more popular majors, but came up empty. Sadly but surely, many of Duke's academic disciplines ignore the kinds of cultural critiques that politics necessitate, as if what they study is separate from the problems and urgencies of the everyday world. Women's Studies, as both an intellectual and political enterprise, does not.

My experiences with Duke's women's movement have been both academic and extracurricular. I entered freshman year with passion and a

spark for the female condition. As a Chronicle columnist with a controversial reputation during my first and second years, I adamantly expressed concern about Duke's campus culture, and about women who insisted on downplaying their intelligence in social settings. I also founded and continue to instruct the popular house course, *Dating and Mating: The Hookup Culture at Duke*, in an attempt to provide different shades of the same story: sexual agency on a college campus.

Time and time again, my interest in female sexual agency brought me back to the Women's Studies classroom. Intersectionality. Performativity. Feminist epistemology. Gender subjectivity. Post-Modernism. Deconstruction. In an echo of our introductory course, *Gender and Everyday Life*, the theories of Women's Studies make up the backbone of our daily experiences. Their implications are immediate.

My reasons for studying feminism and women's rights as an undergraduate are simple: Women's Studies is a major that, like my other major (Cultural Anthropology), inspires me, in both its instruction and its content. Women's Studies is also a major that helps me better understand the world, culture, society, and personal relationships.

Across college campuses and even at top universities, Women's and Gender Studies has the mistaken reputation of being an easy, feel-good field, where women go to sob about the men who hurt them, listen to Alanis Morissette and Janis Joplin complain

(ad nauseam) about the "patriarchy" that is responsible for ruining their lives. In truth, Women's Studies is far more complex, and the kind of intense, critical thinking that it requires outweighs many other studies at Duke. To major in Women's Studies is to forfeit the popular belief that ignorance is bliss, because once invested in the field, it is hard to see anything as simple.

When acquaintances ask me why I majored in Women's Studies and Cultural Anthropology, I tell them that I did so to better understand my place in the world. I did not major in either field as part of a pity party in honor of my second-class citizen status, but rather in an attempt to be sure that, whichever direction my professional career leads me, I will have a secure sense of self, with the tools necessary to continually think about and analyze my surroundings, and to be a critical consumer.

As my time at Duke wanes, I leave with only one regret: That it didn't last longer. The intellectual bravado of the Women's Studies program has inspired me to do great things with my time. I will never lose my desire to make a difference, but I will miss the spunk of being a student, and the support of professors who aren't afraid to make a stand.

**CHIRANKA DE CROOS,  
WOMEN'S STUDIES  
AND LITERATURE 2007**

"The mission statement of Duke's women's studies program is nothing short of an end-stage fascist manifesto expressing full intent to turn all core curricula into subdivisions of feminist dicta...Duke...[does] not have [a] men's studies program. This is because "professional" feminism dictates that men are not allowed to have views on social issues, marriage, family, divorce, childbearing, or childrearing. The feminist idea of equality: women must have equal rights to be in the workplace, but men should not have any right to be in the family or to even think about it. Such is the situation of men at Duke."

The above quote is one of many mentions of the program over the past year in blogs and conversations as a result of the Duke lacrosse case. I have seen many bloggers and commentators denounce Women's Studies and other programs like African and African

American Studies as liberal madness, casting them as indoctrination majors that serve only to deprive "more deserving" academic studies tuition dollars. It is painfully obvious that none of these people have the slightest clue what Duke's Women's Studies program entails. They seem to think that all we do is study the oppression of women. If I listened to the claims, I would imagine myself sitting in my room memorizing every word of the S.C.U.M. Manifesto while sharpening my rusty knife collection, waiting for the day when I can revolt against the patriarchy.

I doubt any of the majors or minors are plotting the demise of men. However, we do think a great deal about the question: what exactly is Women's Studies? I know my own perceptions of the program and even my understandings and conceptions of the term "women's studies" has changed greatly since I first applied to college. To be honest, when I was in high school, I didn't really have any idea what the major was all about, which is why I surprised myself my freshman year when I told Lillian Spiller that I wanted to major in gender studies. Even then, I didn't know the difference between gender studies and Women's Studies program, and I used the titles interchangeably. She was rather quick to correct me, however, which made me realize that there was more to the terms than I had thought.

From the beginning, though, I have known that there was a stigma attached to being a Women's Studies major, and I think it has grown since the lacrosse incident in March 2006. It is impressive to see how much "credit" people have given us regarding various activities on campus. For example, on numerous blogs, I've seen people accuse Women's Studies majors of creating the "wanted poster" that was passed around last March, or of organizing the first protests at 610 Buchanan Boulevard. I am almost flattered by how efficient and activist we are perceived to be, even though, in truth, it is discouraging to see such negative things said about us. I can be fairly thin-skinned, and I find it painful to be the target of such negative reactions. It is also discouraging to know that no matter what you tell people, they are often committed to their misconceptions.

Despite the negative press, my own personal experiences in the program have been rewarding. One of the most pleasantly sur-

prising things to me is how my experiences doesn't fit into the preconceived ideas of what a women's studies program should entail. I've had friends ask me if I ever had to read Betty Friedan, Andrea Dworkin, or Valerie Solanas for class, since these are some of the more mainstream or well-known authors of works pertaining to feminism and the women's liberation movement. However, I've never had to read any of them for class, and when I said this to a friend, she then asked me, "Well, what do you study in women's studies?" I had to pause and think for a moment, since how could I explain in a few sentences about the breadth of my education? How would I explain that Women's Studies was not something merely confined to a few names, dates, and places, but encompassed something much greater?

My courses have been fairly diverse, as I also have taken many electives that were cross-listed in other departments, such as Literature, English, linguistics, Romance languages, and African and Asian Literatures and Languages. In these classes, I've explored a multitude of topics, such as how gender and race impact film noir to how important cognitive differences really are between women and men. This diversity was invaluable to me, as it showed me how significant and relevant Women's Studies is in our world. I consider one of the strengths of the program to be its ability to mesh well with other academic fields. Gender really is something that has impacted every aspect of our lives!

**PATRICIA AGUSTIN,  
WOMEN'S STUDIES 2007**



I came to Duke with the intention of graduating with a biomedical engineering degree. As a first-semester freshman I randomly took Women's Studies 90 with Kathy Rudy, and although I really enjoyed the class, at

the end of the semester, I thought I would never again take another Women's Studies course at Duke, not because I didn't enjoy the class but because I was too busy trying to take as many pre-med courses as I could. So I concentrated on the pre-med courses until I wanted a break from thinking about biology and chemistry and decided to take another Women's Studies course. Again, the stereotype of extreme feminists came into my mind, but I recalled that I enjoyed my experience in Kathy Rudy's course, so I signed up for another class with her.

In the spring of 2005, Professor Rudy taught the senior seminar on the topic, "The New Chicana," which focused on the recently arrived immigrant population in Durham and how immigrant women experience feminism. It was this course that completely changed the way I viewed feminism, the Women's Studies program, and my own academic career at Duke. In the course, students were paired with immigrant families in Durham and we met on a weekly basis. My interactions with one particular family that had recently emigrated from Guatemala profoundly changed me, in part because they reminded me so much of my own family when we first came to the U.S. Like my own family, this Guatemalan family came to the U.S. with nothing; they were trying to achieve the American Dream, one step at a time. It was with this family in mind that I committed myself to continuing the help immigrant families, and thus JUNTOS, a group of students that assists newly arrived immigrants, was born less than a year later.

Over the summer of 2005, I decided that I no longer wanted to pursue a science degree. I began to realize that Women's Studies had a lot of offer, especially with the autonomy that it gave its majors to pursue senior projects on any topic of their choice. The interdisciplinary nature of the major allowed me to take classes that I was deeply interested in, and my view of feminism and society started to change. Moreover, as a result of dropping my science major, I was able to go abroad and study in the Duke in Venice exchange program.

During my time abroad, I realized that I wanted to learn more about feminism, particularly as it applies to Latina immigrant women. I wanted to try to understand the internal changes that I had

experienced as an immigrant woman in higher education, as well as the changes that I saw within my own family, especially the changes within my mom. I wanted to give voice to many women who come to this country and whose voice is lost, and thus, the idea for my honor's thesis on "The Hybrid Immigrant Woman" was born. My thesis explores the process through which Guatemalan women experience hybridization of both Guatemalan and American culture, and their conscious participation in the making of their hybrid identity.

I cannot emphasize how much I have learned about myself through the classes that I have taken for the major. I came to Duke thinking that I knew for sure what I wanted to do. However, my Women's Studies experience changed all that, and I have to credit Professor Rudy's course as helping me to find my passion. I am proudly graduating with a Women's Studies degree with the intention of going to law school to practice immigration law in the near future.

**CHRISTY JAMES, WOMEN'S  
STUDIES 2007**

Before I tell you, the reader, my experience as a Women's Studies major, let me be honest: I will not be attending graduate school in order to pursue a PhD or an MA relating to Women's Studies. My ultimate goal is to enter medical school and wind up with an MD behind my name!

So why the heck would a Duke pre-med student be a Women's Studies major?

It's true that most pre-med-minded students tend to major in Biology (or Chemistry, if one is feeling particularly brave) or maybe even Economics. For a good portion of my first semester in college, I thought I would take the typical pre-med student track as well. I planned to major in a science, sprinkle in a few humanities courses to seem well-rounded, take the MCAT, apply to medical school, and BAM! I'd be where I wanted to be. I didn't give much attention to intellectual stimulation or larger critical questions. I just figured that as a pre-med student, this is what I had to do to get to the next level. Four years of college be damned.

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*Senior Perspectives continued from page 5*

However, by the end of my first year, I realized that I definitely did NOT want to do Biology. I liked science, but I knew that unless I picked something that I would actually be interested in, the next four years were going to be a waste. When picking classes for the fall semester of sophomore year, I decided to take Jean O'Barr's class on gender, race, and higher education with my roommate, and Paul Lai's class, Asian American Feminisms. Both of these I took on a whim, really, because I had never taken a Women's Studies course before, but the material looked interesting--more interesting than examining fungi, at least!

At the time, I don't think I could have been more thankful to be taking both of these courses. Organic Chemistry, to be quite frank, was knocking my pride down left and right, and I could barely manage the pronunciation in my introductory French class. To be in two classes that were not just about memorizing facts or conjugations, that allowed me to re-evaluate the meaning of my own identity as a straight Indian-American Christian female in a top-tier university, made me realize that maybe, just maybe, the traditional pre-med track was not the best path for me. In fact, because of the experiences of these two Women's Studies courses, I knew that I had finally found the field that could hold my attention. Of course, being a Women's Studies major and being pre-med did not go over so well initially with my parents. A slew of questions followed my decision: Was Women's Studies even a major? What would you be studying? How could it be of any use to you?

For my parents, it was difficult to understand how Women's Studies could possibly overlap with science. Yet, it was through my courses in this major that I found issues relating to women's health which needed to be addressed more definitively in my science courses. In my papers in Biology courses, I continually looked at research that focused on women, such as breast cancer vaccines. In the wake up Tom Cruise's delusions about postpartum depression, I immediately hunted for research relating to the causes and treatments of this disease. Through my work in Women's Studies, I came to question, to analyze, and to ponder in a manner that is now second

nature when I think about global health issues or breakthroughs in medical research. Women's Studies gave me the direction I needed to understand what exactly I wanted to focus on as a future physician.

Even more importantly, I have learned more about myself through this major than any other class I have taken outside of this program. To me, entering medical school requires you to understand who you are and the type of person you are so that you do not find yourself lost even one minute into its start. I felt a little lost academically for the first year and a half of college because I had no idea where I belonged, but Women's Studies allowed me to find a home, a home that allowed me space to grow both academically and personally.

**AMY LEVENBERG,  
WOMEN'S STUDIES  
AND HISTORY 2007**

I started my education at Duke in the engineering, so I know all about the scientific method: the results of your experiment have to be reproducible. Thus, it is with near scientific precision that I can predict the pattern of conversation surrounding my tenure at Duke. It usually goes something like this: "Oh, you go to Duke. How nice. What are you studying?" "I am a Women's Studies and History double major." Their smile fades and they suddenly look forty years older as their face wrinkles up. Perplexed they ask, "What are you going to do with that?"

Before I jump to my future plans of world domination (just kidding!), it seems logical to explain how I discovered Women's Studies in the first place. When I first arrived at Duke, I considered myself a future biomedical engineer and took the customary organic chemistry and calculus courses. While I enjoyed struggling through these classes, I had a nagging sense that my educational path was lacking something. I scoured the Arts and Sciences course listing for topics and fields of study that could fill the void. I signed up for WST 130: Women in the Political Process on a whim and was surprised when it was my most difficult and most interesting class. By the spring of my sophomore year, I had declared Women's Studies as my second major along with History. Drooling over the

ACES lists of all the potential and fantastic sounding Women's Studies courses, I never asked that dreadful question, "What are you going to do with that?" I didn't care; I was immersed in the idea of studying something I loved for the sake of learning itself.

When I was originally asked to write this, I put it off as long as possible. I just had no conception of how to translate the passion I feel for this field into words. When people ask me the aforementioned persistent question, I know that they have no idea what Women's Studies is. Their general understanding is that it is simply feminism in the classroom; a political movement gone soft; posters transformed into textbooks; chants recreated as lectures. However, for those of us on the inside, majoring in Women's Studies is full of seriousness; while it assuredly means different things to each of us, it is far more complicated and engaging than most people know. For me, it means the opportunity to study how gender and other modes of identity affect every aspect of life--and something that affects everything is hardly insignificant! After my first class, I knew that Women's Studies was about more than just the history of women, which common perceptions indicate; it is rich and bursting with theoretical questions, with competing analyses about society, with vibrant accounts of identity. Unlike engineering, where I only used my mathematical, scientific side, Women's Studies gives me the opportunity to think both abstractly and concretely, with one foot in an academic discussion and one in the realities of everyday life.

While I believe that my work in the classroom is separate from the activism I participate in outside of it, they are interrelated in that Women's Studies has taught me new ways to look at the world--to question things that I once took for granted. This set of lenses that I will take away with me when I graduate is one answer to the question that is constantly thrown back at me. So, "What am I going to do with that?" Simple, it's part of who I am now and everything I have learned will help me in whatever path I pursue. And if you want to know what I am actually doing when I graduate, well, you can just ask.

## Teaching the Young About Aging

By Erin Gentry, English 2008



In 1985, lesbian feminist activist and writer Barbara MacDonald addressed the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA): "From the beginning of Women's Studies, the message has gone out to those of us over 60 that your 'sisterhood' does not include us.... You do not identify with our issues. You exploit us; you patronize us; you stereotype us. But most of all, you ignore us." In the last two decades, Women's Studies has responded to these charges through an Aging and Ageism Caucus

in the national organization, numerous anthologies on women and aging, and most recently, a special issue of the NWSA Journal devoted entirely to Aging Studies. And yet, while the importance of aging and ageism to Women's Studies has been recognized, as Leni Marshall notes in her introduction to the special issue, work on the topic continues to be greeted with a "larger social amnesia," a failure to both acknowledge and actively generate a coherent field of feminist aging studies. In a curriculum that so vigorously investigates issues of race, class, gender and sexuality, it is puzzling that Women's Studies as a field has not paid more attention to age as a marker of social difference, especially when "old" is a subject position we will all someday occupy (if we are so lucky!). What lies behind the "social amnesia" about aging?

In Fall 2006, I served as the instructor for Feminist Science Studies and Aging, designed to explore this very question. I opened the course by asking my students to write down "the first thought that comes to your mind when you think of 'old age.'" "Wrinkles" was overwhelmingly the most common answer, accompanied by such other responses as "health problems, achy joints, age lines, white hair, bad driving, resistance to change, senility and loneliness." When asked to describe themselves at age 75, students typically pictured themselves as active grandparents, still physically and mentally fit, financially secure, traveling, teaching, working, and writing. The disconnect between their predominantly negative associations with old age and their predominantly positive visions of their own future illustrates both our culture's negative, medicalized understanding of aging—as a process of biological decline manifest in changing appearances and functional impairments—and the difficulty of reconciling this bleak outlook with our sense of self. The cognitive dissonance between our view of the Aging Other and of our Aging Self contributes to what Kathleen Woodward calls "youthfulness as masquerade," or the attempt to maintain the appearance of youth in a denial of age. From Botox to Viagra, anti-oxidants to Extreme Makeover, evidence of this dissonance is omnipresent in twenty-first century U.S. culture's "Anti-Aging" campaign.

In our class, we used the tools of feminist science studies and aging studies to explore representations of women's aging in contemporary culture, from television, film and fiction to popular journalism, advertisements and medical textbooks. We focused particularly on how our culture's predominantly medicalized, functionalized view of aging impacts the representation of aging more generally, and how these representations of aging impact our expectations of what aging is and can be. Using menopause and anti-aging consumerism as specific case studies, students were asked to think critically about experiences that have yet to touch their life (like the Red Hat Society or Hormone Replacement Therapy) and to re-evaluate, with a critical eye, familiar aspects of their daily world (such as Nip/Tuck or our cultural emphasis on "health maintenance").

One of my goals for this course was to help students to think critically and compassionately about not only the seventy-five-year-old in line at the grocery store, but also their seventy-five-year-old future selves, putting the Aging Other and the Aging Self into dialogue. One assignment asked students to interview an acquaintance about her expectations for and experience of menopause;

students interviewed mothers, aunts, godmothers and grandmothers and discovered new aspects of these women and their lives. "Before this seminar, I did not even realize my mother was going through menopause," first year student Margaret Skoglund confided, but "one day right after class I called my mom...and we ended up talking about her experience with menopause for an hour. Her openness and detailed stories made it clear that she was relieved to be able to talk about it with me, and I felt grateful that I could connect with my mom in a new way." Junior Whitney Mickens also found herself identifying across generations: "Now that I know more about menopause, aging issues, and societal pressures, I feel like I can relate. So the 'they' becomes 'we.'"

Students were able to place the rampant anti-aging consumerism directed towards women in the context of the appearance-related pressures that the media generates for women of all ages, themselves included. "Normal, healthy women my age are never going to be as thin as the airbrushed, undernourished women we compare ourselves to just as normal older women are never going to look as young as their celebrity, plastic surgery-addicted counterparts," reported sophomore Camille Kingsolver. "This class has shown me that the vicious scrutiny women apply to their own bodies does not fade with age. If anything, it worsens. This is not to say that I feel depressed and hopeless at the end of the semester, though. Instead, I am even more inspired than before to change the way females are portrayed in our culture."

Throughout the course, we questioned on what level change can happen. Is it the cultural representations and expectations that need adjustment, or can individuals choose whether or not to conform to societal pressures? What might such a choice entail? Regardless of how change might best happen, consciousness raising is an important first step in making the college students of today recognize the ways they "other" those who are aging—whether, as MacDonald says, that is through exploiting, stereotyping, ignoring or failing to identify—and the stake their own future Aging Selves hold in the representations of the Aging Other. As freshman Caroline Lampen says, "By forcing us to think about the role of post-menopausal and aging women in society, we are making ourselves challenge our potentially preconceived and misconstrued assumptions, and rethinking how we will contribute to society and compel change."

*Sources used for this article include: Leni Marshall, "Aging: A Feminist Issue," NWSA Journal 18.1 (Spring 2006), and Kathleen Woodward, "Youthfulness as Masquerade," Discourse 11.1 (Fall-Winter 1988-89).*

*Erin Gentry serves as a graduate instructor for the Women's Studies Program. She is a PhD candidate in the English Department and is earning the Women's Studies Certificate.*

"The most rewarding and insightful aspect of the course for me was the new understanding of the challenges faced by my grandmother, mother, and sister in the twenty-first century. I gained a new appreciation of my grandmother and her life as an 80-year-old widowed woman, of my mother as she returned to the workplace after raising her children and continued to contribute to society, and of my sister, who struggles to balance a successful career with the prospect of family life and children in the near future."

—Caroline Lampen, First Year

## Judy Woodruff '76 Teaches Public Policy Course

By Sarah Wallace, 2008

In the fall semester of 2006, I had the pleasure of taking a course from the legendary journalist Judy Woodruff, former member and Chair of the Council on Women's Studies. The title of the seminar, Media and Politics, proved a topic flexible enough to allow discussions about media bias, interview styles, and the Duke Lacrosse scandal all in one semester. While students in the course came from a variety of academic backgrounds, including public policy, chemistry, and religion, we all shared a common interest in journalism and its role in contemporary society.

Admission was selective, as each potential student was asked to write an essay describing her/his motivations and interests in taking a course with Professor Woodruff. I was motivated to take the class for two reasons. First, I wanted to become a more knowledgeable consumer of news. Secondly, I was in the process of developing a news show for Duke's campus television network, Cable 13, and I thought the course would give me important knowledge about broadcast journalism. Among my classmates was an editor of the Chronicle, an MSNBC intern, and a Chinese journalist for the United Kingdom network Sky News.

As a teacher, Judy Woodruff made an immediate impression on me. She commanded the small room in Rubenstein Hall with her confidence. Even though she had assumed the role of a college professor, the habits she had acquired as a world-renowned journalist emerged in class. She prepared extensively for each session, and she took copious notes whenever someone spoke. I think one of my classmates said it best when he described Professor Woodruff's teaching style as "anchoring the class." The result was a course that was very structured, yet conducive to stimulating debate.



Professor Woodruff has acquired an incredible network of professional connections during her tenures at NBC, CNN, and PBS. One of our more prominent guests was media mogul Ted Turner, who discussed such diverse topics as cable news, the fragility of our natural environment, and his new chain of restaurants that serve buffalo meat. Lesley Stahl and Andrea Mitchell, both of whom are close friends and colleagues of Professor Woodruff, also visited the class. Lesley Stahl's Reporting Live and Andrea Mitchell's Talking Back are fascinating autobiographies and were required reading for the course.

Judy, Lesley, and Andrea's accomplishments and continued contributions to the field of journalism are regarded as legendary by some. Clearly, their experiences, training, and discussions with the class suggest that it takes a special kind of person to accomplish such highly respected status when such professional progress has consistently been reserved for and applied to men. In fact, Lesley Stahl commented that she had to confine her maternity leave to three weeks in order to demonstrate a certain tenacity, sacrifice, and willingness to fight for a career path that offered little flexibility for women choosing to also raise children. It was a choice her male counterparts did not have to make. These women, who paved the way for future generations of female journalists by crashing the boy's club that was broadcast journalism in the late 1960's and early 1970's, are the new role models for aspiring young journalists today.

My semester with Judy Woodruff was an unforgettable experience. I was able to meet inspiring women, conduct an interview with a community member, and, most importantly, learn about contemporary issues in journalism from someone who practices the subject every day.



Sarah Wallace, 2008, is a double major in Public Policy and Pre-Med. She is from Virginia Beach, Virginia.

# TRAVEL AWARDS

## Saving a Life

*By Nandini Palaniappa, Public Policy 2008*

Carefully stepping over the immense piles of trash scattered between the shabby tents that each housed five to six women and children, I wondered how I had never seen such dismal conditions in my life. I had traveled to India numerous times, but the beautiful palaces and temple I visited never lead me to conceive that such poverty could exist. This trip, funded in part through a travel grant from Women's Studies, revealed something new to me: the living conditions, homes, and to the lives of the destitute.

My peers and I were working with an organization called Sahara House that provides many services in and around New Delhi for marginalized populations, most of whose members are HIV positive and/or substance abusers. The organization includes 39 centers that provide health services such as clinical treatment, food, shelter, vocational training, psychological counseling, and most importantly, a network of support. Working cooperatively with Sahara House and Duke's Center for Health Policy, my peers and I were evaluating the current methods for intervention and conducting a preliminary assessment of Sahara House.

We learned quickly that many of the young women living in the crowded tents with multiple children had led normal lives until the fathers of the children lost their jobs. The devastating socio-economic effects of unemployment drastically sent them into the cycle of poverty. The women were forced into the commercial sex trade in order to earn money for food. This led to substance abuse and a destructive, endless

cycle ensued. No one deserved to live in these appalling conditions, much less these women and sweet children. What determined these circumstances? Was it possible that my fortunate life could be suddenly converted to fighting for their survival?

I knew that I had to do more in order to help these people and I felt guilty for leaving them to return to my life filled with luxuries. I had only worked for the organization for two weeks and felt that my efforts were futile. But I soon realized that my efforts were not in vain and that my trip was truly worthwhile. My purpose was not to save a thousand people, but rather to improve the lives of a few. As my friend pointed out, a life is the sum of one's experiences, and if I made someone slightly happier, or helped anyone for even a day, I feel I made a significant impact upon their life.

Currently, my peers and I are creating a program that will send six Duke students to New Delhi every summer in order to conduct research and utilize public health research methodology to evaluate the Sahara's House programs. We hope to improve the effectiveness of the organization, and to provide other students an opportunity to learn firsthand about public health issues through the experience of providing direct services to those in need. I appreciate the support from Women's Studies which made this trip possible.

## Emory University Conference Report

*By Cynthia Current, English 2007, University of North Carolina*

In December of 2006, Women's Studies at Duke University provided funding for me to attend "An Uncomfortable Conversation: Sociobiology, Evolutionary Psychology, and Feminist Legal Theory" at Emory University. The two day conference included a number of papers authored by legal scholars. The workshop sought to address the value of evolutionary theory, sociobiology, and evolutionary psychology for feminist legal theory. As the conference title suggests, fields such as sociobiology and feminism have often clashed. There is a long history within feminism of resistance to the essentializing gestures of biology. There are also, however, many in Women's Studies today interested in readdressing the concerns of biology, sex and gender. My interest specifically concerns how race and gender come to be organized out of the cultural concerns of evolutionary theory and genomics. I hoped to converse with leading scholars at the conference not only in order to inform my work but also to engage my students in new ways, especially in the course I am currently teaching at in Women's Studies at Duke on Evolution, Genomics, and Gender.

The conference was valuable—but not in the manner I had expected. Discussion quickly grew "uncomfortable" as Colleen Condit (University of Georgia), whose research focuses on issues of human reproduction and the impact of genetic technologies, addressed the scientific misconceptions put forward as facts by other participants. Her questions and concerns are important to all of us who are interested in interdisciplinary work. How do we make sure that the work we incorporate from other fields is correct? Condit's presentation demonstrated that such concerns are vital. Not only had some papers attempted to fix human psychology in the ancient past, but such assumptions were then attached to questions of gender, which in the various presentations, was couched always in terms of heterosexuality. Thus, many papers saw the outcome of evolution as one essentialized around male aggression and female reproduction. While scholars promoted laudable goals, the policies they forwarded tended to reinscribe the very categories they claimed to work against.

**Life After Graduate School:**

*An Interview with Professor Rebecca Wanzo '03*

By Kinohi Nishikawa, *Literature 2007*

Rebecca Wanzo received her Ph.D. in English and Certificates in Women's Studies and African & African American Studies from Duke in 2003. She is currently Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and African American & African Studies at the Ohio State University, where she teaches courses on literature, popular culture, feminist theory, and social activism. Rebecca is on leave in 2006-07 as a Ford Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Current Women's Studies graduate scholar Kinohi Nishikawa conducted this interview with Rebecca in January 2007 to find out about life on the other side of the graduation divide.

**KN:** What effect did your Women's Studies background and degree have on your search for a tenure-track position? What doors did it open for you?

**RW:** The Women's Studies Certificate was important as it gave me the credentials to apply for Women's Studies positions, but it also helped me recalibrate my understanding of myself as a scholar. My job search was primarily focused on English, and I only applied for one Ethnic Studies job and one Women's Studies job. However, just conceptualizing myself as an interdisciplinary scholar led me to think differently about my project and communicate the stakes in ways that were definitely influenced by a Women's Studies background.

**KN:** Can you comment on the nature of applying for interdisciplinary jobs such as those in Women's Studies?

**RW:** The reality of interdisciplinary Ph.D.s is that they are competing with Ph.D.s in traditional disciplines. At a place like Duke, for example, we are encouraged to produce interdisciplinary scholarship, scholarship that does something new in ways that might not conform to traditional historical periods or disciplinary methods of research and analysis. While [academic] publishing may value certain interdisciplinary or field-changing research, when you look at the job openings, you'd be surprised at how traditional they still seem. Even though people in the field say they want Women's Studies Ph.D.s to claim the open positions, you still see job listing that highlight specific disciplines. For example, a

job advertisement might state that a department is looking for someone doing transnational work, but then it will say, "in the social sciences." Or another will read, "visual culture, with expertise in film studies." All of which is to say I think Women's Studies as an interdiscipline is still grappling with disciplinary aims. I mean, the people who built Women's Studies came from disciplines, necessarily so, because there weren't Women's Studies Ph.D.s.

**KN:** Perhaps one way of building an interdisciplinary faculty base is for Women's Studies programs to produce more advanced degrees of their own.

**RW:** It's true, but it's tricky because we are still competing with the disciplinary Ph.D.s. In English, for example, we produce too many Ph.D.s: there are too many English Ph.D.s who do not get jobs. Women's Studies doesn't want to do that. It needs to be responsible and think about how many positions are in fact available for our students. So I think that any move forward with Ph.D. programs always has to be attentive to the limitations of the market. I think the "field of dreams" philosophy can only get you so far. It's nice to think that if you build it, then they will come, but you also have to think about real structural barriers [to growth] so that we in Women's Studies can be ethical program-builders.

**KN:** As a recent Ph.D., how are you going about turning your dissertation into a first book? Within which fields of knowledge are you now situating your work?

**RW:** My book is titled, "The Suffering Will Not Be Televised: African American Women and Sentimental Political Storytelling." It is a significant revision of my dissertation, which looked at sentimentality in the twentieth-century, and even though I did look at film and television, I was primarily reading texts. What I have really tried to think about is how to take my study of the concept of sentimentality beyond literary studies. One of the ways I have done this is to link literary conventions of sentimentality with contemporary political discourse. By applying the conventions of nineteenth-century sentimentality to twentieth-century political

**Remembering Eleanor "Elly" Thomas Elliott**

**Alumnae News**

By Sarah Rosen, T'84

Duke University lost a dear friend this past December with the death of Eleanor "Elly" Thomas Elliott, who served on the Council of Women's Studies and received a Doctorate of Humane Letters from the University in 2002.



Elly's Duke connection began at birth. She was the daughter of James A. Thomas, colleague of James B. Duke, founder of the Memorial Chapel in the Duke Chapel, and the person for whom the Thomas Room in Lilly Library is named. He is the only non-Duke family member buried in Duke Chapel. Elly continued the family's connection to Duke through her commitment to Duke's libraries and in her active role on the Council on Women's Studies.

Elly spent much of her life working for the equality of women and was a strong advocate for women's health, education, and leadership. As the president of Barnard College in the mid-70's, she staved off

efforts to merge Barnard with Columbia and kept Barnard as an independent women's college. She worked actively on many boards including serving as president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the only American foundation to offer graduate fellowships in Women's Studies; the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund; The Foundation for Child Development; and the New York Hospital/Cornell Medical Center, to name a few. She was one of the first women to sit on corporate boards, including Celanese and the C.I. T. Financial Corporation, and she took that responsibility seriously. As Gloria Steinem said, "She was a bridge for feminism into many traditional places."

I knew Elly as a philanthropist, a leader, and a mentor. We had many conversations about women's giving and she would pass on sayings from former Barnard president Millicent McIntosh, "It is good if a woman has a little money of her own — to spend as she pleases without asking anyone." Elly always did and, along with her husband Jock, gave a good bit of it to Duke.

She cared deeply about Duke University and the Women's Studies program and helped to organize meetings and events in New York

rhetoric about suffering in the U.S., I began to see the ways in which sentimental literary culture was still alive. So what I have moved towards is a book that uses the tools and foundations of my dissertation but that turns now toward contemporary politics.



I should also note that I moved my dissertation onto more interdisciplinary terrain in part because some of my best interlocutors [at Ohio State] are political theorists. One thing I really treasure about being in a Women's Studies Department is having people in other contexts with whom I can talk about my work, people who are not just serious about reading it and talking about

it but who also expose me to different kinds of thinking. It's this that I think interdisciplinary departments are particularly helpful at cultivating. My work wouldn't be developing in the ways that it is if I weren't in an interdisciplinary department.

**KN:** What advice would you give to current Women's Studies graduate scholars who are looking to pursue similar interdisciplinary paths in their scholarship, teaching, and service?

**RW:** Really think about how you would communicate your work to people outside of your discipline. Take advantage of talking to your peers; interdisciplinary writing groups, for example, can be really great. Having an outlet for presenting your work to audiences that aren't from your discipline gives you a chance to think about your vocabulary, the kinds of assumptions you're making, and so on. You don't always have the opportunity to do these things with people from your field.

**KN:** What, specifically, is important about communicating your ideas across disciplines? Is it that people lying outside of your discipline give you a different sense of your research object? Is it that they give you a sense of the different stakes of your research?

**RW:** All of this, yes. But also, on a larger level, they let me know about the little "so what?" and the big "So What?" of a project. The little "so what?" is what your project means for the discipline. The big "So What?" asks, "Why should anyone care about this?"

In this regard, I think interdisciplinarity is the first step in thinking about how our projects can be useful to people beyond our choir, beyond the people we would expect to be in the pews because they're paying church dues. Interdisciplinarity can foster a broader way of communicating the humanities and the work that it does. It helps us think about how we can make transparent our work and its value. Interdisciplinarity can be an end in itself, but it can also be something that leads us to other avenues through which we can communicate our work.

**KN:** If one of the best things about Women's Studies is that it puts you in conversation with different intellectual traditions, it seems that being in Women's Studies means becoming responsible to a great deal more than issues related to your primary training and research. What are these intellectual responsibilities? Or to put this differently, how might those of us interested in becoming faculty in Women's Studies prepare ourselves for this larger conception of the field?

**RW:** The challenge continues to revolve around the definitions of "interdisciplinarity," and "multidisciplinarity," and what it means to do work and construct curriculum with these concepts in mind. I think many of us come to interdisciplinary projects when we realize that the traditional objects of study or methodologies of our field won't allow us to answer our research questions adequately. But then we need to think about what it means to extensively engage with multiple disciplines in order to make something new, versus dabbling and borrowing in ways that don't do justice to the fields outside of our training. As we continue to build the field, I think we need to learn how to be ethical interlocutors and be explicit in our projects about what we mean when we say we're doing interdisciplinary work in Women's Studies.

*Kinohi Nishikawa is a doctoral student in Literature and a Women's Studies certificate earner. For 2006-07 he holds a dissertation fellowship in Women's Studies.*

City. At the Duke Women's Studies graduation ceremony in 2002, she shared two thoughts that she said had always kept her going.

The first was from Millicent McIntosh, "As educated women you have an obligation to take responsibility for the problems of your time." Elly believed that equality for women was one of the problems of her time and worked happily every day of her life toward that goal.

And the second was from Annie Dillard: "Caring passionately about something isn't against nature, and it isn't against human nature. It is what we are here to do."

As educated women, we can honor Elly Elliott's life best by caring passionately for the problems of our time. I know she would like that.

*Sarah Rosen, Trinity 1984, is a former Chair of the Council on Women's Studies. She currently serves as the Board Chair of Bridges Outreach Inc., a non-profit organization that unites individuals from various economic backgrounds and brings homeless and housed people together in community.*

## Women's Studies Alum/Donor Publishes Photography Book

Photographer Laurie Giesen, former member of the Council on Women's Studies and creator of the Giesen Endowment in Women's Studies, has recently published *The Wedding is "Off"*, a 64 page gift book that documents the "lighter side" of nuptial moments. "Cookie-cutter wedding photography this is not," said Giesen. "Unique bridal art it is," she added. Giesen has had numerous shows nationwide, including an exhibition at the Governor's Art Gallery in Washington State's capitol building. She has also been the first featured artist at Starbucks Coffee in Monterey, CA and in Lake Forest, IL. Additionally, the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History asked her to display some of her art in a mixed media collaboration with muralist Jeff Crozier. Her bridal work has been published locally, nationally, and internationally by publications such as *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Simply Creative Weddings*. She is also a writer, and her stories have appeared in *Wine Spectator*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and local Monterey Peninsula newspapers such as the *Carmel Pine Cone*. For further information, contact her at [www.lauriegiesenphotography.com](http://www.lauriegiesenphotography.com)

**FACULTY NEWS**

**Jonna Eagle**, Visiting Assistant Professor Women's Studies, is teaching the introductory course, Gender and Everyday Life, this spring. She is looking forward to teaching Gender and Popular Culture next fall. Last month, she presented work from her research on gender and early cinema at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference in Chicago.

**Mary McClintock Fulkerson**, Professor in the School of Divinity and Associate Faculty in Women's Studies, is currently teaching a course with Professor Maurice Wallace, African and African American Studies and English, on the relationship between Christ and Cultural Studies. Professor Fulkerson is also teaching Women, Theology and the Church, which is part of the Divinity's school's certificate in Gender, Theology, and Ministry, which she directs. For information about the certificate, see [www.divinity.duke.edu/academics/degrees/gender/](http://www.divinity.duke.edu/academics/degrees/gender/).

**Karla Holloway**, William R. Kenan Professor of English and Associate Faculty Women's Studies, will deliver the annual Merrimon Lecture at UNC-School of Medicine this spring, and a lecture at Baylor School of Medicine, both of which will focus on the ethics of medical research and race. Professor Holloway will

also travel to Atlanta and Emory University as part of a tour for her recently released and well received book, *BookMarks: Reading in Black and White—A Memoir*. Next fall, Professor Holloway plans to teach a graduate course on privacy, with a focus on race, gender, and sexuality. She anticipates taking a leave in Spring 2008 to complete her manuscript in progress, *Private Bodies/Public Texts*.

**Diane Nelson**, Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Associate Faculty in Women's Studies, is teaching two graduate courses this spring, *Medical Anthropology and Theories in Anthropology*. She is also working on two different book projects, both addressing Guatemala in the aftermath of civil war and genocide. One is an edited collection and the other a monograph that looks specifically at the question: when does war actually "end"? By studying the peace process and practices of reconciliation and memory, she examines the ways in which violence and loss are quantified. Professor Nelson hopes to begin fieldwork this summer on reparation projects that aim to address the victims of war as part of her interest in how accounting procedures and political accountability work together.

**Charlie Piot**, Interim Director of African and African American Studies and Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Associate Faculty in Women's Studies, is currently teaching a large Introduction to

African Studies class that seeks to address the resurgent undergraduate interest in Africa. Next fall, Professor Piot will co-teach a course with incoming Director of Women's Studies Ranjana Khanna

**Kathy Rudy**, Associate Professor of Women's Studies, continues work on her new book, *The Ethics of Earthlings: New Approaches to Animal Advocacy*. Last summer she spent several weeks conducting interviews with members of Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen, NY (<http://www.farmsanctuary.org/>). She also attended two national animal rights conferences. Through her teaching and research, she continues to seek points of connection between feminism and animal welfare. Next summer, she has been selected to participate in an ongoing workshop sponsored by the Institute for Animals and Society at NC State for scholars working on animal justice.

**Ara Wilson**, Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Director of Sexuality Studies, is teaching *Introduction to Sexuality Studies* for the second semester in a row and with waiting lists for enrollment in both terms. In March, Professor Wilson organized a panel discussion about the World Social Forum held this past January in Nairobi, Kenya. She is currently completing a paper on "NGOs as Erotic Sites," and continues work on her ongoing book project, *Sexual Latitudes*.

## Janie Long Appointed to Direct the Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Life

Janie Long, Ph.D. Family Therapy, is the new Director of the Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Life at Duke University. Dr. Long was formerly on the faculties of Antioch New England Graduate School, Purdue University, The University of Louisiana, and The University of Georgia where she directed master's and doctoral level family therapy training programs. Her teaching and research interests have been in the areas of sexuality and sex therapy, postmodern theories, multiculturalism, and the process of clinical supervision. Dr. Long is the author of numerous publications related to LGBTQ issues and has presented nationally and internationally in this area of study. She currently serves on the editorial boards of *The Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, *The Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, and *The Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*.

In addition to the ongoing programming of the

Center, several new initiatives are underway in consultation with the newly formed Advisory Board, which is made up of student leaders, faculty, and staff. Professor Robyn Wiegman of Women's Studies serves on the Board. Overall goals for the year include increasing the visibility and outreach of the Center across campus and expanding the dialogue on campus related to issues of sexuality and gender. Some of the expanded efforts of the Center toward these ends include: a new mentoring program between trained graduate students and newly identified LGBT undergraduates, hosting a dinner and conversation between LGBT students and faculty related to the experience of being LGBT on this campus, office hours on East Campus by Dr. Long, a newly formed LGBT Faculty and Staff group that will offer support and networking, and the formation of an ongoing discussion group for undergraduates to discuss personal issues and challenges.

## Sheila Broderick Joins the Women's Center

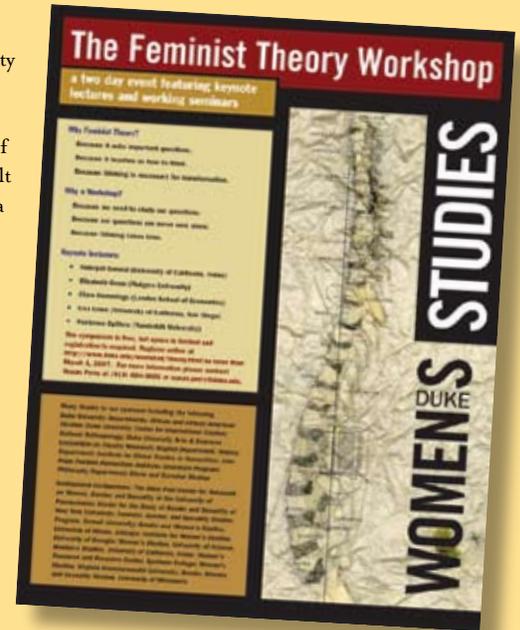
By Allie Hauser, Publications Team Leader

In 2006, Sheila Broderick joined the Women's Center from her private psychotherapy practice in Durham, a place she has called "home" since 1992. Sheila brings a wealth of experience from over fifteen years of service in the roles of clinician, director and manager in several local non-profit agencies that provided trauma treatment to children, adolescents, women and families. She is primarily interested in social justice, trauma, and issues that disproportionately affect women and minorities. She received her MSW from the University of South Carolina in 1988. In addition to providing on site counseling, emergency support services, and policy initiatives that support University wide efforts to provide healthy campus relationships, Sheila Broderick and the staff at the Women's Center creates, develops, and implements the Dating Violence Awareness Week and Sexual Assault Prevention Week programs. Both of these programs and other educational events throughout the year have been co-sponsored by the Women's Studies Program.

## “Success!” Feminist Theory Workshop, Duke University, March 23-24, 2007

The two day event featured keynotes by Inderpal Grewal (Professor of Women's Studies at the University of California at Irvine); Elizabeth Grosz (Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University); Clare Hemmings (Senior Lecturer in Gender Studies and Gender Theory at the London School of Economics); Lisa Lowe (Professor of Literature and Comparative Studies at the University of California at San Diego); and Hortense Spillers (Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor at Vanderbilt University). In addition, Tina Camp, Eva Cherniavsky, Ann Cvetovitch, Ranjana Khanna, Wahneema Lubiano, Jenny Terry, and Robyn Wiegman participated as seminar leaders.

The Workshop had nearly 200 registrants and was institutionally co-sponsored by: The Alice Paul Center for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality, the University of Pennsylvania; the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, New York University; Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Cornell University; Institute for Women's Studies, University of Georgia; Women's Studies, University of Arizona; Women's Studies, University of California, Irvine; Women's Research and Resource Center, Spelman College; Gender and Women's Studies, University of Illinois, Chicago; Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota; Women and Gender Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto; Women's Studies, Emory University; Gender and Women's Studies, University of California at Berkeley; and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Yale University. The Duke University co sponsors were: African and African American Studies; Duke University Center for International Studies; Cultural Anthropology; College of Arts & Sciences; English; History; the Institute for Global Studies in the Humanities; the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute; Literature; the Office of the President; the Office of the Provost; Philosophy; and Slavic and Eurasian Studies. Full coverage will appear in the fall newsletter.



## Sexuality Studies Program Builds Momentum



The Sexuality Studies Program (SXL), an undergraduate certificate program, is being revamped under the new directorship of Ara Wilson (interviewed in our last issue). This year, SXL hosted talks by Columbia University Anthropology Professor Elizabeth Povinelli, and Jenny Terry, Director and Associate Professor of Women's Studies at the University of California at Irvine. In February, the Program presented "Transnational Asian Erotics: Investigating the Interface of Area-Identity-Sexuality Studies," a panel discussion featuring Duke Professors from a range of fields. Anne Allison, Chair of the Department of Cultural Anthropology; Sean Metzger, Assistant Professor in the Department of English, and Tomiko Yoda, Associate Professor of Asian & African Languages & Literature, discussed approaches to desire and sexuality in Asia. SXL is also a major co-sponsor of a two day conference in late March called Ethnopornography, organized by Pete Sigal, Associate Professor of History. The Sexuality Studies Program is also working with the Institute for Critical U.S. Studies and the Center for Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Services on prospects for future programming

## Women's Studies Graduate Scholars Colloquium

The Graduate Scholars group met on January 22, 2007 in preparation for Judith Butler's visit to Duke for the "Collapse of Traditional Knowledge" Conference organized by the Program in Literature. Marc Schacter (Assistant Professor, Romance Studies) led a discussion of Michel Foucault's "What is a Critique?" and Butler's response to it, "What is a Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue." Graduate Students Leah Claire Allen and Amalle Dublon (both in the Program in Literature) followed Schacter's opening comments by posing a set of further questions.

At the Colloquium's second spring semester meeting on February 19, 2007, Professor Ara Wilson (Women's Studies and Director of Sexuality Studies) led a discussion about her recent article, "Queering Asia" (Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context 14 (November 2006)). The article rethinks geographies of queer sexuality in relationship to critical and area studies. Graduate students Ignacio Adriasola (Art History) and Calvin Hui (Literature) acted as official respondents, and Fiona Barnett (Literature) served as a moderator.

The final meeting of the Graduate Scholars for the year will be April 16, 2007 in the East Duke Parlors. Cindy Current, PhD candidate in English at the University of North Carolina and Duke Women's Studies certificate earner, will present work from her dissertation-in-progress, "After Darwin: Chance and Necessity in American Literature, 1880-1910." In preparation for the event, participants are asked to read a chapter on Mark Twain and Octavia Butler, whose fictions revise organizations of race and gender. Contact Susan Perry for the reading.

## Earth2Table: A NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY VENTURE GETS UNDERWAY

by Kathy Rudy, Associate Professor, Women's Studies

Earth to Table is an interdisciplinary project built around principles of environmental sustainability and animal welfare. Launched by Robyn Wiegman and Kathy Rudy, both from The Program in Women's Studies, the group serves as a discussion forum for the intersection of environmentalism, food justice, and animal welfare. Starting with the premise that monoculture agribusiness and animal factory farming are ruining both the planet and human health, as well as causing unnecessary suffering of billions of animals, Wiegman and Rudy felt the time was ripe for a cross-disciplinary faculty conversation to sort out the implications of "going green." Their first meeting in November 2006 brought together faculty from earth sciences, health sciences, Divinity, social sciences, law, and humanities for one of the most interdisciplinary conversations ever seen at this University. The group started by asking questions such as: what would it mean to build sustainable food practices, across the university and the globe? They concluded their first meeting by agreeing that good eating and "green living" should begin and end with the life of the mind.

For the second meeting, on January 19, 2007, the group read and discussed Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Approaching the discussion from such a wide range of backgrounds proved exceedingly fruitful

for many, and the conversation even spilled over into many email exchanges. The third meeting of the group was led by Jeff Welty, J.D. Lecturing Fellow (faculty) Law and Founder and Director of the Duke Animal Law Clinic. Welty spoke about animal law and practical directions for animal advocacy; from him, the group learned that, as a result in part of a large grant from Bob Barker, Duke is at the forefront, with one of the nation's only legal clinics devoted to animal law, and two faculty members working in the area. This meeting was open to students and over thirty people attended. As a result of this event, several undergrads are entertaining the possibility of law school, with a focus on animal law.

The E2T last meeting of the year was held on April 13, 2007 when the group welcomed Ben Bergmann from Fickle Creek Farm. Ben has spent the last six years transitioning from a full-time academic to a full-time farmer. He and his partner, Noah Ranells, started Fickle Creek Farm in Orange County with the objective of creating a system with minimum impact on the environment while humanely raising animals, cultivating a market garden, and managing small woodlots. Besides maintaining approximately 700 hens for egg production, their pasture-raised livestock includes goats, sheep, steers, pigs, and broilers. Fickle Creek Farm is to the triangle what Polyface Farm was to the Omnivore's Dilemma.

For more information on this interdisciplinary initiative, please contact Kathy Rudy at [krudy@acpub.duke.edu](mailto:krudy@acpub.duke.edu).



## Judith Butler Visits Duke University

By Alexis Pauline Gumbs, 2010

Judith Butler is alive, as proven by her recent visit to Duke to deliver a keynote address at the Collapse of Traditional Knowledge Conference organized by the Literature Program and co sponsored by Women's Studies. Butler, Maxine Elliot Professor in the Departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley and author of ten books about subjectivity, gender, and the possibility of human responsibility, did more than prove her own embodiment during her visit at the end of January. She also attracted our bodies to the scene of her address, as a "standing room only" crowd filled the Nelson Music Room for her talk on "Disciplinary and Critique" on Friday, January 26, 2007.

I repeat the (apparently obvious) fact of Butler's aliveness because the difference between Butler, as the figure behind the texts (we) students of gender and ethics have studied for the last two decades, and Butler, as a breathing individual, present in the Nelson Music room, is important in the context of her influential recent work *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005). Butler insists on attention to what it means to be alive and responsible in the face of loss, death, and the ever-present possibility of pain. Her keynote address furthered such considerations by tackling the difficult question of academic freedom in a time of increasing state and foundation censorship, when responsibility for living in a world of others is being profoundly denied. But I also remark (on) Butler's aliveness in order to highlight the intellectual contribution that I find, both personally and as a member of Duke's community, most crucial in her recent work.

When I first read Butler's 2004 collection *Precarious Life: Powers of Violence and Mourning*, I was engaged in my own personal process of mourning. I was struck

by her analysis of the experience of "not being ourselves" as a way of thinking about alternatives to violence on interpersonal and global scales. When Butler was at Duke for the conference, I was called to remember and reframe my own vulnerability, as a woman of color who has survived sexual assault. Her attention in *Giving an Account of Oneself* to what it means to be in community, created by more than one can either remember or own and responsible for more than one can understand, was particularly appropriate to our embattled process of accountability here, at Duke, in the face of unprecedented national attention and familiar tactics of enforced silence.

Butler's keynote address re-emphasized these points by focusing on the limits and the urgency of a critical relationship to power within the university, one that would be informed by a critique of the very disciplinary norms through which academic work is judged. Her address hailed those of us who are (still) alive and audible in the climate of the heightened "National Security" and the endless war on terror to be present to the normalization of state violence on the global stage. At the same time, her talk resonated with the current moment at Duke, when the violence of the university's status quo is particularly visible.

In his comment to Butler's address, Fredric Jameson, Director of the Institute for Critical Theory, invoked the difficulties that members of this academic community and this municipality have been facing in our attempts to respond to and be responsible for violence. Jameson mentioned the bravery required for something like accountability to be enacted. It is my sense that those of us who are still here gained perspective for our efforts towards an ethical intellectual relationship to community by Judith Butler's presence and especially by our engaged response to the difficult issues that she raised.



Alexis Gumbs is a doctoral candidate in English specializing in Caribbean literature.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### *Graduation with Distinction, Wednesday, April 18, 2007*

Undergraduate distinction candidates will present their work at 4:30 pm in the East Duke Parlors, with dinner to follow. Women's Studies majors, Patricia Agustin and Rachel Weeks will speak from their projects on "The Hybrid Immigrant Woman" and "Fashion, Free Trade and Feminism," respectively. Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan, Literature 2007 and member of the Women's Studies senior seminar course this spring, will present from her thesis, "When Protesting Ethnic Meets the Protestant Ethnic."

### *Women's Studies Commencement, Friday, May 11, 2007*

The Commencement celebration in honor of Women's Studies majors, minors and certificate earners is scheduled for Friday, May 11, 7:00 pm in the Nelson Music Room. A buffet dinner in the East Duke Parlors will follow. Join us in celebrating the completion of undergraduate degrees for our majors Patricia Agustin, Chiranka De Croos, Christine James, Rachel Weeks, Amy Levenberg, Shadee Malaklou and our minors Sweta Patel, Megan Brooks, Lauren Rodman, and Mary Claire Grant; and graduate certificates for Katherine Bryant, Silvia Bettez, and Keitha Wright.

### *Gender, Empire, And The Politics of Central And Eastern Europe, Central European University, Budapest, May 17-18, 2007*

This symposium will address the emergence of Gender Studies within the academies of Central and Eastern Europe by reflecting on how the field is taking shape in relation to the post-socialist state, the European community, and contemporary practices of empire. It is co-organized by Gender Studies, Central European University; Women's Studies, Duke University; and the Helen Chair in American Literature and Culture, University of Washington.

### *Melancholic States Conference, Lancaster University, September 27-28, 2007*

Women's Studies at Duke will co sponsor an international conference on the concept of melancholia being organized by the Institute of Women's Studies at Lancaster University in the UK

## Nancy Fraser, Henry A. and Louise Loeb Professor of Political and Social Science, Department of Political Science, the New School for Social Research.

Thursday, October 25 lecture at 4 pm, location TBD

Friday, October 26, Seminar for Faculty and Graduate Students, Noon, location TBD

## COURSES FOR FALL

The fall course schedule features several new courses, we are pleased to announce that Ranjana Khanna and Charlie Piot will focus the advanced seminar, *Interdisciplinary Debates*, on the concept of asylum. This seminar is underwritten by a Ford Foundation grant and will feature course development grants for faculty participants as well.

<b>WST 49S</b>	Gender and Sports- Donna Lisker	<b>WST 150S.05</b>	Modernism, Women & Performance - Charles Del Dotta
<b>WST 90</b>	Gender and Everyday Life - Kathy Rudy	<b>WST 160</b>	Feminism in Historical Perspectives- Kathi Weeks
<b>WST 95 FCS.01</b>	Sex and the Citizen (Focus only) - Caroline Light	<b>WST 161</b>	Money, Sex and Power - Kathi Weeks
<b>WST 109/SXL 115</b>	Intro to Sexuality Studies - Ara Wilson	<b>WST 163</b>	Interpreting Bodies- Kathy Rudy
<b>WST 116</b>	Gender, Science, Technology and Society- Marie Hicks	<b>WST 162</b>	Gender and Popular Culture - Jonna Eagle
<b>WST 150S.01</b>	Black Love: Romantic Relations and the African American Experience -Chanequa Walker-Barnes	<b>WST 240</b>	Critical Genealogies we need the subtitle here- AraWilson
<b>WST 150S.02</b>	Body Politics - Laura Grattan	<b>WST 360</b>	Interdisciplinary Debates: Asylum - Ranji Khanna and Charlie Piot
<b>WST 150S.03</b>	Feminism and Fundamentalism - Russell Leo		

## Become a Friend of Women's Studies!

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