

WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

October 2005

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ANNOUNCEMENTS :

Next brownbag:
November 18th: Kay Jenkins (Sociology),
"Negotiating Female Submission and Gender Egalitarianism in an Evangelical New Religious Movement"



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Questions? Comments?
Suggestions?

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Update from Director:

Welcome to the 2005-6 academic year in Women's Studies! The semester is well under way, and we have already had a number of successful events.

The Black Studies/Women's Studies brownbag series started with a talk by Anne Charity, a new faculty member in English/Linguistics, called "Repeat after me: the linguistic and educational ramifications of teacher talk." The room was packed, and Anne had us all practicing different ways to say "pen." Our next brownbag, on October 21st, will be given by another new faculty member, Gayle Murchison, who is jointly appointed in Music and Black Studies. The title of her talk is "The Little Piano Girl: Two Early Piano Solos of Mary Lou Williams". We hope to see you all there.

We also had our Annual Planning Meeting, at which we discussed ways to incorporate an activism component into the "Introduction to Women's Studies" course, and our plans for expansion of the program. And on Family Weekend, we hosted a brunch for students and their families at which Women's Studies students Alex Berman and Nadina Perera gave informal talks about their summer internships. Alex interned with Health and Human Services in their Office of Minority Health; and Nadina worked with the Shakti Foundation in Bangladesh.

Upcoming events this year include a conference on sexualities on March 17th and 18th, 2006, featuring the Annual Minnie Braithwaite Lecture in Women's Studies, given this year by Lisa Duggan, Associate Professor of History, American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies at New York University, author of *Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy* (2003), *Sapphic Slashers: Sensationalism, Sexology and Lesbian Subjectivities* (2000), and *Sex Wars: Essays in Sexual Dissent and American Politics*, co-ed. with Nan Hunter (1995). The closing event of the conference will be a screening of Beverly Seckinger's *Laramie Inside Out*, a diary/documentary which explores the ongoing reverberations in her hometown community of Matthew Shepard's 1998 murder. Beverly Seckinger is Associate Professor in the Department of Media Arts, University of Arizona, and she will be here to introduce the film. There will also be a number of speakers from William & Mary, so come and hear your colleagues/professors/students present their research!

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A Conference on Sexualities

College of William and Mary, March 17th and 18th, 2006

featuring the Annual Minnie Braithwaite Lecture in Women's Studies, Friday,
March 17th, 7.00 pm

The Annual Minnie Braithwaite Lecture in Women's Studies commemorates the efforts of Minnie Braithwaite to attend classes at William and Mary in 1896. On October 2 of that year, Braithwaite petitioned the faculty of the college to allow her to attend chemistry lectures. The faculty assembly voted 4-3 to deny her request. Six days later, after much discussion about Braithwaite's appeal of their decision, the group rejected a more sweeping resolution that would have allowed women into the science lectures. It was another 22 years before women were admitted to the college in 1918. We are very grateful to Mrs Dorothy Ross, Minnie Braithwaite's daughter, for her generous support of this lecture series.

Guest Speakers:

Lisa Duggan (Minnie Braithwaite Lecturer), Associate Professor of History, American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies at New York University, author of *Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy* (2003), *Sapphic Slashers: Sensationalism, Sexology and Lesbian Subjectivities* (2000), and *Sex Wars: Essays in Sexual Dissent and American Politics*, co-ed. with Nan Hunter (1995).

Beverly Seckinger, Associate Professor, Department of Media Arts, University of Arizona, who will be screening and introducing her most recent film, *Laramie Inside Out*, a diary/documentary which explores the ongoing reverberations in her hometown community of Matthew Shepard's 1998 murder. Other productions include *Mommie Queerest* (1997), a comic short about mother/daughter conflicts over gender socialization; *Bottoms Up* (1996) and *Alice Unplugged* (1996), experimental satires on lesbian life in the 90's, both co-directed with Joyan Saunders; *Planet in My Pocket* (1995), a mixed-genre critique of consumer multiculturalism; and *Letter From Morocco* (1991), a personal documentary about neo-colonial relations.

Speakers from William & Mary will include:

- **Christy Burns**, English
- **Rachel DiNitto**, Modern Languages (Japanese)
- **Arthur Knight**, English and American Studies, and **Kevin Flanagan**, American Studies
- **Leisa Meyer**, History and American Studies
- **Juliana Mills**, Assistant Director/Personal Counselor, Center for Counseling, Coaching and Consulting, Christopher Newport University; Women's Studies
- **Deborah Morse**, English
- **Gul Ozyegin**, Sociology and Women's Studies

Workshops on:

Teaching Sexuality in the Classroom, led by **Nancy Gray**, Associate Professor of English and Women's Studies

Activism in the Classroom, led by **Andrea Westcot**, American Studies and Women's Studies.

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Focus on Faculty Research: Leisa Meyer

Leisa Meyer, former Director of Women's Studies, is currently working on a book called *Talking Sex: A History of Sexuality in the U.S. Since WWII*. Here is how she describes her project:

Immediately following World War II Alfred Kinsey released two studies of human sexuality. These volumes were alternately vilified and acclaimed by the popular media, religious and state leaders, and the millions of Americans who discussed his findings during the course of their daily lives. Whether it was deemed horrifying or titillating Kinsey's work was a subject of intense conversation among friends, co-workers, and relatives for months after it was formally published. Despite the fact that most of Kinsey's subjects seemed to lead fairly conventional sexual lives, the focus of attention and debate was the varied and fluid sexual experiences recounted by the minority. This glimpse of, by dominant standards, deviant sexual expressions was profoundly unsettling to many Americans and equally affirming to others. While Kinsey's survey did not begin such conversations it gave sexuality public legitimacy as a topic of discussion between individuals and in popular media forums. Sexuality, always intertwined with personal identity, became a means to claim liberation and simultaneously a barometer of a nation's morality. The issues raised in responses to Kinsey's work were a means of making sense of broader cultural shifts resulting from American involvement in WWII. Discussions about and representations of sexuality became a way of explaining and containing challenges to gender relations and racial systems of order. In the years following the release of Kinsey's study, Americans would find other modes through which conversations about sexuality might have an explanatory power.

My book project, *Talking Sex: A History of Sexuality in the U.S. Since WWII*, focuses on sexuality as a site - meaning a particularly salient and visible mode of discussion - within which broader cultural anxieties are manifested. In other words, sexuality is a language or venue, within which power relations between men and women, different racial/ethnic groups, classes and states are expressed and configured. As such the study of sexuality is the study of politics. Sexuality is central to Americans' understandings of themselves. It is a means to define respectability and propriety and to claim identities divergent from the norm. It is a means of creating community and defining those outside these communities. And it is a means of defining threats that reflect and shape broader cultural attitudes toward race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Major institutions, governments, courts, churches, and the medical profession, have served as arbiters, constructing normative and deviant sexualities and providing criteria for defining the range within each. And arbiters' authority has always been contested by those who refuse to submit to such definitions. Making sense of a period bracketed by Kinsey on one end and the Clinton sex scandals on the other, by sexual expression as life affirming and sex equaling death, by the removal of homosexuality from the list of "official" mental disorders and the furor over the potential acceptance of gays and lesbians into the nation's military, and the most recent uproar over the question of same-sex marriage, requires that we understand the history of sexuality as far less simple than a movement from repression to liberation.

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Women's Studies students attend the National Collegiate Global Women's and Human Rights Conference in Washington DC

In April 2005, Women's Studies sponsored six students from William & Mary (Stephanie Cappa, Cosmo Fujiyama, Jessica Menter, Hilary Moise, Heather Kibbee, Emilie Dubois, and Jack Warner) to attend a major activist conference in Washington DC. Here is what Cosmo Fujiyama had to say about her experiences:

Hosted by the Feminist Majority Foundation, the National Collegiate Global Women's and Human Rights Conference held in Washington D.C. in April of 2005 was an amazing event devoted to mobilizing students in the worldwide discussion of women's rights, human rights, economic justice, and the environment. Workshops were presented by some of the world's most prominent scholars and leaders of the feminist movement and led insightful discourse on topics including: Transforming Contraception into Human Rights: AIDS, Condoms, and Birth Control; Human Trafficking and Globalization in the New Millennium; The US Failure to Abide by International Policies, Treaties, and Laws; Spreading the Word of Hate: Religious Fundamentalism, Peace and Women's Rights; and Implementing Positive Feminist Change: The UN's Role in Promoting Peace, Human Rights, Women's Equality, and a Healthy Environment.

At this conference, I was introduced to the tremendous breadth of topics that address global women's rights and was left intellectually electrified by the vast research concerning issues of gender equity. Also, the conference offered a fantastic venue for building strong networks to further solidarity and expanding ways to access resources and information. Most importantly, engaging in the enlightening dialogue with hundreds of other broadminded, motivated, and inquiring students representing all parts the nation really challenged me to ask what it meant be a women, a feminist and an activist.

I can't wait til next year!

Cosmo Fujiyama



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Women's Studies receives generous gift to fund Braithwaite lectures

This spring, the Women's Studies Program was fortunate enough to receive a generous donation of \$6,000 from Mrs. Dorothy Ross of Live Oak, CA, daughter of Minnie Braithwaite, whose experiences at the College of William and Mary are remembered in the Annual Minnie Braithwaite Lecture in Women's Studies. Mrs. Ross's gift supports the Braithwaite Lecture series, and we are profoundly grateful for her generosity. Her donation means we will be able to continue the Braithwaite lecture series for many years to come.

The Braithwaite lectures commemorate Minnie Braithwaite's courage in attempting to attend classes at William and Mary and celebrate the eventual admission of women to the College of William and Mary – not a moment too soon! On October 2, 1896, Braithwaite petitioned the faculty of the college to allow her to attend chemistry lectures. The faculty assembly voted 4-3 to deny her request. Six days later, after much discussion about Braithwaite's appeal of their decision, the group rejected a more sweeping resolution that would have allowed women into the science lectures. It was another twenty-two years before women were admitted to the college in 1918.

The first Braithwaite Lecture was in 1996, and past Braithwaite lecturers include Helen Cam Walker, History, W&M; Leisa Meyer, History and American Studies, W&M; Maureen Fitzgerald, Religious Studies and American Studies, W&M; Joyce Follet, Producer, *Step by Step*; Susan Cahn, History, SUNY, Buffalo; Patricia Martin, Sociology, Florida State University; Stacy Wolf, Theatre and Dance, University of Texas at Austin; Jane Espenson, writer and producer of *The Gilmore Girls*, *Ellen*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; and Laurie Kahn Leavitt, director of *A Midwife's Tale* and *Tupperware!*.

This year's Braithwaite Lecturer is **Lisa Duggan**, Associate Professor of History, American Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies at New York University, and author of *Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy* (2003), *Sapphic Slashers: Sensationalism, Sexology and Lesbian Subjectivities* (2000), and *Sex Wars: Essays in Sexual Dissent and American Politics*, co-ed. with Nan Hunter (1995). She will be speaking on Friday, March 17th, 2006, at 7 pm.

Dean's Prize Winners, April 2005



It seems a long time ago now, but we are proud to announce the 2005 winners of the Dean's Prize for Student Scholarship on Women. They are:

Kristen Proehl, graduate student in American Studies, for her paper "Re-Evaluating Sentimental Violence in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred*"

Caitlin Freeman, undergraduate, for her paper "Sex and the Street: Adolescent Girls and the Sex Culture of Deerfield, MA, 1730-1755"

Congratulations to Kristen and Caitlin!

The Dean's Prize for Student Scholarship on Women is awarded to a William and Mary student whose work is especially successful in advancing our knowledge of women. Students may submit term papers or other class assignments, independent study projects, honors or thesis research. Projects and papers of up to 35 pages in length will be considered. The competition is judged by the Women's Studies Prizes Committee. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences will award two prizes of \$100 each. This competition is open to all undergraduate and graduate arts and science students.

The deadline is in early April, so watch out for more announcements!

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Friends of Women's Studies

Friends of Women's Studies is a new organization which offers an opportunity for women in the local area to become more involved with Women's Studies at the College of William and Mary, to attend various events and to contribute their support to the campus community.

Friends membership for 2005-6 includes the Women's Studies and Black Studies brownbag lecture series, Fridays at noon; Women's Studies newsletters; borrowing rights at the Women's Studies library; film screenings and discussions in *Introduction to Women's Studies* course forums on Tuesday evenings, Spring semester 2006; conference on Sexualities, March 2006; and the speaker series, *Careers for Women*. Founding Friends are also invited to join a monthly book group with Friends, faculty and students. This year, the book group will discuss the following books: Friday November 11th: Valerie Martin, *Property*; Friday December 2nd: Cristina Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban*; Friday January 20th: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*; Friday February 17th: Linda Hogan, *Power*; Friday March 17th: Alice Randall, *The Wind Done Gone*; Friday April 14th: Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*.

2005-6 annual membership dues for Friends of Women's Studies are \$35 for Friends level, and \$75 for Founding Members. If you are an employee of the College, Friends membership is free and Founding Friend Membership costs \$20. If you would like to join, please download the registration form from the Women's Studies website, www.wm.edu/womensstudies, or contact Ann Repeta on 221-2457, darepe@wm.edu.

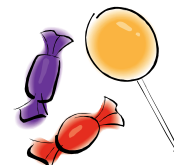
Careers for Women Speaker Series:

Ever wondered what it's like to be a woman and work for the UN? Come and hear

Ameerah Haq

(Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Kabul, Afghanistan)

talking about her life and work on Tuesday, November 1st, 7 pm, in Washington 201.



And, of course, feel free to stop by Morton 322 any time and sample Ann's M&M's, now in a new, improved container.....

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WMST ALUMS COLUMN



Update on our 2005 graduates

This year we had a record number of graduates in Women's Studies, fourteen majors and five minors. What are they doing now, we wondered?

Here are some of their stories:

- **Kathryn Higgins** accepted an AmeriCorps VISTA position with Planned Parenthood of Western Washington. She is working with Checkpoint, which is a pregnancy prevention program for at-risk youth in Seattle schools
- **You Lee Kim** is at William & Mary Law School.
- **Kelli Raker** is pursuing a Master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs at Ohio State University
- **Camille Thompson** is pursuing a Master's degree in Library Science at Rutgers University
- **Tina Nguyen** is in New York, working as the new Development Associate at Human Rights in China
- **Kelly Barker** is teaching second grade in the Chesterfield County Public Schools

If you are an alum, please write to us and tell us what you are doing now, or fill in the Graduate/Alum Information Form on our website.



Update from Kathryn Higgins '05

I made the epic trek out to Seattle before Labor Day, and I am now working at Planned Parenthood through AmeriCorps. So of course, since I'm in AmeriCorps I'm penny pinching and living on food stamps and such, but it's Seattle, so it's fabulous nonetheless. Did you know you can check up to 100 books out of the Seattle libraries?! This is very bad for me. Anyway, my title at PP is Tutoring Coordinator for the Checkpoint program. Checkpoint is a pregnancy prevention program for at-risk middle schoolers, and basically I plan afterschool tutoring and all the field trips (there are many), which is pretty great. However, I miss WM quite a bit, which is kind of annoying. Enjoy it while you can, kids! And move to Seattle when you're done!

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Exit interviews with May 2005 graduates

This summer, we conducted exit interviews with five Women's Studies students, a mixture of majors and minors, to see if there were ways in which we could improve students' experiences in the Women's Studies Program. Here are some of the things they said in answer to some of our questions:

- **Why did you choose to major/minor in WMST?**

Three of them said they were drawn in by taking WMST 205 for the GER and then loving it. Some also said they found they were taking more and more WMST courses and liking them more and more, which shifted the focus of their undergraduate program. None of them had any idea that they would be majoring/minoring in WMST before they took a course in it.

- **Do you think we offer enough courses? Are there any obvious gaps in our curriculum?**

The students suggested that we need more courses in the following areas (some of which we are about to introduce): social science in general, queer theory, psychology, upper-level course on history of women's movements/activism, women practitioners of pop culture, sexuality, and lower-level English courses that were less literary than upper-level seminars. [We have added a new senior seminar on queer theory which will be taught for the first time by Professor Christy Burns in Spring 2006.]

- **Is the major/minor academically demanding, or not demanding enough?**

Students were unanimous that it is already demanding enough. So we've decided not to make it any harder – for the moment anyway....

Exit interviews with May 2005 graduates Cont.

- **Student suggestions:**

- Create a page on the website devoted to career help, with links and information about careers in WMST and relevant organizations. [Maya Johnson, the Black Studies/Women's Studies Graduate Assistant, is working on this.]
- Have a section on the web with alumni info and contact information for current students thinking about different careers, and looking for advice from W&M alums who are working in different fields. [Maya is also working on this!]
- Create a *Woman's Guide to William & Mary* from the student's point of view, with information about the WMST program but also about other relevant issues, places, people etc. [Kathryn Higgins '05 and Thao Nguyen, a current WMST major, are working on this.]
- Have a ten-hour activism/volunteering requirement for majors. [In Fall 2006, we plan to hold a May Seminar for instructors who are teaching "Introduction to Women's Studies" in Spring 2006, to discuss ways to include a small-scale activist project in the requirements for the class.]