



# Women's and Gender Studies Newsletter 2015

## A Note from Dr. Hephzibah Roskelly, Interim Director:

I want to thank everybody in the WGS Program for their hard work, collaborative spirit and good will this semester. We've had much to do and we've accomplished a lot. We have a new director in place, a new lecturer position to search for, a strong curriculum in undergraduate and graduate studies, and an active, supportive group of faculty across our university.

Your generosity to me, as well as your enormous help and advice, has made my work both possible and fun.

All the very best to you all--my friends and colleagues.

Hepsie



## Our Mission Statement

The central focus of the Women's and Gender Studies Program is to explain how gender is produced within social institutions and how these institutions affect individual lives and to analyze the mutual constitution of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, and religion. The program addresses issues of neglect, omission, and bias in curricula while honing critical thinking skills vital to a liberal education. Faculty in Women's and Gender Studies are expected to further this vision through their teaching, research, and service.

## Dr. Mark Rifkin

*New Director of Women's and Gender Studies*

The Women's & Gender Studies Program is pleased to announce Dr. Mark Rifkin's appointment as Program Director, effective August 2015. Dr. Rifkin has been a professor in the UNCG English Department since 2008 and his work focuses on Native American writing and politics from the eighteenth century onward. Rifkin is a prolific scholar and his book *When Did Indians Become Straight?* received the 2011 Best Subsequent Book in Native American and Indigenous Studies from the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association as well as the 2011 John Hope Franklin Prize for best book in American Studies from the American Studies Association. Dr. Rifkin has been appointed to serve as director from 2015-2019.



The WGS Program is delighted about the stability, organization, and hope for the future that his appointment will surely bring.

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## Job Sharing as a Feminist Practice

*Welcoming Sadie Kneidel*



This year, we welcomed Sadie Kneidel to share Program Administration duties for WGS with Isabell Moore. Sadie's appointment marks a step forward in enacting feminist work principles at UNCG and in our program.

Dr. Hephzibah Roskelley, interim director and colleague of Dr. Rifkin in the English department, says that he will bring "new horizons" to the program.

"He's an energetic, deeply dedicated scholar and teacher, and has so many good ideas about WGS."

## Beth Walker Retiring

*A Warm Farewell to a Treasured Colleague*

At the close of this academic year, Beth Walker will be retiring from her position as Senior Lecturer and Undergraduate Advisor in Women's & Gender Studies. Beth has taught in WGS since 2000, and is well-known by students and faculty alike for her enthusiastic mentoring of undergraduate students and recruitment of majors and minors, her stellar advising, her years of teaching in the Honors and Freshman Seminar Programs, her involvement in all the behind-the-scenes work of WGS, and her service to AAUW and many feminist causes and organizations.

WGS Director Hephzibah Roskelley says, "Beth was a bright and funny graduate student in my Women's Studies class in the late 90s. Her energy and enthusiasm for the work of WGS has never wavered, and she

We thank Dr. Rifkin in advance for his service to the program and look forward to the contributions he will make to the work of our program.



Beth Walker (left) with student Anna Malika (right)

has contributed so much to the life of this program that it's hard to imagine us without her. We wish her a delightful retirement and lots of visits back to UNCG." WGS will be hiring a new lecturer to take on the Intro to Women's and Gender Studies courses which Beth has so skillfully taught over the last fifteen years. However, we know that Beth Walker can never be replaced. We are incredibly appreciative of her time and devotion to our program and we wish her all the best. She will be missed.

Isabell and Sadie share their duties in a highly structured, intentional arrangement called "job sharing" which emerged from second-wave feminist efforts to support women in the workplace and provide work-family balance. In *Feminism is For Everybody*, bell hooks asserts, "To live fully and well, to do work which enhances self-esteem and self-respect while being paid a living wage, we will need programs of job sharing" (p. 52). Furthermore, the arrangement aligns with WGS's focus on "gender. . . within social institutions and how these institutions affect individual lives" (WGS Mission Statement). WGS is delighted to take this innovative step and lead by example, in keeping with the program's mission and history.

Sadie credits a college course in Feminist Theology with awakening the seeds of WGS consciousness previously planted by her forward-thinking mother. She proceeded to earn a BA in Women's Studies and Spanish from Guilford College in 2005 and an MS in

Counseling from UNCG in 2013. In the meantime, she has worked in international education at UNCG, GTCC, and Guilford College, both with incoming immigrants and refugees as well as American students traveling abroad. She is also the co-author of two books on sustainable living, *Veggie Revolution* and *Going Green*. She participates in community activism around the intersection of sexism with other systems of oppression, including racism and environmental exploitation.

In her new position, Sadie finds it "refreshing to work in a community in which systems of oppression are commonly understood and taken into consideration. I love the way WGS students, faculty, and staff encourage each other to think more deeply on issues of feminisms, sexism, and inequality. I look forward to helping WGS get more organized and efficient than ever before."

# OUR STUDENTS

## New MA Students



**Savannah Behrent** received a B.A. in both Women's and Gender Studies and English from UNCG. Through a fortuitous twist of fate she was only accepted to one graduate program, the M.A. in WGS at UNCG. Though she originally thought that this was a tragic circumstance, Savannah has found a home in this program where the faculty is eager to offer support, guidance, and often times therapy when graduate school feels like the hardest journey imaginable. She is currently deciding on a thesis topic, and has a passion for a range of issues including post-9/11 humanism, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory, among many others.

When not studying or being buried under a mountain of assigned readings, Savannah is a graduate assistant for WGS and coordinates most events that take place for the program. Savannah is also a lover of all things baked goods and can often be found making muffins, bread, or other delicious items (to which the other graduate assistants and student staff can attest). Originally from Upstate New York, Savannah hopes to return to the North to pursue either a PhD in WGS or possibly law school. While her post-graduation future seems incredibly murky at this point and often times daunting, Savannah knows that the WGS program is preparing her to be successful in all future endeavors and is confident that the support of faculty and staff is the reason why she is still sane and working towards graduation. If all else fails, Savannah can snuggle up with her puppy and her partner, and watch "Shark Tank" until the end of time.

**Lauren Maggart** is in her first year of the Women and Gender Studies M.A Program. She received her B.A from Sewanee: The University of the South where she spent two years researching the portrayal of gender in visual art from the 1960's.



After graduation she lived in New York City where she worked with LGBT non-profits until moving to North Carolina to start graduate school. She is on the Gender and Community Leadership track and wants to return to working in the non-profit sector after graduation.

**Danielle Achiaa Boachie** is a first year Women's & Gender Studies grad student and cat lover. She received her B.A. in Women's Studies from UNC Chapel Hill in 2011. She is also working to get a certificate in African American and African Diaspora Studies. As a queer immigrant of color, Danielle is a full time feminist and is therefore very passionate about WGS. She spends her free time



doing social justice work focusing on anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist movements, and is a member of the BlackLivesMatter Youth Assembly in Durham. She has a blog called Womancipation Proclamation and is also a Professional Dominatrix ([www.womancipation.wordpress.com](http://www.womancipation.wordpress.com)).

Danielle hopes to get her PhD in WGS or Feminist Studies. As a sex worker, she is interested in understanding how the sex industry can be made into a safer space for women of color and LGBTQ workers while acknowledging the work exists within a sexist society that produces the patriarchal conditions necessary to reinforce women as sexual objects to be used by men. Her thesis work, however, will reflect the ways in which misogynoir (anti-Black misogyny) has been used to systematically erase the legitimacy of Black womanhood in seemingly progressive movements. She is just beginning her thesis journey, but she is looking forward to narrowing her topic down and learning a lot about herself along the way. Ultimately, Danielle hopes to become best friends with Dr. Angela Davis.

**Melanie Pringle** is a North Carolina native whose path to WGS has been neither straight nor narrow. She grew up in the Triangle and graduated from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in 2005. She moved to the Triad to attend Guilford College, where she received a BA in Music - Vocal Performance and a BA in Spanish in 2009. Guilford provided her with a formative education that encouraged equity, social justice, and community mindfulness when engaging in the world both



personally and professionally. After working four years in various service positions for Forsyth County, including the animal shelter, a library branch, and the health department, she decided to return to school to gain the qualifications to work in her interest areas. She began the MS/Eds School Counseling program at UNCG from 2013-2014, but realized that this path ultimately would not allow her to do the type of work she wanted. Working as a graduate assistant at the UNCG Center for Women's Health and Wellness helped her to reinvigorate her passion for feminism and social justice, so she transitioned to the WGS program in Fall 2014. She is interested in reproductive justice, body image and physical embodiment, and the influence of the media and popular culture in shaping physical and sexual identity, particularly among teenagers. Melanie desires to become a certified sexuality educator and do community advocacy and education around healthy teenage sexuality. She would also like to find a way to incorporate her love and talent for music into her social justice work.

The application deadline for the Master of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies is February 1. The Graduate Certificate has rolling admissions. Apply at <http://grs.uncg.edu/apply-online/>



## Graduate Certificate Students

The WGS graduate certificate, usually taken along with an MA or PhD in another field of study, helps to prepare graduates for interdisciplinary teaching and careers in nonprofit, as well as governmental and/or corporate venues. The learning outcomes of the program include the ability to demonstrate interdisciplinary understanding of the ways that gender, race, culture, class, sexuality, and more function in society. The following is a selection of a few WGS graduate certificate students.

**Melissa Ridley Elmes** is originally from Newport News, Virginia and is now a resident of Winston-Salem. She is a third-year doctoral candidate in medieval literature in the UNCG English Department, and has completed the Women's and Gender Studies Certificate. She works in post-Conquest through fifteenth century British literatures and cultures, with wide-ranging interests. Her dissertation looks at textual scenes of feasts and feasting as rhetorical acts and cultural artifacts in medieval British texts. Elmes' experiences in the WGS certificate program include an independent study with Dr. Baker and directed reading with Dr. Vines. Elmes has made use of much of the knowledge gained through her WGS coursework in both her teaching/research and writing endeavors. She seeks to include at least one unit focusing on women and gender issues in each of the courses she teaches and has worked on numerous projects that her WGS coursework has made possible. Elmes credits her confidence in conducting and writing scholarship on women to the excellent training and support she has received at the hands of the UNCG WGS faculty with whom she has worked.

**Leah Milne** is originally from Boston and is a recent transplant to Indianapolis. She will be receiving her PhD in English this coming May. Milne is currently teaching composition at the University of Indianapolis. Her areas of interest include post-1945 American literature, ethnic American literature, postcolonial theory, women's and gender studies, authorship, and world literature. Her dissertation, which she is working on revising into a book, looks at how post-1989 ethnic American novelists are challenging the limits of multiculturalism by writing self-conscious (meta)fiction that reframes ethnic identity as dynamic and responsive to economic, social, and political changes. Milne experiences in the WGS Graduate Certificate program include an independent study with Dr. Moore that focused on issues of gender and authorship in postcolonial and transnational literatures. She also received grants for classes and conferences. Milne considers one of her most exciting accomplishments in the program to be securing a Sally and Alan Cone Student Grant for Special Projects to expand UNCG's library collection to include more Filipino and Filipino American texts.

**Gwyn Strickland** is originally from Winston Salem but has lived in Greensboro for many years. She lives on a small farm in Greensboro with horses, dogs, and cats that she loves caring for. Strickland has a BS Degree in Business from UNCG and worked in business before deciding to return to UNCG in 2008 and get her BA and MA in English so that she could teach. Strickland says she

fell in love with the WGS program and stayed an extra semester to earn her post-baccalaureate certificate in WGS. She graduated in December 2014 with the MA in English and WGS Certificate. During her time in the WGS program, she found the courses to be rich and eye-opening. She especially loved her work with Dr. Roskelly, who she considers and inspiration as a teacher and as a person. She hopes to teach a course similar to Roskelly's Women's Rhetoric and Feminist Pedagogy in the future. Strickland currently works in the Student Success Center, helping students navigate college and improve in their academic skills. She also teaches horseback riding lessons at her farm in Greensboro and hopes to grow this business this year as she finds working with horses extremely rewarding.

## Graduate Alumni Profile

**Lauren Pereira** graduated from the WGS MA program in the Spring of 2013. During her time in the program, she worked as a graduate assistant in the WGS office, and her academic and activist interests were focused on diversity in the LGBTQ community and LGBTQ activism. After having some difficulty finding work in North Carolina, she and her partner, Kelly, moved back to her hometown of Westerly, Rhode Island. Pereira immediately found work in New London, Connecticut as the manager of a health center with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England.



Lauren Pereira (left) with her partner Kelly Stanley (right).

As the manager of the health center, she supervises a staff of five clinic assistants and two clinicians. Her work as a Planned Parenthood health center manager requires a commitment to the following: access to reproductive and sexual healthcare including abortion, dismantling abortion stigma, providing quality services regardless of ability to pay, the right to sexual education, providing services to marginalized communities, and respecting each patient to make educated and informed choices about their bodies and their lives. She credits her time in the Women's and Gender Studies Master's Program as well as her time as a Graduate Assistant in the office with helping to prepare her for this kind of critical work.

In her personal time she enjoys spending time with her partner outdoors hiking, kayaking, going clamming, and visiting major cities close by. They have two much-loved fur babies: a dog, Brody and a cat, Rigby.

Our Women's and Gender Studies Master of Arts Program offers both thesis and internship options so that students can tailor their experience to their interests. Students may choose to complete a thesis, an internship, or both!

### THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Although the thesis is often considered to be the only option by students, those who have completed their internships through the WGS 602 course cannot say enough great things about it. WGS Program Administrator Isabell Moore, who is an alum of the MA program, says the following:

"I love that our MA internship seminar helps students figure out how to connect the theoretically complex and critically engaged ideas that they explore throughout their MA studies with their engagement in non-academic community projects. Our alums report that the work they did in the MA program and in the Internship seminar informs how they engage in the day-to-day of their community work and makes them more thoughtful and effective change-makers and advocates. . . Other WGS programs are hungry for tools to help them develop critically engaged internships the way we already do."

Sara Forcella, who graduated with her MA in WGS in May 2014, interned at the YWCA of Greensboro during the Spring 2014 semester. During her internship, she worked with at risk teen girls and young mothers to discuss things like healthy relationships and self-care. During her time in graduate school, she focused mainly on intimate partner violence research and advocacy and worked closely with Dr. Christine Murray from the Counseling Department to develop advocacy skills and experience.

Forcella currently works for North Carolina State University, as the Rape Prevention Education Coordinator. In this position she works closely with community and campus stake-holders to develop and implement interpersonal violence prevention programs on campus. Her work also includes working with a student group called The Movement who facilitates workshops about interpersonal violence prevention to peers. She still works closely with Dr. Christine Murray from UNCG as a contributor to her web based campaign which seeks to empower survivors of domestic violence. As a contributor she typically writes one to two blogs per month about issues of gender based violence.

Forcella says that her internship really showed her what she was and was not looking for in a job and that it gave her experience working hands on with teens and young adults, something that she greatly enjoyed. More than anything, she says, gaining the experience gave her more confidence and a resume boost.

### THE THESIS EXPERIENCE

We are continually amazed by the creative and exciting work that our Master's students produce during their time with us. Our graduate program offers a thesis track which gives students the opportunity to work closely with faculty to develop independent scholarship through a focused discussion of a particular subject.

Sherronda Brown's thesis project, *The Haunted Ground We Walk On: (Un)Knowable Gendered and Racialized Subjects* certainly demonstrates the ingenuity and inspiring nature of the scholarship that our students create. Her thesis analyzes haunting narratives in cinematic texts, such as *Shutter* (2008), *Candyman* (1992), and popular television horror series *The Walking Dead*, exploring the significance of gendered and racialized violences on the screen while contending with the normalization of these violences in reality. Through connecting social phenomena in our material world with the abject hauntings of gendered and racialized subjects in the supernatural world, she argues that these ghost and zombie texts often re-inscribe socially constructed ideologies of femininity and masculinity as gendered scripts of the body, as well as blackness and whiteness as racial inscriptions, and the ways in which they are defined against one another. Inhabiting spaces which are both of this world and the afterworld, these phantasms are the known and unknown, and yet, their ethereal presence is revealing of our earthly ideologies regarding violence, victimization, and injustice.

"It was absolutely intense and challenging work," Sherronda says. "But having my Feminist Fairy God Mother, Danielle Bouchard, as my mentor certainly made the journey a little less daunting. Ultimately, it was a rewarding experience and I'm so appreciative to this program for allowing me to explore these ideas and write such an unconventional thesis."

Her thesis chair Danielle Bouchard remarks, "In *The Haunted Ground We Walk On: (Un)Knowable Gendered and Racialized Subjects*, Sherronda Brown offers nuanced readings of modern cinematic and televisual haunting narratives, in turn providing crucial interventions into common portrayals of state-sanctioned forms of violence. Sherronda deftly interweaves close textual analysis with social theory in order to provide original and insightful commentary on the work that haunting narratives do, both to limit and to open up new possibilities for grappling with the very real racialized and gendered horrors that continue to define the contemporary US political, social, and cultural context."

# OUR FACULTY

## Accomplishments

**Dr. Jen Feather** will soon be published in *Literature Compass*. The article is entitled, "Masculinity and Shakespeare".

**Dr. Risa Applegarth** was awarded the 2014-2015 Linda Arnold Carlisle Faculty Research Grant, for her research on the Greensboro Business and Professional Women's Club. Her recent publications include her book, *Rhetoric in American Anthropology*, by the University of Pittsburgh Press, and a forthcoming article in the journal *College English* on vocational autobiographies about women workers in the early 20th century. She has been working recently as part of a task force on inclusion with the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition.

**Dr. Emily Edwards** is currently Working on a chapter for a new book on the *Evil Dead* Franchise: "Horrid Addictions: Curious Cravings and the *Evil Dead* Reboot" and has recently submitted the screenplay: "Bite" to the University Film and Video Association 2015 conference, Washington, D.C

**Dr. Derek Krueger**, Joe Rosenthal Excellence Professor of Religious Studies and Women's and Gender Studies published a book entitled *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). He also won a fellowship from the European Institutes of Advance Study to co-direct a collaborative project in Jerusalem on the "Poetics of Christian Performance" in the Middle Ages.

**Dr. Lisa Levenstein** received a fellowship from the National Humanities Center for her book on U.S. feminisms and the Beijing Women's Conference of 1995.

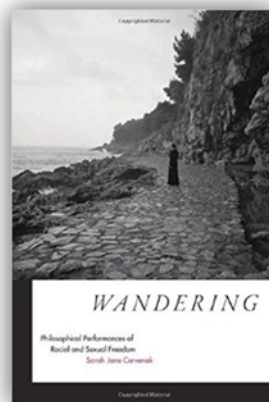
**Dr. Silvia Bettez** has recently published "Refugees and Immigrants Share their Stories: Critical Incidents, Expectations, and Structures of Schooling in Urban Schooling" and "Navigating the Complexity of Qualitative Research in Postmodern Contexts: Assemblage, Critical Reflexivity, and Communion as Guides" in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. Additionally her book, *But Don't Call Me White: Mixed Race Women Exposing Nuances of Privilege and Oppression Politics* was awarded the American Educational Studies Association 2014 Critics' Choice Award.

**Dr. Cybelle H. McFadden's** book, *Gendered Frames, Embodied Cameras: Varda, Akerman, Cabrera, Calle, and Maiwenn*, was published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press in 2014. In 2015, she received a P3 grant and a Regular Faculty Grant for her new book project, *Franco-Arab Cinema: Transnational and Transcultural Crossings*.

**Dr. Jodi Blinkoff's** book *The Avila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* has just been released by Cornell University Press as an updated edition. This book, with a new introduction and extensive bibliographical essay, came out in time for the 25th anniversary of the first edition, in 1989, and the 500th anniversary of the birth of Teresa of Avila, Spanish nun, writer, mystic, and monastic reformer, in 1515.

**Dr. Mark Rifkin**, incoming director of WGS, has recently published the following:

- *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance*, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- "The Silence of Ely S. Parker: The Emancipation Sublime and the Limits of Settler Memory," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 1.2 (2014): 1-43.
- "Making Peoples into Populations: The Racial Limits of Tribal Sovereignty," *Theorizing Native Studies*, eds. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, Duke University Press, 2014. 149-187.
- "Queering Indigenous Pasts, or Temporalities of Tradition and Settlement," *Oxford Companion to Indigenous American Literature*. Eds. Daniel Heath Justice and James Cox. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 137-151.
- "The Frontier as (Movable) Space of Exception," *Settler Colonial Studies* 4.2 (2014): 176-180.



In our previous newsletter, we announced the much-anticipated release of a book by **Dr. Sarah Jane Cervenak**, a cross-appointed faculty member with African American and African Diaspora Studies. This year we celebrated the release of *Wandering: Philosophical Performances of Racial and Sexual Freedom* in a warm and extremely well-attended talk and book signing. Faculty and students from beyond WGS and AADS attended the event with excitement and enthusiasm in support of Sarah's immensely important work.

Fred Moten, author of *B Jenkins*, declares *Wandering* to be a work which "illuminate[s] and extend[s] meditative resistance to the racial and sexual pathologization of the irregular, anti-regulative, social and aesthetic movement animating the history of black thought." We are extremely proud of Sarah's exciting work, thankful for her commitment to the WGS program, and we are not surprised by the praise that she has received for her brilliance.

Dr. Cervenak was recently invited to submit an essay pondering questions of pedagogy and racial violence. That essay, "On Not Teaching About Violence: Being in the Classroom After Ferguson" is forthcoming in *Feminist Studies*, 41-1 (March/April, 2015).

# LINDA ARNOLD CARLISLE

## Distinguished Excellence Professor



Dr. Karen Kilcup organized two events in April as the current Linda Arnold Carlisle Distinguished Excellence Professor of Women's and Gender Studies. The Professorship Symposium "Eating Green: Food, Animals, and Environmental Equity" was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Faculty Center, and her professorship talk took place on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

The "Eating Green" symposium featured a panel who spoke on an array of food-related issues: food choice from a communal perspective, the university's work to reduce food waste, food insecurity among refugees in Guilford county, environmental costs of factory farming, posthumanist ecofeminisms, and hunting as a practice of environmental conservation.

Dr. Kilcup's subsequent talk, "'Mary Had a Little Lamb': Children, Animals, and Environmental Ethics in *The Juvenile Miscellany* and Beyond," examined children's literature from 1825-1835, particularly poetry from *The Juvenile Miscellany*, a progressive children's publication of the period. Professor Kilcup highlighted how children's literature at that time was not very different from adult literature (some at a 12th grade reading level!) and how it was subversive in its encouragement of questioning the status quo in terms of animal welfare and the subjecthood of the natural world. In her talk, she encouraged participants to identify the distinguishing characteristics of children's literature and presented several examples that challenge those definitions. Students and faculty alike eagerly participated in discussion. Linda Arnold Carlisle, who established the professorship in 2002 was also in attendance.

## Research Grant Recipient



Each academic year, the Women's and Gender Studies Program awards a faculty member with the Linda Arnold Carlisle Faculty Research Grant to support research or creative work related to our program. Dr. Risa Applegarth, an Assistant Professor cross-appointed in English and Women's and Gender Studies, is the winner of the 2014-2015 Linda Arnold Carlisle Faculty Research Grant.

She presented her work to an intimate but invested group of people in a lecture entitled "Activism, Archives, and the Greensboro Business and Professional Women's Club." Founded in 1919, this club is an organization that helps women achieve economic self-sufficiency by advancing careers, building businesses and advocating for workplace equity. Their mission is simple: to provide professional and personal growth opportunities and to promote equity for North Carolina women in the workplace. Archiving the records of their past organizers, volunteers, and community leaders, Dr. Applegarth has made exciting discoveries about the work of women which has often gone unnoticed or unappreciated by others.

Dr. Applegarth remarked that there have always been anxieties around women's bodies in the workplace. They are thought of as unruly and in need of regulation. Her research establishes that women's bodies are not only acceptable in working spaces, but that they in fact *belong* in these spaces. With the support of the grant, she has been able to collaborate with the Business and Professional Women's Club to organize an archive of rhetorical women's practices, including 40+ yearbooks, annual reports, 20+ scrapbooks, and more.

Dr. Applegarth's feminist recovery work is motivated by an understanding of women's historic lack of agency as speakers. Historically, women have repeatedly had to argue for the right to speak, especially in male-dominated spaces. And because of the erasure of women's rhetorical agency over the years, the rhetorical canon is still dominated by white male thinkers, who never had to question their right to speak in the way that women have had to.



# EVENTS

Love Your Body Week, a week of celebrating unapologetic love and respect for our own and others' bodies, was a success yet again this year. WGS hosted events ranging from a Lunch and Learn, a Queerlesque Performance, and a presentation and conversation about fat acceptance. For the Lunch and Learn, students were invited to watch a film called "FIXED: The Science/Fiction of

Human Enhancement" dedicated to creating a new understanding of what it means to be disabled. The movie is described by saying "From bionic limbs and neural implants to prenatal screening, researchers around the world are hard at work developing a myriad of technologies to fix or enhance the human body, we take a close look at the drive to be "better than human" and the radical technological innovations that may take us there. What does "disabled" mean when a man with no legs can run faster than most people in the world?"

Later on in the week, the Queerlesque Performance encouraged the queering of traditional burlesque in order to encourage the audience to explore new ideas about gender and sexuality. Dance and Women's and Gender Studies major Will Indemauro explains, "Queerlesque, to me, is about feeling comfortable in your own body and being able to express yourself in whatever fashion you choose. As a queer person and a dancer, it has become a way for me to build up self confidence if I'm ever having a hard time. I don't see myself as changing into another character on stage, like I would for say - a ballet role. I'm performing as me, which is a very powerful feeling." Over 100 people attended the event, which included a lively discussion afterwards between the performers and the audience members. The dancers truly demonstrated radical love of their bodies and were gracious enough to share that with us.

Lastly, the presentation "Fat Acceptance 101" by WGS and English major Taylor Chapman encouraged the audience to think about common narratives surrounding fat people's lives and bodies in an attempt to understand how fat and non-fat people are shaped by anti-fat bias. During her discussion, Taylor talked about issues ranging from under/misrepresentation in popular media, social, medical, and economic discrimination, as well as how intersections of race and gender alter people's perceptions of fatness. After her presentation, a lively and thoughtful conversation took place wherein people asked questions about how to learn to accept themselves and their bodies, how neutralizing and reclaiming the word 'fat' adds to the fat acceptance movement, and why it's so important to change negative perceptions of fat people. Ultimately, the event sparked a lot of important questions about why fat acceptance is a feminist issue, and it went on to show that student-lead conversations and events are a wonderful way to build community within WGS.

## LOVE YOUR BODY WEEK 2014

## MEDIA MEETS THEORY

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

One of the highlights of this year has been the WGS Media Meets Theory series, a monthly event where WGS students and alums convene on a specific topic using feminist theories from WGS classes in order to analyze a pop culture artifact, text, or current event in the media. This series brings better visibility to a diverse array of subjects, provides a way to apply WGS coursework to real-world events, and highlights student expertise.

Our first Media Meets Theory event centered on the #BlackLivesMatter Movement, the systemic racism embedded in the criminal justice system, and state violence committed disproportionately against people of color by law enforcement. We also discussed the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown, and their portrayals in the media. Panel Members included MA student Sherronda J. Brown, WGS alum Holden Cession, and UNCG Library Sciences alum April Parker, who previously coordinated the WGS library. The panelists and audience members discussed how activists, scholars, and others combine social media and community organizing techniques to draw attention to issues, and how to locate more possibilities and strategies for effecting change. This was by far our most well-attended and most critically engaging forum of the semester, as we considered the impact of #BlackLivesMatter and the everyday reality of police bias and brutality against persons of color.

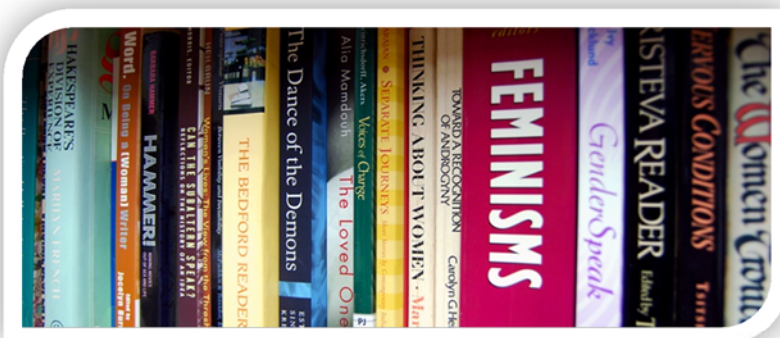
We followed this event with a panel on Women's History which discussed women's health activism in 1990's zines, the intersections and racial implications of birth control and the welfare state, and women's rights movements. Our final talk was a rewarding discussion on Body Politics, exploring the intersections of Disabled Studies and Fat Studies. We drew connections between the two, and identified methods to combat fat phobia and ableism. As a whole, our Media Meets Theory series was a great success for the program and offered WGS and non-WGS students and faculty the opportunity to engage in important discussions. We hope to continue this work in the coming years.

*"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."*

Audre Lorde



# Assemblages & Queerlesque



**Assemblages**, the annual WGS Research Symposium began in Spring of 2014 and was hosted again in February 2015. Co-organized by Graduate Assistant, Sherronda J. Brown and Dayne Alexander, the event was well-received and well-attended by students, faculty, and alumni in both years. One of the most significant aspects of the event was that it presented an opportunity for students to present to share work beyond the classroom. The works each explored systems of oppression and methods for responding to oppression, examining the significance, relationships between, and power dynamics related to race, sexuality, gender, class, ability, species, etc. in such spaces as education, the prison industrial complex, the animal industrial complex, the media, the mental health industry, activism, and more.

The organizers purposely created a space for networking and exchange of knowledge, rather than a competitive atmosphere. The event provides a space for students, faculty, alumni and others to come together to contribute to a larger discourse and engage in meaningful conversations about systemic oppressions embedded in social relations and institutions by sharing their work and research with one another. Second year graduate student, Amber Mathwig, remarks, "I always appreciate the opportunity to be able to gain experience in preparing presentations for a diverse audience who give both positive and critical feedback. Locating the intersections of all our projects is a tremendous way to grow in my career."

It is extremely important to build a strong WGS community between undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni, as well as faculty. Both in-house and cross-appointed WGS faculty have displayed support by attending both symposiums, which meant a great deal to the presenters and organizers. WGS alumni and lecturer Carrie Hart says, "The best thing about the environment at *Assemblages* is that everyone who attends is so invested in supporting each other's work. Both years I've presented I've come away feeling more excited about being part of an academic community in WGS."

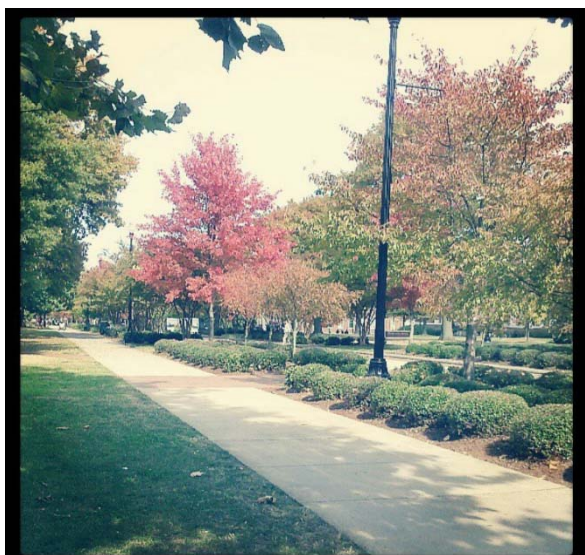


As an evening addendum to the second annual symposium, WGS sponsored a Spring repeat of the Queerlesque Performance. Curry Auditorium is usually marked by tall gray walls, the gold Spartan embellishments on chandeliers shining high above the seats, and two large paintings of old men that hang in the back of the room. However, the evening of the Symposium, the auditorium was overtaken by a cheering crowd, an enthusiastic group of scantily clad performers, and a floor covered in a mixture of glitter and confetti. This was Queerlesque – a performance exploring and playing with a variety of interpretations and performances of gender and sexuality. Alyssa Haney, a WGS MA Certificate student and the lead organizer of Queerlesque, explained: "Whitney Akers and I were taking Dr. Bouchard's WGS 650 course and struck up a conversation about burlesque, since we both had performed in burlesque shows before, and had one of those, 'Wouldn't it be great if...?!' moments. I hope that this event can be not only a fun, glittery show, but provide a space for conversations regarding ideas about feminism, sexuality, gender, agency over our bodies, and a whole host of important issues." It was amazing having this show punctuate the second annual research symposium. The participants and the audience had an awesome time at this outrageous, fantastical, and innovative event.

# The Ashby Dialogues

"The Ashby Dialogues: Feminist Theory and Science," organized by Dr. Elizabeth Keathley, was a part of the 2014–15 university-wide celebration of the anniversaries of Galileo and Shakespeare by asking historical, theoretical, and practical questions about the relationships between gender and science. Theoretical physicist and feminist philosopher Karen Barad of the University of California Santa Cruz opened the series with a public lecture on Thursday, October 30 in the Organ Recital Hall of UNCG's Music, Theatre and Dance building. Dr. Barad is a Professor of Feminist Studies, Philosophy, and History of Consciousness and is the Co-Director of the Science and Justice Training Program at UCSC and her publications include *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007), and "Nature's Queer Performativity" (2012).

Dr. Barad's lecture, "Dis/continuous Re-memberings: Material Entanglements and Temporal Diffractions," challenged assumptions of continuity and experimented with its disruption. Five dialogues among 12-15 faculty and students followed with topics including histories of women in science and feminist science studies. The faculty participants included Heidi Carlone (Teacher Education and Higher Education); Nadja Cech (Chemistry); Cerise Glenn (WGS [Women's and Gender Studies] & Communication Studies); Veronica Grossi (WGS & Languages, Literatures & Cultures); Elizabeth L. Keathley (WGS & Music Studies); Hephzibah Roskelly (WGS & English), Beth Walker (WGS); and Amy Williamsen (WGS & Languages, Literatures & Cultures).



College Ave, UNCG Campus

## STUDENT EXCELLENCE AND RECOGNITION

### 2014-2015 Sally and Alan Cone Awards

#### Special Projects Grants

**Taylor Chapman** to present at SEWSA - *Navigating the (Un)ethical Consumption of Bodies in a Capitalist Regime*

**Michael Lee** for "Inbalanced/Inversion" MFA Thesis Concert

**Kathleen T. Leuschen** for their dissertation "Remembering Consciousness Raising Groups"

**Anna Malika** to present at SEWSA - "Pimping, Porn, and, Gender: A Survivor Explains."

#### Graduate Travel Awards

**Dayne Alexander** to present at SEWSA, *Gendered and Racialized Violence(s) in Spaces of Captivity*.

**Savannah Behrent** to present at SEWSA, *Navigating the (Un)ethical Consumption of Bodies in a Capitalist Regime*

**Amber Mathwig** to attend "War, Memory, and Gender Conference"

#### Course Scholarships

**Taylor Chapman**

**Gillian Gurganus**

**Crystal Matey**

**Stephanie O'Brien**

## SEWSA

The 2015 Southeastern Women's Studies Association Conference was held in Boca Raton, Florida, from March 26th to March 28th, and our program was well-represented at the conference. Following the conference theme of "Trafficking Gender: Feminist Dialogues on Embodiment, first-year WGS MA student Savannah Behrent and Senior English and WGS student Taylor Chapman presented their workshop "Navigating the (Un)Ethical Consumption of Bodies in a Capitalist Regime", and second-year WGS MA student Dayne Alexander presented her paper "Gendered and Racialized Violence(s) in Spaces of Captivity: Alterity and Animality in the Prison and Animal Industrial Complexes." All three students received the Sally & Alan Cone Graduate Student Travel Award and Chapman and Alexander received additional SEWSA Student Travel Grants.

Dayne Alexander commented on her experience: "SEWSA 2015 was a great experience. The discussion for the panel I was a part of was so rich that it went over the time allotted. Almost everyone in the room, the moderator, panelists, and audience members, exchanged contact information. I greatly appreciate the grant I received from the WGS program, sponsored by the Cones, which allowed me to have this wonderful experience."

"Conferences like SEWSA are an amazing opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to find a space to present their ideas and receive feedback



from folks they might not normally have a chance to interact with," Savannah Behrent added. "While I think that SEWSA as an organization still has a lot of growing to do in terms of intersectionality and the people that are represented, I'm grateful for the opportunity to present my scholarship to a very receptive and supportive audience."



Taylor Chapman (left), Dayne Alexander (center), and Savannah Behrent (right).

Taylor Chapman summed up attendees' reactions with her comment. "It was an amazing experience, one that wouldn't be possible without a group of people coming together to make it happen. It was a collaborative process from beginning to end; from crowd-funding and grants to be able to attend to co-presenting the workshop itself. It feels so good to know that my desire for education is supported by and made possible through working with others."

We were very excited to have such great representation at SEWSA, which we had the grand opportunity to host at UNCG in the Spring of 2013.



Women's and Gender Studies stoles and diploma

## UNCG WGS and the "Resisting Arrest" Symposium

Dayne Alexander and Sherronda Brown, WGS graduate assistants and MA students, had the opportunity to present their joint paper "(Re)Generative Violences and New Possibilities for Resistance in *The Walking Dead*: Black Survival in Apocalyptic Haunted and Captive Spaces" at a symposium at Duke University, co-convened by our own Dr. Sarah Cervenak and her colleague Dr. Thomas DeFrantz of Duke University. The conference, "Resisting Arrest: Black Artfulness and Survival," brought together scholars from many different universities and discipline to discuss repeated state-sanctioned violences against black bodies and the "coercive aggregation, containment, and reduction of black life."


We celebrate their work, not only for its innovation, but also because it clearly demonstrates the possibilities of feminist collaboration. Both students worked closely with Dr. Cervenak in preparation for the conference, which proved to be both helpful and eye-opening. Our students' contribution was a close reading of (the limitations of) black characters in *The Walking Dead*, especially their characterization in haunted and captive spaces like that of the prison and the slaughterhouse, which both signal the normalization of violence against people of color and non-human animals. Dayne and Sherronda worked from two individual pieces, a long term paper that provides an in-depth analysis of the Prison and Animal Industrial Complexes and a thesis chapter which explores the constructed connections between and (mis)understandings of blackness, zombification, and non-humanness.

While bringing their project together was overwhelming at times, both feel that their work fits well together and are ultimately pleased with their finished product. The other presenters at the conference, all Ph.Ds and Ph.D candidates, were very kind and supportive and remarked at the excellence of their joint project. In fact, Dayne and Sherronda are both proud to have been continually mistaken for doctoral students.

Both students are grateful to Dr. Cervenak for her supportive mentorship throughout their writing process, and for all the work she did to plan the symposium.



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Women's and Gender Studies offers undergraduate major and minor and MA degree programs, as well as a graduate certificate. Our interdisciplinary major and minor emphasize excellent intellectual training and community engagement and are flexible enough to work in tandem with many other majors. The MA program offers three concentrations (leadership, health, and individualized) and two tracks (thesis or internship) and equips students with skills needed for work in many professions, including public service, health care, and nonprofit management, and for further professional and academic education.