

Women's & Gender Studies

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES • UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Spring 2010

Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA) Conference, "Cultural Productions, Gender, and Activism" at USC

SEWSA '10 Plenary Sessions



Cultural Productions, Gender, and Activism

Thursday, March 18, 7:30 pm School of Music Recital Hall, Preconference Lecture Recital

Dr. J. Daniel Jenkins, countertenor,
University of South Carolina
Nathan Doman, piano, University of South Carolina
The Countertenor Voice: A Gendered Cultural Production



Thursday, March 25, 6:30-8:00 pm, Belk Auditorium
Dr. Judith Halberstam, University of Southern California
Shadow Feminisms

Friday, March 26, 12:00 –2:00 Capstone Room, WGST Awards Luncheon:

Dr. Marjorie J. Spruill, University of South Carolina,
Recipient of the 2009 Josephine Abney Award
Preserving Feminist History: Lessons from Constance Ashton Myers' International Women's Year 1977 Oral History Project



Friday, March 26, 7:30 – 9:00 pm, Belk Auditorium
Bernice Johnson Reagon
The Singing Culture of the Civil Rights Movement: A Sonic Force for Radical Transformation of Place and Person

Saturday, March 27, 12:00-1:00, Capstone Room
Closing Performance by the Power Company



Saturday, March 27, 2010, 8:30 pm, School of Music Recital Hall
Post-Conference Performance
Claudia Stevens, Department of Music, College of William & Mary
"An Evening with Madame F"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2010- Women's History Month

March 17, 2010 Carlisle Panel Lecture,
3:30 pm, Gambrell 153

"Mi bebé, mi vida': Latina Prenatal Care Access in a Sending & Receiving Community"

Dr. Erica Gibson, Ph.D., Anthropology and Women's & Gender Studies

"The Inability to Love: Jews and Gender in Contemporary German Literature"

Dr. Agnes Mueller, Ph.D., Languages, Literatures, & Cultures

March 18-19, 2010 Bodies of Knowledge Symposium, USC - Upstate. Details at <http://www.uscupstate.edu/bodiesofknowledge>

March 25-27, 2010 SEWSA 2010: Cultural Productions, Gender, & Activism
Daniel Management Center, USC - Columbia

April 8, 2010 "Students Creating New Knowledge" 3:30 pm, Coker Life Sciences 104
Women's & Gender Studies Graduate Students' Panel

Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance: Sydney Daigle

USC's Feminist Majority strives to advance women's equality, non-violence and empowerment of women in all sectors of society through education, strategic philanthropy and organizing direct actions. We engage in issues relevant to our large Southeastern University while working in solidarity with women across the United States and internationally.

This year, our chapter's membership base has doubled and our members will attend two national conferences supporting feminist issues; including the Feminist Majority Foundation's National Young Women's Leadership conference in Washington D.C. On campus, we promote the sexual health of our fellow students through events like our Valentine's Day inclusive

and healthy relationships campaign and by our participation in all initiatives sponsored by the Office of Sexual Health and Violence Prevention, including Project Condom. Through our visible presence, we reduce the stigma surrounding the title "feminist" and provide a group for like-minded individuals to discuss feminist issues while taking action to advocate for the rights of women. FMLA also coalition builds towards common goals with other progressive organizations on campus, including Amnesty International and Voices for Planned Parenthood (VOX). Our organization has started a community partnership with TellThem!, a local nongovernmental organization that supports age appropriate reproductive health education for all South Carolinians.

Alongside TellThem! we have canvassed, tabled, and lobbied against measures to restrict access to reproductive health services and appropriate and accessible sex education. We have raised awareness of domestic and psychological abuse on campus and engaged in strategic philanthropy for local organizations such as the Women's Shelter that support victims. Currently, the FMLA is developing a campaign with the help of United Students Against Sweatshops to keep vulnerable employees and students on campus in the face of large budget cuts and tuition hikes. Our group also plans to focus on working in solidarity with female sweatshop workers internationally in their fight for collective bargaining rights and fair wages.



**Teen Violence Dating Bill Should
Protect ALL Children:
Sheryl McAlister, USC Women's &
Gender Studies Partnership Council**

At the time of this writing, a Teen Dating Violence bill was in a SC Senate subcommittee being debated, having already been passed by the House. Passing the bill without amendments should have been a no-brainer. After all, it was simply intended to protect our children from violence in schools.

Except that several legislators decided that only **some** of our children should be offered protection against violence. And somewhere in all the rhetoric is the simple fact that many children are excluded from this important piece of legislation.

Marian Wright Edelman said: "The future which we hold in trust for our own children will be shaped by our fairness to other people's children." This has been but one of the fundamental truths in the debate about who should and who shouldn't be included. These kids need us to fight for them. All of them. They don't have a voice. They don't get

to vote. Not yet anyway. It's not okay for the state of South Carolina to say to them "it's okay if some of you get beat up." These kids deserve to feel safe at school. If they don't get protection anywhere else, they should be able to count on it there. The ancillary benefit is that they also learn to understand from this public debate what fairness is and why it's important. Let me offer two quick examples.

There is a young man who is a recent graduate of a SC high school who worked with others to start a Gay/Straight Alliance at his school. He was successful, and his courage gives other high school students a reason to stand up and be heard. He aspires to be President of the United States. There is a businesswoman in the state, who, with no prior political experience, ran a historic campaign for the United States Congress in 2008, took 48 percent of the vote in her district and lost narrowly to a 4-term incumbent. People voted for her because she stood for something they believed in. She continues her work every single day for people who would not otherwise be seen or heard. These two individuals, on the surface, would

appear to have little in common. But both are passionate leaders who also happen to be gay South Carolinians. And through their respective life experiences, they learned about fairness and inclusion, which helped give them the courage to fight the fights that not everybody gave them a chance to win. They won simply by having the audacity to think they could.

It's all about a level playing field. It's about creating an environment in this state where everybody feels they have an equal shot at whatever they want – win or lose. Equal protection should not now or ever be limited to only one group of people, especially when it concerns children.

Naysayers indicate that until the criminal domestic violence laws in this state are changed, nothing can be done to include everyone. But building a better South Carolina means making it better for all its citizens. Therefore, I challenge our state's elected officials to step up and take that on. Change our laws to include all citizens of South Carolina.



WWBI News Beth Fadeley

On the evening of January 19, 2010, the Women's Well-Being Initiative (WWBI) hosted our second annual Community Dinner and Advisory Board Meeting in West Columbia. Faculty and students from the University of South Carolina came together with residents and leaders of the Cayce/West Columbia area to reflect on our progress in 2009 and renew our commitment to improving the well-being of women and girls in this community.

Established in 2009, the Community Advisory Board represents a primary aim of the WWBI: to enhance and facilitate university-community partnerships. Members now include representatives from the Cities of Cayce and West Columbia, the Lexington County Council, the Cayce/West Columbia Branch Library, the Tri-City Leisure Center, Eau Claire Health Cooperatives, the Woman's Club of Cayce, Sistercare, Inc., Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands, the Dickerson Center, and more. The Community Advisory Board provides input and guidance on WWBI programs, priorities, and directions. Last fall, the Board developed three task forces to promote issues related to three priority populations: Latina Women, Adult Women, and Young Women and Girls.

The Task Force on Latina Women, led by Erica Gibson, aims to strengthen the diversity and broaden the scope of the Community Advisory Board by expanding its representation from the Latino community. The group also plans to develop Spanish-language community resource guides and to work with local schools to foster interaction and understanding between Latino families and educators.

With support from the Task Force on Adult Women, Rhonda Johnson is developing a project designed to support the well-being and community work of African American women. As part of this project, she will be organizing a series of discussion groups to highlight the experiences, rewards, and challenges of community care-work.

Shauna Cooper and Olga Ivashkevich, co-chairs of the Task Force on Young Women and Girls, seek to engage young people in the process of developing and implementing WWBI programs for adolescent girls. Discussion groups, campus programs, and community events will be planned to identify and promote girls' perspectives, experiences, and interests within the community.

The Juvenile Arbitration Arts Workshop continued this year with another successful program. In February, graduate students Amanda Lambert and Heather Eaddy developed and facilitated a series of weekend workshops for adolescent girls participating in Lexington County's Community Juvenile Arbitration program. The workshops are structured to empower young women with the tools needed to navigate difficult circumstances and situations in their lives, including low self-esteem, depression, abusive relationships, substance abuse, and lack of belonging.

In addition to ongoing programs and initiatives, the WWBI and the Cayce/West Columbia Library are initiating a new Community History Project this Spring. Led by Lynn Weber and Jason Munsell of Columbia College, students will develop and conduct oral history interviews with women in Cayce and West Columbia. An anticipated outcome of the Community History Project will be the development of a community theater production and multi-media presentation exploring issues of diversity and change in the community.

Now in its tenth year, the WWBI continues to embody the true spirit of civic engagement at the University of South Carolina. With the recent establishment of our Community Advisory Board, our interdisciplinary, community-focused collaborative continues to grow.



Letter from the Graduate Director: Kate Adams

I am half way through my first year of service as Graduate Director, and feeling gratitude for the many people in WGST and the Graduate School who have helped push me over the learning curve. I especially want to thank Paulette Jimenez, WGST Program Coordinator, and Jacqueline McClary, WGST Administrative Assistant, for their extraordinary patience, generosity, and expertise. And I would also like to note that the more I learn about the Graduate Certificate the more I realize how much we all owe a debt of gratitude to Professor DeAnne Messias under whom the program grew and prospered enormously from 2005-2009.

In AY 2009-10, the program continues to expand, and its members to flourish. We now have nearly forty students enrolled as candidates for the graduate certificate, with several more applications in process. Half of

these students are pursuing the certificate as a stand-alone credential, often holding down full-time jobs at the same time. The other half are concurrently enrolled in other USC graduate programs, representing a broad range of disciplines and nearly every college on campus. We salute our two most recent WGST graduates, Elizabeth White-Hurst and Mary McLaughlin, who received their certificates in December; and we look forward to celebrating again in May with five more students on track to graduate this spring.

As ever, WGST graduates bring an impressive array of research agendas to the university, and we are pleased to recognize and support their accomplishments. This fall, two newcomers to the program, Stacey Haney and Annie Boiter-Jolley, both received the Harriet Hampton Faucette Award for Graduate Research and Development. This spring, Sherietta Murrell won a Graduate School Travel Grant that will enable her to present a conference talk on hip hop and black feminism later this semester. At the time of this writing, applications are still coming in for the spring Faucette award, as well as for the Emily Thompson Award, given annually for the best research project in women's health. I am happy to report a significant increase over previous years in the number of submissions for both competitions – a phenomenon that suggests a growing community of feminist graduate scholars at USC and increased awareness of the WGST graduate program.

There will be an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of WGST graduate research on Thursday, April 8, when three of our certificate students will present from their current research. Sarah Gareau's presentation will focus on how punitive legislation limits access to substance abuse treatment for South Carolina women; Michelle Williams will present from her research on the high incidence of cervical cancer among women in Ghana, West Africa; and Stacey Haney will discuss new theoretical approaches for understanding transgendered identity and embodiment. The panel, entitled "Students Creating New Knowledge," is the final event of the 2009-2010 WGST Research Series.

Since becoming Graduate Director in August, I've been talking with WGST students and faculty about what our program can do to foster a more robust feminist community among our graduate students – both those enrolled in our certificate program and those who simply care about women studies, queer studies, feminist studies, and gender studies. One outcome of this conversation was the smashingly successful faculty-graduate potluck that took place in January, graciously hosted by Professor, Laura Woliver. Other ideas that have garnered interest include a weekly feminist happy hour, a feminist zine collective, and a brown bag discussion series on topics such as funding opportunities for feminist research. Plans are underway, so look for upcoming events. And don't hesitate to contact me with your own ideas and desires for how the WGST graduate program can grow.

Kudos

Drucilla K. Barker, Director of Women's & Gender Studies at USC has published *Feminist Economics: Critical Concepts*. 4 vols. Drucilla K. Barker and Edith Kuiper, eds. London & New York: Routledge, 2009. It is a collection of collection of historical and contemporary work in feminist economics fully indexed with a comprehensive introduction to each volume newly written by the editors, and an invited introduction to the final volume written by Dr. Gillian Hewitson

Darcy Freedman, SOWK and WGST affiliate, published two articles: (2009). Local food environments: they're all stocked differently. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 42, 382-393. and Freedman, D.A. & Bell, B.A. (2009) Access to healthful foods among an urban food insecure population: perceptions versus reality. *Journal of Urban Health*, 86(6), 825-838.

Dr. Lisa Johnson, Director of Women's & Gender Studies at USC Upstate, has a mixed genre book (part literary memoir, part feminist psycho-social cultural critique) forthcoming from Seal Press in May 2010, titled *Girl in Need of a Tourniquet: Memoir of a Borderline Personality*.

Kevin Lewis, Religious Studies & WGST affiliate, Following publication last fall of his book, the interdisciplinary examination of an Americana item, *Lonesome: The Spiritual Meanings of American Solitude* (Palgrave/Macmillan), he published in the Winter-Spring 2010 issue of the Harvard Divinity School Bulletin an article about the book, "Lonesomeness Explored," pp 11-13.

Preston McKeever-Floyd, Affiliate Faculty in WGST, defended his doctoral dissertation, *On Becoming Divine: A Study of the Divine/Self in Grace Jantzen*, on November 13, 2009 at the University of South Carolina's Department of Philosophy, writing in the area of feminist philosophy of religion. The doctorate was conferred on December 14, 2009.

Ed Madden, WGST Undergraduate Director, is currently on leave as a research fellow and visiting faculty at the National University of Ireland in Galway, as recipient of the Irish American Cultural Institute's annual NUIG fellowship. He was recently selected as the first winner of the SC Academy of Authors Carrie McCray Nickens Fellowship in Poetry.

Kimberly Simmons, AFRO & WGST Affiliate, *Reconstructing Racial Identity and the African Past in the Dominican Republic*, University Press of Florida

Sharon Lee White, affiliate and adjunct faculty in WGST, defended her doctoral dissertation, "Up Close and Personal: Using Narrative Inquiry to Examine the Persistence Strategies of Non-traditional African-American Women Students at a Traditionally Oriented University," On November 12, 2009 at the University of South Carolina's College of Education. The Doctorate was conferred on December 14, 2009. White's research interests include the critical pedagogy and the impact of race, class, gender, and sexuality on marginalized student populations.

Laura R. Woliver and Christine M. Sixta. *Abortion*. In *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (2009), vol. 12, Gender, Ted Ownby and Nancy Bercaw, eds. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, pp. 13-17. co-author: Christine M. Sixta was a WGST certificate student and a Ph.D. in Political Science

Mission Statement:

Women's and Gender Studies at the University of South Carolina promotes an understanding of the experiences of women and other underrepresented groups through a complete program of teaching, research, and service to the University, the local community, the state, the nation, and the global community. Through its teaching mission, Women's and Gender Studies shares this knowledge with students so that they learn to think critically, to communicate effectively, to solve problems, and to interpret human experience. Through its research mission, Women's and Gender Studies reconceptualizes existing knowledge and creates new knowledge through the lens of gender and the prism of diversity. Emerging from an activist tradition, Women's and Gender Studies serves University, local, state, national, and global communities by acting as a resource and guide for issues related to women and gender.

Our teaching, research, and service missions interweave as we create, share, and apply knowledge, skills, and values that promote the full participation of women and other underrepresented groups in society. At the core of the work of Women's and Gender Studies teaching and research at the University of South Carolina are broad but fundamental questions that drive examinations of the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and other dimensions of inequality.

Support USC Women's and Gender Studies and the Women's Well-Being Initiative

The Women's and Gender Studies Program is growing. We invite you to join our efforts to promote the understanding essential to improving the lives of women and other underrepresented groups by becoming a Friend of Women's and Gender Studies.

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