

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program

Newsletter *Volume 10, Spring 2013*

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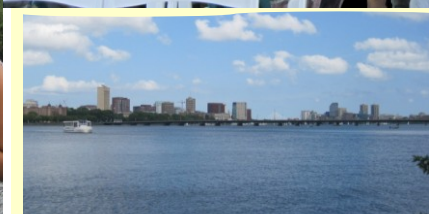
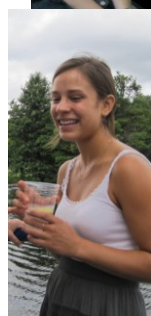
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WGS annual riverboat cruise on the Charles River

Sipping lemonade and discussing landmarks of interest, WGS faculty and students also began new conversations and new friendships.



Congratulations to our affiliated faculty!



Arianne Chernock has been tenured and promoted to **Associate Professor of History and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies**. Her first book, *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism* (Stanford University Press, 2010), called fresh attention to the forgotten but foundational contributions of men to the creation of the "rights of women" in late-eighteenth-century Britain. The book won the 2011 John Ben Snow Prize from the North American Conference on British Studies. Articles based on this project have appeared in the *Journal of British Studies*, *Enlightenment and Dissent*, and the edited collection *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Palgrave, 2005). Chernock has also written more broadly on questions of gender and history, and recently contributed an article to the edited collection *Engendering Women's History: A Global Project* (New York University Press, 2012). Professor Chernock is presently at work on a new book, *The Queen and I: the Right to Reign and the Rights of Women in Victorian Britain*, which explores Britons' responses to queens who reigned during the 19th century.

Cheryl Knott, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, has received tenure. Prof. Knott is a world expert on orangutan behavior and biology and a leader in protecting and conserving orangutans. She established the Gunung Palung Orangutan Project in Indonesia in 1994. She has organized recent international symposia on *The Role of Phenotypic Plasticity in the Expression of Primate Life History Traits* and on *Conserving Primates through Research and Habitat Protection*. She has recently published papers on sexual coercion, male bimaturation, protein re-cycling and cultural transmission in orangutans. She also received the 2011 Templeton Prize for Excellence in Student Advising for her work with undergraduates.



Roberta Micallef became the first Boston University faculty member to receive the title **Associate Professor of the Practice in Modern Languages and Comparative Literature and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies**. Recently Prof. Micallef edited with Sunil Sharma *On the Wonders of Land and Sea*, a collection of Muslim travel narratives; organized an international conference on *Exploring Gender Representation and Identity in the Middle East*; and was invited to join a network of 17 international scholars examining Muslim women's autobiographical writings, with sponsorship from the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the United Kingdom. She was also selected to participate in the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*' Distinguished Lecture and Research Workshop on *Gender, Women and Violence in the Middle East*.



J. Keith Vincent has been tenured and promoted to **Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies**. His book, *Two-Timing Modernity: Homosocial Narrative in Modern Japanese Fiction* (Harvard Asia Center, Fall 2012) reads first-person fictional narratives in which male protagonists are haunted by past relationships with other men as indications that Japan's newly heteronormative culture was unable and perhaps unwilling to expunge completely the memory of a male homosocial past now deemed "perverse." He regularly publishes in both English and Japanese and is a prize-winning translator of both literary and critical texts. He is currently at work on a book on the genre of literary sketching (*shaseibun*) in the early twentieth century, tentatively titled *Haiku in Prose: Shaseibun and the Abortive Beginnings of Japanese Realism*. For the 2013-2014 academic year he will occupy the Toyota Visiting Professorship in Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Awards Highlight WGS Teaching Excellence



Deborah Belle, WGS Director and Professor of Psychology received the College of Arts & Sciences Award for Distinction in First Year Undergraduate Education. “A teacher and mentor of great skill and utmost respect for all students, Deborah Belle has recently been celebrating her 30 years on the Psychology faculty in typical fashion: with the addition of four new courses to her repertoire. Two are seminars drawing on her research interest in the roots and experience of poverty; one of those, repeated by popular demand, marks BU’s first ever participation in teaching for the Boston area Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies. The remaining courses, an ambitious two-semester sequence particularly intended for first-year students, may break new ground nationally... To welcome and orient the first WS 101 class in Fall 2011, Professor Belle came up with another inspired and inspiring idea. During a boat cruise on the Charles River, students and faculty got to know each other informally, while she also pointed out landmarks of interest: Cambridge City Hall, for example, in respect to the nation’s first licenses for same-sex marriages. The riverboat cruise is a keeper. WS 101/102 has been lucky in its lead author. Deborah Belle’s plotting and staying the course with great imagination and integrity redound to the lasting benefit of her students, collaborators, and college.”
Virginia Sapiro, Dean of Arts & Sciences, May 15, 2013.



Carrie Preston, Associate Professor of English and WGS received the Frank and Lynne Wisneski Award for Excellence in Teaching in the College of Arts & Sciences. “Carrie Preston aims high: to be the kind of English and gender studies teacher whose students leave her courses not only reading, writing, and thinking better, but with their lives transformed, and able to look at the world, critically and creatively, in new ways. ... Professor Preston teaches with consummate technical artistry, informed by bold interdisciplinary scholarship and vision. Her range of courses is extensive, focusing in variable proportions on canonical literary Modernism, on contemporary theories of gender performance, and on her study of dancers and dance forms from Isadora Duncan to Japanese Noh... Regularly cited as a role model, she exemplifies rare combinations: of passion with intellectual rigor; daunting assignments with effective guidance; brilliance and polish with welcoming encouragement; and exemplary organization, clarity, and logic with deft responsiveness to students’ sometimes off-the-wall classroom comments. As to whether her teaching is in fact transformative, one student answers for many with a resounding yes: “I learned more about writing, drama, the world, subversive forces, and about myself than I ever thought possible. She is the most inspiring person I have ever met.”
Virginia Sapiro, Dean of Arts & Sciences, May 15, 2013.



Clare Ploucha, an American and New England Studies doctoral candidate who was our teaching fellow this past academic year for the new WGS interdisciplinary two-semester sequence WS 101 and 102, was awarded her department’s **Teaching Fellow Award** for her outstanding work in this class. Students admired the way Clare led discussion sections, her responses to them on their own work, and the single lecture she delivered to the whole class. This lecture, on “Gender and sexuality in national politics,” timed to occur in the last days of the presidential election campaign, guided us through some important U.S. history and then brought us up to date, particularly through an examination of contemporary cartoons and illustrations. WGS faculty have such confidence in Clare that we have invited her to serve on the faculty teaching team for Fall, 2013, when Carrie Preston goes on leave. In her third year as a Dean’s Fellow, Clare studies 19th and 20th century cultural and intellectual history with attention to gender, education and nationalism. We are proud and lucky to have her on our team.

In Other News...



The Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies' **Motherboard Award** for outstanding paper by a graduate student was given to Boston University Anthropology student **Feyza Burak Adli** for her paper, "The Veiled Periphery: Rural Kurdish Women in Turkey and the Taboo of Sexuality." To celebrate her achievement we held a reception in her honor. Adli wrote: "Sexuality is the most salient taboo informing many practices in Cibo, a Kurdish village located in Erzurum, Turkey. In this article I explore the manifestations of sexual shame through gendered practices. My analysis manifests the complex matrices of the deployment of the practices." Her complete essay is available at <http://www.bu.edu/wgs>

Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, who not so long ago worked at WGS with Brenda Gael McSweeney, has been awarded the **National Association of Social Work's 2013 Legislative Staffer of the Year award**. The award is given to those legislative champions who have demonstrated "exemplary commitment to social work values" in the Massachusetts State House. For the past two years Raffi has been the Legislative Aide for Representative Carl Sciortino of Medford and Somerville, focusing her work on poverty, gender equity, and minority rights. Raffi is also the first openly transgender woman to work in the Massachusetts State House. We are very proud of her WGS connection. Congratulations, Raffi!



Deborah Belle gave a talk in March on "**Gender Schemas and Gender Bias**" as part of a panel on "Addressing subtleties in gender bias in academia," convened by the Joint Committee on the Status of Women at Harvard Medical School and Harvard Dental School. Other panelists were Jo Handelsman and Carol Warfield. The panel was inspired in part by the recent paper by Jo Handelsman and her colleagues entitled "Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students" that appeared in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

NEW!

WGS GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

The Graduate Certificate in WGS will enable students enrolled in graduate programs across the university to pursue comprehensive study in the vibrant, interdisciplinary field of women's, gender, and sexuality studies and receive institutional acknowledgement of their work. Requiring four graduate seminars and a pedagogical workshop, the Certificate will prepare students to conduct research and develop innovative courses. It will also expand career opportunities and professional activities by preparing students for careers in policy development, nonprofit organizations, public health, and other fields.

GRS WS 801

Theories and Methods in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



This fall Erin Murphy, Associate Professor of English and WGS, (left) will offer the inaugural section of Theories and Methods in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. This course, the required seminar for students earning a Graduate Certificate in WGS, will explore the variety and complexity of theories and methods in this rich and interdisciplinary field.

“Boston University is incredibly lucky to have world-class scholars pursuing research in gender and sexuality studies across a wide array of disciplines. The Theories and Methods course will serve as the core of the new certificate in two crucial ways. First, our shared readings and discussion of both classic texts on gender and sexuality and current trends in the field will provide a solid foundation on which all students can build.

Second, the participation of guest lecturers from around the university will allow students to engage fully the interdisciplinary nature of women's, gender, and sexuality studies, while getting to know professors from outside their academic departments and schools. Since students themselves will come from a variety of disciplines, our shared discussions will also offer a unique interdisciplinary opportunity to consider central issues in the study of gender and sexuality.

WS 101 and 102 have already been an inspiring example of the potential of interdisciplinary experiment. By enabling such intellectual cross-fertilization at the graduate level, this seminar promises to provide an exciting new venue for developing research in women's, gender and sexuality studies at Boston University.”

Erin Murphy, Associate Professor of English and WGS

Marie-Dominique Garnier, Professor of English Literature and Gender Studies at the University of Paris 8, France, was WGS visiting scholar from September, 2012 to January, 2013. During her time with us Prof. Garnier revisited texts from the second wave of French feminism, which she reappraised from the double perspective of their North American reception and translation (particularly Beauvoir's recently retranslated *Second Sex*). Her work focused on Beauvoir-in-retranslation, but also on the transition from (feminist) Beauvoir to (queer) Cixous, Hélène Cixous being the founder of the first Women's Studies Graduate Program in France in 1974. Besides a talk given at BU on Beauvoir and Cixous ("Second Sex, Third Body"), Prof. Garnier completed two manuscripts submitted for publication: one on Jacques Derrida and becoming-animal, "Love of the Löwe," another on woman photographer and artist Sophie Calle. It was a delight to have Prof. Garnier with us.



Prof. Garnier has described her time with WGS as "an extremely rich, transformative and prolific experience, giving me the opportunity to interact with new colleagues, staff and students (with a few of whom conversation began on the occasion of a first, friendly "get-together," a narrated boat trip on the River Charles). I then had the occasion to attend a regular number of gender-related events (the screening of *Left on Pearl*, at Brandeis; a conference in October on "The End of Men"; a talk by Stephanie Coontz at Hillel House, a book presentation at an informal meeting which brought together colleagues from other disciplines, and a memorable booklaunch celebration on homosocialities in Japan). Besides this rich spectrum of scholarly events, and interesting conversations across disciplines (including biology/gender), I had the occasion to join a tutorial on Wordpress, as well as to explore the endless stacks and e-stacks of the (mighty) Mugar Library."

WGS Visiting Scholars

Debotri Dhar, an interdisciplinary Women's and Gender Studies scholar with research interests in feminist theory, transnational/'Third-World' feminisms, and interdisciplinary research methods, will be our 2013-14 WGS Visiting Scholar. Dr. Dhar holds a Masters in Women's Studies, with distinction, from Oxford University, and a Ph.D in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers University. Her publications include 'Radha's Revenge: Feminist Agency, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Desire in Anita Nair's *Mistress*,' *Postcolonial Text*, Vol 7, No 4 (2012); 'Mad Adulteress, Moral Wife: Sex, Sin and Psychiatry in Aparna Sen's *Parama*,' in Nawale, Vashist and Roy eds. *Portrayal of Women in Media and Literature* (New Delhi: Authorspress, 2013); and a forthcoming Book titled *Education and Gender* ((London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

Dr. Dhar will use her year as a visiting scholar to revise her dissertation, (*Between Samskaras and Adhikaras: Rape, Suicide and the State in Contemporary India*) for publication. This dissertation is the first detailed interrogation of the relationship between rape, suicide and the state in contemporary India. More specifically, it examines rape victims' suicide in contemporary India and the state's response(s) to such suicide (or, as often, its threat) in light of women's legal and constitutional right against rape. In this respect, the dissertation is particularly attentive to the agency of raped women who use *public* suicide to mobilize a (postcolonial) politics of affect and claim their right against rape from the state. This study is a timely analysis of a disturbing phenomenon, rendered even more relevant given the current international focus on the rising rates of rape in India following the brutal Delhi incident of December 16, 2012.

We are pleased and proud to welcome her to the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program at Boston University.



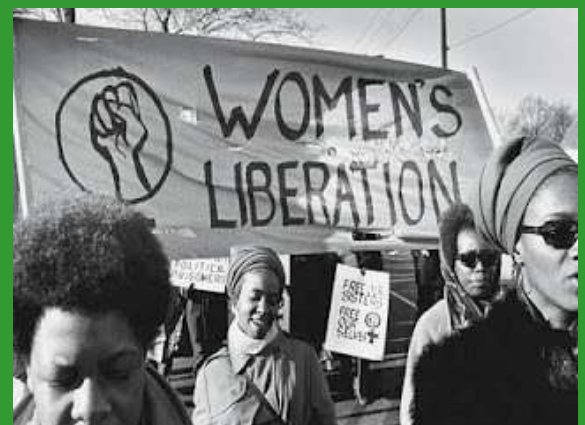
Save the Dates: March 28-29, 2014

A Revolutionary Moment: Women's Liberation in the late 1960s and early 1970s

Despite its immense achievements, the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s has been minimally documented in print or on film. In recent years, however, celebrations of the movement's accomplishments have proliferated and new films have revived interest in this revolutionary period. It seems timely therefore to bring together activists, scholars, artists, writers, and filmmakers to reflect on the movement: its accomplishments in so many domains, its unfinished business, and its relevance to contemporary work that is advancing women. The conference will engage with political, intellectual, artistic, literary, legal, and personal elements of the movement, and especially with the ways in which these elements intertwined and often reinforced each other. Films of and about the movement will be screened and a signature play of the period will be performed. **Linda Gordon, University Professor of the Humanities and Florence Kelley Professor of History at New York University** will deliver the conference keynote address.



- Topics for conference presentations include but are not limited to the following:
- What groups and individuals created the women's movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s? What were the contributions of radical, working class, rural, African American, and Latina women? Of lesbian and heterosexual women? Of men? At what moments did men work together across boundaries of class, ethnicity, generation, and sexuality and pursue their goals independently?
- What have been the impacts of the movement on the lives of women and men? On the arts and literary work? On political organizing? To what extent were intellectual disciplines transformed by feminist insights, and to what extent have these changes been sustained? How did developments in different disciplines affect and reinforce each other?
- What are the reigning narratives today about the women's liberation movement, and to what extent do these narratives obscure or illuminate what has been important about the movement? How is the women's movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s depicted in contemporary scholarly work? In popular culture? By different generations? Which elements of the movement and which movement figures have received the most attention, and which have been overlooked?
- How has more recent theorizing complicated our understandings of the women's liberation movement and the goals for which it fought? What impact has gender theory, queer theory, and other post-structuralist theory had on the cause of women's liberation?
- What of the tools and methods of the women's liberation movement? Is there a role for consciousness-raising groups today?



End-of-year party and Sarah Joanne Davis Awards

We celebrated our WGS community on May 3 at our end-of-year party. The **Sarah Joanne Davis award** went to **Chelsea Schwalm** (shown here with her father). **Shantel Mendez** (below) received an honorable mention.



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Welcome Callan McAdams! Shortly after our end-of-year party we were delighted to welcome the newest member of our WGS family. **Callan McAdams Oliver**, weighing 8 lbs. 4 oz., arrived May 7 to proud parents **Carrie Preston and Derek Oliver**. We wish every joy to Callan and his family!

Newsletter layout, design
& most photos credit
C. Pack-Bailey