Greetings from Women’s Studies

Following Pittsburgh’s hosting of the G-20 leaders in September, we’ve been thinking a lot about our relationships around the globe. Women’s Studies students and faculty have traveled far and wide to carry out research projects—to the Caribbean, to investigate women in the Grenada Revolution and birth control and population policy; to South Dakota, to interview pro-choice activists; to Israel, to study cinema; to Zambia, to follow up on a public health project; to South Korea, to study educational policies.

Meanwhile, those of us here in Pittsburgh have been designing a new interactive web site for the Program, partly to keep up with our far-flung colleagues and activities. Funded by a generous “Innovation in Education” grant, the web site will make it possible to stay in touch with the many affiliated faculty members whose courses are offered in numerous departments and schools across Pitt, with those traveling to distant countries, with those stepping outside the academic world in order to intern with a local provider or activist organization, and with graduating students. Faculty members will be encouraged to discuss their research, post curricular materials, and create a storehouse of valuable documents, assignments, and pedagogical reflection. Students will be encouraged to share their projects and papers more widely—not just with their immediate classmates and teachers but with the broader community of women’s studies. The web site should also make it possible to maintain closer connections with our alumni. We would love to hear about how our graduates have put women’s studies courses and experiences to work in the world—in jobs, community activism, and lives.

We’ll send an announcement when the new web site is available and when (and how) to participate in the interactive portions.

–Jean Ferguson Carr, Director of Women’s Studies
Women’s Studies Awarded Innovation in Education Grant

The Office of the Provost awarded an Innovation in Education Grant this year to Women’s Studies to create an interactive web site: a virtual space for the community of faculty and students to share research, field and internship experience, and curricular materials by collaborating on webliographies (online bibliographies), personal and group blogs, and wikis.

The collaboration will lead to the creation of a reference database and links to key research sites. It will enhance the Program’s value to the university, to WS alumni, and the broader community by serving as a forum for disciplinary and interdisciplinary work and as a resource for issues of women, gender, and sexuality.

It will feature recommended readings organized around six key themes, archives of student research and internship projects, and curricular materials. The project and planned workshops will enhance instructors’ ability to address concerns with the ways students use the Web as a resource.

The grant was written by Jean Ferguson Carr, Director of Women’s Studies, Frayda Cohen, Visiting Assistant Professor, and Carly Woods, PhD candidate in Communication and Women’s Studies, and former WS teaching fellow, with advice from Kathy Blee, Distinguished Professor and Chair of Sociology and former Director of Women’s Studies.


WSP Excited About Updates to Brochures, Web Site, and Library

Women’s Studies has a new undergraduate brochure, thanks to a generous grant from the School of Arts and Sciences. The brochure features pictures of WS faculty and certificate students (Lisa Brush, Aaron Arnold, Carly Woods, Stephanie Guenther, and Arielle Duhlberg) and a photograph by Colleen Jankovic (PhD student, English and WS), taken on her WS-sponsored research trip to Israel. Work on a graduate brochure is also under way.

The new general web site will be coordinated with the Innovation Grant project to enhance the Program’s ability to communicate effectively with the University and community. Look for updates on the project soon.

Also, to make its library materials more readily available to faculty and students, the Program has recently catalogued its texts and media, and has converted VHS tapes to DVD. The collection is online at www.librarything.com/catalog/wstudies.

In conjunction with the library and web site updates, Women’s Studies is organizing its history files into binders that will be housed in the Program’s library; some will be sent to University library archives for permanent storage and others will be scanned and posted on the web site.
A Variety of New Courses Are Offered

Women’s Studies has several new course offerings: “Women and Narrative,” “The Politics of Gender and Food,” and “Gendered Bodies.” In spring 2010 Frayda Cohen will offer our first capstone course, “Senior Seminar: Feminist Theory and Methods.”

Todd Reeser (French and Women’s Studies) taught a graduate course, “Queer Theory Past and Present,” in spring 2009. In spring 2010, Nancy Glazener (English and Women’s Studies) will teach a new graduate course, “Theories of Gender and Sexuality.” Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum’s “Social Movements” (Sociology), Lisa Parker’s “Bioethics” (Bioethics) and Lara Putnam’s “Gender, Race, and Class” (History) are three new graduate courses offered in both home departments and Women’s Studies.

Former Women’s Studies Visiting Scholar Alice Julier taught “Sociology of Gender” in fall 2009 and will teach “Gender, Race, and Class” in Women’s Studies in spring 2010. Jean Ferguson Carr is teaching “Constructing Girlhood,” a seminar cross-listed with English. It focuses on the construction of girlhood as it emerges in children’s literature, in educational and advice books, in periodicals and other media, and in texts that articulate the status of females and children.
Faculty Members Join Women’s Studies Program

Assistant Professor Sara Goodkind’s research focuses on programs and services for young people, particularly those in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Assistant Professor Melanie Hughes specializes in the fields of gender and politics, intersectionality, transnational political sociology, and quantitative methods.

Assistant Professor Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum is interested in social movements, social inequality, gender, peace and war, globalization, reproduction and family.

Professor Suzanne Staggenborg’s research focuses in the fields of social movements/collective action, political sociology, social problems, sociology of gender and family.

Social Work

Sara Goodkind

www.socialwork.pitt.edu/people/goodkind.php

www.sociology.pitt.edu/people/rkutz-flamenbaum.php

Sociology

Melanie Hughes

www.sociology.pitt.edu/people/mhughes.php

www.sociology.pitt.edu/people/staggenborg.php

Rachel Kutz-Flamenbaum

Suzanne Staggenborg

FACULTY - New Affiliated Faculty

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Visiting Scholars Announced for 2009-2011

The Program is pleased to have Joan Gunderson, Jessie Ramey, and Patricia Ulbrich as Women’s Studies Visiting Scholars for a two-year term starting in September.

Joan Gunderson has been affiliated with the Program since 2003 when she held a Research Associate position. Gunderson has been a Visiting Scholar since 2007. She has written on such topics as women in the American Revolution and women’s roles in the Episcopal church. Recently, she produced a traveling exhibit for the Episcopal Women’s History Project entitled “What Could a Woman Do in the Episcopal Church.”

Jessie Ramey is the newest member of the University of Pittsburgh Women’s Studies Program community. She is a recent PhD recipient in History from Carnegie Mellon, where her dissertation was, “A Childcare Crisis: Poor Black and White Families and Orphanages in Pittsburgh, 1878-1929.” Ramey founded and directed CMU’s Undergraduate Research Office, where she focused on women and minorities in non-traditional fields. She also worked for the Westchester Community Foundation where she managed an effort to increase the capacity and quality of childcare programs.

Patricia Ulbrich’s affiliation with the Women’s Studies Program reaches back to 1995 when she was a Research Assistant. She has been a Visiting Scholar with the Program since 2005. Ulbrich has published widely on the relationships between women’s life circumstances and health. In 2007, she created a multimedia exhibit and web site documenting the history of the women’s movement in Pittsburgh during the latter half of the twentieth century (In Sisterhood: The Women’s Movement in Pittsburgh).
Women’s Studies Faculty Selected Publications

Jean Ferguson Carr

Irene Frieze
• “Gender, Aggression and Prosocial Behavior” with M. Li., Handbook of Gender Research in Psychology (in press).
• “Intimate Partner Violence in the United States” in Bringing Cultural Diversity to Feminist Psychology, 2nd ed. (in press).

Sara Goodkind
• “‘You Can be Anything you Want, but You Have To Believe It’: Commercialized Feminism in Gender-Specific Programs for Girls,” Signs 34, 2 (2009).

**Marah Gubar**


**Todd Reeser**


**Jennifer Waldron**


**Andrew Weintraub**

Tarini Bedi, WS Visiting Scholar in 2007-2008, accepted a tenure-track position at University of Chicago, where she is Associate Director of the South Asia Language and Area Center and the Committee on Southern Asian Studies.

Jean Ferguson Carr was awarded an “Innovation in Education” grant for 2009-2010 from the University of Pittsburgh, with Frayda Cohen.

Frayda Cohen was awarded an “Innovation in Education” grant for 2009-2010 from the University of Pittsburgh, with Jean Ferguson Carr.

Irene Frieze was identified as a “Pioneer in Feminist Psychology” by the Association for Women in Psychology in March 2009.

Jane Feuer received the German Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies for 2009-2010.
Nancy Glazener won the Norman Foerster Award in December 2008. The award was for the best essay published in the journal American Literature. The winning essay was entitled "Benjamin Franklin and the Limits of Secular Civil Society."

Alice Julier, Visiting Scholar, accepted a visiting lectureship in Sociology at University of Pittsburgh for 2009-2010, and in Women’s Studies for spring 2010.

Shalini Puri was awarded the University Center for International Studies Faculty Fellowship for "Theorizing Fieldwork in the Humanities," Fall 2008. She received a Hewlett International Small Grant (Fall 2008) and a Center for Latin American Studies Faculty Grant Competition Award for "The Grenada Revolution: Memory and Fieldwork."

Ronald J. Zboray received the E. Jennifer Monaghan Triennial Book Award of the History of Reading SIG, International Reading Association for Everyday Ideas: Socioliterary Experience among Antebellum New Englanders.
Deborah Gould and Shalini Puri Receive Research Awards

Each year, the Program awards two faculty research grants of up to $2,500. This year’s awardees were Deborah Gould (Sociology), for the preparation of the index for her forthcoming book, “Moving Politics: Emotion in ACT UP’s Fight Against AIDS,” and Shalini Puri (English), for field work for her book project, “Women in the Grenada Revolution: Thirty Years Later.”

Shalini Puri will give a lecture based on this research in spring 2010. Deborah Gould moved in fall 2009 to the University of California at Santa Cruz.

WS Supports Faculty in Development of Courses

The Women’s Studies Curriculum Development Fund supports the revision of existing courses, the development of curricular materials, and the design of new courses. These faculty will make their course materials available by posting syllabi, assignments, and annotated bibliographies on the WS web site. Course materials will be accessible on the new Women’s Studies web site.

Faculty revising graduate courses offered brownbag sessions on “Gender and Nationalism” (Livezeanu and Chaiklin), “A Feminist Profession? Feminist Theory and Practice in Social Work” (Goodkind, with Addie Weaver, Social Work graduate student), and “Gender Theories Past and Present” (Reeser and Waldron).

- Frayda Cohen “Politics of Gender and Food” – WS, fall 2009
- Nancy Glazener “Theories of Gender and Sexuality” – WS, spring 2010
- Irina Livezeanu and Martha Chaiklin “Gender, Sexuality, and Nationalism in the Modern World: an East-West Comparison,” – History; cross-listed with WS, fall 2008
- Todd Reeser “Queer Studies Past and Present,” – WS; cross-listed with French and Italian and Cultural Studies, spring 2009
- Jen Waldron “Gender and the Body on the Early Modern Stage,” – English; cross-listed with WS and Medieval and Renaissance Studies, spring 2009
# WSP Proud to Present Certificate Graduates

## 2008
- Victoria L. Abbott
- Laura L. Brigido
- Lauren J. Bruce
- Claire E. Donato
- Amanda M. Fierro
- Heather D. Frost
- Abigail S. Ludwig
- Kathryn Mackowick
- Mara P. Mandradjieff
- Lauren M. Masi
- Kimberley D. Mays
- Lindsay A. Mensch
- John J. Musser
- Vanita Patel
- Amy Risko

## 2009
- Aaron M. Arnold
- Shannon L. Black
- Julia C. Bouchat
- Sara M. Brestensky
- Arielle Dulberg
- John R. Fallon
- Megan L. Farrell
- Melissa A. Geiger
- Samantha L. Goldberg
- Ashlee M. Green
- Stephanie K. Guenther
- Emily R. Hatcher
- Elizabeth O. Howell
- Jennifer P. Kirk
- Alix S. Levy
- Katelyn S. Litterer
- Jamie A. Marks
- Bekezela Mguni
- Kimberly N. Minto
- Hannah A. Obeng
- Sara L. Pendleton
- Hilary A. Rabuck
- Emily R. Tamilin
- Brian J. Ulrich
- Lindsey M. Webb
- Clarisse R. Wells
- Lindsay G. Welsh
- Alexandra K. Zamorski
- Jason F. Zimmerman

A special congratulations to our graduated work study student, Sara Michelle Brestensky! She is pictured above at the April 24, 2009 graduation luncheon with her mother.
Nicole Bourbonnais Receives Master’s Certificate

In April 2009, Nicole Bourbonnais received her MA in Caribbean and Latin American History, along with her master’s certificate in the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Her thesis, entitled “Dangerously Large: The 1938 Labor Rebellion and the Debate over Birth Control in Jamaica,” will be published in the New West Indian Guide this summer.

In 2008 and 2009 she served as a teaching assistant for “Modern Latin American History,” “African-American History Since the Civil War,” and “African-American History from the Slave Trade to the Civil War” at the University of Pittsburgh.

Nicole has received multiple research grants from the Center for Latin American Studies, International Studies, and Women’s Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She received Arts and Sciences fellowships in 2007-2008 and summer 2009. Nicole was awarded a Travel-to-Collections Fund grant from Smith College in 2009.

Nicole has conducted pre-dissertation research at libraries and archives across Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, and Bermuda.

As an undergraduate at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Nicole studied History. She received multiple essay prizes and achievement scholarships.

Nicole’s most recent accomplishment is a doctoral fellowship awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
WS Graduate Students Earn Deserved Awards

Nicole Bourbonnais, WS master’s certificate recipient and doctoral student in Caribbean and Latin American History, was awarded a 4-year doctoral fellowship by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Jessica Ghilani, WS doctoral certificate student and former teaching fellow, received an AAUW Fellowship to complete her dissertation, “Selling Soldiering to Consumers: Advertising, Media, and the All-Volunteer Army.” Jessica is a Communication and Cultural Studies student.

Leah Strobel was awarded a 2009-2010 Andrew Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship. Leah was a WS teaching fellow in 2007-2008. She is a Visiting Lecturer of Hispanic Languages and Literatures during the 2009-2010 academic year.


Stacey Waite of English won an Andrew Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship for 2009-2010 and an Elizabeth Baranger Teaching Award. Stacey, WS certificate student, taught Queer Theory last year.

Carly Woods, 2008-2009 WS teaching fellow and Communication PhD candidate, was awarded an Andrew Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship for the 2009-2010 academic year. Carly also received an Elizabeth Baranger Teaching Award from the School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Organization for Intro to Women’s Studies. She was one of three WS faculty awarded an “Innovation in Education” grant from the University of Pittsburgh.
Program Awards Funds for Exceptional Student Research Projects

2008

Nicole Bourbonnais: “Birth Control and Population Policy in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, 1938-1968”

Kelsy Burke: “High-Risk Activists and Sympathetic Non-Participants: A Case Study of South Dakota Pro-choice Clergy”

Kimberly Creasap: “Another Europe is Possible...For Whom?: Gender Politics and Feminist Strategies at the European Social Forum”

Sarah Drinkwater: “Forum for Women, Law, and Development Internship”

Patrick Mansfield: “Art, AIDS, America –and- Hide and Seek: Sexuality and Desire in American Portraiture”


Marina Starik: “Designers and Informants: Fashioning Female Dandies in Proust’s ‘A la recherche du temps perdu’”

Niketa Williams: “Evaluating the Legacy of Microbicide Trial Participation Among Women in Lusaka, Zambia”

Niketa Williams with research participants in Zambia.
2009

Julien Comte: “The French Connection: Prostitution Regulation in New York City and Buenos Aires”

Colleen Jankovic: “Queering Terror: Visualizing Sexuality and Nationalism in Israeli and Palestinian Cinema”

Hanae Kanno: “Racial Differences on Psychological Well-being of Never-Married and Divorced/Separated Women: Is Self-Esteem a Key Psychosocial Resource?”

Amy McDowell: “Gender Performance in Christian Punk Subculture”

Heejin Park: “Educational Policies for Ethnic, Cultural, and Linguistic Minorities in South Korea”


Yoko Suzuki: “An Ethnography of Female Jazz Saxophonists in New York City”

Carly Woods: “Debater-Scholar-Mentor: Marie Hochmuth Nichols and Feminist Intellectual History in Rhetorical Studies”

You Meme Wu: “Examining Integration of Complementary and Alternative Therapy with Conventional Care: A Qualitative Study”

Photos from Colleen Jankovic’s spring 2009 trip for research on Israeli and Palestinian cinema.

“The Interviews reveal that domestic violence, rape and sexual violence committed during armed robberies are the most pressing threats to women’s security. The findings underscore poverty as a strong determinant of how women are affected by Gender-Based Violence (GBV). They also reveal a flaw in the understanding of the causes of GBV, with some interviewees attributing the problem to Liberia’s high poverty rate instead of underlying structural factors. In addition, the interviews highlight a rural-urban divide in how Liberian women experience and respond to security threats.”

Marina Starik - Designers and Informants: Fashioning Female Dandies in Marcel Proust's ‘A la recherche du Temps perdu’

“From the exhibit ‘Dandysmes 1808-2008, de Barbey d’Aurevilly à Christian Dior’ at the Musée Christian Dior in Granville, I learned about the influences of men’s and women’s fashion in the last 200 years, and the resulting sartorial gender ambivalence. The exhibit provided information on ‘real’ and literary dandies, both male and female, including the ‘amazone’ Natalie Clifford Barnie, an American expatriate, a poet and a hostess of popular literary salons in Paris.”
Niketa Williams - Evaluating the Legacy of Microbicide Trial Participation among Women in Lusaka, Zambia

“In sub-Saharan Africa, women comprise more than 60% of HIV infections; vaginal microbicides aim to enable women to reduce their HIV risk. The success of clinical trials depends on recruiting and retaining study participants from high HIV incidence areas; critical to understanding future HIV research in the developing world are the lived experiences of participants and the legacy of participation for them and their communities.

In August 2008, 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the perceptions of women who had completed participation in the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 035 Phase II Microbicide Trial in Lusaka, Zambia 2-8 weeks prior. Interviews were conducted in English or in a local language with interpreters, and were audio recorded and transcribed in English. ATLAS.ti was used to conduct data analyses.

The sexual health screenings and services provided by the HPTN 035 study motivated participants' decision to enroll, with many admitting that they would have enrolled even without partner agreement. In the community, blood collection for health screenings fueled misperceptions of Satanism. Women felt that these sentiments had improved since study onset, and most suggested additional community sensitization to assuage distrust. Based on study-specific experiences, former participants have developed unique definitions of research for themselves. Participants were satisfied with the HPTN 035 study and were hopeful about the future of microbicides in their communities; almost all women lamented their study exit and would opt to participate in future microbicide studies. Data analyses are currently ongoing.”
Sarah Krier and Amy Romanowski Receive 2009-2010 WSP Teaching Fellowships

Anthropology PhD candidate, Sarah Krier, has focused her research on medical anthropology, Indonesia and the Pacific, ethnography, Islam, and popular culture. Sarah received her MA from Pitt’s Graduate School of Public Health, and her BA from Oberlin College.

Sarah has worked in a variety of public interest settings in Indonesia, Oberlin and Pittsburgh. Most recently, she was a Provost Development Fellow and a Salk Fellow through the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and the University of Pittsburgh.

In 2008, Sarah held guest lecturer positions at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Sarah was a NSEP David L. Boren Fellow in Indonesia in 2007-2008 and a Pitt Anthropology teaching fellow in 2005-2006

Amy is a second-year PhD student in the Department of French and Italian. She received an MA in French from the University of Utah in 2005, and taught high school French in Phoenix, AZ before coming to Pittsburgh. Amy's research interests lie in gender and sexuality studies and queer theory, not only as they appear in francophone circles of literature and culture, but in any social or cultural medium that destabilizes gender or sex.

In addition to teaching Intro to Women's Studies, Amy has taught French 1, 4, and 6 at the University of Pittsburgh. She was selected as the 2009 Program Assistant for the University's intensive French language study abroad program in Nantes, France.

Amy anticipates writing her dissertation on Tahar Ben Jelloun's *L'enfant de sable* and its approach to masculinity of the non-white, non-male body.
Women’s Studies Creates Iris Marion Young Award

In 2008, Women’s Studies initiated the Iris Marion Young Award to honor the former GSPIA faculty member and WSP affiliate. In collaboration with GSPIA and the Innovation Clinic, the award was presented the same year to Dr. Audrey Murrell of the Katz School.

Murrell is the Director of the David Berg Center for Ethics and Leadership and an associate professor of Business Administration. She has a joint appointment in the Department of Psychology, where she began as a Pitt faculty member in 1987. She has been a faculty leader for the Diversity Seminar at Pitt and a chair of the University Senate Anti-discrimination Committee; indeed, she got to know Iris Young in the 1990s through their shared work in the Women’s Studies Program and University Senate.

Look for the interview with Audrey Murrell by Nancy Glazener on our new web site.

Second Annual Iris Marion Young Award Presented in April 2009

The 2009 award was presented with the inaugural Iris Marion Young Lecture, sponsored by GSPIA and the Innovation Clinic. Anne Sisson Runyan (Professor of Women’s Studies and Political Science, Univ. Cincinnati) spoke on “Theorizing Feminist Global Justice.”

In 2009, Aaron Arnold was the first recipient of a new Iris Marion Young Undergraduate Award for Political Engagement. Although undergraduates had applied for the first year’s award, it was clear that a separately designated award would address the difference in their available time of commitment and thus in how their applications fared in relationship to faculty and staff applications.
Aaron Arnold is a Sociology BA alumnus with a minor in Africana Studies and a certificate in the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. He was a Time-Warner/Point Foundation Scholar in 2005, and he received The Robert W. Avery Award for excellence in undergraduate studies from Sociology. Aaron was inducted into the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership honors society, he was a Brackenridge fellow in the Honors College, and he was a leader in the Rainbow Alliance at the University. Additionally, Aaron interned with the Heartland Alliance, a refugee health education program.

At an April 16 ceremony and reception, Melissa Swauger received the Iris Marion Young Award. In 2008, Melissa earned her PhD in Sociology, and masters certificate in women’s studies from the University of Pittsburgh, as well as an MA from Duquesne’s Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy. Melissa is presently an assistant professor of sociology at Carlow University. She is active in many community organizations, including the Girls Coalition of Southwestern PA, Women and Girls Foundation, and the Carnegie’s Girls Math and Science Partnership. She has volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters programs and organizations for battered women and abused children.

Ceremony speeches by Melissa and Aaron will be available online.
The Women’s Studies Program supported Todd Reeser’s (French/Women’s Studies) attendance at the significant conference, “Rethinking Sex: Gender and Sexuality Studies: State of the Field”, held at University of Pennsylvania on March 4-6, 2009. The conference was highly pertinent to Reeser’s current research, but it was also useful to have him go as the chair of our graduate committee and as a faculty member who has recently taught courses on masculinities and queer theory. The Program is currently rethinking its graduate offerings and designing a new core course on theories of gender, with specific attention being paid to the relationship between women’s studies and gender and sexuality studies. This conference pulled together the leading figures in the field with the express purpose of assessing the field and looking to its future. The Women’s Studies Program also welcomed responses from a Pitt alumna (a recent WS certificate student), who attended the conference.

Alumna Heather Frost Reflects on Conference Experiences

When I first heard about the University of Pennsylvania’s conference “Rethinking Sex: Gender and Sexuality Studies State of the Field,” I was thrilled. Now that I’m out of school and working forty hours a week, I have less time for the academic and intellectual gatherings that I was inundated with during my schooling at Pitt. Sure, my job as a sexual and reproductive health hotline counselor gives me the opportunity to put some of my women’s studies knowledge into practice, but not as much as I would like. In fact, the majority of my time is spent using my “clinical” knowledge—the symptoms of STDs, how a woman can tell if she is pregnant, where someone can find emergency contraceptive pills, etc.—rather than helping consumers explore their gender and sexuality. Therefore, a conference like the one Penn was putting on seemed to be the perfect opportunity for me to connect with my academic roots.

The conference itself felt like coming home, revisiting a place that felt so familiar. I was even able to witness speakers whose works I’d read during my undergraduate years, women like Gayle Rubin and Judith Halberstam.
Seeing them speak, along with the other participants whom I was less familiar with, brought me back to that feeling of connectedness I remember from my women’s studies classes; the feeling that everyone in the room shares my ideals, my struggles, my awareness of what needs to be changed.

The speakers presented papers on various topics such as disability, objectum-sexuality, and hope and hopelessness. While some speakers had me struggling to completely comprehend their ideas—you know how some people in this field love to use elevated language—others had me emphatically agreeing with their points and becoming captivated with their ability to put my own thoughts into words.

On the other hand, the conference reminded me of some facets of the sexuality and gender studies field that disappoint me. I approached the readings with a different perspective than the one I had while in school. After spending the last eight months speaking with women and men who, for the most part, lack health insurance, are undereducated, and have become parents at a young age, I’ve realized that many people don’t have the time, energy, or interest to ponder their gender and sexual identities, or to see how the issues raised by a conference such as the one at Penn affect them. Even though they may be very affected by racism, heterosexism, homophobia, etc., many often don’t have the vocabulary or intellectual structure to comprehend these ideas and see how they’re practiced in everyday life.

Therefore, this conference gave me the chance to expand upon an idea I started formulating as an undergrad: the biggest flaw in the gender and sexuality field is its pretentiousness. Even though a conference like this one is geared for academics, I don’t feel that enough people are taking the time to translate these issues into words that everyone can understand. Who is making the common person aware of how s/he affects the universe, how racism and sexism affects him/her personally, and how important his/her gender and sexual identity is to his/her life? These are the questions that I feel should be raised within the field. In order to truly impact society—which is, after all, the common goal of most individuals in the gender and sexuality field—we must find a way to reach the masses, to educate our entire community so that change can come from the majority, rather than the academic minority.

Heather Frost
March 31, 2009
Events Promote Interest in Program

Undergraduate Information Expo

This event is typically held in October so that seniors may make full use of the resources being offered to acquaint students with opportunities outside of the classroom. In 2008 and 2009, the expo was held at the William Pitt Union and attracted over 50 students (up from 30 in 2007) interested in internships, graduate school and careers related to Women’s Studies. The expo was attended by a range of internship providers such as the Thomas Merton Center, Pittsburgh Food Bank, Girl Scouts of America, the Women’s Law Project, POWER, Planned Parenthood, Lydia’s Place, and the Midwife Center. Graduate certificate students were on hand to discuss graduate school applications and study opportunities.

WS Film Series

Frayda Cohen organized this film series in spring 2009. For each film, a discussant shaped a series of questions and issues. Students could attend single films (and did in large numbers) or attend the series for independent credit. Films included an Indonesian film on polygamy with discussion by WS certificate grad student Sarah Krier (who is a WS teaching fellow for 2009-10) and a film version of The Vagina Monologues with discussion by a visiting lecturer, Sealing Cheng, who has directed versions of the production in South Korea. The fall 2009 series began with a reception and showing of I Was a Teenage Feminist.

In 2008-2009 WS cosponsored several major conferences and ongoing series:

Lifting Belly High: A Conference on Women’s Poetry since 1900 (Duquesne University)

Realisms (Humanities Center, CMU, year-long series)

Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia (Music)

The Gender Wage Gap: New National and Regional Strategies (GSPIA)

In Sisterhood: The Women’s Movement in Pittsburgh multimedia exhibit by Patricia Ulbrich (Jean Ferketisch and Patricia Beeson)

Remembering the Future: Legacies of Radical Politics in the Caribbean (English/Latin American Studies)

Class Matters: Conference of the Working Class Studies Assoc. (English)

Pittsburgh Consortium for Adoption Studies (Arts and Sciences, English)
The Women’s Studies Program kicked off the 2009-2010 academic year with a potluck reception hosted by Director, Jean Ferguson Carr. Attendees enjoyed the company of colleagues and welcomed a few new faces as they sampled a variety of tasty dishes brought by attendees.

Women’s Studies has been working steadily with University Marketing to complete the new Program web site. A screenshot of the work-in-progress is shown here. Keep your eyes open for an announcement when the site goes live!

Rebecca Roadman, Pitt Classics and Religious Studies alumna, is excited to join Women’s Studies as the new Program Assistant.
We Thank the Generous Donors Who Supported the Program in 2008 and 2009

Ellen Sue Ansell
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Meredith Bailey-Orr
Lisa D. Brush
David Carrier
Joan Veronica Cisz
Carrie M. Collins
Matthew Christian Collins
Frayda Cohen
Linda Ann DeLuca
Deborah Desjardins
Irene Frieze
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Mrs. Martin A. Greenwald
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Lawrence E. Zeff

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Pitt Annual Fund
500 Craig Hall
200 South Craig Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

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