From the Director:

Greetings from Women’s & Gender Studies!

Chantal Kalisa,
WGS Director

This year marks the end of my tenure as the Director of Women’s & Gender Studies. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve you. I am thankful to those who serve in many capacities in order to grow our program. Core and affiliate faculty are key in reflecting our commitment to interdisciplinarity through their research, teaching, and service. I also thank campus community members such as those who run the Women’s Center and LGBTQ+ Resource Center. They are dedicated to making women’s issues visible on campus, and also offer invaluable internship and professionalization opportunities for our students.

In the last four and half years, we dedicated ourselves to strengthening our curriculum. We streamlined our assessment process to gauge what our students learn at the end of major. There has been an increase of cross-listed courses across campus as we continue to find ways to collaborate with new departments and faculty. Additionally, we created new stand-alone courses in our priority areas and at all levels. Our majors and minors have increased. It is a great pleasure to see that more and more freshmen are taking our classes early on, increasing the chance that they might continue to explore the opportunities provided by WGS. Graduate specialization and minors have also increased and we are dedicated to their professionalization through curriculum training and providing support for travel to conferences.

Our colloquium series continues to be a strong presence on campus. Turnout to these events has been phenomenal. This newsletter contains reviews of the series this year, written by undergraduate and graduate students. The speakers included outstanding outside lecturers and our own faculty. In the spring, it is our turn to host the NO LIMITS conference, with the theme “Sexuality and Gender in the Digital Age.” It is a student conference shared by UNL, UNO, and UNK, and attended by students from many other institutions. We hope you consider attending, especially those who are no longer on campus.

I want to thank those I work closely with: Associate Director Rose Holz, Administrative Support Associate Paige Glasshoff, graduate students Kathleen Lacey and Catherine Medici-Thiemann, and our wonderful student workers over the years.

And finally, thank you for supporting the program.
On January 22, UNL had the honor of hosting Alexandra Wettlaufer from the University of Texas at Austin. Wettlaufer is a professor of French and Comparative Literature and specializes in 19th-century literature, visual arts, culture, and gender studies. Wettlaufer’s talk for the WGS Colloquium Series, “Painting Women: Gender, Representation, and Artistic Identity,” focused heavily on her research of 19th-century visual arts and gender.

She spoke of 19th-century artist Adelaide Labille-Guiard, one of the first female artists to have her paintings shown in the Louvre. At the time, the number of women allowed to have their work on display was only four. Labille-Guiard was a great advocate for female artists; when they were not welcome in traditional male studios, she opened up her own studio so that women who were not welcome elsewhere or could not afford the steep price of being taught by the masters could still develop their craft. She also petitioned to change the rule that prohibited more than four women to be shown in the Louvre. Initially, her efforts failed, but as her own personal means of defying the rule, she submitted a portrait of herself and two of her students into the Louvre so that there would be not four, but six, women represented in the museum.

Labille-Guiard, in her initial battle against the system, was unsuccessful but her fight for equality continued on. The work she did to make museums and galleries more inclusive places for people of all genders and social classes has stood the test of time and would eventually inspire many female artists during the late 20th century working for the same cause. The subject of Wettlaufer’s talk and Labille-Guiard’s fight in 19th-century France is prevalent today as women continue to be underrepresented in the art world.

On February 26, 2015, Patrice McMahon, associate professor of political science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, presented the beginnings of what is sure to be an enlightening research project on the funding trends of private foundations for women in conflict zones. Her presentation, “Mapping the Terrain,” is only the beginning of an examination that looks into what prominent foundations are providing funding to women’s empowerment programs in conflict zones around the world. McMahon, along with Jill Irvine, professor of women’s and gender studies and religious studies at the University of Oklahoma and Andrew Halterman from Caerus Associates, has uncovered some preliminary data that aims to shape the future of their research.

Some of the more prominent foundations McMahon focused on include the Ford Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation. Foundations are likely to support countries otherwise unsupported by the United States government, with the largest portion of foundation money going to Africa. There is still more research that needs to be done, but preliminary findings focus on foundations that are beginning to spend more of their money internationally, particularly increasing their funding for women’s empowerment, and those that are largely working with women in conflict zones. Notably, the foundations also frame women as “agents of change” and “agents of democratization.” However, foundations are still prone to have agendas, as McMahon noted during her presentation, and there is mixed evidence of movement building. Along with discovering the true impact of foundations in these conflict zones, this information will lead to findings that will better answer the researchers’ question: “Are American foundations important ‘agents’ for women’s empowerment in conflict zones?”
On March 19, Brenda Flanagan, professor of English at Davidson College, presented her research on the work of Eva Svankmajerova, known as the “godmother” of Czech surrealism, and the lives of other Czech women under socialism. As a painter, filmmaker, and feminist, Svankmajerova is recognized outside of the Czech Republic as a prolific artist; however, inside her native country, she is hardly known “due to the stagnant gendered discourse and low recognition of women.” Flanagan’s interest in Svankmajerova, she says, was inspired by a serendipitous encounter at a bookstore in Prague. When looking for the work of Czech women writers, the bookstore clerk recommended Svankmajerova’s Baradla Cave. The novel, according to the publisher, explores “maternity and femininity while offering a satirical look at the overweening mother-state and consumer society.” The language changes from jargon to slang to “metaphoric stream,” reflecting Svankmajerova’s “sense of the absurd.”

Flanagan was so impressed with the book that she decided she had to meet Svankmajerova, and the two became fast friends. It was from these series of events that Flanagan began a new area of research of women’s lives under socialism. Aside from Svankmajerova, she interviewed dozens of Czech women about their everyday lives and opinions. She relays the story of one woman who ran away from home when she was a teenager; she was “living the life of a vagrant” at a time when the government refused to acknowledge that such things could happen under socialism.

The lives and experiences of womanhood under socialism is a largely untapped area of research, and by giving voice to these women, Flanagan fills a large gap in the history of women in Eastern Europe and offers additional scholarship to those studying women’s survival strategies under oppressive regimes worldwide.

On April 20, Linda Przybyszewski, associate professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, presented a fascinating talk on the history of American dress. Her book, The Lost Art of Dress: The Women Who Once Made America Stylish, explores how Americans learned (and forgot) how to dress in the modern age. A legal historian by training, Przybyszewski says she came upon fashion history quite by accident; browsing a bookstore produced a 500-page book on the art of dress, and from there, her interest and research took off.

The Lost Art of Dress pulls from Przybyszewski’s own collection of over 700 dress and sewing manuals dating from the early 20th century, archival research, and her own skills as a dressmaker. In fact, she even recreated a number of items from the 20th century to support her work. The Lost Art of Dress tells the story of “the Dress Doctors,” a group of women, mostly academics, who taught Americans what to wear. The Dress Doctors emphasized thrift and beauty and incorporated elements of fine art, such as balance and line, into their instruction and philosophy.

The Dress Doctors, Przybyszewski says, felt that “everyone deserves to have some beauty in their life” and fashion was the easiest and cheapest way to do it. Also at the time, women were engaging more in civic and social engagements, and “needed to learn how to look the part.”

Of particular interest to UNL audiences was the fact that two of the Dress Doctors had Nebraska ties. Ruth O’Brien had an MS in chemistry from UNL and became chief of the Division of Textiles and Clothing at the USDA’s Bureau of Home Economics in 1923. Grace Margaret Morton was an associate professor of home economics and head of the textiles and clothing division at UNL and authored the well-known and widely-used book The Arts of Costume and Personal Appearance in 1943.

In conjunction with, and to supplement Przybyszewski’s lecture, the exhibition Modernism and Romanticism: An American Design Approach, featuring the works of Bill Blass, Geoffrey Beane, and Oscar de la Renta, opened at the Robert Hillestad Textiles Gallery on East Campus.
Dr. Cati Connell, social scientist and author of the book *School’s Out: Gay and Lesbian Teachers in the Classroom*, gave an insightful talk in the UNL City Campus Union on October 2, 2015. Dr. Connell’s presentation focused on the experience of gay and lesbian teachers at the K-12 level, as well as administrators, and a few straight allies. According to Dr. Connell, gay and lesbian teachers “work in one of the last remaining strongholds of homophobia.” She’s found that there is a “fundamental incompatibility” between gay pride and teaching professionalism. Dr. Connell conducted a series of interviews with teachers, mainly in California and Texas, and came to the conclusion that there are generally three paths gay and lesbian teachers follow, paths Dr. Connell refers to as “splitting,” “knitting,” and “quitting.”

Splitters choose to “leave their sexual selves behind,” presenting an asexual, “professional” presentation of self, while knitters attempt to weave together their sexual and professional identities and emphasize a responsibility as role models for LGBT youth. Quitters simply choose to either leave the teaching profession altogether or move into non-teaching or administrative positions. They find that neither path, splitting or knitting, quite fits their needs and beliefs. Splitting hinders the “true self” and promotes shame instead of pride, while knitting offers too much exposure, leaving teachers open to harassment and discrimination. While quitting offers relief from a no-win situation, one must already be in a privileged position in order to take this path.

Dr. Connell suggests we need to go “beyond gay-friendly schools” to “queer-friendly schools.” What’s needed is a stronger, more expensive network of employment protections for lesbian and gay teachers. Even so-called “gay-friendly” schools encourage limited presence of sexuality in the classroom, enforcing typical married, monogamous, gender-norm-following ideas, rather than exposing students to varied lifestyles. In order to move forward with this “queering” of education, Dr. Connell says we need to think beyond “safety” and “tolerance” and introduce a “queer pedagogy,” a philosophy of education which challenges the typically sexually neutral ethic of teaching and encourages the challenging of all forms of inequality.

On February 18th, 2010, at the presidential palace in the Republic of Niger, the country’s ministers were holding a weekly meeting to discuss and revise policies. On this day, the specific topic of discussion was the number of men and women to receive promotions within the country. Outside the room, gunshots blasted and a band of soldiers entered to arrest President Mamdou Tandja, detain the ministers, and instate a transitional government. This occasion set the mood for Dr. Kang’s presentation on Muslim women’s activism and legislative reform. Dr. Kang asked the audience, “Why would President Tandja, a powerful Muslim man leading a predominantly Muslim country, spend his very last moments in office counting the number of women and men being promoted, ensuring that women are a part of this list?”

Dr. Kang focused the rest of her presentation on trying to understand and answer this question. She presented the idea that women’s activism is critical in understanding why women’s presence within various offices is promoted, and supports these findings through her fieldwork in the Republic of Niger. Over one hundred countries have adopted gender quota laws similar to that of Niger, which ensure that a certain number of women are represented at various levels of government.

With such wide support for gender quotas, Dr. Kang invites reflection upon such stipulations and how women’s activism has impacted these reforms. Through many interviews with women’s rights activists, women who oppose certain women’s rights reforms, and interviews with ministry officials, Dr. Kang presents a diverse array of research supporting her theory on women activists’ impact on the promotion of women in high-level occupations and offices.
Faculty and Student Achievements

Shari Stenberg (English) published *Repurposing Composition: Feminist Interventions for a Neoliberal Age* (University Press of Colorado) in August.

Rose Holz (History & WGS) received two research grants for her project, “Dr. Robert L. Dickinson and the Making of the Modern Pro-Life Nation.” One is a 2015-2016 History of Medicine Fellowship from Harvard University’s Francis A. Countway Library, and the other is a UNL CAS ENHANCE grant for 2015.

Beth Lewis (Learning & Teacher Education) recently published an article in *Science Education* and received the National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program Grant to support graduate MA students with an emphasis in science teaching. She also presented research at the National Association for Research in Science Annual Meeting in April.

Pat Tetrault (LGBTQA+ Resource Center) presented “The Evolving Conceptualizations of Allies and Advocacy: Moving Toward Social Justice Supporters,” at the Expanding the Circle Conference in June. Pat and grad student Stephanie Blair just recently received an acceptance for their Brave Space Workshop for 2016’s American College Personnel Association Conference.


Carly Woods (Communication Studies & WGS) received a research development grant from the Organization for Research on Women and Communication to support her project, “The Problem with Purple Penguins: Gender Trouble at a Site of Ordinary Democracy.” She was also an invited speaker for the communications department colloquium series at the University of Kansas, and presented “A Tale of Two Lucys: Remembering Oberlin’s Early Orators” at the Alexandria Lyceum in September.

Laura Madeline Wiseman (WGS) presented at the Steel Pen Conference. Her collaborative book, *Intimates and Fools*, is an Honor Book for the 2015 Nebraska Book Award. Her books, *Drink and Wake*, were published this year. She is also the guest editor for Cahoodaloodaling’s issue #18, Historical (Re)Tell.

Margaret Jacobs (History) is the Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions at Cambridge University for 2015-2016. She is teaching a graduate class, participating in the Cambridge American History Seminar series, and giving presentations at universities and conferences around the UK and other parts of Europe about her scholarship on Indigenous and women’s gender histories.

Tom Carr (Modern Languages and Literatures) published “Une ‘histoire véritable’ littéraire à l’Hôtel-Dieu de Québec: l’ “Histoire de Ruma” (1711) de Marie-André Duplessis et de Marie-Elisabeth Le Moyne de Longueuil” in *Quebec Studies* this summer.

Michael James (Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design) is currently exhibiting a collection of recent work in a show called *Ambiguity & Enigma* at the International Quilt Study Center & Museum on East Campus. The exhibition continues through February 20, 2016.

Joy Castro (English & Ethnic Studies) published the short fiction collection *How Winter Began* (University of Nebraska Press) in October and gave the talk “The Myth of the Room of One’s Own” at the Society for the Study of Women Writers Conference. Her essay, “Racial and Ethnic Justice in the Creative Writing Course” appeared in *Gulf Coast*.

Jennifer McKitrick (Philosophy) published “A Dispositional Account of Gender” in *Philosophical Studies* in October. She also presented “Theorizing ‘The Before’” at the Hypatia conference and as an invited talk at the University of Kansas and will be presenting it at the Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, and it will be published in the *Bloomsbury Companion to Analytical Feminism*.

Tamy Burnett (University Honors Program & WGS) will be leading an education abroad trip to Vietnam in May 2016, titled “War and Memory.” She has also been named a UNL Global Gateway Faculty Associate for 2015-16, an honor that is accompanied by a grant to support the development of this global experience for students.

Sidnie White Crawford (Classics & Religious Studies) became a member of the Society of Biblical Literature governing council in January. Her volume *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Concept of a Library* (coedited with Cecilia Wassen) has been published by E. J. Brill. She also published “‘There is Much Wisdom in Her’: The Matriarchs in the Qumran Library” in the collection, *Celebrate Her for the Fruit of Her Hands* (ed. S. Ackerman).
Faculty/Student Achievements Cont’d

Emily Kazyak (Sociology & WGS) was awarded an ENHANCE CAS Grant from the College of Arts & Sciences for her project, “Assessing Changes in Public Opinion of LGB Rights.” She was also recognized as an LGBTQQA+ Voice for Equality in Nebraska by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln LGBTQQA+ Resource Center. In addition, Emily was awarded the Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award by the Nebraska Association for Sociology Graduate Students. She also published articles in the Journal of GLBT Studies and Sexuality Research and Social Policy. Finally, she co-authored two articles with WGS graduate specialization students Brandi Woodell and Rachel Schmitz for Social Sciences and Journal of Marriage and Family, respectively.

American/Popular Culture Association.

Brandi Woodell (Sociology & WGS Grad Spec.) recently published “Reconciling LGB and Christian Identities in the Rural South” in a special issue of Social Sciences entitled “LGBTQ Lives in Context: The Role of Place.” The article was co-authored by WGS faculty member Emily Kazyak and D’Lane Compton.

Kristi Carter (English & WGS Grad Spec.) read her poetry at Lincoln’s own SP_CE Commons on October 16.

Catherine Medici-Thiemann (History & WGS Grad Spec.) received the Albin T. and Pauline Anderson Award from the Department of History for excellence in European History and the Robert Knoll Graduate Paper Award from the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program for “So Noble a Friend”: Lady Mary Sidney’s Favor and Patronage at Elizabeth’s Court.” In January she will present “An Earnest Instrument of Peace: Irish Noble Women’s Diplomatic Participation in the English Reconquest” at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting.

Annie Himes (WGS minor) was recently selected as a Truman Scholar, which rewards students who demonstrate leadership potential and who have an outstanding record of public service.

For news, events, & info, go to: http://www.unl.edu/wgs

WGS 2015 Scholarship and Award Winners

Karen Dunning Women’s and Gender Studies Scholarly Paper/Creative Activity Awards
Undergraduate Student: Elizabeth Askren
Graduate Students: Maria Nazos, Rachel Schmitz
Graduate Student Honorable Mention: Alicia Meyer

Outstanding Student Achievement Award
Samantha Lunde

Melba Cope Scholarship
Eliot Hines

Melba Cope Community Associate Award
Bobbie Kierstead

No Limits 2016
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Friday, March 11, 2016

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Meenakshi Gigi Durham
Professor, School of Journalism and Communication & Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, University of Iowa

“No Limits” is a regional student academic conference dedicated to crossing boundaries between disciplines and exploring a wide range of women's and gender issues. All student projects related to women and/or gender issues are welcome.


For the full Call for Papers, see www.unl.edu/wgs/.

WGS Welcomes Dr. Abla Hasan!

A new program faculty member in WGS, Dr. Hasan received her MA and PhD from UNL and joins the faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures as a Professor of Practice in Arabic Languages and Literatures. Her current research and teaching interests include feminism, second language acquisition theories, philosophy of language, religious studies, translation, and contemporary Arabic literature. In spring 2016, she’ll be teaching a special topics course, MODL 398: Women in Quran.
Spring 2016 Colloquium

WGS’s Spring 2016 Colloquium Series will feature Dr. Meenakshi Gigi Durham on March 11 and Dr. Katrina Jagodinsky on April 5th.

Special Topics Courses - Spring 2016

WMNS 291: Intro to Men & Masculinities
What is masculinity? How do societal and personal definitions of masculinities shape our culture and our individual lives? This course is an exploration of masculine identity development from personal, social, cultural, and psychological perspectives. Drawing from multiple disciplines we will examine historical and current definitions of masculinities, and investigate the intersections of masculine identity with race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender performance, age, and other characteristics. (Dr. Jan Deeds, W, 5:30-7:50pm)

MODL 398: Women in Quran
This class will read the Quran as literature to discover what analytic, linguistic, as well as critical study can reveal when it comes to feminism and gender issues in Islam. (Dr. Abla Hasan, W, 1:30-4:20pm)

COMM 998: Rhetoric of Gender Activism
How have feminist interventions into scholarly debates redefined what counts in western rhetorical traditions? What do feminist methods and methodologies bring to research in communication? We will become acquainted with the interdisciplinary feminist theories most often utilized in analyzing gendered discourse and explore key issues in feminist rhetorical scholarship, including style, voice, difference, and intersectionality.

How have marginalized groups used writing, speaking, and silence to navigate discursive interactions, challenge dominant language practices, and create social change? We will root our inquiry in practice by bringing the tools of rhetorical analysis to the study of gender and sexuality activism in historical and contemporary contexts. (Dr. Carly Woods, W, 3:30-6pm)

Alumni Spotlight

Adelle has worked for various non-profits and political campaigns since graduating from the WGS Program, including Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, Nebraska Appleseed, and Patty Pansing Brooks’ campaign for Legislature. She now works as an Administrative Assistant for Senator Pansing Brooks and spends her free time working as the Field Director for Anna Wishart.

Social Media & Website Updates

WGS has increased its presence on social media through Facebook and Twitter. We post info about department and campus news and events, as well as national news pertaining to gender and sexuality. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @unl_wgs.

Changes are coming to the WGS website! Already active is the new layout for the schedule of classes. We are now using an interactive table that allows students to click on the class title for the course description. Future additions to the website will include an updated graduate student directory, a dedicated area for alumni stories and successes, and new information and resources about career opportunities.

Congratulations Graduates!

During the 2014-2015 academic year, WGS celebrated 30 graduating WGS majors, minors, and graduate specialization students as well as LGBTQ/Sexuality Studies minors at our December and May graduation receptions.

Majors: Meredith Cain, John Holen, Samantha Lunde, Danielle Rue, Erin Urbank, Francesca VanDeWalker, Veronica Zuccarello
Minors: Joshua Bivins, Ali Britzman, Aliza Brugger, Becky Buchanan, Riley Cullen, Anne Flesher, Emily Grammes, Amber Hadenfeldt, Carli Halstead, Kaitlin Harvey, Mina Holmes, Jared Holzhauser, Anne Johnson, Rebekah Land, Courtney Leikam, Shannon Smith, Morgan Wisnieski
LGBTQ/Sexuality Studies Minors: David Cossaart, Jared Holzhauser, Anne Johnson, Olivia Reinert-Gehman, Lindsay Spaulding
Graduate Specializations: Mitchell Hobza, Jacqueline Harris, Sarah Jones
If you would like to contribute to the Women’s and Gender Studies Development Fund, please cut out the above contribution card and mail it to: University of Nebraska Foundation, P.O. Box. 82555, Lincoln, NE 68501-2555.

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