

# Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies

University of Massachusetts Amherst

A Department in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts

Spring  
2017

## ► Greetings from the Chair ◀

What a year this has been! The campus and the world feel very different than they did back in September, when most people thought Hillary Clinton was about to be elected. Many of us are feeling deeply alarmed by the changes wrought by the Trump administration—from the end of the Title IX protections for transgender students to the immigration crackdowns at airports and in the streets to the militarized clearing of Oceti Sakowin camp in North Dakota, once home to thousands of Standing Rock protesters. But for every piece of bad news, there are also signs of an astonishing flourishing of democracy. The Women’s March turned out between 3 and 4 million people, the largest demonstration in the history of the United States. The Tohono O’odham of Arizona and Sonora are talking about Standing Rock-style protests to stop the extension of a US-Mexico border wall. From Town Hall meetings to the congressional switchboard on speed dial, thousands of people are mobilizing politically. The Sanctuary Campus movement seems to have stopped, at least for now, the ending of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), even as UMass professors stopped at Logan Airport became the basis, in part, of a lawsuit against the Trump administration’s first travel ban. Is the quote “May you live in interesting times” a blessing or a curse?



## Spring 2017 News

We are delighted this semester to welcome back Svati Shah and to welcome Amanda Johnson, who will be teaching WGSS 395N “Gender, Nation and Body Politics” this spring.

### **The Much Anticipated Move!**

From November through January we were moving and super busy, so this is a short newsletter. Look for the full version in the fall, complete with alum news, academic news, pictures of people and the new building and more. Come see us in our new place:

### **4<sup>th</sup> floor, main office room W401 South College Academic Facility**

Astonishingly, after all this time, we are in new digs. The new building is amazing. We are nested up high, with some of the most gorgeous views of the Valley of anyplace on campus. The space is full of light and glass. The temperature fluctuations are minimal compared to Bartlett, where it could be 100 degrees or 55. It’s all so gorgeous and comfortable that we still don’t quite believe these are our offices.

All the faculty and staff are now next to each other! No hunting on multiple floors and in alcoves. Come up to the southwest corner of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in the new section of South College and wander through and you will see us! Our new website has also been up and running for several months.

Take a look if you haven't visited in some time: [www.umass.edu/wgss](http://www.umass.edu/wgss).

We will miss being able to see and hear the demonstrations out the main office window as they march to Whitmore, and we don't have our iconic red-painted fist and "Women's Studies" on the window, and somehow we suspect that the good folks from the Isenberg School of Management will not want to preserve them for their historical significance when they move into our old offices. But plans are afoot to remove the fist and bring it over—our fundraising campaign to save the fist has begun! To give, please see the "GIVE" button on our website (just write fist in the comments) or send us a check.



## SPRING EVENTS

*Linda Sarsour*

*The Resistance: Organizing in the Age of Trump*

*Friday, April 28, 2017, 3:30 p.m. (doors open at 3:00)*

*Mahar Auditorium*

We are excited to bring Linda Sarsour, Co-chair of the Women's March to campus. In addition to being one of the national co-chairs of the Women's March, she is an award-winning, Brooklyn-born Palestinian-American-Muslim racial justice and civil rights activist, community organizer, social media maverick, and mother of three. Linda has been at the forefront of major social justice campaigns both locally in New York City and nationally. Linda is the Executive Director of the Arab American Association of New York, co-founder of Muslims for Ferguson, and a member of Justice League NYC. She is most notably recognized for her focus on intersectional movement building.



## Trans\* Studies Speaker Series

Even though we were packing in the fall, our program committee was working hard. We've been honored to host some of the edgiest and most interesting trans studies scholars working in the academy these days for short-term residencies. Thanks to the Provost's office, who underwrote the series together with the gender studies programs of Mt. Holyoke College and Smith, the Five College Women's Studies Research Center and the History and Communication departments here. We have had the opportunity to have fantastic scholars and artists visit multiple classes and meet students, grad students, and faculty in informal settings as well as speak at exceptionally well-attended formal talks.

We scheduled two residencies each semester. Poet, performance artist, and writer Ryka Aoki was with us in October, and Africana studies and feminist, gender, and sexuality studies scholar C. Riley Snorton of Cornell University spoke in December. We were recently joined by feminist philosopher Talia Bettcher, Chair of the Philosophy Department at California State University, Los Angeles, who shared her work in progress with us, giving a talk entitled "The Phenomenology of Illusion: On Gender Transitions and Existential Identity." Our final speaker, micha cárdenas, Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences and Interactive Media Design, University of Washington, Bothell. She hosted a workshop on pedagogy, trans studies and reproductive politics and gave a public talk titled, "Poetic Operations Inclusive Design and Media Art Strategies for Resisting Fascism in the U.S."

The Annual Graduate Student Conference was March 31st. The title this year was “Transformative Feminisms: Interventions and Innervations.” The students completing the certificate presented their work to mark the culmination of their feminist research projects.



The History Department continues with 2016-2017 Feinberg Family Distinguished Lecture Series

*The U.S. in the Age of Mass Incarceration* [www.umass.edu/history/about/feinbergseries.html](http://www.umass.edu/history/about/feinbergseries.html)



The Five College Women’s Studies Research Center continues with the Working Feminism Lecture Series and other great events. [www.fivecolleges.edu/fcwsrc/events](http://www.fivecolleges.edu/fcwsrc/events)



### Quick student news

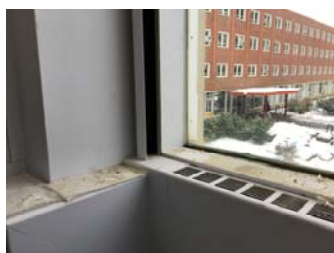
**Undergrads:** If you are graduating check in with Karen. Career services has been restructured, but there are still career events and other opportunities and Caroline Gould in the HFA Advising Center is available to talk with you about careers. Remember, these services are for you!

Congrats to the WGSS students who have won awards so far. We have winners of Senior Leadership, Field Scholar and Internship awards. It is worth taking the time to apply!

**Grad students:** [The admission deadline for the Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies is March 1 every year.](#) Complete information is available on our website, and/or contact Lezlie Frye for more information. This spring we have 12 new certificate students!



Some before and after moving pictures! With some Bartlett filth thrown in to show you all what we don't miss!



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