

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies

University of Massachusetts Amherst

A Department in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts

Spring 2018
Newsletter

Chair's Message

From the Women's March to #MeToo, 2017 was a busy year for feminism, as evidenced by Miriam Webster's decision to make "feminism" its word of the year. Yet many also asked why those events didn't feel particularly inclusive of lots of people—trans women, women of color, sex workers, and others. Year by year, WGSS tries to open the space to look at those questions, and the age of Trump is no different. Alex Deschamps is offering a new course on **Pop Culture and Racial Icons**, which started as a conversation about Beyoncé's *Lemonade* video. Stina Soderling is offering her course, **Feminist Perspectives on Indigeneity and Settler Colonialism** again, while Elizabeth Williams is offering another new course, **Global Gays in the Global Gaze**. Meanwhile, as the news continues to bristle with significant events, Banu Subramaniam and Karen Lederer have put another new course on the books for next fall, **WGSS Reads the News**, to at least provide a place to talk about it. Here at the university there is good news about organizing against sexual harassment: we recognize the successful efforts of the Graduate Women in STEM (GWIS) this year for the #safeatwork campaign and look forward to future collaborations.

Things in the department are as busy and interesting as usual: **Kiran Asher** is chairing a faculty search in African American/African Diaspora feminisms, with a significant assist from **Angie Willey** and **Svati Shah**; and **Laura Briggs** and **Lezlie Frye** are submitting the PhD proposal for the department at the beginning of February. **Kirsten Leng** has a new book coming out in February--*Sexual Politics and Feminist Science: Women Sexologists in Germany, 1900-1933*—and **Angie Willey** has a coedited volume, *Queer Feminist Science Studies: A Reader*, that came out in December (we know they're doing something important, since the book's already been denounced by the radical right website, *Campus Reform*). Since we're talking about the right, they've also been trolling our colleague over at Amherst College, **Amrita Basu**, over her course on Women and Right-Wing Populism last fall. Apparently the folks at *Campus Reform* get upset when you name people who are supposed to be marginal and invisible as having a legitimate viewpoint—queer folk and feminists—but also when you mark what is supposed to be the unmarked category—right-wing women, those white women followers of Phyllis Schlafly who voted for explicitly misogynist candidates like Roy Moore and Donald Trump *because* they are anti-feminists. Welcome to Gilead, and the very strange politics of "free speech" on campus. We're supposed to welcome characters like Milo Yiannopoulos, who seems to have little new or even empirically verifiable to say and one of whose supporters shot a protestor outside his talk at the University of Washington, but feminist faculty teaching their research can expect harassment or worse.

In other news, we have many great events in the coming semester, but one we are particularly excited about is an exploration of the late 1980s gay and lesbian politics, when anti-imperialism and anti-racism were central. Look inside for a schedule for the February 23-24 conference, ***Finding the Queer Radical Past: Scholars and Activists on the Legacies of the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights***, keynoted by Emily Hobson and Dean Spade, and full of exciting activists, historians, and artists. See you there!



Laura Briggs

EVENTS

Sign up for our events listserv (details on our website—"About us" and then "stay connected") to get all the info.

We are happy to be in the midst of a search for a tenure-track assistant professor with a focus in African-American Studies and/or the African Diaspora. Guest lectures were held in January and early February. Save these dates: **Public Presentation of Graduate Certificate Students Final Projects**, Monday, March 26, 1:00-4:00 p.m.: **Gala End of Year Breakfast** celebrating our grads: May 10, 2018; **A Queer/Feminist Decolonial Analysis of the Zika Outbreak in Puerto Rico**, a talk by **Adriana Garriga-Lopez**, Chair of Anthropology at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, April 10, 2018. Watch our website or your email for more information!

We've organized a spring conference that will commemorate a moment in which LGBTQ politics were intimately bound up with anti-racism and left solidarity movements: against apartheid, war, and US imperialism. Our goal is to reflect back on the queer left and its legacies for today. Over two days, we will bring students and activists working for racial justice and LGBTQ freedom into dialogue with historians and veteran activists. The conference is free, but we do need people to register. Details below.

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Finding the Queer Radical Past:

Scholars and Activists on the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights

Friday and Saturday, February 23-24, 2018

Student Union Ballroom, UMass Amherst

Keynote speakers: Emily K. Hobson, Dean Spade

9:00 a.m. Friday, February 23 Opening

9:15 Opening Keynote: Emily Hobson, "*Finding the Queer Radical Past*"

10:30-12:00 Panel 1: Organizing a National March
Marc Stein, Gil Gerald, Kwame Holmes, Jess Wender-Shubow
Moderator: Genny Beemyn

12:00-1:00 Lunch *free to registrants*

1:00-2:30 Screenings Films by: Jim Hubbard, JEB

2:45-4:15 Panel 2: Memorialization
Jim Hubbard, Joan E. Biren
Moderator: Jennifer DeClue

4:30-6:00 Panel 3: Political Intersections: Why Should/Did Queer Politics Draw On Multiple Movements?
Umayyah Cable, BC Craig, Joan Gibbs, Carmen Vázquez
Moderator: Laura Briggs

9:00 Dance with cash bar (UMass Chapel)

10:00 a.m. Saturday February 23

10:00-11:30 Panel 4: Collective Survival Today
Kenyon Farrow, Jason Lydon, Gerry Scoppettuolo, Nathalie Amazan
Moderator: Kevin Henderson

11:30-12:45 Lunch *free to registrants*

1:00-4:15 Non-Violence/Civil Disobedience Training

4:30-6:00 Closing Keynote: Dean Spade, "*Creating the Queer Radical Future*"

The conference is free and open to all. For complete information and to register: www.queerradicalpast.net/

Continued.....

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Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department; History Department; Stonewall Center; Advocacy, Inclusion, and Support Programs Cluster of Student Affairs and Campus Life

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STUDENT NEWS

- ◆ Applications for the Ann Ferguson scholarship (for undergrad and graduate students pursuing degrees or certificates in women and gender studies at UMass Amherst) are open. There is one common application at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts for this fund and many others.

www.communityfoundation.org/scholarships

- ◆ **Undergrads:** Junior Writing and Theory are offered fall semester only. The Integrative Experience is offered spring semester only. Often a particular elective is only offered once a year or even less often, so grab those fascinating classes when you see them.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ **Social Media:** We have a departmental Facebook page where we post interesting articles, (UMass Amherst Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department) if you don’t follow us now, please do. www.facebook.com/umasswgss/
- ◆ We have a writing tutor again this semester to assist students! You can contact **Faune Albert** at on her blog wgsswritingblogspring2018.wordpress.com/ to set up an appointment!
- ◆ We would love to use social media for our grads to connect to one another and current students. If you have thoughts about how to do this (private facebook group for example) contact Karen Lederer: lederer@wost.umass.edu.
- ◆ We also have a linked in group-UMass Amherst Women’s Studies Grads: www.linkedin.com/groups/1834031



Thanks to donors: Because of donations we can help students, provide programming, give T-shirts to grads and we even moved our historic window! At press time, we didn’t have the end-of-year donors, a big thank you in advance—you know who you are!

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University of Massachusetts Amherst
W401 South College
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LOOKING BACK.....

In newsletters 20 and 30 years past, some things have changed a great deal, and alas some have not. In Spring of 1988 students of color occupied New Africa House in response to racist attacks on campus. WGSS (at the time Women's Studies) supported days of action that spring, with classes focused on issues of racism and sexism, and opened those classes during the action to others in the University community. Ten years later, in the spring of 1998, we reflected on the successful Women Activists Reunion the prior fall and went on later in the newsletter to say *"We are still tinkering with our new Graduate Certificate Program in Advanced Feminist Studies, instituted officially this year (last year it was a pilot program).* That newsletter goes on to proudly talk about our 8 grad students. . . We're happy to report our numbers have increased something like 10 fold, and the Ph.D proposal is being finalized!

This newsletter is produced online and in written form twice a year funds permitting. The newsletter is edited by Karen Lederer, and designed by Linda Hillenbrand. Thanks to Laura Briggs, Lezlie Frye, Linda Hillenbrand for contributions. **Alumni News is next fall in this newsletter, send us your updates by August 1!**