

WOMEN, GENDER, SEXUALITY STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

208 Bartlett Hall - www.umass.edu/wost

A department in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts

Fall 2015

Message from the Chair's Desk

What a difference a year makes. At the beginning of the last academic year, Palestinian-American scholar Steven Salaita had just been fired from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana (UICU) for angrily commenting on Israel bombing civilians in Gaza—from his personal twitter account—in what seemed like a very bad precedent for free speech for academics. Mike Brown had just been shot in Ferguson, MO. And most people still thought of Title IX in relationship to sports rather than rape.

In the intervening year, we've seen powerful grassroots organizing around all of these issues, and we are in a noticeably different place. This summer, when the conservative blogosphere exploded about the tweets of Saida Grundy, a Women's Studies Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and incoming assistant professor at Boston University, the entire event merited a collective shrug. CNN and others duly asked whether it was okay for a Black woman (whose research documented who tended to be in trouble on college campuses for cheating and drinking offenses) to tweet "Why is white America so reluctant to identify white college males as a problem population," and the story lasted a week. BU refused to get excited about it, and those who howled for her to get fired were ultimately ignored. (Meanwhile, at UICU, proceedings have begun to terminate the president who fired Steven Salaita, as his legal case on First Amendment freedom of speech grounds proceeds.) #BlackLivesMatter has changed the conversation about police violence and survived efforts to appropriate the meme and disappear its origins with Black queer women. People have learned the names of #BLM's founders—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—even as they have learned to #SayHerName about the female objects of police violence. And the mainstream media has begun to talk often about the pervasiveness of rape on and off college campuses, and even the *New York Times* has begun to use the feminist term "rape culture" to characterize the conditions that normalize it.

The last year serves a powerful rejoinder to those who lament the decline of activism, and of course, our students and faculty were involved in all of it. This is part of what I love about this job.

GOOD NEWS IN THE DEPARTMENT!

In more local news, we're tremendously gratified that our hardworking business manager, **Linda Hillenbrand**, has recently been promoted to a Grade 15, a much-deserved promotion that recognizes her work as website manager, scheduling officer, first contact with students, bookkeeper, personnel paperwork expert, supervisor of undergraduate work-study students and much more.

...The last year serves a powerful rejoinder to those who lament the decline of activism, and of course, our students and faculty were involved in all of it...

We're also excited to be welcoming a new faculty member this year, **Kiran Asher**, as an associate professor specializing in development and sustainability, known for her work on gender, race, environmental justice movements, and resource extraction from rural Colombia. She's also a wildlife biologist and expert on forestry who spent the past two years working on international treaties on environment and climate change out of Indonesia, while a senior scientist at CIFOR, (Center for International Forestry Research). She'll bring a lot to our curriculum, teaching courses on feminist theory and environmental justice, while raising our (already substantial) research profile in gender and science. Read the interview with her on page 8.



Speaking of gender and science, Banu Subramaniam won a much-deserved promotion to full professor last year in recognition of her considerable accomplishments as a scholar—with the publication of *Ghost Stories for Darwin*—as a teacher, and as an administrator, mentor, and organizer of so many of the activities related to gender and science locally and nationally. Her collaborator and partner-in-crime, Five College faculty member **Angie Willey**, easily won reappointment from the university last year, and her book, *Undoing Monogamy: The Politics of Science and the Possibilities of Biology*, will be out this spring. It is an extraordinary book, challenging the ways human beings (and voles) are seen as monogamous or non-monogamous, building on sources as diverse as her ethnographic fieldwork in a neuroscience lab, the philosophy of (new and old) materialisms, the history of race and sexology, queer studies, and a reading of Alison Bechdel's comics.

Tanisha Ford also won an enthusiastic reappointment last year. Her remarkable new book, *Liberated Threads: Black Women and the Politics of Adornment*, is already generating considerable excitement among historians and other scholars of the Black freedom movement in advance of its publication next month for its critical exploration of what Ford calls “soul style.” In it, she argues that the production of new kinds of bodily adornment—from “natural” hair to African-inspired clothing—functioned simultaneously as political solidarity and cultural contestation. Her book takes us from SNCC in the U.S. South to South African fashion models to the Black Power movement in London, exploring how record stores, beauty salons, fashion boutiques, and nightclubs functioned as nodes of the Black Freedom movement. While limited numbers of people might have been activists in the usual sense, everyone got dressed and fixed their hair!

Our newest faculty are also accomplishing great things. **Mecca Sullivan** published a stunning book of fourteen short stories, *Blue Talk and Love*, that explore the inner lives of women and girls of color as they negotiate sexuality, violence, and racism in her uniquely compelling writerly voice. As one reviewer put it, in this book Sullivan “is in love with the strangeness of people,” while another compared her to James Baldwin. **Kirsten Leng's** book on feminism and European sexology is currently under review by publishers, and last spring she won a \$9,000 FRG/Healy Grant for research on her second book, *Feminism, Comedy, and Humor: An Overlooked History*. Look for a new course on comedy this spring! **Kiran Asher** won a \$1000 sustainability grant for her new course. **Abbie Boggs**, in addition to a busy first year in which she stepped in as Director of Grad Studies, also has a book currently under review *American Futures: International Students and the Global U.S. University*.

In other news, **Alexandrina Deschamps** is completing another very successful year as associate dean of the Commonwealth Honors College, and has done pathbreaking work to increase the diversity of its students. **Miliann Kang** is developing a remarkable profile as a public intellectual, writing for *Huffington Post* on a regular basis on issues related to Asian American women and mothering. **Svati Shah** is on sabbatical this year, and will be spending the fall as a Visiting Scholar at the Zolberg Institute for Migration and Mobility at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

As to my own work, I am excited to have finished a draft of my next book *All Politics are Reproductive Politics*, under contract with the University of California Press.

Our curricular offerings have grown along with our faculty, and we're delighted to see many new students joining our major and taking our classes at every level! We are also pleased to have a new class this fall *Policing, Protest, and Politics: Queers, Feminists, and #BlackLivesMatter* taught by **Eli Vitulli**. Eli won a Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies fellowship for research for his first book, on the US prison system and gender non-conforming people. Eli is also teaching at Mt. Holyoke College. Look for this class alongside others on masculinities, reproductive politics, feminist art and politics, postcolonial science studies, trans* theory and politics this spring, and sustainable development.

.....We've also been working with colleagues across the Valley to develop a new **Five College Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Certificate.....**

We've also been working with colleagues across the Valley to develop a new **Five College Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Certificate** that will bring together the considerable number of courses and extensive activism of students, faculty, and other community members under a single rubric. The certificate has been approved at Smith, Mt. Holyoke, and Hampshire Colleges, and we hope to have it approved at UMass this fall—we have heard from a lot of students who want it made a reality here so they can enroll!

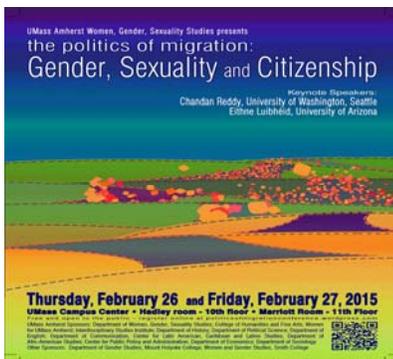


New facilities and infrastructure are forthcoming all around. Sometime soon, we should have a new website up! We've also been waiting and hoping to get our faculty, currently scattered around Bartlett, physically together so we can have those fabulous, productive hallway conversations that are the seeds for so much in academe. So it's with great excitement that we are watching the South College Academic Facility, our new home, being built, with a planned move-in during December 2016/January 2017. Take a walk by, see the fantastic fence posters (go around to the back to see ours featuring Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, and Meridel LeSeur) and see the pictures on page 4.



We are continuing to explore expanding our degree offerings to include the Ph.D. With the support of the new provost, Katherine Newman, we are contemplating submitting a proposal for the Ph.D. this fall, with the enthusiastic support of feminist colleagues around the Valley, and financial backing from Smith College, alongside UMass Amherst.

LOOKING BACK ON 2014-2015



Last year we had wonderful programming spearheaded by our new faculty (Kirsten Lang and Abbie Boggs with special thanks to Priyanka Srivastava.) The highlight of the year was the spring conference on **The Politics of Migration: Gender, Sexuality and Citizenship** which featured noted thinkers including Chandan Reddy who spoke on “Failures of Citizenship: Queer of Color Critique and the Politics of Migration” and Eithne Luibheid who spoke on “Nationalist Heterosexuality, Migrant (II) Legality, and Citizenship Norms” plus a celebration of Svati Shah’s book *Street Corner Secrets: Sex, Work, and Migration in the City of Mumbai*. Also last spring we had the **Advanced Feminist Certificate Graduate Student Conference** where our certificate students presented their important work. See page 5 for more.

In the fall, we also had a fascinating talk by Jack Halberstam and Lisa Lowe on their important book series for Duke University Press, *Perverse Modernities*, which has been home to so many major books on how to think gender, queers, and bodies together with race, colonialism, and economy. Finally we had our ab-fab end of year celebration where we sent another crop of completing majors, minors and certificate students to bring their skills, insight, theory and practice to go change the world. These students do us proud, with many awards and accomplishments amongst them ranging from Fulbright scholarships to being a 21st Century leader.

Thank you to our hardworking supporters. We especially appreciate the participation of students and faculty from outside departments who generously give of their time to staff our committees and teach courses that count for our undergraduate major and graduate certificate program. Thanks also to our donors, without them, these wonderful programs and resources wouldn't be possible.

I look forward to seeing you at events. . . and actions.



The Director's message (pp 1-3) is filled with news on promotions, faculty publications and accomplishments, our new faculty member, Linda's upgrade and more!

Bartlett Slowly Sinking Into the Sunset

We love to complain about Bartlett with all its problems. Still, as Bartlett's illness is increasingly terminal, we are beginning to savor the quirks that make Bartlett, well, Bartlett. We are using these next 18 months to say goodbye to the odd shaped toilets, the windows with no screens, the thoughtful bathroom graffiti, the lovely rock garden out our window and more. We post pictures on Facebook, so if you use Facebook, find us and "like" us to see the pictures. We are scheduled to move to the South College Academic Facility in time for Spring 2017.



Student Award Winners

Congratulations to **Alayna Williams** winner of the Ann Ferguson Women and Gender Studies Scholarship, administered through the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. Alayna is a senior journalism student at UMass Amherst minoring in women, gender and sexuality studies. She recently returned from Copenhagen, Denmark where she studied Scandinavian masculinities, gang crime and media with the Danish Institute for Study Abroad. Alayna is passionate about sharing stories that change the way we think about the criminal justice system, mental health, and equality.

Martha Balaguera was awarded the 2015 Joyce Berkman Award for Outstanding Graduate Feminist Scholarship in recognition of her final project for the Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies entitled "Transmigration, Disposability, and the Decline of the Nation-state: Failure as Generative of Spaces of Politics in Contemporary Mexico." As Martha writes in the abstract for her paper, this work "interrogates the political spaces opened up in a context of transmigration that has constituted contemporary Mexico as vertical border between Central America and the US. The paper examines how these spaces defy critical scholarly representations that offer a stark contrast between the citizen and the refugee, and between political membership and sheer belonging to the human race."

Congratulations to **Kelsey Barowich**, selected as one of the 21st Century Leaders of the class of 2015. This prestigious award is presented at Commencement.

And congratulations to **Isabel Tripp** of Amherst Regional High School for winning the UMass Amherst WGSS Book Award, an award for a student who is active on feminist issues or has done outstanding academic work in the field.

Spring 2015 Graduate Certificate Symposium

The Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies wrapped up the 2014-2015 academic year in April with a fantastic symposium featuring the six students completing the Certificate. The symposium featured two panels. The first, “Bodies in Motion, Technologies of Power, and the Transnational,” included a series of papers by Jennifer Zenovich (Communication), Jessica Ouellette (English), and Martha Balaguera (Political Science) each of which utilized the insights of transnational feminist studies to interrogate how the movement of ideas and people across borders comes to shape politics, identities, and lives. The second panel, “Exploring Narratives of Gender, Race, and Class,” brought together Kate Marantz (English), Jacinta Saffold (Afro-American Studies), and Mahala Stewart (Sociology) for an interdisciplinary set of engagements with Women of Color Feminism in relationship to questions of narrative and geography Toni Morrison’s *Sula*, street lit and hip-hop feminism, and the racial and class politics of school choice. The conference was an excellent display of the breadth and depth of work undertaken by students in the certificate program. A special thanks to all of the faculty who provided supportive and generative commentary on all of the students’ work -- Graciela Monteagudo, Millie Thayer, Alexandrina Deschamps, Emily Lordi, Whitney Battle-Baptiste, and Laura Briggs.

Please help support us!

There are many ways to give, we have a prominent button right on our homepage that brings you to the online donation system with our department earmarked. You can also send a check made out to UMass and designate “Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies” in the memo line. If you respond to a telefund call, you can also direct your donation to our department.

We rely on our donors to underwrite this newsletter, help with our programming and the additional little touches that make us special. For example, as we do targeted outreach to high school teachers working with Gay Straight Alliances, we love being able to supply them pencils, pens and stickers to give to their students.

Thank you to

M.C.Z. Abrahamsen
Nancy Arnold
Robyn Bagley
Kristina Bourne
Christina Cincotti
Kathleen Cote
Kristin Damigella
Arlyn Diamond
AnnMarie Duchon
Katherine Dwyer
Andrew Elder
Joanne Gangi-Wellman
Donna Grant
Abbie Hatton
Timothy Hogan
Judith Hudson
Erin Jackson
Ellen Johnson
Jackson Katz
Donna Kerner
Jacqueline Levin
Lynn MacDonald
John and Deborah Martin

Samantha Martyn
Dale Melcher
Alice Nash
Jan Passion
Janice Rayner
Tinker Greene Ready
Elizabeth Rensenbrink
Susan and James Richardson
Sharani Rebecca Robins
Leona Rockwood
Inez Sieben
Catherine Stewart
Ilona Sturm
Timothy Valentine
Cynthia Warren
Emily and Gregory Weiss
Judith Weiss
Eliza White
Anne Wiley
Ann Williams



Events

Welcome back reception!

Come join us in our fab conference room, Bartlett 102A, Wednesday, September 16 from 11:30-1:00. Meet our newest faculty member, Kiran Asher, and say hello to old friends and colleagues. Stop by in between classes, bring your lunch if you like. We'll supply refreshments, (fruit, cheese, veggies, donuts, cider) you bring the conversation.



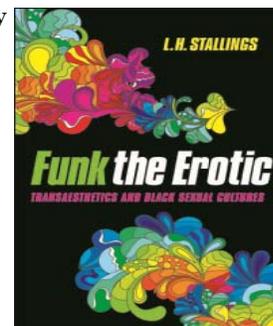
LaMonda Horton-Stallings

Tuesday, September 22 at 4:30

ILCS 231

Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures

Professor LaMonda Horton-Stallings (University of Maryland), author of the new book, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* will speak on September 22. In *Funk the Erotic*, Stallings brings together queer theory, black feminist theory, pop cultural analysis and literary studies to explore multiple dimensions of black erotic and political life. Stallings develops a theory of funk as a multidimensional and multisensory philosophy that highlights the importance of the erotic and eroticism in Black cultural and political movements. Brandishing funk as a theoretical tool, Stallings argues that Western theories of the erotic fail as universally applicable terms or philosophies, and thus lack utility in discussions of black bodies, subjects, and culture. In considering the Victorian concept of “the freak” in black funk, Stallings proposes that black artists across several media have fashioned a tradition that embraces the superfreak, sexual guerrilla, mama’s porn, sexual magic, black trans narratives, and sex work in a post-human subject position. Their goal: to ensure survival and evolution in a world that exploits black bodies in capitalist endeavors, imperialism, and colonization. The talk will be followed by a Q&A and book signing. This event is being held in conjunction with WGSS 792AD: African Diaspora Feminist Poetics. All are welcome.



Banu Subramaniam will speak on her new book project, *Avatars of Bionationalism: Science, Religion and the Making of Postcolonial Biologie*, **Thursday, October 22 at 4:30 p.m., Herter Hall 301**. In this new project, Banu explores how science, rather than being a universal unmediated practice, in fact shapes and in turn is shaped by local contexts. Using India as the focus of her book, she explores how science and religion are implicated in India's quest for modernity, profoundly shaping scientific and cultural ideas of the nation, its cultures, and biologies.



Look for the final details on a visit in mid-November by **Amber Hollibaugh** and **Yana Calou**, two queer economic justice activists from NYC.



The Five College Women’s Studies Research Center kicks off the year with their 24th annual reception Friday, **September 18, 3:00-5:00** at the Center at Mount Holyoke. They have other great events www.fivecolleges.edu/fcwsrcl

LOOK FOR THESE EVENTS IN SPRING 2016!

Dagmar Herzog, Distinguished Professor of History and the Daniel Rose Faculty scholar at the Graduate Center, City University of New York will speak on **Thursday, March 3** on “*Disability and Abortion: Western Europe, 1960s-1970s.*”



Save the date! June Jordan Feminist Poetics on March 25, 2016

This one-day symposium will celebrate the work and activism of feminist poet and scholar June Jordan by highlighting the intellectual and artistic contributions of scholars, artists, and activists who extend Jordan's legacy of innovative and socially-engaged feminist poetics. Speakers will include many of the original members of the Combahee River collective, and a number of younger scholars, artists and activists working at the intersections of Black/queer/feminisms. Watch your email for updates—we’ve invited a lot of people you’ll be excited to hear—and more information!



Also save the date of **April 15, 2016** for the graduate certificate student symposium.

Student News

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

WGSS continues to develop new gen eds! Our introductory class, **WGSS 187 Gender, Sexuality and Culture** will be offered this fall and typically every fall semester. In the **Spring WGSS 290C History of Sexuality and Race in the U.S.** taught by Angie Willey will be offered (HS U GenEd). We will also offer **Biology of Difference, WGSS 285** (GenEd SI U) in the spring. Keep your eyes open for other new classes and tell your friends!

Please note the new course number for Junior Writing: **Writing for WGSS Majors is now WGSS 310.**

Just a reminder:

Theory class(s) and Junior Writing are offered every FALL.

The Integrative Experience is offered every SPRING.

Plan your program of study with this in mind. There are some upcoming new rules and limits to the ability to double count classes between majors and minors. See Karen Lederer to find out more. Also, look for the Ann Ferguson scholarship competition, news will be arriving in early 2016. Read on for more information.

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

The Spring 2015 Symposium with Certificate Final Projects showcased a wide range of academic thinking. See the article on page 5 for details.

Certificate Advising

This fall, Professor Miliann Kang will be returning to the position of Graduate Program Director for WGSS and Abigail Boggs will continue as Associate Graduate Program Director. Both Miliann and Abigail are available to meet with prospective, continuing, and completed certificate students to discuss the certificate program, individual student work, strategies for approaching WGSS conferencing, the job market, and more! Please feel free to reach out to one or both.

Course Offerings

Throughout this academic year, WGSS is offering a wide array of courses including our core courses in Feminist Theory and Methodology and innovative topical classes such as "*Monogamy: Queer Feminism and the Politics of Social Belonging*," "*African Diaspora Feminist Poetics*," "*Queer Theories of Power and Temporality*," and more! Be sure to check out our website for a full list of course offerings.

Upcoming Meetings and this Year's Deadlines

- ◆ Thursday **Sept 17, 2015 5:00 pm** in Bartlett 102A. Meeting for students planning to enroll in 793A next spring and complete the certificate this academic year.
- ◆ Thursday, **October 1, 2015 5:00 pm**: Gathering for all Certificate Students
- ◆ **March 1, 2016**: Deadline to apply for acceptance into the certificate
- ◆ **March 10, 2016**: Deadline to apply for graduate student employment with WGSS

To keep abreast of WGSS graduate student news please send an email to Abigail Boggs (aboggs@umass.edu) to be added to our graduate student mailing list.

Job Market and Fellowships

Be on the lookout for an email from Abigail with some WGSS focused funding opportunities for graduate students from AAUW, and the Ford, Woodrow Wilson, and Mellon Foundations. This email will also detail helpful websites for funding and job information. If you are planning to go on the job market or applying for funding this fall, you should be sure to request letters of recommendation from your advisors as soon as possible. Be sure to include all pertinent information about the position or fellowship and a draft of your application materials along with the request.

Welcome to New Faculty Member Kiran Asher!

What are you most looking forward to about coming to our department at UMass?

Being part of an intellectually and politically committed feminist community! I'm particularly excited to be where the faculty's work is grounded in natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities. This range of inter- and multi-disciplinarity is incredible, and I look forward to working on struggles for social change with a range of allies.

What do you want students to know about you?

Like everyone else I have many dimensions and can narrate my "story" in many ways. Here's the "straight," chronological tale of my professional trajectory--I took my Ph.D. in Comparative Politics, 1998, University of Florida, and also obtained a graduate certificate in Women and Gender studies. I took a Masters in Environmental Management, Duke University, after B.Sc. in Life Sciences, St Xavier's College, Bombay.

I began as a visiting professor at Mount Holyoke College in 1997, a joint appointee in Women and Gender Studies, and Politics. I went on to a tenure-track position at Bates College from 1998-2001. From 2001-2002 I was a Rockefeller fellow at the Rutgers Institute for Research on Women. The next decade I was part of and built the International Development and Social Change program at Clark University. Pedagogy and educational program building have been among my primary responsibilities. I have taught a wide range of courses in international development, political economy, social theory, women's studies, area studies and environmental studies.

In 2013, I had an unexpected opportunity to go back to the natural science world and just returned from two-years as Senior Scientist at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Bogor, Indonesia. Through diverse fields and jobs, my fundamental research has remained focused on the gendered and raced dimensions of development and environmental change in the global south, and is grounded in almost three decades of field-based research in Latin America (Costa Rica, Belize, Brazil, and Colombia) and Asia (mainly India but also China and other parts of Southeast Asia).

Please describe a recent project or current research.

My work shows the contradictory and mutually constitutive linkages between political economy and ecological processes. In my book, *Black and Green: Afro-Colombians, Development, and Nature in the Pacific Lowlands* (Duke University Press, 2009), I argue that Afro-Colombians are neither neglected victims of development nor heroes of a cultural, "environmentally friendly" alternative to development. In a detailed ethnographic and historical account of black social movements, with a special focus on Afro-Colombian women in the Pacific, I show how black organizing is shaped by, and partially shapes, economic development and political processes in 1990s Colombia. I trace claims made in the name of culture, nature, and development by Afro-Colombian groups and the state, and disrupt the notion that development is a hegemonic, homogenizing force of western rationality. My book eschews the many binaries—tradition vs. modernity, progress vs. underdevelopment, exploitation vs. resistance, local vs. global, theory vs. practice—that plague and limit thinking about third world development and environmental movements, and shows that struggles for social change are shaped differentially, unequally and discursively *by and against* local, national and global influences.

My current research remains focused on nature-society linkages, empirically and especially theoretically. In this long-term project I engage in a thorough political and theoretical critique of development theories, including neoliberal and sustainable variants, by drawing on political-economic and feminist approaches in a postcolonial frame. I examine how and why environmental concerns become posed in development terms and intersect with processes of differentiations of class, race, ethnicity, gender, nation, and regional origin. I map how these connections are variously invoked by mainstream advocates of "sustainable development" and critics (such as ecofeminists and proponents of post-development). The research is framed by two sets of questions: First, how do international accords (such as the Conventions on Biological Diversity, or Climate Change) frame nature and the environment as issues of global concern and management? What actions do India and Colombia as signatory states take to comply with and implement these accords? Second, how do marginalized groups—women, peasants, ethnic communities—engage with or resist policies that may dramatically transform their livelihoods?

Interview

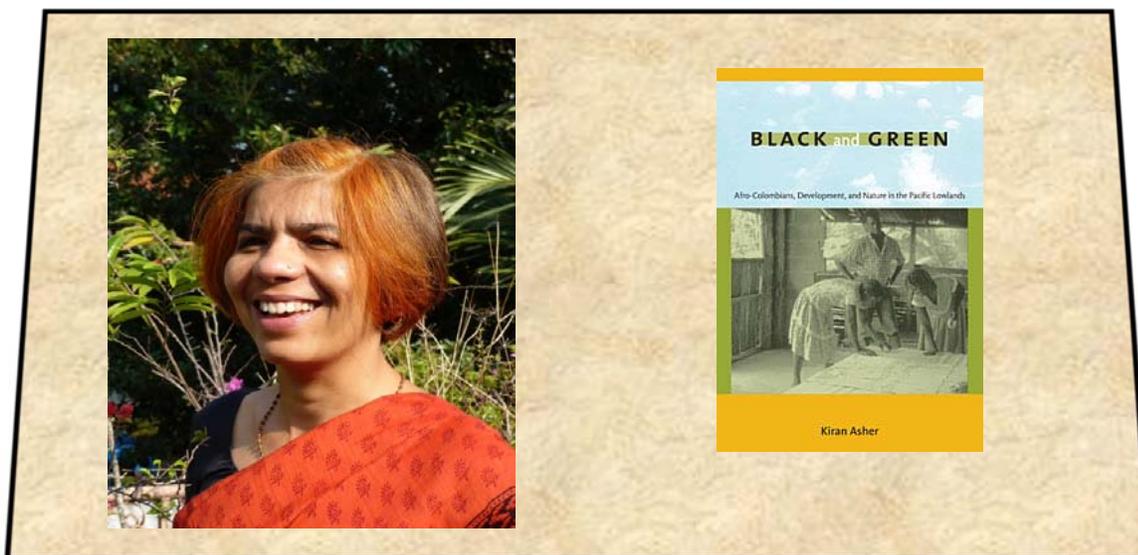
Is there anything else about your background, training or expertise you would like to share?

People wonder how I made the transition from natural to social sciences, and how I went from field biology to working with black social movements in Colombia. I'm a multidisciplinary and comparativist by training and inclination. I was animal mad from childhood, but in post-independence India studying nature meant "objectivity" and "scientific distance." As an undergraduate researching the behavioral ecology of antelope and deer, I had to take great care to keep "humans" out of the frame of my photographs and thinking. This required extraordinary amounts of work given my modest camera and the numerous and curious inhabitants of rural India! But what Haraway refers to as the "busy traffic between nature and culture" was evident everywhere I went in the third world and it haunted the margins of my field notes. So I followed the *marginalia* and reflecting critically began to see that the relations between environment, development, and rural peoples are multiple and contradictory, not causal and teleological as colonial science and capitalist political economy contend. So, following the winding paths along margins (geographical or metaphorical) and critical reflection remain a key part of my method.

And is there anything else you can tell us about other activities you are or have been involved in including special interests, activist projects, etc.?

After undergraduate work on ungulate ecology (perhaps it was nascent even then!) attention to feminist perspectives and the gendered nature of power underlie my research. In the past few decades, terms such as "women", "gender" and "empowerment" became central in the lexicons of global economic development and the environment. Yet, the material conditions of poor women have worsened. My work on the complex and contradictory rhetoric and realities of these concerns is inspired and informed by Afro-Colombian women's organizing. It is equally marked by postcolonial feminism's call for a persistent skepticism regarding our desires and methods to better the lives of third world women. My recent engagement with the Five College Feminist Science and Technology Studies group and literature, has sharpened my analysis and understanding of debates related to sustainability and environmental movements. Finally, my students keep me honest. My term at CIFOR and unremunerated gender consulting is in partial response to their dogged questions about the relevance and practice of such critical thinking. In 2005, I collaborated with CARE (an international development NGO) to develop and evaluate research protocols for their "Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment." In 2008, Julian Cho Society, a Maya organization in southern Belize, invited me to work with them to examine the link between gender politics and indigenous land rights struggles. Understanding and fostering such linkages is a key part of my long-term commitment to my Afro-Colombian *compañeras*.

Welcome Kiran Asher!



Alum News

Here is just a small taste of what our fab alums are doing! We love hearing how you miss our classes, and Amherst, and we marvel at the wonderful lives you are living.

Jenn Castro wrote to let us know about her children's picture book, MOM*ME which was published in 2013. Congratulations! You can find out more on jenncastro.com

Tina Cincotti is living in Jamaica Plain in Boston where she is the proud momma to a 3 year-old vizsla/retriever named Penny. Tina is self-employed as a nonprofit consultant. Her business Funding Change will celebrate seven years in January. She adds, "She has achieved her lifelong goal of *not* having children and Tina was surprisingly delighted to turn 40 this past July."

AnnMarie Duchon writes: "On April 14, 2015, I was invited by Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) to speak at the Equal Pay Day event in the U.S. Senate with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) Senator, Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) & Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). I spoke about my experience battling for Equal Pay in the workplace. Equal Pay Day is the date that symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year."



Maddie Drake writes "I'm an Editorial Administrative Assistant at the Brigham and Women's Department of Medicine Circulation office. I review manuscript and image submissions and work with authors, editors, and reviewers to move papers through the review process and ultimately publish or reject papers for the main *Circulation* journal publication."

Paul Gels wrote that after a summer gig as Temporary Online Engagement Coordinator at Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, he was hired full-time as the permanent Communications Coordinator in the Public Affairs Department. This summer Paul was hard at work on the "Sexual Health Lobby Day" and on the "Healthy Youth Act" both efforts to advance sexuality education. Outside of work Paul is now a commissioner on the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth.

Kelsey Jordan works at CommunicateHealth, a small women-owned health literacy consulting company in Northampton. Inspired by the intersection of the humanities and health, she partnered with a theater company and created *Resources for Health*, a workshop series for adult learners in vulnerable communities. The workshops were designed to teach health related self-advocacy skills using best practices in arts integration and health literacy. She co-facilitated the pilot program at The Literacy Projects in Greenfield, Orange, and Ware. She was looking forward to completing her sexuality education certificate at Planned Parenthood and enjoys volunteering as a birth doula at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

Nicole Lisa wrote to say: "After four years as an editor at United Nations Headquarters in NY, I've accepted a transfer to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which is located in Bangkok. My husband and I are relocating at the end of July. I'll be working as an editor there, trying to learn Thai and exploring the region."

Lauren Mahoney is coming up on her 6 year anniversary at the National Consumer Law Center (a nonprofit in consumer law and energy policy working for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people). She recently was promoted to Manager of Events and oversees all of their large conferences, trainings etc. In addition she is the Events Coordinator for The Michael J. Fox Foundation Boston Chapter.

Ellie Miske wrapped up an internship at the Victim/Witness unit at the District Attorney's office and was volunteering over the summer as a crisis counselor at the Center for Women and Community at UMass. Ellie starts UConn Law School this fall.

Annie Tummino is a Project Archivist at Columbia University, lives in Queens and parents almost-three-year-old Enzo. Annie continues to work with National Women's Liberation.

Jill Wayrynen wrote last fall that she was at Citizen Schools as a teaching fellow.

Alum News

Obituary Christine Decker

We were sad to see the notice of the death of Christine Decker. She led an exciting life, becoming a naturopathic physician after working as a writer and editor. She was a key leader in the historic women's occupation of the Massachusetts Daily Collegian, an action after months of efforts to get more coverage on women's issues. (For a complete obituary, see the Daily Hampshire Gazette June 9, 2015)



Photo highlights of events, talks and celebrations from 2014-15



Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies at UMass Amherst Presents

PERVERSE MODERNITIES: A CONVERSATION WITH LISA LOWE AND JACK HALBERSTAM

Please also attend these other Five College Events!

A lunch talk by Lisa Lowe on her forthcoming book, *The Architecture of Our Discontents*

hosted by the UMass Amherst English Department

Thursday, November 20th, 12-1:30pm
210 Thurston Hall
UMass Amherst

Please RSVP to Asha Kulkarni
ashk@umass.edu

"A Path So Tainted": Thinking Widely With and Through Perverse Modernities
A Talk by Jack Halberstam

Thursday, November 20th, 12-2pm
East Lecture Hall, Franklin Pierce Hall
Bancroft College

SWG Reads the News with Jack Halberstam and Lisa Lowe

Friday, November 21st, 12-1:30pm

Samuel Hall Room 201
Don't miss this talk in Series 1871
The South College Department for the Study of Women and Gender

Please RSVP to Lisa Krennberg
krenn@umass.edu to attend

Thursday, November 20th, 2014
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm
UMass Campus Center, Room 917

Sponsored by Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department, English Department, Kenneth Center, Department of Massachusetts Amherst, The College for Gender Equity, Center for Women and Gender, South College, Gender Studies and Feminist Studies, Bancroft College, Gender Studies, Mount Holyoke College



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20 years ago in this newsletter So much is different. . . so much is the same

In fall 1995 we welcomed new people to the department, advertised a *Black Studies/Women's Studies 1981 and Today* conference (following up on a conference from 1981) with a keynote by Beverly Guy-Sheftall. The faculty union was organizing a teach in on the crisis in public higher education. We celebrated our 21st birthday that year (do the math, that makes us over 41 now!) Many pages in the newsletter announced events. We published additions and changes to course listings in the newsletter. There was NO spire. Practically no internet. We had to spread the word on paper. . . imagine.

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This newsletter is written and edited by Karen Lederer. Thanks to Kiran Asher, Abigail Boggs, Laura Briggs and Linda Hillenbrand for their contributions. Thanks also to Kirsten Leng and Mecca Sullivan. This newsletter is published twice a year on paper and on our website funds permitting.