FACULTY UPDATES

REBECCA WHELAN is associate professor and chair of chemistry and biochemistry. As an assistant professor, she served on the Gender and Women’s Studies (GAWS) program committee and participated in the reconfiguration of GAWS into the GSFS Institute. Rebecca is delighted to see the continued strength and vitality of GSFS. Her current research—which is supported by the National Cancer Institute and which relies profoundly on the contribution of Oberlin College undergraduates as collaborators—explores new ways to detect and treat ovarian cancer in its earliest, most treatable stages. In 2014 she published a comprehensive critical review on the biology and clinical use of CA125, a protein that is detected in the most widely used blood test for ovarian cancer. She is particularly committed to supporting students interested in the sciences through formal and informal mentoring, classroom work, and laboratory research experiences. In addition to teaching general, analytical, and bioanalytical chemistry, Rebecca offers private readings in Gender and Science and is developing a First-Year Seminar course on that topic.

CRYSTAL BIRUK is assistant professor of anthropology. Her research centers on the ethics and politics of intervention in the global south—broadly, how the growing presence of foreign humanitarian, development, and scientific projects in sub-Saharan Africa reconfigures local social geographies, producing new kinds of status, mobility, expertise, and exclusions. She is also working on a project that examines the emergence of same-sex activism and identities in Malawi, with a focus on how global flows of resources intersect local LGBT landscapes. This year, she is teaching Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Culture Theory, and Medical Anthropology. Her teaching interests also include global health, humanitarianism, science studies, and transnational sexualities.

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DIRECTOR’S NOTE

CAROL LASSER, GSFS DIRECTOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

The opportunity to direct the GSFS Institute represents for me something of a homecoming. When I first arrived at Oberlin in 1980, I immediately became active in the Women’s Studies Program and served as its chair from 1987 to 1989. Like today, those were heady times. Now, the program has links to nearly every area of the Oberlin curriculum with 35 affiliate faculty, and our feisty, creative, energetic, and brilliant students push yet further. Their scholarship on queer studies, the intersections of gender and science, reproductive rights, and the histories of feminisms is combined with activist commitments to the prevention of sexual violence on campus, the fostering of intersectional feminisms, and transnational conversations about gender.

While gender studies has a long history at Oberlin, the GSFS Institute turns seven this year, and so it is now in the middle of its first program review. We welcome this opportunity to reflect on our past and determine ways to build a vibrant and meaningful future for GSFS at Oberlin. We are using this time for self-examination as a springboard for Spring 2016, when we will explore “45/45: Looking Back/Looking Ahead.” We envision a series reflecting on the lessons learned in the first 45 years of Gender Studies at Oberlin and to plan for the next 45 years. Please send us your ideas for this exciting program. We want to hear from you!

PRIZES AND AWARDS

LEAH FREED MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Leah Freed Memorial Prize is awarded to support student research, creative work, performance, or other academic projects. Awards are granted to help defray costs of deserving student projects. Competitions for the award are held every fall semester for work to be completed during that academic year. The fall 2013 recipients were as follows:

Samantha Aisen, Anthropology major
Pro-Choice Narratives-Northeast Ohio

The abortion debate in the United States is a contentious social issue. Within the past three years, legislators introduced abortion-related restrictions in unprecedented quantities. Pro-choice activist organizations and individuals are responding to this influx of targeted legislation. My thesis is an ethnographic study of pro-choice activist habitus and the cultural capital shared among activists. I explore political activists’ and clinic escorts’ shared rhetorical tactics and personal preferences regarding key pro-choice issues. First, I discuss and analyze how gender inequality and gender identity is present in activists’ political abortion discourse and personal life choices. Second, I explore how activists discuss the body as it relates to abortion and health care, both personally and politically. And third, I present and analyze how activist use of the word “fetus” is a significant pro-choice preference that tactically furthers their cause. My thesis expands upon existing
ethnographic exploration of activist social movements and their tactics, habitus and preferences, as well as feminist anthropology.

Gian-Carlo Toriano Parel, Neuroscience and Economics major

_Bakla Labor in Neoliberal Manila, Philippines_ This research project sought to shift anti-neoliberal and anti-oppressive lenses on Filipinx queerness by observing the effects of and current reproductions of Spanish colonization, U.S. imperialism, and capitalist globalization on present-day Filipinx bakla (roughly translated: queer men) and labor. The following were my original research questions: (1) What are Filipinx concepts of kabaklaan (roughly translated: queerness)? (2) What economic strengths and challenges might bakla workers face? (3) How do bakla workers define “economic empowerment,” and how do they pursue it? I observed broader concepts of Filipinx queerness and the labor of queerness in the context of neoliberalism that is exacerbated by the Philippines’ colonial history. As has been reflected in existing scholarship, the limited economic development in the Philippines that can be traced to neoliberalism and colonialism route male-assigned queer workers into labor markets where queer expression and performance are simultaneously empowering for queer men and commodified for consumers, queer or otherwise. This work further serves as context of my larger working research project on U.S. imperialism in the Philippines.

**PHYLIS JONES MEMORIAL AWARD**

The Phyllis Jones Memorial Award was established through gifts from students, colleagues, and friends of Phyllis Jones (1945-1982). This annual award recognizes and honors student work in areas related to Phyllis Jones’s interests: women writers, minority women, women in the workplace, and friends of Phyllis Jones (1945-1982). This project seeks to reject the “it gets better” narrative that queer youth are so often presented with, which subtly tells us to leave behind our small hometowns to go to big cities and discounts the communities we come from as dynamic, livable, spaces of possibility. Instead, Rethinking Rurality counters this narrative and serves as a resource where young queer people can find reflections of themselves and their stories. Created by two queer Vermonters, Ariel Goodman and Eloise Reid, this project is a living and working communal project that seeks to carve out possibilities for people of all identities to survive, and even thrive beyond the urban meccas of gay life that are often presented to young queer people as the only livable spaces for them to exist.


Website: [https://rethinkingrurality.squarespace.com/](https://rethinkingrurality.squarespace.com/)

**Group Project by Michell Hermann, Abigail James, and Leila Goldstein**

_Rubber Capital_

**Julia Harris, GSFS & Studio Art major**

_Without Closets: A Queer and Feminist Reimagining of Narratives of Queer Experience_

This project employs a queer and feminist lens to critique the prominence of the coming-out narrative in discourses surrounding queer life experiences and configures alternative ways of thinking about these experiences. I conducted on-campus interviews with queer-identifying women about their identities and experiences with visibility and disclosure. I investigate in this project both the role that the coming-out narrative plays in shaping these stories and the radical possibilities embedded within these stories for new types of narrative. Guided by queer theory’s complicated relationship with the notion of identity, I define and employ the concept of “queer alignment” as an alternative way of understanding what it might mean to “be queer,” and I lay out two alternative formulations to the coming-out narrative; queer temporality and queer visibility. This project is not a comprehensive solution to the problem of the coming-out monolith, but a gesture towards the vast array languages and concepts that might be developed in order to describe and value a more diverse array of narratives of queer experience.

Jennifer Murdock, Religion and English major

_La Vida Es La Lucha/Una Lucha De Nempita_ Charlotte Vari, Religion major

_The Sacramentality of Choice: Unplanned Pregnancy in Feminist Theology_

Many feminist theologians observe that women are excluded from Roman Catholic sacraments, acts of worship which give access to the divine and aid in salvation. This project proposes that the problem lies in the emphasis on a woman’s capacity as mother in the sacrament of marriage and her restriction to this role in relation to sacramentality. The feminist sacramental theology of Susan A. Ross begins with the inclusion of female experiences in Catholic sacramentality, takes female embodiment seriously, and redefines family. Additionally, the liberation theology of Leonardo Boff proposes concepts of justice and inclusion within Catholic sacramentality. This project has two objectives: to explore current feminist and liberation theological trajectories in Roman Catholic theology that seek to redefine sacramentality; and to test these new views of sacramentality as they relate to women’s motherhood choices. Specifically, this project will bring Ross’ and Boff’s understanding of sacramentality to test what is arguably one of the most challenging of female embodied experiences: unplanned pregnancy. This paper looks at the components of a revised understanding of sacramentality, as they relate to the family, embodiment, and justice, in order to propose a solution where the woman’s choice could be seen as sacramental either way.
FACULTY UPDATES CONT.

MARGARET KAMITSUKA is the Francis W. and Lydia L. Davis Associate Professor of Religion. She has served on the GSFS Advisory Council from its inception and was director of GSFS from 2012 to 2014. She teaches courses at all levels on gender and religion and upper-level courses on methodologies in gender studies and religious studies. Her monograph, Feminist Theology and the Challenge of Difference, was published by Oxford University Press in 2007. Abstracts of the book’s chapters are available at Oxford Scholarship Online: http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/search/results/1. She was the editor of and contributor to The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity (Fortress Press, 2010). Her essay “Feminist Scholarship and Its Relevance for Political Engagement: The Test Case of Abortion in the U.S.” appeared in the inaugural issue of Religion and Gender (Vol. 1, no. 1 [Fall 2011], http://www.religionandgender.org/index.php/rg/article/view/2), the first refereed online international journal dedicated to the systematic study of gender and religion in an interdisciplinary perspective. She is working on a book-length discussion of abortion rights tentatively entitled Abortion, Women’s Experience, and Fetal Life: A Feminist Theological Proposal.

MEREDITH M. GADSBY is associate professor and chair (through December 2014) of Africana studies. Meredith teaches African and African Diasporic Literatures, Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism, and Caribbean Literatures and Culture. She is the author of Sucking Salt: Caribbean Women Writes and the Politics of Survival and coeditor (with Carol Boyce Davies, Charles Peterson, and Henrietta Williams) of Decolonising the Academy. Her current research involves Caribbean Women Writers of Speculative Fiction. She continues to serve the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars as president. Meredith also serves on several college committees such as the CAS Program Committee, MRC Advisory Committee, and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

A dancer and scholar, ANN COOPER ALBRIGHT is professor of dance and chair of the Department of Dance at Oberlin. Combining her interests in dancing and cultural theory, she is involved in teaching a variety of dance, performance studies, and gender studies courses that seek to engage students in both practices and theories of the body. Her book Engaging Bodies: the Politics and Poetics of Corporeality (2013), which recently won the Selma Jeanne Cohen Prize in Dance Aesthetics from the American Society for Aesthetics; Modern Gestures: Abraham Walkowitz Draws Isadora Duncan Dancing (2010); Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loie Fuller (2007); Choreographing Difference: the Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance (1997) and coeditor of Moving History/Dancing Cultures (2001) and Taken By Surprise: Improvisation in Dance and Mind (2003). The book Encounters with Contact Improvisation (2010) is the product of one of her adventures in writing and dancing and dancing and writing with others. Ann is founder and director of Girls in Motion, an award-winning after-school program at Langston Middle School, now in its 11th year, and codirector of Accelerated Motion: Towards a New Dance Literacy, a National Endowment for the Arts-funded digital collection of materials about dance. In November she will become the president of the Society of Dance History Scholars, and she is currently organizing an international dance studies conference in Athens, Greece. [www.athensisdancing2015.com]

ANGIE LAGROTTERIA is teaching GSFS 305, Feminist Research Methodologies, this fall. She received her PhD in women’s, gender, and sexuality studies at Emory University in 2012. She also teaches English and women’s studies at Cleveland State University, Lorain County Community College, and Cuyahoga Community College. Born and raised in Elyria, she is happy to be back home and especially happy to be near her 2-year-old nephew.

RASHNÉ LIMKI’S PhD research addresses the role of body in the production of value by global capital. Her research interests lie in the areas of postcolonial critique, political economy, and ethics. In London, she teaches courses on Corporate Social Responsibility and on critiques of Human Rights. Additionally, she is the co-founder of the Living Commons Publishing Collective and a member of the London Roots Collective of trainers and facilitators committed to social justice praxis.

HARRY HIRSCH’S seminar, Justice (POLT 309), now counts as a capstone course for GSFS. He also is continuing to teach Gender, Sexuality, and the Law and The Politics of Sexual Minority Communities.

Rashné Limki

Harry Hirsch

Ann Cooper Albright’s book Engaging Bodies.
reproductive justice and collective responsibility

on changing people’s individual behavior to a individualism-focused “prevention” frame based my field is going in—moving from a radical profit that works with adults in communities to Alliance on Teen Pregnancy, a statewide non-
of grants management at the Massachusetts and raising my kids. Currently I am director “I’ve been in Boston for the past 10 years, work -
ern UPDATEs

KIM BROOKES ’85
“My partner of almost 25 years died two years ago of ovarian cancer. Her illness and death completely changed my life. Our son is a wonderful, emotionally and socially aware 16-year-old. After coaching his soccer teams for seven years, I switched to coaching girls. I’m currently the JV coach for Malden High School in Massachusetts. I love teaching and mentor-
ing and hope I’m a good lesbian feminist role model, even when I make fun of the team when they’re being “girly girls” or taking their end-
less selfies!”

MICHAELA FERRARI ’07
Since graduating from Oberlin, Michaela has spent the majority of her time living in San Francisco and working in the field of public health. She worked for several years at UCSF’s ANSIRH research program on the Turnaway Study, a prospective, longitudinal study exploring the effects of unintended pregnancy on women’s lives. She then spent a year as a Fulbright Fellow conducting her own research on women’s and clinicians’ attitudes toward family planning in the Republic of Georgia. She recently completed her master’s degree in public health at UC Berkeley, where she focused on policy analysis, quantitative research, and health care reform. In particular, Michaela contrib-
ted to on-the-ground implementation of the Affordable Care Act within California’s health care safety-net system. She recently relocated to Los Angeles with her partner as he begins medical school and is working at UCLA’s Center for Health Policy Research in its Health Economics and Evaluation Research (HEER) Program. She still plans to open a bakery once everyone in the U.S. has access to affordable, quality health care.

ERICA FLETCHER ’96
“I’ve been in Boston for the past 10 years, work-
ing in adolescent sexual health, making music, and raising my kids. Currently I am director of grants management at the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy, a statewide non-
profit that works with adults in communities to address the complexities of teen pregnancy, ado-
lescent sexual health, and the needs of expectant and parenting teens. I’m enjoying the direction my field is going in—moving from a radical individualism-focused “prevention” frame based on changing people’s individual behavior to a reproductive justice and collective responsibility frame that incorporates sexual health within the broader context of young people’s lives. It’s in-
vigorating to be a part of a movement for young people where I can help shift the way providers, funders, policymakers, the public, and young people themselves think about adolescent sexual-
ality and their own rights. A job in which I help move popular discourse and programming away from shaming young people for their parenting status to supporting young people’s sexual and parenting decisions was certainly not something I envisioned when I was at Oberlin in the early ’90s. But my women’s studies major was the best foundation I could have had. I’m also passion-
ate about reducing financial and policy barri-
ers to abortion, particularly for adolescents, so in my spare time I volunteer with the Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund.”

VICTORIA GONZÁLEZ-RIVERA ’90
Victoria was granted tenure and promotion to associate professor in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at San Diego State University in May 2014. In June, she traveled throughout Nicaragua on a pre-book tour for the new book she is coauthoring, titled One Hundred Years of LGBT History in Nicaragua. During her stay in Nicaragua she was interviewed by Carlos Fernando Chamorro, son of the former president of Nicaragua Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, for the TV show Esta Noche.” Victoria continues to live on the US.-Mexico border with her husband and three children. She is also the author of Before the Revolution. Women’s Rights and Right Wing Politics in Nicaragua, 1821-1979, Penn State University Press, 2011.

TESSA LEVINE-SAURHOFF ’05
Tessa (a double major in gender studies and art history at Oberlin) has been living in Seattle for the last 9 years with her husband and their old dog. She recently completed her MBA in sustain-
able business at Bainbridge Graduate Institute and works at Methodologie, a brand strategy firm where she’s focused on corporate social responsibility reporting and sustainability mar-
ketng. She’s also on the board of AIGA-Seattle, where she serves as sustainability director, and she re-lives her co-op days from time to time by eating kale and brown rice.

LARISA MANN ’95
“I am as of this year a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University. I am also doing research on how our under-
standing of data privacy and surveillance must account for the expertise of marginalized com-

munities and be informed by a gendered analysis of privacy and safety, with the support of the “Women and surveillance technology” working group. I recently had an article published in Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies (Volume 11, Issue 3, 2014) called “What can feminism learn from new media?” and I am revising one for Communication, Culture and Critique entitled “White faces in intimate spaces: Jamaican popular music in global circulation.” Both address how changing media technologies shape the capacity for autonomous culture-mak-
ing for marginalized communities, especially Black women and men, as well as for women more generally. I also recently performed at Lincoln Center’s Global Fest, following my seventh tour of Europe as a performing DJ. I continue to combine Djing, activism, scholarly work, and teaching, based in New York and working with my Dj/label collective Dutty Artz, but also traveling widely when I can.”
ALUMNI UPDATES CONT.

RACHEL BENSON MONROE ’08
Rachel Benson Monroe recently celebrated her marriage to Nick Monroe ’09. They had a beautiful wedding in Oberlin, surrounded by loved ones and many Obies. Rachel earned a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling at Lesley University in 2013 and now practices as a mental health counselor at the Multiservice Eating Disorders Association, counseling those struggling with eating disorders and their families. Rachel also enjoys her work presenting on body image and confidence building in local schools and universities, and is particularly passionate about the ways eating disorders represent breakdowns in connection to mind, body, and soul, and how we can use feminist approaches to understand these complex and dangerous disorders. Within the past few years Rachel has become active in the Health at Every Size movement, a righteous organization led mainly by women who aim to bring size diversity and acceptance to the spotlight in our image-obsessed, media driven culture. She writes: “Anecdotally, I am both proud and envious of my now husband, who while earning a PhD in sociology at Brandeis University, will also be earning a master’s degree in gender and feminist studies, thereby trumping me in “academic” feminist work…but I still have the whole ‘identifying as a woman’ thing that will certainly give me a leg up.”

CARRIE MOYLAN ’99
“I’m an assistant professor of social work at Binghamton University (SUNY), where I am researching, among other things, how colleges and universities are responding to sexual assault on campus. I’d love to hear from anyone who has similar interests! I live in Binghamton, N.Y., where I keep myself busy during the long winters by knitting sweaters and hats for my two boys (ages 5 and 10 months). I can be reached at cmoylan@binghamton.edu.

GSFS FACULTY & STAFF
DIRECTOR:
Carol Lasser, GSFS Director, Professor of History

PROGRAM COORDINATOR:
Linda Pardee, GSFS, Rhetoric & Composition, Writing Associates Program, Comparative American Studies, Mediator at the OC Dialogue Center

Ann Cooper Albright, Professor of Theatre and Dance
Crystal Biruk, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Pamela Brooks, Associate Professor of Africana Studies
Meredith Gadssby, Associate Professor and Chair of Africana Studies
Harry Hirsch, Professor of Politics
Margaret Kamitsuka, Associate Professor of Religion
Renee Romano, Associate Professor of History
Rebecca Whelan, Associate Professor of Chemistry
Ellen Wurtzel, Assistant Professor of History

PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH!
Tell us what you are doing. We are interested in building networks of our alums involved in various fields and activisms. Following up on the successful “Roots and STEM” series on campus last year, we are particularly interested in learning about engagements in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

To follow GSFS at Oberlin, go to http://new.oberlin.edu/arts-and-sciences/departments/gender/ or follow us on Facebook facebook.com/GSFS.OberlinCollege

You can support us by giving online: http://oberlin.edu/giving. When you reach this page click on “Donate”. When asked to “choose a designation” please choose “Other”. Under “Special Instructions” please type “Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies,” which will direct your donations to GSFS.

DON’T MISS OUT!
In an effort to curb print, postage, and environmental costs college-wide, Oberlin is moving several of its print publications online. Please make sure we have your email address, so that you don’t miss out on newsletters, invitations to alumni regional events, and more. You can update your email address (and other information) via OBIEWeb at www.oberlin.edu/alumni. Go to the MyOBIEWeb box and click on “register” (it’s free). Please direct questions to alumni@oberlin.edu or call the Alumni Association at (440) 775-8692.