News from the Director

As I get ready to rotate off as director of the Institute, it gives me enormous pleasure to report that in its second year as an Institute, Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (GSFS) has continued to offer a diverse and exciting curriculum to its majors, minors and other students interested in the Institute’s varied projects and pedagogical investments. What’s more, it looks like the Institute is likely to expand its curricular offerings as more and more faculty, particularly among the college’s new hires, from diverse departments and programs continue to opt into the Institute’s programming by developing courses on gender, sexuality, and feminist scholarship. The curriculum committee of the GSFS Institute also successfully devised an effective way for GSFS majors to pursue a senior capstone project via 3 different avenues: 1) a senior seminar on a defined topic from within a particular department or program, or 2) a senior tutorial where a major could pursue an individually chosen research or creative endeavor, or, finally, 3) an honors project. All this has been made possible by the Institute’s committed and dynamic advisory committee and slate of advisors to whom I offer a big thank you.

In its second year, the Institute also has been able to honor substantively its commitment to developing programming that extends opportunities for education and knowledge production beyond the confines of the classroom. Once again, working closely with several campus-based organizations, like the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC), Oberlin Shansi, and student organizations like Students for a Free Palestine (SFP), and sponsored by many departments and programs, GSFS collaborated on a four-day Fall 2009 symposium devoted to Asian Sexualities, which brought such prominent speakers to the college campus like Joseph Massad, Anjali Arondekar, Jasbir Puar, and Martin Manalansan. For its Spring 2010 event, GSFS has organized a one-day event—a panel discussion organized around a cross-divisional, interdisciplinary course being taught by Frances Hasso and myself, Partition, War, Dislocation: Mid-Twentieth-Century South Asia and Historic Palestine. The panelists include prominent scholars of South Asia and Palestine: Mary Layoun, Comparative Literature, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Aamir Mufti, Comparative Literature, UCLA; Gyanendra Pandey, Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of History, Emory University; Nadia Yaqub, Asian Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This event, too, in keeping with all the events we have planned is supported and/or sponsored by a wide spectrum of departments/programs and student and other campus organizations. Nor is such programming going to come to an end or taper off. The incoming director, Renee Romano, has already worked out some exciting programming for next year, including a visit by Estelle Freedman, Professor of History at Stanford University, who will be visiting in the week of September 13 to offer a module on the history of sexual violence in the US; she is also planning an event in collaboration with Comparative American Studies and Environmental Studies programs. Renee Romano will be joined as Director of the Institute by Margaret Kamitsuka who will serve as Associate Director.

I cannot thank enough the people—interested and committed alum and others—who have contributed to GSFS, but also must remind you that programming like the kind we have been offering and will continue to offer needs intellectual and material support and hence my appeal for your continued support.

Anuradha Dingwaney Needham
Longman Professor of English
Director, Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies
Phyllis 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 community, and the integration of personal and professional goals for women. The Spring 2009 recipient was as follows:

Rachel Cotterman

Rachel Cotterman is a Comparative American Studies Major.

Project Title: Sex, Power, and the Transnational Patriarchal Military Establishment: Images of Women in the Israeli Defense Forces in American Media

Project Description: How can a community of women working for professional empowerment through integration into the military be co-opted as part of a hegemonic patriarchal agenda? This paper explores the ways in which sexualized images of female soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces in American media both obscure and maintain discourses of male power and “western” dominance. It confronts feminist agendas that promote the professional advancement of women without looking critically at the cost of such assimilation. The images analyzed, from Maxim Magazine and the social networking site Facebook, hail a positive association between American and Israeli women as liberated citizens of the “west.” These images, while seemingly straightforward texts about the availability of women for the male sexual gaze, are layered with numerous other implications about women's professional assimilation, militarization and gender, the construction of the “west” and “Arab Muslim” worlds, liberal sexuality and feminist discourse. These images teach us that feminists that work for all women's true empowerment must remain vigilant of the ways in which feminist agendas such as women's assimilation into the military can be co-opted in order to maintain white patriarchal dominance.

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 2009 recipient was as follows:

Maia Brown

Maia Brown is a Studio Art & History Major.

Project Title: From Mother to Daughter: the Legacies of Jewish Women’s Activism in the United States, Tracing the Roots of Jewish Solidarity Movements with the Palestinians

Project Description: This project explores the legacies of a history of Jewish women’s activism within the Old and New Left in the United States in order to contextualize the phenomenon of contemporary Jewish women in the Palestinian Solidarity Movement. Through oral history collection and local archival research, I use the multigenerational community of radical Jewish women in Seattle, Washington, as a case study. The project interrogates how succeeding generations of women have understood and articulated the intersections of their Jewish, female, and activist identities in order to narrate their place in political and social justice struggles of their day.
Senior Spotlight

Maytal Schmidt: I am a Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, Religion and African American Studies Major. My journey throughout the GAWS and GSFS departments has been a thought-provoking and intriguing trip. The professors in the departments have challenged me to think about feminist discourses and the ways that it engages me as an academic and social activist. Next year I plan on working with women from underprivileged backgrounds, specifically African American impoverished women. My work will help empower these women, a mission I will continue for the rest of my life. My journey to think about my role as a white, female American has just begun, thanks to the help of the GSFS department. I am happy that I have been provided the tools and frameworks in which to see, understand and critique the world around me.

Beth Smeltzer: I’m a senior GSFS major also majoring in English and College Music. I came to Oberlin for the double-degree program, but I left the Conservatory after my second year and somehow wound up with three majors. Some nonacademic things that I like are backpacking and fermented foods. The GSFS major has helped me become a critical reader and I have learned how to ask (and to try to answer) tough, productive questions about gender and sexuality. I'm not precisely sure what I'm doing after I graduate, but I'm hoping to become a teacher in an urban public school within the next few years.

Alumni News

Rebecca Adelman (‘01): After finishing her Ph.D. in Comparative Studies at Ohio State, Rebecca Adelman joined the faculty of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County as an Assistant Professor in the Media & Communication Studies program. She can be reached at adelman@umbc.edu.

Alex Borns-Weil (formerly Alex Weil) (’87): I am working as a literacy specialist in Brookline, MA. I married my partner, Stephanie, in 1995 and we have a 13-year-old son. Hope all is going well at Oberlin.

Lisa Handwerker, Ph.D., M.P.H. (’80): At the time I was at Oberlin, I had an independent women's studies major since there was not a formal program (1979-80). After Oberlin I received my Masters in Public Health from UC Berkeley and my PhD from UC San Francisco and UC Berkeley in Medical Anthropology. My doctoral work was on the social significance of infertility in Beijing, China. I have lived, worked and traveled in China since 1979. Since then I have been teaching gender, anthropology and health classes. I was also on the board of the National Women's Health Network in DC for seven years. My most exciting news is that I am a mom to my now almost 7-year-old daughter, who I adopted from China as a single mom when she was a one year old. At home, we speak both Mandarin and English. We were recently back in China and are planning our next trip for this Spring.
Nina Hasen ('88), received her doctorate in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin in 2008. She is currently based in Washington, DC, where she works for the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator in the Department of State. In her role as an HIV Prevention Technical Advisor, she has a special focus on Gender Issues, and is involved in a variety of projects aimed at improving HIV prevention and outcomes for women, especially in Southern Africa. Nina is very interested in mentoring young women in science, and in encouraging women with an interest in gender issues to consider scientific training. She welcomes contact from Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies students (and faculty) at her personal e-mail address: nina.hasen@gmail.com

Nehara Kalev ('94) will be creating a new dance-theater work as part of a residency grant at the Djerassi Resident Artists' Program in March & April, 2010. The evening-length premiere will be co-presented by The Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood August 13, 2010. Dance company website is www.CatchMeBird.com. Please keep in touch!

Marne Litfin ('07) left Seattle with a backpack and a one way ticket to New Zealand last fall. She is still traveling.

Lauren Mizock ('03): Lauren is in her final year of her clinical psychology PhD program at Suffolk University in Boston, MA. She is currently working on her predoctoral clinical internship at the Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology at Boston Medical Center where she is conducting child and family therapy as well as working with individuals with serious mental illness in an inpatient forensic setting. She successfully defended her dissertation on the effect of researcher race on the research process in October 2008. She is currently working on research publications in culturally sensitive care for transgender populations, traumatic racism, narrative methodologies, and cultural awareness in disaster mental health. When she's not working, she enjoys yoga and spending time with former Obies.

Laura Paley ('01): I am currently working for the Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice in Brooklyn New York where I represent children who's parents have been charged with abusing/neglecting them in proceedings in Family Court.

Sarah Saunders ('03) graduated with honors from Temple University with a Master of Social Work in May 2009. For the past two years, Sarah has worked in a community mental health program in Philadelphia as a therapist, group facilitator and housing counselor for adults living with mental health disorders, chemical dependence and HIV/AIDS. She can be reached at sarahsaunders@gmail.com.

Kim Tolman ('00): I am a producer with The Joy Behar Show and am living in Brooklyn, NY.

Emilie Zaslow, Ph.D. ('93): Emilie is an Assistant Professor in Communication Studies at Pace University. Her book, Feminism, Inc.: Growing Up in Girl Power Media Culture, was published by Palgrave this year.
Faculty News

Eric Estes

Eric Estes started his work as Associate Dean of Academic Diversity in the College of Arts and Sciences in July, focusing on curricular and faculty diversity initiatives. He also contributed to an article on the election of Barack Obama published in the Oberlin Alumni Magazine, presented on panels at two Consortium for High Achievement and Success conferences, taught his course Bodies in Play: Athletics, Identity and Culture in America in the fall, and was the keynote for Ally Week at SUNY Fredonia working with faculty, administrators, and students on infusing both the curriculum and student life with LGBTQ issues and concerns.

GSFS Grads 2009

Congratulations to the students who graduated with a major or minor in Gender & Women’s Studies this past academic year. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

Emma Anderson
Joshua Birch
Anjali Chaudhry
Raquel Font-Soloway
Sarah Gardner
Hannah Lesser
Rachel Madris
Hannah McCorkel
Juliana Scherer
Sophia Simon-Ortiz
Suzanne Zalewski
Frances Hasso

Frances S. Hasso: I am pleased to report the forthcoming publication of my book *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East*, from Stanford University Press, which will be launched at the 2010 annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in San Diego. I recently published “Shifting Practices and Identities: Non-Traditional Relationships among Sunni Muslim Egyptians and Emiratis,” in *Family, Gender, and Law in a Globalizing Middle East and South Asia*, a collection edited by historian Ken Cuno and sociologist Manisha Desai (Syracuse University Press). I presented pieces of the book project to audiences at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and Duke University in the past year, where it was also fun to catch up with Oberlin grads and former students Annie Gebhardt, Lina Elbadawi, and Mitali Routh, who were completing graduate degrees (in Public Health, Medicine, and Art History, respectively) at these institutions. This term I am excited and consumed by (in terms of time!) the teaching of a new course, “Social Thought and Theory,” to some truly engaged first- and second-year students. I am also enjoying re-teaching with Anu Needham the “Partition, War, Dislocation” course and my advanced seminar on “Gender and the State in the Middle East and North Africa.”

Margaret Kamitsuka

*Associate Professor, Religion Department,* has served on the Advisory Council of the GSFS from its inception, working on the Curriculum Subcommittee. She is an advisor for GSFS majors and is interested in working with GSFS affiliate faculty who wish to incorporate new trajectories for the study of gender, feminist, sexuality into their existing and new courses. She teaches courses in gender and religion and methodologies in 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). Her most recent publication is an anthology, *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity* (Fortress Press, 2010).

Wendy Kozol

Wendy Kozol was one of six faculty members to receive a 2008-09 Oberlin Teaching Excellence Award. For the 2009-2010 academic year, Wendy is acting director of Comparative American Studies and teaching two new courses while continuing to work on a book project, *Visible Wars and the Ambivalences of Witnessing*, on US militarism and visual culture.
Greggor Mattson

Greggor Mattson, Assistant Professor of Sociology, joined the GSFS Committee in 2009. He also serves on the Law and Society Program Committee and teaches courses on urban sociology, the sociology of sexuality, law and society, and seminars on alcohol and prostitution. Greggor was awarded a Powers Travel grant to complete interviews and research for his book manuscript, Governing Loose Women: The Cultural Politics of European Prostitution Reform. The award will fund travel to his field sites in Germany, Sweden, Finland and The Netherlands in the Summer of 2010. Last year he published “Is America Fragmenting?” in the Annual Review of Sociology with co-author Claude Fischer, finding that “the loudest claims of fragmentation, those concerning value issues, are based on the most contested evidence, but the widening gap between Americans by income and education - which receives less popular attention - is substantial and serious.”

Pablo Mitchell

Pablo Mitchell's new book project, West of Sex: Colonialism and Mexican America, 1900-1930 is under review by the University of Chicago Press. In Spring 2010, Mr. Mitchell will be co-teaching the US History survey with Shelley Lee and Clayton Koppes and will also teach courses on the US-Mexico Borderlands and the American West.

Anuradha Needham

While teaching in Oberlin College’s London program during spring 2009, Anuradha Dingwaney Needham was particularly pleased with the opportunity it offered to develop and teach a course on “The Place of ‘Islam’ in British discourses of Multiculturalism and Immigrant Identity.” On April 24, 2009, she gave an invited lecture at the Center for Transcultural Research, Dublin Institute of Technology, seminar series on Negotiated Identities, Histories and Public Culture. This lecture was based on her recently published essay “The Place of Difference in Cross-Cultural Literacy” that appears in Teaching World Literature edited by David Damrosch and published by the Modern Language Association of America. She was also invited to give a talk, “Laughter Bollywood Style,” at the Chicago Humanities Festival in November, whose theme for 2009 was Laughter. On Research Status for 2010-2011, she hopes to complete her monograph on an alternative Indian cinema film maker now tentatively entitled, Crafting Viable National Selves: The Cultural Work of Shyam Benegal’s Films.
Patrick O’Connor

Patrick O’Connor, Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies and Acting Director of the Comparative Literature Program, is teaching a new course this semester on “Latin American Icons,” Che Guevara, Frida Kahlo, Eva Perón, and Pancho Villa, with an emphasis on the transnational circulation of exaggerated representations of femininity and masculinity. He will be giving the keynote speech (on queer writing in Argentina in the 1990s) at a graduate student conference “The Poetics and Politics of Love” at University of Miami, Coral Gables, in March 2010, and will present a talk at Georgetown in June on the representation of lesbians in the 2003 Argentine film Suddenly. He is juggling three different book projects, mostly on Argentine and Uruguayan literature, and it’s anyone’s guess if he’ll finish any of them.

Bridget Reischl

Bridget-Michaele Reischl, Associate Professor, Conservatory of Music, is in her fifth year as Music Director of the Oberlin Orchestras and teacher of orchestral conducting. She received her BM in Performance from the Eastman School of Music (Univ. of Rochester) in 1985 and an Artist Diploma from the Hartt School of Music (Univ. of Hartford) in 1990. She was Director of Orchestral Studies for twelve years at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin and has been an active conductor outside of academia for the last 20 years. Reischl has enjoyed being on a committee that has nothing to do with music and interacting with new students and faculty members! She hopes to find more ways of involving Conservatory students in the GFSF Institute events.

Renee Romano

Renee Romano, Associate Professor of History, is excited to join the GSFS Advisory Council. She is the author of Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America (Harvard University Press, 2003) and co-editor of The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory (University of Georgia Press). This year she published an essay on civil rights museums in The Public Historian and continued work on her current book project, "Justice Delayed: Civil Rights Trials and America's Racial Reckoning." She is currently teaching a GSFS seminar on Race and Sexuality in American History and next year she will be using a curriculum grant to develop a course on the history of whiteness.

Zeinab Abul-Magd

Zeinab Abul-Magd, Assistant Professor of History
Doctor of Philosophy, Georgetown University, 2008
We Need Your Support!

Programming and student fellowships in the new Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies significantly rely on the contributions of alumni and friends. Such contributions of whatever amount facilitate the growth and vitality of gender, sexuality, and feminist studies at Oberlin College for majors and students throughout the college. We hope you can make such a contribution. The following URL allows you to do so directly and online: http://www.oberlin.edu/giving When you reach this page, click the “Give Online” link on the left. Donations will be directed to the new GSFS Institute if Option “c. Other” is chosen and “GSFS Institute” is typed in the empty box to the right. Thank you.

Donors

The Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies Institute is extremely grateful for the generous contributions made by the following individuals over the last year.

Melsen Carlsen and Reese Himmer
Pamella Farley
Michaela Ferrari
Carolynn Fischel
Charles & Paula Goldsmid
Sara Green
Maryasha Katz
Sherri Levin

Krista Lewicki
Sally McConnell-Ginet
Kevin Mills & Holly Fechner
Marilyn Rife
Thomas Swartele
June Wing
Richard Zaslow

Thank you for your support. Your generous contributions enable us to schedule and sponsor events both on and off campus, benefiting the Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies majors as well as the entire student body at Oberlin College.

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