NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR

This is now my third year as Director of Women’s Studies and I’m pleased to watch the Program continue to thrive with two full-time faculty and a growing number of majors and minors. I would like to welcome our new majors and minors as well as greet advanced students and friends of the program. The 2002-2003 academic year offers exciting new courses, guest lectures, and long-term projects for the program. Along with our required courses, this fall Professor Frances Hasso is teaching a new course, “Gender and Sexuality in the Middle East and North Africa.” This course examines issues of gender and sexualities in this region, including constructions of masculinities and femininities. The class discusses regional contextualization, historicization, and plurality through readings of both recent feminist scholarship and memoirs and novels. Students explore how marginalized positions like queerness, along with femininities, masculinities, modernities, and bodies come together in the histories and politics of the region. Women’s Studies is pleased to contribute to the College’s recent commitment to developing its curriculum in studies of the Middle East and North Africa. In addition, we are now able to cross-list Professor Pam Brooks (African American Studies Department) courses on African American women’s history. While these classes have long counted for the major, cross-listing signals the centrality of these courses for our majors. We are also delighted to welcome Professor Brooks to the Women’s Studies Program Committee. This year, the Program is continuing to sponsor the Feminist Research Brown Bag Series, in which we invite Oberlin College faculty doing research in areas of gender and sexuality to present their work. In November, Professor Kirk Ormand from the Classics Department gave a lecture titled, “Sex or Gender? The Miraculous Lesbians of Ovid’s Metamorphoses.” In this well-attended lecture, Professor Ormand offered new insights into the role of sexuality in Ovid’s much studied text. We will also have a guest speaker in December, Professor Wendy Hesford from Ohio State University, who will talk about global sweatshops and student activism. Finally, the Program Committee has been busy working on several projects. We are reevaluating study away programs (see student representatives request below) attended by WoSt majors. We are also reassessing the title of the program in light of new directions in feminist scholarship and curricular offerings in the program. We hope to have more news about this change in the spring newsletter.

Wendy Kozol
Director, Women’s Studies Program

STUDY AWAY PROGRAMS

The Women’s Studies program is in the process of affiliating study away programs. To gather the most information about programs, the input of students is vital. If you have been on a study away program that should/does give WOST credit, and are interested in commenting on it, please email alexandra.delvalle or jason.weinberg.

WANTED: STORIES ABOUT WOST GRADUATES

We are looking for reports from or about our graduates whose present activities would be of interest to our readers. Would you like to suggest a particular Alum, gather suggestions, or write a brief interview with them for the Newsletter? Send in suggestions or reports to linda.pardee@oberlin.edu
LEAH FREED MEMORIAL PRIZE AWARD
FALL 2002 RECIPIENTS

The Leah Freed Memorial prize is awarded to support engagement in student research, creative work, performance, or other academic projects. This year's Fall 2002 recipients were:

Sarah "Annie" Gebhardt

Project Title: "Ideologies and Practices of Primary School Sex Education"

Project Description: This research project is intended to explore two primary questions: (1) What are the politics, controversies, and constraints—on both the national and local levels—that determine the literal and ideological content of preadolescent sex education? (2) What are some of the implications of the knowledges and ideologies that are ultimately communicated to preadolescent youth—both for the policy-makers and the youth themselves? The research project will center around a qualitative content-analysis of educational materials (i.e., videos, books, hand-outs) used in teaching 9-12 year-olds about sex and sexuality in school. The project also includes face-to-face interviews with local educators and members of the school-board, as well as extensive secondary research. It is the intention of this project to explore preadolescent sex education as an early and institutionalized means through which common understandings, attitudes, and assumptions about sex and sexuality are both communicated and contested. The final aim is to consider the potential for transforming the sex and sexuality education and socialization of youth as a method of working towards future social change in relation to gender and sexual identities.

Jane Lee

Project Title: "Zainichi Korean Women in Japan: An Interpersonal Study"

Project Description: "Zainichi Korean Women in Japan: An Interpersonal Study," is a research project concerning the historical and social experiences of Korean women in Japan. Through previous research on the broader history of Koreans in Japan, the strong need for a more adequate representation of Korean women became very clear. Zainichi women have played a very unique and important role within both Japanese mainstream society as well as the marginalized Korean communities that they belong to. This research endeavor will involve traveling to Osaka, Japan with an interpreter during Winter Term to carry out individual interviews with young Zainichi women of high school age. Within the discussion of their personal life histories, I would like to focus on how each woman's educational experiences have affected their particular identity formation. My research in Japan will also include several visits to various schools in the Osaka school district where I will be observing the different systems of education that exist, which includes Japanese public schools, Korean ethnic schools, and International schools. While I hope that this project will help me to gain a better understanding of Korean women in Japan, my greater goal is to give voice to these women who have historically been and continue to be silenced.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wendy Hesford

Associate Professor, Ohio State University

“Global/Local Labor Politics and the Promise of Service Learning”

Friday, December 6th, 2002
12:00-1:30; Wilder 101

How are we to understand the institutionalization of service learning in the context of global capitalism and the corporate university? Although community service learning is often praised as a site for community-building and civic responsibility, pedagogical initiatives that attempt to create connections across social boundaries do not automatically undo ideological or socioeconomic divisions. This paper considers how neo-liberal notions of the nation-state, citizenship, and the public sphere have infiltrated community service learning paradigms and its institutionalization in the U.S. academy.

http://www.oberlin.edu/~wstudies