

# FEMINIST TRAJECTORIES

Newsletter of Rutgers  
Women's and Gender Studies Department



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## *Rutgers Wins Erasmus Mundus Grant from European Union*

Under the auspices of a grant from the European Union, Women's and Gender Studies will host three graduate students from European Universities each spring semester for the next three years. In 2009, Anna Somma from Institute for Studies in the Humanities, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Paulina Bolek from the University of Lodz, Poland, and Beatriz Revelles Benavente from the University of Granada, Spain will be taking courses ranging from Contemporary Feminist Theory and Feminist Methodologies to Gendered Borders, Changing Boundaries and Feminisms and Deconstruction. These course credits will count toward their Masters Degrees at their home institutions.

Rutgers partnered with eight European Women's Studies Programs in applying for the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Grant, which supports faculty and student exchanges. Our partner institutions include University of Granada (Spain), University of Bologna (Italy), Central European University (Hungary), University of Hull (Great Britain), University of Lodz (Poland), Institute for the Study of Humanities-Ljubljana (Slovenia), University of Oviedo (Spain), and University of Utrecht (Netherlands).

## *Films for the Feminist Classroom*



Films for the Feminist Classroom (FCC) is a new initiative of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* and three WGS graduate students: Julie Salthouse, Ari Rotramel, and Catherine Sameh. When *Signs* was contacted by film distribution companies about reviewing films, something the journal has not done before, *Signs* staff decided to start reviewing them, in the hope that the reviews will help

teachers use films effectively. The reviews, published on the *Signs* website, identify salient teaching points and issues that might arise in class discussions. In addition to brief reviews, the project includes interviews with filmmakers. There are plans for incorporating visual content in the form of stills and brief clips, and also links to further information. The project focuses on documentaries, and the first issue centers around three fields: female suicide bombers; transgender and gender-queer issues; and girls, media and pop culture.

FCC founding editor Deanna Utroske created databases and did the initial requesting of films. She and *Signs* senior editor Karen Alexander serve as advisors for the project, together with Dena Seidel, media librarian Jane Sloan, and professor of film studies and Spanish and Portuguese Susan Martin-Marquez. The first issue of *Films for the Feminist Classroom* is scheduled to come out in March. For more information, see the *Signs* website: [www.signs.rutgers.edu](http://www.signs.rutgers.edu).

## A Note from the Chair

How does an academic department measure success? For Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers, the indicators are multiple:

- 11 outstanding WGS undergrads delivered papers at the Mundos des Mujeres/World Women's Conference in Spain in summer 2008.
- Sixteen of our Ph.D. students delivered papers at national and international conferences in the last academic year.
- WGS faculty published 17 books in the past two years.
- Two of our Ph.D. students, Anahi Garrido Russo and Magda Grabowska, coauthored books in the past year.
- Two WGS faculty, Charlotte Bunch and Yana Rodgers, have been recruited to special assignments by the United Nations and the World Bank.
- Two WGS faculty are delivering distinguished lecture series—Liz Grosz delivered the 2008 Rene Wellek Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine, and Nancy Hewitt will deliver the 2009 Becker Lectures at Cornell.
- Academic Analytics ranked WGS one of the top three doctoral programs in the United States.
- Eight European Universities sought us out to partner with them in an intensive competition for the European Union Erasmus Mundus grant.
- The Department provides a home for the editorial offices of the premier journal in the field, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.
- WGS faculty introduced ten new courses this year, bringing cutting edge scholarship to our students.
- The Department launched two new minor degree programs—in Critical Sexualities Studies and in Social Justice.
- Partnering with the Office of Social Justice Education, WGS launched the Livingston Social Justice Living-Learning Community, a two-year program designed to train the next generation of social justice activists.
- WGS received an Academic Excellence Grant, *Developing Digital Expertise for Transnational Feminist Research*, which has enabled us to introduce new courses and new summer employment opportunities for our students.
- Three of our outstanding faculty have been tapped for major administrative appointments—Harriet Davidson is serving as Acting Dean of Douglass; Barbara Balliet is serving as Vice Dean of Douglass, and Joanna Regulaska is serving as SAS Dean of International Programs.
- The Department is hosting six international visiting faculty, three of whom hold prestigious Fulbright Awards.
- In fall 2008, WGS hosted the annual meeting of Department Chairs and Graduate Program Directors of all Women's Studies Ph.D. Programs in the USA.
- In spring 2009, WGS is hosting the Mid-Atlantic Women's Studies Association Meeting that will bring several hundred scholars to campus to share their research.
- In 2009, we are celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

As these multiple indicators make clear, Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers is thriving. We look forward to continuing success in the decades ahead.

Mary Hawkesworth  
Professor II and Chair

## Academic Excellence Fund Grant

### *Developing Digital Expertise for Transnational Feminist Research*

Under the auspices of a grant from Rutgers Academic Excellence Fund, WGS hired Joanna Wyzgowska, an MFA student from Mason Gross School for the Arts to launch a series of new media initiatives using the Sharon Fordham Multimedia Laboratory at the Mabel Smith Douglass Library. Joanna was assisted in these efforts by Marlee Kimmick, Allie Graham, Deanna Utroske, and Kenji Denda. The new media projects include videofilm biographies of Rochelle I. Brown, Sharon Bernstein Megdal, and Renee Kronberg Weisman, who were inducted into the Douglass Society in Fall 2008; a videofilm about the 2009 Mundos de Mujeres/World Women's Conference in Madrid; significant improvements to the Signs and WGS websites; and digitization of the Global Center's collection of posters from 30 years of transnational feminist activism. In a related project, Leanne Catena painted a mural for the Livingston Social Justice Living-Learning Community Residence Hall, Quad 2.



Livingston Social Justice Living-Learning Community Mural created by Leanne Catena

## Social Justice Living-Learning Community on Livingston Campus

In the fall of 2008, a social justice living-learning community was started on the Livingston campus. The initiative for the community came from Cheryl Clarke, Director of the Office of Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities and member of the Women's and Gender Studies affiliate faculty, who wanted to preserve the legacy and history of Livingston as a socially responsible educational institution. Barbara Balliet, the Vice Dean of Douglass Residential College and one of the people involved in the living-learning community, says that the community is an attempt to "recognize the past and take it into the future."

The social justice community consists of fourteen undergraduate students, and there are plans to expand the participation to 20-25 students next year. The community members live together in a residence hall in Quad II on the Livingston campus. During the fall semester, all members of the community took the course "Introduction to Social Justice." The course met for five hours every Friday. Teaching assistant Anahi Russo Garrido says that "this format permitted to solidify a community around their interest in social justice." The course addressed various social justice movements, for example feminism, immigrant rights, and environmental activism. The class also made a field trip to United Way in Newark "where students had the opportunity to come closer to an organization that funds and trains hundreds of organizations in New Jersey" (Russo Garrido). *(Continued on p.7)*

## Recent Publications

**Mary S. Gossy** published *Empire on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (University of Liverpool Press, 2009)

**Elizabeth Grosz** published *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (Columbia University Press, 2008).

**Deborah Gray White** edited *Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

**Nancy Hewitt**, with Christopher Clark and Josh Brown, published *Who Built America?: Working People and the Nation's History, Volume 1: to 1877* (St. Martin's Press, 2008).

**Nancy Hewitt**, with Kirsten Delegard, edited *Women, Families, and Communities: Readings in American History*, two volumes (Pearson Longman, 2008).

**Phyllis Mack** published *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

**Joanna Regulska and Magda Grabowska** with Malgorzata Fuszara and Joanna Mizielska published *Wspolpraca czy Konflikt? Unia, Panstwo i Kobiety [Cooperation or Conflict? The Union, The State and Women]* (Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warsaw, 2008.)

**Yana Rodgers**, together with Günseli Berik and Ann Zammit, edited *Social Justice and Gender Equality: Rethinking Development Strategies and Macroeconomic Policies* (Routledge Press, 2008).

## Faculty Honors and Awards

**Charlotte Bunch**, Rutgers College Class of 1962 Presidential Public Service Award (2008); Doctor of Law, *Honoris Causa*, University of Connecticut, 2008; and Joyce Warshaw Lifetime Achievement Award from SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders), 2008.

**Carlos Decena**, Woodrow Wilson Foundation Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Scholars, 2008-2009

**Mary Hawkesworth**, Outstanding Professional Achievement Award, Women's Caucus for Political Science, Midwest Political Science Association, 2008.

**Nancy Hewitt** has been invited to deliver the 2009 Becker Lectures at Cornell University and to serve as the Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions at Cambridge University in 2009-2010.

**Jasbir Puar's** recent book, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke University Press), received the Association of Asian American Studies 2007 Book Award in Cultural Studies.

**Yana Rodgers** was chosen to represent the International Association for Feminist Economics at the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha, Qatar, where she delivered a paper on gender-equitable public policy.

## CIC meeting at Rutgers

On November 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of last year, Rutgers hosted the annual CIC meeting for Women's Studies chairs and graduate program directors. Representatives from twenty universities, as well as the National Women's Studies Association, participated. Topics discussed included the role of sexuality studies in women's studies programs, the relationship between scholarship and activism, graduate and undergraduate programs, and interdisciplinarity.



## Radigals- A Student's Source for Feminist Activism!

Radigals serves as the Undergraduate Women's and Gender Studies Association. As one of the few feminist activist groups on campus, Radigals takes up an active role in the Women's and Gender Studies department, providing an outlet and a means for the advancement of feminist activism at Rutgers, educating the student body and the community about global, national, and local issues of social, political, and economic significance, and fostering an environment full of diversity, unity, communication, and action. Meetings are held every Wednesday night at 9 p.m. in the Women's Center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Douglass Campus Center.

Radigals hosts three major events during the spring semester: The Feminist Conference, NJ Zinefest, and Gender Bender Prom. The Annual Feminist Conference is a chance for us to invite various academics, activists, authors, and public figures to speak about a topic of our choosing. Our topics in years past have included "Women in Globalization," "Feminism and Technology," and "Women and the Body" with speakers ranging from representatives of the Zapatista movement, professionals in women's health, Rutgers graduate students, founders of the Feministing.com blog, and many notable others. The NJ Zinefest, a day-long independent media festival, brings together artists, zine writers, independent publications, musicians, poets, and crafters to share their works for sale or trade. Past guests have included ABC No Rio, Bluestockings, and Atlantis Underground. Radigals then wraps up the semester with the Gender Bender Prom. Guests are encouraged to dress genderless or as their opposite gender as we groove to the tunes of some of New Brunswick's local bands. In addition to our main events this year, Radigals is proud to participate in the 2009 Meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Women's Studies Association Conference. Students interested in joining Radigals or our events should contact [amyet@eden.rutgers.edu](mailto:amyet@eden.rutgers.edu) or sign up for e-mails at [radigalsnb-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:radigalsnb-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

## Ghana Internships, 2009

Three outstanding SAS undergraduate students have been selected to complete internships with women's organizations in Accra, Ghana in summer 2009. The students include:

**Fiona Devonish**, a double major in English and Linguistics, hopes to intern with the National Council on Women and Development.

**Parisa Kharazi**, a Middle-Eastern Studies major, who has served as the director of Rutgers' Oxfam chapter, hopes to work on issues of poverty and hunger reduction while in Ghana.

**Kerryn Presley**, a double major in Africana Studies and Nursing, hopes to work on health education, focusing on HIV-AIDS prevention and treatment.

The Ghana Internship Program is jointly sponsored by the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and the Center for African Studies at Rutgers with the generous support of Rutgers alumna Wendy Lee. Professor Abena Busia oversees the internship placements in Ghana. The 2009 Internship Selection Committee included Professors Mary Hawkesworth (Women's and Gender Studies), Dorothy Hodgson (Anthropology), David Hughes (Center for African Studies), and Richard Schroeder (Geography).



*Radigals skillshare*

## Student Accomplishments

### ***Eleanor Brilliant Award for Outstanding Graduating Senior in Women's and Gender Studies***

**Arwa Ibrahim**, a double major in Women's and Gender Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies, and an IWL Scholar, completed her Henry Rutgers Senior Honors Thesis, "Searching for Home: Iraqi-American Negotiations of Belonging in the Post 9/11 Era," *summa cum laude*. From August 2006 to May 2007, Arwa was engaged in media advocacy for Arab-American rights, speaking out against racial profiling and illegal discrimination against Arabs and Muslims in the United States. She gave presentations at the Council on American Islamic Relations and at the American Civil Liberties Union, which were covered by the BBC, the New York Times, Fox5 News, Democracy Now!, and the Montel Williams Show. Her work was also featured in a documentary, "Flying While Muslim." Arwa served as Vice-President of the Arab-American activist organization, Belief, Awareness, Knowledge and Activism and completed an internship at the Center for Women's Leadership. Arwa was nominated by her thesis advisor, Professor Thea Abu-El Haj.

### ***Dorothy Hamilton Balliet Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research in Women's and Gender Studies***

**Martha Guarnieri**, a double major in WGS and Political Science, was nominated by Professor Jennifer Jones for this award for her research paper on "The Ideology of the Second-Hand," which delves extensively into the Village Voice in the 1960s and 1970s to reconstruct the aesthetic and marketing of thrift and second hand clothes. Professor Jones noted that this paper is unusually sophisticated in its use of theory and that it embodies a truly interdisciplinary approach that blends research and activist agendas, theorizing and digging in the archives. See profile of Martha, page 7.

### ***Gilda Morales Award for Outstanding Student Activism***

**Julia Moon**, a double major in WGS and Genetics, has done extensive volunteer work at Thomas Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia (osteoporosis) and the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick (mothers and newborns). She has served as Co-President of BiGLARU while maintaining a sterling academic record. Julie was nominated by Professor Josephine Diamond.

### ***Women's and Gender Studies 2008 Woman of Distinction Award***

**Kaylin Padovano**, an English and Women's and Gender Studies double major at Rutgers College, will be graduating Phi Beta Kappa in May 2008. Kaylin has served as President of Radigals, the Undergraduate Women's Studies Association, helping to organize the Annual Undergraduate Feminist Conference and the New Jersey Independent Media Festival. She interned at Jersey Battered Women's Service in Morristown and at the Eric B. Chandler Health Center's domestic violence prevention program in New Brunswick. Kaylin was nominated for this award by Professor Yana Rodgers.

### **Senior Honors Theses**

**Maggie Barone**, "Young Women, Feminism, and Leadership"

**Arwa Ibrahim**, "Searching for Home: Iraqi-American Negotiations of Belonging in the Post 9/11 Era" (*summa cum laude*)

**Michelle Lambly**, "His(story), Her(story), of Their (stories): An Examination of Social Studies in New Jersey High Schools" (*summa cum laude*)

**Kaylin Padovano**, "Latina Immigrant Women in New Jersey and Domestic Violence: Borders and Barriers in Reporting Abuse" (*magna cum laude*)

## Martha Guarnieri, winner of Balliet Award



Women's and Gender Studies major Martha Guarnieri won the Balliet Award last spring for her paper "The Ideology of Thrift." In this paper, written for a class taught by Professor Jennifer Jones, Guarnieri "explored the ideological roots of second hand

clothes" through a case study of sub-cultural groups in New York City in the 1970s, looking at the links between dress and political beliefs. Her research for the paper required Guarnieri to go to New York. Unfortunately, many of the resources she had hoped use were either no longer in existence or in bad condition. Discovering how many sites were built over or run down added a new angle to the research: the implications of "gentrification and its impact on the preservation of the past."

Guarnieri decided to major in Women's and Gender Studies because she realized that a

gender analysis is central to understanding the current global structure. Her favorite class has been Philosophical Issues in Feminism, taught by Professor Ishani Maitra. Says Guarnieri: "This class is opening my eyes to so many fundamental arguments in women's studies - it is amazing." She is also a political science major and a labor studies minor.

When not studying, Guarnieri works on "a million different projects." She was involved in the Eagleton Institute of Politics' RU Voting project, and now she works with Empower Our Neighborhoods, a community group working on democracy issues in New Brunswick. She is also a staff member for Rutgers Model United Nations and Model Congress, and a first year scholar in the Institute for Women's Leadership Scholars Program. "Aside from all of this, I like to travel and cook." After graduating, Guarnieri plans to work in the labor movement, particularly with women workers.

## Social Justice Community, continued from page 3

For their final project, the students did group social action projects. Projects included: "organiz[ing] a meeting to start an organization of students to help high school students in New Brunswick to continue to college and apply to Rutgers"; "organiz[ing] a cabaret night where students discuss[ed] the issue of sexual identity and discrimination. Students present at the soiree signed a poster that said 'I pledge to be open minded'; and "organi[zing] a petition signing session outside of the Livingston campus cafeteria, to request biodegradable plates and cups instead of Styrofoam" (Russo Garrido).

Participation in the living-learning community has had a positive impact on the members: several students have become involved in groups on and off campus, such as NJPIRG and the George Street Co-op. For other students, their participation in the community has led to a shift in their thinking about school, becoming more engaged in classes and going to events on campus. Barbara Balliet describes the community participants as "some of the most ambitious and engaged students" (Balliet). This spring, the students are continuing their social

engagement by going on alternative spring break to the Highlander Center in Tennessee.

The Women's and Gender Studies Department is closely involved with the living-learning community: in addition to being part of initiating the project, the department provides a graduate assistant as well as invisible administrative support. The living-learning community has received Ford funding, as well as financial support from the Office of Undergraduate Education. Marie Logue and Ghada Endick in the Office of Undergraduate Education have been very supportive, as have WG&S Chair Mary Hawkesworth and Lisa Hetfield at the Institute for Women's Leadership.

Next year, there are plans of expanding the program by opening another living-learning community on Douglass campus. It would be have a gender lens and be geared toward upper-level students. The Rutgers social justice minor is also being revived.

## New Faculty

**Zakia Salime** joined the department in the fall of



2008 with a joint appointment in Sociology. Her courses focus on comparative feminism(s), gender, globalization, social movements, international

inequalities and postcoloniality. Her research interests include, race, empire, the political economy of the "war on terror", development policies, Islamic societies and movements, Middle East and US relations. Her forthcoming book (University of Minnesota Press) explores the interactions among the feminist and the Islamist women's movements in Morocco. Her new project explores the connections between gender, the "war on terror" and neoliberal reforms in the Mid-East.

**Melissa Feinberg** holds a joint appointment in



WGS and History. With expertise in gender history, 20th century European history, and the history of human rights, she is developing a new WGS course on the so-called

"modern girls" of the 1920's and 1930's, whose smoking, drinking, and materialist ways struck fear in the hearts of pundits across the globe. Her book, *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950*, was published by University of Pittsburgh Press in 2006. Her current research investigates how fear transformed political culture across Europe during the first decade of the Cold War.

## Visiting Scholars

**Sara Ahmed**, Blanche, Edith and Irving Laurie-New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass, 2008-2009. Sara Ahmed is Professor of Race and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London. She works at the intersection between feminist, queer, postcolonial and critical race studies. Her books include: *Differences that Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (1998); *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Postcoloniality* (2000); *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) and *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects and Others* (2006). Her next book, *The Promise of Happiness*, is forthcoming with Duke University Press. She has begun work on a new project on the idea of 'the social will' and also aims to edit a collection of essays on racism, diversity and language.

**Lubica Kobova**, Fulbright Scholar, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

**Harnida W. Adda**, Fulbright Scholar, Indonesia

**Meyda Yegenoglu**, Fulbright Scholar, Turkey

**Kristin Sampson**, Department of Philosophy, Bergen University, Norway

**Hanne Marie Johansen**, Department of History, Bergen University

**Dawn Blissett**, a scholar specializing in Caribbean history, women's history, and African history has joined the Department as Visiting Assistant Professor in 2008-2009. Professor Blissett completed her doctoral studies at York University in Canada with highest honors. Her dissertation, "Endurance Vile: Discipline and Punishment in Barbados and Jamaica, 1834-1900," analyzes disciplinary and punitive measures against the backdrop of the omnipresent and omnipotent plantation economy, with particular attention to the complexities of race, gender, class, and color.

**V.G. Julie Rajan** has rejoined the Department as Visiting Assistant Professor in 2008-2009. Dr. Rajan's areas of specialization include South Asian feminism, women's fiction and non-fiction, literatures of immigration and diaspora, feminist theory, cultural studies, terrorism and resistance. Her major works include *Home and World: South Asia in Transition* (2006) and *Language, Mysticism, and Iconography: Exploring the Cultural Interface Between East and South Asia* (2008). She is currently completing a book, *Narratives of Violence: The Phenomenon of Women Suicide Bombers*.



## **Economic Educational Crisis: Global Politics Hitting Too Close to Home**

*By Christopher Rivera*

When I first came to Rutgers University in 2003 I would have placed bets that come graduation time, I would be sitting pretty. Some may call this arrogance or others may think of it as confidence in my hard work ethic and interdisciplinarity. Whatever it is called, the truth is that is how I felt. How could a Latino, trilingual man with dual specializations in Comparative Literature and Women's and Gender Studies struggle to find a job? Looking back, I realize my naiveté in so very many issues relating to the academy.

In fall 2008 I began the job hunt. I took the advice of my mentors who suggested applying to at least forty jobs. I applied to fifty to be safe. I was told the typical ratio of job applications to interviews was about 7:1. Though I restricted my search to one geographical region, preferring the northeast, I hoped I would get five to ten interviews. Instead of ten, I was fortunate to be invited to one interview by a research university during the Annual Meeting of the Modern Languages Association. The verdict is still out on whether I will be invited for a campus interview. Beyond the low number of interviews (or I should say the single interview), two parts of this process stand out as the most shocking. The first is that I received 22 notifications that due to the current economic crisis, the job searches were postponed or cancelled. As an impoverished graduate student, I spent more than two hundred dollars on applications that were never even read because job searches were suspended.

The second alarming part of this process is how it can take over your life. I lost sleep; I wasn't able to focus on anything other than checking my cell phone or e-mails hundreds of times per day. The stress of applying, waiting, and being rejected from potential jobs took a toll on me. I would wake up some mornings with pain in my jaw because I had been grinding my teeth that night—something I have never done before in my life. No matter how much yoga I did, the stress always seemed to win.

People don't talk openly enough about the difficulties of the job search. I am sharing my trials and tribulations to let others know that they are not alone in confronting the perils of academic job hunting. There are so many qualified candidates searching for work that rejection is just par for the course in the academy. We need to develop thicker skin given the odds. Realizing that we are not alone in this struggle may make a difference.

I remain an optimist and I am grateful to have been part of Rutgers' impressive group of feminist

scholars. My peers, my professors, and my mentors, have made my struggles in graduate school worth the effort. I am especially thankful to Joanne Givand, Ben Sifuentes, Carlos Decena, and Mary Hawkesworth. Although at times I was admittedly a little too diva, they all always believed in me and stood by me. Wonderful mentors and friends make the first round of rejection a little easier to bear. I may be a little battered and beaten from round one of my job hunt but I will not give up. The economy will continue to be in crisis and so will my stress level for the near future. Nonetheless I will persevere and I am hopeful for success. I am also hopeful that my peers in WGS will also find success in the long run as they so richly deserve.

## **Spring 2009 Lectures, Research Briefings & Film Screenings**

**Professor Evan Stark**, Rutgers University,  
Newark

**Re-framing Battered Women: From Domestic  
Violence**

**to Coercive Control"**

Monday February 23, 4:30 pm

Ruth Dill Johnson Crockett Building

*Women's and Gender Studies Lecture Series*

*Sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies*

**Pray the Devil Back to Hell (Gini Reticker,  
2008) 72 min.**

**Featuring a discussion with producer Abigail  
Disney**

Tuesday February 24, 6:30 pm

Art History 100, Douglass Campus

*Conflict and Comfort: WGS Film Series*

*Sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies*

*Department,*

*Center for Women's Global Leadership, Douglass*

*Residential College,*

*and Office of Undergraduate Education*

**Professor Ishani Maitra**, Rutgers University  
**"Speech and Silence"**

Wednesday, April 1, 12 pm

Ruth Dill Johnson Crockett Building

*Women's and Gender Studies Research Briefing*

*Sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies*

**Professor Nancy Hewitt**, Rutgers University  
**"The Long Suffrage Movement 1776-1965"**

Thursday, April 30, 12 pm

Ruth Dill Johnson Crockett Building

*Women's and Gender Studies Research Briefing*

*Sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies*

## Interdisciplinary research in Women's and Gender Studies

By Debotri Dhar

This year, I was fortunate enough to be awarded the Institute for Research on Women's 2008-09 graduate fellowship for a year-long seminar titled 'The Rights of Culture/Culture of Rights'. This is an advanced seminar that brings together scholars engaging with multiple themes and perspectives in human rights theory and praxis across a wide range of disciplines. As a Ph.D student, the unmatched experience of being in conversation with seasoned faculty members was doubly enhanced by the seminar's interdisciplinary scope. The epistemological and methodological interaction between disciplines that included political science, law, literature, history, sociology, anthropology and women's studies led to some very illuminating discussions, allowing the issue of rights to be framed in nuanced ways that would have been impossible otherwise. It is very clear to all those of us who are part of the seminar that many of the projects will not only go on to constitute path-breaking research within their respective disciplines, but also play a vital role in stimulating dialogue across these disciplines.

Though the scope for such dialogue across disciplines continues to widen in the academy, departments such as ours are still notable exceptions in their active encouragement of interdisciplinary research. WGS Rutgers is in this sense truly exceptional in its commitment to interdisciplinarity as reflected in the diversity of faculty and student research interests as well as resource allocation. This is not the case with many academic departments not just in the United States but worldwide, where a conservatism reminiscent of the early modern era still defines 'knowledge' as that which keeps strictly to its disciplinary boundaries, or is in other words, 'disciplined'. This conservatism is also reflected in funding opportunities as well as academic jobs, where primary affiliation with a 'traditional' discipline is often a necessary prerequisite.

One concedes that disciplinary specialization has its many obvious merits, and further, that intellectual projects such as those framed within the broad ambit of Women's and Gender Studies are certainly more amenable to be viewed through an interdisciplinary lens. However, it seems profoundly ironic that in the twenty-first century, the epistemo/logical basis of scholarship should continue to disengage itself from the insights and interrogations of other disciplines. It is perhaps worthwhile to consider that in contemporary times, the need more than ever is to frame new questions in new ways, through hybrid methodologies and creative, interdisciplinary research. And many would concur that this is undoubtedly the most enriching aspect of being a part of WGS at Rutgers.

### New Courses

*Women and the Global Economy*, Prof. Yana Rodgers  
*Introduction to Social Justice*, Prof. Darnell Moore  
*War: Feminist Perspectives*, Prof. Ethel Brooks  
*Gender, Power, and the Development of Black Politics and Thought*, Prof. Nikol Alexander Floyd  
*Mentoring, Leadership, and Practice*, Prof. Katherine Birckmeyer  
*Transnational Sexualities*, Prof. Jasbir Puar  
*Neighborhood Narratives*, Prof. Hana Iverson  
*Global Sweatshops*, Prof. Ethel Brooks  
*Narrative and Memory*, Prof. Judith Gerson  
*Feminism, Space, and Visuality*, Prof. Elizabeth Grosz



*Women's and Gender Studies  
holiday party, December 2008*

## MAWSA Conference, March 26-28

On March 26 to 28, WGS will host the 2009 Mid-Atlantic Women Studies Association Conference (MAWSA). Held in conjunction with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Blanche, Edith and Irving Laurie-New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass College, and the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Douglass Residential College, the conference theme is: Taking Stock: Transformative Scholarship, Transforming Practices. Conference plenary sessions, events and panels are noted below. For full information, see the conference schedule posted at [www.womens-studies.rutgers.edu](http://www.womens-studies.rutgers.edu).

### **Plenary sessions:**

#### ***Securing Women's Rights as Human Rights***

Moderator: Mary Hartman, IWL, Rutgers  
Charlotte Bunch, Center for Women's Global Leadership

Jacquelyn Pitanguy, CEPIA, Brazil  
Salma Maoulidi, Sahiba Sisters Fdn., Tanzania  
Mary Jane Real, Human Rights Defenders, Philippines

#### ***Engendering/Degendering Knowledge***

Moderator: Harriet Davidson, Dean of Douglass Residential College  
Alison Jaggar, University of Colorado, Boulder  
Elizabeth Grosz, Rutgers University  
Jasbir Puar, Rutgers University  
Diana Tietjens Meyers, Loyola University of Chicago  
Joan Tronto, Hunter College and CUNY Graduate Center

#### ***But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies and the Transformation of the Academy***

Moderator: Winnifred Brown-Glaude, The College of New Jersey  
Nikol Alexander Floyd, Rutgers University  
Cheryl Clarke, Rutgers University  
Valerie Lee, Ohio State University  
Paula Giddings, Smith College  
Cheryl Wall, Rutgers University

### **2009 Laurie Lecture and MAWSA Keynote Address**

Sara Ahmed, Goldsmiths College, University of London

#### ***"Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness"***

### **Concurrent Panels:**

*From Our Seats to the Streets: Connecting Academics to Activism in the Feminist Classroom*  
*Transnational Movements/Local Practices*  
*Transforming Women's Studies: National Views*  
*Strategies for Economic Justice*  
*Art and Social Engagement*  
*Gender and Popular Culture*  
*Sex in the Classroom: Sex Education as Transformative Practice*  
*Producing and Using Feminist Knowledge*  
*Putting Feminism Into Practice: Conference Organizing*  
*Gender Issues in a Global Frame*  
*Towards Sexual Democracy*  
*Women's Life Cycles*  
*Mourning Violence*  
*Taking Stock of Academic Services: Oppressive Gendered Division of Labor or Feminist Activism?*  
*Art and Feminist Practice: Pedagogy, Relational Experience and Social Change*  
*Inspiring Action: Running Campus Student Organizations*  
*From Law to Justice: National and International Strategies*  
*Body Politics*  
*Teaching and Technologies*  
*Theorizing Identities*  
*Re-Imaging Spaces of Embodiment: Disability Studies Meets Women's Studies*

### **March 26 Performance: *Carnival of Kings and Queens***

### **March 27 Performance: *Revenge of the Woman Studies Professor***

A one-act play written and performed by Professor Bonnie Morris, George Washington University

**Women's and Gender Studies**  
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