

SPRING 2023

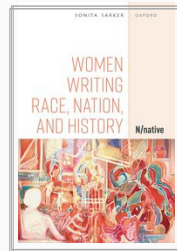
# INTERSECTIONS

Macalester Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department Newsletter

WGSS

## Sonita Sarker's Teaching and Scholarship

By Josh Groven '23



While the WGSS department has always promoted community engagement, their commitment to stellar scholarship has never wavered. Sonita Sarker, the WGSS department's core faculty and chair, is on sabbatical for the 2023 spring semester. She's still been busy as ever as a scholar on and off campus.

Professor Sarker's book "Women Writing Race, Nation, and History: N/native" published in the spring of this year was "the result of years of hard labor and dedication" Printed by Oxford University Press, the book studies the role of the "N/native" in the non-fiction works of Zitkála-Ša, Cornelia Sorabji, Grazia Deledda, Virginia Woolf, Gwendolyn Bennett and Victoria Ocampo. Through these six women, Sonita explores how nativism interacts with nationalism and the ways these authors negotiated with citizenship and the nation-state. She compares and contrasts how some of the authors being over-represented or minoritized alters their legacy and the unique perspectives of their writing. Last spring, Sonita held an event on campus for the release of the book that brought together her students, colleagues and community members. The event was hosted in the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Commons where each special guest read a passage of the book supplemented with their own response.

Sonita's work continues to span many topic areas and approaches across the intersectional lens of WGSS. Sonita was co-organizer for a seminar on Whiteness in an inter/national academic convention and participated in an online conference on Indigenous Studies at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. Building on the hard work of her book, Sonita will be on a panel at a conference celebrating the Grazia Deledda's 150th anniversary, an indigenous Sardinian and Italian author featured in "Women Writing Race, Nation, and History: N/native." She also had essays published this year in two notable collections that stem from and relate back to the courses she teaches. In addition to this dedication to scholarship, Sonita has been teaching WGSS classes adapted to the current climate of the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread social unrest. Her course "Worlds Upside Down: Revolutions in Theories and Practices" and "Whiteness and Postcolonialism before and during the pandemic" both confront the chaotic realities of our current world head on.

We wish a successful and fulfilling sabbatical for Sonita and we look forward to her return to the WGSS department in the fall of 2023.

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INTERSECTIONS Student Staff:

Josh Groven '23  
Anna Sverclova '23

WGSS Department Coordinator:  
Jan Beebe

## WGSS Core Faculty



Myrl Beam, Associate Professor  
Sonita Sarker, Professor and Chair



Satoko Suzuki  
WGSS Interim Chair



Sachiko Dorsey Frenchy Lunning  
WGSS Visiting Faculty



# Feminism in Action: Macalester Students On the Ground

By Anna Sverclova '23

In our exploration of this year's newsletter theme, "Feminism in Action," we interviewed Macalester students involved in feminist organizations to show what theory-in-practice might look like on an individual level.

We reached out to Colleen Apostle, a senior English major, about her involvement with Macalester's new Queer Oral History Project. The Queer Oral History Project is headed by the GSRC (Macalester's Gender & Sexuality Resource Center) with support from the WGSS department in effort to capture the experiences of queer and trans students at Macalester, particularly those of marginalized identities.

Colleen reports, "The scope of the project is rather broad, focusing on histories of queer/trans activism at Macalester, both recently and within the past, while paying particular attention to centering and fronting the stories and experiences of queer/trans students of color."

When asked why she was interested in this project, Colleen states, "I'm really interested in hearing all about the amazing activism and resistance that queer Mac students have been up to across the past two years, and preserving that record for future Mac students. The institutional memory of this college has an incredibly short half-life, and with so many juniors and seniors involved in the uprising last year, and Line-3 protests a few years ago, we're about to lose an incredible depth of wisdom and knowledge that I feel anxious to keep alive somehow. I know that I've learned so much from queer folks at Mac, and I want to pass that onto the next generation of students if I can."

Senior WGSS minor, Hannah Steuer, recounts their experience working with two local community organizations: Gender Justice and Unrestrict Minnesota.

"During the 2022 spring semester, I was the 'development intern' for Gender Justice. The idea behind Gender Justice is taking legal action to advance gender equity. Gender Justice is in partnership with a nonprofit called Unrestrict Minnesota. Unrestrict Minnesota works to protect abortion access in Minnesota and in the upper Midwest."

Of the work involved in their internship, Hannah reports that, "...as a development intern, one of my main responsibilities was to maintain connections with donors. I would hand-write postcards, and make calls to donors to thank them, and see if they had any questions about where their money was going or the work that we're doing. I also did some emergency response texting, for example, when the draft of Roe v. Wade's overturn in the Supreme Court came out, or anytime there was an immediate threat to gender equity or gender equality or reproductive rights that we wanted to make people aware of."

Hannah's for-credit internship had the added bonus of academic advisement from the WGSS department. "My academic advisor was Professor Myrl Beam. We would meet every other week to discuss how the internship was going. He helped me to process what I was learning about while working in a nonprofit, and how I could apply that to my understanding of the nonprofit industrial complex. Ultimately, I felt like much of the organizations' work was truly essential. We're doing good work, led by community members, and working to be in coalition with other organizations made up of diverse demographics of people which I think is really important. Something that I really appreciated about the organization was really recognizing that they didn't see their work as 'the savior of gender equity,' instead that we need to be consistently and continuously in coalition with people doing direct action through protesting and non-legal actions that people take to protect themselves and their communities."

*Special thanks to Hannah Steuer '23 and Colleen Apostle '23*

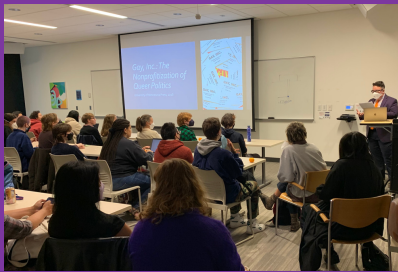


# Feminism In Action: Myrl Beam's Community-Based Approach

By Josh Groven '23

Macalester's WGSS department has a long history of striving to bridge the gaps between theory and practice. Professor Myrl Beam, newly hired in a tenure track position, has dedicated himself to this approach for his classes going forward. He continues a history begun by the department's capstone course taught by Professor Sonita Sarker for the last 15 years subtitled as "Linking Theory and Practice." By collaborating with local activist groups, Myrl will connect WGSS students to the community we study. Myrl adds that "realizing relationships are what make us resilient" which requires extending the class beyond campus. He reminds us that feminism has always been rooted in community and "social change work." Feminist practice doesn't move from the academy outwards, but is the grounded source for academic theorizing.

Professor Myrl Beam has been hired for a tenure track position in WGSS



Myrl has decided to shift his Abolition Feminisms course to be community engaged and community-based. With funding from the Mellon Periclean Faculty Leadership Program in the Humanities, students are spending the first half of the semester mapping abolitionist geographies in the Twin Cities to spend the second half of the semester engaged in community-based projects with organizations like REP MN, Black and Pink, Showing Up for Racial Justice, and the Memorialize the Movement Project. These projects demonstrate how academic theories that students read about in texts actually play out in the wider world. Myrl described this as a personal commitment to "recognize that a class focused on a system that has racialized impacts shouldn't be solely led by a white transmasculine person." Instead the education should be shared, in collaboration, with community members close to the content of the class.

Myrl and Sonita further plan to expand the community engagement component of the WGSS capstone. They envision the class as an "activism practicum," meaning that seniors work over a semester with a community organization for their capstone project, exploring the connections between feminist theory and feminist practice. The combination empowers students to follow feminist practice in action and keep in mind "the nonprofitization of social movements". This work isn't new to Myrl. Based on his book about the nonprofitization of the LGBT movement, he has been teaching a course called "Activism Inc." across previous institutions and now wants to bring his experience to Macalester. Myrl worked in queer nonprofits after graduate school and came to understand the limitations faced by progressive movements and wants to share this perspective with students.

One of Myrl's classes even developed out of the classroom into a campus-wide project in collaboration with the Lealtad-Suzuki Center for Social Justice. Myrl's "Telling Queer and Trans Stories" course has previously been taught in collaboration with the Tretter Trans Oral History Project housed at the University of Minnesota, but is now additionally supporting a student-led oral history here at Macalester led by students in the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center to document queer activist work at and beyond Mac. All of these projects are ways to expand the WGSS department's long-lasting commitment to community engagement. Going forward, students will only have more opportunities to extend their classroom learning to the wider world beyond the college and themselves.

Myrl Beam's Job Talk:  
"We Let Our Enemies Know Where We're At:  
On the Pleasures and Dangers of Trans Visibility"

October 6, 2022



# Lauren Schenk's Work with #FreeThePill

By Lauren Schenk '24

At the beginning of Fall 2022, I was given the incredible opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. with Advocates for Youth and Ibis Reproductive Health to work on the #FreeThePill campaign.

#FreethePill began in 2002 when a group at Ibis decided that birth control should be available over the counter (OTC). This past July, pharmaceutical company HRA Pharma submitted the first-ever application to the FDA for OTC birth control. To approve the medication, an Advisory Committee must hear from the pharmaceutical company, advocates, and the general public about their opinions on the application. Unfortunately, the Advisory Committee meeting was postponed, and nothing can move forward until this meeting takes place.

While it's not ideal that #FreeThePill is at a standstill, it's wild to think about the progress that has been made just in the four years since I started working on the campaign. Back in 2019, I became the first youth representative on the Ibis Reproductive Health #FreeThePill Steering Committee, and from there I became a founding member of the Advocates for Youth #FreeThePill Youth Council in 2021. In that time, I have seen huge steps forward in the movement. It has been such an amazing experience to be a part of, and to think that when birth control finally hits the shelves, that I will have had a hand in making that happen, is amazing to me.

To find out more about #FreeThePill and how to get involved, you can go to [advocatesforyouth.org](http://advocatesforyouth.org) and sign up for a digital toolkit to help you get started. You can also check out the @free\_the\_pill Instagram page to find more information.

*Lauren Schenk '24 is a WGSS and Sociology major, Political Science minor, has a concentration in Human Rights and Humanitarianism and is a WGSS student worker.*

## WGSS Steering Committee 2022-23



Fall 2022 Members:  
 Sonita Sarker, WGSS Chair  
 Myrl Beam, WGSS Faculty  
 Jaïne Strauss, Psychology  
 Satoko Suzuki, Asian Languages and Cultures  
 Alicia Muñoz, Spanish and Portuguese



Spring 2023 Members:  
 Sonita Sarker, WGSS Chair  
 Myrl Beam, WGSS Faculty  
 Jaïne Strauss, Psychology  
 Morgan Sleeper, Linguistics  
 Erika Busse-Cardenas, Sociology  
 Satoko Suzuki, Asian Languages and Cultures

**WGSS PANEL ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA**



"ABORTION, DEMOCRACY, AND THE 'GREEN TIDE'"

**ZOOM PRESENTERS: BARBARA SUTTON AND NAYLA LUZ VACAREZZA**

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 11:30-1:00  
HARMON ROOM. LIGHT LUNCH.



CO-SPONSORED BY WGSS, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, POLITICAL SCIENCE, ENGLISH, PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY, LINGUISTICS, SPANISH & PORTUGUESE, SOCIOLOGY, AND INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY.

Based on their work as co-editors of *Abortion and Democracy: Contentious Body Politics in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*, Dr. Sutton and Dr. Vacarezza will share key insights learned from abortion rights struggles in Latin America's Southern Cone. They will explore how abortion rights demands fit with current democratic agendas and engage in conversation with the audience about abortion politics in transnational perspective.

## Women's History Month: Panel on Reproductive Rights in Latin America

# "Abortion, Democracy, and the 'Green Tide'"

With presenters:  
 Barbara Sutton  
 and  
 Nayla Luz Vacarezza

Held on  
 March 9, 2023

Co-sponsored by the departments of WGSS, English, Political Science, Environmental Studies, Linguistics, Physics & Astronomy, Spanish & Portuguese, Sociology, and Institutional Equity.



# Our WGSS Senior Majors and Their Capstones - Congratulations!



**RILEY CHURCH**  
**CLASS OF '23**

WGSS and Psychology Major

WGSS Capstone:

"Black Women Are Able to Decide for Themselves": A Brief History of Reproductive Justice and What Freedom Means in a Post-Roe World"

My paper will examine the history of reproductive justice in the United States, focusing on the accomplishments and achievements of Black women, and what reproductive justice looks like now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned. My capstone aims to center Black women and their experiences in the context of reproductive justice and demonstrate that reproductive freedom is much more than abortion rights and the pro-choice/pro-life rhetoric that dominates the mainstream reproductive rights movement.



**JASMINE ALVARAZ**  
**CLASS OF '23**

WGSS and Psychology Major

WGSS Capstone:

"Bridging Anti-Violence Politics and Chicana Feminism: A Transformative Intervention for Chican@ Communities"

How does Chicana feminism inform anti-violence politics? My capstone will explore Chicana historical activism that stemmed from socio-political issues within the Chican@ Movement and the Women's Movement in the U.S. and apply a Chicana feminist lens to anti-violence politics. This capstone will propose a transformative intervention for violence within Chican@ communities.

## WGSS Alumni Updates Where are they now and what are they doing?

**Zoe Kross** - 2022 WGSS and Neuroscience major and Biology minor.

Lab Coordinator at Interdisciplinary Affective Science Lab at Northeastern University. Project: looking at MRI scans during menstrual cycles to see how hormone fluctuations can affect memory recollection and one's overall mood.

**Natalie Kaplan** - 2017 WGSS and German major.

MSW Program at St. Catherine University, Behavior Interventionist at the Twin Cities German Immersion School.

**Kate D. Gallagher** - 2016 WGSS major and Psychology minor.

Fund Development Specialist at Minnesota Jewish Community Center.

**Nola Pastor** - 2014 WGSS major and Hispanic and Latin American Studies minor.

Violence Prevention Program Manager at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Madeleine Brown** - 2011 WGSS major.

Medical School Graduate, First Year Resident at Samaritan Family Medicine Residency in Corvallis, Oregon.

**Nicole Forbes** - 2004 WGSS and Political Science major.

JD at Northeastern University School of Law, Deputy General Counsel at G-P/Globalization Partners. Global employment lawyer, global employment industry expert.

**Jessica K. Taft** - 2000 WGSS major and Sociology and Philosophy minor.

Professor of Latin American and Latinx Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz.

We love to share updates on our alumni so please send your information to us for our next newsletter.



## Professor Satoko Suzuki - Asian Studies Department

WGSS/ASIA/JAPA/LING 150-01: Language and Gender in Japanese Society

Many linguists as well as lay persons consider Japanese a gendered language as they associate certain linguistic forms with gender. Male characters in Japanese animation often use *boku* or *ore* to refer to themselves, while female characters often use *watashi* or *atashi*. When translated into Japanese, Hermione Granger (a female character in the Harry Potter series) ends sentences with soft-sounding forms, while Harry Potter and his best friend Ron Weasley use more assertive forms. Do these fictional representations reflect reality? How did gendered language come about? Are Japanese women and men always expected to sound feminine/masculine? How do people who do not align their identity with femininity or masculinity deal with gendered forms? We will explore these and other questions in this course. Students will have opportunities to learn about the historical background of gendered language and find out about current discourse on language and gender. I cross-list this course with WGSS because I would like students to join Macalester's vibrant community of faculty and other students who are engaged with scholarly discourse on gender. I also hope to contribute to the WGSS curriculum by providing linguistic perspectives.

## Professor Margaret Olson - Spanish Department

WGSS 394-01/SPAN 359-01: "Neither Saints Nor Sinners:" Women Writers of the Early Modern Hispanic World

Sixteenth- and seventeenth- century women writers were in constant dialogue with their male counterparts and dedicated much of their energy to debunking myths of female purity, passivity and ignorance. To this end, they created female protagonists of great strength and integrity. Exploring themes such as life in the convent, the *mujer varonil* (the masculine woman) and the *mujer vestida de hombre* (the woman disguised as a man), we will look at many peninsular as well as New World women authors who were busy challenging both social and aesthetic norms in their writing. This course might hold appeal for students who are intrigued by the evolution of gender norms across history and cultures, as well as how individuals challenged those norms in a rather oppressive seventeenth-century Spain. I decided to crosslist this course to expand students' opportunities to explore gender in a context that is less familiar than our own 21st century moment.



## Professor Elizabeth Jansen - Biology Department

WGSS /BIOL 117: Women, Health and Reproduction

It means a great deal to me that this course is cross-listed between Biology and WGSS. A liberal arts approach to social, legal and ethical dilemmas in gender, health and reproduction helps to unpack how and why we understand things. Historical events and biases continue to shape equity, access and health for people around the world, and this class looks at how our understanding of these intersections has evolved and continues to evolve. Physiology influences the social context and the social/historical context shapes the understanding and treatment of people and their physiology.



## Professor Tara Hollies - History Department

WGSS 294-03/HIST 213-01: Women in African History

Women in African History uses case studies of individual women and groups of women who lived in different parts of Africa from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century in order to examine the variety of African women's lived experiences. While it is a history course, it is important to me to cross-list it with WGSS because of the main themes of the course: intersectionality, gender fluidity and the variation of gendered identities, and learning about women's stories from their own words. Examination of the social, political, and religious contributions of the women studied in the course allows students to understand fundamental historical methods and skills by applying them to a particular theme – women and women's lives – in various times, places, and manifestations. WGSS is all about intersectionality (the newsletter is called *Intersections*, after all!) Beyond the content and thematic fit of the course with the mission of WGSS, the people of WGSS are so kind, supportive, and welcoming. I've loved being even a tangential part of this awesome department!





## Professor Teresa Glaser - Psychology Department

WGSS 264-01/PSYCH 264-01: Psychology of Gender

I am pleased that Psychology of Gender is cross-listed with WGSS because intersectionality, cultural humility, liberation psychology, and critical studies are key frameworks we use to ground our studies in this course. An ongoing analysis of power and how it functions in our lives aids us in understanding gender in context. It provides students with ways to connect learning to their own lives, to current events, and to the society in which we live. In this course, students are invited to be co-creators of knowledge and encouraged to bring their knowledge and experiences to bear in the world by enacting real social change.

## Professor Ashley Sorenson - Political Science Department

WGSS/POLI 294: LGBTQ Politics & Policy

In LGBTQ+ Politics and Policy we focus on critically evaluating arguments and/or counterarguments to contemporary debates relating to identity, as well as seek to analyze the progression of LGBTQ+ rights and representation in politics and in the media. One of the reasons I like cross-listing the course with WGSS is because part of the course is intended to be spent on recognizing the trade-offs of different approaches to study of LGBTQ+ representation in politics. By making it easier for students from different disciplines to take the course, we all benefit by being able to engage with more diverse perspectives on the material.



## Professor Amy Sullivan - History Department

WGSS 250/HIST 350: Race, Gender, and Medicine

The name of HIST 350/WGSS250--Race, Gender and Medicine--speaks for itself in terms of why I choose to cross-list it. We cover events and issues in the history of medicine that center race, gender, and sexuality for the entire semester. Before I began teaching at Macalester eight years ago, I taught interdisciplinary gender and women's studies courses exclusively. Since I intellectually cannot (and never want to) separate my feminist-activist-scholar self from my history teaching and scholarship, I embrace any opportunity to cross-list with Mac's WGSS Department. The courses I teach are always imbued with histories and theories related to gender, race, and class because I see no other way to holistically approach Modern United States history. WGSS classes stretch us to imagine a better world for everyone, and History classes help us understand the past so we can move forward into a future with new tools--like the ones I learned about from Audre Lorde when I was a young WGSS student myself.



## Professor Kirisitina Sailata - American Studies Department

WGSS 294-06/AMST 231-01: Sovereignty Matters: Critical Indigeneity and Governance

Sovereignty Matters: Critical Indigeneity and Governance advances the argument that Critical Indigenous Gender and Sexuality methods and theories are central and foundational to the study of Indigenous law, culture, and politics. This course covers a range of topics including rights of nature, blood quantum, marriage acts, citizenship, Indigenous futurism, data sovereignty, visual sovereignty, #mmiwc, relationality, and resurgence. No prerequisites are required as it is an introductory survey to theories and histories of Indigenous politics and sovereignty struggles across global contexts with an emphasis on the U.S. context.

I am deeply committed to transnational feminist theory and practices, especially, Indigenous feminisms, in my life beyond campus as well as a scholar and teacher. As a Macalester alum who took courses in both American Studies and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies it is especially gratifying to design and implement a course such as Sovereignty Matters that I wished I had been able to take as a student. These are research areas that have greatly shaped my trajectory as an emerging scholar and it is really rewarding to guide and support students who are passionately committed to building and dreaming otherwise worlds into existence.







## Professor Victoria Mallaway - Music Department

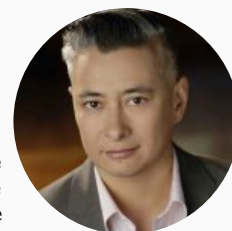
WGSS 354-01/MUSI 354-01: Gender & Music

Gender & Music (WGSS 354/MUSI 354) examines and interrogates constructions of gender in various musical contexts and explores the ways in which gender relates to and is informed by other aspects of identity, including class, race, and sexuality--making it ideal for cross-listing between the WGSS and music departments. In addition, we investigate the contributions of trans, non-binary, and female musicians, as well as issues that affect their participation in musical life. My own research is interdisciplinary, combining music theory, musicology, gender studies, and cultural studies, so it feels like a good fit to offer this course that engages multiple disciplines. Furthermore, being able to explore a topic through multiple academic lenses helps us to make better sense of what we study, and cross-listing codifies the choice to approach the topic and inform our thinking from multiple perspectives.

## Professor kt shorb - Theatre Department

WGSS 217-01/THDA 217-01: Gender and Race Theory in Performance

"Gender and Race Theory in Performance" covers a lot of ideas that are at the center of my scholarly and creative practice. We look at how gender is racialized and how race is gendered in and through aesthetic performance (such as theatre and dance) as well as in the mundane performativity of life. We consider how everyday life involves a series of performative acts that makes meaning in relation to social vectors such as gender, sexuality, and race. We examine how the body receives, resists, and reifies those meanings. We also consider how such social vectors influence creative process. My work as an educator, artist, and scholar is inextricable from explorations of gender and sexuality. Therefore, through cross-listing in WGSS, I engage in further discussion of these ideas while also facilitating conversations for future scholars and thinkers.



## Professor Maria Fedorova - Russian Department

WGSS 294-03/HIST 294-05/RUSS 294-02: Women in Science

Why are women still underrepresented in STEM fields despite the considerable attempts to change the situation in the last fifty-sixty years? "Women in Science" students will find some answers to this complex question in the history of science. When designing this course, I felt that cross-listing this history course with WGSS was crucial. Not only do the course goals align with the department's focus on the intersection of gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and class, but the course also brings an additional dimension to the curriculum by bringing histories of engineering, computing, and technology into the spotlight. This class also offers an exciting opportunity for WGSS majors and minors to discuss recent scholarly literature and to get firsthand experience in researching this history. This semester, we will work with the Macalester Archives to conduct archival research on the history of women who practiced, taught, studied, and participated in science at Macalester from the 1890s to the 1990s.



Professor Susanna Drake - Religious Studies Department  
RELI/WGSS 225: Women and the Bible

Professor Joan Ostrove - Psychology Department  
PSYC/WGSS 168: Psychology of/and Disability

Professor Rachel Gold - English Department  
ENGL 105/WGSS 194: Identities and Differences in U.S. Literature: LGBTQ2S+ Literature

Professor Rebecca Bigler - Psychology Department  
PSYC/WGSS 264: The Psychology of Gender

Professor Ebony Aya - American Studies  
AMST/WGSS 294: Endarkened Feminist Epistemologies

Professor Julie Dolan - Political Science  
POLI 200/WGSS 294: Women and American Politics

Professor Wendy Weber - Political Science  
POLI 224/WGSS 294: Women, Peace and Security

Professor Helen Scharber - Economics Department  
ECON/WGSS 242-01: Economics of Gender





Senior majors



Women's History Month Panel

**WGSS**  
**Community Events**

- Fall Open House
- Registration Course Mixers
- Winter Celebration Dinner
- Convo(ersation) Pop-ups
- Women's History Month Event
- Capstone Presentations
- Spring Celebration Dinner
- Daily FIKA!

**WGSS**



Winter Celebration Dinner



Valentine Pop-up



Fall Open House





**WGSS  
STUDENT WORKERS**

Fall 2022  
Riley Church  
Lauren Schenk  
Anna Sverclova  
Josh Groven

Spring 2023  
Riley Church  
Jizelle Villegas  
Anna Sverclova  
Josh Groven

