



INTERSECTIONS

Fall 2007

Newsletter of the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at Macalester College

Welcome to the Fall 2007 issue of *Intersections*, the WGSS newsletter. This fall has brought

many changes to WGSS, and I'm pleased to introduce you to two of them! First, as many of you know, Professor Sonita Sarker is a fellow of the American Council on Education this year, and is learning about higher education administration at New York University. We are very lucky to have Visiting Assistant Professor Kulvinder Arora here in Sonita's stead this year.



Kulvinder holds her PhD in Literature, University of California San Diego; MA in English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University; BA in Psychology, New York University. She is interested in researching

and teaching how "Third World" or "traditional" cultural practices are affected by globalization and shape views of gender and transnational feminist networks in the study of literature, film, and cultural politics. She will be teaching courses that involve studying how gender is transformed by the proliferation of new technological media throughout the 19th and 20th centuries; the interaction of faith and gender politics in religious and also feminist discourses; the representation of gender in diasporic South Asian cultures; and the cultural production of transnational feminists. In her scholarship, she has studied 20th century United States immigrant groups to understand how cultural practices that are considered "traditional" are incorporated into progressive politics concerning issues of gender, race, religion and sexuality. Her scholarly publications include "The Mythology of Female Sexuality" in *Women: A Cultural Review*

(17:2 Summer 2006) and "Mapping Religion, Culture and Education in the Production of South Asian Immigrant Space" *Hitting Critical Mass: A Journal of Asian American Cultural Criticism* (5:2 Fall 1998).

Second, you are also likely aware that Betsy Salvatore has taken a full-time department coordinator position with International Studies (feel free to visit her any time over in Carnegie!!). We spent a month or so over the summer doing a search for a new department coordinator, and I am delighted that Chanomi Maxwell-Parish accepted our invitation to play this important role in our department.



Chanomi has a BA in Journalism and Spanish from the University of Minnesota and completed her sophomore year of studies at the University of Costa Rica in San Jose. She spent the rest of her undergraduate career

working as an Information and Referral Specialist for the University of Minnesota Women's Center (now the Office for University Women). She has worked as a Bilingual Clinic Assistant for Planned Parenthood, a Bilingual Liaison for New Visions School in Minneapolis, and most recently as the Director of Development and Communications for La Oportunidad Inc., a Minneapolis non-profit organization that serves Latino families.

Please visit them on the 3rd and 4th floors of Old Main, respectively. Also, check out descriptions of Professor Arora's classes (and many other exciting WGSS and cross-listed classes!) for next semester later in this newsletter.

- Joan Ostrove, Chair, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

In This Issue:

Changes in WGSS – 1
Faculty Workgroup in Queer & LGBT Studies – 2

WGSS Events – 3
Spring 2008 Courses – 4, 5
Alumni Update - 6

***“Faculty Workgroup in Queer and LGBT Studies”*: A New Macalester Initiative**
by Scott Morgensen

This fall the Bush Foundation “Intersections” Program is funding a new faculty initiative to support LGBT/Q studies instruction at Macalester College. Sixteen faculty recently formed a Faculty Workgroup in Queer and LGBT Studies to discuss our interests in developing courses in these areas. I was awarded this grant to administer as part of revising the WGSS introductory course in LGBT/Q Studies, “Sexuality, Race, and Nation.” The grant supported a memorable visit by Professor David Román in September. In addition to a public lecture, entitled “Dance/Liberation,” and a meeting with students considering graduate school, Professor Román met interested faculty, and we read his work to stimulate our thoughts about how queer and LGBT studies are done today. The Faculty Workgroup then met for the first time at the end of October. We shared our syllabi and discussed our hopes and concerns about our efforts to foster queer and LGBT studies instruction. We will meet again in December, when we will discuss how we might gather further grants and other support to build faculty development. In addition to maintaining our connection beyond this term, our ideas for future work range from sponsoring a conference of student scholarship in LGBT/Q studies, to a workshop for faculty from regional liberal arts colleges who are working to teach these fields. We hope the result will be an expansion of the number and range of courses regularly taught at Macalester that include LGBT or queer studies content.

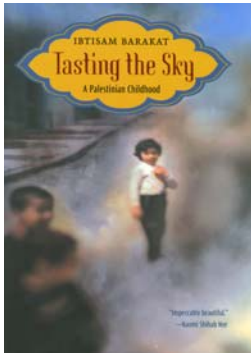
Part of making the Workgroup and its initiatives a success has been taking stock of the successes and challenges facing Macalester’s support for instruction in these fields.

Some successes include the existence since the year 2000 of the WGSS position I now hold, which is directed to teach multiple annual courses in these fields; the hire in recent years of over ten tenure-track and full-time temporary faculty whose work intersects these fields; and the campus climate for LGBT/Q students and alumni, including the strength of the Scots Pride LGBT Alumni Network that held its first reunion in 2006, and the Princeton Review’s selection of Macalester as the most LGBT-friendly U.S. college in 2007. But historical challenges remain. We saw recently that the very visibility of the campus may attract negative attention, as when at the start of the term a student’s car was vandalized with homophobic graffiti, while reports circulated that homophobic slurs may have been used during a police break-up of a recent student party. In turn, among the tenure-track or tenured faculty who chose to leave Macalester in recent years, three regularly taught multiple LGBT or queer studies courses that have not been sustained or replaced. Yet these challenges are not unique to Macalester, as we may find when we reach out to faculty at other liberal arts colleges. Academic fields in particular require continued rejuvenation to sustain and grow, which the Faculty Workgroup hopes to instill now and in the future.

The workgroup invites students to let us know what variety of LGBT and queer studies instruction you would like to see in departments across campus. We would like to think with staff about how we can cultivate strong relationships with units in student life and community engagement. And we always welcome more faculty to participate. Please contact me at morgensen@macalester.edu to keep in touch about the work!

WGSS Events: Fall 2007

UPCOMING EVENT:



Ibtisam Barakat

Thursday, December 6, 2007

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Carnegie 06

Author Ibtisam Barakat will speak about her memoir
"Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood."

This event is co-sponsored by the English Department, the Office of the Provost, the Omrit Israel Archeological Program, the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, and the Department of Multicultural Life.

PAST EVENTS:

Thursday, September 27, 2007

David Román, Professor of English and of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California

Presentation entitled:

Dance / Liberation

This event was sponsored by the Bush Intersections Program and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department; co-sponsored by the Center for Scholarship and Teaching, American Studies Department, Theater and Dance Department, and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Macalester College.



Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Julia Query, Filmmaker

Screening and Discussion of her documentary:

Live Nude Girls UNITE!

This event was co-sponsored by the History Department.

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

Visiting Professor Kulvinder Arora

Presentation entitled:

***The Mythology of Female Sexuality:
Transnational Receptions***



WGSS Courses: Spring 2008



WGSS 105-01 [Transnational Perspectives](#) - TR - 2:45 PM - 4:15 PM HUM 214 Professor Kulvinder Arora *First day attendance required*

This course will examine feminist struggles for anti-sexist and anti-racist politics. We will examine how various feminists have defined such struggles and how race and gender have been deployed as constructs in feminist organizing. We will examine the cultural constructs that feminists in various global contexts have used to define feminism, activist work and cultural politics. We will also examine art, literature and media which offer alternative feminist visions of culture. We will try to understand feminist politics as both specific to nations and nationalisms and also within transnational networks of communication and dialogue.



WGSS 194-01 [Female Ascetics in Buddhism and Christianity](#) - TR - 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm OLRI 247 Professor Erik Davis *Cross-listed with RELI 194-03*

Ever wondered about nuns? Who are they, and why do they do the things they do? What makes a nun a nun? For that matter, what makes a woman a woman, and is nun's asceticism different from men's asceticism? This class will examine the history, practice, and struggles that take place whenever women deny themselves. It is assumed that a woman's self-denial is different from a man's, but that this difference is culturally and religiously determined, rather than universal.



WGSS 200-01 [Feminist/Queer Theories](#) - MWF - 1:10 pm - 2:10 pm MAIN 009 Professor Scott Morgensen *First day attendance required*

This course introduces theories and methods in contemporary feminist and queer studies. We examine how feminist and queer scholars have created theory by critically engaging liberalism, Marxism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and cultural studies, and their methodological applications in the social sciences and humanities, as well as in cultural work and social movement. The course situates feminist and queer studies within current debates over their racial formation and global location. Course materials foreground women of color feminism and queer of color critique as sites of leadership towards theorizing gender and sexuality in relation to racialization and globalization. The backlash in our title reminds us to ask continually how feminist and queer knowledges have arisen intimately--in identity, alliance, or antagonism--and under what conditions they will link today.



WGSS 294-01 [Psychology of Gender](#) - TR - 2:45 pm - 4:15 pm OLRI 352 Professor Joan Ostrove *Cross-listed with AMST 264-01 and PSYC 264-01*

This course provides an examination and a critique of psychological theories, methods, and research about gender. We will explore structural, social, individual, and biological explanations of how gender is experienced and represented, as well as of gender similarities and differences. Examples of research and theory will come from a wide variety of areas in psychology and related disciplines, and will address such issues as social and personality development, bodies and body image, social relationships, cognition, identity, language, violence, moral reasoning, sexual orientation, etc. We will explore the intersection of gender with other social identities and will also learn about the historical, cultural, and epistemological underpinnings of psychological research on gender.



WGSS 294-02 [Postcolonial Literature: Feminist Interventions](#) - TR - 1:00 pm - 2:20 pm HUM 227 Professor Kulvinder Arora

We will begin with key texts that have been influential to the study of colonialism and post-colonial literature from the perspectives of formerly colonized cultures. We will see how feminists have innovated the study of postcolonial literature by offering analyzes of gender and subalternity to understanding the history of the colonized. We will examine literature from various postcolonial sites including South Asia, South Africa, the Caribbean and the Philippines. Gender will be examined as a construct that emerges in historical contexts for specific ideological purposes. In reading both the literature and theory of post colonial cultures, we will come to an understanding of how "the empire writes back" to the historical project of colonialism.



WGSS 294-03 [Cultural Politics of Sport in North America](#) - M - 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm CARN 06
Professor Tiffany Muller *Cross-listed with GEOG 294-04*

Professional sports are important economic and symbolic components of many North American cities and their significance becomes visible in myriad ways: debates over stadium building and finance, resources allocated to major event proposals and planning, displays of fan identity, and the various and contradictory-meanings that are attached to sport in urban centers. This course will examine the relationship between sport and the city by focusing on both the practicalities of locating sport in the city [asking questions like why do city leaders care about gaining or losing professional sport teams? What are the costs and benefits of stadium building?] and the social norms and cultural politics at work within and beyond stadiums [asking questions like how do identity categories like race, class, gender, and sexuality get expressed in and through sport spaces? What is the relationship between identity, sport, and the city?] Whether you love or hate professional sports, this course will prompt you to see them in a very different light!



WGSS 394-01 [Global AIDS: History, Politics, Culture](#) - MWF - 2:20 pm - 3:20 pm MAIN 010
Professor Scott Morgensen *Cross-listed with ANTH 394-02 and INTL 394-03*

This course investigates the cultural and political history of the AIDS pandemic, in order to ask how disease and health are produced by social processes. We first consider the history and theory of colonial medicine, social hygiene, and global public health as frameworks for the globalization of AIDS, and the discourses and policies that shape it. We then ask how people affected by HIV and AIDS have created culture and politics that respond to the conditions of their lives, including in movements that seek redress in national or transnational contexts. We conclude by studying current social contests over AIDS worldwide, even as students complete research papers that answer scholarly debates about the history, politics, and culture of global AIDS. Our readings address HIV/AIDS in a range of overlapping political and geographic areas, with particular detail in southern Africa, southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and north America (Mexico/U.S./Canada).



WGSS 394-02 [Gender, Sexuality, Film](#) - TR - 2:45 pm - 4:15 pm HUM 402 Professor Vincent Doyle *Cross-listed with HMCS 394-01; mandatory film screenings TBA.*

Feminist film theory and criticism has been one of the most vital areas of film studies since the 1970s, even as concepts from feminist film studies (e.g., the gaze and psychoanalytic theories of spectatorship) have informed feminist scholarship in other fields. This course explores the history of the contributions of feminist film theory and criticism to studies in representation, from critiques of images of women through psychoanalytic poststructural approaches, cultural studies, and work in antiracist, postcolonial, and queer studies. It analyzes women's alternative film- and video-making as well as mainstream commercial films directed by women and men. Papers emphasizing close analysis of film texts will be required, with possibilities for work in video-making, along with one test covering basic film terms. Prerequisite: sophomore standing and one of the following: Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies 100, 105, 110, 200, or permission of instructor.



WGSS 400-01 [Senior Seminar](#) - W - 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm MAIN 003 Professor Scott Morgensen
First day attendance required

Feminist and queer studies inspire us to ask how theoretical activity and everyday life interlink, including in engaged research and action for social change. We see how theory and practice arise as one when we ask how gender and sexuality intersect race, class, ability, religion, and nationality, or how power relations can be met by such ideas as alliance, democracy, solidarity, or communion. All of us in this seminar will investigate our locations in theory and practice as we prepare to meet our personal, political, professional, and collective futures. Prior to its start and throughout the term, students should participate in an external project that takes a feminist or queer approach to theory and practice, such as volunteering in a social change organization, conducting a long-term research project, or participating in community-based organizing. Coursework will comprise one substantial research paper and a formal oral presentation on its ideas, which students are encouraged to present at the year-end WGSS Senior and Honors Project Presentations. Prerequisites are senior standing and three WGSS core courses or instructor permission. Juniors and non-WGSS majors/minors are encouraged to apply to take the course by contacting Professor Morgensen.

How I Used My WGSS Degree

by Aleena Oberthur, Class of 2005

I graduated from Macalester in 2005 with a degree in Women's and Gender Studies and I wanted to give you all an update about what I am up to. After a year and half of waitressing, National Park Service internships and various temp jobs, I started working full-time at NARAL Pro-Choice California. I am a development assistant in our eight person satellite office of NARAL Pro-Choice America. NARAL Pro-Choice California strives to be the political leader of the pro-choice movement in California.

My work consists of the more mundane aspects of fundraising (gift processing, preparing acknowledgement letters, etc), as well as helping to organize events and conferences and participating in the planning of our political strategy. Working in a mainstream pro-choice political organization has been a fascinating experience. My background in women's and gender studies often proves useful, especially as NARAL Pro-Choice California attempts to meaningfully address issues of diversity both internally and externally and build coalitions with other reproductive rights and reproductive justice organizations.

I wanted to let you know how well my WGSS degree has served me so far! (My mother is still in shock that I got a job with it). Also, NARAL Pro-Choice California has a great summer internship program for college students, which some Bay Area-based Macalester students might be interested in. I would be happy to pass on information to any interested students: amoberthur@hotmail.com



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