



INTERSECTIONS

Fall 2008

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

From the WGSS department, we present to you the first issue of *Intersections* for fall 2008! After a tumultuous last year, we are finally seeing things in the department settle down a bit. We welcome Sonita Sarker, department chair, back to Macalester (and to freezing winters!), as well as a handful of new professors – Teresa Kupin-Escobar, Rachel Raimist, and Alex Urquhart, introduced right here!



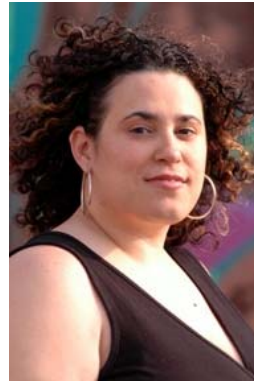
Visiting Professor **Teresa Kupin-Escobar** is teaching WGSS 194: "Beyond the Binary: Trans and Intersex Studies" this semester at Macalester. Kupin-Escobar, a performing and visual artist who will finish a Ph.D. in Hispanic Literature with a focus on Gender and Performance Theories at the University of

Minnesota in May 2009, sat down with WGSS major and student employee David Seitz '10.

DS: What's teaching at Mac been like for you?

TK-E: I think that in terms of who I am, as a scholar and an artist, Macalester is, personally and politically, the best fitting school that I have ever experienced! This seems to originate from a combination of the intellectual preparation of the students, the ideologies that they (the students) bring to the school, and the way that I am able to interact with other faculty and students, as a community of learners...I feel excited about my own scholarly work, which progresses and changes along with the co-theorizing that takes place in our discussions, meetings, projects, and events, which we attend together. To be in a place that supports the link between what I do academically and what I perform/represent in the community is important to me. I believe that the Macalester environment challenges us to reflect upon the "who" of the "what" that we are. As global citizens, we must develop the critical skills to understand the intersectionalities between race, class, gender, ethnicity, ableism, the arts and the sciences, etc...I love being part of it!

He has two articles forthcoming and is an editor for *The Queer Twin Cities* (Forthcoming University of Minnesota Press). He graduated Summa Cum Laude in Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2004. His Dissertation, *Accumulating Infection*, examines public health at the intersection of historical trajectories of regimes of accumulation and liberal subjectivity.



Rachel Raimist is passionate about praxis. She is interested in what we do with what we know. As a visiting instructor in WGSS this semester, she is teaching the introductory course on Race, Class, and Sexuality in U.S. Feminisms (cross-listed with American Studies.) Rachel encourages her students to be critical of the world, and tell their own stories through

photo essay, video, or personal narrative. She firmly believes that using media can not only help to sharpen theory, but be a tool for social justice.

Raimist says without hesitation that she loves it here. She finds that students are committed to their work and are perpetually active. During her office hours, it is not unusual for students to come in not to discuss an upcoming paper, but rather their larger academic goals, and assistance with on-campus organizing. Raimist is invested in theory that comes from stories and experiences, and thus hopes to plant seeds in her classroom by bringing in artists and community members.

Trained as a filmmaker, Raimist began her career when a high school teacher handed her a camera as a student in New York City. From there, she found that while no one listened when she opened her mouth, she could bring a community into uproar when she presented her voice through video. From there, she went on to pursue a B.A and M.F.A. in Film Directing from UCLA, and has taught film production in numerous venues. She has directed and produced a documentary on women in hip-hop, *Nobody Knows My Name* (1999), which she has toured across the country at various colleges.

Alex Urquhart is a Visiting Instructor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Alex is a Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies at the University of Minnesota. He is interested in discourses of race, gender, class, community, sexuality, and subjectivity grounded in institutions and applications of biomedical models of disease prevention.

In This Issue:

New Faculty Interviews! – 1

Message from the WGSS Chair, Retreat Information – 2

WGSS Fall Events – 3

Spring 2008 Courses – 4, 5, 6

Fresh Faces – 8

Message from the WGSS Chair Sonita Sarker

Welcome to WGSS and what has already been an event-filled academic year! Returning from the summer break can always be hard, and for different reasons, but for me, it was already the best time to get acquainted with WGSS students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends. You see, I had been away (in Noo Yawk Citay) last year on an American Council on Education Fellowship in higher education administration. While it was an exciting and action-packed time, I had kept in touch with WGSS and was eager to meet everyone. I was certainly aware of that our much-admired faculty member, Scott Morgensen, would not be here, and was grateful for the way in which people received my expression of renewed dedication (as the only full-time faculty member who was also the Chair as well as unofficial supporting shoulder, strong back, and alert eyes of the department).

WGSS started off the year with a fun summer lunch in August 2008 that students and alumni attended. Those who could not attend received an update so that they did not miss out on anything. Once school began, we started right away with a combination of devoted ongoing members and new additions to our Steering Committee. We knew we had to get every one together, intellectually and socially, to plan the times ahead. So our Annual Retreat this September was a great success—with approximately a dozen each of alumni,



current students, and faculty attending, all on a Saturday, from 9 a.m. till 2 p.m. What love for WGSS!

What we have ahead of us are a number of stimulating events—Alumni are returning to speak about their careers, Faculty are presenting their scholarly and teaching profiles, and Women's History Month is already on the books, all being planned as we speak. One of the most important activities is conducting a successful search for our second tenure-track position. I personally acknowledge all the constructive dialogue and support that students, faculty, and staff have shown around it, especially those in our Steering Committee.

I invite you all to pitch in, spread the word, get acquainted with the nature of the position itself, attend in large numbers and check out the candidates, and have your say. You decide to make the department stable and to begin to flourish again. I'll be there, taking notes, chewing on pencil after pencil, and listening to what you have to say!

Stop by and talk any time.
Sonita.



Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Retreat 9/20/08

The retreat brought together 35 people, about a dozen each of alumni, students, and faculty! A smash hit for a Saturday morning and an action-packed day of reflection and planning. We divided the day into group workshops, each discussing how to create a vibrant, thriving department.

(continued on pg. 7)

WGSS EVENTS: FALL 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Winona LaDuke

“Environmental Justice Locally, Nationally, and Globally”

Thursday, November 6, 2008, 5:00 PM
Alexander G. Hill Ballroom, Kagin Commons

This event is sponsored by the Lealtad-Suzuki Center, Office of the President, Dean for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, the Program Board, and Environmental Studies.

Winona LaDuke, a renowned social and environmental activist who is deeply involved in our nation's quest for social justice, is the first speaker in the Lealtad-Suzuki Center initiative entitled "SPEAK! A Series of Conscious Conversations." This will be an engaging opportunity for the Macalester community to be a part of an intimate dialogue with Ms. LaDuke.

WGSS ALUMNI RETURN!

Thursday Oct 30, 2008, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
4th Floor Lounge, Old Main

Three alumni of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department return to campus to tell us about how they've used their WGSS degrees and knowledges! Come hear Venessa Fuentes '97, Andrea Lien '99, and Katherine Barrett Wiik '00. *Lunch provided - all are welcome!*



WGSS Faculty Presentation

“WGSS Faculty and their Inter-Disciplines”

Susanna Drake (Rel. Studies), **Casey Jarrin** (English),
and **Katrinka Somdahl-Sands** (Geography)

Thursday, Nov. 20th, Old Main 4th Floor Lounge, 11:30-1, Lunch served

WGSS 194-01 Media Anthropology: Mediating Gender and Sexuality
 MWF 3:30 pm-4:30 pm MAIN 010 *First day attendance required*
 Professor Anne Kustritz



How do images teach us about being men and women, queer and straight? This will investigate the social and cultural implications of capturing and distributing representations of gender and sexuality. Sampling from film theory, audience studies, and anthropology, we will examine the meaning and effects of representation in photography, film, television, the Internet, and mass mediated print, with an emphasis on alternative media practices.

WGSS 194-02 Topics in US History: History of Feminism
 TR 3:00 pm-4:30 pm MAIN 111 (cross-listed with HIST 190-01 and AMST 194-02)
 Professor Lynn Hudson

This is an introductory course about the history of feminism as it was articulated and experienced in the United States from roughly 1800-1970. We will interrogate the myths about feminism and the backlash against it that are central to the history, culture, and politics of the United States. Topics that the class will consider include: the roots of feminism as it took shape in the anti-slavery movement, the overlap of women's rights and the civil rights movement of the twentieth century, and the women's health movement, among others.



WGSS 200-01 Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies: Anthropological Perspectives
 MWF 2:20 pm-3:20 pm MAIN 010
 Professor Anne Kustritz



This course follows two recent strands of cultural anthropology and ethnography: the critique of traditional ethnographic practice from feminist and queer perspectives, and the construction of new methods for the anthropological study of gender and sexuality. Readings will include works by Ruth Behar, Don Kulick, Gelya Frank, Gayle Rubin, and Kamala Visweswaran.

WGSS 294-01 Sexual Citizenship and the Public Sphere
 MWF 10:50 am-11:50 am MAIN 011
 Professor Anne Kustritz

This course investigates "**the citizen**" and "**the public**" from the perspective of feminist and queer theorists with a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. We will question how sexuality and gender become public, the way in which groups organize themselves and become organized by larger social systems as "a (sex) public," and the extent to which national discourses are steeped in assumptions and directives about social and sexual life.



WGSS 294-02 **Feminist Political Theory**

TR 9:40 am-11:10 am CARN 206 (Cross-listed with POLI 261-01)

Professor Zornitsa Keremidchieva



This course will advance your political imagination by familiarizing you with the historical and theoretical contributions of feminism in challenging oppressive structures as well as in offering alternative models, ethics and visions of political life. By the end of this class you should be able to: identify the origins and some key points of debate between mainstream political theory and feminism; recognize the diversity of perspectives within feminist political theory; apply the concepts of feminist political theory as a lens through which to analyze diverse historical and political circumstances; and explain the theoretical and practical advantages of advancing a feminist perspective to the study of social and political life.

WGSS 294-03 **Economics of Gender**

TR 9:40 am-11:10 am CARN 305 (Cross-listed with ECON 242-01)

Professor Karine Moe

In this course we will use economic theory, both neo-classical and feminist, to explore how gender differences lead to different economic outcomes for men and women, both within families and in the marketplace. Course Prerequisite: Economics 119, Principles of Economics.



WGSS 294-04 **Economics of Sexual Orientation**

TR 3:00 pm-4:30 pm HUM 216 (Cross-listed with ECON 294-02)

Professor Lisa Giddings

WGSS 294-05 **Performing Feminisms**

TR 3:00 pm-4:30 pm THEATR 205 (Cross-listed with THDA 262-01)

Professor Lara Nielsen

In this class examine gender *in* performance and gender *as* performance. Our texts include works by: Mary Shelley, Zora Neale Hurston, Susan Glaspell, Adrienne Kennedy, Caryl Churchill, Suzan-Lori Parks, Ntozake Shange, Maria Irene Fornes, Cherrie Moraga, Coco Fusco, Paula Vogel, Naomi Wallace. We engage feminist critiques of subjectivity and representation, including the works of Monique Wittig, Barbra Smith, Donna Haraway, Teresa de Lauretis, Laura Mulvey, Judith Butler.



WGSS 294-06 **Comparative Muslim Cultures**

TR 1:20 pm-2:50 pm CARN 404 (Cross-listed with ANTH 253-01 and INTL 253-01)

Professor Smadar Lavie



This course introduces students to the diversity of Muslim societies in the Arab world, Europe, Africa, North America, and Asia. It traces Islam as a culturally lived local and transnational experience. The course will attempt to illuminate connections between Islam and ethnicities, gender, media, travel, migration, citizenship, politics, and social change.

WGSS 294-07 Comparative Borderlands and Diasporas
 W 7:00 pm-10:00 pm CARN 305 (Cross-listed with INTL 336-01)
 Professor Smadar Lavie

The course will compare, in context, the Middle East, the "new" Europe (with a focus on Muslim immigration), the US-Mexico intersection, and other transition areas by considering borders and diasporas through the optics of culture, hybridized histories, institutions, zones of contact, and travel, in particular the cultural shaping of individual and group identities, and the geopolitical constitution of "homes."



WGSS 294-08 Race and Masculinity in Modern U.S. History
 M 7:00 pm-10:00 pm HUM 215 (Cross-listed with AMST 294-07)
 Professor Daniel Gilbert



Through readings in labor, gender and cultural history, this course will examine the racialized construction of masculinity in the United States since the mid-19th century. Throughout the course we will examine cultural texts – from fiction and poetry to film and spectator sport – as key historical sources in the history of race and masculinity.



WGSS 315-01 Comparative (Neo/Post) Modernities
 TR 1:20 pm-2:50 pm MAIN 010 *first day attendance required.*
 (Cross-listed with ENGL 394-04 and HMCS 394-02)
 Professor Sonita Sarker

This course will contextualize fascism as a historical phenomenon and as a particular modernist ideology in the context of contemporary political, economic, social, cultural theories. It will explore the relationship of fascism to concepts of masculinity and femininity, sexuality, race, class, and nation. Some of the texts are Benito Mussolini's speeches, Antonio Gramsci's and Emma Goldman's, Djuna

Barnes's *Nightwood*, Grazia Deledda's *Cosima*, and Zora Neale Hurston's *I Love Myself*. Other media such as art and films will also be included.

WGSS 400-01 Senior Seminar: Linking Theory and Practice
 TR 3:00 pm-4:30 pm MAIN 010 *First day attendance required.*
 Professor Sonita Sarker

Where and how do **theory and practice** become linked? How does all this relate to my life and how will it



help in my post-college experience? To respond to these questions, we'll review the feminist genealogies that have emerged in previous courses and contextualize our places in relation to them, and how theories and practices affect each other in the works of writers such as Rosa Luxemburg, Jean Rhys, Nella Larsen, Gayatri Spivak, Joanna Kadi, to name a few. Your own experiences in academia, organizational work, and imagined professions will be part of our study

because we will test various frameworks in our present and imagine how they may be part of our future.

WGSS Past, Present, and Future (from p. 2)

Our retreat began with a moment of silence for Jan Serie and recognition of the losses of the department. After welcome and introductions, we discussed what WGSS means to us, and how that meaning has shifted over time. We shared the understanding that WGSS develops analytic frameworks on a number of axes of which gender is only one, and that WGSS continues to strengthen the relationship between core and interdisciplinary courses. We discussed plans of action and outreach that would create positive and interactive interdisciplinary relationships between affiliated faculty in their own departments. In order to reflect the growing fields of WGSS scholarship nationally and internationally, and to prevent them from being isolated on campus, the group was energized by the thought of welcoming more recent and new faculty on campus to participate in the interdisciplinary conversations of the department.

Student-Alumni Mixer and “Professor Pasta” Faculty Workshop

In second session, students had the option to mingle with alumni while professors took the opportunity to discuss working beyond their disciplines.



With the students, alumni shared their career experiences, which included social work, law, child psychology, education, and non-profit work both locally and abroad.

Current students and alumni discussed what drew them to WGSS and how it has impacted their mindsets and lives. Alumni expressed the desire for more regular correspondence from the department and greater contact with current students. Ideas included creating a WGSS blog or Facebook page, formal mentoring of current students in graduate school choices and work opportunities, a monthly reading group, a more broadly distributed newsletter, and an alumni directory.

The simultaneously-held Faculty Workshop included 12 faculty from many departments and inter-disciplines who introduced themselves and their scholarship as well as their teaching interests. The descriptions from existing and new faculty were illuminating in terms of the wide range of topics, issues, methods, and goals that WGSS represented or could represent. We discussed some of the aspects of

gaining recognition for feminist/gender/sexuality studies-teaching and scholarship in various



departments, of possible contributions from any department, and having that recognition reflected in the consistency of courses that had core status or at least stable offerings. We discussed the possibility of holding an inter-departmental retreat on feminist pedagogical techniques that related to student learning in our various WGSS-related inter-disciplines. Humanities, Media, and Cultural Studies, American Studies, and WGSS now plan to offer a retreat on these topics in Spring 2009.

Thinking/Doing Lunch

The third session focused on activities that gave alumni, staff, faculty, and students occasions to interact. Four projects are in the works: two upcoming WGSS newsletters, an Oral/Visual History of WGSS Project (gathering interviews from former and current faculty, staff, and students), a WGSS Memory Book containing alumni photos and bios, and a photo gallery outside the WGSS office of current students (now already finished). The students and alumni present agreed to help in any way they could, and the idea was also presented to set up audiovisual equipment for the Oral/Visual History Project and the Memory Book in collaboration with Scots Pride and the Alumni Relations Office.

Future Planning

After hearty meals and much excited conversation about the past and the present, we focused our last hour of the retreat on future projects. We are hiring an advanced assistant/associate professor of LGBTQ Studies in the coming months. We discussed the relationship of Mellon Curricular Pathways to WGSS: This is a 3-year grant that seeks to develop the following concentrations: Community and Global Health, Global Citizenship, Human Rights and Humanitarianism, and Urban Studies. For example, our Global AIDS course fits into the Community and Global Health pathway. We will seek to develop such potential and strengthen the foundations for these interdisciplinary partnerships. The retreat ended with a warm send-off with delicious cookies and high spirits.

Fresh Faces!

Each issue, *Intersections* will feature faces of WGSS majors and minors. Take this opportunity to get to know your classmates a little better, in and out of classroom walls – strike up a conversation, build community!



Bobbi Gass, '10, WGSS Major

“My heart lies in gender performance, so thinking about how gender is constructed and playing with it is the first step in liberating ourselves. I have a definite soft spot for Foucault and Butler.”

“People will be surprised how much they can learn...What are they going to get out of it? It's weird to some extent...but humbling. I feel more thoughtful, it makes you listen to others and form arguments, but premised on the fact that it's important to listen first. Why is this important? You don't know it all!”

Margaretha Blignaut, '11, WGSS Major

“I wouldn't engage with WGSS as much as I do if I wasn't aware of my privilege as much as I am. As a South African who moved away, a white South African, I am definitely aware of my privilege. Afrikaners have a really bad rep – I didn't have an active part in that, but that's my legacy. That's my grandparents' and my parents'.”

“I decided to take *one* class. It was Scott Morgensen's class, Intro to LGBTQ Studies. It changes everything; it's a method of life. If you really engage with it, there's no disengaging, unless you sit down and decide to disengage from it, and that is irresponsible.”



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