



INTERSECTIONS

Fall/Spring 2012

NEWSLETTER OF THE WOMEN'S, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES DEPARTMENT
AT MACALESTER COLLEGE

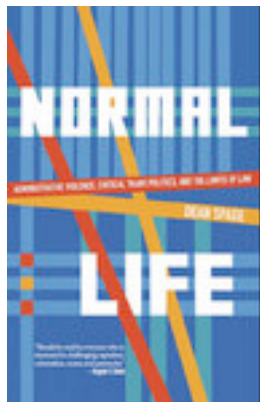
Dean Spade To Visit Macalester May 1st

Prior to joining the faculty of Seattle University, Dean was a Williams Institute Law Teaching Fellow at UCLA Law School and Harvard Law School, teaching classes related to sexual orientation and gender identity law and law and social movements. In 2002, Dean founded the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (www.srlp.org), a non-profit law collective that provides free legal services to transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people who are low-income and/or people of color. SRLP also engages in litigation, policy reform and public education on issues affecting these communities and operates on a collective governance model, prioritizing the governance and leadership of trans, intersex, and gender variant people of color. While working at SRLP, Dean taught classes focusing on sexual orientation, gender identity and law at Columbia and Harvard Law Schools. Dean was recently awarded a Dukeminier Award for his 2008 article "Documenting Gender" and the 2009-2010 Haywood Burns Chair at CUNY Law School, and was selected to give the 2009-2010 James A. Thomas Lecture at Yale. Watch for May 1st events.



Dean Spade's most recent book.
NORMAL LIFE

Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics and the Limits of Law



Fall Events

Thursday, September 15 the department held a Welcome Back event. Faculty gave a short briefing of their spring courses.

Wednesday, November 9 the department sponsored a Pre-registration luncheon providing opportunity for students to hear about spring classes and meet the faculty offering the classes.

Tuesday, November 15 Three alumni graciously shared their time and talents to inform current students how their major in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies has worked in alums' life and careers.

Spring Events

Wednesday, February 8, WGSS sponsored a 'welcome back to second semester' pizza gathering.

March, WGSS will be sponsoring and supporting Women's History Month.

Tuesday, May 1, Dean Spade visit....

There will be a **5:30 reception and Dean Spade speaking at 6:00 p.m. in JB Davis auditorium. This is an invitation for on and off campus persons.**

Dean Spade will also be meeting with Corie Hammer's class in OM 009, **WGSS 110: Sexuality, Race, and Nation: Introduction to LGBT and Queer Studies**, Tuesday 9:40 – 11:10 a.m. *Please feel free to join the class.*

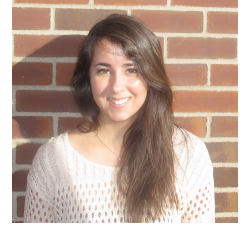
Introducing New Majors in WGSS

Emily Granada is a sophomore this year and is a new major in WGSS. She is from Topeka, Kansas and has two brothers and a sister. *What helped you decide to major in WGSS?* I've always been really interested in gender studies in general. When I got to Mac I found myself always wanting to sign up for WGSS classes and really enjoyed being in them. It just made sense for it to be my major.

What is your other major or minor? I'm not sure yet, but I've been really interested in media and cultural studies lately.

Looking into your future! The future is a bit daunting, but I'd love to go to graduate school to keep studying WGSS! I would love to teach the theories that I've learned, so my ideal job would be a college professor.

Your thoughts on the department. I'm really excited about some of the things the department has been doing in terms of becoming a stronger presence around the campus. I get really excited to see non-WGSS majors interested in the subject. Also, most of my WGSS classes have challenged me in some way to apply the theories learned in class to real life--particularly within the Mac community. And Corie and Sonita are great!



Gina Nepa is from Pittsburgh, PA. She has two sisters and her dog named Ella.

Why your decision to major in WGSS? I took a WGSS first year course, and I found it very interesting and stimulating. I love working with the professors in the department as well.

What is your other major or minor? I have an American Studies minor.

Looking into your future! I want to attend law school and hopefully become an international human rights lawyer. My background in WGSS at Macalester has introduced me to a wide range of perspectives and issues that I hadn't thought about before and would be very useful in the field of law.

Your thoughts on the department? I am really excited to see the department evolve. I have observed people from a lot of different academic fields taking WGSS classes and it has added a lot of interesting perspectives. I also really appreciate all of the opportunities to eat food that the department sponsors!



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT ON FEMINIST ARTIST 2012

Emma Fabiny Cohen, 2012, Brookline, Massachusetts

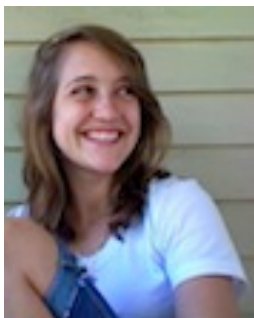
Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies major

I have been a feminist from an early age, largely on account of my father. Every time I wanted my Barbies to play "wedding" my dad would ask if they could just be friends instead, and whenever my father got his way, Barbie saved Ken from impending disasters instead of the other way around. My parents and I wrestled and played soccer and were not afraid to get dirty or make a mess. At summer camp in second grade I made a big stink about the rule that only boys were allowed to take wrestling, and the camp changed its policy to allow girls to wrestle as well. (I just wanted to take arts and crafts, but it was the principle of the thing.)

I was involved in theater and music all through elementary school and high school, and I worked at creative writing camp over the summer. Everyone who knew me was sure I'd be an English major in college, and I was too, upon arrival. I took a couple of English classes, but none of them excited me the way Lynn Hudson's "History of U.S. Feminism" did spring semester of my sophomore year. It was a Thursday afternoon in late spring and we were talking about abortion politics during second wave feminism. I suddenly realized that never before in school had I studied anything that felt so palpably important. (Literally, there could have been a beam of heavenly light shining down through the Old Main window and someone singing songs of revelation.) I couldn't quite tell what interested me so much or made me feel that way, but I knew I wanted more of it. After class that day I asked Lynn if we could meet to talk about WGSS and History. She agreed to be my advisor, and I soon fell in love with both departments.

I decided to major in WGSS because never before had I been so intellectually challenged. I had taken some harder classes in terms of workload, but my WGSS classes challenged my fundamental beliefs in a way nothing else ever had. I realized how much about myself, my gender, my race, my class, and my identity I took for granted. Some feminist theory infuriates me and sometimes I want to tell Judith Butler to please, please shut up, but in the frustration and confusion and desire to punch theorists, I am always amazed by how much I am learning, by how much these ideas are questioning my values and assumptions about society and humanity.

"History of U.S. Feminism" and "Women, Health, and Reproduction," plus my internships with Cambridge Health Alliance's Family Planning Program and with Family Tree Clinic, sparked an interest in community health education. I have no definite plans yet for after graduation, but I am hoping to be involved in reproductive health education, maybe eventually getting my masters in public health or in community health education. I want to teach young people about their bodies and about sex in a way that is empowering, thoughtful, and revolutionary, bringing my new values, feminist beliefs, and critical thinking skills to the wide world of sexual health.



Emma Fabiny Cohen

Two Alum Talk About Life After Mac

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Meredith Aby, '95

High School Social Studies Teacher

I use feminism to guide my actions as a high school social studies teacher and as a volunteer activist. My partner, Anne, and I have a beautiful daughter Audrey who is almost 3 and we live in Minneapolis.

Professional update: After I graduated with a degree in history and Women's Studies, I got a teaching license. I have been teaching social studies in Bloomington, MN for most of my career. I use my Women's Studies education to guide my abilities to strive equity for girls and minorities in the classroom – in curriculum, in classroom discussion, in leadership roles, etc. Rarely do I receive professional development in this area so my feminist education from Macalester has been essential in shaping my teaching style.

Activism update: At Macalester I went on a study abroad trip to Mexico on Augsburg's Women and Development program, which changed my life. Through this program I learned first hand about the realities of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. When I came back to Mac I became active in students organizing for progressive causes.

After graduating from Macalester I continued with my activism. In 1998, I co-founded the Twin Cities based Anti-War Committee (antiwarcommittee.org) with a fellow Mac Women's Studies student – Jess Sundin. Through the AWC I have fought against U.S. war and militarism in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Colombia, Palestine and Afghanistan. The AWC is primarily made of women, many of who are queer, between 25 and 40 years old. We created the AWC as a place for young activists to learn organizing skills and as a local organization to fight U.S. intervention across the globe. Through the AWC I have mentored many young activists in flyer writing, speech giving, fundraising, etc. Feminism has very much guided my work with the AWC. As a feminist I think it is imperative that young people – women of color in particular – get to be the face of the anti-war movement. It is also important that the anti-war movement make connections with the communities from countries the U.S. is at war with. The AWC has played a vital role in advocating for Arab and Muslim voices to be a part of the anti-war movement and in building a bridge between the anti-war movement and the people most affected by U.S. warfare.



However, these acts of solidarity and activism have landed us in trouble. In 2010 the AWC and many of its members, including myself, were raided and subpoenaed by the FBI as a part of a “material support for terrorism” investigation targeting us for our solidarity with Palestine and Colombia. None of us have given any money or weapons to any terrorists, but we have organized protests against U.S. military aid, held speaking events with women activists from Colombia and Palestine, and have sent small amounts of funds to a child care center in the West Bank. We have now founded the Committee to Stop FBI Repression (stopfbi.net) and are fighting back against the crack down on dissent in our country. None of us have been formally charged with a crime, but we are obviously concerned that the government is investigating us. I have been truly touched by the support some of my old professors and Mac grads have given me since the FBI raided my home over a year ago. I am proud of the education I received at Mac because it truly shaped my life. Si se puede!

John Jensen, '96

Political Science Major, Women and Gender Studies Core
Assistant Director of Privacy & Security
University of Minnesota

The November 30th email request from Jeanette was very simple: provide an update on my post Macalester life and the impact of WGSS on my current pursuits with no limits in terms of length or style. Yet as soon as I finish typing “Class of 1996”, I’m a total mess. Not as much of a mess as I was sixteen years ago, but still a mess. Therefore, I’m titling this “A Bureaucrat Embraces His Mess”.

I’ve worked at the University of Minnesota since 1998, starting as a secretary in the Division of Child Neurology in the Medical School. I had been desperate for a full time job; especially one that paid

\$11.69/hour. I supported people that were not addressed by their first names and did not take unannounced phone calls. I took dictations, typed (on an actual typewriter) Ritalin prescriptions and made appointments for kids who were really sick. For at least a month, I hated it and spent many lunch breaks crying. Nor did I admit to anyone that I was a secretary - I thought I had let Macalester and my degree down somehow. I was supposed to be raising money, organizing something for good people, anything but working in what I thought to be the most hierarchical, elitist and dysfunctional workplace ever. By the time I was transferred to another position (due to restructuring) 6 months later, I was on a first name basis with faculty whose dysfunction I grew to love and cherish.

Thirteen years and 4-5 job code changes later I'm still at the University and despite a lot of stress, and still a few tears, I love it. As a privacy analyst, I manage the University's privacy and security compliance program. I am a true, 100% bureaucrat; my office and my job exists because of legislation authored by Senators Edward Kennedy (may he rest in peace) and Nancy Kassembaum, HIPAA. When you visit your doctor or pharmacist, you may remember signing an additional form in addition to the consent – an acknowledgement of receiving the notice of privacy practices. This privacy notice outlines how your information will be used – and includes things like the billing operations, the contractors that may be hired, the fundraisers, and the researchers. Each notice is unique to the organization and while many of us rarely read it – I'm the person who is required to make sure the University manages patient information respectfully and I am tasked with notifying people when the University fails – such as when a doctor loses his or her laptop in Mexico – with their information on it.

While I may have not have been the most helpful preceptor for those taking feminist political thought (especially when it came to Beauvoir and the whole French feminism thing) – the experiences that I had in trying to help others develop and own their own questions provided me with incredible insight that I have taken far beyond that semester. For example, since the passage of the 2009 Stimulus, or “ARRA” – improving and adopting health care technology has become a federal mandate. Along with this mandate has come new privacy and security obligations and in some ways job security for me. Health information technology is a fascinating field and the Obama led initiatives for improving access to resources for all providers and patients is pretty remarkable. As I try to understand the implications of new technologies (e.g., social media, mobile devices and applications)– the type of questions I ask is key. Fortunately, my personal and academic experiences at Macalester have provided an incredible foundational framework for me.



Interdisciplinary Faculty Reading Group

Professor Sarker of WGSS organized an Interdisciplinary Faculty Reading Group, “*What’s Science Got to Do with It?*” held last year, followed by Dr. Banu Subramaniam’s visit to campus and talk on ‘*Alien Turns Exotic: Gender, Race, and the Practice of Science*’.

Below are responses from faculty that participated in this reading group.

Liz Jansen gained insights into what other people think of science, and it deepened her awareness of how non-scientists view science. It gave her an opportunity to hear from folks who think about science and critique science in a thoughtful way but reside decidedly outside of the practice of science.

Mark Davis commented on the fact that a significant portion of the US population seems to have dismissed science and is not interested in data or information. They are more than content with their ideologies and belief systems, which pose a serious threat to the future of the country. He added that this would be a good topic for a future reading group, if attendance can be improved.