



INTERSECTIONS

Fall/Spring 2015/16

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

Linda LeGarde Grover-MN University at Duluth visits Sonita Sarker's Class

By Cleo Young and Aarohi Narain



On the 15th of October, Macalester had the distinct privilege of welcoming author Linda LeGarde Grover to its campus. Linda was born in Duluth on a Native American reservation north of the Iron Range where she spent most of her childhood. In addition to giving an evening talk and slideshow presentation, Grover spent a class period speaking with the students of Sonita Sarker's "Feminist Reconstructions: Indian" course, answering questions and providing insight into her outlook and writing.

Having read her collection of short stories, "The Dance Boots," the class was curious to understand the connections between the people and places at the

heart of the book and Grover's own family history. When asked whether or not Mozhay Reservation, the center of Grover's multifaceted narratives in "The Dance Boots," is fictitious or bounded in reality, Grover revealed that she had created it using her memories of Lake Vermillion; however, she offered that the fiction of Mozhay is, perhaps truer than nonfiction anyhow, embodying all the most important elements. The boarding schools violently interrupted family and community life, with children being sent away at young ages, blocked off from communicating with their families. Culture and language were deliberately fragmented, American Indians were forced to adopt the tongue of the colonizer and abandon the rituals, traditions and belief of their communities. With the central goal of assimilation, schools launched full-scale attacks on families for generations, causing irreparable damage and trauma for years to come. Academics were a less significant element of the Indian boarding school experience, although literacy was crucial and there were few employment opportunities for those who could not read. As such, due to the vicious nature of Indian boarding schools, where abuse and sexual violence were rife, many runaways were recorded and rarely retrieved.

The reality is that the impact of the Indian boarding school program on indigenous cultures and families was widespread, profound, and brutal, and yet it is still not a part of many people's historical awareness.

Beyond providing the class with compelling insight into the experiences of Native Americans and her authorial motivations, quirks, and aspirations, Grover approached her audience with an infinite sense of humility, compassion and kindness. In the end, it was her empathy, passion and undisguised humanity that spoke volumes, leaving everyone in the class feeling inspired.

Fall Events

September 13, WGSS held a Welcome Back event for all new and returning WGSS students.

October 15, Linda LeGarde Grover visit.

November 4, the department co-sponsored Noura Erakat, professor at George Mason University, discussed Israeli-Palestinian situation and how it may play out in the future.

Spring Events

January 15, faculty, steering committee retreat with cross-listed faculty.

March 1, Eli Clare visit.

March 10, faculty/student lunch. Victoria Malawey, Associate Professor and Chair of Music " talked about "The Power of Interdisciplinarity, or How One Music Nerd Found a Home in Gender Studies AND Ben Singer, Visiting Assistant Professor of WGSS, spoke on "The Profusion of Things: Trans* Tactics, HIV Prevention and Public Health".

April 7, Student/faculty registration event.

April 27, Reception and Honor's Projects presented by seniors...Harmon Room.

2016 WGSS Graduating Majors

Kate Gallagher

Taylor Fitzgerald

2016 WGSS Graduating Minors

Jennifer Brooks, Rachel Crane, Haleigh Duncan, Laura Einerson, Emma Pinney-Lehman, Vivian Liu, Amani Mekraz, Rebecca Murtha, Jessica Stone, Zosha Winegar-Schultz,

WGSS faculty: Sonita Sarker and Corie Hammers, Benjamin Singer has joined the department while Corie & Sonita are on sabbatical in 2015/2016. Lin Aanonsen (Biology) is chair with Joan Ostrove (Psychology) as chair in fall 2016. Steering committee consists of Corie Hammers & Sonita Sarker, Susanna Drake (Religious Studies), Victoria Malawey (Music), Joan Ostrove (Psychology), Beth Severy-Hoven (Classics).



Ben Singer, Visiting Professor, taught classes in WGSS this year while Corie Hammers was away on sabbatical. Classes he taught are: **WGSS 100: Introduction to WGSS: Sex, Gender and Social Worlds**; **WGSS 294: Gender and Sexuality in Transnational Contexts**; **WGSS 300: Advanced Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies**; **WGSS 394: Transgender Queries: Critical Trans Studies**.

I was born in a small town in Illinois and for several years my family moved around the Midwest. We lived outside of Chicago for a while and even spent two years in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. I fondly recall hours at the lakeshore digging for buried treasure as a child. Eventually we moved back to my birthplace. I entered academia as a refuge from the stigma I experienced as a gender nonconforming child growing up in a homogenous small town. My way out was to become a first-generation college student.

I began my education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison by enrolling in their two-year Integrated Liberal Studies Program. ILS faculty introduced me to the mind opening astonishment of critical thinking. Majoring in Women’s Studies further armed me with powerful critiques of social norms. The legacy of my early educational experience has shaped me into a broad critical thinker, a socially engaged teacher and scholar, and an advocate for interdisciplinary dialogues on campus and beyond.

I continued my education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, earning a Master’s degree in critical theory through the Modern Studies Program in the Department of English. I then attended Rutgers University where I completed my PhD in English with a concentration in queer and trans studies. During my graduate tenure I was fortunate to receive professional advancement awards, including a Ford Foundation Fellowship through the Social Science Research Council’s Sexuality Fellowship Program. SRF provided mentored training in ethnographic methods. As a result, my dissertation became an interdisciplinary engagement between the humanities and the social sciences. I am currently adapting this research into a book titled *Towards a Transgender Sublime: The Politics of Excess in Trans-specific Cultural Production*.

My manuscript examines trans-specific cultural productions that range from activist educational models, ethnographic encounters in public health worlds, popular media representations of (trans) male pregnancy, and autobiographical and biomedical discourses of gender transition. Conventionally, transgender functions as a category of containment that theoretically encompasses all sex and gender differences. By contrast, my book analyzes the understudied aspect of “transgender” that operates as a proliferative matrix producing rapidly shifting embodiments and identities that exceed sex and gender categorization. I theorize the “transgender sublime” to account for encounters with representational excess that overwhelm perception and unsettle familiar ways of knowing. Cognitive disorientation opens up new ways of thinking that allow trans categorical profusion to work toward political ends.

My academic studies have always taken place in conjunction with social justice work; they have mutually informed one another from my early college days to the present. I have been involved in organizing for economic and racial justice, sex worker rights, transgender health equity, needle exchange access and HIV/AIDS services. While conducting my dissertation fieldwork, I became the founding director of Philadelphia’s first peer-led and government-funded harm reduction program for trans and gender non-conforming individuals at Prevention Point needle exchange. My participation in community organizing and advocacy has enabled me to ground understandings of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and other differences in my work. I am grateful to have spent this past year at Macalester because it provided an ideal context for me to integrate my background of scholarship and advocacy into my teaching.

Eli Clare Speaks at Mac, His Topic is *Yearning Toward Carrie Buck: Collisions of Disability, Class, Gender, and Whiteness*.



Photo by Riva Lehrer

Eli Clare explored how disability, class, gender, and whiteness often collide through the U.S. Supreme Court case *Buck v. Bell*. This case declared involuntary sterilization laws constitutional in 1927 after a poor white woman from Virginia was ordered to undergo sterilization.

Clare’s work illuminates a dimension of history that engages issues of eugenics, institutionalization, and sterilization, and is based in a critical analysis of the intersections of race, disability, gender, and class.

White, disabled, and gender queer, Eli Clare happily lives in the Green Mountains of Vermont where he writes and proudly claims a penchant for rabble-rousing. He has written a book of essays *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation* (Duke University Press, 1999, 2009, 2015) and a collection of poetry *The Marrow’s Telling: Words in Motion* (Homofactus Press, 2007) and has been published in many periodicals and anthologies. He’s currently finishing a book of creative non-fiction called *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*.

Eli speaks, teaches, and facilitates all over the United States and Canada at [conferences, community events, and colleges](#) about disability, queer and trans identities, and social justice. Among other pursuits, he has walked across the United States for peace, coordinated a rape prevention program, and helped organize the first ever [Queerness and Disability Conference](#).

Sponsored by WGSS and co-sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs, The Legal Studies Program, Psychology Department.

Spotlight on 2016 WGSS Major Graduates



Kate Gallagher '16, Capstone: "The Elevator is Broken Again: Navigating Disability Accommodation, Accessibility, and Usability in the Ivory Tower." "I'm from Tucson, AZ. I applied to Macalester early decision four and a half years ago mainly because I could major in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Mac seemed to have a vibrant feminist and queer community. I dove into my studies my very first semester where I began to expand my understandings of power, oppression, intersectionality, and identity. I have also deeply enjoyed studying psychology for my minor and dabbling in studio art. In the fall after graduation, I will be starting at Iowa State University School of Education working towards a Master's Degree in Student Affairs. I have secured my assistantship bringing theory to practice as a Social Justice and Equity Coordinator at ISU's Margaret Sloss Women's Center. Beyond that I aspire to work at a small, private, liberal arts college (maybe even Mac) and work in Student Affairs in disability services or multicultural/queer/women's services.

I live with my partner Emma and our orange cat Sunny. In my spare time I enjoy crafting, baking, shopping, interior decorating, and watching cheesy, heteronormative romantic comedies. "



Taylor Fitzgerald '16, Capstone: "Queer Im/materialities: Spirituality, Religion, and Identity in Pagan Practices."

"I'm from Grand Prairie, Texas (in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex). I knew before coming to Mac that I wanted to be a WGSS major. I had budding interests in feminism, but I wanted to learn about gender and sexuality beyond my immediate experience and how to translate my passions into my work. My love for WGSS as a field of study really grew when I realized how its interdisciplinarity would allow me to explore while still being grounded in my overall objectives. I also knew I made the right decision since my assignments for WGSS always felt like my "fun homework". After graduation, I'll be moving back to Texas for a while, but I hope to go to grad school within the next few years."

CHECKING IN ON WGSS ALUM

Emily Granada '14 "I came to Mac already interested in WGSS having been introduced to feminist/queer theory in high school debate. I remember reading excerpts of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and proclaiming 'gender doesn't exist!' to anyone who would listen. Of course, I now realize that I was misreading Butler and generally being insufferable. However, I'm still grateful for that time in my life for inspiring me to major in WGSS. My first experience with the department was my first year course *Transnational Perspectives on Class, Race, Gender and Sexuality* taught by Sonita Sarker. This class stood out from all of the others I was taking at the time for providing a space to ask the questions I wanted to be asking. I couldn't stop noticing how race and gender were problematically absent from the discussion in the other disciplines I was studying. It also allowed me to begin to think and speak about my own identity and experience in a way that had never previously been available to me. To this day, it remains one of my favorite courses that I took in my time at Mac and was definitely influential in my eventual decision to major in WGSS. Other highlights of being in the department were writing my capstone on strip clubs and sexual agency under the instruction of Corie Hammers and all of the amazing cross-listed courses I got to take. Since graduating in 2014, I have been working for a federal grant program that aims to increase college participation amongst students in low income schools. I will be starting a Master's program in Public Policy and Women's Studies in the fall at George Washington University. My ultimate goal is to figure out a way to use my knowledge in both fields to build a lifelong career

smashing the patriarchy. "



Course offerings Fall Semester 2015

Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Sex, Gender and Social Worlds
Women, Health, Reproduction (First year course cross-listed with Biology)
Women/Gender/Sex/Greece Rome (cross-listed with Classics)
Minding the Body (First year course cross-listed with Psychology and Russian Studies)
Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies
Feminist Re-constructions: Indian (cross-listed with English)
The Psychology of Gender (cross-listed with Psychology)
Gender and Sexuality in China (cross-listed with Chinese)
Sex and Citizenship: 19th Century U.S. Women's Writings (cross-listed with English)
Race, Class, and Gender in American Photography (cross-listed with American Studies and Art)
Text and Identity: Parisians (cross-listed with French)

Course offerings Spring Semester 2016

Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Women, Health, Reproduction (cross-listed with Biology)
Of Sex and Society: Women's History and Feminist Thought (cross-listed with History)
Gender, Sexualities and Feminist Visual Culture (Cross-listed with Art and Art History)
Performing Feminisms (cross-listed with Theater)
The Psychology of Gender (cross-listed with Psychology)
Queer Cinema (cross-listed with Media and Cultural Studies)
Gender and Sexuality in Transnational Contexts
The Cold War Gets Hot: Sex and Gender in First and Second World Literatures (cross-listed with Russian Studies)
Silent Subjects (cross-listed with Russian Studies)
Advanced Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies (cross-listed with International Studies)
Lives in Context (cross-listed with Psychology)
Race, Gender, and Medicine (cross-listed with History)

NEW WGSS MAJOR & MINOR PLANS Implemented FALL 2015

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Major

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

The women's, gender, and sexuality studies major consists of 10 courses (40 credits). These courses must include the following:

1. WGSS 100: Introduction to WGSS
2. WGSS 200: Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies
3. WGSS 300: Advanced Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies
4. WGSS 400: Senior Seminar — Linking Theory to Practice
5. Six additional WGSS courses, two of which must be 300-level courses.

Points to consider in developing your WGSS major:

- You should plan your WGSS major in consultation with a department faculty member in WGSS and as you do so, consider what you'd like to accomplish with this major.
- Although not required, we recommend you take at least one 300-level elective (see #5 above) from a WGSS department faculty member since these specific courses will build most directly on the knowledge obtained in WGSS 200.
- The major may include up to the equivalent of 4 credit hours from a study-away program.
- The department strongly recommends civic engagement or other community work. Up to 4 credit hours of independent study or internship may count toward the major.

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Minor

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

The women's, gender, and sexuality studies minor consists of 5 courses (20 credits). These courses must include the following:

1. WGSS 100: Introduction to WGSS
2. WGSS 200: Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies
3. One 300-level WGSS course
4. Two additional WGSS courses at any level

Points to consider in developing your WGSS minor:

- Although not required, we encourage you to consider taking WGSS 400 or complete an independent study or internship in WGSS. Completing one of these options will help you better link WGSS theory to practice and provide a tangible opportunity to link this minor to your major area of study.
- The minor may include up to the equivalent of 4 credit hours from a study-away program.
- The department strongly recommends civic engagement or other community work. Up to 4 credit hours of independent study or internship may count toward the minor.