



# **INTERSECTIONS**

## **THE CRISIS & PLEDGE EDITION**

**Fall/Spring 2019/2020**

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

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### **Statement in Response to the Murder of George Floyd**

From the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department  
Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA  
June 4, 2020

The brutal public murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis brings, once again, grief welling up in our throats and eyes, laying bare the foundational and continuing trauma of anti-Blackness in the US. The murder of Mr. Floyd, along with the recent killings of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, and David McAtee, return us to collective and generational trauma caused by the violent, hate-filled killings of countless Black, Indigenous, Brown, and trans family members and friends. In particular, we stand today with the Black members of our WGSS and larger Macalester community: we see you, and we honor your leadership and courage.

The horror we feel at the brutal murder of Mr. Floyd, and the righteous anger that surges through our entire bodies, returns us to our historical commitment and resolve. We stand in solidarity with the protesters in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and now across the world, demanding an end to police brutality and white supremacy. We resolve to fight even more strongly to manifest our belief in non-supremacist definitions of power, equity, justice, advocacy, and inclusive community in all our relationships, every day. Our voices must be heard in ways that actually transform our structures. We believe that another world is possible, and we join with you as we work to build it.

Our grief and anger remain the bedrock of our hope and determination to live and practice these beliefs. We are implicated in the conditions in which we exist. WGSS at Macalester College in the United States of America will continue to labor against institutionalized and systemic violence in our individual and collective lives, and to grapple with the history of colonialism, land theft, and genocide that, alongside enslavement, shape our history as a college, a community, and a nation. We embrace with love and care those who struggle with us. We will fight together for a world in which we all can breathe, we all can survive, we all can thrive!

As we move forward in this resolve, we want to centralize the vision and leadership of Black people, as we also invite our non-Black community members to come into even deeper commitment to struggle against anti-Black racism. In this spirit, we offer the following resources:

## Resources

To educate yourself and get involved in work to dismantle racism and white supremacy, [here](#) are a number of educational resources recommended by the Department of Multicultural Life.

If you are in the Twin Cities, our colleagues in the Civic Engagement Center provided a list [here](#) of organizations working on racial justice that welcome your involvement.

Additionally, we draw your attention to two very helpful community created resource guides:

[Things You Can Do to Support the Resistance From Home](#)

[Resources: BLM Protests + Twin Cities Community Needs.](#)

Resources for Understanding the Local Context of the Uprising:

[The Minneapolis Uprising In Context](#), by Elizabeth Hinton

[George Floyd's Death and the Long History of Racism in Minneapolis](#), by Olivia Waxman

## Resources to Support the Ongoing Work of Local Organizations

We know that real change happens over months, years, and generations. To build a world free of white supremacy, colonialism, policing, and gender-based violence will take long-term community-based activism.

Here are some organizations doing that work locally:

[Black Visions](#)

[Unicorn Riot](#)

[Women for Political Change](#)

[MPD150](#)

[Reclaim the Block](#)

[Racial Justice Network](#)

[Voices for Racial Justice](#)

### Learning More about White Supremacy:

[Learn about ways white people can act for racial justice](#)

[Anti-racism resources for white people](#)

[Southeast Asian anti-racism toolkit](#)

[Resources for non-Black Asians on Anti-Blackness](#)

From Sonita Sarker, Professor and Chair; Myrl Beam, Visiting Asst. Professor. And faculty affiliates and friends of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

**From the WGSS community: We are grieving our loss of Kai Davis and somber in the face of onslaughts on our hope and flourishing this year. We pledge to remain open, embrace positive change, and continue our work in your company.**



## Introducing Myrl Beam—WGSS Visiting Assistant Professor

Hi, WGSS folks! My name is Myrl Beam, and I'm excited to be teaching this coming year at Macalester. I'll be teaching at Mac alongside my work as the Oral Historian for the [Tretter Trans Oral History Project](#) at the University of Minnesota, a project that I'm working on while on a two-year scholarly leave from my position as an Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

I'm a white trans masculine interdisciplinary scholar and activist, and I teach classes focused on queer and trans theory and politics, critical race theory, and the affective economies of neoliberal capitalism. I also write about contemporary queer and trans social movements, especially the politics of assimilation and inclusion that Lisa Duggan has termed "homonormativity." You can check out a [short piece](#) I wrote for the blog The Abusable Past, critical of the corporatization of Pride. Another piece, which you can find [here](#) in the Rutledge anthology *Queer Activism After Marriage Equality*, critiques the danger of #lovewins messaging that was at the heart of the 2012 "Vote No" campaign in Minnesota. My first book, entitled [Gay, Inc.: The Nonprofitization of Queer Politics](#), argues that the institutionalization of queer movements in and through the nonprofit system has pushed queer politics in a more conservative direction. It's available as an [e-book](#) at the Macalester library

For the past year I've been the Fellow in Oral History at the Tretter Trans Oral History Project at the University of Minnesota. The oral history project is intended to document the transformational power and vision of trans movements for justice through activists telling their stories and the story of their work. Check out some of the interviews I've conducted [here](#). We've just recently released a podcast called [Transcripts](#) intended to share some of the stories from the oral history project with a wider audience. The first episode, entitled "[I'm Seeing My Liberation Right Now](#)" features interviews with trans activists and movement leaders and questions the value of trans politics focused on visibility and assimilation.

This Fall I'll be teaching two classes: Intro to LGBTQ Studies, which will explore key ideas from queer theory via a close investigation of uprisings and pandemics, both those that we are currently navigating and others from which we may draw lessons. In the second module I'll be teaching a project-based course on queer and trans oral histories, in which students will have the chance to learn about oral history methodology and help build an archive of queer and trans oral histories. In the spring I'll be teaching Feminist/Queer/Trans Theories and Methods, and a course called Trans Politics and Theories that thinks about the history and construction of trans identity, as well as trans activism and political theory.

I'm looking forward to getting to know the WGSS community, even while we must be physically distant from one another. So whether it be via Zoom or socially-distant outdoor gatherings, I look forward to meeting everyone and navigating the adventure of pandemic teaching, learning, and community building together.

Core WGSS faculty: Sonita Sarker (chair) & Myrl Beam

Crosslisted WGSS faculty & affiliates/friends of WGSS (staff & faculty) number more than 40!

WGSS Steering committee members:

Sonita Sarker (WGSS)

Myrl Beam (WGSS)

Devavani Chatterjea (Biology)

Adrienne Christiansen (Political Science)

Susanna Drake (Religious Studies),  
Khalidoun Samman (Sociology)  
Xin Yang (Asian Languages and Cultures)

### **Comments from some Steering Committee Members:**

I am excited to be a part of WGSS, energized by its transformative multidisciplinary, and eager to be in exchange with the many voices, histories, lives and imaginations in this community. *Devavani Chatterjea*

I have found another academic home on campus. *Xin Yang*

I've been thrilled to be a part of the WGSS community for several years now. I've learned so much from my WGSS students and colleagues, and I've appreciated having a voice in the new directions and curricular offerings of the department as a member of the WGSS steering committee. The study of women's history, feminist and queer theory, and intersectionality has been transformative in my own research and teaching, and I'm glad to share a commitment to the study of these issues at Macalester through participation in this department. *Susanna Drake*

Serving on the WGSS steering committee and contributing a course on masculinities in the program allows me and my students to branch out into areas that intersect with multiple communities and identities with the hope of nourishing respect and equality for everyone. *Khalidoun Samman*

### **WGSS Upcoming Seniors/Majors**

**Adar Kamholtz** "This year I am studying site-specific performance and its role in producing and changing public memory. This includes studying histories of political performance art, and examining the boundary between performance and protest. In my dance research and by engaging in my own site-specific performance, I will be asking through a gendered and feminist lens: to what extent can performance change the meaning of the area it takes place in?" I have a tentative title for my Honor's Project, "Intimate Theatre and Public Memory: using site-specific performance to shape the meanings of public spaces". I am a senior from Evanston, IL.



**Austin Ahlman**  
**Kieran Cuddy**  
**Sarah Garrett-Engele**

## **Spotlight on 2020 WGSS Major Graduates**

### ***2020 Senior Honors Thesis***

**Jeremy Chamberlin** "Derivatization, Respect, and an Aesthetical Ethics of Considered Film Viewership."

### ***2020 Senior Capstone***

**Elizabeth Everitt** "'What About Me?': Towards a More Effective and Inclusive Future of US Sex Education." And then winning again as the recipient of the WGSS prize for her academic excellence and as an embodiment of the highest and best values of our community.

# CHECKING IN ON WGSS ALUM

## Caelin Eisenberg 2019



I am currently working as a market research and compliance assistant at a company called the New York Grant Company. My job entails researching economic relief programs available in New York City, State, and at the national level and assisting small-large businesses with applications and compliance for these programs. Outside of work, I'm super into plants, lifting, and cooking.

I think regardless of where I end up career-wise, I am always very conscious of my identities and how that influences my work/who I work with and am aware of existing systems and the ways in which they can oppress or liberate folx. My coursework, colleagues, and professors at Macalester all helped me to gain a social awareness about how I move through the world and interact with others, which I find to be extremely valuable. I also found that in having a major that many employers are not super familiar with, I have learned how to exhibit how skills I have acquired as a result of being a WGSS major are transferable to any position.

I am definitely going back to school in the next few years to pursue a degree in a TBD program. My goal is ultimately to work with an organization such as the Vera Institute or Black & Pink on Prison Abolition with a focus on supporting incarcerated queer folx and dismantling existing oppressive structures. Some avenues I have looked into relate to policy analyst positions, social work, or public health.

The social awareness WGSS provides students with is critical for navigating the world. I've found that since leaving the classroom, my work is now turning to applying the texts/theories/ideologies I learned in the classroom to the outside world. It's critical to not only be able to read these texts with like-minded individuals, but to understand them in a way that can be applied in daily life and disseminated in a way that is accessible to as many as possible. Life outside academia is very different, and it is important to continue to radicalize yourself post-grad, continue learning, continue educating others, and let go of the ego of always needing to be right. In order for justice and progress to actually occur, we need to be okay with being wrong with the intention of growth upon being corrected.

## Toan Doan 2019



It has been an eventful journey since my graduation (May 2019). Since early 2019 I have been in rehearsals for Ananya Dance Theater's show "Sutrajaal: Revelations of Gossamer" which premiered in Saint Paul, MN in September. Therefore I spent the summer after graduation in the studio to rehearse for the production, and I was super excited for my first full-evening show as a professional dancer. Then I decided to move back to Vietnam in November to contribute my efforts in activism and the development sector here. The first few months back home were difficult as I was mostly unemployed and still adjusting to the new-old reality of living in my home country after six years abroad. I also spent that time, before Covid-19 pandemic hit Vietnam, to network and meet amazing people who inspire me to keep making arts and advocating for disenfranchised communities. I was fortunate to have my family's support through those months, and thus was able to 'research' the socio-political landscape of Vietnam and find out where I fit. I am now working as a Project Coordinator for a development project that aims to empower low-income workers in Southern Vietnam, through microfinance and fintech approach. At the same time, I am still doing arts, dancing, and teaching workshops. The photo attached is from one of my movement workshops in February, 2020.

Through the WGSS major I acquired critical thinking and research skills, which apply for any kind of work and particularly the NGO/development sector. The ability to ask "what are the systemic causes to this particular issue?" is a great asset, and serves as a guiding light through both work and life. I am also engaging in LGBT and feminist advocacy work, despite the difficulties on many fronts in Vietnam. The analytic framework that I learned from my WGSS major has helped me navigate and identify the approach to many issues. It empowers me to engage with the women of my community in a thoughtful way, and to always take the community-based approach.

I have no clue what will happen after December 2020, when this project ends. The world is changing every day, and I want to stay agile and adaptive to these changes. I am constantly asking myself "Who do I want to be" in this new reality. How do I continue taking risks to advocate for justice? We must all take risks, otherwise the risks will fall onto the most vulnerable.

For WGSS majors and minors, spend enough time with yourself so that you know deeply who you are, and who you want to be. A Macalester alum once told me, after I shared with her my plan to return to Vietnam and engage in justice work, that "It is lonely out there. You have to be strong." That strength takes work, and I am still working on myself every day. It is so easy to forget the idealism at Mac - how are you going to remind yourself? And most importantly, never forget that *people* are the most important. Always.



### **Our Student Employee Brennan - Before COVID19 Hit Macalester**

My name is Brennan Drake and I'm a sophomore from Des Moines, IA studying English, Political Science, and Art History. I work as office assistant for the wonderful Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies Department at Macalester. I am currently learning from home with my family including my mom, dad, little sister, and our dog. I miss Macalester dearly and hope we can all go back soon.

## **"Feminisms Today" Speaker Series**

### **Christine Diindiisi McCleave at Macalester**



*Christine Diindiisi McCleave, M.A.*, enrolled citizen of Turtle Mountain Ojibwe Nation, is Executive Director for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. McCleave's grandfather attended Marty Catholic Indian Boarding School in SD and Haskell Indian Boarding School in Kansas. Her great grandfather attended Carlisle Indian School. Boarding school's inter-generational impacts on her personal life and children's lives led McCleave to complete her Master of Arts in Leadership research on the spectrum of spiritual practices between traditional Native American spirituality and Christianity and the legacy of the boarding schools on spiritual activities and Indian Activism today. McCleave is trained in Trauma-Informed Practices, is a GONA facilitator, a Historical Trauma Recovery Specialist, a KAIROS Blanket Exercise Facilitator, and a fellow of the Nexus Community Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute. McCleave also has a Mini-MBA in NonProfit Management from St. Thomas University and a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies from Northwestern College. She previously worked in Communications and Marketing at Indian Land Tenure Foundation and Human Resources Management at Aon Hewitt. She lives in Minneapolis, MN with her family.

### **Catherine Rottenberg at Macalester**

*Catherine Rottenberg* is Associate Professor in the American and Canadian Studies Department at the University of Nottingham. She is the author of *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism* (Oxford, 2018), *Performing Americanness* (Dartmouth, 2008), and editor of *Black Harlem* and the *Jewish Lower East Side* (SUNY 2013). Her current project examines theories and contemporary practices of feminist solidarity. From Hillary Clinton to Ivanka Trump, more and more high-powered women are unabashedly identifying as feminists. In this talk, Catherine Rottenberg discusses her book, *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism*, offering insight into why we are witnessing this new phenomenon in which feminism has increasingly become a source of pride and cultural capital for high-profile women. She argues that not only is a new strand of feminism on the rise, but also that neoliberalism may actually need feminism in order to "solve" the thorny issues of reproduction and care work.



## A Minnesota Public Radio Show: Counter Stories

*In celebration of Women's History Month, the fearless female cast of Counter Stories had an engaging conversation about their journeys and experiences in the media.*

Sponsored by WGSS, Media and Cultural Studies, and the Department of Multicultural Life

**Luz Maria Frias**



**Hlee Lee**



**Jo Erickson**



*Our MPR show started in August 2014 as a podcast, we discuss race, identity, social justice and culture in a region grappling with demographic changes.*

**Luz María Frias**, lawyer and consultant, is an experienced mediator and frequent lecturer on the issues of implicit bias and immigration public policy.

**Hlee Lee** is the owner of "the other media group". The other media group (OMG) is a full service media company that believes in teamwork, diversity at the table and community building through media.

**Jo Erickson** is the freelance radio producer with MPR News and featured writer for BBC News and Current Affairs.

### Course Offerings Fall Semester 2019

Transnational Perspectives on Gender, Race and Class

Language and Gender in Japanese Society

History of Childhood

Feminist Re-Constructions: Indian

Comparative Feminisms: Whiteness and Postcolonialisms

Muslim Women Writers

Who Speaks for Whom? Decolonizing Academia

Gender and Race in Performance

Parisian Women

### Course Offerings Spring Semester 2020

Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Women, Health, and Reproduction (cross-listed with Biology)

Masculinities: From the Self-Made Man to the 'New Man' (cross-listed with Sociology)

Feminist/Queer Theories and Methodologies

Race, Gender, and Medicine

Gender, Sexualities and Feminist Visual Culture

Gender and Sexuality in China

Progress and Identity: Race, Gender and Social Movement

Muslim Women Writers in 21st Century (cross-listed with English, International Studies, and Religious Studies)

Philosophy of Race and Gender

Conquering the Flesh: Renunciation of Food/Sex in the Christian Tradition

Intersectionality and Disability

Senior Seminar: Linking Theory and Practice

[Link to Fall 2020 WGSS Courses](#)

<https://www.macalester.edu/registrar/schedules/2020fall/class-schedule/#WGSS>

[Link to Spring 2021 WGSS Courses](#)

<https://www.macalester.edu/registrar/schedules/2021spring/class-schedule/#WGSS>

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