

WGS news

Department of Women's & Gender Studies
University of South Florida
Summer/Fall, 2019



Chair's Column: Dr. Diane Price Herndl

USF is embracing a lot of change this year—a new president and a consolidation with our sister campuses in St. Petersburg and Sarasota. WGS will be relatively unaffected, since Tampa is the only campus with a WGS Department, but we are hopeful that this will mean that our courses will be more easily available to students in St. Pete and Sarasota, and that down the line we may be able to offer a few courses there.

WGS is experiencing quite a bit of change of our own. Dr. Kim Golombisky agreed to serve as the interim Director of the Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications, and even though she isn't teaching for us, she is still taking an active role in the department. (Though we are very much looking forward to getting her back with us full time!)

In Dr. G's absence, we have hired two new visiting faculty. Dr. Helis Sikk has joined us for three years as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Sikk has most recently been teaching WGS at DePauw University in Indiana, and before that held positions at the College of Wooster, William and Mary, and the Smithsonian. Her area of expertise focuses on anti-LGBTQ violence, anti-violence activism, and the politics of representation. She is teaching Intro to WGS and Feminist Research Methods for us this year and we're looking forward to her teaching a course on Queer Comics before long.

Dr. Melinda Mills has joined us this fall as a one-year Visiting Instructor. Dr. Mills has been the Coordinator



Dr. Diane Price Herndl

of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Castleton University in Vermont. Her recent book, *The Borders of Race: Patrolling "Multiracial" Identities*, was published in 2017, and her current work focuses on multiracial people in interracial relationships. She is teaching Introduction to WGS and Issues in Feminism this fall, and will be doing History of Feminism and Classics of Feminist Theory in the Spring.

We also have much to celebrate this year. Dr. David Rubin's tenure and promotion to Associate Professor was finalized this summer. Dr. Milton Wendland has been awarded a professional development leave in Fall 2019 to enhance our already excellent internship program and (we hope!) to take a much-needed break from teaching. And Dr. Tangela Serls has been named Faculty-In-Residence with USF Housing, starting in August.

We are all trying to take a breather this summer as we are looking forward to a busy and exciting year next year, full of events (see page 7), great learning, and hosting the SEWSA Conference!

WGS Faculty

Dr. Diane Price Herndl
Professor and Chair

Jennifer Ellerman-Queen
Instructor and Graduate Program Coordinator

Dr. Kim Golombisky
Associate Professor and Interim Director of the Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications

Dr. Michelle Hughes Miller
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Melinda Mills
Visiting Instructor

Dr. David A. Rubin
Associate Professor

Dr. Tangela Serls
Instructor and Director of Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Helis Sikk
Visiting Assistant Professor

Dr. Milton Wendland
Instructor and Internship Director

Contact Info



**USF Department
of Women's &
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WGS has a new website!
Visit: usf.edu/wgs

Email: cas-wgs@usf.edu
Giving to WGS: usf.to/wgs

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/WGSUSF

WGS Alumni Spotlight: Saron Musa

Saron Musa graduated from USF in May, 2019 with a double major in Women's and Gender Studies and International Studies, and a minor in Economics. She started law school at Emory University in Atlanta this fall, and plans to work as a lawyer in the public sector, specifically in matters related to immigration.

WGS has helped to prepare Saron for her future career as a lawyer: The tools I learned both inside and outside of the classroom related to WGS have made me view the legal field differently even before starting law school. Regardless of whether I end up in the public sector or not, I believe WGS has highlighted to me how important pro bono work is because it tries to correct the issues with access to legal aid for a lot of marginalized people.

WGS has made me more aware of how certain clients I will work with in the future will all have their own situations that they will need help with. Especially when it comes to immigration there are so many factors that could affect someone's pathway to citizenship such as sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. Homogenizing these individuals is not only reckless but dangerous to their trajectory and ultimately viewing these people as unique was something

I learned through my WGS education.

Also, the critical thinking and writing skills I learned in all my WGS classes made taking the LSAT, writing my personal statement, and interviewing with law schools that much easier and made it so that my application process was not nearly as stressful as it could have been.

WGS provided a welcoming and safe space for Saron: The sense of family in the department is truly something I've never experienced before. Both the faculty and fellow students made it easy to talk about whatever I wanted to in a class and if I felt like a topic was being glossed over I never felt like I couldn't mention it during the discussion. That kind of comfort is something that is so rare and ultimately helped me grow as a student. It has truly been amazing and the department I was the most relaxed in because it allowed me to expand my frame of thinking and see the perspectives of different people that I may not have met outside of my experiences in WGS.

Saron believes that WGS courses are valuable for the knowledge and skills they offer: Ultimately it comes down to students needing to know more about



WGS alumna Saron Musa

the people that are on this planet and those who came before this time. There's so much diversity (beyond just gender or race) that individuals at a collegiate level are not aware of and that could adversely affect how they go about their interactions not only in college but in their careers. Also, there is a need for students to broaden their critical thinking skills and my WGS coursework has done the best in that out of all the departments I've been a part of.

The topic that I found to be the most interesting in WGS was the intersection of economic development with race and gender. Looking into how this functioned both domestically and internationally was especially important to me because I felt it combined both my undergrad majors and minor.

Reproductive Justice is for Everyone!

This month's cover art is by ceramic artist nicole gugliotti. nicole is a Florida native who currently resides in Washington. nicole has an MFA in ceramics from UF, and is a co-founder of the Socially Engaged Craft Collective.

A conceptual thread that runs through nicole's work is the intersection of craft and social justice, specifically reproductive justice. A portion of nicole's project awe/agency, which combines formal beauty and wonder with positive stories of people's abortion

experiences, will be on exhibit in WGS beginning November 5. Along with nicole's art, WGS will be exhibiting the work of other artists who will be contributing pieces that address what reproductive justice means to them.

WGS Student Spotlight: Kawtar Guenoun

Kawtar Guenoun is currently majoring in Integrative Animal Biology with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. She is entering her second year at USF this fall, and plans to go to med-school after graduating so that she can become a doctor, possibly specializing in family medicine or gynecology. Kawtar is the vice-president of the USF chapter of the Triota Women's & Gender Studies honor society. She is also Moroccan and proudly wears the hijab.



Kawtar Guenoun is a pre-med student with a WGS minor.

WGS has increased Kawtar's awareness of social issues: I decided to minor in WGS after taking my first WGS class at USF. Initially, it came as a shock to me when I began learning about marginalized groups and different intersectionalities. I wasn't expecting WGS courses to cover such important, and even taboo social issues. I always felt as if I wasn't doing enough to educate myself on the inequality and injustices many face, but by taking WGS classes, I've been able to become more aware of what's going on socially and how

it impacts marginalized groups. So as soon as I found out this major/minor existed, I knew it was something I wanted to do.

I would definitely recommend a degree in WGS to anyone who wants to become more aware and engaged with social injustices.

Kawtar values the relationships she has formed with professors in WGS, and the small class sizes: Something I especially enjoy is the connection students are

able to form with their professors. This is due to the smaller class sizes and the opportunity to have professors for more than one semester. With Dr. Tangela Serls, I have taken Intro to Women's Studies, Black Feminisms, and Disability Studies. As a result, the inviting and accepting environment cultivated by many WGS professors gave me something to look forward to each day.

My favorite class was Black Feminisms, which was taught by Dr. Tangela Serls. I not only enjoyed the content of this class but also the atmosphere. Being a premed student, most of my classes are in large lecture halls with hundreds of students. Smaller class sizes, like this one, allow for closer connections and deeper class discussions. With that, this class gave me one of the most unique perspectives and an opportunity to hear personal stories from my diverse peers.

WGS Alumni Spotlight: Dr. EJ Pavlinich

Dr. EJ Pavlinich earned the WGS Graduate Certificate in 2015, and this summer obtained a PhD in English Literature from USF. He is currently a visiting instructor of English at USF.

The WGS Graduate Certificate experience was beneficial in many ways for EJ: Professionally, I had a strong interest in queer and feminist approaches to medieval texts, but I knew there was more to the theory and activism that I was not getting in traditional English and Medieval Studies programs. I needed to directly engage with Women's and Gender Studies as a discipline in and of itself.

Personally, women have predominantly raised and influenced my development and I have found safety in LGBTQ+ spaces. I have identified as a gay man for most of my life. I needed a community to help me understand the nuances of our experiences, to unravel the complexities of my own genders and sexualities, and to learn how I can contribute meaningfully to the scholarship and activism that supports our intersectional communities.

I am glad I made the decision to enhance my studies with WGS because this has refined my research,



WGS alumni EJ Pavlinich and his cat, Thorn

pedagogy, and activism by helping me to develop a cohesive goal for each: social justice.

continues on page 5

Dr. EJ Pavlinich Continued...

Dr. Price Herndl's Advanced Feminist Theories equips students with foundational perspectives and tools that can be employed beyond the classroom. It's a dense course; I find myself returning to the material and continuing to learn new things. On the other hand, Feminist Media Studies gave me the confidence to branch out from literary texts and work closely with film and television. And I model my feminist teaching practices after Dr. Golombisky's style of teaching theory and media. These two classes combined—I am proud to say—resulted in two papers that were later published in a premier journal for my discipline.

WGS has helped to shape EJ's scholarship: My dissertation is heavily influenced by my studies with WGS, and I recent-

ly curated an exhibit at my local library that featured a more inclusive representation of Medieval Studies—one that combats the prevalent narrative that the European Middle Ages were dominated by white men.

My principal research interests include Old English and Middle English literature, with particular interests in authority, women's and LGBTQ+ theory and interpretation, space and place, and medievalisms.

My current research project, *Queer Authority in Old and Middle English Literature*, argues that select early English texts queer normative authorizing conventions to authorize Old English and Middle English literatures. During the European Middle Ages, Latin

cultures and literatures were privileged with authority that extended to and subverted the cultural capital of the inhabitants of England at the edge of the known Western world. I identify four exceptional English texts that employ authorizing conventions to disrupt normative networks of power that traditionally privilege Latin and to authorize English literature instead. Analyzing the mechanisms by which cultural authority is constructed, I locate women, queer individuals, and same-sex desires early in the English literary heritage. My work recognizes inclusion already present in English literary canons while enhancing women's and LGBTQ+ histories.

To read more about E.J.'s work, visit: usf.edu/wgs/people/alumni.aspx.

WGS Student Spotlight: Jade McNitt

Jade McNitt is majoring in Women's and Gender Studies and will graduate next year in the spring. She plans to be a therapist and is applying to the PsyD program in Counseling Psychology at Chatham University in Pennsylvania. Before her studies at USF, Jade obtained a certificate in Integrative Nutrition, attended Vancouver Film School, and worked at Lowry Park Zoo as a volunteer zookeeper.

Jade found an intellectual home in WGS: When I was first introduced to WGS, I was enrolled in an Anthropology class. We were discussing gender and feminism. I had always pushed back against the term feminist and wanted to investigate that world. After taking that class and learning about different injustices all over the world, I came to see how important understanding feminism globally would be. I felt inspired to take part in activism. At

the time, I was a Mass Communication major and wanted to find something that aligned more with activism and helping people. I wanted the flexibility to explore my interests through electives while preparing myself for non-profit work. Women's and Gender Studies is perfect for that. The switch was easy and am incredibly grateful for it.

Jade believes her experience in WGS will make her a better graduate student and therapist: As a therapist, I really hope to understand my patients. Having an expanded understanding of the world around me and increasing my capacity to approach people with love and respect will be essential. Being introduced to injustices in our system and my blind spots has helped me tremendously. Additionally, the required research methods class helped prepare me for ethical research through a Women and Gender Studies



Jade McNitt is a WGS major and future mental health therapist.

lens, which a large part of my time in graduate school will require. This will also be essential as a therapist.

One of my favorite WGS classes was the Politics of Women's Health. Having a more transparent look at the history of health and medical care through a gender lens was extremely eye-opening.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A WGS DEGREE?

We asked WGS alumni what they have done...

LEADERSHIP ROLES

WGS alumni are leaders:



executive director, assistant director of stewardship, annual giving manager, project manager, director of account management, strategy manager of process engineering, IT manager, insurance claims manager, healthcare practice administrator

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

WGS alumni build knowledge and educate:



assistant professor, librarian, research manager, academic services administrator, teacher success coach, social studies department head, instructional designer, Montessori teacher, editorial coordinator

HEALTHCARE & COUNSELING

WGS alumni help people to lead healthier lives:



med student, public health researcher, mental health clinician, school counselor, clinical trauma interventionist, medical case manager, children's therapist, sex therapist, social services case manager

ANYTHING YOU WANT!

WGS alumni follow their passions:



attorney, law student, deaconess, video game writer, state park assistant manager, poet, feminist real estate agent

WGS is Different

We *link* knowledge, research, teaching, and activism.

We *promote* social justice by engaging students in the discovery and production of knowledge that emerges from feminist perspectives on culture and society.

We *teach* students to use the analytic skills that emerge from engaging the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, and nation in order to promote responsible citizenship in a diverse transnational environment.

We *expose* limits in traditional higher education caused by excluding women and other marginalized groups and create knowledge that is transformative and inclusive.

We *aim* for knowledge that will better all people's lives, not just the lives of a few.

We *connect* our work as academics with the social, political, and economic world outside the university to educate our students about social inequalities that result from sexism, heterosexism and homophobia, racism, classism, able-ism, and ethnocentrism.

We *seek* to empower students through a feminist critique of social, cultural, and institutional structures that enables them to think more critically about their own lives and that inspires them to work as active citizens for social change.

WGS *prepares* students to go on to graduate school, medical school, law school, or to enter the workforce in a wide variety of public, private, governmental, and non-profit agencies.

WGS *offers* a B.A., a second major, a minor in Women's Studies, a minor in Queer & Sexuality Studies, an M.A., and a graduate certificate.

For more information, visit the new WGS website at: usf.edu/wgs.

WGS Degrees

Undergraduate Programs:

Major or Second Major in Women's & Gender Studies: 36 hours (30 for second major). The major focuses on feminist research and practice. WGS promotes social justice through the discovery and production of knowledge that emerges from feminist perspectives on culture and society.

Minor in Women's & Gender Studies: 18 hours. This minor offers students from other majors the opportunity to learn more about feminist analysis, research, and activism.

Minor in Queer and Sexuality Studies: 18 hours. This minor trains students in the critical analysis of sexuality. It examines the rich history and cultural contributions of LGBTQIA people as well as the processes of normalization and pathologization that have structured sexual relations in different contexts.

Graduate Programs:

M.A. in Women's & Gender Studies: 36 hours. The M.A. is useful for students and professionals who are preparing for advanced degrees, non-profit sector employment, and those interested in broadening their understanding of WGS topics. Deadline to apply for fall admission: February 15. Funding is available to students through graduate assistantships.

Graduate Certificate in Women's & Gender Studies: 12 hours. The Certificate provides an opportunity for graduate students and other professionals to gain a more inclusive knowledge of women's and gender issues in society, including feminist studies.

Fall WGS-Sponsored Events

WGS events are open to the public. If you require reasonable accommodation to participate in a WGS event, please contact Jennifer Ellerman-Queen at 813-974-5520 at least five (5) working days prior to the event.

WGS Brown Bag Series:

September 11, 12:30-1:45pm. CMC 202T. Dr. Kim Golombisky will present: "A Conversation about the Mechanics of the Gaze in the Age of Selfies."

WGS Careers & Alumni

Panel: *October 1, 4:30-6:30pm.* Teco Hall, Education Bldg. II (DAC103). WGS alumni will discuss their careers and engage in a Q&A with current and potential WGS students. Anyone interested in WGS is invited to attend.

Latinx Feminists You

Should Know! *October 15, 6:30-8:00pm.* CMC202T. Join Drs. Price-Herndl and Serls as they highlight notable Latinx feminists and activists. Attendees are not expected to have prior knowledge of feminisms; however, those who do are encouraged to attend and contribute to the discussion.

The Feminist on Cellblock

Y film screening: *October 17, 5:00-6:45pm.* MSC 3705. Documentary about a man who created a feminist movement in a California men's prison.

The Lavender Scare film

screening: *October 28, 6:00-8:00pm.* MSC Oval Theater. Documentary about the federal government's persecution of gay people during the Cold War. Based on the research of USF's Dr. David Johnson.

"Reproductive Justice is for Everyone" Art Exhibit:

November 5, 12:30-3:00pm. CMC 202. Opening of an exhibit featuring pieces by artists responding to what reproductive justice means to them. Exhibit will run through the end of the fall semester. Refer to page 3 for more info.

WGS Brown Bag Series: November 6, 12:30-1:45pm.

CMC 202T. Dr. David Ponton will present: "On the Study of Black Men: Post-intersectionality Polemics, Afro-pessimism, and (Dis)Locating Race."

WGS Brown Bag Series:

November 21, 12:30-1:45pm. CMC 202T. Dr. Helis Sikk will present her research on queer media.





March 26-28, 2020 | St. Petersburg, FL Embodying Disobedience, Crafting Affinities

WGS is the 2020 host of the annual conference for the Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA). The conference will take place March 26-28, 2020 on the St. Pete campus of USF.

The conference theme – **Embodying Disobedience, Crafting Affinities** – figures embodiment and diverse lived experiences as the lifeblood of resistant politics and the livelihood of building alliances across our many differences. The theme echoes the broader mission of the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). With its distinctive blend of research, programming, teaching, and advocacy, WGS questions conventional wisdom, challenges the status quo, critiques intersecting gendered, sexual, and racialized inequities and injustices, and strives to create social change for more equitable, ethical, and just futures.

The conference brings together scholars and activists from throughout the southeastern U.S. and beyond, and will include plenaries and workshops, as well as an exhibition hall with vendors, local groups, and art exhibits.

The conference plenary speakers will be Loretta J. Ross and Dr. Aisha Durham.

Loretta J. Ross:

“She was a co-founder and the Na-

tional Coordinator of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective from 2005-2012, a network founded in 1997 of women of color and allied organizations that organize women of color in the reproductive justice movement. She is one of the creators of the term “Reproductive Justice” coined by African American women in 1994 that has transformed reproductive politics in the U.S.”

“She is a nationally-recognized trainer on using the transformative power of Reproductive Justice to build a Human Rights movement that includes everyone. Ms. Ross is an expert on women's issues, hate groups, racism and intolerance, human rights, and violence against women. Her work focuses on the intersectionality of social justice issues and how this affects social change and service delivery in all movements.”

Dr. Aisha Durham:

“She is an Associate Professor of Communication with faculty affiliations in the Department of Africana Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and Humanities and Cultural Studies at the University of South Florida.”

“Her research about Black popular culture explores the relationship between media representations and everyday life. She examines how controlling images or power-laden stereotypes are produced by media makers

and interpreted by media audiences to make sense of blackness in the “post” era. Durham uses auto/ethnography, performance writing, and intersectional approaches refined in Black feminist thought to analyze representations of Black womanhood in hip-hop media. This scholarship contributes to an interdisciplinary field called Hip Hop Feminism.”

Call for SEWSA Volunteers:

WGS needs volunteers to assist with the conference. We are looking for students, faculty, staff, and community members who can help as attendants for registration, sessions, workshops, and the Exhibition Hall, as well as faculty to serve as panel moderators. If you are interested in volunteering, let us know at: <https://tinyurl.com/sewsahelp>.

More Information:

For more information about the conference, including conference location and travel information, visit: www.sewsa.net/2020-south-florida.

To review the full call for proposals for the conference and caucus panels, visit: www.sewsa.net/2020-south-florida#cfp.

To submit a paper, panel, or roundtable proposal for the conference, visit: www.sewsa.net/2020-south-florida#submit.