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Letter from the  
Director 1

A Past Director  
Returns to Lecture on  
Her Work 2

The WGST Faculty  
Seminar 4

Why the Study of  
Sexuality Matters 6

Ann Early Award  
Winner 6

Maynard Award  
Winners 7

Our 2016 Graduate  
Certificate Recipients 10

Margareta Deschner  
Teaching Award lumna10(d)U/Spang

Tobin of Clark University, "Nineteenth-Century Germany and Sexuality."

The work of the program has been greatly facilitated by the hard-working Executive Committee composed of Professors Joci Caldwell-Ryan, Crista DeLuzio, Sheri Kunovich, and Beth Newman. The committee rewrote by-laws, reviewed all syllabuses, and streamlined a number of processes to make them easier and more attractive to faculty and students. The program continues to add new courses in new areas as they develop and as new faculty members join our community.

Professor Beth Newman, the former director of the program (2008-2014), was the originator of many of the initiatives brought to fruition this year. She has been a most gracious source of information about all things Women's and Gender Studies related. I am immeasurably grateful to her for her guidance as I negotiated this new administrative role.

Professor Joci Caldwell-Ryan remains, as she has long been, the crucial instructor in the program. Her courses, so central to the program, have been integrated into the new curriculum and will thus continue to attract students from all parts of the university. Joci also supervises interns in the program and as well as the graduate student adjuncts, whom we have been fortunate to be able to have teaching some sections of the WGST Images Course.

This year's newsletter contains some brief reflections of our Ann Early Award Winner, our Maynard Scholars, and those graduate students completing their Graduate Certificates. (See pages 6-11). They are a truly impressive group of students. It is most gratifying to read their remarks about how the program has influenced their academic and professional development. We continue to be most grateful to the legacy of Professor Betty Maynard, which allows us to support and recognize the accomplishments of Women's and Gender Studies students as Maynard Scholars. We are also always pleased to learn of the accomplishments of our graduates. This newsletter features recent graduate Whitney Harp and how she has put her education in Women's and Gender Studies to use. (See page 11).

Many thanks for your interest in the Women's and Gender Studies Program at SMU.

Best wishes.

Kathleen Wellman

## A Past Director Returns to Lecture on Her Work



On February 11, 2016, Carolyn Sargent, the former director of the program from 2000-2008 and professor of Anthropology, spoke about her research with the Malian immigrant community in Paris. Now \_\_\_\_\_

injunctions and Malian male authority into conflict with French expectations of female autonomy and rights to determine fertility.

In her research, Carolyn both followed medical practitioners and interviewed men and women in a variety of settings where French medicine connects with Malian immigrants, including maternal health clinics, public hospitals, family planning clinics, worker hostels, and migrant community associations. The French maternity system, which provides comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care, informs Malian women about reproductive health, public assistance, and women's rights. The mandated post-partum interviews gave Malian women access to information and Carolyn occasion to speak with women as they considered their family planning options. As French medical advice to women strongly favors family planning, it has produced a sharply gendered debate within the immigrant community.

Carolyn discussed a number of cases revealing these conflicts, particularly between married couples. Her lecture highlighted how Malian women and men make reproductive decisions within their understanding of Islam and their Parisian context and pursue individual and family goals. Interpretations of Islam prove crucial in such decisions.

Carolyn's interviews with several Imams confirmed that Islam does not have a definite teaching on contraception. As result, although both men and women emphasize religious devotion in their lives and religious doctrine in their important decisions, their interpretation of Islamic texts and their implications for contraception are highly gendered. Nonetheless, many Malian men and women believe that that Islam forbids it and cited Islam to validate or invalidate women's decisions about contraception. However, absent a single Islamic ruling on contraception, interpretations vary.

The discourse about contraception revolves around interpretations of Islam but also demonstrates women's agency and pragmatic decision making. Women take into account Islamic strictures, family relations,



Seminar participants were much engaged by David's project. The ensuing discussion raised questions and produced suggestions of a number of themes common to David's protagonists' lives, which he might want to explore to illuminate his fascinating subjects and their significance.

... **C** **D** ..., visiting professor of creative writing in the English department introduced her novel, \_\_\_\_\_, and read a chapter from it to a meeting of the seminar on March 17. Cara fictionalizes the exploration of much engaged by her scinaf akep10(cny)3gherpxplor of.02cbioeommosubjects aeledus of.02cli povel htdgT ea0(in e P5112t) enere wr.4(T)6.9erdT(ot35112-10.9eleba7(es8ln)Tw 0 -1.26 -104e)3(xplor(nifE)17(Resm)

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## Why the Study of Sexuality Matters

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Emerging from such intellectual traditions as the social history of feminists, civil rights, and lesbian and gay movements, the study of sexuality is an increasingly vibrant field—and a field that is opening up many long-static discussions of vital importance in American history. Without considering sexual histories within such issues as slavery, European immigrations, or the interactions between European settlers and Native Americans, it is hard to arrive at a coherent picture. Concepts such as social constructionism, and the ability to articulate gender and sexuality as distinct categories of analysis have given scholars the tools to

every one that has been part of my minor. What I most enjoyed about the courses was the breadth of subject matter – I took courses focusing on psychology and sociology as well as history. Women's and Gender Studies has been applicable to all aspects of my SMU education and has helped me become more critical of normative assumptions and the status quo.

This fall I will be beginning the next chapter of my education at Boston College, where I will be pursuing a PhD in sociology. I am very excited to be able to continue my studies, and ultimately I hope to join academia as a professor. During my time at SMU I have been active in Environmental Society as vice president, worked on undergraduate research as an Engaged Learning Fellow, and have been a member of the University

My women's and gender studies education at SMU has been invaluable to me as a student, woman, citizen, and human being. Being fluent in both the historical and contemporary rhetoric of gender and sexuality gives me a broader perspective in everything I do. I have learned to think critically and to engage with diverse perspectives. My education at SMU has prepared me for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. I am grateful for the opportunity to have studied at SMU and for the support of my family and friends. I look forward to continuing my education at Boston College and to contributing to the field of sociology and to society as a whole.



The Women's and Gender Studies Program has allowed me to put words to the realities and issues that have always influenced my life. My upbringing as a Chinese adoptee in a family of all women has made me hyperaware of how the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation affect us all in the way we experience life. Being able to learn and study these issues from an academic perspective has given me clarity and a deeper understanding of the impact of gender and how it bleeds into all other aspects of life.

The WGST courses have given me a sense of empowerment, not only as a woman, but also as an individual, who is now cognizant of how the intersection of gender identities shapes the world. The discourse and terminology surrounding gender has given me the tools and knowledge to understand better how the world operates. It has also allowed to me to fully recognize the importance of women's voices throughout history and in the present, despite the fact that they have often been silenced. More importantly, this recognition has made me realize

how my own experiences as a woman are valid and worth listening to.

The WGST courses have reshaped my world perspective. They have been important not simply to my intellectual development but also to defining my values and career goals. I want to pursue my Master's degree in Public Health with a concentration in either "Maternal and Child Health," or "Sex, Sexuality, and Gender." The Women's and Gender Studies Program has given me the opportunity to expand my mind and challenged me to recognize the impact of gender on the world through discourse and inquiry.

Kendell's activities include: Women's Interest Network Vice President; LGBTQ+Allies Panelist; "Love Your Body" Week Student Representative; Spectrum Member; Meadows Brown Bag Performer; Sexual Assault Awareness Month April 2016 Student Representative

When I first came to SMU, I was a Business Management Major and a Fashion Media Minor. When I took Professor Ryan's Gender: Images and Perspectives class, I knew I had found the focus of my greatest interest and passion. I immediately changed to a Women's and Gender Studies Minor.

Coming from Oklahoma and having attended Catholic elementary school, and middle school, I had had a very conservative and sheltered upbringing. My high school was also religious but more inclined to support individual thought, and, for Oklahoma, it was socially liberal. High school was the first time I was able to think for myself and decide my own opinions. They differed greatly from what I had previously been taught.

My time in high school developed my passion for social justice, particularly on issues of domestic violence awareness and women's reproductive rights. Coming to SMU and discovering the Women's and Gender Studies Program has only increased my knowledge and strengthened my commitment to women's rights. The program has truly played a tremendous positive role in my college experience. The classes I have taken have allowed me to continue to develop my thinking and increased my social awareness.



My involvement in the Women's and Gender Studies Program has also made me a better business student. We live in a time when inequality, whether in regard to race, gender, or sexual orientation, is still very real. My awareness will help me make more ethical business decisions and work to decrease inequalities in the workforce.



Through the SMU Women's and Gender Studies Program I have been able to cultivate my passion and define my future career. I hope to work one day for a non-profit organization that supports domestic violence awareness or women's reproductive rights. These issues are important not only not only to me, but to women on the SMU campus, in our country, and the world. At a time when women's basic rights are being questioned and dismissed, I think it is so important that women make supporting other women a priority.

Tessa's activities include: Business Management Major; Women's and Gender Studies Minor; Panhellenic Council President; Marketing Teacher's Assistant; BBA Scholar; Member of the SMU Honors Program; Member of Mortar Board; Genesis Women's Shelter Volunteer



The Women's and Gender Studies Program has been a crucial component of my academic career at SMU. It introduced me to a radically different perspective on female agency, seeing women as autonomous actors rather than as exceptions to the patriarchal norm.

Two classes had a great influence on me. Professor Martha Satz's class on the Ethical Implications of Children's Literature shaped me as a creative writer by showing me how literature can influence culture. I was astonished—although, I suppose I shouldn't have been—to see that the cultural "isms" of American society exist in children's literature. *B E* by Toni Morrison presented the African-American experience. This was a text that really spoke to me as a

hair marked me as racially ambiguous. Soon, I grew to love my curls, but Pecola's yearning for blue eyes still spoke to me. When I created my own children's book, I considered my protagonist carefully. Inspired by Dr. Seuss and other authors who engage children's imagination, I imagined a protagonist without race, sex, or orientation—a simple stick figure. My hope was that any child would identify with this figure—scared of the dark, of falling, and of nightmares—and find solace in my book.

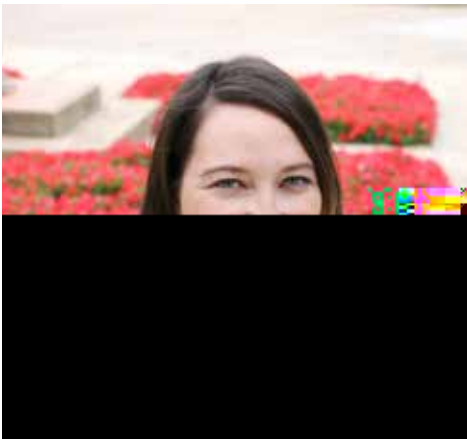
Professor Richard Bozorth's class on Contemporary LGBT Literature exposed me to the writings of authors marginalized not only by their society but by other, smaller groups and even sometimes by their families. These writers' characters revealed a matrix of intersectionality long before the term was coined. I found Audre Lorde's amazing account of her experience as a West African immigrant's lesbian daughter in early twentieth-century A : A especially poignant.

My Women and Gender Studies classes have made me much more attuned to cultural issues and have given me the tools to create art to combat patriarchal and heteronormative thinking and to express the veracity of experience outside the "norm."

River's activities include: Hamilton Scholar, research assistant, summer 2015; Student assistant, Kimbilio Fellows Writing Retreat in New Mexico; Website designer for Kimbilio Foundation for African American writers. <http://kimbiliofiction.com/>; Co-chair of 2016 Vagina Monologues

## Our 2016 Graduate Certificate Recipients

Through my participation in the Women's and Gender Studies Certificate Program, I have grown immensely as both a scholar and a teacher. Because of the program, I was able to attend Duke University's 2014 Feminist Theory Workshop. At this three-day workshop, I listened to keynote lectures by prominent feminist scholars (including Karen Barad and Karen Engle) and participated in smaller seminars with other graduate students and faculty members from universities across the country. Through conversations with new and established scholars, I achieved a deeper understanding of the kinds of debates taking place within the field of feminist theory at large. I left the workshop feeling inspired and energized, and I drew upon my newfound knowledge to plan my dissertation, *E\_\_\_\_\_ : E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_*, which traces the gendered and imperial meanings attached to things like porcelain, shawls, rouge, cameos, and diamonds in the British literary imagination. I was also eager to share my insights with my undergraduate students in my "Gender: Images and Perspectives" class. This course provides SMU students with their first (and often only) introduction to women's and gender studies. While I was initially anxious that the



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