LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR,  
DR. ELAINE PARSONS

It has been a whirlwind first semester as Director of Women’s and Gender Studies. Ann Vinski and I have been working to maintain the momentum of this by now well-established program, and also to position it to take advantage of some of the new energies in the College and University. We want to keep up our vigorous graduate certificate and concentration programs and our excellent programming for faculty and students, and at the same time we aim to bring in more students to our under graduate degrees, to make our classes and degrees accessible to students beyond the College, to allow our students to take advantage of WGS-oriented courses beyond the College, to enhance our mentorship of new faculty, and to be more visible across the University and in the broader community. Toward that end, we’ve been doing a lot of behind-the-scenes bureaucratic stuff, which we hope will have an impact within the next year or two. I am hoping that steering committee members and other friends of Women’s and Gender Studies will remember to reach out to potentially interested undergraduates and encourage them to join our program.

Our Speaker Series, “Saints: Religious and Secular,” started strong this semester with a standing-room-only crowd to hear Lisa Tetrault’s (History, CMU) excellent talk on the orchestrated beatification of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Most of our speakers and other events (including a pop-up museum of saints!) will be next semester, culminating in Robert Ellsberg’s keynote on Dorothy Day and the subversive power of female saints. We have already begun planning for 2015-16, with the proposed theme of “Sinners.”

You may have noticed the exciting photographic art illustrating all of our posters. This was created by the brilliant Christine Lorenz, who teaches in our Art History department.

Such a pleasure to work with you all! Thanks for all of your support.
More than 40 faculty and students gathered to listen to Dr. Lisa Tetrault, Associate Professor of History at Carnegie Mellon University, deliver a fascinating lecture on Friday, October 17. Tetrault deftly discussed the (secular) sanctification of Susan B. Anthony as the leader of the women’s movement in the United States. Drawing on her recent book, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women’s Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898*, Tetrault explained that Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote a four-volume history of the women’s movement in the United States in which they celebrated the 1848 Seneca Falls convention as the origin of the movement, and themselves its leaders from 1848 forward. These claims represent an attempt to impose order on the history of the movement and imply that Anthony was one of the attendees at the Seneca Falls convention. In fact, Anthony was not present at Seneca Falls in 1848, and she and Stanton did not meet until 1851. Although Anthony and Stanton were among the leaders of the movement, other women whose contributions were also significant have received less historical acclaim than they have. One reason for Anthony’s secular sainthood (some of her followers called her “Saint Susan”) and her high-profile association with the women’s movement, Tetrault argued, is that Anthony made use of historical narrative in a way that shows her astute understanding of its power. In addition to the history of the women’s movement, Anthony helped to author a three-volume biography of herself, which further established her legacy. We thank Dr. Tetrault for her excellent and engaging presentation!
Allie Reznik, a native Pittsburgher, earned her B.A. in English and cultural studies with a music minor at the Chatham College for Women at Chatham University. She completed her M.A. in English at Duquesne as a Teaching Fellow, and she is currently a second-year Ph.D. student in Duquesne’s English department and a WGS Certificate student.

What about WGS do you find engaging? What prompted you to pursue a graduate certificate in WGS?

After analyzing music in the Little House series and Godey’s Lady’s Book through the lens of gender, class, and race for my undergraduate thesis, I immediately signed up for the WGS certificate when I arrived at Duquesne because I love the interdisciplinary nature of the WGS program.

Are there any WGS-related projects or conferences that you are particularly excited about?

Oh, so many! Most recently, during November 2014, I attended the Emerging Paradigms: New Methodologies in Word and Music Studies conference at Aarhus University in Denmark. I presented on the role of music in the novels Of One Blood by Pauline Hopkins and A Questions of Power by Bessie Head where the site of music resides in the biracial woman. I am particularly engaged in thinking about constructions of gender and race not only in literature, but in popular culture as well.

How does Women’s and Gender Studies influence your teaching?

I begin theoretical discussions with my first year students in my classes from day one, always encouraging them to think critically about how gender, race, and class operate in literature and society. It is more productive to talk about systems of power and how we operate within them, regardless of our identity position. Women can perpetuate patriarchy, blacks can perpetuate white supremacy, and capitalism is alive and well no matter what tax bracket you find yourself in. Providing students with the paradigms to enter and participate in informed conversations about women and gender studies is essential to their position as world citizens.

What are your career goals? How will women’s and gender issues be part of those?

I am keeping my opportunities open, both academic and professional, and would ultimately like to be a professor of American literature and work for or with a literacy council. My work with the Career Readiness for Humanities at Duquesne over the past two years has taught me so much about the important bridges that need to be fostered for graduate students to market themselves in the non-academic job market, particularly in regards to the transferable skills that we develop, such as synthesizing research, teaching, and writing. As a professor, I plan to continue having discussions with students about systems of power and how they operate in literature and other cultural texts. My volunteer work with literacy councils (they are in many cities—check out the important work that the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council does!) has inspired me to help foster literacy in the community, help them raise money to reach as many students as possible, and teach students important skills such as navigating a doctor’s visit and being advocates for themselves.

Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about?

I recently won the Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award to supplement my trip to Ghana with the English and African Studies departments. While there, I had the opportunity to engage with Ghanaian and Spiritan cultures, walk on a rope bridge over the rainforest at Kakum national park, and tour the slave castle at Cape Coast. All of these experiences inevitably enhance my teaching of literature and material culture.
Rona Kitchen is an Assistant Professor of Law in the Duquesne School of Law, and she recently joined the WGS Steering Committee. We are very excited that she has agreed to cross-list a course with WGS in the spring 2015 semester (see p. 6 of this newsletter)!

Please tell us a little about yourself. Where are you from originally? How long have you been at Duquesne? Where did you go to law school?
I am from Philadelphia but have lived in Arizona, Houston, and Pittsburgh. This is my fifth year at Duquesne. I went to law school at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona.

Can you describe your path to becoming a law professor?
After law school graduation, I accepted a job as an associate at a large international law firm. While I enjoyed practice and felt intellectually stimulated, it did not take me long to realize that it was not my calling. After I had my first two children, I decided that I really needed to love my career (so as to make it easier to leave them). So, I started my journey toward becoming a law professor. I was accepted into Temple Law’s fellowship program, which essentially helps practicing attorneys transition to academia, and, here I am.

What projects or research have you been involved in that focus on or incorporate WGS issues?
My research and writing focus on the intersection of law and motherhood. I have looked at various areas of law and how they intersect with motherhood.

How does being attuned to WGS issues impact your research, scholarship, and teaching?
I view the law through a WGS lens, particularly one concerned about motherhood. I hope that my critique of the law (like critiques based on race or sexual orientation or nationality or age) will help refine the law and increase awareness among judges and lawmakers so that there is more sensitivity toward the institution and experience of motherhood.

Do you think that your legal training sharpens your awareness of WGS issues in any particular way?
I believe that my training enables me to think about solutions to WGS issues from a legal perspective. When I consider the best way to address work/family conflict, for example, I am looking for ways the law can be part of a solution (as opposed to thinking about how changing social norms can be part of a solution).
**NEW LEARNING COMMUNITY: AMOR**

*By Dr. Sarah Alison Miller and Dr. Aimee Light*

We proposed the AMOR Learning Community with the goal of fostering an interdisciplinary program of study on love, sex, and gender for first-year students at Duquesne. This Learning Community incorporates courses from Classics (Dr. Sarah Miller), Theology (Dr. Aimee Light), English (Dr. Erin Speese), and Art History (Dr. Julia Sienkewicz). In these courses students assess how ideologies about sex and gender shape the meanings of love, and they analyze representations of love in literature, mythology, rhetoric, popular culture, religious discourse, and art. AMOR has partnered with the Center for Victims, which serves local victims of all crimes including domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, homicide, physical assault, and robbery. The focus of the AMOR service-learning project is outreach on behalf of the Center. We have hosted a film screening and discussion of the documentary, “Life After,” which portrays the devastating effects of violence and the hope for healing provided by the Center. We have also held an item drive in support of the Center’s emergency shelter and created a social media campaign to spread the word about the services available for victims of violence in Pittsburgh. A primary goal of AMOR is to introduce students to the history, methodology, and relevance of gender studies, and we hope that our students will seek out future Women’s and Gender Studies courses. To that end, we are working to cross list AMOR courses with Women’s and Gender Studies beginning next academic year.

**ALUMNI UPDATES**

**Samina Gul Ali** recently began her Ph.D. in English at the University of Miami. Her research interests include Post-colonial and Caribbean Anglophone Literatures, with an emphasis on intersections of race and gender in the contemporary American context. She is currently completing a year-long teaching practicum and is developing her first course in Freshman Composition for the Fall semester of 2015.

**Adrienne Freeland** is currently the Social Media Coordinator for Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, a gender-inclusive, non-profit fraternal organization that focuses on our tripod of scholarship, leadership and fellowship. The organization made the change from co-ed to gender inclusive this summer at their Grand Chapter meeting, and she was very happy to be a witness to that. Adrienne is in charge of managing web communications, including our social media channels and eCommunications. She finished her very first half-marathon this September and hopes to complete her first marathon next fall!

**Laurie McMillan**, Ph.D. English ’04, teaches literature and writing courses at Marywood University in Scranton, PA. Many of these classes focus on feminist writing. Laurie recently co-wrote an essay on YouTuber Jenna Marbles for Feminist Media Studies, and she is busy producing her own YouTube videos that parody faculty life (https://www.youtube.com/user/winkyfacetimes2). Laurie is also working on a book project titled Slut Rhetoric: Social Media, Pop Culture, and Politics.

**WELCOME TO WGS**

**Graduate Students:**
Jessie Axe, Social and Public Policy
Kelly Baranowski, English
Leslie Lewis, Gumberg Library
Liz Klie, Social and Public Policy
Brigid Taylor, Historical Studies

**Minors:**
Natalie Frank, English
Anne Hilenski, English

**Steering Committee Member:**
Rona Kaufmann Kitchen, J.D., LL.M., School of Law
Spring 2015 Courses

Undergraduate Courses

WSGS 203 / THEO 202: Christianity and Violence
TR 1:40-2:55 p.m. (E. Vasko)

WSGS 207 / ENGL 201-02: Literature for Children and Young Adults
MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m. (J. McCort)

WSGS 220W / CLSX 220W: The Ancient Novel
TR 1:40-2:55 p.m. (S. Miller)

WSGS 364 / HIST 364: History of Sexuality in the United States
TR 12:15-1:30 p.m. (E. Parsons)

WSGS 448W / ENGL 449W: Black Autobiography
MWF 12:00-12:50 p.m. (K. Glass)

WSGS 453 / PSYC 453: Psychology of Gender
T 6:00-8:40 p.m. (J. Arroyo)

Graduate Courses

WSGS 501 / HIST 501: Medieval Europe
W 6:00-8:40 p.m. (J. Parsons)

WSGS 505 / PLCR 505: Values, Ethics, and Policy
M 6:00-8:40 p.m. (M. McIntyre)

WSGS 529 / ENGL 692: Drama and Material Culture 1660-1830
M 6:00-8:40 p.m. (L. Engel)

WSGS 543 / LAWS C543-61: Employment Discrimination
T 6:00-8:40 p.m. (R. Kitchen)

WSGS 549 / ENGL 549-61 / ENGL 649-61: 19th Cen. American Literature
W 6:00-8:40 p.m. (T. Kinnahan)

New Artwork

We are thrilled with the new artwork for our publicity items. Thanks to Christine Lorenz for her beautiful work! In case you have not had a chance to view it on our posters, here is a sample.

Faculty and Graduate Student Happy Hour

Three Friday afternoons this semester found faculty and graduate students from WGS gathering at the Red Ring for casual interaction and camaraderie.

Please join us in the Spring 2015 semester for:

Faculty and Graduate Student Happy Hour

Red Ring
4 – 6 p.m.
Friday, January 16
Friday, February 13
Friday, April 10
UPCOMING EVENTS
SPRING 2015

SARAH MILLER
“BLOOD, MILK, AND TEARS: HOLY BODIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES”
Friday, January 23
4 – 6 p.m.
553 College Hall

ALIMA BUCCIANTINI
“WHO ARE OUR SAINTS?: BUILDING A NATIONAL PANTHEON IN THE MODERN MUSEUM”
Friday, March 13
4 – 6 p.m.
553 College Hall

POPE-UP MUSEUM: SAINTS
Thursday, January 29
4 – 6 p.m.
Nite Spot, 1st Floor Duquesne Union

SEAN WEAVER
"DEFINING AND ADDRESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE"
Friday, March 20
4 – 6 p.m.
553 College Hall

BONCHO DRAGIYSKI
“DIVINE TEXTUALIZATION: THE WRITING OF MARÍA”
Friday, February 20
4 – 6 p.m.
553 College Hall

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH KEYNOTE SPEAKER
ROBERT ELLSBERG
“BLESSED AMONG ALL WOMEN: THE SUBVERSIVE POWER OF FEMALE SAINTS”
Thursday, March 26
Power Center Ballroom

GODRIVER ODHIAMBO
"MODERN DAY SAINTS ON THE BATTLEFIELD: THE POWER AND RESILIENCE OF SUDANESE WOMEN"
Tuesday, March 11
6 p.m.
Power Center Ballroom

WGS SPRING RECEPTION
Tuesday, April 28
4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
643 College Hall

Please check our website for the most up-to-date information on these events.
http://www.duq.edu/academics/schools/liberal-arts/centers/womens-and-gender-studies/news-and-events
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