Letter from the Director, Dr. Laura Engel

We’ve had a very busy and exciting semester at the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies! In addition to co-sponsoring Darwin Day, we collaborated with The Center for African Studies, the philosophy department, the history department, and the Center for Teaching excellence, to bring speakers from around the country addressing topics ranging from Matricentric Africana women’s religious practices, to the political philosophies of Hannah Arendt and Julia Kristeva, to the struggle to balance work and professional life with family and child care. In addition to these wonderful events attended by people from across the university, Women’s History Month 2013, which focused on “Women in the Arts,” brought local Pittsburgh artists Jan Beatty and Emily Newman to campus. Their innovative and inspiring presentations highlighted the significance of the arts to our programs and to our daily lives at Duquesne and beyond.

I want to thank everyone who assisted in making the events possible, with a special debt of gratitude to Ann Vinski, WGS graduate assistant and newsletter composer extraordinaire! As always my hope for the center is that we can continue to provide resources, support, and enthusiasm for projects, curriculum, events, scholarship, and partnerships related to the study of women’s and gender studies. If you would like to become more involved with the center or want to know more about our graduate program, our undergraduate second major or minor, feel free to contact us or stop by our office at 550A College Hall. Best wishes for a happy and restful summer!!

Dr. Laura Engel
Emily Newman described the inspiration for and creation of her video art in an intriguing presentation of her work on March 19th to a gathering of more than 35 people. Her purpose in creating art is to make living more conscious and more deliberate, and so her art reflects some of her experiences. Much of Newman’s art centers around children, allowing her to incorporate her own experiences of motherhood as well as to explore children’s experiences. She and her family are based between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and St. Petersburg, Russia, and so her work also contains themes of Russia—its language, its history, and the changes it is undergoing. Newman received her MFA from CalArts and has shown her work internationally.

Beatty is a professor of English at Carlow University, where she directs the creative writing program, runs the Madwomen in the Attic Writing Workshops, and teaches in the MFA program.

When Jan Beatty talks about “undressing in public,” she is referring to confessional writing in poetry that reveals the author to the reader. Beatty, an award-winning poet, maintains that confessional writing in poetry does not simply relate what happened; rather it creates a poem that intermingles the personal, theoretical, poetic, and story.

But the poems are not reducible to the stories. Beatty read some of her own fascinating poems and told personal stories to reveal herself to an audience of more than 60 people on Thursday, March 14.

Thank you to all who helped make our Women’s History Month events a success!
The events were sponsored by Center for Women’s and Gender Studies, the McAnulty College NEH Endowment, and the Departments of English and History.
Spring Events

Darwin Day: Sex and the Scala Naturae

On February 14th, 500 people gathered in the Power Center Ballroom to hear Dr. Marlene Zuk debunk two common misconceptions about sex, gender, and evolution. She cautioned her listeners against subscribing to the *scala naturae*, which sees human beings as the pinnacle of evolution, with other animals higher or lower on the scale depending on how similar they appear to be to humans. This thinking not only justifies using certain animals as models for human behavior, but it also influences the perceptions of the humans observing the animals. Further, when humans observe animals through a lens of false preconceptions about how males and females within a species act, what they think they see can include some blatant errors. For instance, Zuk noted that the films “Bee Movie” and “A Bug’s Life” depict male insects performing tasks that in fact are exclusively performed by females in nature. In addition, studies of animals that view the male of the species as the norm, relegating the female to the category of “special case,” present a view that is misrepresentative of the species as a whole.

Dr. Zuk is Professor of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior at the University of Minnesota.

*This event was sponsored by the Dean’s Office of the Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, with assistance from the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies.*

Mother Symbol & Africana Women’s Religious Practices of Peacebuilding

All human beings can embody motherhood. This was the message Dr. Dianne Diakite of Emory University challenged her listeners with when she presented African and African diaspora cultures’ views of mothers. Motherhood, as a socio-ontological and metaphorical ideal, is not reducible to biological motherhood. It is a way of being that involves using one’s creative power and having a rank of status and respect within the community. Using a variety of sources, Diakite presented a number of robust examples of women who have embodied “mothernity” and the matricentric ideals of their culture as they work in practical ways to improve life in their communities.

*This event was co-sponsored by The Center for African Studies, the Pierre Schouver Endowed Chair, and the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies.*
Spring Events, cont.

Ulrika Bjork
Dr. Ulrika Bjork of Uppsala University, Sweden, presented her paper, “Political and Subjective Freedom: Reading Hannah Arendt with Julia Kristeva” on February 22. In her talk, Bjork explored the questions: “Is individual spontaneity dependent on a free political space? Or is politics conditioned by a human and ontologically based faculty for beginning, for initiatory action?” She then compared Arendt’s and Kristeva’s different ideas of political and subjective freedom.

This event was sponsored by the Philosophy Department and the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies.

Eleanore Holveck Essay Contest Winners
Each spring we honor one undergraduate and one graduate student with the Eleanore Holveck Essay Award. This award is given to students for essays that most effectively and proficiently advance a conversation about women’s, gender, or sexuality studies. Winners of this contest receive a certificate and monetary award.

We are pleased to announce this year’s recipients, who will be honored during our spring reception on Thursday, April 18:

Sarah Farbacher, an undergraduate Secondary English Education major, for her essay, “A Kiss That Crosses Time: An Analysis of the Kiss(es) in Michael Cunningham’s The Hours,” which was written for Dr. Beth Buhot Runquist’s City, Country, Suburb: Place in Contemporary Literature course.

Jessica Patella Konig, a graduate student in the Philosophy Department and a WSGS Graduate Certificate student, for her essay, “Francis Bacon on Nature: The Secret, the Erotic, the Dominated,” which was written for Dr. Dan Selcer’s History and Philosophy of Science course.

We also thank Drs. Moni McIntyre, Sarah Miller, Elaine Parsons, and Maggie Patterson, for volunteering to serve as judges of this contest.

Having It All: The Struggle for Work-Life Balance
The Center for Women’s and Gender Studies partnered with the Center for Teaching Excellence to conduct an animated panel discussion on balancing an academic career with family life. Panelists discussed their experiences being academics and parents, addressing the challenges they face and their coping strategies, as well as gender dynamics they have encountered in their work and in academia regarding the struggle for balance.

Please join us Thursday, April 18

THE DEVIL HIMSELF:
A GILDED AGE TALE OF HONOR, VENGEANCE, AND INSANITY

A talk by
ANDREW PORWANCHER
Assistant Professor of Classics & Letters, University of Oklahoma
Alistair Horne Fellow in Modern History, Oxford University, 2013-14

4 TO 5 P.M.
502 ROCKWELL HALL

SPRING RECEPTION
Come celebrate another successful semester and congratulate the winners of the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies’ Eleanore Holveck Essay Award!

Refreshments will be provided.

5 TO 7 P.M.
SILVERMAN PHENOMENOLOGY CENTER
(1ST FLOOR, GUMBERG LIBRARY)

These events are cosponsored by the History Department and the Center for Women’s & Gender Studies
Last fall, Dr. Moni McIntyre was honored with the YWCA Racial Justice Award in the area of Faith. In addition to teaching in Duquesne’s Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy and serving as a WSGS Steering Committee Member, Dr. McIntyre is the rector of the Church of the Holy Cross (Episcopal) in the Homewood-Brushton community. Her parish is the only African-American parish in the Episcopal diocese of Pittsburgh. She has served at the parish since 2000 and has been its rector since 2005.

Her work at the parish involves sacramental ministry, including celebrating the Eucharist, baptizing new members, officiating at weddings and funerals, and visiting the sick. In addition, she works in cooperation with Homewood-Brushton community ministries to serve the larger community. One of the goals of the community programs is to get the children in the neighborhood to a place “where people love them” to aid their flourishing.

Dr. McIntyre sees connections between her ministry at the Church of the Holy Cross, her work with Women’s and Gender Studies, and her teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Gender, race, and class are all interrelated in the work she does. The majority of her congregation is elderly and women, and she believes part of her ministry to these women is to appreciate who they are and what their work has been. Her church bulletin runs features on African Americans, many of them women, who might be of interest to the parishioners. Dr. McIntyre’s bulletin features both famous people and people from the parish. Occasionally, the fame and parish membership intersect, as in the case of Alma Speedfox, a member of the Church of the Holy Cross for whom the NAACP building in the Hill District is named.

In her teaching here at Duquesne, Dr. McIntyre includes African American texts in her course syllabi as often as possible. Among the courses she teaches are Non-Violent Social Change and Community Organization and Social Movement, both of which she is able to connect to her parish work. The subject matter is germane for the Homewood-Brushton community, and she also occasionally provides a write-up in her bulletin of a text she uses in her courses, as she did with Isabel Wilkerson’s The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration. We congratulate Dr. McIntyre on her award and thank her for her inspiring work and ministry!

In Memoriam—Gerda Lerner

Gerda Lerner, an academic historian who was a pioneer the field of Women’s History, passed away January 2, 2013. She was 92. Lerner earned her bachelor’s degree at the age of 43 and went on to earn a PhD in History at Columbia University. She was instrumental in founding the first graduate program in women’s history at Sarah Lawrence. She later became a member of the History Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she established the doctoral program in Women’s History.
This spring, we had the pleasure of interviewing Leah Boisen, who is a fourth year Ph.D. student in the Clinical Psychology program and is enrolled in the WSGS Graduate Certificate program.

Please tell us a little about yourself. What is your academic background? How far along are you with your dissertation?

I travelled to Pittsburgh to pursue my Bachelor's degree in Psychology at Point Park University. I ended up double majoring in Psychology and English [with a] concentration in forensics.

I decided to apply to Duquesne [for graduate school] since it has an unusual, human science approach to psychology. It turned out to be a really beautiful fit—the program here is unique and conducive to a feminist approach that values the role of culture and a holistic view of the person. I've attained my Master's degree here at Duquesne and am currently in the proposal stages of my dissertation, which focuses on feminist street art and activism.

What prompted you to pursue a graduate certificate in WSGS?

By now I've just sort of resigned myself—with both a shrug and a smile—that gender is my “thing.” Gender as a socially constructed performance has riveted me throughout my studies and it's really taken center stage now in my research, teaching, and thinking about the world. Gender is this incredibly important piece of our lives that impacts and affects relationships, emotions, jobs, self-expression, literally everything ... and yet we so often treat it as this monolithic, unchangeable fact. Finding out about feminism, queer theory, and gender studies has been a bit like tumbling down the rabbit hole for me. Once you start pulling the thread just a little bit, seeing what's underneath all those clothes, and roles, and regulated romances, it's amazing the explosive world underneath. People are incredible.

I was interested to hone in on gender when I came to graduate school so I was really pleased to find the certificate program here. Feminism is still so important to contemporary society, and yet I often find so many of my students hate the term, distance themselves from it, or think it's unnecessary. When I prod, they have so much to say about gender roles, double standards, inequalities, sexualization, objectification, and more.

What projects are you working on now that incorporate Women's and Gender Studies?

I'm in the early stages of my dissertation, which I am both pretty proud of and excited about. I'm working with some seriously awesome women artists and activists who do street-level interventions (like tagging billboards, dropping flyers, and hijacking websites) to get messages of empowerment, acceptance, and equality out into the culture. I love feminism, and I could talk philosophy about gender, identity, and the self all day long, but I also think it's really important to pay attention to the fact that women are really suffering out there, every day, in very real ways. I think it's crucial to see how we can intervene in the day-to-day space and keep feminism in the streets and homes, not just the classrooms and journals.

What kinds of formative experiences have you had during your years at Duquesne?

Honestly, I've done some cool stuff—I've gone to some incredible conferences, met some brutally smart people (bell hooks!), taken insightful courses—and I've even sometimes gotten recognized for doing all that stuff. But my greatest honor by far has really been teaching my students. I've had high expectations of my students to participate with me in creating collaborative, Continued on p. 7
Maddie Maxon is a sophomore majoring in Political Science and Women’s and Gender Studies. She is from Fredericktown, Pennsylvania, a small town south of Pittsburgh.

“By studying Women’s and Gender Studies, we not only learn that women are still considered unequal to men, but we can learn how to change that. The fact that people still question the relevance and utility of a major in WSGS is very telling of our society’s view on women.” She thinks that being able to view our culture with this awareness can lead to positive changes.

Maddie sees connections between WSGS and politics. “I’ve always been interested in women in government and working with the Obama campaign this fall made me so excited about the future of women in politics! However, we definitely have a long way to go. Women are very underrepresented in government, we’re voting at terrible rates all while some pretty scary anti-woman legislation is being proposed.”

After graduation, she hopes to study public affairs and become involved in developing policy on women’s health issues. We are thrilled to have Maddie as a WSGS major!

Alumnae/i Update

Amy Taylor: I completed my Clinical Psychology Ph.D. in August 2012. I have been working at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts since then. My work as a clinician here is psychoanalytic, in the sense that my main role is to interpret what’s happening intrapsychically for my patients, but my work also focuses on systems (including patriarchy) and how social and family issues are carried out by individuals. My background in feminism and gender studies is particularly useful for understanding these systemic issues, and I find my work here an excellent way to combine my interests in individual psychodynamics and social constructions. I’m currently working on a conference paper about psychoanalytic understandings of the sexed body based on my dissertation work and formulating a qualitative research project on the clinical construct “projective identification,” or how to understand the phenomenon of identifying one’s feeling as not one’s own.

Leah Boisen, cont. from p. 6

democratic classrooms—and they've done it! Not only that, they've astounded me with the sensitivity of their thinking and depth of their passion to explore and argue about contemporary issues, particularly gender.

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

Hopefully after dissertation and internship I move on to the world of academia! I’d like to get a job teaching somewhere where I can continue to focus on women and gender studies and continue to learn from and interact with students. I think above all it’s crucial to me to stay in dialogue with students and to keep making gender relevant to them, finding and highlighting it everywhere in the context of their worlds and lives. Most of all, I think finding it everywhere, and showing young people how to find it too, is exactly how we start rippling the culture.
Recent Work by WSGS Faculty and Students

Laura Engel, Associate Professor of English & Director of Center for Women’s and Gender Studies

- Invited Plenary Speaker, Aphra Behn Association Conference, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK, October 2013.

Linda Kinnahan, Professor of English & Hillman Endowed Chair

- She is also completing two books: one on modernist women poets and economics in the early 20th century; and a second on twentieth-century poetry and photography.

Jessica Patella Konig, Doctoral Student, Philosophy Department


Aimee Light, Associate Professor of Theology


Allie Reznik, MA Candidate, English Department

- “Composing Community in Susannah Rowson’s Charlotte Temple.” Course paper for Early American Literature, Dr. Tom Kinnahan, Fall 2012.
- “‘more smoke than fire—more noise than music’: Composing National Identity in The Letters of John and Abigail Adams.” Course paper for Engendering the Self: 18th Century Journals and Diaries, Dr. Laura Engel, Fall 2012.

Lanei Rodemeyer, Associate Professor of Philosophy


Emily Rutter, Doctoral Candidate, English Department