

# MARY & WILLIAM

THE GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020: ISSUE 16



## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



When we gathered as a program in January in the Sadler Center to chart the future of GSWS, where I listened to four of our amazing seniors sharing their passion and ideas, I never would have imagined that the year would end without embracing our graduates in person. But the global pandemic has impacted our academic programs, services, and research projects, just as it has for every unit at William & Mary.

Now that special moment in January seems a distant memory, when our students, faculty, alumnae, librarians, and staff came together to articulate a common vision at shared tables with a bounty of food. The same can be said for the packed gatherings of people who came to hear Lauren Klein in February discuss possible partnerships between the emerging field of data science and feminist theory and practice. We've included some photographs that document these exciting events.

Nonetheless, as a program, we showed that we could be resilient, even as instruction moved online in March and April, when our faculty had to adapt their feminist pedagogy to venues like Panopto and Zoom.

We're excited about being able to offer a great multimedia virtual commencement ceremony with students, faculty, and feminists from around the world contributing material with which to celebrate our graduates. Thanks to the availability of videoconferencing technology, in the final weeks of the semester, we even helped bring in the celebrated writer R. Zamora Linmark to offer a provocative multivocal performance and the eminent feminist scholar Judith Butler for a special opportunity for discussion of undergraduate research and activism with a small cohort of students who had planned to attend the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop before it was canceled. We even had a GSWS graduate make national news as the creator of a viral music video about life under quarantine.

Join us in celebrating our graduates and reading about how GSWS engages with cutting-edge data analysis, educational technology, and digital media-making. We're excited about the community of scholars and activists that continues to flourish.

## PRIZES AND AWARDS



*Cody Mills and Hailey Ulrich*

### **Dean's Prize for Student Scholarship on Women**

This prize is awarded to an undergraduate and a graduate student by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences for the student's work in advancing our knowledge of women or the politics of gender.

Undergraduate Award: Samuel McIntyre  
Graduate Award: Kelsey Smoot

### **Student Activism Award**

This prize is awarded to an individual, student organization, or group that has done outstanding feminist activist work outside the classroom.

Hailey Ulrich

### **Nancy Gray Prize**

This prize is awarded to one graduating senior in recognition of academic and activist achievements and their commitment to the ideals of the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program.

Cody Mills

### **Carol Woody Internship Award**

This award allows for "real world" experience for distinguished students participating in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.

Alexia Kaelber



# GSWS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



## GSWS PLANNING RETREAT 2020

# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT 2020



## Stephanie Cerrato

The best decision I made in my college career was taking Intro to GSWS with Professor Castillo in my sophomore year because it truly was the beginning of my political awakening. This course provided incredible insight into ways in which we navigate everyday life and the power structures that are upheld systematically, which I hope becomes better integrated into other courses in all levels of education. This was the first time I had ever had a course center the experiences of non-white, non-cis, and non-hetero persons, which shows how far we have to go as a society. But, I am eternally grateful for the privilege to have learned from such wonderful professors and to walk away radicalized because of this department.

"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never allow us to bring about genuine change." - Audre Lorde



## Maddie Belesimo

I am so excited to be graduating with a major in GSWS! My classes and professors in the department have helped me to grow academically, but also as a community member. GSWS has challenged my understandings of the world, contextualized my own identity, and cultivated my interests in activism. I hope to build upon what I have learned here as I go on to graduate school at Auburn, for an MS in Behavioral Psychology, and into the future. Thank you!



**Cody Mills**



**Katie Catron**



**Kalli Doyle**

I started at W&M not really knowing what my academic plans were beyond knowing that I wanted to eventually attend medical school. I began taking GSWS courses my freshman year and immediately starting planning a GSWS minor, though I didn't actually officially declare until my senior year. The courses I have taken within the GSWS department are the courses that have been most influential for me both as a student and as person, and I am deeply grateful for the ways in which these courses have both empowered me and shaped my worldview. One of the most outstanding aspects of the program is that it creates such close bonds of community within and beyond the classroom. I look forward to translating the knowledge I have gained within my four years in the program into further action throughout the course of my life.

Neuroscience major and GSWS minor  
Hometown: Ham Lake, MN

Future Plans: I am planning on taking two gap years before attending medical school. As a physician I hope to integrate what I have learned as a GSWS student to address health disparities within the US.

Senior Picks: The Portrait of a Lady on Fire, Val Plumwood's Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, and Charli XCX's discography. My favorite class I've taken within the GSWS department has been Feminism and the Environment with Professor Dawson.



## Casey Scanlan

Becoming a GSWS minor was the best decision I made in college! The W&M GSWS program and professors have helped me to grow significantly as a person and have enriched my entire college experience. Everything I do and see in life is now informed by all of the knowledge I've gained through this program. I'm incredibly sad that it's over, but I can't wait to apply what I've learned to the workplace and the world.

Hometown: Richmond, VA

Future Plans: Master of Accounting at W&M and hopefully one day a PhD in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Favorite Class: Intro to LGBTQIA+ Studies with Dr. Castillo

## Kayleigh Webster

The GSWS program has defined my experience at this college. I'm a psychological sciences major, but the GSWS department has been my home at William and Mary since Day 1. I come from a REALLY small town and I was scared what living someplace where I was not surrounded by family was going to be like. In Lancaster, people know me by who my grandparents were even when they don't know who I am. I'd never had anonymity, and I didn't know how to define myself by ME or how to construct a support network.

And yet, by the time my first week of classes had ended, I had a community. My favorite class I've ever taken--Intro to LGBTQ History/Studies seminar with Leisa Meyer--was the same place I first felt genuinely at home since I left my hometown. Many of my classmates ended up being my friends throughout college too. I knew nothing about gender, sexuality, and women's studies before attending this



university; it is now the focus of my future career as a clinical psychologist.

Psychological Sciences is a great field, but I've never felt like I could tell a psych professor the real depth of what my bipolar disorder is like sometimes. Psych professors never went out of their way to provide me with homemade food because I missed the class supper at their house. Never have psych professors, let alone the head of the department, practically fought a war to change the minor declaration system of their department just so that I could get an official minor in their subject (which Professors Losh and Meyer did). I came to this college a terrified, anxious, closeted tall child that grew up in rural conservative Virginia. I'm leaving here an anxious, out-at-college, confident young woman involved in political activism and intersectional (real) feminism. And I credit a lot of that growth to the guidance, faculty, and community of GSWS at William and Mary.



## Andrew Uhrig

I came into GSWS after taking classes in Africana Studies and wanting to know more about feminist thinkers (broadly defined). Also, being queer/gender non-conforming myself, I felt that I had some stakes in many GSWS courses. I see everything I've done in my GSWS classes in conversation with all the other courses I've taken as well as my life beyond academia. Both my majors have helped me to do better work as an editor, photographer, and art director on ROCKET Magazine here at W&M, which has propelled me into the creative industry as a graphic designer. I am looking forward to doing creative work that has a social impact aspect to it, informed by everything I learned in GSWS.

Africana Studies and GSWS double major

Hometown: Reston, VA

Future Plans: Graphic Design

Senior Picks: Chromat Spring/Summer 2020 NYFW show, When I Get Home visual album by Solange, Clue the movie, James Blake's voice



## Geneva Galioto

The GSWS department has always been the only place I ever want to be on campus. Even when I studied abroad in Austria, I only cared to take gender studies courses. I know this was the right choice for me because I've learned how to question the ways we live and interact in this world. I can now utilize those skills to defy our unjust systems. I feel confident and excited about my future, and I have to thank my wonderful professors for that.

Hometown: Bronx, NY

Future Plans: Vegan Food Truck in Hawaii with a late-career change to become a Sex Educator

Senior Picks: Normal People by Sally Rooney, Edna Ferber short stories, Sula by Toni Morrison, Sisterhood is Powerful



## Hailey Ulrich

GSWS and Government double major  
Hometown: Vienna, VA  
Future Plans: To incorporate my feminist knowledge into a career in politics  
Senior Picks: Robin Morgan, ed, *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, Jessica Valenti, "You're A Hardcore Feminist. I swear," and *Full Frontal* with Samantha Bee on TBS

The GSWS Major was one of the main driving forces behind my decision to attend W&M. But, I was completely unaware of the extent of knowledge, research, and theory that feminist thought consisted of before coming to college. After my first semester, I was blown away by the fact that I could enjoy "school" this much. The classes, opportunities, discussions, workshops, friends, and relationships that this department has brought me have been some of the peaks of my collegiate experience. This Program and my wonderful professors have changed the way I think about the world—and has influenced my other classes, research topics, and career path. Thanks to GSWS, my friends and family will never be able to escape my attempt to weave the concept of "intersectionality" into every discussion.



## Leslie Weber

In my first semester at William & Mary, I took Introduction to GSWS. Some of the first readings that I did for the class were an excerpt from Jessica Valenti's book *Full Frontal Feminism* and "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" by Peggy McIntosh. I greatly enjoyed reading both pieces, and that excitement and interest characterized my years in the GSWS department. As cliché as it sounds, the GSWS department has truly helped me become the person and scholar that I am today. All the professors that I had in the department encouraged me to think about issues from new perspectives and challenged my preconceived notions about oppression, power, and privilege. My advisor supported my internship and research on domestic violence in my community, which led me to my current job as a children's advocate at a local domestic violence agency. Furthermore, the GSWS department influenced my involvements on campus. I was a member of the Health Outreach Peer Educators (HOPE), and through that organization, I supported survivors of sexual violence and raised awareness of the issue at events like Take Back the Night. My coursework in GSWS contributed to my ability to critically think about issues of violence in my community. I am incredibly grateful to the GSWS department for encouraging, uplifting, and growing my passion for intersectional feminism.

## Annie Winebrenner

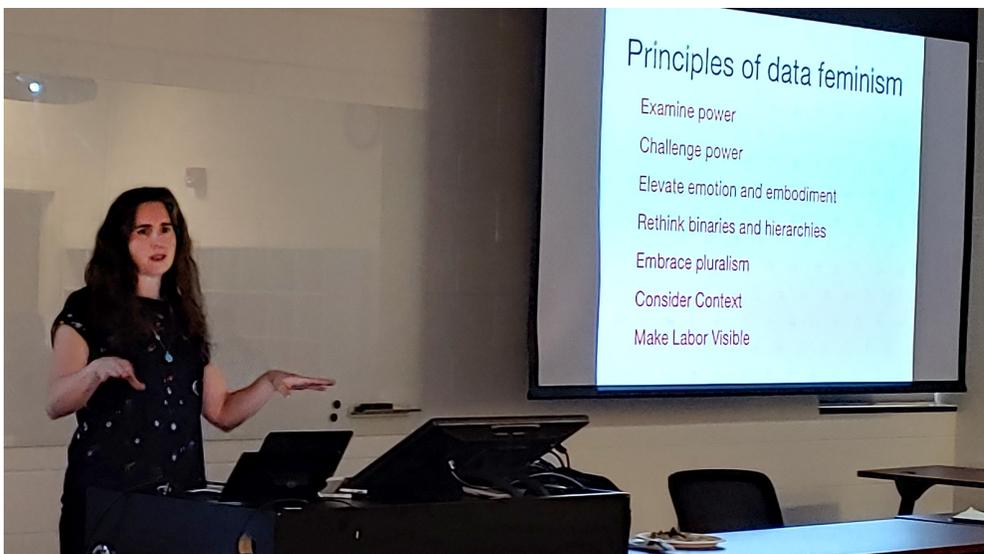




# Data Feminism

## Lauren Klein Talk and Workshop

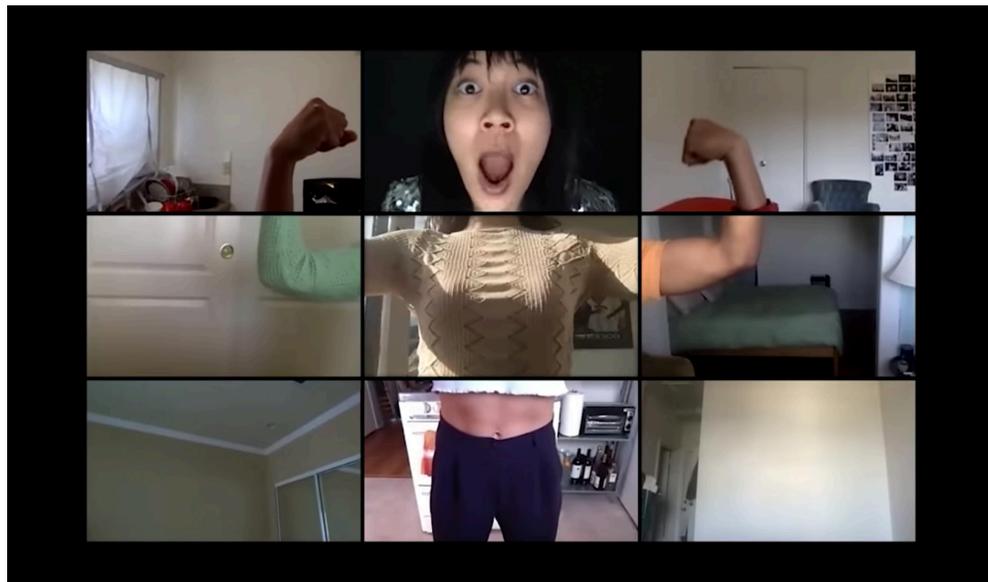
Emory professor Lauren Klein spoke to packed houses at William & Mary for a two day visit focusing on what she has dubbed "data feminism." Working with her collaborator Catherine D'Ignazio of MIT, she argues that intersectional feminist theory and data science belong together to help policy makers and citizens better understand how information visualizations can help them to "examine power," "challenge power," "elevate emotion and embodiment," "rethink binaries and hierarchies," "embrace pluralism," "consider context," and "make labor visible." As her audience watched Klein's presentations full of beautiful slides, GSWS and Data Science participated in a fascinating dialogue about numbers and what they mean.



# ALUMNI UPDATE

## Thao Nguyen

*GSWS Grad Goes Viral:  
Thao & the Get Down  
Stay Down*



"The first great Zoom music video has arrived" announced the headline in The Washington Post praising how GSWS alum Thao Nguyen and her creative team shook up music industry precedents. As the reporter observed, the group cleverly "used

the rigid grid format of the teleconferencing app Zoom to produce the impossible: a fluidly evolving dance video of astonishing visual power and imagination." Nguyen double-majored in GSWS and Sociology during her time at William & Mary, and she

considered a career in women's advocacy. She's been producing albums since 2005, starting with her debut record Like the Linen. Tune in on YouTube to see why "Phenom" has gotten so much attention.



## Judith Butler Zooms with GSWS Students

When the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop was cancelled this year with the closure of campuses and face-to-face gatherings, GSWS students who had planned to attend and learn from seminar leader Judith Butler were very disappointed. Fortunately, Professor Butler offered to hold a special online discussion session from her home in Berkeley with nine William & Mary students who have pursued undergraduate research on gender and sexuality. Most of them were graduating seniors. For an entire hour they group held a lively and frank discussion in which Professor Butler inquired about their research interests and activist commitments. "You all are great!" she exclaimed near the end of the session. "I love your questions!"

Many of the students had read Butler's *Gender Trouble* in their coursework and were eager to hear how Professor Butler looked back on work

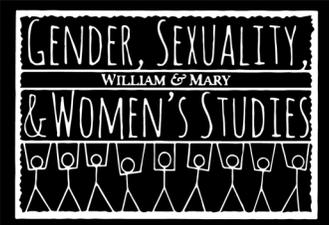
that she had written three decades ago. She noted that it was "one book among many that seem to pivot from feminist theory to queer theory and . . . there were a lot of debates -- about whether it belonged to feminism or whether it was part of a new queer theory, and I didn't have a strong view. I thought maybe it was all those things." She chuckled about having written the book as an underpaid adjunct instructor not anticipating its influence or that so many people outside of academia would read it. She also didn't want her ideas to seem like an "import from the United States" that ignored local histories and regional feminism.

In thinking about fundamental questions such as "what's your idea of masculine or feminine or how do you understand yourself or why is it that we think girls only played this way and boys play this way" and "what you could become in life or who you could be love in

this world, she reflected on her transition from philosophy to interdisciplinary scholarship as a way to understand big issues. Although she thought rigorous arguments were important, she cautioned students against using logical analysis as a "vehicle for cruelty" and to consider the effects of their rhetoric.

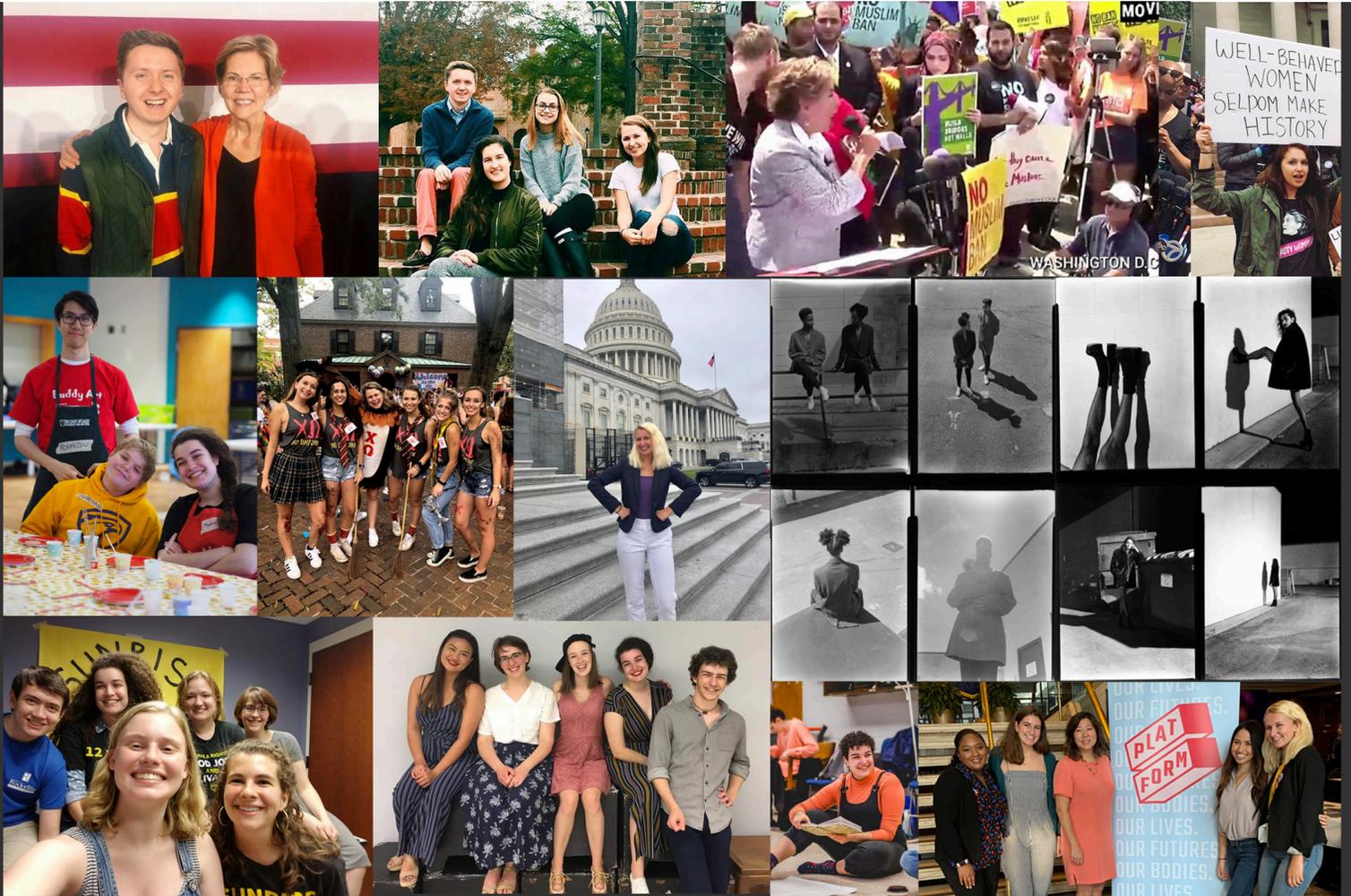
She also reflected on becoming a lightning rod for right-wing outrage in countries that included Argentina, Brazil, Hungary, and France and how gender studies was misunderstood as a "diabolical ideology." She told the story of being confronted by a pious woman who was offended by her work – although she hadn't read it – in Switzerland. Butler argued that the "doctrine of love" including the "love of self and love of the world and forms of love that are not necessarily about sexual love focused on procreation" could offer a space for common ground.





WILLIAM & MARY

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## GIVE TO GSWS

Your contribution to the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program will help our faculty members provide the best learning experience to our students. You can contribute online with your credit card, using our secure web server at: [www.wm.edu/as/gsws/support/index.php](http://www.wm.edu/as/gsws/support/index.php). The contribution form will be pre-selected to direct your gift to the general academic fund for the GSWS, which supports student and faculty needs directly.

To contribute by mail, make your check payable to The College of William & Mary Foundation. Please be sure in your check's memo area to note how you are designating your gift to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.

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### Director of GSWS

Elizabeth Losh