

MARY & WILLIAM

THE GENDER, SEXUALITY & WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



By Interim Director Tom Linneman

“I’ve regularly witnessed our GSWS students doing amazing things that make the world a better place for our communities.”



Hello! I’m Tom Linneman, a professor from the Sociology Department. For the Fall 2016/Spring 2017 academic year, I have been serving as Interim Director of the GSWS program while our intrepid leader Jennifer Putzi is taking a well-deserved research leave. Jenny will be back at the helm July 1st, 2017, to steer the program toward excitingly uncharted waters. My primary goal has been simply to keep the S.S. GSWS afloat. Enough with the maritime analogies.

Given recent events, it has been an interesting year to oversee the GSWS program. For the first time in history, a woman was at the top of a major American political party’s presidential ticket. Also for the first time in history, a woman won more popular votes than the other candidates. Alas, for the first time in history, in terms of electoral votes, a woman lost the race for the presidency. Not only does this glass ceiling remain in place, but on the other side of this ceiling is a man who, among all 119,400,000 American men, is the one man who most clearly embodies the patriarchy that we teach about in our GSWS classes.

After the shock started to wear off (not that it completely has), I must say that, with regard to these recent events, being in the GSWS program this year was a great help for me personally. I have had several productive and provocative discussions with my GSWS colleagues. More importantly, though, I’ve regularly witnessed the actions of our GSWS students, who, as you will see throughout this newsletter, are doing amazing things that will make the world a better place for our communities. Talking to them about their classes and their lives, and seeing their academic and activist accomplishments gives me a big shot of hope in these troubling times.

My first year at the College of William and Mary and as a joint appointment in GSWS and Government has well exceeded any expectations I had coming in. From wonderfully supportive and intellectually engaged colleagues to brilliant and driven students, I am beginning to understand what makes William & Mary such a special place. This year, I had the pleasure of teaching two sections of a new course for GSWS, *The Politics of Reproduction in the United States*. The course examines the history of reproduction as a social and political issue, focusing on birth control, abortion, the medicalization of childbirth and welfare politics. The course investigates how identities constructed around race, disability, gender, and sexuality drive actors in reproductive politics to seek new forms of coercion and freedom. We did close analysis of five Supreme Court cases that helped to illuminate the conceptual landscape of reproduction as a matter of individuals, society, and the state. Students produced projects that interacted with this theme that included podcasts, blogs, research papers, policy memos, amicus briefs, zines, and a documentary. The creativity and success of these projects showcased the passion of the students and showed just how multifaceted reproductive politics can be.



By Assistant Professor Claire McKinney

Next year, I will introduce another new course to the GSWS landscape: a cross-listed course entitled “Medicalized Citizenship.” The course is an exploration of the meaning of political belonging and how, historically and culturally, citizenship has often turned on the construction of what it means to be healthy, diseased, and immune. The course will look at three case studies in order to understand how gender, sexuality, and race as matters of citizenship are shaped by encounters with disease and scientific medicine: settler colonialism and immigration, medicalization of reproduction, and de/medicalization of homosexuality. The course is theoretically grounded,

“.....wonderfully supportive and intellectually engaged colleagues to brilliant and driven students.....”

so we will spend time thinking broadly about the meaning of citizenship and the cultural practices of medicine and science. The course is designated as a COLL 300 for Fall 2017’s theme of In/Exclusion and as such will integrate three incredible guest speakers to enhance the course’s focus on thinking differently about cultural encounters and identity as related to formal and informal institutions of inclusion and exclusion.

Both of these courses speak to my current research. I have recently had a piece published in the journal, *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, that argues that scholars should pay more attention to the social meaning of bodies and the fact that the ways in which we inhabit our bodies is influenced by the social expectations of identity. I have also just finished writing a piece that argues that disability justice requires us to rethink the meaning of human dignity and what sorts of diversity we value and why. Because disability has been primarily understood through medical thinking of disease and cure, we have missed the possibility of thinking about disability outside of scientific frameworks where having a disability is largely a tragedy.

Finally, I continue to work on a book manuscript, tentatively entitled *Autonomous Women? Medicine in the Ethics and Politics of Abortion in the United States*, which investigates the role of medical thinking, medical expertise, and medical professionals as fundamental to the politics of abortion. Following many other scholars, I argue that the pro-life/pro-choice framing of the abortion debate is misleading. But I argue that we have misunderstood the role of medicine in giving us the pro-life/pro-choice frame and in sustaining the non-feminist terms of debate over the importance of abortion as primarily an issue of women’s reproductive health or the life of the fetus. I presented a part of this research at the GSWS Brownbag in March and received wonderfully helpful feedback that will continue to shape the project. William & Mary has been an incredible intellectual home for the past year and I look forward to many more like it. I have been undoubtedly enriched by the encounters with students, staff, and faculty here and look forward to continuing to be a part of the William & Mary GSWS community!

TAYLOR MEDLEY

My future plans after graduation are to continue my internship with Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia before applying to nursing school for nurse-midwifery. My achievements and honors include, Ewell Award Recipient, Nancy Gray Prize in Excellence in GSWS, The Haven Boes/Tucker Volunteer of the Year Award, Vice President of Triota.

SADIE MEADOWS

After graduation I will be working to earn my Masters of Social Work through Columbia University's online program. I am currently on the look out for job opportunities in my field. So far, my ideal situation would include working for a community action program, working as a foster care worker, or providing mental wellness services to those in need.

EMILY THOMAS

My name is Emily Thomas and I am graduating! Ahhhh! I am graduating with a double major in Government and GSWS. After graduation I will be moving home to Jeffersonton, Virginia while job hunting in the D.C. area. I have had the pleasure of serving as the Undergraduate Senior Class President and was honored with the Ewell Award this past Spring semester. I am also honored to graduate as a member of both Phi Sigma Alpha and Triota the national honor societies for political science and gender studies respectively. I'll miss my GSWS family and can't wait to take on the patriarchy in the real world! :)

SAMANTHA BRAVER

After graduation, I plan on entering a 10-month Master's program at the University of Cambridge, with my degree in International Relations & Politics. However, I will be focusing on feminist theory within the IR context and hope to write my thesis on female world leaders/governance. I am also considering law school afterwards, but I ultimately want to enter public service. Last semester at William & Mary, I was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, which had always been a dream of mine. I am so grateful for the GSWS Department at W&M and have greatly enjoyed my time here!

**KATHERINE
AMBROSE**

I am graduating with a double major in International Relations and Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies. After graduation, I will be working for the Nike Office of Government & Public Affairs, and hope to start a career in public policy and international affairs.

MARIANNA STEPNIAK

Post-grad plans: After graduation, I will travel with the William & Mary choir to South Africa, and spend 5 weeks of my summer backpacking Europe with a friend. After that, who knows? I will take a gap year before entering graduate school or law school, and I hope to do work that centers on women's rights or education. I was elected to Mortar Board as a senior, and was recently nominated and accepted into Phi Beta Kappa in spring 2017.

ASHLEIGH ARRINGTON

After graduation I'm hoping to land a job in the museum studies, public history, or preservation fields in the Boston or D.C. areas. In terms of achievements, this semester I travelled to Greenville, South Carolina to present my own research at the Southern Sociological Society's annual meeting, and was awarded a scholarship from the Sociology department to do so.

GSWS MAJORS

- ◇ Katherine Ambrose (GSWS/International Relations)
- ◇ Ashleigh Arrington (GSWS/Sociology)
- ◇ Samantha Braver (GSWS/Government)
- ◇ Tiyrah Fields (GSWS/Psychology)
- ◇ Julia Jermstad (GSWS/Government)
- ◇ Christina Kontzias (GSWS)
- ◇ Andi Mayer (GSWS/Marketing)
- ◇ Sadie Meadows (GSWS/Psychology)
- ◇ Taylor Medley (GSWS)
- ◇ Katie Sosa (Psychology of Gender and Sexuality)
- ◇ Marianna Stepniak (GSWS/English)
- ◇ Emily Thomas (GSWS/Government)

GSWS MINORS

- ◇ Elena Macdonald (Kinesiology and Health Sciences/GSWS)
- ◇ Emily Wasek (Government/GSWS)

On Thursday, April 13th, at the College's annual Evening of Excellence, out of forty Ewell Awards, FOUR were received by senior GSWS majors.

Congratulations to Samantha Braver, Taylor Medley, Marianna Stepniak, and Emily Thomas!

**CONGRATULATIONS
GRADUATES!**

STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

Dean's Prize for Student Scholarship on Women

- ◇ Undergraduate: Marianna Stepniak
- ◇ Graduate: Jan Huebenthal

Nancy Gray Prize for Excellence in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

- ◇ Taylor Medley

Carol Woody Internship Award

- ◇ Hayes Parker-Kepchar
- ◇ Aleksandra Pozor
- ◇ Hannah Major

GSWS Activism Prize

- ◇ The Haven

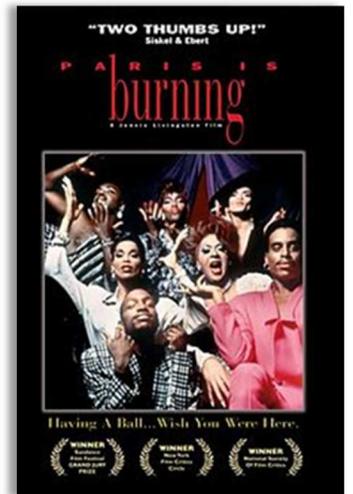
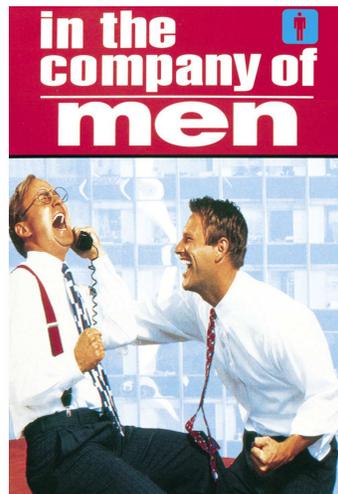




We've had a busy year in GSWS, throwing major events in the fall and spring, as well as numerous smaller events throughout the year. Here is a summary of what we've been up to this year.

Our major event in the fall was a talk by Rita Mae Brown. She was in town for the Williamsburg Book Festival, and we were able to steal her away from that for a couple of hours at the end of her day. Over a hundred people turned out in Andrews 101 in order to hear our own Leisa Meyer introduce Rita Mae, telling a moving story about how much her work meant to her as she was growing up. Then, Rita Mae talked about her life and work, showering the crowd with many fun facts. Did you know that she wrote the screenplay for 1982's "The Slumber Party Massacre"? Well she did! She then answered many questions from the audience, primarily concerning her craft and how she has had such a prolific career. Rita Mae's main point was that if you want to write for a living, you have to write every day, even when you don't feel like it.

In the evenings, we held a film series each semester, during which we screened gender-related films. In the fall, our theme was "Toxic Masculinities," in which we showed the films "The Mask You Live In," "Force Majeure," and "In the Company of Men." In the spring, our theme was "Gender through the Ages," in which we showed the films "Albert Nobbs," "Paris is Burning," and "Tangerine." Each film was accompanied by pizza and followed by a very lively discussion. At the start of the spring semester, we held a one-time discussion group regarding the fall's election. We read selections from Arlie Hochschild's *Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* and Arlene Stein's *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights* (understanding strangers was a theme, in case you hadn't figured that out).



21st Annual Minnie G. Braithwaite Lecture
in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

**All
the
Young
Dudes**



Arlene Stein
Professor of Sociology
Rutgers University

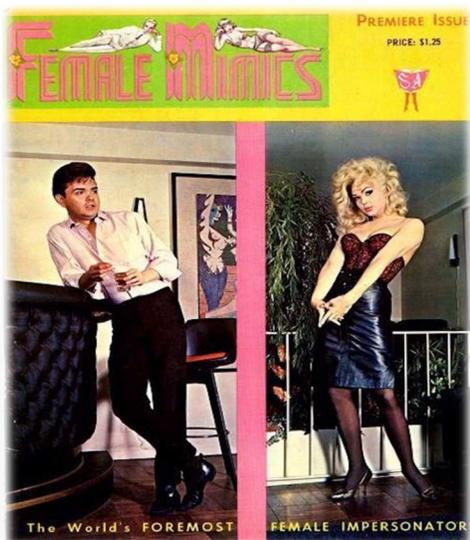
Arlene Stein directs the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers. The author of four books, she received the Simon and Gagnon Award for contributions to the study of sexualities and the Ruth Benedict Book Award.



A few years ago, Arlene Stein heard about a surgeon in Florida who was doing a brisk business masculinizing the chests of female-assigned individuals. She decided to visit his office and interview people undergoing "top surgery." In this talk, she will summarize her findings, telling the stories of four individuals who underwent surgery that day, and what they tell us about transgender masculinity and the future of gender.

7:00pm
Tuesday, March 28th
Tucker Theatre 127A
~Reception to follow~

In the spring, the program hosted Arlene Stein, this year's Minnie Braithwaite lecturer. Stein is a professor of Sociology at Rutgers University and director of their Institute for Research on Women. She is the author of four books, and she is currently writing a book based on her new research project for which she longitudinally has interviewed people who have had "top surgery." The Braithwaite lecture had never ventured into trans issues before, and Professor Stein gave a provocative talk on the relationship between gender and the body.



The next day, she gave a workshop in our Gove seminar room regarding her new book *Going Public: A Guide for Social Scientists*, in which she and her co-author describe how to give research a more public face.

We also held smaller events throughout the year. In the fall, our first brownbag was a panel of three undergraduates who had done interesting research and internships over the summer. Our second talk, given by new Assistant Professor of World Theatre Claire Pamment, concerned the hijras of Pakistan. Finally, Tom Linneman gave a talk on his research on the many masculinities on the popular sitcom "Modern Family."

In the spring, our first brownbag was by English professor and former GSWS director Christy Burns, who spoke about the Bloomsbury group of English writers active at the turn of the twentieth century. Our second brownbag was given by Claire McKinney, GSWS' new joint Assistant Professor with the Government department. Claire's talk was titled "Feminist Abortion Politics: Strategic Action and Gendered Belonging." Our final brownbag for the year was given by Helis Sikk, a recent William and Mary Ph.D. who is teaching fulltime for GSWS this year. Her talk was based on her archival research on LGBT publications from the 1950s, showing how these groundbreaking periodicals often marginalized trans issues.

Congratulations to our GSWS Faculty!



Francesca Sawaya, Professor of American Studies and English

*On Tuesday, April 4th,
Arts and Sciences
Dean Kate Conley gave
out three Faculty
Awards for Teaching
Excellence.*

*This year ALL THREE
recipients had
connections to GSWS,
either through teaching
GSWS courses or
cross-listing courses
with GSWS.*



Victoria Castillo, Visiting Assistant Professor of GSWS



Judith Hand, Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology

Last fall I had the pleasure of teaching Queer Comics (GSWS 290). Queer comics were once an illicit art form, circulating from person to person through underground networks. Although comics have always been a little queer (Batman and Robin anyone?), not all superheroes wear capes. When censorship began to loosen in the 1970s, comics emerged as a vital medium in LGBTQ meaning making and provided another window into a world that still tends to remain hidden. Often mistakenly dismissed as not serious and too simplistic, queer comics from artists such as Tom of Finland to Alison Bechdel have functioned as acts of activism, especially during times of political conservatism.

To help students understand the connections between creation, activism, and queerness, one of the assignments was for each student to produce a three page comic of their own. The projects were so wonderfully smart and insightful, and at times poignant and painful that we decided it would be a shame not to share them with the rest of the campus. With the help of Jennie Davy from Special Collections, we set up an exhibit and successfully managed to queer the Read & Relax area at the Swem Library. The exhibit opened on January 27th with a proper reception, which included a superhero themed cake.

“.....understand the connections between creation, activism, and queerness.....”

The themes covered by our very own underground comic artists on campus addressed the everyday lives of young queers: coming out, navigating relationships with family, friends, and lovers; and the possibilities of finding the people who accept you for who you are. The queer comics exhibit showed what GSWS can be, a space where academia, activism, and art meet, where the personal is political.

I cannot thank enough all the student artists who allowed their artwork to be included and shared their worlds with the rest of us. The students’ creativity and boldness highlights the potential we all have when it comes to creating inclusive spaces in our communities, especially during this time of political uncertainty.



By Visiting Assistant Professor Helis Sikk

Under the leadership of Co-Presidents Eden Tadesse and Taylor Medley, VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood kicked off the semester by attending the Women’s Equality Coalition Lobby Day at the Capitol in Richmond, Virginia! In addition to lobbying several legislators about supporting bills pertaining to issues of bipartisan redistricting reform, access to contraception, equal pay, and more--we heard from Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam and thanked Delegate Mike Mullin for making Williamsburg proud in the General Assembly!

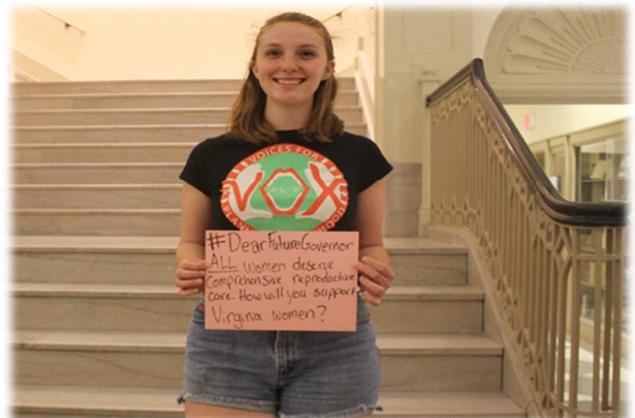


We quickly returned to the General Assembly to sit in on the House Health, Welfare, and Institutions (HWI) Committee meeting as it heard two bills concerning TRAP regulations and funding of Planned Parenthood. We thanked Del. Kaye Kory for introducing legislation to end TRAP in Virginia and her work advocating for reproductive rights.

In February, we held our 3rd Annual Abortion Speak-Out where members of the William & Mary community can tell their abortion stories in a safe and empowering space in an effort to end the stigma and shame surrounding the procedure. We continued this work by holding a #StandWithPP rally to show visible support for Planned Parenthood health centers, patients, and



providers – seven other rallies like this took place on campuses across the state on the same day! In addition to our regular weekly meetings and tabling efforts where we distribute free condoms and resources to the community, VOX partnered with the several student organizations to make connections and increase outreach on campus. We co-hosted a Q&A with Democratic candidate for Governor Tom Perriello alongside our Young Democrats chapter in an effort to increase voter awareness and involvement on campus! We continued this effort through the #DearFutureGovernor social media campaign, which works to uplift the voices and concerns of young people for the upcoming gubernatorial race.

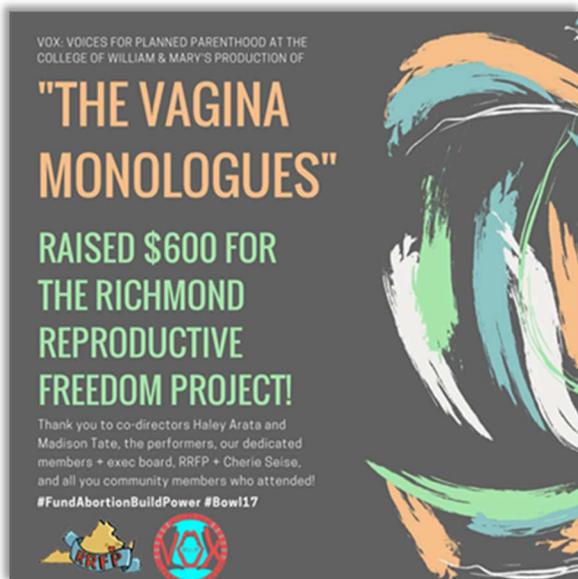


More recently, we worked with the Lambda Alliance for a Sex Re-Education Initiative where we did special outreach around sex health “basics,” queer sex education, and consent.



Last year, VOX was the winning recipient of the GSWS Activism Award.

We have ended our year with electing a new Executive Board and are excited for fresh faces as most members of the current board are graduating or going abroad next year. Caroline Nutter and Madison Tate will be serving as Co-Presidents for the 2017-2018 academic year; we can't wait to see where VOX goes next!



Our last big event of the semester was our annual production of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues. This year's production was co-directed by Haley Arata and Madison Tate. Unique to this year's show was the reading of the W&M Black Lives Matter Conference demands to the crowd and an original monologue written by Lex Varya on trans experience and issues. All ticket proceeds were donated to the Richmond Reproductive Freedom Project, a statewide reproductive justice organization that provides logistic and monetary support for people seeking abortion care. This year's production raised \$600 for RRFP!



By Taylor Medley (GSWS '17)



Mary & William Newsletter

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GENDER, SEXUALITY
AND WOMEN'S STUDIES
ON FACEBOOK**

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. The contribution form will be pre-selected to direct your gift to the general academic fund for 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 that you are designating of your gift for GSWS.

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