

# MARY & WILLIAM

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

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# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



What a year it has been as we celebrated the 100th anniversary of coeducation with many different departments, programs, and student organizations on campus!

Because so many of our students who look beyond the walls of William & Mary are interested in issues involving the media and politics, in the spring semester CNN pundit Ana Navarro met with GSWS 205 students and shared personal stories around the seminar table.

We hosted many guests who study feminism and digital media as well, including Izetta Autumn Mobley, Amy Earhart, and Stefanie Wuschitz. Faculty from the English department also gave popular brown bag talks, so “old media” from the age of print clearly still matters, whether it be the poetry of a 17th century duchess examined by Erin Webster or tabloid stories about child marriage in the early 20th century analyzed by Melanie Dawson. Lynn Pasquerella, president of the Association of American Colleges and Univerities also gave an amazing brown bag talk about hot-button issues on college campuses in the “post-truth era,” particularly those involving transgender students.

The study of masculinity was obviously important in the scholarship that we highlighted this year as well. Douglas Flowe recounted memorable histories of black criminality in New York City during the Gilded Age from the records documenting the experiences of incarcerated men.

As you can see from the pages that follow, we are committed to offering high quality research experiences that are intellectually challenging. You will hear from students who attended the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop with support from GSWS, and student voices figure prominently in our account of the symposium My Mother Was a Computer: Legacies of Gender and Technology, which concluded with this year’s Braithwaite Lecture by Wendy Chun.

In this issue students share their transformative experiences attending the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop.

Of course, we’ll be highlighting our wonderful graduating seniors in this issue. So stay tuned for their exciting adventures as they apply lessons learned in their GSWS classes.

*Elizabeth Losh*

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

### Dean’s Prize for 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.

Katherine Avery  
Michaela Kleber

### Student Activism Award

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

Elena Gaffney

### 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.

Nora Zimmerman  
Rebecca Beale

### Carol Woody Internship Award

This award allows for “real world” experience for distinguished students participating in Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies.

Megumi Matsuda-Rivero  
Bailey Hall  
Leslie Weber  
Gracie Harris

# Douglas Flowe

by Claire McKinney

As part of the commemoration of 100 Years of Women at William & Mary, the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies Program coordinated with the 100 Years of Women steering committee to invite Professor Douglas Flowe to campus to give a public talk on black masculinity. Douglas Flowe, assistant professor of history at Washington University in St. Louis, researches early 20th century New York City with a focus on black men and questions of criminality. Flower received his PhD in history from the University of Rochester in 2014. His talk, entitled “The Crucible of Blackness: African American Men and the Politics of Black Criminality in Early Twentieth Century New York,” was based on his forthcoming book from University of North Carolina Press in March 2020. The February 28 talk was attended by students, faculty, and other college community members who were treated with a theoretically rich and empirically in-depth look at the lives of black men and women involved in running saloons before Prohibition. Flowe presented a theory of “the crucible of blackness,” which identifies main social and economic pressures that would drive black men into criminal behavior in urban New York City. Identifying the demands of masculinity that black men experienced while they were denied access to white masculinity by pervasive racism combined with lack of access to traditional economic success and the intimate politics of the home, Flowe considers criminality as one potentially desirable option for men facing such pressures. A crucible, Flow explained, is a “harrowing gauntlet” or a situation that forces incredibly difficult decision-making to try and make legible the choices of black men trying to navigate racism, capitalism, and gender rela-



tions in the urban environment. At the same time, some of these criminal actors create notions of respectable behavior that regulate behavior in the marginal world of illicit behavior. Unlike older criminological theories that posit cultural degeneracy or economic theories that see a pure calculation between risk and reward, Flowe rejects any overdetermining theory of what makes a person prone to criminal behavior. Instead, he adds the nuance that history affords us: looking at individual lives amidst broad structural patterns reveals a rich tapestry of interaction where crime has psychological, social, eco-

nomi, and other payoffs in a world where other options are closed off. It was an honor to have Douglas Flowe present his theoretically rich and elegant research as part of the celebration of 100 Years of Women at William & Mary. As Flowe reminded us, black masculinity cannot be understood in isolation from men’s interactions with women, especially interactions in the domestic sphere. Flowe added a new perspective that combined thinking about race, masculinity, and place to the wider conversations we have had on campus this year regarding gender.



# Duke Feminist Theory Workshop

## Nadia Ma

My experience at the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop was definitely interesting. I have to confess that this was the first time for me to attend a conference/workshop out of town in my four-years of college life, so you can tell how both excited and intimidated I was before going there. Indeed, when I walked into the huge auditorium on the first morning of the two-day workshop, I immediately got nervous because there were around 400 people sitting in this room, and many of them looked super-professional and appeared to have been in the academy for a long time. I got even more intimidated and a little bit confused when the first speaker started to talk about his works, and that was when I for the first time truly realized the importance of academic accessibility. For the most of the time, I felt like I accidentally broke into this dark universe of unknown knowledge. I understood very little so I could not help trying really hard to grasp some familiar terms and ideas throughout his speech. But don't get me wrong, it was still very informative, and he brought up some really interesting ideas that I have never encountered before, and I was taking notes like crazy on my notebook. However, I think he used very specific, scholarly language (JARGON WARNING was blinking in my head the whole time), which made it really hard for me, or anyone who is not super familiar with this field or the topic, to follow his points throughout the talk. For a moment I really questioned my own academic ability, because I was not able to understand even half of his ideas after four years of study in GSWS.

It would not make my experience worth recalling if I ended up feeling completely discouraged by the difficult subjects discussed by the speakers. Indeed, I think the more valuable and exciting part of my experience was communicating with other scholars during the reception and the small group discussion.



It was during these direct conversations where I was able to make connections with other feminist scholars from various fields, and I truly experienced the support and care from the academic community toward young students like me.

During the reception on the first day of the conference, I was sitting alone at a table feeling absolutely disheartened by the earlier speakers of the day. A few people joined me afterward, and after some brief introductions, I realized that I was the only undergraduate student at the table—the others were either Ph.D. candidates or professors. To my surprise, they understood perfectly how I felt at that moment, and they assured me that I was not the only one having trouble comprehending the speech. Through conversations with them, I understood that it was also a hard choice that the speakers had to make about the speech—how can they present their complicated work within such little time? Do they want to break down and explain the concepts more, or do they want to sacrifice some details to cover more aspects? I still remember a truly inspiring thing she said, that I should not be disheartened by realizing how much I don't understand, because that is exactly where my academic path begins.

Another thing that I really appreciated during the conference was the chance to meet with scholars from different countries around the world and thus hear various perspectives. I witnessed this very interesting intellectual discussion during the reception. Besides that Canadian professor and a couple American professors, there were three scholars from Costa Rica. They were discussing a problematic part of the speech from the second speaker of the day, that when she used a movie to argue for sex positivity, she failed to acknowledge that the sex scene inside was in fact a real rape. Though all the profes-

sors and scholars criticized the speaker's ignorance of the rape, the Canadian professor argued that there was still a necessity to strive for sex positivity. However, the Costa Rican professors argued that sexual violence was far more critical based on their own experience in the field works, and criticized the speaker for not being able to truly get to know ordinary women outside of prestigious academia. This discussion reminds me of the fact that early (white) feminists prioritized the ability to work in their goals without realizing how women of color have long been forced to work and not been able to care for their children. I think this was a truly wonderful real-life experience to see how intersectionality can divide the fundamental orientations of different scholars and how easy it is to assume privileges.

I had a great time at the Duke Feminist Theory Workshop. Although it was intimidating at first, and I am still not able to digest many ideas that I have heard during the conference, I think it was an amazing opportunity to connect with other feminist scholars and to feel the vibe of the welcoming and highly intellectual community. I would absolutely recommend this annual workshop to anyone who is passionate about feminist issues.

## Noah Terrell

The Duke Feminist Theory workshop was an incredibly powerful experience. The two-day event was comprised of lecture-style presentations on the developing projects of keynote speakers C. Riley Snorton, Lauren Berlant, Jocelyn Olcott, and Kim Tallbear. Following these talks were challenging and productive Q&A segments offering a chance for audience engagement with the speakers' scholarship. Picking just one presentation to unpack is impossible without feeling as if I am doing an



injustice to the others. Instead, I will give a snippet on each and encourage everyone to keep an eye out for how these projects unfold in the coming months/years. Snorton discussed his developing project on comparative racialization as historically figured in the U.S. by the biome of the swamp. This project emphasizes notions of hybridity in relation to gender and space, and challenges colonial conceptions of temporality in an experiment Dr. Snorton stated he was taking in his formal writerly practices: he described said experiment as "writing without time." Dr. Berlant's latest project takes up several threads from her earlier co-authored project with Lee Edelman, *Sex, Or the Unbearable*. Dr. Berlant positioned her project as a theory of human desire for the inconvenience of others and the complications pre-subjective structures of affect present to this kind of desire. In general, she offered her project as a way of maintaining the conception of the joy of sex in response to what, in her eyes, is a concerning tendency toward erotophobia in recent feminist circles and scholarship. Dr. Jocelyn Olcott presented an in-depth study on the theories of value of emotional and care labor with early 20th century Central America as a case study. She has been organizing an international panel of feminist scholars to target the question of value in care and emotional labor in hopes of mobilizing region-specific geo-political initiatives. Dr. Kim Tallbear's talk took up a discussion of what she gestured toward as the hegemony of monogamy and what this 'mono-normative' framework has been used to justify in the nation-building project of settler-colonial states. In compliment to her critical analysis, Dr. Tallbear discussed the radical potentials of polyamory – especially solo-poly communities in decolonization practices; solo-poly as she used it indicates a polyamorous community explicitly counter to establishing formal or objectified preferential relationship practices. Dr. Tallbear finds the implicit demand of solo-poly's practitioners



## Jake Beardsley

My name is Jake Beardsley, and I am a sophomore philosophy major at William and Mary. Much of my research thus far has been in queer philosophy, addressing issues of queer ethics as well as the metaphysics of gender. Although all four of the speakers at the workshop were excellent, I gained the most from hearing Kim TallBear and Lauren Berlant's talks, and I would like to say a bit about how I expect their work will shape my future research.

Kim TallBear's lecture made me realize a significant oversight in my work thus far. TallBear is a professor of racial politics who has written extensively in indigenous studies, and her work made me realize that I have overextended many of my philosophical arguments in a way that erases the existence of indigenous peoples. When writing analytic philosophy, I am always tempted to move toward extreme and universal claims; in queer philosophy, this means that I have tended to describe 'queer' and 'heterosexist' ideology as if these were universal concepts which transcend cultures. My greatest takeaway from Kim TallBear's lecture is that queerness, as a concept, exists only in reference to colonialist ideal of a heterosexual, monogamous family structures. While a person's identity or relationships might be 'queer' to the extent that they challenge these norms, TallBear argues (and I am persuaded) that it is wrong to apply this label to family structures that simply exist outside of the colonialist worldview. I will strive to make my future work more accurate and inclusive based on further research in indigenous studies.

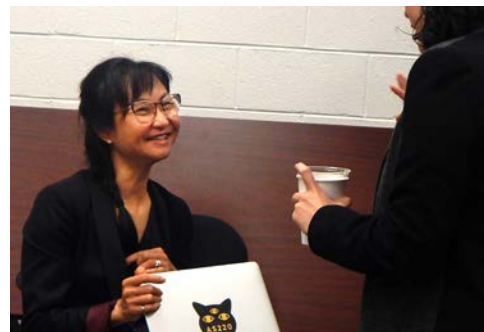
Lauren Berlant touched on a number of topics in a short time, but I was particularly struck by her discussion of the ambivalence, and even the fear, that comes with being a sexual creature. I have been interested in doing work on sexual consent for several months, and I am extremely attracted to her definition of consent, which I recorded as "wanting, or wanting to want, or wanting to be game for" sex. Although it is difficult to distill the essence of her lecture here—the speech itself was, as she admitted, a work in progress—I was personally moved by her characterization of sex as something we desire even to our own detriment. As I continue my research into sexual ethics, I expect to revisit her lecture online, and also to study her book, *Cruel Optimism*, which I purchased at the conference.





# Ana Navarro Visits Intro to GSWS Studies

*Ana Navarro, a regular on The View and frequent guest on CNN, spoke to GSWS students about the 2020 election cycle, her identity as a Latina and a Republican, her reactions to the Orlando shootings, her upcoming wedding, and many other topics about gender and sexuality.*



This year's Braithwaite lecture was part of an ambitious symposium that brought speakers from around the country to discuss scholarship about gender and technology. A class of William and Mary students in a special GSWS seminar read essays and book chapters from the presenters in preparation for the event. "For a Computer Science and GSWS double major like myself, missing it would be inexcusable," class participant Chase Jones wrote in a blog entry about the event.

The first panel of the day focused on Gender and Programming and featured historians Janet Abbate, Marie Hicks, and Sarah McLennan. Student Ally Brimmer observed how many of the speakers focused on the future, as well as the past, and thus they asked, "How do we move forward together?" As Brimmer noted, the history of computer science is one of "discrimination, harassment, and exclusion." Many of the presenters emphasized the ties of the personal to the political. Hicks described her own mother's experiences in the technology sector of a prior generation, and Abbate argued that it was less important for "girls" to "code" than for "boys" to show "respect."

Lauren Winkler observed that on the standing-room-only Gender and Gaming panel "four people spoke about their backgrounds and experiences," and examined "who is considered a gamer," "why is history not being created," and why do "representation and archives" not exist for feminist and queer gaming. This panel included noted queer game scholars Amanda Phillips, Bo Ruberg, and Adrienne Shaw, along with Celia Pearce who has studied how games provide powerful learning environments. Brimmer pointed out that Pearce connected practices from "in-person sport leagues and bridge clubs to new digital worlds."

Jones enjoyed how "Mattie Brice gave a talk on her work and activism. Having followed a complex path between games development, public activism, and running games conferences, Brice offers a unique insight on how games can be used for social change." Her video games include Mainichi (her first game about a transgender woman getting to a coffee shop), Eat (about a student in debt trying to manage food insecurity), and Mission (about the impact of gentrification on restaurant prices). Jones appreciated how "Brice uses games as empowerment" and makes games that are comparable to punk zines, so "an individual can use games for personal reasons, such as 'love letters' to friends."

The last panel of the day, Gender and Online Community, was described by Jones as "arguably the most overarching and contentious panel of the day." Joan Donovan of Data & Society gave a passionate talk about punk protest: "On the Internet, Everyone Knows You're a Nazi." Dorothy Kim discussed how alt-right groups are co-opting feminist praxis and theory to wage war on oppressed groups. Micro-celebrity expert Alice Marwick stated, "I would hate it if people could go back to see what I put out there in high school" Finally, Veronica Paredes summed up the panel with a catalog of feminist and anti-racist groups working to promote online community, personal safety, and digital rights.

As Brimmer wrote, "Wendy Chun's 'My Mother was a Key-Punch Operator' lecture was the perfect way to wrap up the symposium . . . In order to discuss the complexity of legacies, Chun mixed the personal, political, theoretical, and historical. It was through weaving stories of her mother's job with information about the Montreal Massacre, that she herself displayed her own connections."



# Senior Spotlight



**Rebecca Beale**  
*GSWS and Government double major*

Hometown: Palatine, IL  
Future Plans: Pursuing my JD at the University of Pennsylvania School of Law  
Senior Picks: I have so many, but the class that had the largest impact on me was Gul Ozyegin's course, Comparative Studies in Gender and Work. Working with Professor Ozyegin and exploring the topics of the class, I came into my own as a GSWS writer and theorist.



**Annie Brinkley**  
*GSWS major*

When hanging out with my friends, it is always my major that is the most relevant in our conversations. GSWS challenges people to think differently and to question everything. It allows us to view the world not as black and white, but as the rainbow of colors and various shades it actually is made up of. Through this program, I have gained a better understanding of myself, especially in terms of my sexuality. While before taking a GSWS class, I wanted to view myself as normal in terms of my sexuality, I now have learned all the reasons to embrace this unique part of me. The relevance of this degree is all around us, it's on the news when we turn on the T.V., it's weaved throughout the MeToo Movement, and increasingly in conversations concerning equal pay and the lack of diversity in the workforce. Historically, GSWS highlights the underdogs of history that deserve to be in the spotlight when thinking about how far we have progressed as a society. We study people like Christine Jorgensen, a trans woman who is regarded as one of the first people in the United States to undergo sex reassignment surgery. Then there's Audre Lorde who declares herself as a "black feminist lesbian poet warrior mother." She promoted intersectionality in her writing and used her writing talents to speak out against racism, sexism, and homophobia.

There's also Karl Heinrich Ulrichs who courageously is regarded as the first person to publicly come out in 1862. Ulrichs challenged the idea that homosexuality and pedophilia were intertwined and that queerness was not a choice, but rather, something people were born with. Without this major, I would have never learned of these queer heroes, along with the countless others, who came before me and fought for equality. This major has also taught me the progress that we still have left to achieve. Statistics show that the more marginalized someone is, the more susceptible they are to hate crimes. LGBTQ youth make up between five and eight percent of the U.S. youth population, but they comprise around 40 percent of the youth homeless population (Durso & Gates, 2012; Ray, 2006). The fight that GSWS has presented to me will not end until everyone is free. I am incredibly thankful for the lessons I have learned being a GSWS student, and for the tools it has given me to keep up the fight for equality.

Hometown: Baltimore, MD  
Future Plans: Work in Diversity and Inclusion  
Senior Picks: Call Me By Your Name, Moonlight, Call Her Ganda, E. Patrick Johnson's Sweet Tea, Leslie Feinberg's Stone Butch Blues, Alison Bechdel's Fun Home



**Louise Ferrall**  
*Biology and GSWS double major*

I came into college planning on being a biology major, and freshman year picked up a GSWS minor. Over the years I continued to take classes I found interesting, and one day fall semester senior year while talking with Jenny Putzi she pointed out that I was one class away from a major. I quickly upgraded the minor to a major! There are so many fabulous aspects of the GSWS program, from the feeling of community and camaraderie to professors who truly care about students to readings that make me go "Ah-ha! That explains what I've been seeing for years exactly!" For me, the GSWS department gives me an outlet to be creative and explore epistemological approaches. It means that I am taught how to think rather than what to think and encourages me to think outside the box.

Hometown: Crozet, VA  
Future Plans: I am planning on joining the workforce after graduation, preferably in human sexuality education and research.  
Senior Picks: Janelle Monae's Dirty Computer, Roxanne Gay's Bad Feminist, Lindsey West's Shrii

**Niya Gray**  
*Anthropology major and GSWS minor*

My favorite class was Gender and Digital Culture with Professor Losh. It was by far the most interesting and fun class that I have taken in the department.

Hometown: Hampton, VA  
Future Plans: Attending the University of Maryland School of Medicine to enroll in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program  
Senior Picks: Hidden Figures







## Xufan (Nadia) Ma

*Sociology and GSWS double major*

Majoring in GSWS is much more than an intellectual choice for me. It is also the beginning of a life-long self-discovery and self-affirmation journey as it acknowledges my existence in this world as whom I am, wholly, genuinely and justly.

Hometown: Nanjing, China

Future Plans: MSc in Sociology at Oxford or Master in Sociology at Sciences Po (Paris Institute of Political Studies)

Senior Picks: "La Femme Cachée (The Other Woman)" by Colette



## Laura MacDonald

*GSWS and Government double major*

I not only love GSWS, but I think it's vital. GSWS has solidified and heightened my passion for social justice and has given me a space to be vulnerable, curious, understood, and respected. This major has changed the way I think and act for the better and has exposed me to viewpoints I otherwise would have never come into contact with.

Hometown: Fairfax, VA

Future Plans: Try to simultaneously live consciously and survive under capitalism (tips needed)

Senior Picks: Mad at School by Margaret Price, Normal Life by Dean Spade, Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj on Netflix, Crazy Ex-girlfriend on Netflix

## Baldeep Kaur Mann

*GSWS and Psychology double major*

When I was a freshman, I had a vague plan for myself, which changed after I took my first GSWS class here. I was drawn into the Program taking more and more classes to learn about different identities and their intersections. Being able to apply what I learned in my classes immediately was amazing. I got involved with the Program: attending workshops, brownbags, and finally holding positions as the undergrad representative and co-editor of this newsletter. The Program has given me the ability to critically think about the world we live in today and spark conversations to create positive change.

Hometown: Herndon, VA

Future Plans: To continue incorporating what I have learned from the GSWS program into my life and keep learning!

Senior Picks: Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj, BTS, Hidden Figures, Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir by Kai Cheng Thom, and the first ever GSWS class I took with Jenny Putzi!



## Sarah Smith

*Government and GSWS double major*

Hometown: Ashburn, VA

Future Plans: Pursuing a career in journalism or communications  
Senior Picks: My favorite class was my first – "Gender" with Professor Jenny Putzi!



## Madison Pellow

*Finance and GSWS double major*

Hometown: Boston, MA

Future Plans: Working at Brown Brothers Harriman in NYC working in their Private Bank, in a full time marketing role, also working with their Center for Women and Wealth.

Senior Picks: The Handmaid's Tale. My two favorite classes were Queer & Present Danger with Professor Meyer and Comparative Study in Gender and Work with Professor Ozyegin. Both of courses and professors were absolutely amazing and provided discussions and readings that broadened and enriched my perspective of the course topics!





## Arika Thames

*Theatre and GSWS double major*

The GSWS program has given me an incredibly well-rounded understanding of both the history and future of feminist scholarship. Every one of my classes introduced me to new ideas and prompted me to think more critically about the world constructed around me. Pairing GSWS with Theatre was a natural combination for someone like me who wants to think critically about the plays I engage with. This program has made me a better performer, educator, and thinker. GSWS introduced me to so much pop culture and media. Reading *Zami* by Audre Lorde in my Queer Memoir class was a turning point and has changed my life. Also, any major that lets me analyze *Moonlight* for an assignment is amazing in my book!

Hometown: Virginia Beach, VA  
Future Plans: Work with kids as a theatre educator

## Nora Zimmerman

*GSWS major and Linguistics minor*

My GSWS major has allowed me to center my academic career around issues that are important to me. It has given me fascinating conversations, hard conversations, ones that have made me question some of my fundamental understandings of the world. It has given me friends whose passions align with mine. It has given me mentors, professors who value my voice, who push me to do my best work, who care about me.

Hometown: Fairfax, VA



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

### Hannah Rosen

Interview with *Baldeep Kaur Mann*

*For students who are unfamiliar with you, can you please give a short introduction about yourself and your teaching/research interests?*

I am most interested in issues of race and gender in U.S. society, questions that I have approached in my research and teaching mostly from a historical perspective. I am trained in nineteenth-century African American and southern history, with a focus on histories of slavery, emancipation, and postemancipation society, and have always taught in both History and interdisciplinary programs. I have also always been interested in feminist and critical race theory and try to incorporate both into my research and teaching.

*What was your own college experience like? What are some memories that you have taken away from that time?*

I went to a large university in the 1980s and found it hard at first to find a community that was equally committed to the intellectual and political pursuits that had most meaning to me. But I eventually found that community in both History and Women's Studies seminars, making my last two years of college much more satisfying. Some of my most formative experiences, though, occurred outside of the classroom, in protests calling for university disinvestment from South Africa as a strategy to help undermine apartheid as well as in meetings and protests organized by feminist organizations. In these spaces, I learned both how to listen and learn from others' experiences and also how not to be afraid to speak my mind.

*What called you to professorship?*

After college, I worked for several years in the non-profit world, both in organizations conducting research on primarily youth social services and in



a community service center for young people in New York City. The work was satisfying, but I was eager to understand better the forces behind the challenges faced by the people these agencies were attempting to serve. This, and the desire to return to a life that allowed me more time to read books, brought me to graduate study in U.S. history with an emphasis on race and gender, the forces producing and reproducing inequality, and the strategies for resisting those forces found in African American history.

*Following that, how do you incorporate GSWS into your teaching?*

Some of my courses are explicitly focused on GSWS, such as a graduate seminar in Feminist Theory and an undergraduate course on Gendered Histories of Slavery and Emancipation. My other courses also always bring in questions of gender difference and inequality, such as my survey course in African American history or a COLL 100 class I teach on Race and Racism in the U.S. Gender studies is part of these courses when, for instance, we explore the gendered and sexual dimensions to the violence and discrimination that African Americans had to face under slavery, or gender differences in how African Americans experienced and resisted slavery, or gendered norms and conflicts within African American communities.

*How/why did you first become involved in GSWS related issues?*

I was raised in the 1960s and 70s in New York City, and both the Civil Rights/Black Power movements and second wave Feminism were all around me, so it is hard for me to remember a time when I was not to some degree interested in issues that are part of GSWS. I first came to the formal study of gender, though, through my interest in understanding racial difference and racism, which often led me to critiques of mainstream feminism. For instance, the first Women's Studies course that I took in college was a seminar taught by Chandra Mohanty entitled "Feminist Theory and the Challenge of Third World Feminisms" (an amazing class!). For my undergraduate thesis, I researched African American women's involvement in the movement for Women's Suffrage in the U.S. I ended up writing a history of black women's organizing for suffrage and debates within African American communities about women's political rights that was also a critique of white women's suffrage organizations and leaders for their racism and exclusion.

*What is your favorite part of William & Mary?*

Teaching at William & Mary is the best!



***When engaging in your activism and research, what methods do you use to try to avoid vicarious trauma? As in, how do you take care of yourself as you go through such traumatic materials?***

I do at times need to take some time away from the weight of the suffering contained in many of the research materials I use. But I am driven also to pursue such research by knowledge that the people I am studying, when they testified to that suffering, made clear that they wanted their stories told. I also take heart, as often as I can, in the evidence of the endless resilience, creativity, and beauty of human beings and their communities, even when forced to live under enormous, at times seemingly impossible, constraints.



***Your book, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South*, received multiple awards, like the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians First Book Prize. Can you tell students the process of researching and writing such a work, as well as a little description of it?***

The first thing I would say about researching and writing any book is that it takes a long time, and that my ideas for the project evolved as I worked with and thought about the materials I was finding and as I drafted many versions of each of the chapters.

Researching and writing can be a lonely process, but it is also important to share your work in progress with others. It is in conversation that with others that many of the best ideas develop, or at least I have found that in my own work.

*Terror in the Heart of Freedom* focuses on the period of Reconstruction, years when former slaves looked ahead to the opportunities made possible by their new status as free persons while many white southerners resisted those possibilities by targeting freedpeople with violence, including sexual violence against black women. I argue in the book that at stake in both the sexual violence of the period and in testimony about it after the fact were contested meanings for race, meanings that are central to understanding how a liberal republic that had abolished slavery and declared legal racial equality nonetheless ultimately excluded African Americans from full citizenship for nearly a century afterward.

The book explores gendered dynamics of political struggle by examining the histories of rape that African-American women suffered at the hands of white men during episodes of Reconstruction-era political violence. I also consider the flood of racist rhetoric circulated in these same years – in the conservative press, by political leaders in Reconstruction-era constitutional conventions, and in police and vigilante discourse about allegedly widespread criminal conduct of former slaves – that cast African-American women and men as lacking what were considered to be honorable gender norms, sexuality, and family relationships. These depictions imputed an unrestrained sexuality to former slaves that supposedly reflected black men's unsuitability for suffrage and black women's unworthiness for citizenship, including state protection from sexual abuse. And I argue that this gendered rhetoric of race was both reflected in and reproduced through the acts of cross-racial sexual violence that occurred during this period. Finally, I show how sexual violence and racist rhetoric worked together to produce a climate of terror in which black men and women were forced to maneuver as they sought to claim their rights as citizens.

Throughout the book, I investigate both this climate of terror and African-American resistance to it, and a key example of that resistance is the effort of formerly enslaved women to document to federal officials the sexual violence that they and their communities suffered. Women's testimony about rape before federal officials provides a window onto both white-on-black rape in this period and also onto how African American women claimed rights as citizens by demanding protection from violence and by affirming their identities as individuals with the same bodily integrity and "honor" as others. Their testimony reveals how new rights to refuse the demands of white men for sex and to control their bodies and sexual

relationships were for African-American women a central part of the meaning of freedom.

So, in sum, the book tries to contribute to an understanding of the rise and fall of Reconstruction – and of the possibility of a genuine legal racial equality being established after the Civil War – by demonstrating the ways race and racism were reconsolidated following emancipation through gendered violence, discourses, and experiences. And it places both African American women and gender at the center of the history of racial violence and of African Americans' struggle for, and white southerners' battle against, a racially inclusive national citizenship.

***How do you feel as a white woman studying in your aforementioned field of research?***

For me personally, I cannot think of a reason for me to study in another field. Especially as a person who has benefited immensely from white privilege, I believe it is my responsibility to investigate the histories of race that have shaped our society and to learn from the stories of people disadvantaged by those very histories. I did not have to do that through African American history, but I chose to because these are the stories that have always most moved me and have felt most closely tied to my own. As a white person in this field, it is also my responsibility to engage with and learn from the research and writing of scholars of color, who bring different experiences to the material we study and who are likely to see different things. I aspire to be part of a community of minds that seeks vision and understanding shaped together, drawing on multiple narratives, analyses, and viewpoints.

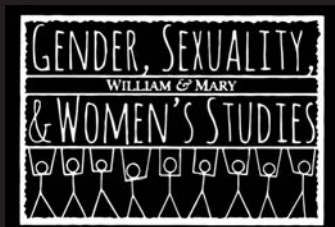
***Following that question, how does your field center the voices of people of color, both from the time period being studied and of scholars of the field?***

It is the responsibility of the researcher to make every effort to find those voices in the material we use to build our narratives and analyses, even when not immediately evident to us in the most readily available archives. And we should expect that of each other. It is also the responsibility of scholars to make sure that in all arenas in which we share our work and ideas that scholars of color are core participants. Finally, as the designers of syllabi, faculty have the opportunity to bring multiple voices to our students, and to foreground the voices of people of color, by shaping those syllabi around the writing of scholars from diverse experiences and perspectives.



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