

Fall 2013 Newsletter

Colgate

Center for Women's Studies

Volume 20, Issue 1

A Note from the Director

I write with exciting news. Our Women and Globalization Search is now complete. Dr. Cristina Serna, whose recent PhD is in Chicana/o Studies at University of California, Santa Barbara, has accepted our offer! Dr. Serna's work is original, interdisciplinary, and truly transnational, reflecting Latina queer art and activism on both sides of the Mexican-American border. Thank you to the many students, staff, and faculty members who participated in this search. We are thrilled with the outcome and will welcome Cristina as our first ever 100% Women's Studies faculty member in July!

Our joint Women's Studies and Economics search is underway as I write this. We hope for a successful completion by the end of the winter!

As we grow and build the program, we honor and remember those faculty who have been leaders in our program and have since moved on to new projects in retirement. This Fall, our program hosted a wonderful celebration dinner honoring Kay Johnston's numerous contributions to Women's Studies. We already miss her so much. However, Kay is staying involved in scholarship; Kay and I will be presenting our work on professional women and retirement in Galway, Ireland in April!

Our programming remains vital; Che Hatter is doing a wonderful job in his first year as Program Assistant. Ze makes sure that our Brown Bags remain smart, provocative and popular, oversees our hardworking program interns, and manages other programming throughout the semester!

Our commitment to improving campus climate continues. Che and I serve on both the Sexual Climate Advisory Committee (SCAC) and the Bystander Intervention Initiative. We are happy to report that we will be fine-tuning and launching a Bystander Intervention program called PACT this coming Spring. This program is already quite successful at Duke and UNH, and we believe it will do a world of good for our campus climate! If you'd like to be involved in these efforts, we'd love to have more WMST faculty involved in this initiative.

This December, two of our faculty received tenure, Janel Benson, and Catherine Cardelus, and Eliza Kent was promoted to full professor. Congratulations to all! We will celebrate these achievements as well as our seniors at our Annual Women's Studies Banquet in April. Hope to see you then!

Open Hours at the Center for Women's Studies

Monday - Thursday
8 AM - 9:30 PM

Friday
8 AM - 5 PM

Sunday
4:30 PM - 9:30 PM



Seneca Falls Trip Reflections

By Jennifer Godbout '15

To my own surprise and maybe to others at Colgate, Hamilton, NY rests in a prime location to investigate the early history of the women's rights movement. Our trip to Seneca Falls and Auburn gave us a glimpse at the rich women's rights and abolitionist histories of the area as we toured Elizabeth Cady Stanton's home, the Wesleyan Chapel, Harriet Tubman's House of the Aged, and Senator William Seward's mansion in Auburn, NY.

Full and content from our breakfast of scones and croissants, nearly forty Colgate students from the two Introduction to Women's Studies classes and the History of Women's Rights course departed on an early Saturday morning for our full day ahead in Seneca Falls and Auburn.

The chilly morning started as two National Historic Park rangers met us outside of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's house. Through the tour, we learned about the life of Stanton, a women's rights activist who organized the Seneca Falls Convention and wrote speeches to train local women on speaking up in co-ed conversationals. In addition to working to change women's lives, she also raised seven children!

We left Stanton's house and drove to the reconstructed Wesleyan Chapel, the assembly hall of the Seneca Falls Convention where the Declaration of Sentiments was signed. In 1848, men and women came from around the country to Seneca Falls for a convention unheard of at the time. Together, they took their aggravations with the law and society and formed resolutions as they saw fit. While by no means the first declaration of discontent, the Declaration of Sentiments drove new force and organization behind the movement. The women's rights movement of later years would look back at the inspiring Seneca Falls Convention with admiration.

Following the Wesleyan Chapel, we headed to Harriet Tubman's property. A lively reenactment of Tubman's life as an escaped slave, her organization with the Underground Railroad, and her work in Auburn with elderly in her House of Aged presented a new dimension of New York state's rich 19th century history. The women's rights and abolitionist movements were not championed by a particular individual or group, but rather by a diverse array of passionate people. Tubman dedicated her life to helping those in need. Even though Tubman's early life held more than her share of personal battles against slavery and the enslavement of her family, her whole life long, Harriet Tubman chose not to stop battling for equality.

Our final stop of the day, Senator William Seward's house, provided an immediate contrast to our earlier stops. The large gated house of Senator Seward stood impressively intact and beautifully kept up. The interior of the house stood in pristine condition as if Seward and his family knew that one day people would come by for tours. Senator Seward was well-known for his abolitionist political principles. He was the purchaser of Alaska as well as President Lincoln's Secretary of State. Seward fought for his conviction in the political realm of the senate, and provided a safe house in the Underground Railroad. His abolitionist politics and efforts bolster the diversity of activism alongside Stanton and Tubman.

While the legacies of Stanton, Tubman and Seward take their place of note in most American history textbooks, through exploring their homes and lives, their dedication to their causes became astoundingly evident. That day, the forty of us had the closest opportunity we may ever have to walk in the footsteps of such dedicated and inspiring individuals of New York State's abolitionist and women's rights history.



Exploring the History of Women's Rights By Margaret Schuelke '15

This Fall, students from Professor Dudden's class as well as students from the Introduction to Women's Studies courses traveled to Seneca Falls, NY and the surrounding areas. The first stop on the trip was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's house in Seneca Falls, which she lived in from 1847 to 1862 when she and her family moved to New York City. Our tour guides urged us to think about Stanton's legacy of ideas rather than her legacy – or lack there – of possessions. In this house, Stanton gave birth to her many children, and she became overwhelmed with the tasks of motherhood and housework as she was underwhelmed by the intellectual companionship the area provided. It was Stanton complaining to her peers about her frustrations with her womanly home life that helped foster the idea to have a women's rights convention right there in Seneca Falls.

But where to hold this convention? The answer was the next stop on the tour, the Wesleyan Chapel, which was known to the convention's organizers as a forum for free speech. The chapel today is small but nonetheless fully capable of holding the three hundred or so people who attended the convention in 1848. Much of the structure is not original, as the chapel, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton's house, lived many lives before it was acquired by the National Parks Service – it had functioned as an opera house, a grocery store, and a laundromat just to name a few. The



Parks Service set about a restoration process similar to that of Stanton's house, and as a result, although the building still stands, most of the infrastructure is composed of new materials, the exceptions being select parts of the walls and plaster and the wooden portions of the roof. It was exhilarating to stand where pioneers of the women's rights movement stood and spoke of the need for fifty percent of the population to be acknowledged as independent human beings entitled to all the rights and liberties of the rest of humanity.

After a brief drive to Auburn, NY, the group arrived at Harriet Tubman's House. Our tour guide emphasized Tubman's desire to not only help escaped slaves, but also the elderly and infirm (with her Home for the Aged) as well as her desire to further her own life and economic status through her own efforts. For instance, when Tubman was offered the plot of land in Auburn free of charge, she insisted on paying for the land herself. The Home for the Aged was a large series of rooms, all of which had been furnished either by descendants of Tubman or by congregation members of the church which currently owns the property.

The final stop on the tour was the William Henry Seward House. Beautiful inside and out, the home was fitting for the man who was a New York state senator, a two-term New York state governor, a US senator, and Abraham Lincoln's and Andrew Johnson's Secretary of State. Seward believed that all Americans were born equal and entitled to the same rights and liberties. Overall, the day was long but informative and interesting as we all learned much about the nearby history of Upstate New York.

YouTube star Laci Green talks about the “Best Sex Ever!” By Aidan Davis '16, Multicultural and LGBTQ Affairs Intern

Where is the female pleasure center? If I had chlamydia, would I know it? And what does it mean to “pop your cherry?” These questions and many more were answered by Laci Green in her talk titled “Best Sex Ever!” Laci Green is a YouTube celebrity who promotes positive sexuality through her sex education channel Sex+. Her talk went over many things, including the anatomy of the vagina. Although I knew what a vagina looked like from research and the fact that I have one, I never knew all the parts. I had comprehensive sex education in middle school and found that I learned more in the 30 minutes from Laci Green than I ever did in sex education class. In addition to learning the basic anatomy of both a vagina and a penis, many people were surprised to know the pleasure center for a female is the clitoris. Many females best reach their climax through clitoral stimulation. I found this information particularly relevant after discussing Koedt in my women’s studies class who also argued against Freud saying vaginal orgasms are the only way for females to climax.

She then segwayed into talking about STIs. One thing I found interesting was that many people will not show symptoms of chlamydia or gonorrhea if they have it, so it is very important to get reasonably timed check-ups from a certified doctor. She then talked of the myth of popping one’s cherry, which is a troublesome phrase. She explained that there is a flexible piece of flesh that slightly covers the inside of a vagina called the hymen but it often does not cover the whole thing. It stretches but is not popped and does not need to be broken. Enjoyable, comfortable, consensual, and pleasurable sex is so important, and if it causes pain, something wrong is most likely happening.

Taking some time to stretch it with perhaps something smaller first is better. Gradually you can work your way up to more, but it is not advised to just plunge right in if a vagina owner has not had sex before or not in a very long while. It is also important to note that not all hymens bleed and not all vulva owners have hymens. It is not an accurate indicator of “virginal” status per se. 100% of serious female athletes break their hymens before ever having vaginally penetrative sex. So no, a female’s cherry does not actually “pop.”

I found it so surprising and shocking that my sexual education did not provide me half of the valuable information I learned from Laci Green, which I attribute to society demonizing sex and keeping many in the dark. It’s not a simple debate on abstinence only versus comprehensive anymore. Proper sex education catered to positive sexuality is a great method to counteract all the myths out in the world. Of course, people can and should make their own personal choices about their lives as sexual beings, but I feel they have a right to go into the world and evaluate sexual situations based on real knowledge and not biased, partly inaccurate notions. Society cannot assume that with all the facts that people will just go wild--although they have a right to. We all make different choices based on personal experiences and varying comfort levels. Proper information and education just allows people to approach each situation with a sense of not only empowerment, but also control.



WMST Brown Bag Series - Fall 2013

Tuesdays at 11:30 AM

The F Word: Intersectional Feminisms

Aidan Davis '16, Ben Mandell '14, Melissa Melendez '14, and Lindsey Skerker '14

Reflections on DOMA & Prop 8 Supreme Court Decisions

Britt Berner '14, Tara Nahill '14, Mark Stern, and Ken Valente

Co-sponsored with LGBTQ Initiatives

Hispanic Heritage Month: Latin@ Identity at Colgate

Panel of students

Co-sponsored with LASO

Dear Colleague Letter and Title IX Compliance

Val Brogan, Meika Loe, Nancy Rios, Lyn Rugg, and Kim Taylor

ReThink Pink: Moving Beyond Breast Cancer Awareness

Gayle Sulik, Executive Director of Breast Cancer Consortium

Co-sponsored with Shaw Wellness Institute, SOAN, and Student Health

Coming Out Stories

Panel of students

Co-sponsored with LGBTQ Initiatives

Commodification, Gender, and Sexual Pleasure

Evan Chartier '14, Mel Grover-Schwartz '14, and Che Hatter

Co-sponsored with Yes Means Yes

Local and Global Feminist Art

Jess Aquino '14, Meli Gamez '14, and Padma Kaimal

Co-sponsored with ARTS

Gender and Climate Change: Lessons from the Movement to End Mountaintop Removal Coal

Mining

Joyce Barry, Visiting Professor of Women's Studies, Hamilton College

Co-sponsored with ENST, GEOG, Sustainability, and SOAN

Social Entrepreneurship: How Feminist Values Drive Women

Panel of TIA students

Co-sponsored with TIA (Thought Into Action)

Equity in Higher Education

Students of SOCI 303: Sociology in Education

"Esto Si Se Dice": Women's Experience with Illegal Abortion in Highland Bolivia, 1952-2010

Tasha Kimball, Visiting Assistant Professor of History

Positive Sexuality at Colgate

Evan Chartier '14, Melanie Grover-Schwartz '14, Zoe Huston '15, and Marvin Vilma '14

Wires

By April Bailey '14

This semester I designed an independent study with Professor Mary Simonson called *Feminisms Through Dance*. The course reviews chief feminist choreographers' contributions to dance, beginning in the present and moving retrospectively to the early modern period ending with Isadora Duncan. Through weekly readings and viewings culminating in final research and reflection papers, I examined the ways feminism contributes to the development of modern dance and pushes the field in new and interesting directions.

Historically, women have heavily populated dance, making it distinct from other art forms. Since in Western culture women are subject to male gaze, dance often features women's bodies. At the turn of the century in the United States, dance was a medium for sexual exhibitionism more than serious artistic work. Figures such as Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham began to emerge seeking to be taken seriously as artists and academics. These and subsequent contributors changed dance by altering its aesthetic (by creating a space for people of color, for asexuality, and for new ways of moving), its process (by making it more collaborative), and its content (by making it explicitly feminist).

Complementing this academic research, I choreographed and directed my own piece of feminist dance for a public performance on November 16 in Brehmer Theater in the Dana Arts



Center. Featuring seventeen Colgate dancers and attended by over 150 people, the show included four movements. The first movement asked the audience to consider the ways social mores and customs constrict their behavior. Gender was marked by shirtedness (blue, pink, or purple). This drew attention to how in many circumstances the behaviors associated with a particular gender are as arbitrary as choosing to put on a blue or pink shirt. The second movement considered heteronormativity and how specific desire is associated with specific genders. The third movement presented one of the unfortunate consequences of otherizing a group: violence. Finally, the fourth movement provided a space for rebellion and genuine expression of the self regardless of gender stereotypes.

Entitled *Wires*, the piece drew on a famous essay by Marilyn Frye that uses the metaphor of a birdcage to explain how different iterations of oppression intersect to confine individuals. When examined independently, it is difficult to see the true cost of oppression, but when taken together, the constriction becomes clear. *Wires* seeks to put this constriction on display, and in the process deconstruct it.

Fall 2013 WMST Courses

ENGL 204: American Lit: Native American Writers
ENGL 208: Sex and the Global City
ENGL 336: Contemporary Native American Lit
FMST 350: Hollywood and World: Gender/Sex
FSEM 126: The Biology of Women
FSEM 169: African Francophone Literature
HIST 311: Women's Rights in US History

JWST 343: Gender and Judaism
LGBT 350: Sexuality, Gender, and the Law
PCON 260: Gender in Conflict and Peace
RELG 282: Experiencing Islam
WMST 202: Intro to Women's Studies
WMST 499: Honors: Women's Mental Health

Shift Toward Greatness

By Charity Whyte '16

On Friday, October 25, I was one of the thirteen selected students, amongst other staff and faculty members, to meet with Secretary Clinton before her Global Leaders address. I was both humbled and honored to have the opportunity to sit amongst Secretary Clinton and hear her responses to peers' questions. I was astounded and happily surprised by her warm, personable nature and honest responses to the questions that were asked. With the lack of candor of many politicians, it was quite refreshing to be in the same room with a politician that strayed away from regurgitating impersonal party ideals. Secretary Clinton remained truthful to responses about her views on the crisis in Syria, the future direction for our country, and the encumbering obstacles that she has had to push pass as a woman of such high political stature. She chuckled when mentioning she was often treated as the "honorary man in the room" and highlighted that most of the respect she was given wasn't because of who she was, but because of her position as the Secretary of State. She continued by mentioning that she found solidarity amongst other women in her field and found solace in her passion to serve the country she loves.

I appreciated her sincerity and instantly connected with her because of her willingness to open up to us. I have found that it is in these moments that people are truly inspired, and these connections spark shifts toward greatness. Secretary Clinton called for America to shift back to community, focus on funding the future through the empowerment of students, and affirmed that America's "habits of the heart" will lead us to great renewal. "With all the challenges we face at home and abroad, our country is so well positioned to rise to any of them, to roll up our sleeves together, to make sure that we are keeping faith with the people of our country, and to continue to lead in all the ways that the 21st century demands," stated Secretary Clinton in her lecture.

As a quintessential world changer, advocate for the rights of all persons, and phenomenal political figure Secretary Clinton continues to lead a respectable life, and has given a framework by which I aspire to live by. It was a pleasure to have met her, and I am more than grateful for the opportunity to have heard her speak at my university.



Jackson Katz and Bystander Initiatives on Campus

By James Speight '14

This year, the Women's Studies program has been involved in initiatives that serve to alter the perception of women's issues on Colgate's campus. The first initiative was acquiring nationally recognized activist and documentarian Jackson Katz to give a lecture on the misperception of women's issues. Katz's method deals with spreading awareness on violence against women to the portion of the population who usually perpetrates these offenses—men. He stated that when we gender label issues into the categories of men and women, the out-group usually ignores or fails to recognize the importance of the message, even though the issue directly relates to them.

In regard to the issue of domestic violence, which has been gender labeled as a women's issue, it allows men, the population who are statistically more responsible for committing these heinous acts, to easily separate themselves and remain absent from conversations on how to address the problem. This event was successful and assisted in adding discourse into how we advertise issues to the Colgate community.

In addition, Women's Studies in collaboration with the Shaw Wellness Center, has formed a Bystander Intervention working group created to conduct research on implementing a bystander intervention program on Colgate's campus. The group has been meeting frequently to discuss programs being practiced on the campus' of peer institutions, as well as organizing single gender student caucuses to illicit answers on how to best ensure the success and sustainability of similar programs at Colgate. Thus far the response has been overwhelmingly positive, as students not only want a program of this nature on campus, but the caucuses have aided in spreading awareness to groups across campus.

Tweet Tweet!

By Lindsey Skerker '14, Publications Intern

From the Trudy Fitness Center (@ColgateFitness), to the Volleyball team (@Colgate_VB), to the Colgate Jewish Union (@ColgateJews), when we arrived back on campus this fall, it seemed that almost every department, club, or team had their own Twitter page. The Program Assistant, Che Hatter, and the seven Center for Women's Studies interns thus decided that Women's Studies needed a Twitter page to keep up with the increasing social media use across campus. Twitter, a social media site, has become increasingly popular ever since its debut in March 2006. Twitter is essentially an online social networking and microblogging website that allows users to "tweet" and to read what others "tweet." These "tweets" are messages limited to 140 characters. This forces users to keep their messages quick and simple. Twitter is now one of the world's top ten most-visited websites.

One of the beauties of Twitter is the way that it can connect users. Certain words, events, or breaking news according to keyword usage or hashtags will "trend" on the website, and users can keep up to date with the latest "trends" of the moment. The WMST Twitter account has been so helpful in getting the word out to the campus to remind followers about happenings in the Center and to inform people of last-minute changes to events. Be sure to check out twitter.com/ColgateWMST to follow us!



Spotlight on FSEM 126: The Biology of Women By Professor Priscilla Van Wynsberghe

This semester, I taught a new WMST course, FSEM126: The Biology of Women. This Core Scientific Perspectives course discussed the biological mechanisms and social issues surrounding the concepts of gender, female anatomy, reproduction, sexually transmitted diseases and breast cancer. Throughout the term, class discussions were enhanced by visits from Jamie Bergeron, Assistant Director of LGBTQ Initiatives; Evan Chartier '14 – FC2 expert; Val Brogan - Campus Safety expert on Sexual Assault; Debra Alt - Doula; and Nancy Pruitt, Associate Dean of the Faculty and breast cancer survivor. Outside of class, students were helped through their first semester of college by their LINK Lindsey Skerker '14 – WMST and History double major.

Students gained insight into the scientific process by conducting an experiment in the laboratory to investigate the effect of hormones and drugs on nematode fertility. In addition, students researched women's health topics of their choice, and presented their findings as written research papers and posters which hung in the Center for Women's Studies during the last three weeks of the semester. Students exhibited their diverse interests and backgrounds through their Women's Health topics related to vaginal infections, body dissatisfaction, anorexia, depression, abortion in the black community, war rape, cancer, hypothyroidism and childbirth in the 21st century.

As Barbara Seamen, women's health journalist and activist said, "Women who talk to each other about health will go on to talk to each other about anything and everything." This course aimed to help shape a new group of first-years poised to act as leaders, resources, and activists for themselves and their peers both at Colgate and beyond.



An excerpt from: Kimmie Garner Interviews Janet Little: July 16, 2012

KG: Okay. How did it feel to be on campus in the late 1970s?

JL: Well the social scene in the late 70s and the early 80s was definitely centered around the fraternities. . . . I do remember some of the women being upset about the fact that the social scene was directed by the men. At that time, there weren't any sororities and actually the reason that sororities were created at Colgate was really for housing. At least as I understand it, sororities were initiated at Colgate to provide more housing options for women. So, I would say that, from an athletic standpoint, the frustrating thing was that the volleyball team was a pretty good team. We achieved a competitive level that would have allowed us to go on to the Easterns, to the regional tournament, and then had we qualified there, we would have gone on to the AIAW national tournament. And at this point, and even probably 15 or 10 years later, there would be no question, money would be found to pay for the women to go to that. But back then, the money was not going to be made available for the women to go. . . . And at that time, the national structure in athletics was small college and large college and there were athletically-based scholarships at a few schools. . . . So anyway, we didn't qualify. But before we went to the regionals, the women on the team knew that we weren't going to be supported to go to the nationals anyway so they didn't have as much incentive. I think they played with anger more than excitement.

. . . read the rest at colgate.edu/wmst

Announcements

Allegorical Athena

Submissions are being collected for the *Allegorical Athena*, a gender-oriented magazine edited and produced by the Center for Women's Studies. Submit anything related to gender issues: drawings, articles, poetry, photography, and more. Suggested topics include (but are not limited to): beauty perceptions, the media, sexuality, sexism, and relationships.

For more information or to submit works, please contact the Program Assistant, Che Hatter, at rhatter@colgate.edu or Publications Intern, Lindsey Skerker, at lskerker@colgate.edu

A Note from the Program Assistant

Whew! There really isn't any other way to sum up my first semester as the Program Assistant for the Center. This Fall has definitely been an exciting one. The turnouts at our Brown Bags are as strong as ever, averaging at 86 attendees. The Feminist Film Series continues to provide a way of generating discussion among students. And we've hosted a couple of evening lectures that had attendees spilling out onto the Quad: "Sex+" with Laci Green and "More Than A Few Good Men" with Jackson Katz. The support for WMST programming has been nothing short of remarkable this semester!

We've participated in quite a few off campus events as well. Our annual trip to Seneca Falls was a great opportunity for students to get in touch with the historical significance of Upstate New York to the women's liberation and slavery abolition movements. In November, we sponsored a Brooklyn Feminist Art and Mentorship Trip, which was a huge endeavor. Four students spent a weekend touring the Sackler Center for Feminist Art in the Brooklyn Museum where we viewed the famous *The Dinner Party* exhibit by Judy Chicago and Wangechi Mutu's exhibit *A Fantastic Journey*. After dinner and a bit of exploration in New York City, we ended the evening with a Paula Cole and Ani DiFranco concert. Throughout the day, we were joined by Hilary Hursh '11, who shared her experiences with students. This trip succeeded in providing access to the presence of feminist voices in art and connected current students with recent alumni as well as each other.

In fact, quite a few on campus events saw the return of recent Women's Studies alumni. Christina Liu '13 returned for the showing of her production *This is Not a Play About Sex*, which saw an amazingly supportive response from our community. And Rachel Greenburg '10 presented for one of our Thursday Brown Bags about her work as an intern for Secretary Hillary Clinton during Family Weekend.

Our seven student interns this semester have been hardworking and phenomenal. They've maintained and expanded the social media presence of the Center by regularly updating our Feminisms in Action blog, Facebook page, and new Twitter account. Be sure to follow us and keep track of what's happening in the Center and going on throughout campus. I'm looking forward to being able to work with them again in the Spring.

I don't know about you, but if the Fall is any indication, then the Spring semester is already looking pretty exciting. See you then!

The Center for Women's Studies Staff

Director:

Meika Loe

Associate Professor of
Sociology and Women's
Studies; Director of
LGBTQ; Director of
Women's Studies

Program Assistant:

Che Hatter

Administrative Assistant:

Letta Palmer

Student Interns:

Aidan Davis '16
Valerie Garcia '15
Gloria Kebirungi '15
Renyelle Jimenez '14
Stephanie Nabine '16
Lindsey Skerker '14
Michelle Van Veen '14