

Colgate Center for Women's Studies

Fall 2015 Newsletter

Volume 22 Issue 1

A Note from the Director

This is truly an exciting time to be affiliated with Women's Studies!

We have our largest group of senior concentrators ever – 17! Our Brown Bag lunches draw an average of 120 audience members. These are the largest crowds we have ever seen.

We have twelve amazing interns working in the Center (6 for WMST and 6 for LGBTQ Initiatives). Our classes are in great demand. In response to student pleas, we are offering four sections of Intro in the spring. Despite this, we continue to have to turn away countless students. It is inspiring to see that our students are more social justice oriented than ever, coming off of a year and a half of activism at Colgate.

This Fall we hosted all of our favorite WMST activities: a New Faculty Orientation and welcome gathering in the Center, a September trip to Seneca Falls and Harriet Tubman's home in Auburn NY, an Open House for new and potential WMST students to meet our professors, and a Happy Hour with senior WMST concentrators.

Brown Bag Tuesdays are always amazing. This semester, I was thrilled to be able to introduce modern day social justice superhero Bree Newsome to a packed crowd in the Center. We also hosted Dr. Kanchan Mathur, a feminist development scholar from Jaipur, India, whom I met when visiting the country last Spring. She has helped to set up gender studies programs in India and has herself been a lifelong activist in relation to sexual violence.

As always, what makes this work deeply meaningful is our community of students, staff, and faculty. My heart swells with pride when I think of our students bravely speaking out about sexual violence on campus and our amazing faculty who are deeply committed to continuing the dialogue and the movement.

I am so thankful to our new WMST team members, Heidi Angueira and Allie Fry. Allie, our new PA, is a recent Gender Studies and Africana Studies graduate from Knox College, and Heidi, our new AA, is a mom and a current student in WMST who has fabulous admin skills. I'm afraid this semester was a bit like trial by fire for both of them, but they weathered it beautifully, and seem to want to continue on. They have caught the Colgate WMST bug!

Looking ahead, the Spring Brown Bag schedule is almost complete. A few highlights include our bi-annual birth stories panel, the Monument Quilt Project (similar to the AIDS Quilt, but about sexual violence), a visit from acclaimed activist Barbara Smith, and capstone students' praxis projects.

Finally, we look forward to reconnecting with our concentrators and WMST Professor Sarah Wider who is currently leading the Santa Fe Study Group. We are excited to hear about their experiences working with indigenous communities in New Mexico.

-Meika Loe-



Open Hours
Center for Women's Studies:
M-Th: 8am-9:30pm
F: 8am-6:30pm
Su: 10:30am-5:30pm



Me, Bree, and Some Knowledgeable Tea: What's the Point of Being Scared?

Ashleandra Opoku '17 interviews Bree Newsome

AO: How do you take on the task of constantly educating yourself?

BN: You have to be a constant student. What's really interesting if you look at any revolutionary leader, in their biographies, they all have some period of time where they just study ferociously. That's really what I want to do, and I've been writing to other people to just give me a list of books that I need to read. As cliché as it is, knowledge is truly power; that's the fact of the matter. That's why any time you see any oppressive force come to power, one of the first things they do is they burn the books and attack the schools; they make it harder for you to be students. They come after professors. We see these same things happening right now with the attacks on education because it's the access to knowledge itself. It's not just because of what you learn; it's the skill of thinking critically. Teaching you to think critically, to question, is in and of itself a threat to the dominant power. Students are always targets, and universities are always a place of great political struggle.

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AO: Women and LGBTQ people have been in movements since the beginning of time, but they are often denied credit and erased from history because they don't fit into the dominant narrative. How does your gender play a role in your activism?

BN: I'm so accustomed to being in spaces where I am a minority that I don't always think about it. I am just so adjusted to it, but to the extent I am aware of it, I do recognize the importance of Black women seeing a Black woman be the one to take down the Confederate Flag. That is why I volunteered to do it. I recognize the importance of being a woman in a position of leadership within the movement. That in and of itself is a form of activism.

There is still a lot of tension within the Black community of not recognizing patriarchy as a thing. I don't get to wake up and say, “I'm going to deal with sexism or racism this morning.” I don't get that option, it is just something I constantly have to do in all these spaces I go into. I'm just going where I want to go, even with film I didn't say “Film is not diverse enough, so I'm going to be a filmmaker.” I did not want to be a filmmaker to help it be diverse; I just said this is where I want to be. This is the space that I feel natural to be in and I'm going to demand space in there.

Read the full blog post at :

<http://colgatefeminism.blogspot.com/2015/10/mebreeandsomeknowledgeable-tea.html>



CENTER FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES
BROWN BAG SERIES | FALL 2015
The Center for WMST @ 11:30am



SEPTEMBER

- 1 The F Word | Monica Hoh '16, Charity Whyte '16, Toni Stickler '16
- 8 Confederate Flags and All That Jazz: Racism in the South and Beyond | Berlisha Morton
- 15 Intersection of Latin American & Gender Identities | Latin American Student Organization
- 22 Reflecting on the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Bill | Cynthia Terrell
- 24 Poetry Performance: African-American Aesthetics in Poetry | Tracie Morris
- 29 Rosa, Martin, and Bree: Civil Rights in 2015 | Bree Newsome | *Cosponsored by Sio Chair Kezia Page*

OCTOBER

- 6 Body Image and Eating Disorders | Rachel Goldberg '16
- 20 QPOC Coming Out Stories | LGBTQ Students of Color Panel
- 22 Violent Femmes: Reflections on Creating the Dances of "Bird Suite" | Tanya Calamoneri, Dages Juvelier Keates, Micaela Gardner, Cristina Sema, Mary Simonson
Cosponsored by the Colgate Arts Council
- 27 The Women's Movement in India: My Journey | Kanchan Mathur

NOVEMBER

- 3 African Feminisms | Africana and Latin American Studies
- 10 Inverting the (Master) Narrative: Re/imaging Dominant International Development Discourses | Students from EDUC 303
- 17 Who Counts as Human? What Psychology Can Tell us About Subtle Gender Bias | April Bailey '14

DECEMBER

- 1 Trapped in the Glass Closet: Feminine Straight Men and the Politics of Coming Out | Travis Beaver
- 8 Womanism/Feminism in the Professional World | Dena Robinson '12

Photos (from top to bottom):
 (1) Maylei Blackwell presents "Geographies of Difference: Cautionary Tales from Transnational Feminist Travels"
 (2) Women's Studies interns, LGBTQ Studies interns and program assistant with Bree Newsome)
 (3) LGBTQ Students of Color Panel presents "QPOC Coming Out Stories"
 (4) Even with the renovation, the brown bags are always packed.
 (5) Kanchan Mathur, introduced by director Meika Loe, presents "The Women's Movement in India: My Journey"



photo credit: Kristi Boazman '16

From the Mission Statement of Colgate Forward and the ACC:

“While important, existing programming aimed at positive sexuality and preventing sexual assault does not adequately support the survivors of sexual violence present on this campus. As a result of our collective frustration, members of this community come together to protest the administration’s lack of transparency and the violent presentation of the HEDS data. In addition, we cannot allow those who have taken an active role in silencing voices and experiences into the Women’s Studies Center, as it has been a safe place for many survivors and their supporters on this campus.

Our human chain around the Women’s Studies Center represents us standing in solidarity as members of the Colgate community who acknowledge that institutional reforms are imperative to change the response to sexual violence on this campus. In linking together, we stand with one another as survivors and supporters, and not as survey statistics. We will not be broken. We are linked through our humanity, and we approach the issue of sexual violence on Colgate’s campus with an intersectional lens.

All members of the community are implicated in Colgate’s response to sexual violence, but we acknowledge that this may look different for individuals with various identities. We are cognizant of the fact that those with marginalized identities, with respect to race, socioeconomic status, marginalized orientations and gender identities, citizenship, and ability experience the highest rates of sexual violence. We emphasize these differences because Colgate’s policies do not adequately reflect these nuances.”

Read the full mission statement, demands, and sign the petition: <http://www.studentsagainstsilence.com/>

From the Women's Studies Faculty and Staff:

Dear Colgate Community,

We in Women's Studies are troubled by the culture of sexual violence on campus. We have been deeply moved by survivors' testimonies, accounts we have heard repeated for too many years. We affirm that many of our students are hurting. We are present with you; we are listening. We support your activism.

As faculty and staff who have long been engaged in the struggle, we reaffirm our commitment to creating a campus culture that does not tolerate sexual assault, harassment, or bias, and that supports survivors of these incidents in their healing process and actively works to prevent and end sexual violence.

While many of us have worked for improvements in violence prevention and equity policy, we know this is not enough, because sexual violence continues to be a major problem on this campus. We want to continue to create spaces of solidarity and cultural awareness in order to shift cultures of silence and violence. We believe that ongoing dialogue and action is crucial.

In the following ways we will continue to work towards justice on campus:

- We will encourage dialogue among student survivors and allies by facilitating a weekly reading group that supports survivor's healing processes.
- We will encourage critical dialogue among faculty on the topic of sexual violence through offering teaching resources and teach-in opportunities.
- We will raise awareness about historical dimensions of activism to end sexual violence at Colgate, by creating social movement timelines and materials that are easily accessible to the campus.
- We will work to build campus understandings of the intersectional dimensions of sexual power and violence and the ways that gender-based, class-based, racial, sexual, etc. hierarchies have long been maintained through social and political systems.

With dialogue and collective action we can do better to prevent sexual violence and support survivors. We are all in this together.

Signed,

Rebecca Miller Ammerman | Heidi Angueira | Claire Baldwin | Antonio Barrera | Danny Barreto | Travis Beaver | Janel Benson | Jesi Buell | John Connor | Kim Creasap | Allie Fry | Maureen Hays-Mitchell | Jennifer Hull | Linck Johnson | Hélène Julien | Padma Kaimal | Deborah Knuth Klenk | Meika Loe | Elizabeth Marlowe | Clarice Martin | Mary Moran | Berlisha R. Morton | Nimanthi Rajasingham | Anna Ríos-Rojas | Cristina Serna | Mary Simonson | Suzanne B. Spring | Lynn Staley | Linn Underhill | Priscilla Van Wynsberghe | Jing Wang | Sarah Wider

Spring 2016 WMST Courses:

WMST 202 Intro to Women's Studies | Serna, Cristina; Thomson, Susan; Loe, Meika
WMST 205 A Queer Latina Visualities | Serna, Cristina
WMST 490 A Women's Studies Senior Seminar | Wider, Sarah A.
ANTH 221 A Kinship and Marriage | Nicolae, Lavinia M.
ANTH 371 A Gender & Society in Africa | Moran, Mary H.
ENGL 202 A Justice/Power-Postcolonial Lit | Rajasingham, Nimanthi E.
HIST 311 A Women's Rights in US History | Hull, Jennifer A.
PCON 260 A Gender in Conflict and Peace | Thomson, Susan M.
POSC 364 A Politics-India/Pakistan/Bangladesh I | Murshid, Navine
RELG 206 A Hindu Goddesses | Bordeaux, Joel E.
SOC 220 A Gender, Sexuality, & Society | Beaver, Travis D
SOC 367 A Sociology of Gender | Creasap, Kimberly A.

A Conversation with Christina (Poppy) Lui '13

Interview by: Monica Hoh '16

MH: How were you involved in WMST/feminism at Colgate? How does it apply to your life now?

CL: I was a Women's Studies (WMST) major (double major with theater), directed *The Vagina Monologues* twice, and interned at the Center for WMST for three years. I also wrote and produced an original play, *This Is Not A Play About Sex*, in my last two years of my time at Colgate. WMST and feminism applies to every aspect of my life: the way I choose roles I want to perform as an actress, the way I took no bullshit from men while I was a bartender in the city, the way I practice communication with my partners, the types of communities I immerse myself in, the way I watch films, everything.

MH: What are you up to now?

CL: I'm rehearsing for three shows that are all geared for full production in the winter and spring of 2016 (*The Gambler* with Phoenix Ensemble Theatre at *The Wild Project*, *Double Falsehood* with *Letter of Marque Theater Company* at *Irondale*, and *BODY* with *Blessed Unrest* at *The New Ohio Theater*). I am also building the theater company I founded called *The Collective Sex*, the project that birthed out of *This Is Not A Play About Sex*.

MH: What advice would you like to give current WMST concentrators?

CL: Stay soft, stay loving, stay tender. This work can be challenging, and it can make us hard or bitter. It takes lots of courage to stay in your softness. Love is the strongest choice. After you have moved through anger, through pain, through judgment and injustice, right as you are about to think, "Ugh," is this how it's always going to be? Why bother?" Right at that moment, choose love instead.

MH: Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for students at Colgate and/or seniors who are graduating soon?

CL: My biggest piece of advice is to not give a fuck what people think about you. For real. Measure yourself by your own internal value system. Build your own internal value system. What things do you love? What do you have tons of passion for? What is stopping you from doing those things? To hell with what people expect of you or think of you. We waste so much of our energy worrying about how we appear to the outside eye.

Learn to find peace in the fact that everything changes. You won't be doing "one thing" after you graduate so don't feel a need to answer, "What are you doing when you graduate?" The answer is everything. Just start somewhere. The secret is it really doesn't matter where.

A few more words of wisdom:

Spend some time with yourself. You learn so much in solitude.
Surround yourself with the type of person you want to become.
Adopt a pay-it-forward attitude.
Don't have a plan, have passion.
Don't take yourself too seriously.

Greetings from the Colgate study group in New Mexico! With six WMST majors on the trip, we had to take a picture together atop a mesa at Chaco Canyon today! We all send our best to campus.
photo credit: Natalie Krause



Sound Poetry with Tracie Morris

Event Review: (Sept. 24 Brown Bag) by Evelyn Lawson '18

Tracie Morris, a poet, vocalist, performer, and academic, performed a few pieces of sound poetry that blew me away and left me speechless. I did not know what sound poetry was before attending her brown bag, so her performance was extra shocking. The first poem that she performed was prefaced with two videos of Doris Day, one of her dancing with Fred Astaire and another of her singing "Que Sera Sera". After the "Que Sera Sera" video, Morris began her poem, which consisted of the words "que sera sera" being repeated in a shrill, raspy voice at various octaves. Most of the time she didn't even get the whole phrase out, just the first half. It wasn't a very pleasant sounding piece of poetry, but the message she was conveying was clear: the femininity being portrayed by Doris Day is oppressive, depressing, and stifling. The second two pieces of poetry were more rap-like and enjoyable. Her first piece was more of a critique of femininity, and her other two pieces were nostalgic of Brooklyn and her experiences amassed while growing up there. I really enjoyed her performances because she has a different style of expression than most poets or artists in general. She told the audience that each poem is performed differently based on the energy that she gets from the audience—no other artist that I know of performs in this versatile manner. Although Tracie Morris is not an artist that I would normally choose to watch perform, I'm glad I was exposed to her unfamiliar style of expression.

Kanchan Mathur

“The Women’s Movement in India: My Journey”

Event Review: (Oct. 27 Brown Bag) by Michael Rapaport '18

Kanchan Mathur started out by joking about how she was a “feminist at birth” and how she was always a problem child. Instead of striving to be a “good female” she questioned why she had a duty to make her brother hot food late at night when he came home, even though she had exams in the morning.

As she grew older and was making her way through graduate studies at the University of Delhi, news and media began to discuss gang rape of women, and the beginning of publicity toward dowry deaths (murders of women shortly after a male husband receives a dowry for marrying the woman). She made the point that there tended to be less activism for these types of crimes and issues because of the Indian societal view that violence in the private domain is not public business. She said that popular view was that things that occur within a family’s four walls are problems for the respective families to deal with.

Another issue she brought up later was the horrifying prospect of forced sati. Sati is the ancient tradition of a widow throwing herself into her husband’s funeral pyre and burning to death, a sign of honor and another aspect of “a perfect wife” in Indian society. This dehumanization of women without their husbands is problematic enough even for the dominantly patriarchal Indian government to officially outlaw it.

Overall, the talk gave a lot of insight into a personal journey and experience of living as a woman in India though a time period of social change and the sorts of backlash that came with it. She talked about the groups she worked with and the work she did in promoting activism and awareness toward issues of gender in her society, giving us ideas on how to react to such issues in our own.

A Note from the Program Assistant

When I accepted a position at the Colgate Center for Women's Studies, I had no idea that my very high expectations for the Center for Women's Studies could be exceeded. I feel so grateful to work in a Center where students, faculty, and staff are so committed to social justice and critical engagement.

Our Brown Bag series has been especially engaging. Activists local and global spoke to their experiences and offered their expertise. Bree Newsome, the organizer known for her high-profile action of removing the Confederate Flag from the South Carolina capitol flagpole after the Charleston massacre, spoke to us about putting one's body on the line for justice. Kanchan Mathur, an activist and scholar from India, shared her journey in the Indian feminist movement to combat sexual violence. Students shared the impact of their identities in a world dictated by systems of oppression. Professors shared their research and insights. All together, the series was dynamic and provocative.

It has brought me immense pride to see students taking initiative in the Center and on campus. Our interns worked tirelessly to foster a feminist community and challenge oppressive normativity. Their efforts included analysing pop culture news through a feminist lens on our blog, "Feminisms in Action," and hosting zine-making workshops. Additionally, "Beyond Title IX," a dialogue space cultivated by student leaders in the Network, SORT, and WMST, addressed students' accountability to each other in ending rape on campus and supporting survivors of sexual and dating violence.

This semester, students organized a protest which shattered the silence on sexual assault at Colgate. As survivors shared their stories at the Chapel in a campus-wide speak out, I was in awe of their courage to speak truth to power. At the Center, we are committed to sustaining this dialogue and movement. Next semester will feature several major projects regarding the dismantling of rape culture.

How can next semester measure up to this semester? Believe it or not, I am confident we are in store for another powerful semester. Thank you to everyone for welcoming me into this community. I look forward to our next semester together!

-Allie Fry-

The Center for Women's Studies Staff

Director: Meika Loe

Program Assistant: Allie Fry

Administrative Assistant: Heidi Angueira

Student Interns:

Erin Diguglielmo '17, Women's Health

Rachel Drucker '17, Sexual Violence

Monica Hoh '16, Information Technology and Resources

Ashleandra Opoku '17, Multicultural and LGBTQ Affairs

Hannah Shaheen O'Malley '17, Publications

