

## Department of Women &amp; Gender Studies

## connections

## Letter from the Chair

As you read through this year's edition of *Connections*, you'll learn about the extraordinary commitments, scholarship, solutions, and creativity that underline everything we do and care about in Women & Gender Studies — and the enormous contributions that our faculty and students make within and far beyond the University of Delaware. Our programs and initiatives continue to reach hundreds of members of the university community, as we offer a robust schedule of student-focused events and conversations that address the power dynamics that fuel gender-based violence and oppression, and seek solutions to ethnic, sexual, religious, and class divides.

Partnering with departments and units across the UD campus from Fall 2019 through Fall 2020, Women & Gender Studies will spearhead the major teaching initiative, **"OUR VOTE: History. Advocacy. Justice."** to commemorate the power and privilege of suffrage. Not only does 2020 mark the centennial of the 19th Amendment allowing certain women the right to vote, it is the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment allowing

non-white men the right to vote. These milestones also coincide with a presidential election year, and the power of voting will be much in the news and on our minds.

"OUR VOTE" will engage students and the community on topics and events that reflect upon the history and impact of social justice advocacy, the democratic process, and laws

relevant courses across the University. Musical, dance, and theater performances will address the history of suffrage and civil rights and the voices of women and social-justice leaders in America. A community-reader series will focus on the struggles for empowerment and social justice, with special lectures from faculty across a broad range of perspectives from multiple disciplines. Student research will

get students writing, thinking, researching, and creating projects that deepen their understanding of democracy and the right to vote.

We encourage alumnae and alumni to become

involved in "OUR VOTE" initiatives, so please let us know if you have ideas or topics you would like to see addressed during the three semesters, and if you would like to participate. Whether you are currently working in politics, government, or social justice advocacy, or have a historical perspective to share, and would like a chance to speak or present at one of our events, please let us hear from you!

— Patricia Sloane-White



## HISTORY. ADVOCACY. JUSTICE.

which both advance and restrict the rights of citizenship and political access. Just as in 1920, when suffrage was still denied to many Americans, voting rights remain under attack in many states, disproportionately affecting low-income and minority voters. So, too, is the very notion of democracy — and the rights of citizens and non-citizens — threatened in nations worldwide.

Events currently planned for "OUR VOTE" include a themed curriculum for interested students, with a three-semester listing of

## Ann V. Bell: Faculty Research Award Recipient

By Margaret D. Stetz, Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities

Through their endowment's Women's Studies Faculty Research Award, Mae and Robert Carter have continued to advance scholarship and support research focused on issues that are central to women's lives.

The 2018 Faculty Research Award recipient is **Dr. Ann V. Bell**, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Delaware, who is at the forefront of examining the issue of women's reproductive health in intersectional

ways that give full weight to the combined effects of gender, class, and race. Her book *Misconception: Social Class & Infertility in America* (Rutgers, 2014), has made an impact

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through its study of women's experiences of infertility and its concentration on how those experiences are shaped by class- and race-based social understandings of infertility and

reproduction, which also affect reproductive decision-making. More recently, Dr. Bell has been examining the gendered components of reproduction through interviews with men experiencing infertility as well as with same-sex couples seeking medical treatment to conceive. Currently, she is exploring contraceptive inequalities by documenting and analyzing both women's and providers' attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs around reproductive health.

Dr. Bell's research, presented at the Faculty Research Award lecture in October 2019, examines "A Neglected Disparity: Race, Class, Gender and the Lived Experience of Abortion," an increasingly political focal point in the United States. As Dr. Bell explains in her research, the topic of abortion abounds with stereotypes and misperceptions: "Despite its extensiveness, the practice of abortion

is silenced, giving the effect of rarity rather than commonality. In turn, this prevalence paradox stigmatizes abortion, and constructs its patients as deviant and non-normative . . . a universal 'Abortion Patient,' often portrayed as a young, unmarried, poor woman of color, despite the significant diversity inherent in the women receiving the procedure." To counter this "disconnect" from the truth, Dr. Bell designs research questions to elicit new information and thus to challenge the prevailing views, asking "How might such a disconnect shape women's lived experiences of abortion?" Dr. Bell's Faculty Research Award-funded research closely examines the social construction of abortion, how its embedded stereotypes influence how women understand and experience abortion, and how a woman's life circumstances, including race, class, and gender, shape that experience.

## The Diversity Research Café

By Patricia Sloane-White

This Diversity Research Café, now in its third year, continued to advance the Department of Women & Gender Studies' mission to foster discussion among faculty, staff, and graduate students across the University on issues related to diversity, gender, women, and sexuality. Each Café, intended to cultivate new research ideas, curricular offerings, insight into classroom approaches and collaborative projects, is led by an invited speaker whose work explores active approaches to addressing and understanding systems of inequality.



In September 2018, The Diversity Research Café welcomed **Dr. Sharon Block**, Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine, who discussed "De-Policing the Classroom: Teaching Race, Sexuality, and Colonialism." She described her own experience in reframing how learning happens for students from diverse backgrounds, whether in large lecture classes or small seminars, as we discussed ways in which the structure of our classrooms might promote or inhibit full engagement as we teach controversial and traumatic subjects such as genocide, human enslavement, and

sexual violence. Dr. Block also shared her expertise for using creative pedagogies in the digital humanities to tie historical subjects to students' modern concerns, as instructors strive to reach students across political, ideological, and academic spectrums.



In October 2018, The Diversity Research Café welcomed **Dr. Aida Hurtado**, Professor and Luis Leal Endowed Chair in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who discussed "Feminism in the Age of Trump," an event co-sponsored by the UD ADVANCE Institute. Noting that many of feminism's hard-won battles and revolutionary changes are under increasing threat as legislation erases advances made during the last 40 years, she asked, "what role should feminist mobilization play in future social change?" Dr. Hurtado's discussion engaged attendees in brainstorming about the promise of renewal through social justice activism, informed by her research as a social psychologist focused on intersectional feminisms, processes of racialization, and Latinas/os educational achievement.



The April 2019 Diversity Research Café welcomed **Dr. Lisa Bowleg**, Professor of Applied Social Psychology at The George Washington University. Dr. Bowleg – who was a student in the very first Women's Studies class taught by Dr. Margaret Stetz at Georgetown University – discussed "The Intersectionality Tool Kit," a resource she developed for public policy researchers to ensure that they understand and then follow clear guidelines for documenting the complex effects of class, sexuality, race, and oppression that impact at-risk populations. She discussed her role in the creation and training of a multidisciplinary research team that uses innovative theoretical perspectives such as intersectionality, resilience, and social-ecological theories as well as multiple research methods, including qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and geospatial analytics. Research teams utilizing Dr. Bowleg's Intersectionality Tool Kit continue to develop culturally relevant programs, interventions, and policies to reduce health inequities and improve health and wellness for people in understudied Black communities.

## Spotlight: Andrea Glass-Heffner

By Chiara Sabina



Authentic, dedicated, and stimulating are three words to describe **Dr. Andrea Glass-Heffner**, Adjunct Instructor in Women & Gender Studies, who brings an array of talents to the department. Students in her course, "Cultural Introduction to Sexualities and Gender Studies" appreciate how engaging, invested, and inclusive she is in the classroom. She is a fierce ally to the LGBTQ+ community, and has served as a board member of the LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania, worked on the Center's oral history project, and is currently the President of the Ephrata Performing Arts Center, a theater dedicated to producing "theater that matters" and showcases diverse voices. For more than 15 years, Dr. Glass-Heffner has worked for non-profits, including as executive director of the Ephrata Area Chamber of Commerce, leading community efforts in economic development and social justice, and documenting cultural landscapes as a photographer.

Dr. Glass-Heffner holds two master's degrees, one in American Studies (Pennsylvania State University) and one in American History and Museum Studies (University of Delaware), and recently defended her dissertation entitled, "Gentrification, Interrupted: Place-Based-Identity, Vanishing Landscapes, and the War on Gentrification in Urban America," receiving her doctorate in American Studies from Penn State Harrisburg. Serving as associate editor for the journal *Cultural Analysis*, and her expansive focus on gender and sexuality, urban culture and folklore, place-based identity, and popular culture ensures her classes are interdisciplinary and include diverse media sources. "Many of my students come to class looking to learn something about both themselves and the world around them," Dr. Glass-Heffner notes. "I am truly blessed knowing that the enthusiasm and passion that I have for my students, my research, and my classes, has changed the lives of others."

## Welcome Barbara Ley

By Pascha Bueno-Hansen

Beginning in Fall 2019, **Associate Professor Barbara Ley** shifts her appointment to the Department of Women & Gender Studies as a seventy-five percent faculty member, with the balance of her commitment continuing in the Department of Communication. This position shift allows Dr. Ley to get back to her roots, which revolved around Women & Gender studies, interdisciplinary teaching, and research.

With her teaching and research moving towards the study of trauma and trauma-informed care, Dr. Ley looks forward to involvement in the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services (DVPS) Program and the new Center for the Study of Gender Based-Violence, both housed within the Department of Women & Gender Studies. She will teach "Gender, Culture and Digital Media" as well as her signature course, "Mindfulness and Self-Care for Secondary Trauma: Gender and Social Justice

Perspectives," particularly relevant within the DVPS Program, which attracts students entering domestic violence-related service professions. This course correlates with Dr. Ley's current book project, a social, cultural and feminist analysis of the emergence of neuro-scientific models for the study of trauma-informed care, particularly in the context of adoption and parenting adopted children in trauma-informed ways. Her course not only explores the neuro-science of trauma, but also the science and therapeutic dimensions from social, cultural, feminist, and anti-racist perspectives, developed in cultural contexts, and the tools for self-care and trauma



management produced and used in social contexts that hold the potential to both perpetuate and challenge dominant systems of power.

As a certified yoga instructor, Dr. Ley is eager to both teach about embodied practices as well as bring the practices into her classes. A key question animating this work is, How do we come to the body for healing while keeping present the societal aspects of structural violence such as sexism, racism, and homo- and transphobia? Along these lines, Dr. Ley will be developing new courses that explore the principles and practices of trauma-informed care as well as trauma, social justice and embodied healing.



# Faculty News

**Pascha Bueno-Hansen**, during her 2018-2019 sabbatical year, made four research trips to Latin America as well as significant progress on her book project tentatively entitled *Transitional Justice Otherwise: Dissident Genders and Sexualities in the Andes*. She delivered four keynote lectures in Colombia, published two articles, and secured a contract to publish *Decolonizando la Justicia Transicional: Las Luchas Feministas y de Derechos Humanos en el Perú* (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, forthcoming, 2020).



**Jennifer Naccarelli**, Associate Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Women & Gender Studies, was selected by The Biden Institute as its inaugural Faculty Member of the Month. The Biden Institute works hand in hand with members of the University of Delaware's faculty who are working in policy areas that align with its fundamental issues. Since 2011, Dr.

Naccarelli has served as the Director of UD's Domestic Violence Prevention and Services (DVPS) Program. In this capacity she teaches, researches, designs curriculums and field experiences in the field of gender-based violence. Last year, she received an additional grant from the Verizon Foundation to support the DVPS program. Additionally, with colleagues, she implemented the Faculty Peer Observation Program at UD, training faculty to provide peers with formative feedback on teaching.

**Chiara Sabina** was awarded a 2019 University of Delaware General University Research grant for her project "A Holistic Community-based Intervention for Domestic Violence in Quito, Ecuador." The study uses art, music and dialogue circles as a way of confronting trauma, and creates peer non-hierarchical support groups as well as cultural strengths to allow individuals to begin to recognize and address violence in their lives with support from their communities.

**Patricia Sloane-White's** recent book, *Corporate Islam*, now appearing in paperback, was awarded an "Honorable Mention" for "Best Book of 2018" by the Asian Law and Society Association. She was invited to speak on her

work on Islamic economics at Harvard Law School and the Georgia State University Law School, and was a visiting fellow in Summer 2019 at the Max Planck Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany. She is currently working on a new book project on Sri Lankan family-owned enterprises and the economic impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative, furthering the archival research on colonial-era Sri Lankan businesses in the British National Archives she conducted during Summer 2018.

**Margaret Stetz**, Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities, published four essays in peer-reviewed journals during the 2018-19 academic year: "Oscar Wilde and the Imaginative Woman: Anna, Comtesse de Brémont" in *The Wildean (Journal of the Oscar Wilde Society)*; "Richard Le Gallienne and a Tale of Two Dantes." *Studies in Walter Pater and Aestheticism (Journal of the Walter Pater Society)*; "Fabricating Girls: Clothes and Coming-of-Age Fiction by Women of Color" in *Humanities Bulletin*; and "Re-embodiment Ida B. Wells: A Figure of Resistance in American Popular Culture" in *Americana: Journal of American Popular Culture 1900 to Present*. Her work on Ida B. Wells was featured in an article in *UDaily* in September 2018. Her essay "Richard Le Gallienne: A Jongleur Strayed into the Modern World," appeared in *Literary and Cultural Alternatives to Modernism: Unsettling Presences* (Routledge), and her poem, "Hare Professor," was published in the journal *Review Americana*. She delivered papers related to military sexual slavery during World War II at the American Comparative Literature Association and the American Culture Association/Popular Culture Association (Washington, DC). In August 2018, she gave the invited keynote speech at a ceremony honoring summer interns who worked on educational projects for the Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues, Inc., a non-profit NGO (Vienna, VA). She gave invited lectures at the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco, the University of London's Society of Bibliophiles, The "Mobilities and Migrations" interdisciplinary 19th Century research seminar series at George Washington University, and the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion in Philadelphia. In April 2019, she received the "Writing to Learn Award" from the UD Writing Center.

**Anne Bowler**, WGS Joint Faculty and Associate Professor of Sociology, involved

students in her "Sociology of Art and Culture" class in the creation of a digital archive of artists' work created at the nonprofit Creative Vision Factory (CVF) in Wilmington, DE, founded by UD alumnus Michael Kalmbach to provide a community and support for artists on the behavioral health spectrum. Students in Dr. Bowler's class were paired with CVF members and, with Dr. David Kim, Assistant Professor of English at UD providing technology expertise, to create the digital archives.

**Rudi Matthee**, WGS Joint Faculty and the John and Dorothy Munroe Distinguished Professor of History, was invited to Iran, where he gave a keynote speech on the similarities between the Catholic variant of Christianity and the Twelver Shi'i branch of Islam as part of a conference on Iran, the Caucasus and Central Asia, held at the University of Tehran in May 2019. His 2012 monograph, *Persia in Crisis: The Decline of the Safavids and the Fall of Isfahan*, was translated into Persian a third time, under the title *Iran dar bohran: Inhetat-e Safaviya va soqut-e Isfahan* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2019). His 2005 study, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900*, was released in Persian as well, as *Tafrihat-e Iraniyan: Moskerat va mokhaderat az Safaviya ta Qajariya* (Tehran: Namak, 2019). The Iranian Embassy in London selected his co-edited volume, *Russians in Iran: Diplomacy and Power in the Qajar Era and Beyond* (2018) as one of last year's best books on Iran.

**Jean Pfaelzer**, Professor of English, Women & Gender Studies, and Asian Studies, announced that her book, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*, was included in *The Chinese Exclusion Act*, a co-production of Steeplechase Films and the Center for Asian American Media, released on PBS in May 2019. Dr. Pfaelzer writes, "I am delighted to share the news that *The Chinese Exclusion Act*, directed by Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu and produced and written by Ric Burns, Robin Espinola, and Li-Shin Yu, won the 2019 Erik Barnouw Award from the Organization of American Historians. It was a pleasure to be deeply involved in the scholarship for this film, to work with Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu, in particular to focus on the resistant history of Chinese Americans, and to see the images from *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* turn into a visual narrative. It was an honor to appear in the film with this phenomenal group of scholars."

# Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Program Update

By Jennifer Naccarelli



During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services (DVPS) Concentration and Minor enjoyed another year of dynamic students, engaged alumni, and the expansion of our course offerings and practicum experiences. Our graduates are now leaders across the state holding positions at the Wilmington Police Department, the YWCA Sexual Assault Response Center, Child INC., the Delaware Center for Justice, and the Department of Justice, among others. Launched in 2011, the DVPS Program has now graduated 52 Concentration students. It is rewarding to watch graduates mentor current students and continue to build a skilled work force in the field of victim services and violence prevention.

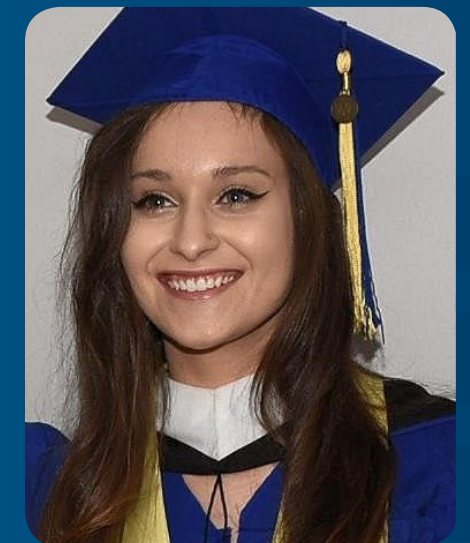
The roots of our program developed through our partnership with the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence and their training requirements to become a Domestic Violence Specialist in the state of Delaware. This year we are expanding beyond advocacy and prevention training for intimate partner violence (IPV) to other forms of gender-based violence. We will expand internships focused on the experiences of sexual violence, and launch new course content, including "Sexual Assault Studies" in Fall 2019, taught by Angela Seguin, Assistant Director for Victim Advocacy with the University of Delaware's Student Health and Wellness. The study of and professional

training for multiple forms of gender-based victimization is our first step towards launching a new research and professional development center within the Department of Women & Gender Studies.

The foundation of the DVPS program has always been to provide students with the opportunity to acquire first-hand field experience delivering direct services to survivors of violence and their families. We are committed to ensuring that students in our program not merely observe but actually engage in the work of victim services and prevention. This commitment ensures that they enter the field with a clear understanding of trauma, towards minimizing burnout and turnover within the gender-based violence workforce. We believe our students make real and lasting contributions to the community of survivors and service providers. This guiding principle was exemplified in the contributions of Nora Carle, a 2019 DVPS Concentration Graduate. With the support of her instructor Claire DeMatteis, who was recently appointed Commissioner of the Delaware Department of Correction by Governor Carney, Carle highlighted the needs of young people experiencing adolescent dating violence, engaging state legislators and proposing a path for minors to acquire Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders. State legislators supported this need and signed a resolution to explore the

proper process and implementation of a PFA program for young adults.

We remain grateful to the Mae and Robert Carter Endowment in Women's Studies, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Department of Women & Gender Studies for providing generous funding to support DVPS practicum placements. We are honored to receive an additional \$10,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation, demonstrating their continued commitment to the program and their investment in its future growth.



Nora Carle



# Graduating Class of 2019 Awards

By Marie Laberge

**The Kathleen Doherty Turkel Award for Social Justice Activism** was established to honor the work of Dr. Turkel, who recently retired from the Department of Women & Gender Studies after 35 years of teaching at the University of Delaware, where she has been an inspirational teacher and mentor to thousands of students. The Award is presented to a student majoring in Women & Gender Studies in recognition of their social justice activism on campus or in the larger community. The inaugural recipient of The Kathleen Doherty Turkel Award for Social Justice Activism is **Kelly James**, who graduated with majors in Women & Gender Studies and Public Policy as well as minors in Political Science, Legal Studies, and Sexuality & Gender Studies. At UD, Kelly has been active with Students Acting for Gender Equity (SAGE), serving as its president, as well as serving as LGBT Outreach Coordinator for Planned Parenthood Generation Action and as a member of the Marching Band. Also the recipient of a 2018 James R Soles Stipend and Fellowship award from the Department of Political Science & International Relations, Kelly is currently

working as a Workplace Equality Intern at the Human Rights Campaign, while pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration with a Nonprofit Management Specialization, through the 4+1 graduate program at the University of Delaware.

Endowed by University of Delaware's past president E. Arthur Trabant in honor of his mother, the annual **Nellie Thompson Rudd Award** acknowledges a graduating senior with a major or minor in Women & Gender Studies, who has demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service to the Department of Women & Gender Studies and to the University of Delaware. The 2019 Nellie Thompson Rudd Award was presented to **Deborah Mack**, who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Women & Gender Studies with a Concentration in Domestic Violence Prevention and Services. After graduation, Deborah plans to pursue Certification as a Domestic Violence Specialist and to work as an advocate with Child Inc. to gather experience before pursuing a career working with women issues.



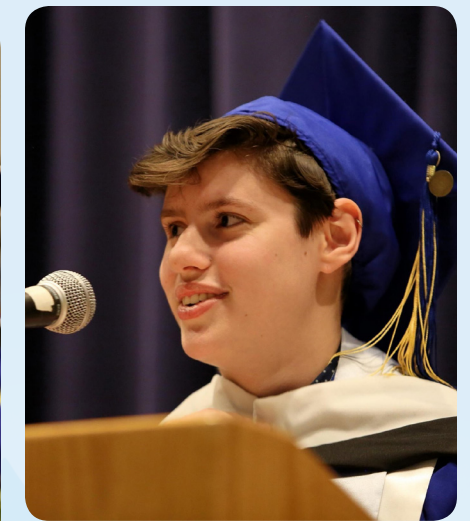
Deborah Mack

**Awards of Special Merit** were conferred to four outstanding 2019 graduates in Women & Gender Studies. The recipients were **Sara Del Valle, Alexandra Eichenstein, Ashley Peloso,** and **Olivia Rogal.** In addition, **Nat Veiga** was selected to deliver the 2019 Convocation Graduate Address, by the Women & Gender Studies 2019 Capstone Class, with shared insights: "We have learned through our studies what critical thinking really is, how to analyze not only 25-page-long essays but also the world around us and the relationships and interactions we have every day. We learned to expand our simple definition of 'interdisciplinary,' to see issues on both interpersonal and systemic, global levels. These are skills we only could have acquired here, in this department. Whether we choose to work in law enforcement, or local government; public health, or public service; write a novel, teach in Spain, or – like me – attempt to make a dual career as an advocate and a personal trainer, I know we will take what we've learned these past several years into every path our future has paved for us."



Kelly James (L) and Nat Veiga, 2019 Convocation Speaker

# Congratulations, 2019 Graduates!



Nat Veiga, selected by the Capstone class, delivered the Graduate Address to the Graduating Class of 2019

## WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES MAJORS

Shelby Adams  
Morgan Baumann  
Alison Cantwell  
Nora Carle  
Amanda Criscitiello  
Sara Del Valle  
Alexandra Eichenstein  
Hannah Fisher  
Megan Geiser  
Kelly James  
Alexandra Luce  
Veronika Lynch  
Deborah Mack  
Ashley Peloso  
Tri Pham  
Olivia Rogal  
Carly Sinisgalli  
Jennifer Valencia  
Lucy Vavala  
Nat Veiga

## SGST MINORS

Kelly James  
Tri Pham  
Nat Veiga

## WOMEN'S STUDIES MINORS

Claire Armann  
Mary Katherine Bartell  
Kerigan Butt  
Madison Cann  
Ella Collins  
Olivia Davis  
Melanie Greenblatt  
Morgan Gregg  
Trina Harmon  
Alexis Lipnicky  
Carly Mazer  
Christine McCann

## DVPS MINORS AND CONCENTRATIONS

Amanda Criscitiello  
Alexandra Luce  
Veronika Lynch  
Deborah Mack  
Ashley Peloso  
Olivia Rogal  
Jennifer Valencia

Maegan Miciotta  
Kelly Myers  
Amanda Paul  
Jaylin Rumph  
Bradford Schmidinger  
Felicia Snyder  
Ashley Stahmer  
Leah Strayer  
Jennifer Urban  
Kasey Verducci  
Tanvi Walia



## What We're Reading

The Women & Gender Studies faculty and staff are pleased to share our annual book and media recommendations from our summer reading, composed of titles to be enjoyed throughout the year.

### **WHITE FRAGILITY: WHY IT'S SO HARD FOR WHITE PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT RACISM,** **Robin Diangelo**

*Recommended by Pascha Bueno-Hansen*

Published last year, this book is a New York Times bestseller. I taught Diangelo's article on the same topic in the WGS capstone class a few years back and it opened up a space for students to collectively reflect upon whiteness and find a language to talk about it.

### **JEZEBEL UNHINGED: LOOSING THE BLACK FEMALE BODY IN RELIGION AND CULTURE,** **Tamura Lomax**

*Recommended by Emerald Christopher-Byrd*

I spent this summer conducting research and looking for contemporary works focused on stereotypes. *Jezebel Unhinged* gives an accessible and contemporary analysis of the impact religion has on Black women and girls. Specifically addressing popular culture and the Black church, Lomax demonstrates the adverse impact religion has had on the bodies of Black women and girls.

### **KILLING COMMENDATORE, Haruki Murakami**

*Recommended by Jennifer Naccarelli*

As with Murakami's previous works, the boundary between the real and the magical is so expertly woven that the reader is left wondering which world the protagonist is occupying. As readers enter yet another of Murakami's alternative worlds, we follow the mysterious journey of a portrait painter processing the failure of his marriage and determining the future of his career. In the home of a famous Japanese artist, he discovers a painting that serves as a portal to a parallel world in which the struggles of the subjects in the painting, and the individuals drawn into it, provide harrowing adventures that help make sense of life's disappointments, reconfigure the experience of loneliness, and reevaluate the necessity of romantic love.



*Photo by Rachel Evans; taken August 2019 at Persephone Books, London, which sells novels by forgotten female authors*

### **VIBRATOR NATION: HOW FEMINIST SEX-TOY STORES CHANGED THE BUSINESS OF PLEASURE, Lynn Comella**

*Recommended by Patricia Sloane-White*

Searching for books to use in my new fall 2019 course, "Sex, Money, and Power," I discovered Lynn Comella's study of how feminist entrepreneurs with enterprises named "Babeland" and "Good Vibrations" created a movement for women to safely explore, talk about, and profit from sex. Comella suggests the sex-toy store created a sex-positive environment in which feminist retailers were also sex educators who could "double as social activists" and sell products that were "framed as tools of liberation."

### **WITH THE FIRE ON HIGH, Elizabeth Acevedo**

*Recommended by Chiara Sabina*

I am drawn to the mixing of cultures, the celebration of people of all walks of life, and the realness of this book which has been characterized as a "love letter to food and a tribute to young, single mothers." The main character juggles her culinary talent and desires with the realities of school, work, and motherhood. The book "turns the stereotype 'teen mom' on its head."

### **DEAR JANE, Marina DelVecchio**

*Recommended by Margaret Stetz*

This harrowing 2019 novel takes the form of letters written to the fictional Victorian protagonist, Jane Eyre, by a young Greek-American girl—a survivor of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse—who finds strength and relief from loneliness in identifying with Charlotte Brontë's heroine. It is a testament to the power of the literature of the past to serve as support and consolation in the present.

### **AMERICAN JOURNAL, Tracy K. Smith**

*Recommended by Deborah Arnold*

In this anthology of contemporary poetry compiled by 2017-2019 Poet Laureate of the United States and Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy K. Smith, the critical relevance of this genre is represented through the work of diverse American writers (including incoming Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, the first Native American to hold that honor), whose voices require us to "sit still, listen deeply, and imagine" ourselves "in someone else's unfamiliar shoes" across diverse communities, towards honoring difference and fostering a foundation of compassionate understanding.

## Student Spotlight: Rachel Evans

*By Deborah Arnold*



*Rachel Evans (L) with David Plastino*

Connect the dots between a British reality dating show, cafés designed to mimic the Rocco period's feminine floral accents, and a women's-only boxing club, and you will understand the expansive intellectual curiosity that defines **Rachel Evans**. A UD Senior with dual majors in Women & Gender Studies and Political Science, Rachel's proposal to examine media consumption and its impacts on food consumption and feminist body-positivity experiences was selected for a 2019 Plastino Scholars Award. Created in 2007 by a generous gift from UD alumnus David Plastino, Class of 1978, the Plastino Scholars Program provides support to undergraduate students interested in pursuing self-designed, off-campus experiential learning opportunities that will allow the pursuit of a passionate interest that goes beyond the scope of an academic course, internship or enrichment program. Rachel, who is the first Women & Gender Studies major selected as a Plastino Scholar, designed a unique experience with a global connection.

"Young women are particularly vulnerable as passive visual consumers of representations of women's bodies in contemporary media,

including fashion magazines, reality television series, and social media sites," Rachel notes. "As a Plastino Scholar, I intend to embark on a dual academic and creative four-week excursion to London, where young women have adopted hyper-feminine spaces that allow them to express their body-positivity within the constructs of a consumer culture. By redefining their experiences through a feminist lens, women have created alternative feminine spaces in cafés designed with women's deliberate consumption in mind. Documenting their experiences through Instagram photos of themselves, their surroundings, and their plates of food becomes a feminist body-positive act of consumption." Rachel hopes to discover insights which she will contextualize in her culminating creation of a digital online "zine," to share the outcomes realized during her first international travel experience during Summer 2019.

The recent academic year has been exceptional for Rachel in realizing her goals and dreams. During the Spring 2019 semester, she participated in the University of Delaware's Domestic Study Abroad Program in

Washington, D.C., where she also interned full-time for U.S. Senator (DE) Chris Coons. "Working in the U.S. Capitol was a unique dream fulfilled," Rachel acknowledges. "I watched floor votes in the Senate gallery, met numerous Senators, and also followed Senator Coons throughout his typical day on the Hill. By the end of my experience, I transformed from a novice intern to an intern comfortable enough to give directions to navigate the Senate office buildings as well as many D.C. neighborhoods with ease. Each neighborhood presents their own aesthetic, with many immensely charming cafes, restaurants, and historic locations."

In anticipation of her experience as a Plastino Scholar, Rachel explored many of D.C.'s culinary offerings. "I completely fell in love with the glamor of the city. Weekend visits should include Georgetown Cupcakes and artistically beautiful lattes. There are so many wonderful spots in D.C. and I encourage the exploration of them all." In early August 2019, writing from Feya's, founder/chef Zahra Kahn's London "pastel haven" where "no dream is too big, no destination out of reach," Rachel sent an Instagram-worthy photograph representative of the feminine and feminist-oriented cafés where she is interviewing young women as part of her research – and where, in the spirit of a Plastino Scholar, she is enjoying the experience in pursuit of her passionate interests.



*Photo by Rachel Evans, "Happiness Pancakes" at Feya, London*



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**Editor**  
Deborah Arnold

**Editorial Assistant**  
Rachel Evans

**Art Direction/Design**  
Lukas Emory



**UPDATES?**

Are you a Women & Gender Studies alum with some news you'd like to share in our next newsletter? Email us: [jnacc@udel.edu](mailto:jnacc@udel.edu)

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On behalf of the faculty and students of the Department of Women & Gender Studies, we extend our sincere thanks to those whose generous support ensures our commitment to education and community outreach, as we continue to thrive and advance the University of Delaware's comprehensive engagement priorities of cultivating tomorrow's leaders, creating solutions to challenges, and transforming lives to make the remarkable happen.



**WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES AND THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & PREVENTION SERVICES PROGRAM**

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**Staying Connected**



**Ingrid Castro** (WOMS/PSYC 1994, SOCI1995), writes, "This year marks the 25th Anniversary of my graduation, with five other students, as the first class with the newly established Women's Studies major at the University of Delaware [before the Program became The Department of Women & Gender Studies in 2010]. In 1990, I started as a Psychology major, and I took my first Women's Studies courses during the 1993 Winter Session because my housemate told me I would like them. Loving what I learned in those courses, I was fortunate to continue taking women's studies courses with prominent faculty, including Lynn Weber (Race, Class, Gender) and Sandra Harding (Feminist Theory). UD faculty and champion Maggie Andersen advised me on graduate schools, and I attended Northeastern University, completing my Ph.D. in Sociology with Graduate Certificates in Cinema Studies and Women and Gender Studies. I served as Director of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, where I am currently Professor and Chair of Sociology, teaching courses in WGSS, including Latinas in U.S. Society and Children's Geographies, and addressing gender and girlhood in my published work on

childhood studies, including LGBTQ high school students. Were it not for the University of Delaware's Women's Studies Program, I certainly would not be in the position I am today. Thank you for providing me with a wonderful and fulfilling path to follow."

**Rebecca Guarino** (WOMS/Math 2015) graduated with a Master's Degree in Sociology and Education, with a concentration in Education Policy, from Teachers College Columbia University, NY.

**Amy Hopkins** (WOMS 2015) is a Victim Services Specialist with Wilmington Police Department. While at UD, Amy, who graduated with degrees in Women & Gender Studies and Public Policy as well as minors in Domestic Violence Services and Prevention and in Journalism, was a victim's advocate for SOS and contributed articles to The Review on topics including domestic violence, sexual assault, and women's health. In her new position as Victim Services Specialist, Amy will be working with victims of violent crime including assault, robbery, homicide and sexual assault.

**Meghan Juscak** (WOMS/ENGL Honors 2017) received a 2019 Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Romania. After graduating from UD in 2017, Juscak became a journalist and now works with City Year, an AmeriCorps program, in Philadelphia. In addition to teaching English at the Universities of Baia Mare and Oradea, Juscak will pursue an independent research project in environmental journalism. "I'm particularly excited to be in Baia Mare because I hope to write a few articles specifically related to environmental health and agriculture," she shared. "There was a devastating cyanide spill into the water supply there in 2000. I'm interested in talking with people, learning more from the local community, and using my position as an outsider to bring in different ideas."

**Olivia Rogal** (WOMS 2019) was named as a 2019 Fulbright scholar alternate to the Czech Republic. Liv, who graduated with majors in Women & Gender Studies and Public Policy

as well as minors in Psychology and Domestic Violence Prevention & Services, plans to work on a campaign in the 2020 election cycle prior to furthering her education.

**Sanika Salim** (WOMS 2017) has accepted a job with the UNICEF-DC regional office, where she will be Associate for Community Engagement, in charge of implementing UNICEF programs in Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Delaware.

**Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William H. Wightman III** (WOMS 2005) recently completed a three-year mobilization leading the Army Liaison Team at the Dover Port Mortuary, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. LTC Wightman's multidisciplinary team supported surviving Family Members as they witnessed the return of their loved one to American soil. They further coordinated all US Army support to the port mortuary's operations. LTC Wightman additionally sustained operations at the adjacent Joint Personal Effects Depot through staff development and sharing subject matter expertise. He also served as the Armed Forces Medical Examiner's personal effects supervisor for 15 months during several multi-fatality incidents including the USS McCain collision and two aircraft accidents. LTC Wightman shares that "Today's Army is more diverse than at any time in history. Soldiers routinely operate in ambiguous environments shaped by the intersections of sexuality, race, class, nationality, religion, and age – the very topics I studied while at UD." LTC Wightman credits his success and recent promotion to the interdisciplinary perspective he gained from the then-Women's Studies program and his previous employment at the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCADV). LTC Wightman now lives near Dover Air Force Base with his wife Jennifer, an elementary special education teacher, and their three children. He has returned to the part-time Army Reserves and looks forward to operating in the unpaid labor market managing home, family and community involvement.





Department of Women & Gender Studies  
 University of Delaware  
 34 West Delaware Avenue  
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"Freedom Making" Mural in James Smith Hall, University of Delaware; created by members of the LGBTQ+ and Racial Activism Living Learning Community, the Visual Arts Living Learning Community, and UD students from all-gender University of Delaware housing.