

# FEMINIST GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES

Wesleyan University 2016



## FGSS Organizes Social Justice Teach-In

by Gwendolyn Fernandez '16

February's Social Justice Teach-In, organized by the FGSS program, provided an opportunity for students and faculty to discuss pressing on-campus issues related to race, gender, speech and harmful language, and allyship. Speaking on the panel at Russell House were seven professors and two students from a number of different departments and programs. Students Jennie He '16 (FGSS/Philosophy) and Nina Gurak '16 (FGSS/Government), along with FGSS Chair Victoria Pitts-Taylor, moderated the three panels.

Professor Tony Hatch (Science in Society) started the afternoon on a high note with an "old-school teach-in" lecture on intersectionality for the first panel on "Race, Gender and Intersectionality in Social Movements." Professor Hatch's presentation, which stressed the interlocking rather than competitive nature of different systems of oppression, referenced the 19th century writings of Ida B. Wells and the 1970s work of the Combahee River Collective. Professor Laura Grappo (American Studies), the second panelist to speak, offered a critique of identity politics. Grappo argued that the social locations of race, class and gender aren't always readily observed, and posed a series of questions pertaining to how these dynamics play out in the classroom. Particularly striking and powerful was Professor Grappo's conflation of anti-racist thinking as pro-human thinking. Last to speak on the panel was Professor Gina Ulysse (Anthropology), who performed an incredibly moving, original poem dating back to her days in graduate school. The call-and-response perfor-

mance, which centered on the theme of "breathing spaces," addressed how racist environments render mere existence a struggle. During the question and answer session, the audience and speakers openly debated how to respond to racism, including the recent demands of campus activists in the "isthiswhy" campaign.

The second panel, titled "Words that Harm," focused primarily on the question of speech, which has been a topic of heated debate on Wesleyan's campus. The first panelist, Professor Lori Gruen (Philosophy/FGSS), gave a brief lecture on J.L. Austin's speech act theory, which describes what speech has the power to do. This power is dependent on the context and authority of the speaker, leaving us to question - Who has the authority to speak? What does this authority give an individual the power to say and do? The second panelist, philosophy major Sitar Terrass-Shah '17, applied this theory to an issue particular to Wesleyan, the controversy over an op-ed that appeared in the *Argus* last semester criticizing the Black Lives Matter movement. Professor Katie Brewer Ball (Theater) widened the scope of the conversation. Professor Brewer Ball's talk stressed the ability of language to cause harm. Brewer Ball raised questions about trigger warnings, feelings and vulnerability in the classroom that were debated by audience members afterwards.

The last panel on the "Complexities of Allyship" featured Professors Christina Crosby (English/FGSS), Elizabeth Garcia (American Studies) and

Rachel Ellis Neyra (English). Crosby addressed whiteness, arguing that white people must undertake active work to become

legitimate allies. Professor Garcia argued that the prime difficulty in forging alliances, particularly across racial lines, lies in the lack of trust between groups. She offered advice to students of color based on her own experiences as an undergraduate at Brown University. Juan Gallardo '16 delivered a triptych that presented a fictional ally, a white student who appropriated Black and Brown culture, and made a case for cultural separatism. Prof. Rachel Ellis Neyra ended the day with a creative prose poem that shifted the language from "ally" to "solidarity," quoting text messages in English and Spanish that responded to the latter term.

Measured by the full house, the audience participation and the thoughtfulness of the talks, the five-hour event was a success. As FGSS Chair Pitts-Taylor put it, "The teach-in was only one event in what needs to be an ongoing effort of anti-racist work on campus. But it provided a needed space for serious exchange and debate in a climate of friendship and solidarity."

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# Letter from the Chair

Of late, the calls for social justice across college campuses, including at Wesleyan University, are receiving a national hearing. While the problems of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism have been dissected in the media and here in our community, the question of praxis, of how to make change, remains a difficult and urgent one. This year the FGSS program contributed to community conversations on social justice in the classroom and beyond. We organized a faculty forum on Safety, Speech and Social Justice in December 2015, which I co-moderated with Professors Christina Crosby (FGSS and English) and Jennifer Tucker (History and FGSS) in the CFA Hall. In the spring, we organized a Social Justice Teach-in, held at Russell House. The teach-in addressed questions of intersectionality, speech, and allyship, with 10 speakers from across the campus (see the cover of this newsletter for more information). In all, about 200 students, faculty and staff attended these two events.

In keeping with our concern for social justice, our FGSS Fall Symposium, held in November, focused on the theme of mass incarceration, and featured speakers Ruth Gilmore and Joy James. Each addressed how mass incarceration (as Angela Davis has also argued) is a feminist issue, and how feminists can respond to the crisis. In this newsletter, we also highlight the work of Professor Lori Gruen (Philosophy and FGSS), whose scholarship on incarceration is complimented by years of teaching inmates through Wesleyan's Center for Prison Education. This summer, Gruen is co-hosting a groundbreaking Race and Animals Institute. In April 2016, she was awarded the Edgar Beckham Social Justice Award for faculty.

Eco-feminism links the oppression of women and other marginalized people with the domination of non-human animals and the planet. This year, the winner of the FGSS Ohmann Prize for Best Thesis is Gruen's thesis student

Rebecca Winkler '16, whose work addresses the labor conditions of elephants and their handlers (who are commonly indigenous workers), in the eco-tourism industry in Thailand. Winkler, who writes that she was inspired in courses taught by Gruen and Professor Kari Weil (COL), was last year's winner of the Animal Studies/FGSS Eco-Feminist Summer Research Grant. This year, the grant was awarded to Biology major Katie Bartel '17. Bartel will undertake an internship at VINE sanctuary, an LGBTQ-run sanctuary that works "within an ecofeminist understanding of the interconnection of all life and the intersection of all forms of oppression." Furthering our connection to Animal Studies, in 2016-17 we welcome Animal Studies Post-Doctoral Fellow Katie Gillespie, who will teach two courses for FGSS, including a seminar called Race, Gender, Science and Species. We will also welcome a visiting faculty member, Elizabeth Garcia, who will teach three courses for FGSS, including a seminar on violence against women of color.

This year we shared several (vegetarian!) meals with colleagues and visiting scholars. We were honored to host Ann Cvetkovich for the Diane Weiss '80 Memorial Lecture and dinner. You can read more in these pages about Cvetkovich's work, which addresses public feelings, affect and the archive. We also explored the works-in-progress of two Wesleyan faculty members at our FGSS Salon: Rachel Ellis Neyra (English) and Roger Grant (Music). In last year's newsletter, I described how the Salon discussed Christina Crosby's memoir. I am pleased to note here that the book was published this spring as *A Body Undone: Living on After Great Pain*, to considerable acclaim (check out, for example, Michael Weinstein's review in *The New Yorker*, which calls



Crosby's writing "surgically incisive.")

We also held a luncheon for seniors to present their theses and essays. We congratulate Winkler and Jennie He '16, who won the Ohmann prize for Best Thesis and Best Essay, respectively, and wish our graduating seniors the best of luck. And what about life after Wesleyan? In this newsletter you can find updates about our alumni, who have applied their FGSS studies in impressive ways, from founding a law journal focused on gender to practicing pediatrics with gender non-conforming youth. I find their stories inspiring.

Finally, I'd like to thank our Administrative Assistant Jen Enxuto, and students Brenna Diggins ('17), Arthur Halliday ('16) and Gwen Fernandez ('16) for help with this newsletter. I'd also like to thank our FGSS faculty and students for making this year so productive and fulfilling.

Victoria Pitts-Taylor  
Professor of Feminist, Gender,  
and Sexuality Studies, Chair

# Thinking, Feeling the Queer Archive

Ann Cvetkovich gave the 28th annual Diane Weiss Memorial Lecture on February 25, 2016. The FGSS program hosts this event each year in memory of Wesleyan alum Diane Weiss '80, who had a strong commitment to community service and social justice. The Weiss lectures created to honor Diane's memory have, since 1987, brought an impressive roster of feminist and queer scholars to campus, Cvetkovich among them. She is the Ellen Clayton Garwood Centennial Professor of English and Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is author of three books: *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism*, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*; and *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Her current project

addresses LGBTQ archives and the creative use of them by artists to produce "counter-archives" and interventions in public history.

Cvetkovich's own creative take on the archive is evident throughout her work. Her first book, *Mixed Feelings*, addresses sensationalist novels from the Victorian era, while *An Archive of Feelings* draws from performance art, literature and activism. Writing with and into affect theory, Cvetkovich has been concerned with the social and political import of feelings, especially negative feelings. In place of clinical and pathologizing frames, *An Archive of Feelings* brings queer and feminist criticism to the question of trauma. Her more recent book *Depression: A Public Feeling*, as Elaine Showalter has described it, is "an experi-

ment in connecting personal feelings with social conditions and critical analysis." The project of bringing feelings into the collective and public frame allows a political analysis of negative inner and somatic experience, such that anxiety, melancholia, desperation, hopelessness and other bad feelings can be thought outside of psychopharmacology and other medicalizing paradigms and practices. The book builds an eclectic archive of affect, while illuminating depression's links to capitalism and racism. Cvetkovich's work bears witness to both catastrophic and ordinary suffering and pain, but it does not remain stuck. New ways of being in activism, art, scholarship and ordinary life are illuminated by her reparative vision.

## Wes Scholars On BioCultural Theory

A biologist, a philosopher, and a sociologist opened the fall semester's FGSS programming. On Friday, September 18, three members of the faculty held a lively discussion on the entanglements of culture and biology. The event, organized with the Science in Society program, was titled "Biology and Cultural Theory," and featured Professor Sonia Sultan (Biology/Environmental Studies), Professor Joe Rouse (Science in Society/Philosophy), and Professor Victoria Pitts-Taylor (FGSS/Sociology). Professor of Psychology Jill Morawski moderated the event, noting how the works of this diverse set of scholars reconfigure our perceptions of the relationship between organism and environment.

Received scientific conceptions of the organism pose it as an entity that is internally defined by a genetic code and merely reacts to its environmental conditions. In contrast, Sultan's talk described the ability of environmental conditions to directly effect an organism's gene expression, as well as the ability of an organism to influence its own environment. Sultan asked the question, "how does this reciprocal relationship change the way we study development?" In her latest book entitled *Organism & Environment: Ecological*

*Development, Niche Construction, and Adaptation*, Sultan urges her peers to reconsider previously established norms in the face of evidence of biology's dynamic relation with its environment.

Rouse followed Sultan by discussing his latest work, *Articulating the World: Conceptual Understanding and the Scientific Image*. Drawing from the naturalist philosophical tradition, Rouse argues that language is a form of niche construction, meaning that we shape our environment with our own linguistics. The idea that language shapes both the human world and scientific understandings of it demands a rethinking of the epistemic claims made by science. Rouse argues that once we can understand our own intellectual capacities as a product of niche construction, we can see that those capacities are vulnerable and risky, existing within their specific historical contexts.

Pitts-Taylor's talk situated new scientific views

of biology alongside contemporary feminist and cultural theories of matter as "becoming." She discussed her forthcoming book *The Brain's Body: Neuroscience and Corporeal Politics*, which addresses the relationship between culture and neurobiology. Pitts-Taylor argues for a critical materialist approach to the brain, one that pays attention to how social inequalities not only influence neurobiology, but also shape neuroscientific knowledge. She argues that if the brain is a plastic and social entity, capable of change and transformation, neurobiology itself must be seen as political.

The panel ended with a lively question and answer session.



# Feminists Respond to Mass Incarceration

by Brenna Diggins '17

The FGSS program's annual Fall Symposium was dedicated to the theme of feminist responses to mass incarceration. The symposium, featuring Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Joy James, enjoyed an audience of about 120 students, faculty and alumni. Gilmore, Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, offered a comprehensive look at the systems of power that enabled a crisis of mass incarceration to develop in the U.S.. James, Professor of Humanities at Williams College, discussed the dangers for social movements in mystifying the state. The event was moderated by Lori Gruen. Gruen is Wesleyan's William Griffin Professor and chair of Philosophy and Professor of FGSS.

Gilmore's talk took a comprehensive approach to the prison-industrial complex and addressed how capitalism and state power intersect with racism to create the conditions for mass incar-

ceration. She urged listeners not to be distracted by great displays of power (the militarization of police, high profile shootings) as the only targets for critique, but rather to take a closer look at more ordinary and endemic forms of systemic racism in the U.S.. Gilmore is the author of *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007), which the American Studies Association (ASA) recognized with its Lora Romero First Book Award. The ASA has also recognized her with the Angela Davis Award for her work on prison abolition.

Joy James's talk focused on the power of knowing. Using Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* as a starting point, James discussed the identity of the activist, scholar, and student as positioned in contrast with a perceived enemy. James argued that it is essential to understand state power to its fullest capacity in order to make meaningful social progress. Past social movements and uprisings

have failed to comprehend the undisciplined and violent nature of state power and as a result, have experienced great shock and trauma in the face of civil conflict. James emphasized the importance of framing demands and expectations with a thorough understanding of the oppressor.

Professor Gruen closed the presentations with a passage from *The New Abolitionists*, addressing the condition of the prisoner and his/her relationship to capitalist structures responsible for imprisonment. The symposium ended with a dynamic conversation between the panel and the audience.

Gruen and her students have created a blog on multiple forms of captivity; for a discussion of mass incarceration as a feminist issue, see their blog post on "Women and Mass Incarceration" at <http://ethicsofcaptivity.weebly.com/women-and-mass-incarceration.html>.





photos courtesy Jonas Powell, Wesleyan '18

Since 2009, Wesleyan's Center for Prison Education has allowed incarcerated men and women at Cheshire Correctional Institution and York Correctional Institution to take courses taught by Wesleyan faculty. Professor Lori Gruen, a core member of the FGSS faculty and Chair of the Philosophy department, has taught five philosophy courses at Cheshire CI, a men's maximum-security prison. (Other faculty members affiliated with FGSS have also taught for the Center, including Professor Margot Weiss, who taught a course on *The Politics of the Body* at York in 2015). For the Spring 2016 semester, Gruen is teaching an advanced philosophy seminar. She says that the men she has worked with have been exceptionally receptive to feminist theory, particularly feminist epistemology. Her students are able to overcome intense structural obstacles to consistently produce quality work.

The experience is also instructive for Gruen herself. "Spending so much time in prison over the

last six years has given me a visceral, embodied perspective on the problem of mass incarceration and the highly structured system of racial and gendered disposability that it represents. Of course, my scholarship and my teaching have been transformed as a result of my experience."

Gruen's work at the CPE has informed her recent academic projects, including her recent book *The Ethics of Captivity*, published by Oxford University Press. She is working on two papers that address political and feminist philosophical topics as they are informed by mass incarceration. Gruen encourages current Wesleyan students to get involved as peer tutors for incarcerated students and to advocate for the awareness of the issues surrounding mass incarceration more broadly. In April 2016, Gruen was given an Edgar Beckham Social Justice Award, created in honor of Edgar Beckham, a tireless advocate for social justice and the first African-American Dean of the College at Wesleyan University.

## Teaching Feminist Philosophy in Prison

# Alumni News

**Britt Allen '04** double majored with Science in Society. She interned for a year for the UCSF Aids Health Project (San Francisco) and attended medical school at University of Wisconsin. She is now an Assistant Professor at University of Wisconsin and a general pediatrician, as well as a provider in the Pediatric and Adolescent Transgender Health Clinic.

**Rebecca Bak '05** is a family medicine physician and the Women's Health director of Zuni Comprehensive Health Center, a rural hospital caring for Zuni and Navajo Native American populations.

**Abby Baker '12** is a freelance user/design researcher. She is currently starting up her own mind-body wellness consulting business. Her goal is to work as a researcher to help "make healthcare more patient-centered." She is also the Human Body Section Editor for PopAnth.



Jennifer Blaine '92

**Jennifer Blaine '92** is the resident theatre arts instructor for the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. She is a life coach, star of a one-woman show, and the creator of the 5,000 Women Festival, which showcases women

performance artists of all kinds.

**Sara (Auerbach) Brewer '93** double majored with Psychology. She attended Harvard Medical School, with her residency in Psychiatry at Cambridge Health Alliance. She is currently the Medical Director of a large community mental health agency in Springfield, MA. She lives with her partner and daughter in Western MA.

**Lynn Chen '98** double majored with Music. She is an actor, food host, body image activist. She founded two blogs, TheActorsDiet.com and ThickDumpingSkin.com. She is also an Ambassador for the National Eating Disorders Association.

**Annie Coombs '03** attended Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. She is both a designer and researcher with her own practice, dividing her time between social impact architecture and high-end residential work. Coombs is a Co-founder of Post-Reservation, an ongoing project focused on housing, infrastructure and economy on the Lakota-Sioux reservations in South Dakota.

**Katie DiBona '11** double majored with Psychology. She is currently the director of and teacher at a Long Island preschool and is working on her Masters in Early Childhood and Childhood Education at Sarah Lawrence College's Art of Teaching Program.

**Vashti DuBois '92** double majored with Theater. She built her career in the Non Profit World working on issues impacting women and girls. DuBois is the creator of The Colored Girls Museum, which celebrates the stories, experiences, and history of Colored Girls.

**Karina Eileraas '93** triple majored with International Relations and French. She earned an MA in French at Northwestern, PhD in Women's Studies at UCLA (The very first PhD recipient in Women's Studies at UCLA!). She is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at USC.

**Shira Engel '14** double majored with English. Shira is a student in the Secondary English Education department at Teachers College Columbia University while teaching Third Grade at a lower school in New York. She also teaches yoga at Harlem Yoga Studio.

**Kristen Evangelista '97** double majored with Art History. She earned an MA in Curatorial Studies at Bard College. She is currently the Director of William Paterson University Galleries in Wayne, NJ.

**Rose (Gower) Everitt '95** double majored with Medieval Studies. She received a JD from the University of Maine School of Law. Everitt has worked for the past 13 years as a Lead Law Clerk to the Chief Justice, Hon. Leigh I. Saufley, who is the first woman to serve as Maine's Chief Justice. Rose resides in Portland, Maine with her husband

and daughter.



Ari Lev Fornari '04

**Ari Lev Fornari '04** In 2014 Ari was ordained as a rabbi from the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College. Fornari is currently the Director of the Boston-area Jewish Education Program and works part-time as a prison chaplain. He is also the parent of a toddler.

**Suzanne Gallo '13** double majored with Psychology. She is currently in graduate school at Boston College School of Social Work with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health. Gallo is involved in domestic abuse counseling and the Behavioral Health Workforce Program fellowship program.

**Johanna Goetzl '07** double majored with English. She received an MA in Climate and Society from Columbia University and currently leads the Climate Group Member Engagement in North America. She is passionate about building a network of corporate leaders and developing a culture of planetary and population health. Johanna is also a skilled chef and avid foodie, advocating for a more sustainable food system.

**Melissa Goldberg '93** double majored with Government. Goldberg attended law school at Georgetown University Law Center and is currently a law clerk for the Northern District of California. Melissa resides with her wife and two children.

**Sara Golden '97** double majored with Sociology. She is a certified Nurse-Midwife providing GYN and obstetric care to women of all ages. Gold has worked with underserved populations in federally funded public health clinics and in multiple small community hospitals.

**Trent Grassian '09** double majored with Anthropology. Grassian worked as a Special Ed teacher after graduation before completing a PhD at the University of Kent in the UK. His research focuses on collaborating with animal rights and sustainable organizations throughout the UK and US. Grassian is also an editor with Vegan Sustainability Magazine. He is married to Jordan Collins '09.

**Megan Greenberg '07** double majored with Sociology. She is currently a Family Nurse Practitioner and Clinic Manager at Mission Neighborhood Resource Center, in San Francisco which serves homeless adults.

**Kristine Gaul '93** double majored with History.

# FGSS Alum Joins Wesleyan Faculty

Abbie Boggs '02 will be returning to Wesleyan this fall as an Assistant Professor of Sociology. After graduating with a major in FGSS (then called Women's Studies), Boggs worked with Queers for Economic Justice in New York. She went on to earn a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of California, Davis. Boggs is currently the Associate Graduate Program Director of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. For the Fall Semester of 2016, Boggs will be teaching Introduction to Sociology, Feminist and Queer Theories of Social Reproduction, and a Spring 2017 course on the emerging field of Critical University Studies. Boggs is interested in becoming involved in the FGSS program. "I'm very excited to be back on campus in part because I thoroughly enjoyed meeting an engaged set of sociology majors during my campus visit in November. I'm also looking forward to working with the current Wesleyan faculty and meeting the sizable incoming cohort of faculty."

Gaul is currently the Chief Operating Officer at Sacramento Native American Health Center, a health clinic that offers primary care, dental, behavioral health, and health education services to urban Native community as well as the general public.

**Kelsey Henry '15** double majored with American Studies. Kelsey is an intern at Maia Midwifery and Fertility, a Seattle-based practice that specializes in providing culturally competent care to LGBTQ folks as they grow their families. She also works as a birth doula and hopes to start a doula practice of her own that will honor a range of pregnancy related experiences and outcomes, including birth, miscarriage, abortion, adoption, and surrogacy.

**Cara Herbitter '03** is a third-year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at UMass Boston. Her research focuses on the impact of social stressors on the physical and mental health of LGBTQ people, as well as resilience and coping within the community. She is married to Xiomara Lorenzo '05 and resides in Jamaica Plain.

**Simca Horwitz '03** double majored with Sociology. Simca earned MS in Food and Agriculture Policy from Tufts School of Nutrition.

She is currently a Program Director at Massachusetts Farm to School. Horowitz also started a pie business, Bushel+Crumb in 2013. Simca lives in Boston.

**J.M. Jaffe '09** double majored with Biology. Jaffe worked as a patient care coordinator at Lyon-Martin Health Services in San Francisco before getting promoted to Trans Health Manager. J.M. is now responsible for improving access to Trans healthcare by managing the Transline, a national e-consultation service that connects providers all over the country with experts in trans healthcare.

**Elizabeth Jauregui '15** double majored with Sociology. Jauregui is currently a graduate student at Ohio University, earning M. Ed. in College Student Personnel. She is also a graduate resident director for a residence hall of over 250 first-year students on campus.

**Paulina Jones-Torregrosa '15** double majored with English. Paulina is working as a Teaching Fellow at Noble and Greenough School in Dedham, MA. She is preparing to enter a PhD program in English in Fall 2017.

**Alex Ketchum '12** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at McGill University focusing

on feminist restaurants, cafes, and coffeehouses in the US and Canada from the 1960s to present day. Ketchum earned an MA in History and Women and Gender Studies from McGill and teaches for the Women's Studies and Sexual Diversity Studies Programs.

**Lola Pellegrino '08** works for a reproductive health non-profit and is writing a feminist almanac for team Girl Nightmare. She lives in Brooklyn.



Casey Reed '12

**Casey Reed '12** double majored with English and worked as a Marketing and Sponsorship Assistant for the Los Angeles Sparks. She is currently writing digital strategy for Microsoft with the Ayzenberg Group.

**Gwendolyn Rosen '15** double majored with Sociology. Since graduation, Gwen interned at the Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health. She currently works at Momentum Communications Group, a PR agency that works with non-profit and education groups.

**Michelle Seelig '94** earned a MD at Mount Sinai

School of Medicine and a MSHS at UCLA School of Public Health. She is a family physician in Seattle and has 5 boys.

**Emma Silverman '06** double majored with Studio Art. Silverman is a PhD candidate at UC Berkeley in History of Art with emphasis in Women, Gender and Sexuality.

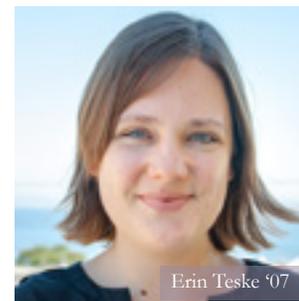
**Piper Sledge '03** double majored with Sociology. She is working on a PhD dissertation in Sociology at University of Chicago. This fall Sledge will be an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Bryn Mawr College.

**Ruby Stardrum '07** earned a Masters degree in Childhood General and Special Education from Bank Street College of Education. She is currently working on an MA in Mental Health Counseling at UMass Boston. Ruby resides in Jamaica Plain with her wife.

**Allegra Stout '12** double majored with Psychology. She is a Community organizer at Boston Center for Independent Living. Allegra campaigns to increase state funding for affordable housing for people with disabilities. She plans to marry Laura Heath '11 in October.

**Erin Teske '07** double majored with Italian Studies. After graduation, Teske

taught English in Argentina. She earned an MA in Translation and Interpretation at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. Teske is currently a medical interpreter at Stanford Health Care as well as a freelance translator and interpreter.



Erin Teske '07

**Keri Weisblum '93** double majored with Film. Keri worked in Post Production Accounting in the Motion Picture Industry and has recently returned to the industry after raising 2 daughters. Keri was very active in raising over \$2M as the Co-President of the Parents' Association at their public school.

**Emy (Johnson) Zener '96** is a psychiatric social worker. Zener works in the outpatient department of psychiatric hospital doing individual and group therapy with adults, specializing in women with trauma histories and/or substance abuse. She resides in NYC with her husband, Maz Zener '94, and daughter.

# Senior Thesis Writers

Nina Gurak: "Why Did the Rapist Cross the Road? A Case for the Feminist Rape Joke"

**Advisor:** Professor Christina Crosby

**Favorite Writing Spot:** My thesis carrel. It's super cozy and has a window. I decorated it so it's a lot of fun to write in there.

**Inspiration:** My biggest inspiration would have to be the awesome feminist comedians I'm writing about. I also want to give a shout out to Missy Elliot, who is great to listen to when writing or thinking in general.

**Biggest Challenge:** My biggest challenge has been just setting aside time to sit down to work on writing.

**Lightbulb Moment:** I kind of joke with my advisor and my friends that every week I feel like I've had a totally game-changing revelation....

Rebecca Winkler: "Walking With Giants: Ecofeminist Insights on Elephant Tourism in Thailand"

**Advisor:** Professor Lori Gruen

**Favorite Writing Spot:** My go to spot is the table on the first floor of Olin in the lobby. I don't like writing or working in small, enclosed spaces and having a little bit of motion and noise around me helps me focus.

**Inspiration:** This December I went back to Thailand to visit the project I wrote about for my thesis and one of the elephants that was rescued had just had a baby. It was a huge moment because her first baby had died in an elephant camp so everyone was really emotional. The baby, named Sunti, which means peace, is perfect and healthy and living the most amazing life in the forest. So every time I felt unmotivated I looked at the picture of Sunti and his mom (Thong Kam) and thought about how they had overcome so much.

**Biggest Challenge:** I actually hated writing before I started. My writing was pretty rough at first and I had to do a lot of rewrites but I've come to really love it and I'm really proud of how far my writing skills have come.

Rebecca Brill: "Holocaust Girls"

**Advisor:** Professor Erica Hunt

**Favorite Writing Spot:** I mostly wrote my thesis late at night in my carrel and in the fishbowl once Olin closed. Admittedly, I also wrote a good chunk of it during my Global Change and Infectious Disease class.

**Inspiration:** The idea for my thesis came largely from my experiences at the yeshiva (Orthodox Jewish day school) I attended for 15 years and the Jewish summer camp I attended for eight. I was interested in the ceremonial and solemn approach to the Holocaust that was standard fare at my yeshiva, and how it contrasted with the comedic approach to the Holocaust that many girls and I took at school and camp, for some of us as a means of rebellion. I noticed that this flippant approach to the Holocaust was common in popular culture, particularly in comedy. In terms of writing, I was inspired deeply by Wayne Koestenbaum, whose seamless fusion of memoir, cultural criticism, literary analysis, and humor I sought to emulate while writing my thesis.

**Biggest Challenge:** It was definitely a challenge to balance the critical aspect of my thesis with anecdotes and jokes.

# Faculty News

**Professor Natasha Korda** was recently elected a member of the Board of Trustees of the Shakespeare Association of America. She will be presenting work at the International Shakespeare Association's "World Shakespeare Congress" this summer in Stratford-upon-Avon. Professor Korda will be a Visiting Professor in the English Department at Columbia University in the Spring of 2017. She has published in *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, the *Ashgate Research Companion to Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, *Rethinking Feminism: Gender, Race, and Sexuality in*

*Early Modern Studies*, *Shakespeare Bulletin* (2015), and *Shakespeare and Costume* (2015).

**Professor Lori Gruen** published a number of op-eds, chapters, and articles this year. She also participated in a couple of podcasts and was one of the featured scholars in an international art installation at the XII Baltic Triennial on Grief and Climate Change. She gave 15 talks, including the Clark Lecture at the Oregon Humanities Center entitled "Justice and Empathy Beyond the Human." Her book *Entangled Empathy* was

the subject of an Author Meets Critic session at the American Philosophical Association Pacific meetings. She was awarded the Edgar Beckham Social Justice Faculty Award.

**Victoria Pitts-Taylor** published *The Brain's Body: Neuroscience and Corporeal Politics*, with Duke University Press.

**Christina Crosby** published a memoir, *A Body Undone: Living On After Great Pain*, with NYU Press.

Wesleyan University Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

222 Church Street • Allbritton Center 218  
Middletown, Connecticut 06459