



WOMEN'S STUDIES BULLETIN

December 2005/January 2006

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EVENTS

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH UPDATE

We received several creative submissions for the position of poster designer for Women's History Month this year. After reviewing the submissions, Andrew Williams was selected for the position. Williams is a visual communications student at NIU. In addition to developing his own web site, he has done web and graphic design for Prism, a NIU student group, as well as for Telfleur, Inc. We are looking forward to working with him on this year's Women's History Month poster. Watch for the poster advertising all of the exciting Women's History Month events, which will be out in February.

CRAFTY WOMEN HOLIDAY SALE

We have many people to thank for making the CRAFTY WOMEN holiday sale a success. First, thank you Women's Alliance for helping to organize and host the event. We must also thank all of the crafty women and men who donated items to the sale. Thank you also to everyone who purchased items. During the opening reception, over \$200.00 was raised. The money raised from all purchases goes to benefit the Mothers Memorial Scholarship fund.

PEOPLE

STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Sandi Caldron, a graduate student in Anthropology and Women's Studies, is our student in the spotlight. Caldron received her bachelor's degree from NIU in 2003, with a major in Anthropology and a minor in Women's Studies. During the first two years of her

graduate program, Caldron was a graduate teaching assistant for the Women's Studies Program. She is currently the head T.A. for the Anthropology department. Caldron plans to graduate in May. After graduating, she plans to join the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program (JET), and teach in Japan for a few years. Eventually, she may pursue a Ph.D. in medical anthropology.

According to Caldron, she was already interested in Women's Studies issues as a toddler, even though she didn't know what the terms "Women's Studies" or "feminist" meant. When she was in high school, Caldron became concerned with society's standards for femininity, especially as presented by the media, and she began to self-identify as a feminist. Her concerns about the representation of women in the media led her to co-found Femme Revolution, an activist group dedicated to improving the way that women are represented in the media, in 1999. During her undergraduate program, Caldron also served as the co-President of Women's Alliance, a NIU student organization that focuses on women's issues.

Caldron is currently working on her master's thesis, which will focus on sex education in relation to LGBT issues. According to Caldron, the key terms that are used in sex education classes, like sex, sexuality, abstinence, heterosexual and homosexual, are often left "undefined and unspecified." Furthermore, she says that most sex education research is quantitative rather than qualitative, and therefore does not adequately represent LGBT issues. In her thesis, she plans to identify the definitions behind the key terms used in sex education classes, and then compare the definitions with how Prism, a NIU student organization for the LGBT community, defines the same terms. Additionally, she is interested in whether Prism members use different key terms than those used in traditional sex education classes. In carrying out her research, Caldron is using feminist and queer theories and approaches, both of which, she says, are critical of heteronormative ideas that present white, heterosexual, males as the standard against which everything is measured.

Caldrone is an exceptional student who has accomplished a great deal during her academic career. As an undergraduate, she received two grants to conduct research on young adult literature. In 2004, she presented a paper at the annual National Women's Studies Association conference. She is also a recipient of the Outstanding Woman Student Award. In order to be successful students, Caldron urges peers to take advantage of their professors' and teaching assistants' office hours, because "they are there to help students."

ASSOCIATE OF THE MONTH

Lynn Kamenitsa is our Faculty Associate in the spotlight. Kamenitsa has held a joint appointment with Women's Studies and Political Science since 1993. She came to NIU after receiving her Ph.D. in Political Science from Indiana University in Bloomington. She received her B.A. in Political Science in 1985 from Ohio University. Since coming to NIU, Kamenitsa has taught numerous Women's Studies courses, including "Women in Contemporary Society" (WOMS 230) and "Research in Women's Studies" (WOMS 530). She says that one of the features she likes most about teaching for the Women's Studies Program is that she has contact with a broad range of students and faculty from across the university.

Kamenitsa was interested in Women's Studies issues from a very early age. Growing up, she says that she was influenced by the Women's Rights movement, and was always concerned about "justice and fairness." As an undergraduate, she took a feminist theory course, which furthered her interest in Women's Studies.

Kamenitsa's current research focuses on contemporary feminist movements in the United States. Specifically, she is interested in the ways in which these movements deal with the issue of motherhood as a policy issue. In September, she presented a paper on this topic, "Apple Pie, or Sour Apples? Motherhood in the U.S. Women's Movement," at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, in Washington, D.C. Kamenitsa has also taught a number of related Political Science courses, such as "Women in Politics" and "Women's Movements in U.S. Politics." She is looking forward to teaching the latter class again in the near future.

Kamenitsa enjoys spending time with her two children when she is not working. She also enjoys hiking, bird watching, and gardening in her free time. Since she is a political scientist, it is not surprising that Kamenitsa is also involved in local politics in her home town of Oak

Park, where she and her husband helped form a citizen's group.

When asked if she had any advice for Women's Studies students, Kamenitsa warned, "Don't pull all-nighters during Finals week. It never works." She also urges students to take advantage of various events on campus, because after they graduate, they may never again have the time and access to so many enriching events. Finally, she encourages students to choose a career that deals with something they are passionate about, because it will make the work experience more rewarding.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Caroline Conley presented "Four Young Readers' (Re)Construction of Self Through *Little Women*" at the 2005 Midwest Modern Language Association (MMLA) conference, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 10-13.

Valerie Guyant presented "Representations and Misrepresentations of Female Sexuality in Vampire Literature" at the 2005 MMLA conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Caresse John presented "Submissive and Subversive: The Narrator in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" at the 2005 MMLA conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Lynn Kamenitsa presented "Apple Pie, or Sour Apples? Motherhood in the U.S. Women's Movement," at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, in Washington, D.C., September 1-4.

Maimouna Konate presented "Contrasting Transformative Learning from the Perspectives of the North (Developed Countries) and the South (Developing Countries)" at the Sixth International Transformative Learning Conference in Lansing, MI, October 6-9, 2005. Konate also presented "Women, Community Empowerment, and Islam" at the 24th Midwest Research-to-Practice conference in Milwaukee, WI, September 28-30, 2005.

Kathleen Renk presented "'The Last Breath of Communism': Exile and Memory in Pauline Melville's *The Migration of Ghosts*" at the 2005 MMLA conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Lisa Schlosser presented "We are playing all the time in one way or another: The Power of Play in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*" at the 2005 MMLA conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Lynne Thomas presented "Passing Jo March: Cross-Dressing Heroines from Little Women to Dime Novels by Edward L. Wheeler and Elizabeth Frees Ellet" at the 2005 MMLA conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Lise Schlosser passed her English comprehensive exam with distinction. Congratulations, Lise!

Austin Sawicki took and passed two of his Philosophy comprehensive exams. He received a "high pass" on the exam on metaphysics and epistemology. Congratulations, Austin!

OPPORTUNITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Talbots Charitable Foundation is accepting applications for the 2006 Women's Scholarship Fund Program. Scholarships range from \$1000-\$10,000. Applications and additional information are available at all Talbots stores, and can also be found at <http://fconline.fdncenter.org/pnd/5001628/talbots>. Deadline for applications is January 3, 2006.

The Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Service is seeking full-length manuscripts for a special issue, titled "Lesbian Parent Families at the Intersection: An Ecological Perspective on Social, Family & Individual Identities," which will be co-edited by Lucy R. Mercier and Rena D. Harold. Deadline for submissions is January 15, 2006. For more information, visit www.haworthpressinc.com/web/JGLSS/.

The Women's Studies Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is accepting applications for their Women's Studies Dissertation Scholars 2006-2007 fellowship program. Deadline for applications is January 27, 2006. For additional information, visit <http://www.womst.ucsb.edu/ABDScholars/ABDInfo.html>.

The NIU Women's Studies Program is accepting applications for the Mother's Memorial Scholarship. The application deadline is February 1, 2006. For a scholarship application and additional information, visit the Women's Studies Program office in Reavis 103, or contact Lise Schlosser at (815) 753-1038 or lschlosser@niu.edu.

The 2006 NWSA Women of Color Caucus seeks submissions for its Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Student Essay Awards. The deadline is February 15, 2006. Visit www.nwsa.org/wocresources.html for further details.

The National Women's Studies Association seeks submissions for the NWSA Graduate Scholarship, the NWSA Graduate Scholarship in Lesbian Studies, and the Scholarship in Jewish Women's Studies. The deadline for all scholarship applications is February 15, 2006. For further details, visit www.nwsa.org/ssnwsa.html.

The University of Chicago's Center for Gender Studies is holding a day-long symposium, "Trans/Forming Knowledge: The Implications of Transgender Studies for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies," on Friday, February 17, 2006. Visit <http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/cgs/transformingknowledgeconf.htm> for more information.

We invite submissions for future WS bulletins. If you know of any information that we should include in future bulletins, please email Rebekah Kohli at rkohli@niu.edu with subject heading "Bulletin." You may also call 753-1044.