

WOMEN'S STUDIES BULLETIN

September 2005

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NIU 2005 CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG WOMEN

This year, the NIU Conference for Young Women will be held Wednesday, October 19, from 8:15 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. Sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Women's Studies Program, this conference introduces young women in their sophomore through senior years of high school to a variety of career areas, including areas where women have been historically underrepresented. The conference will include a panel discussion on career opportunities for women, presentations by faculty on topics related to women's collegiate experiences and career options, and tours of the NIU campus and campus facilities, such as Barsema Hall or the university television center. Please encourage young high school women you know to register for this exciting opportunity. To register, call 1-800-345-9472. For additional information, call (815) 753-1038 or visit www.niu.edu/clasep/Young_womens/. The registration fee is \$33 before October 13, with a \$5 additional late charge after that date. Limited scholarships are available. Should you wish to contribute to a scholarship, please send a check made out to NIU to the Women's Studies Program.

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH PREVIEW

We are excited because we will be celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Women's Studies Program and the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women this year. The theme for this year's Women's History Month will be "Celebrating 25 Years of Women's Studies at NIU: Re-Imagining Sisterhood." Our programs and events will

consider the theme from a variety of perspectives. Possible topics and questions that might be considered are: How are bonds of sisterhood forged across racial and ethnic lines? Does the internet provide a space for global sisterhood? What are the characteristics, limitations, and possibilities for cyber-sisterhood on the internet? We might also consider cultural expressions of sisterhood in art, music and literature. We are currently seeking additional ideas for topics and speakers for this yearly event. Also, we encourage faculty to discuss the theme of “sisterhood” in spring courses and to develop relevant assignment options. We look forward to receiving your ideas for events and programs. Please contact Rebekah Kohli at 753-1044 or rkohli@niu.edu to share any ideas that you might have. We are looking forward to another great Women’s History Month this year.

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FACULTY ASSOCIATES’ LECTURE SERIES

The first event of the Women’s Studies Faculty Associates’ Lecture Series was held Monday, September 12, in Holmes Student Center, Room 305. The speaker was Susan Branson, Associate Professor of American Studies at Syracuse University, and author of the book, *Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women, Politics, and Culture in Early National Philadelphia*. The title of Dr. Branson’s presentation was “Notorious by Design: Women, Crime and Class in the Early Nineteenth Century.”

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FACULTY ASSOCIATES’ FALL SOCIAL

Thank you to Kathleen Renk for graciously hosting a fun and relaxing September gathering for faculty associates. Everyone had a wonderful time as new and returning faculty gathered to share stimulating conversation over wine and hors d’oeuvres. Thanks to everyone who brought snacks to share. The evening was a great way to kick off the fall semester.

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PEOPLE

STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Julie Neubauer, a second year law student, and one of our Women’s Studies TAs, is our student in the spotlight. After receiving her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Religion from the University of Iowa, Julie worked for a year in an inner-city Chicago group home for sexually abused adolescent girls. She then moved on to work as an advocate and counselor for WAVE, an agency in Rockford, IL, that runs an office and shelter for victims of domestic violence. Julie says that she was led to enter law school after witnessing the difficulties that battered women experience when they attempt to escape their abuse through the legal system.

If you talk to Julie for a few minutes, her passion for women’s social justice issues will become very clear. As Julie put it, her interest in women’s rights and issues comes across

in her “social, occupational, and individual activities and interests.” As the current President of the Women’s Law Caucus, Julie helps to facilitate events that bring awareness to domestic violence and related issues. Each spring, the organization hosts performances of Eve Ensler’s “The Vagina Monologues,” in order to raise funds for local domestic violence shelters. This year, Julie also plans for her organization to sell purple ribbons in October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and she is planning activities to raise awareness about violence against women during Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. Presently, Julie is working with the Law Caucus to raise funds for a number of survivors of Hurricane Katrina that are now living in DeKalb.

When asked what sort of advice she would give to other Women’s Studies students, Julie’s immediate response was, “Think critically.” Thinking critically about gender issues is something that Julie has done at least since high school, when she first noticed how boys and girls were often treated differently. She hopes to inspire her students to ask questions, and think critically, too.

After Julie finishes her law degree, she plans to work for a family law firm. Eventually, she hopes to open a law firm of her own, which would offer advocate services for battered and abused women as an added service. In her spare-time, which Julie seems to have very little of, she likes to spend time with her little dog and go bike riding.

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ASSOCIATE OF THE MONTH

Jennifer Lackey, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, is our associate in the spotlight this month. Lackey came to NIU in 2003 and joined the Women’s Studies Program as an associate in 2004. Prior to coming to NIU, she was an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Pomona College in Claremont, California. Lackey received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Brown University, and her M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Chicago. She received her B.A. in Philosophy from Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, in Indiana.

Lackey’s primary research interests focus on “the epistemology of testimony,” which is also the title of a forthcoming book that she co-edited with Ernest Sosa. Some readers may not be familiar with the “epistemology of testimony.” As Lackey explains, epistemology is the study of knowledge, while testimony refers to the knowledge that we receive from other people in either spoken or written form. As people depend on other people more, Lackey says, this question of testimony becomes a more pressing concern. She also argues that there is a natural connection between feminist epistemology and testimony. Feminist philosophers view knowers as being socially connected through testimony, unlike in the traditional Cartesian model, which represents knowers as isolated, autonomous, individuals.

According to Lackey, there are very few women working in the field of philosophy, and when she entered the Philosophy program at Brown, she may have been the only female student in the doctoral program. While at Brown, she noticed that there was a Feminist Philosophy class on the books, but it had not been taught. So, Lackey wrote up a proposal

to teach the course, which was accepted. Since then, she has taught feminist philosophy courses at both Pomona and NIU. When she first began teaching feminist philosophy, she focused on traditional philosophical issues and considered them through a feminist perspective. Recently, Lackey has begun to integrate a new approach, which considers “distinctly women’s issues through a philosophical lens.”

Lackey says that she really enjoys teaching feminist philosophy courses, particularly because of the wide range of students who register for the course. She is looking forward to being able to teach her “Feminism and Philosophy” course again here at NIU, hopefully next year. “Feminism and Philosophy” is also cross-listed as a Women’s Studies course. For more information on Jennifer Lackey, visit her [website](#).

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WELCOME WS TEACHING ASSISTANTS

This year, we have three full-time TAs. Welcome back Lauren Whalen, whom we are thrilled to have return for her second year as a Women’s Studies TA. Welcome also to our two new TAs, Julie Neubauer and Austin Sawicki. Austin is a graduate student in Philosophy and a Women’s Studies concentrator. He joined NIU from Gonzaga University in Washington, where he received his B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies. Julie Neubauer is featured as our “Student of the Month” in this bulletin.

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GOODBYE & THANK YOU JOLENE SKINNER AND WELCOME OUR NEW PROGRAM COORDINATOR

We would like to thank Jolene Skinner for the excellent work she did for 2 ½ years as Program Coordinator for Women’s Studies. Jolene has accepted an organizational consulting position with International Survey Research in Chicago. She will truly be missed!

Rebekah Kohli is the new Program Coordinator. She received her Master’s degree in Art History and her Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies from Northern Illinois University in 2003. After graduating, she was hired by Waubonsee Community College (WCC) to design and teach a new course, “Women in Art.”

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Lisa Kay won the National Women’s Studies Association’s Jewish Caucus 2004 annual scholarship. She plans to use the award to defray some of the cost of traveling to interview students of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, a Jewish member of the Bauhaus who taught children’s art at Terezin concentration camp in Germany, and who is the subject of Kay’s dissertation.

Kathy Kitts and Eugene Perry received a grant from the National Science Foundation for their project, "Intensive Field Experience in Northern Illinois and Central Mexico for Junior and Senior High School Teachers Serving Large Hispanic Populations." The NSF announcement of the award can be found [online](#).

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OPPORTUNITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The National Women's Studies Association is currently seeking proposals for their 2006 Annual Conference, "Locating Women's Studies: Formations of Power and Resistance." Proposals must be submitted electronically via the conference site or to nwsaoffice@nwsa.org by November 1, 2005. For additional information visit the [conference website](#).

Applications for NWSA scholarships for students in Women's Studies or related areas are also available on the NWSA website. Scholarships include graduate scholarships for theses and dissertations, Lesbian Studies, Jewish Women's Studies, and Women of Color Essay Awards. For information, [email](#) NWSA, or visit the [NWSA website](#).

Applications for the Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowships in Women's Studies are now being accepted. These fellowships support doctoral research about women that crosses disciplinary, regional, or cultural boundaries. Application deadlines are October 11, 2005. For additional information, visit www.woodrow.org.

Romance Writers of America announces its Research Grant competition. The grant is intended to support academic research that focuses on genre romance novels, writers, and readers. Grants will fund up to \$5000. Proposals are due December 1, 2005. For information, [email](#) Allison Kelley, or visit the [Romance Writers of America website](#).

Announcing the First Digital Collection of the Harvard University Library, Open Collections Program, "Women Working: 1870-1930" makes fully digitized versions of books, manuscripts, pamphlets, consumer trade catalogs and photographs from Harvard University freely available via the Internet. This collection focuses on women's roles in the U.S. economy between the Civil War and the Great Depression. For more information, please visit the [Open Collection's website](#).

Hurricane Katrina devastated much of the Gulf Coast region, causing a severe loss of life and property. We encourage everyone to contribute to the many organizations that are collecting and distributing much needed funds. A list of WS contacts for faculty, staff and students displaced by Katrina can be found on the [NWSA website](#).

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.

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