

WOMEN'S STUDIES BULLETIN

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR



Welcome back to another academic year! I welcome those of you who are just joining our community as well as those of you who have been friends of Women's Studies for many years.

After spending last year as Acting Associate Dean for CLAS, I have returned to Women's Studies grateful to Diana Swanson for serving as Acting Director. I'm invigorated with new ideas and possibilities for the program. I hope we will make progress on some on-going projects this year, including our proposal for a major in Women's Studies. To complement this work, we will

be engaging in a year-long review of our undergraduate program, with particular attention to our two general education courses. I hope faculty and students will contribute their thoughts to this review.

Our program will be celebrating its **thirtieth anniversary** in 2010-2011! We will be planning special celebrations, and we have set ourselves the goal of scheduling 30 events throughout the year. The particular focus of the events, and of Women's History Month especially, will be **migration and immigration**. Faculty members, please keep this in mind as you plan your spring classes, and we welcome suggestions for activities. We are excited to kick off events related to this theme with a visit by author **Sandra Cisneros**, best known perhaps for *The House on Mango Street*, on October 6. Special thanks to Emily Prieto, Director of the Latino Resource Center, for making this event possible and asking us to co-sponsor with her unit.

We will also be continuing efforts to increase women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). I can barely contain my delight that NIU has been granted an **NSF Catalyst grant** to conduct a self-study relating to promotion and retention of midcareer female faculty in STEM areas, as well as an assessment of the effects of written and unwritten policies on women's career transitions. Dean McCord of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is PI for the grant; faculty associate Lesley Rigg and I are co-PIs, along with Brianno Collier from the College of Engineering. Moreover, the Women's Studies Program will have a table at the first NIU **STEMfest** in the Convocation Center on October 23. I'm seeking people with fun ideas for the table and time to help me staff it!

During the summer, we also began discussions with **LGBT Studies** about creating an alignment between our programs whereby each unit would maintain its autonomy, but certain administrative functions for LGBT Studies would pass through this office. I look forward to this alignment as a way to formalize our close relationship. To mark this change, we will be holding a joint event for the faculty associates of both programs on September 23.

May your school year be fulfilling.

FALL 2010

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Women's Studies Program
"Changing minds & lives
for the better"**

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This fall, Women's Studies is sponsoring and co-sponsoring many thought-provoking and engaging events. Here are some details:

Thursday, September 16

Breaking Up is Harder to Do: Civil Rights, Marriage and the Queer Family—Law Professor Elvia Arriola will survey developments in marriage and domestic partnership legislation and comment on the benefits and burdens of the marriage option for individuals who identify as LGBT. Part of the LGBT Studies Third Thursday series.

LOCATION: Holmes Student Center, Blackhawk Annex
TIME: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Monday, September 27

Black + Queer + Female = Invisible—Join the Women's Resource Center, LGBT Resource Center and Women's Studies Program for a showing of Charles Brack's documentary *Dreams Deferred: The Sakia Gunn Film Project*.

LOCATION: Women's Resource Center
TIME: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 29

WOMS Pizza Party!—Women's Studies students and anyone interested in learning about the program are invited to attend. Please join us, and bring a friend or two!

LOCATION: Reavis Hall, Room 103
TIME: 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 5

Take Back the Night—Join the Women's Rights Alliance, Women's Studies Program, and other sponsors to protest against sexual assault and night-time violence.

LOCATION: Martin Luther King Commons (to the East Lagoon)
TIME: 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 6

An Evening with Sandra Cisneros—Join the Latino Resource Center, Women's Studies and other sponsors for a talk by author Sandra Cisneros! Check our online calendar for information about a discussion of *Woman of Hollering Creek* by Cisneros prior to her talk.

LOCATION: Jack Arends Art Building, Room 100
TIME: 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 7

The Sexual Politics of Meat—The Women's Resource Center and other sponsors are hosting Carol Adams, who will explore the animalization of women in contemporary culture and the sexualizing of animals used for food. Following Adams's talk, there will be a book signing and reception with tasty vegan food.

LOCATION: Holmes Student Center, Heritage Room
TIME: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 19

Crafty Women Workshop-Origami Boxes—Susan Edwards will teach you how to make origami boxes out of greeting cards. Optional: bring your own cards.

LOCATION: Reavis Hall, Room 103 (Conference room)
TIME: 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 20

LUNAFEST: Short Films By, For & About Women—Enjoy an evening of ten new women-directed films, popcorn, and raffle prizes for just \$5.00!

LOCATION: Holmes Student Center, Carl Sandburg Auditorium
TIME: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 23

NIU STEMfest—Women's Studies is thrilled to participate in NIU's first STEMFEST for families, teachers, and others! Stop by our table and learn about women's contributions to the fields of science, technology, engineering and math! Volunteers are welcome as well; contact us for information.

LOCATION: NIU Convocation Center
TIME: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 26

The Palin Paradox: The Rise of Conservative Feminism—Join the Women's Resource Center, Women's Studies Program, and numerous other sponsors for an engaging discussion with Third Wave feminist activists and authors Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards!

LOCATION: Holmes Student Center, Carl Sandburg Auditorium
TIME: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 28

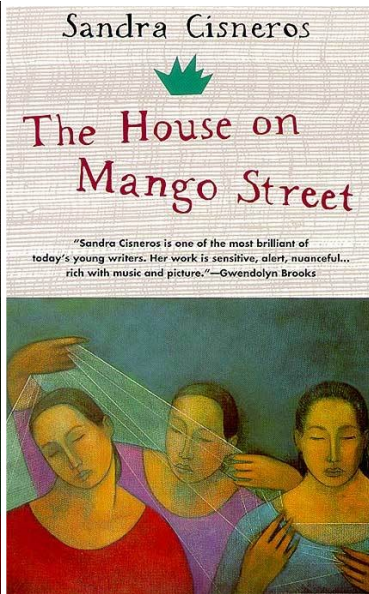
The "Real World": Virginia Woolf and Ecofeminism—Enjoy a talk by Professor Diana Swanson about the connections between Virginia Woolf and Ecofeminism. Part of the Women's Studies Program Faculty Associate Lecture Series.

LOCATION: Holmes Student Center, Blackhawk Annex
TIME: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

For additional events and a list of sponsors, check our online calendar at www.niu.edu/wstudies/news.

INTRODUCTIONS TO UPCOMING SPEAKERS

Sandra Cisneros, who is best known for her novel *The House on Mango Street*, is a novelist, poet and writer of short stories. Cisneros was born in Chicago in 1954 to a Mexican-American mother and Mexican father, and she spent much of her youth moving back and forth with her family between Chicago and Mexico City. Her writing often reflects this experience of "straddling two countries....but not belonging to either culture" (Doyle, 1996). Among her many publications are two full-length books of poetry, a children's book, and two novels.



She received her B.A. in English from Loyola University (1976) and her M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Iowa (1978). She has also received an honorary Doctor of Letters from the State University of New York-Purchase (1993) and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Loyola University (2002).

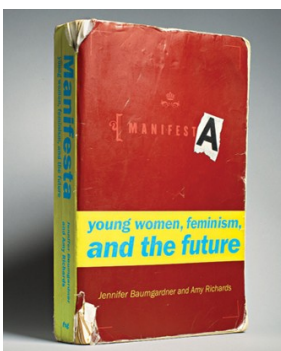
Cisneros has received numerous awards, including the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (1995); the Texas Medal of the Arts (2003); two National Endowment of the Arts Fellowships (1982 and 1988); and, an Illinois Artists Grant (1984). Her books have been translated into over one dozen languages. She is currently the Writer-in-Residence at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, TX. She is also the president and founder of the Macondo Foundation and the Alfredo Cisneros Del Moral Foundation, which provide grants to Texas writers. She has lectured around the country and the world, and was the keynote speaker at the 2007 National Women's Studies Association Conference.

Carol Adams is the author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat: a Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, which was hailed as a significant and challenging book when it was first published in 1990. In June 2010, Continuum Publishing released an expanded 20th anniversary edition of the book. Adams is also the author and editor of numerous other books, including *Living Among Meat Eaters: A Vegetarian's Survival Handbook* (Lantern, 2008), *The Pornography of Meat* (Continuum, 2004), and *Animals and Meat: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Duke, 1995).

In addition to her animal-rights work, Adams has also focused on issues related to sexual assault and violence against women. While living in Chautauqua County, New York, in the mid-1970s, she and her partner started the Hotline for Battered Women. Since moving to Texas in 1987, she has occasionally taught a course on "Sexual and Domestic Violence: Theological and Pastoral Concerns" at Southern Methodist University. Adams received her bachelor's degree from the University of Rochester (1972) and her Master of Divinity from Yale University Divinity School (1976).



Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards first met in 1993, while working for *Ms. Magazine*. Since meeting, they have worked on numerous projects together, including co-writing two books and many articles and book chapters. Their first book, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, examines the current state of feminism as a movement in the U.S. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000). In their second book, *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism*, the authors show "how to move beyond passive activism...to make a far-reaching impact from a personal vantage point" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005). In addition to their writing, Baumgardner and Richards are also the founders of Soapbox, Inc.: Speakers Who Speak Out, a feminist speakers' bureau, which "represent(s) experts with a progressive take on everything from politics to porn to parenting." To learn more about Baumgardner and Richards, visit <http://www.soapboxinc.com/who-we-are>.



WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWS

SIXTH ANNUAL HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFTS SALE

Mark your calendars for the sixth annual "Crafty Women" holiday arts and crafts sale on November 17th and 18th. The sale is a great way for you to get your holiday shopping done early and support the Women's Studies Program.

We hope you will also consider donating fine art and/or craft items for us to sell. If you don't know what to make, join us for the "Crafty Women Workshop" on Tuesday, October 19, where you will learn how to make beautiful origami boxes to donate to the sale. All proceeds from the sale will benefit the Mothers Memorial Scholarship, Austin Sawicki Scholarship, and Women's Studies Foundation funds.

If you would like to contribute items for us to sell, drop donations off in the Women's Studies office, Reavis 103, by Friday, November 12. We hope to top last year's total of over \$2,000!



GET YOUR WOMEN'S STUDIES BUTTONS!

We are excited to announce that there is a new way for you to show your support for the Women's Studies Program: we are now selling buttons to raise money for our scholarships and programming! Buttons are \$1 each. Stop in our office (Reavis 103) to check them out and buy your buttons today. If you have suggestions for buttons you think we should make, share them with Rebekah Kohli at rkohli@niu.edu.



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH PREVIEW



This year's theme for Women's History Month (WHM) 2011 is "Women's Immigration and Migration." We encourage faculty to discuss the WHM theme in spring courses and to develop relevant assignment options. We also invite everyone to share ideas for activities, events, and speakers for this year's celebration. We particularly encourage submissions that relate to this year's WHM theme. Events focusing on the theme will be featured in the annual WHM poster calendar; if space is available on our WHM poster, we will include other events that are related to [women](#). To propose an event, visit www.niu.edu/wstudies/history to download the Activity Proposal Form. You may also contact Rebekah Kohli at 753-1044 or rkohli@niu.edu to share any ideas that you might have. We look forward to receiving your ideas for events and programs!

Please note that while we are happy to help publicize events and the Women's Studies office can offer suggestions for event locations, we do not have the staff to organize or plan others' events.

PEOPLE

WELCOME (BACK) TO OUR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

We welcome our new TA, Amanda Nadenoff, who is currently pursuing her M.A. in History with a graduate certificate in Women's Studies. We also welcome back our returning TAs, Cortney Barko and Heather Samarinotis. Barko is a Ph.D. student in English and Women's Studies graduate certificate student, and Samarinotis is pursuing her M.A. in Sports Management and graduate certificate in Women's Studies. We're looking forward to a great year working with all three of them!

STUDENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Our first "Student in the Spotlight" this year is **Katarzyna (Katie) Przychodzen**, who is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Communication Studies with a graduate certificate in Women's Studies. She works as a full-time graduate teaching assistant in the Communication Studies Department teaching two sections of COMS 100. Przychodzen graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a B.A. in Communication from Loyola University-Chicago in 2005. After receiving her bachelor's degree, she taught English as a Second Language for two years before beginning her graduate program. After completing her M.A. degree, she plans to pursue a doctoral degree in hopes of ultimately teaching at the university level.

Przychodzen's interest in Women's Studies first developed after taking two graduate level communication courses. One of the first courses she took during her graduate program was a seminar in first-wave feminist rhetoric with Dr. Kerith Woodyard. Through primary source materials and critical writings, students learned about the "extremely sophisticated and complex moral and legal arguments that (first wave feminists) constructed to aid in their struggle for justice and equality." During the spring 2009, she took Dr. Laura Vazquez's seminar in media studies, which looked at the portrayal of working women on television from the 1970s to the present. According to Przychodzen, this course "dealt with feminism's second wave and how mainstream representations of women on television worked to both acknowledge and ignore, to reinforce and limit the goals of the movement." These two courses sparked an ongoing interest in Women's Studies for Przychodzen. In particular, she is interested in issues related to media representations of women and femininity, first-wave feminist rhetoric, and the role of women in education and government. "With respect to women in education," she says she hopes "to one day add to the growing body of research exploring the experiences of women in higher education, especially in graduate school and as faculty members in university settings."

Przychodzen argues that Women's Studies is valuable, because "whether we choose to admit it or not, a disparity still exists between society's treatment of men and women." For instance, "women, along with other historically marginalized groups, continue to face limited and/or limiting representations in the media," and women are generally paid less than men for the same work. "Women's Studies allows us access to and immersion in the expanding body of knowledge from which we can draw the tools we need to educate ourselves and others" about gender-based disparities and challenges.

Przychodzen wrapped up our interview by recommending that students focus on fulfilling their own potential while in school. "In other words," she says, "don't waste your time in college trying to gain the approval of your parents, your professors, or your future employers; instead, try every moment to impress *yourself* with what you can do." Additionally, she suggests that students should surround themselves with "people you look up to and never forget that you have something worthwhile to contribute to the conversation."

FACULTY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Corrine Wickens received her M.A. (2002) and Ph.D. in Teaching, Learning and Culture (2007) from Texas A & M University, and her B.A. from Indiana University. While completing her Ph.D., she received a \$25,000 fellowship from the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning. Her doctoral dissertation, “Queering Young Adult Literature: Examining Sexual Minorities in Contemporary Realistic Fiction Between 2000-2005,” won the prestigious *Qualitative Research Special Interest Group (SIG) Dissertation of the Year Award* in 2008 from the American Educational Research Association. Professor Wickens joined NIU as a professor of Literacy Education in fall 2008 and became a Women’s Studies faculty associate the following semester.

Issues of gender equality in education have always interested Wickens. She believes that students should take Women’s Studies courses because they help people understand that gender is an organizing category in our lives. “Gender is one of the markers that we denote from birth,” says Wickens. “It is so basic that we often begin to think that it’s not an issue.” Yet gender and sexuality are important parts of our identity, which are often linked to other issues, such as bullying in schools. Women’s Studies courses help students make these connections.

Professor Wickens teaches a variety of literacy courses at NIU, including an undergraduate class, Content Area Literacy Instruction (LTRE 311). At the graduate level, she has taught Improvement of Reading in the Secondary School (LTRE 510) and Teaching Reading in the Content Areas (LTRE 511). In the future, she would like to teach a gender and sexuality class related to literacy and education. “As an educator,” says Wickens, “being in the field of literacy grounds me.” Students have found her classes to be transformative because she helps them reconsider their own thinking about knowledge and education. Throughout our interview, Professor Wickens’ passion for her subject and teaching was clear. One of the most rewarding aspects of her job is “helping future and current students better know how to educate children.”

Wickens is currently pursuing a number of research projects. She is collaborating with Dr. Jenny Parker and Dr. Jinhong Jung from NIU’s Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education on a project to incorporate physical education in to literacy classes. Wickens’ research also focuses on issues related to sexuality and schooling, which she explores in an article she co-authored with Jennifer A. Sandlin, “Homophobia and heterosexism in a college of education: a culture of fear, a culture of silence,” recently published online in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (15 Feb. 2010); a print version of the article will be out in October 2010. In another recent article in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, “The investigation of power in written texts through the use of multiple textual analytic frames,” Wickens examines the multiple tools used for in-depth textual analysis of LGBTQ-themed young adult novels. Finally, she is also collaborating with NIU sociology professor Carol Walther and NIU literacy professor Melanie Koss on a research project which examines the attitudes of teachers and policies of public schools in the greater Chicago area in regards to controversial materials.

In addition to her academic work, Wickens is involved in the Illinois Safe School Alliance’s efforts to revamp teacher education. She also volunteers for Youth Outlook, a local organization that provides a “safe, supportive, and respectful environment” for LGBTQ youth in DeKalb, Kane and DuPage counties. Finally, Wickens has two young boys and, although it is challenging to balance her personal and professional life, she is very proud of her family and children.

We hope you will join us on Thursday, November 11, at 6:00 p.m. in DuSable Hall, Room 340, for Professor Wickens’ presentation, “Growing Up Female: Representation of Girls in Young Adult Literature” (Part of the Women’s Studies Program Faculty Associate Lecture Series).



SUMMER ACCOMPLISHMENTS



ALUMNI

Josh Adair, who is in his second year as an Assistant Professor at Murray State University, has been made the coordinator of the Freshman Reading Experience Program. His article, "Walk-In Closets? The (Non) Representation of Gay Men in the Museums They Called Home," was recently published in *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader*, edited by Amy K. Levin (Routledge, 2010).

Kelli Lyon-Johnson's book, *Performing Worlds into Being: Native American Women's Theater*, which she co-edited with Ann Elizabeth Armstrong and William A. Wortman, was published by Ohio University Press (2009).

FACULTY

Kerry Ferris's article, "The Next Big Thing: Local Celebrity," was published in the journal *Society* (July 28, 2010). In mid-September, she will be one of the keynote speakers at the University of Geneva's *Celebrity News* conference, in Switzerland.

Amy Levin authored "Straight Talk: Evolution Exhibits and the Reproduction of Heterosexuality," and co-authored "Museum Studies Texts and Museum Subtexts" with Anna Conlan, which were published in her edited volume, *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader* (Routledge, 2010). In June 2010, Levin was a respondent on the Institute of Museum Ethics' online question and answer section, "[Q & A: Museum Ethics and Board of Directors fundraising.](#)"

Brian Sandberg recently completed proofreading his monograph, entitled *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2010, forthcoming), and is eagerly anticipating the book's release later this month. A description is available on the Johns Hopkins University Press website (www.press.jhu.edu). He is currently conducting research on another book project on *Gender and Violence in the French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*. Brian has recently joined the Executive Committee of the Women's Studies Program and is looking forward to participating more closely with WOMS students.