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Congrats to ‘17 GWS Graduates
Upcoming Events
The vibrancy of feminist scholarship at Villanova University was much in evidence again this year, as the changes in directors of the Gender and Women's Studies Program make plain. Dr. Catherine Kerrison (HIS) returned as Academic Director, taking the place of Dr. Lisa Sewell (ENG), prize-winning poet who was named Luckow Family Endowed Chair in English Literature, beginning in Fall 2017. Dr. Timothy McCall (AAH), Programming Director, has been named a J. Clawson Mills Scholar in the Department of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for 2017-2018. Dr. Shauna MacDonald (COM) will take his place, beginning in Fall 2017. We congratulate Drs. Sewell and McCall on their signal achievements, and thank Dr. MacDonald for her willingness to serve.

That academic vitality was also evident in the exciting array of GWS course offerings during the 2016-17 academic year, with 35 undergraduate and 8 graduate courses in 13 different disciplines that served over 800 students. New courses offered this year included Stefanie Knauss's "Religion, Media, & Gender" and Melanie Subacus's "Women in the Classical World." Elizabeth Kolsky and Travis Foster both returned to teach our introductory course, GWS 2050: "Gender and the World," and students from both courses have expressed interest in the GWS major and minor. This Spring, Dr. Jill McCorkel introduced a timely new iteration of our GWS integrating seminar, GWS 5000: "#SayHerName: Gender, Race, & Social Justice."

This spring GWS will mark the graduation of Caitlin Moon (M.A. ENG), the first of the GWS Graduate Certificate Program since its inception in Fall 2014. She will pursue doctoral studies in Dublin, where she will focus on supernatural female agency in medieval literature. The GWS Certificate continues to draw interest from incoming students, both in tandem with another discipline or on its own. All Certificate students take GWS 8000: "Critical Perspectives on Gender," which was taught by Dr. Catherine Kerrison (HIS) in Fall 2016; it will be offered again in Spring 2018. Other courses, based on the research interests of our faculty included Yannik Thiem's "Politics of Affect" and Brooke Hunter's "Chaucer's Canterbury Tales."
Under Dr. McCall’s direction, the Gender and Women’s Studies program provided exciting and thought provoking extracurricular programming on a wide range of issues and in an array of formats. The panel “We Are Here” promoted awareness of sexual violence and involved many groups across campus. Nationally-prominent scholars who presented this year include Seth Koven of Rutgers who discussed World War I and queer conscience, and Catherine Morris, Curator of the Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, who spoke about organizing museum exhibitions that engage with art and identity intersectionally. GWS partnered with Arab & Islamic Studies to bring to campus Sa’ed Atshan who discussed being gay and Middle Eastern in America, and Villanova’s graduate student Arda Aghazarian who spoke about her activism in Palestine and beyond, with the YWCA. Other compelling lectures included those by Jessica Lynn, who poignantly narrated her transgender journey, and Kelly Dittmar of Rutgers, Camden, who in late October discussed the gender dynamics of the 2016 presidential election.

Fascinating presentations of Villanova faculty research included Joseph Drury’s exploration of libertines and machines in eighteenth-century British novels, and Kelly-Anne Diamond’s examination of Ancient Egyptian masculinity. Heidi Rose performed her most poignant “Twin,” which was followed by a discussion with the enrapt audience. Cooperation with the Villanova Women’s Professional Network, additionally, included a successful screening of the film CODE: Debugging the Gender Gap -- a few days after the dynamic, well attended Women in Tech conference – and a critical discussion of the gendered pay gap provided by Elise Gould of the Economic Policy Institute. So too did we laugh riotously this year, at the performance of “Careful Now” by ManiPedi sketch comedy troupe led by our own Tara Demmy, followed by an insightful conversation about women in comedy.

We are excited to welcome internationally recognized scholar Valerie Steele as keynote speaker for this year’s Gender and Women’s Studies Student Research Conference (in conjunction with the Greater Philadelphia Women’s Studies Consortium’s Student Research on Women, Gender, and Sexualities Conference), at which more than one hundred students are presenting work engaging gender, sexuality, and feminist analysis. We hope to see many of you at our next event, just next Monday: E. Patrick Johnson, Carlos Montezuma Professor and Chair of African American Studies at Northwestern, and author of important books including Black Queer Studies, will perform “Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Tales,” on April 10, at 7PM in the Communication Studio in Garey Hall. As always we are grateful to the faculty and administrators who support the Gender and Women’s Studies Program, particularly Dean Adele Lindenmeyr, to our students, and to Joyce Harden, our administrative assistant, and Tara Demmy, our graduate assistant.
Becoming a Gender and Women’s Studies major has made me realize certain uncomfortable (but important) truths about the world we live in, and my place in it. I have been interested in feminism since my senior year of high school, and since then I have been well aware of my status as a woman in a patriarchal society. I was interested in GWS because I recognized the disadvantages I faced as a woman. What I did not realize until I became a GWS major was all the ways in which I am privileged as well.

In life, we tend to focus on the ways we feel we are being treated unfairly. We rarely take the time to recognize the way we are being treated more favorably than others, because why would we question something that gives us an advantage? Studying feminism at Villanova has opened my eyes to the importance of acknowledging privilege, and using that privilege to help others less fortunate than ourselves. I am a woman—this means that, in general, I may be paid less than men, be taken less seriously than men, and be subjected to constraining stereotypes regarding femininity and women’s roles in society. I may experience discrimination, harassment, and violence due to my gender. I may be harmed psychologically by the effects of the media objectifying and marginalizing women. However, I am also middle-class, white, cisgender, and heterosexual. I live in a moderately wealthy country, and I have a college education. This is more than has been afforded to most women.

An important part of the GWS experience is learning about other women’s lives, and the struggles that they face. I have come to realize that I am very lucky compared to many women in this world. I am not in poverty; I will not experience discrimination or state violence because of my race; I will not be attacked or harassed for being gay or transgender; I do not live in a community where I am afraid to speak up about oppression. I am lucky, but this does not mean the disadvantages I experience as a woman are insignificant. It just means that I should use the privileges that I do have to help and support other women, who are not as fortunate as I am. My GWS experience has changed my understanding of feminism from something that I want to use to help me, to something that I want to use to help everyone.

GWS FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Melissa Hodges, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminology

Melissa Hodges received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Her primary research and teaching interests focus on the intersections of Gender, Race, and Class wage inequalities, work and occupations, work and family conflict, and social policy.

Dr. Hodges’ work has been published in the American Sociological Review and Gender & Society. She is a past recipient of the Reuben Hill Award from the National Council on Family Relations and the Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Research Excellence in Families and Work. In 2012, Melissa’s work was also recognized by the American Sociological Association’s section on Family when she received the Article of the Year Award.
Feminova was founded in the spring of 2016, as a response in part to the lack of explicitly feminist groups on campus. Although our university did have several admirable organizations that cater to women, we wanted to create something broader, a space where feminists could come together to discuss issues of gender as they pertain to Villanova's campus and beyond.

The purpose of Villanova Feminism Society (affectionately nicknamed Feminova) is to spark and foster continued feminist discussions on Villanova’s campus, to de-stigmatize and clarify feminism as a movement, and to create meaningful change through activism and action. We are committed to maintaining a safe environment for all our members, and so we strive to be intersectional and inclusive in everything we do.

We achieve these goals in a number of ways. Our primary activity is our discussions series, twice-monthly meetings wherein we talk about a range of issues of our members' choosing. Our topics so far have included slut-shaming and sex positivity, masculinity, menstruation, locker room talk, the presidential election, the Women's March and its handling of intersectionality, and how to dialogue with non-feminists. These lively discussions have been very well-attended, and have created meaningful conversations that extend well beyond the initial meetings.

In addition, Feminova has sponsored a number of other important initiatives. We have teamed up with Project GIRL, an organization that collects feminine hygiene projects for girls in Ghana who are not otherwise able to go to school while menstruating. We have a sticker and button fundraiser planned, featuring a version of the Villanova Wildcat with the slogan "Wildcats Against Catcalls." We are planning to have an intersectional feminist speaker present to our club in the coming months. We also have partnered with numerous other groups on campus, including Gender and Women's Studies, VU Pride, the Association for Change and Transformation, the Office of Health Promotion, College Republicans, and the National Panhellenic Conference, to further realize our mission.
TO THE STUDENTS OF VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

A letter by Dr. Catherine Kerrison, published in the Villanovan on November 15, 2016

The national election results shocked many Americans, but women were particularly devastated. Initially, analysts pointed to unprecedented turnouts among rural, non-college educated men to explain Hillary Clinton’s defeat. But according to the Washington Post, it turns out that 53 percent of white women voted for Donald Trump, many of them middle class and educated. Why?

There is no need to reproduce here the vulgarities, invective, and swagger about having committed sexual assault, uttered by the President-elect and by some of his supporters. We have all heard, seen, and read them. Worse, since the election, they seemed to have unleashed an open season of attacks on women around the country. Women have been grabbed on the street and told that this is what life will be like under Trump. Muslim women have had their hijabs ripped from their heads. On our own campus, black women have been subjected to racial epithets and one was physically assaulted in the tunnel by white men chanting the name of the President-elect. Why would women vote for a man who would be in a position to normalize and institutionalize those views at law?

There are several reasons: the workings of gender, patriarchy, and race are thoroughly tangled, complex, and insidious.

First, there are rewards for women who do not challenge patriarchal authority and who do not make themselves obnoxious by demanding the full human rights and sovereignty of self that (white) men command. Such women are not besmeared with epithets and hatred. Indeed, they can enjoy real material benefits in their associations with men.

Second, American history is replete with examples of white women who have cared more about preserving racial superiority than about achieving gender equity. During slavery, white women saw themselves as the moral and intellectual superiors of enslaved women, possessed of a capacity for rational thought that they denied all slaves. In the nineteenth century, white women abandoned black in the struggle for suffrage, to forge alliances instead between northern and southern white women. In the twentieth century, white feminists overlooked entirely the different concerns of black feminists, and when it was time to write the history of those movements, black women were largely omitted. On November 8, 2016, black women again did the heavy lifting for women: 94 percent of them voted for Hillary Clinton.

Certainly many female Trump supporters would emphatically deny that they are sexist or racist. They voted on other issues, they insist. But in their vote for a candidate who openly expressed those ideas, they affirmed that ultimately sexism and racism did not matter as much as other issues. A little sexism is okay. A little racism is tolerable.

It’s hard for women not to take this personally. Smart, hard working, ambitious women on this campus saw that a smart, hard working, ambitious woman with decades of experience was defeated by a man with no record of public service, whose crude language dehumanized and objectified women.

But there is a way to fix this, and we’re going to do it together. We can change this trajectory of patriarchy, misogyny, and racism.

You are important. Take a Gender and Women’s Studies course in your field, so that you will understand how gender permeates the work place you are preparing to enter. Be informed, so that armed, you can fight ignorance.

There is an awesome group of gender and sexuality scholars at Villanova who stand ready to help. Stop by their offices to talk. Go the GWS website for their names and for other resources, both on campus and off. You are not alone. We believe in your intellect, strength and goodness, and we stand in solidarity with you.
REFLECTIONS ON GWS EVENTS

JESSICA LYNN’S TRANSGENDER JOURNEY

Matt Zarenkiewicz ‘17, VU Pride

Now looking back on Jessica Lynn’s talk in the fall semester, I am frankly amazed it occurred. Two days after the election of President Trump, Jessica spoke with power and pathos, enlivening an energy in the room for a fight. Jessica’s appearance represented what should be a watershed moment in activism on Villanova’s campus. One of the few Trans speakers ever on campus, Jessica spoke powerfully about her experience using narrative to provide a source of motivation and inspiration. Solidarity at this moment at Villanova is key, and Jessica showed how to build that.

This spring has seen Roger Scruton, Ross Douthat, and Charles Murray speak on campus, all of whom have at one time or another fought against the dignity of queer and Trans people. In reflecting on Jessica’s appearance, I can’t help but demand more from all segments of our campus to fight back against the tides of reactionary conservatism building on campus.

But the future is not bleak; Jessica’s talk reminded me of the hope necessary to sustain solidarity and intersectional missions on campus. There should be more Trans speakers on campus, more queer people of color, more inter-departmental efforts to secure funding for more activist-oriented approaches to trans and queer issues.

I have hope for the future. The story we tell ourselves and others about the existence and lives of queer and Trans people will define where we stand in the next four years. In telling stories, we build empathy, create symbols, and develop imaginations. Story-telling is the cornerstone of any successful activist movement. What is our story here at Villanova? How did we get to the point where Jessica Lynn can come to campus and speak bravely, uncontested? Where are we going and why? Who has held us back and who has lifted us up?

These reflections may be in haste or even out of turn, but demanding more is the best way to sustain activity for the success of queer and Trans people on campus. Jessica continually demanded more for her life, and I believe we should do the same. We should demand more of Villanova and ourselves to be a better space for diversity of all kinds.

CODE: DEBUGGING THE GENDER GAP

Jessica Nicholas ‘18

I attended the movie Code: Debugging the Gender Gap on 2/1/17. The movie was very interesting and summarized how women in computer science and programming fields are treated differently than men and are not encouraged to join the field as much as men are. There are so many jobs in computing fields and there are not enough workers to fill them, yet women earn only 18% of all computer science degrees in the United States. As you go up levels in a company, there are fewer women in these roles. For example, when going from a software engineer to the founder of a company you find fewer and fewer women.

The former president of Harvard University, Larry Summers, made a statement that there is an innate reason why men are better than women at math and programming. This was met with uproar and he eventually revoked his statement. Any differences between men and women are not genetically predetermined and are caused by a multitude of environmental factors, but his statement discourages women from joining the field of computer science and programming.

A large problem with the field of computer science is that students aren't being taught this subject in school. Only 10% of U.S. high schools offer computer science classes. The biggest problem is finding teachers qualified to teach courses on computer science to high school students. We need all students to be taught computer science and coding especially today when coding is involved in everything and will only increase in importance in the future.

Another problem with this field is attracting women to join. The tech world can be seen as hostile to women because it is male dominated and the men can act sexist towards the women at times. For example, two programmers came up with an app called “Titstare” where men can submit pictures of themselves staring at breasts. They presented this idea at a prestigious tech conference in front of 500 people. Actions like these make women not want to join the male dominated industry and portray women on a different level than men. One female software engineer said that at conferences people always think she is just the cute check-in girl but really she is the main speaker.

To help fix this problem we need to get more women involved in the field of computer science. Etsy has done a great job of this and has increased the women engineers in its firm by over 30%. Girls need to feel welcome in the field and not seen as “nerdy” or “weird” for wanting to code.
**UPCOMING GWS EVENTS**

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<tr>
<td>Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Tales</td>
<td>MONDAY, APRIL 10 AT 7PM</td>
<td>Communication Studio, Garey Hall</td>
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<td>Fight like a Girl (FILM)</td>
<td>WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26 AT 6:30PM</td>
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**FALL 2017 GWS COURSES AT VILLANOVA**

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<tr>
<td>GWS 2050-001</td>
<td>Gender and the World</td>
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<td>ECO 3118-001</td>
<td>Women and the Economy</td>
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<td>ENG 2300-001</td>
<td>Women in Literature</td>
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<td>ENG 3490-H01</td>
<td>Sex and Celebrity</td>
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<td>ENG 3590-001</td>
<td>Gender Authorship and Anonymity</td>
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<td>COM 3341-001</td>
<td>Gender and Film</td>
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<td>HIS 1075-100</td>
<td>Global Women &amp; Daily Life</td>
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<td>HIS 1150-001</td>
<td>Gender and Conquest</td>
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<td>ITA 2324-001</td>
<td>Diversity, Gender, Race</td>
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<td>PHI 2410-100</td>
<td>Philosophy of Sex &amp; Love</td>
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<td>PHI 2420-001</td>
<td>Philosophy of Women</td>
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<td>PJ 2800-100</td>
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<td>PSY 2450-001</td>
<td>Psychology of Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>THL 4990-001</td>
<td>Saints, Witches, Mystics</td>
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**CONGRATULATIONS to our 2017 GWS Graduates!**

**MAJORS:**
- Deena Leonetti
- Julia Tich

**MINORS:**
- Victoria Cho
- Brittany Flippen
- Aimee Lee Russell
- Natanae Williams

**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE:**
- Caitlin Moon