Letter from the Director — Nancy Hanrahan

Dear Colleagues and Friends of Women and Gender Studies:

We've had, as usual, a busy, exciting and productive year. Saida Hodžić joined our faculty last August as an Assistant Professor of Women and Gender Studies, allowing us significantly to expand our course offerings in transnational women's issues. Saida is also advisor for the WMST graduate programs and has conducted a very popular thesis-writing workshop for our students. We welcomed Vicki Kirsch as Associate Director of Women and Gender Studies in January. Vicki brings to the position a wealth of both academic and student service experience, and her new courses in religion and psychology bring greater depth to our existing curriculum. With these two wonderful new hires, we have a full complement of teaching and administrative staff.

It was also a banner year for the Center's two ongoing research projects. The Gender Justice Research Community continued as a monthly forum for student and faculty research on gender and global human rights, and culminated in a day-long symposium that brought experts from around the world to discuss these issues. The group plans to publish a volume of papers from the symposium this year. From the global to the local, the Gender Research Project had a very successful first year as nearly 30 students participated in research on gender issues on the Mason campus and presented their findings at the first annual Mason Gender Research conference. The project goes into its second cycle this semester with new students in the research methods class and proposals for external funding to support data analysis and dissemination through conferences and formal reports. Full reports on these activities and profiles of our new faculty members are in the pages that follow.

In addition to our formal research and teaching activities, the Center also functions as a community space for a wide range of activities throughout the year, as home to the Feminist Ninjas (our fabulous student organization), and as a drop-in center. We welcome you to stop by any time.

Finally, we were very pleased to have the support of Dean Censer and Provost Stearns in changing the name of our program to Women and Gender Studies. This move reflects both national trends and the research and pedagogical commitments of our faculty and students. The name expresses our dual commitment to issues that differentially affect women and the investigation of gender more broadly, as a system of social relations that structures life experience for everyone.

All the best for the new academic year.

Nancy Weiss Hanrahan
Director, Women and Gender Studies
Welcome Letter from Vicki Kirsch

Hello Women & Gender Studies Community.

Spring Semester 2008 was a whirlwind for me. I arrived at George Mason on January 3 and immediately began working on the Feminist Art Show and Lecture/Discussion as a part of Women's History Month and assisting the Feminist Ninjas in their process to bring The Sex Workers Art Show to campus. I had my first introduction to teaching at Mason even as I tried to navigate the campus. This last activity proved to be one of the more difficult ones. While I might have eventually found the Parking Office or Mason Hall, there’s no telling how many weeks I would have been circumnavigating the campus without the constant and nonjudgmental assistance of Susan Miller. Thank you to everyone for welcoming and assisting me and contributing to the program during this past year. I take my responsibility of vitalizing the Women and Gender Studies community very seriously, and as such I will continue to ask and prod and plead for your participation. The fullest participation occurs when individuals become co-creators of events, projects, and parties – I invite you to continue to take this seriously and help me to see and provide things that we have not thought of on our own.

In his book After Babel, George Steiner speaks about the process of translation as being a practice of creating and recognizing “fields of meaning.” In other words, real synonyms rarely exist in individual languages or in so-called equivalencies between languages, and the most the translator can hope for is to offer a place where meaning is less ambiguous as it shifts depending on context. In an effort, therefore, to make myself less ambiguous to members of the Women and Gender Studies community here at Mason, I offer a field inscribed by ten personally significant films. They are not in any particular order, but have changed my life in some way, provided new ideas that became central in a particular way, or articulated emotions and notions that I myself have not been able to put into words or images. In any case, the field inscribed by these films reveals something meaningful that the community might not know otherwise, and something that, with my presence, somehow becomes a part of the evolution of the Center and Program.

My Brilliant Career (1979, Dir. Gillian Armstrong)
National Velvet (1944, Dir. Clarence Brown)
Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975, Dir. Peter Weir)
An Angel at My Table (1991, Dir. Jane Campion)
I’ve Heard the Mermaids Singing (1987, Dir. Patricia Rozema)
The Wizard of Oz (1939, Dir. Victor Fleming, King Vidor)
U.S. Dressage Federation Symposium 1999 with Conrad Schumacher
The Exorcist (1973, Dir. William Friedkin)
The Haunting (1963, Dir. Robert Wise)
To Sir With Love (1967, Dir. James Clavell)

Wishing everyone a good year!

Vicki Kirsch
Associate Director, Women and Gender Studies
Fall for the Book: Jessica Valenti

In celebration of the Fall for the Book Festival September 25, 2007 Women and Gender Studies welcomed feminist author Jessica Valenti to discuss her first book titled Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters.

Jessica Valenti is an author, an activist, an editor, and a role model for young feminists. Well known as the editor and founder of the extremely popular website Feministing.com Jessica combines intelligence, activism, and humor in her postings to reinvigorate feminists everywhere. Jessica received a Master’s Degree in Women and Gender Studies from Rutgers University, and has been published in magazines such as Ms., Bitch, and Guernica as well as numerous books including Full Frontal Feminism. She has worked for organizations such as NARAL, Pro-Choice America, the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Ms. Magazine and in April 2007 ELLE Magazine listed her as one of their IntElLEGentsia.

Her most recent work, Full Frontal Feminism, is a primer on feminism debunking myths and re-presenting issues such as reproductive rights, relationships, violence, and education. Rather than rehearsing past debates and conversations, she makes these issues relevant to today’s feminists. Valenti spoke in a frank, humorous, casual, and entertaining style revealing why so many young women feel they can relate to her work and ideas. The strongest point made by Valenti is the continual relevance and importance of feminism to young women today. To build upon that point, topics discussed during the event included women’s sexuality and the pressures placed upon women, particularly college aged women, to behave and be perceived in a certain way and the dangers of being pressured by societal expectations. In addition, she spoke of her challenges and inspirations of being a young feminist and what that means not only within patriarchy but also within the feminist community.

Fall for the Book 2008: September 21-26

This year, Women and Gender Studies is collaborating with Native American Studies in welcoming Moscogee/Creek poet and musician Joy Harjo to George Mason. Joy Harjo will be doing a reading under the tent near the Johnson Center on September 23rd at 1:30pm.

Joy Harjo is an internationally known poet, performer, writer and musician. She has published seven books of acclaimed poetry. They include: She Had Some Horses, In Mad Love and War, The Woman Who Fell From the Sky, and her most recent How We Became Human, New and Selected Poems from W.W. Norton. Her poetry awards include the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award, Oklahoma Book Awards, 200; The American Indian Festival of Words Author Award from the Tulsa City County Library; the 2000 Western Literature Association Distinguished Achievement Award.;: 1998 Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Award; the 1997 New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts; the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas; the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America.

Joy Harjo co-produced her first music CD Letter from the End of the 20th Century in 1997 and is featured as poet and saxophone player. Her recently released second CD of original songs, Native Joy for Real crosses over many genres and has been praised for its daring brilliance.

She is the Joseph Russo endowed professor at University of New Mexico, and when not teaching and performing she lives in Honolulu, Hawaii.

(continued on the next page)
"she was whole before that night
believed in heaven before that night
and she’s not the only one
she knows she won’t be the only one
she’s not asking what you’re gonna tell your daughter
she asking what you’re gonna teach your son."

from Blue Blanket by Andrea Gibson

Women and Gender Studies is also co-sponsoring writer Lisa Moore with the Office of Diversity Programming and Services. Lisa Moore will be reading on September 24th at 3pm.

Lisa Moore writes about contemporary urban Newfoundland; where she was born and continues to reside. Moore’s career trajectory began with her first collection of short stories, Degrees of Nakedness (The Mercury Press, 1995) and continued with her second collection, Open (Anansi, 2002) which was nominated for the Giller Prize. Alligator (Open City Books, 2006) is Moore’s first novel and was also nominated for the Giller prize and won the 2006 Commonwealth Writer’s Prize Best Book Award, Caribbean and Canada Region.

**Take Back the Night** by Sarah Larkin

The Feminist Ninjas started out the year with a magnificent turnout for Take Back the Night during Turn off the Violence Week. We decided that we would hold small discussion groups before the actual rally at the clock tower in order to raise awareness and attention about violence against women within different communities. The three participating communities included a Female Identified Breakout Group, a Male Identified Breakout Group and a Pride Breakout Group. The groups met at a specified time and location in order to hold their discussions. During the rally at the clock tower leaders from each group spoke for a few minutes about the discussions that were held in their group in order to combat violence within their communities. As always, The Feminist Ninjas and supporters rallied at the clock tower for a candle light vigil to honor and listen to students who were violated speak about their experiences. Additionally, there was a special performance by slam poet Andrea Gibson, who co-emceed the event. Following the rally, Gibson inspired students, faculty, staff and friends with an hour long performance. Gibson has been arousing audiences throughout the United States and Canada. She is a self proclaimed queer poet/activist who is “political, opinionated, and partial to the big issues.” A special thanks to the Women and Gender Studies Center, University Life, and Sexual Assault Services for cosponsoring the event with us. This year Take Back the Night will be on Tuesday October 14th with a speake out and march to follow. For more information about Andrea Gibson, please visit her website at www.andreagibson.org

**Scholarly Lecture: Lois Horton**

The Annual Women and Gender Studies Scholarly Lecture was delivered by Professor Lois E. Horton on November 13, 2007. In “Gendered Appeals: Rights and Relationships in Black Anti-Slavery Argument” Prof. Horton examined the very different logics used by men and women in the antislavery movement as they argued for abolition. Where men made the case for abolition on the basis of justice and human rights, women tended to argue in terms of morality and an ethic of care. The historical evidence of 19th century documents, pamphlets and written accounts of speeches seems to support the gendered differences in ethical reasoning that Carol Gilligan explored in *In a Different Voice.*

The dinner and lecture were also an occasion to honor Dr. Horton (History and Art History, Women and Gender Studies, and African-American Studies) on the occasion of her retirement.

**WMST Breakfast**

The Annual Women and Gender Studies Faculty/Staff breakfast was held on February 20th on a very cold 8am morning. Great coffee, pastries, and bagels were merely the sideshow as introductions, conversation, laughter, and renewed friendships took center stage after the holiday break and the start of classes.
Feminist Art

Feminist Art was the theme of Women's History Month 2008. A gentle deconstruction reveals that not all events were related to the theme and our events were not limited to March but spilled over into April. Feminist energies are difficult to contain.

For the opening event, Women and Gender Studies hosted a two week juried exhibition of feminist art created by George Mason University students. The "Reve(a)ling: Feminist Art" opening reception was held on March 3, 2008 in the Johnson Center's Gallery 123. Professor Ellen Todd participated as the maestro of ceremonies to an overflowing gallery crowd of at least 50 rapt spectators and guests including GMU students, faculty, and staff. The goal of the exhibition was to portray that feminist art is art with a message, not simply art by women. It is art that talks about crucial issues where the subject matter can be as important as the medium. Because gender affects every aspect of human experience, feminist art deals with but is not limited to issues such as the human body, race, class, sexuality, capitalism, globalization, politics, power and domination, and beauty. We were fortunate to receive several entries and a total of seven artists participated in the event. The exhibition was juried by Maria Karametou, Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Technology at George Mason University; Suzanne Scott, Associate Professor New Century College at George Mason University; and Dr. Vicki Kirsch, Associate Director of Women and Gender Studies.

Several days later in continuing with the theme, about thirty individuals, including several classes, gathered to participate in a discussion with Feminist art activist and art historian Josephine Withers and painter Barbara Johnson. Titled "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Feminist? Why are Young Women Leery of the F Word? A Discussion of Feminist Art." The discussion focused on contemporary views and roles of feminism and the artist.

Later on in the month, in collaboration with the Cultural Studies and the Visual Culture Symposium, Women and Gender Studies hosted a roundtable discussion titled Art and Gender Politics. Discusant participants included Edgar Endress, Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Technology, Stacy Gursky undergraduate student Women and Gender Studies minor majoring in Art. Jennifer Headley and Deborah Lash Cultural Studies graduate students, Susan Miller Women and Gender Studies graduate student, Ellen Todd Associate Professor of Art and Art History, and was moderated by Dr. Nancy Weiss Hanrahan Director of Women and Gender Studies. The discussion was attended by over 30 GMU students, faculty, and staff who discussed the affect of gender and politics in the visual and performing arts. Works by visual artist Kara Walker, feminist performance artist Marina Abramovich, and Mujeres Creando, a Bolivian anarcha-feminist collective that works against poverty and propaganda using street theatre were discussed posing questions of the relevancy of politics within art. Slides and videos of each artist were presented fostering engaging conversation regarding the controversy of such works in the contemporary art world.

2008 Sojourner Truth Lecture with Filmmaker Cheryl Dunye by Mika'il A. Petin

On Tuesday March 25th from 1:30PM until 3PM, in Student Union Building II, the programs of Women and Gender Studies and African American Studies co-hosted the 2008 Sojourner Truth Lecture. Justly dedicated to recognize the advocacy of early Black American women's rights exponent and abolitionist Isabella Baumfree (d. 1883), the speakers of the annual series address the meeting of race and gender as sites of oppression upon women. This year's invited lecturer was Black Lesbian activist, Cheryl Dunye, whose work exemplifies the intersection of not only issues of race and gender, but also class and sexual orientation. Her talk was titled, "Confessions of a Black Lesbian Filmmaker," and her work typifies the 2008 theme of Women's History month, Feminist Art." Susan Miller, Program Coordinator of Women and Gender Studies, described feminism-themed art as: "...an art with a message, not simply art by women. It is art that talks about crucial issues where the subject matter can be as important as the medium...[it] deals with but is not limited to issues such as the human body, race, class, sexuality, capital-

Mika'il A. Petin is the Associate Director of African American Studies at GMU.

"Just as women of this century have been prominent in the peace movement, they have also made war's brutality the subject of their art."
Josephine Withers
ism, globalization, politics, power and domination, and beauty." While Dunye, arguably, lacks the immediate, broader audience name-recognition of, say, Julie Dash, who directed the historically-iconoclastic Daughters of the Dust, as a cultural artist in the United States, Dunye is internationally-regarded as a pioneer in Black and Queer cinema.

Originally from Liberia, though currently residing in Los Angeles, California, Dunye's experience and body of work are what make her a cinematically rich filmmaker. Before becoming a professional artist, she received her BA from Temple University (1990) and her MFA from Rutgers University (1992.) As an artisan, Dunye has served in the roles of actress, screenwriter, and editor for her film projects, which includes: My Baby's Daddy (2003), Stranger Inside (2000), The Watermelon Woman (1996), Greetings from Africa (1994), The Potluck and the Passion (1993), Untitled Portrait (1993), Vanilla Sex (1992), She Don't Fade (1991), and Janine (1990). Having directed numerous feature-length films, ranging from groundbreaking independent works to major Hollywood studio movies, as well as numerous short works, some of her work is autobiographical, while the volume of it is an exploration in Black feminist existentialism. Film Studies and Cultural Studies scholar, Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, writes regarding this mode of thinking: "Women filmmakers of the African and Asian diaspora seek spaces of agency and creative energy where cultural agency opens up—and holds together—the performative and pedagogic, thus revealing and linking Black spaces that have been separated and suppressed by white times" (Foster 128).

Thus, according to Foster, Dunye's intention to reclaim the filmic racial as well as sexual subjectivities is the commonality she shares with other filmmakers.

With truly collaborative spirit, the day, which corresponded with Pride Week, began with Dunye interacting with a group of students, staff, and faculty over lunch in the Women and Gender Studies Center. Prior to Dunye's visit, Women and Gender Studies screened Watermelon Woman (1996) in the Center to give members of the campus community an opportunity to become more familiar with one of her more well known independent works. After engaging the assembled group, some participants expressed how they considered Dunye to have been extremely generous with her time, and wisdom of the industry. Dunye offered what they felt was very helpful advice on achieving their goals as undergraduate and graduate students, and on becoming, eventual, professional artists. Her enthusiasm and personable demeanor resonated with students when, normally, pessimism supersedes optimism concerning future careers in the arts.

At the formal lecture, a room of at least 50 people sat attentively as former Director of African American Studies, Scott Trafton, introduced Dunye. Once Dunye took the podium, she began her talk by chronicling her background up to when she began to make films. She projected photographs of her upbringing and some years as a young adult life on screen to explicate some of the impetus to focus on her chosen subject matter. She spoke of not seeing visual ideals she identified with in the films she viewed growing up, and as an artist, turned to film in college as a medium to express herself. Feminist, cultural critic, and public intellectual, bell hooks, theorizes that the 'critical black female spectator' is one who "[constructs] a theory of looking relations where cinematic visual delight is the pleasure of interrogation" (hooks 126). As a critical black female spectator transitioning into a cultural artist eventually producing films, Dunye asserted how she became actively engaged in locating her racial, gender, and sexual identities. Turning from projected images into showing segments from some of her early films, she interwove auto-biographical details with the images to demonstrate how she reconciled her interpretation of 'Blackness' and homosexuality early in her career. In one film segment, the audience sat suitably unsettled as a Black female character, played by Dunye, engaged in a vivid love-scene with another Black female, which is inherently provocative considering that White lesbianism is the visual normative while Black lesbianism is scarcely seen and stigmatized within the Black community (Staples 71-75).

Always cognizant of the need to disrupt standardized conceptions of lesbianism, Blackness, and 'a filmmaker,' Dunye ended her talk by encouraging students to not be restricted in pursuit of their dreams. After the talk, there was a light reception in the Women and Gender Studies Center.

Sources
WMST Leadership Tea

Fifteen students were honored at the first Women & Gender Studies Leadership Tea; the final event of Women's History Month. The awards, given to students nominated by GMU faculty and staff, recognized graduate and undergraduate students who are heroes in their own lives as they negotiate challenges – whether familial, financial, academic or work-related. The Center was filled beyond capacity as sponsors, honored students and their families, WMST faculty affiliates, and staff applauded and cheered as each student came forward to receive her Certificate and gift. No tea would be complete without tea sandwiches, scones, and lively conversation. The Tea provided an opportunity for Women & Gender Studies to bring newcomers and community members together in the context of honoring our students’ achievements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HONOREE</th>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afra Saeed</td>
<td>Eden King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burcu Borhan</td>
<td>Lisa Rabin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovana Escobar</td>
<td>Charlene Y. Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine Wilson</td>
<td>Paula Gilbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Schaaf</td>
<td>Sandra Cheldelin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maneshka Eliatamby</td>
<td>Mecca Marsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manji Cheto</td>
<td>Women &amp; Gender Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryam Sodeifi</td>
<td>Women &amp; Gender Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Krath</td>
<td>Debbie Taneyhill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moni Akintunde</td>
<td>Women &amp; Gender Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole McCoy</td>
<td>Tamara Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriel Estrada</td>
<td>Shelda Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Samuelson</td>
<td>Women &amp; Gender Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Lynn Larkin</td>
<td>Nicole Ciccone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shari Dogbo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive." Dalai Lama
Gender Justice Symposium: Gender & Human Rights by Tamara Harvey

Organizing committee: Debra Bergoffen, Paula Gilbert, Tamara Harvey, Connie McNeely, Suzanne Scott, Karen Wolf

On April 17, 2008, GMU hosted a symposium that brought experts from around the world to Mason for an interdisciplinary discussion of global gender justice. A keynote address by noted poet and human rights activist Marjorie Agosín and panels on “War & Genocide,” “Legal Landscapes,” “Cultural Dynamics,” and “Activism” attracted over 175 attendees to the Johnson Center cinema for a day of examinations, critiques, and discussions of the intersections between gender and human rights. Presenters included activists, artists, and scholars of law, literature, political science, religion, philosophy, education, history, East Asian studies, sociology and women’s studies. Mason students and faculty were joined by students and faculty from throughout the consortium and members of the community.

Panelists and audience members alike enjoyed the geographic and disciplinary diversity of the conference. This was an informative symposium that challenged participants to think about the complicated and disturbing nature of gender and human rights in a global framework in new and sometimes difficult ways. As Oleksandra Davydenko, a GMU global affairs major, wrote, “I left the auditorium with a feeling of uneasiness.” Another student, Pakiza Nashes, observed that the conference led to an epiphany. “The Gender Justice Symposium was truly an eye opening experience.... I was touched at a very profound level at what I heard and saw. You always hear about sex trafficking, prostitutes, ... etc., but this symposium truly elaborated on each subject and made me aware.... During the Gender Justice Symposium, I had an epiphany, and that epiphany was that I ultimately wanted to major in journalism.” While serving as United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomarasamy wrote “that women’s rights are the fourth generation of human rights.” The Global Gender Justice symposium provided a forum for furthering the discussion of international human rights thoroughly informed by an awareness of gender.

This symposium was a project of the Gender Justice Research Community, a group of GMU faculty and graduate students who have been meeting since Fall 2005 to discuss readings on gender and human rights as well as group members’ works-in-progress. This group is itself an offshoot of a faculty development day held as part of the Women and Gender Studies Gender and Globalization initiative. The symposium was sponsored by the Women and Gender Studies Program, University Life, the Provost’s Office, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Public Policy, New Century College, the Democracy Project, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, CHSS Global Interdisciplinary Programs, the Mason Project on Immigration, and the departments of Philosophy, English, Modern and Classical Languages, Communication, History and Art History, and Religious Studies.

"I am always writing, and I guess this is called prolific, but I need to order the world around me. I need to describe the rain and sea and lighthouses. Writing and living are inseparable to me.” Marjorie Agosín
Gender Research Project and Conference

The initial year of the GRP was a great success. Nearly 30 students, undergrad and graduate, enrolled in the two core courses and pursued both team and individual research projects on gender issues at Mason. The work culminated in the first annual Gender Research Conference on May 1, where 15 students presented their findings and discussed the research process. Topics included race and ethnic divisions in love and life at Mason, gendered expectations of Mason’s modern dance students, planning for work and family among young women at Mason, the gender dynamics of the Johnson Center, the new dating model, and expectations of high-achieving women students. In a later panel in the afternoon, graduate students in Women and Gender Studies presented papers related to their thesis or dissertation research. The students who participated in the project received rigorous training in feminist social research methods and had been out in the field — our campus — collecting data and then interpreting it in their final reports. But what distinguishes their work from other so-called “campus climate” studies that have been done at other universities is that not only have students participated as respondents to surveys or in focus groups, not only have they collected and analyzed data — in this study, they’ve generated the questions. Those questions were nuanced, imaginative and investigated sites and activities that haven’t been reproduced in any other study. Their collective work produces a richly textured picture of student life at Mason as it’s articulated through gender. If you were not able to attend the conference, you may visit the Center to view the DVD or read students’ final reports. The GRP is a five-year study of gender issues at Mason, conducted through the Women and Gender Studies Center. Associate Professor Amy Best (SOCI) is the principle instructor and research coordinator. We hope, over time, that the data collected through this project will constitute a basis from which we can draw meaningful conclusions about campus life and generate policy recommendations for the university administration. It will also help us think about programming and about issues on campus that we need to address. We are currently applying for external funding to support data analysis over time, the preparation of reports, and the dissemination of our work through conferences and publications.

Feminist Ninjas!

What an exciting year it was for The Women’s Coalition! First thing first, we have officially changed our name to The Feminist Ninjas! Why the name change? Many of you may be asking? Well let me give you the top five reasons why we changed our name:

1. Anyone can be a ninja and/or a feminist!
2. An intriguing name leaves you wanting to know more.
3. We all should be fighting for a change in equality and justice!
4. Feminist Ninjas use their stealth tactics against better-armed enemies. And after all we are kicking patriarchy’s butt!
5. Feminist Ninjas offer supportive, non-argumentative challenging discussions in a comfortable atmosphere (as in the couch in the Women and Gender Studies Center) which usually includes chow and beverages.

Because the Feminist Ninjas have done SO many things this year, we’ve decided to give them their own section. For information about all of these fabulous events, check out the included Ninja insert!

- Breastcasting
- "Promoting Education in Santa Elena, Costa Rica" and Bake Sales
- Hotter, Safer Sex and Candy
- The Controversial Sex Workers Art Show
- A Viewing of Born into Brothels
- Leadershape and SOEL
- Public Service Announcement about Sexuel Predators
- Movie Nights
- LUNA Fest
- End of the Year Party
Working Moms Support Group

Over the past five years, the Support Group for Working Mothers at Mason has received an incredible amount of interest and support from university administrators. Our group was a focus group for the university quality of work life task force, and we've helped influence the Human Resources and Payroll Department's efforts toward promoting telework/flextime options and best practices for using FMLA. We also partnered with HR and Payroll to identify lactation rooms for faculty and staff on all three campuses, and we are currently working with facilities management to create a permanent place for all breastfeeding moms to use. Most importantly, our advocacy for the GMU Child Development Center helped to move the construction of a new facility to the top of the list. The new center opened in fall 2007!

http://gazette.gmu.edu/articles/10422/

The Support Group for Working Mothers at GMU meets twice a month on Wednesdays from 12:00 - 1:00 pm in the Women and Gender Studies Center. Our meetings are very casual and friendly. While we have not had formal training in counseling, we all have experience in balancing the roles of mother, partner, student, and employee. We participate in this group to help each other work through a wide variety of challenges that we face as working parents. This group is not just for the mothers of infants and toddlers, we've spent many meetings talking about public school system fears and frustrations, how to deal with kids who have special needs, summer camp options and shortfalls, and even the issues facing parents of teens and adult children! We always welcome new participants as each person brings a new set of problems and perspectives on the experience of being a working mom.

This fall we are going to try a mix of planned activities along with our regular sharing sessions. On October 8, the meeting will be a "shared" seminar on the topic of the Sandwich Generation and Alzheimer's along with Patrice Winter's Eldercare Support Group. We will host a "Women's Bean Party" on November 5th and show our support for the Women's Bean Project, a non-profit organization in Denver dedicated to helping women break the cycle of poverty and unemployment through employment in their gourmet food production business. We also have planned a panel discussion on navigating the Family Medical Leave Act on December 10th. In the works are presentations on separation anxiety, postpartum depression, Association for Research on Mothering, and http://www.momsrising.org/

For more information about the Support Group for Working Mothers at GMU, please contact Heather Aleknavage, Office of Sponsored Programs, at (703) 993-2295/haaleknav@gmu.edu, or visit our webpage for an updated meeting schedule: http://wmst.gmu.edu/center/working_moms.html

In May 2007, we announced the kick-off meeting of the Prince William Campus working moms support group. Robin Knies, Administrative & HR Coordinator, Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center, and Heather Hannan, Head, Mercer Library, have been spearheading this effort, and one year later they are still going strong. The Prince William chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month in the Mercer Library Conference Room. The dates for fall 2008 are September 18, October 16, November 20, and December 18. For information please contact Heather Hannan at 993-8344/hannan@gmu.edu, or Robin Knies at 993-8506/rknies@gmu.edu.

"A strong woman is strong in words, in action, in connection, in feeling; she is not strong as a stone but strong as a wolf suckling her young. Strength is not in her, but she enacts it as the wind fills the sail."
from For Strong Women by Marge Piercy
Resources

New developments at the library—

Over the summer, the Libraries started subscribing to the “Women’s Studies International” database. This database includes a wide range of materials relating to women’s studies, including journals, newspapers, and book chapters. Although these materials are mostly scholarly, there are some popular items as well. There’s also quite a bit of full text, especially for more recently published materials.

I think that this database has a great deal to offer, both for your own research and for your students’ coursework. You can find it at the Libraries’ Database Portal at http://furbo.gmu.edu/dbwiz/SPT-BrowseResources.php. Please let me know (jstevens7@gmu.edu or 703-200-0699) if you have any questions about using it or any of our other library resources; I’d also be happy to do library instruction sessions for your classes.

New developments in the Center—

Vicki Kirsch and Susan Miller had the pleasure of hosting the two founders of the Women’s Center at Northern Virginia Community College on June 5, 2008. Patricia Gordon, Student Services Specialist, and Prof. Elizabeth Harrison, Religious Studies, are in the process of starting a Women’s Center at NVCC and are looking towards our Center for consultation, possible resources, but also to forge a new collaboration as students migrate from the Community College into Mason. This school year, Susan, Vicki and students will be visiting the new NVCC Center and speaking with students about our program and the Center. We will also be sharing our library resources by passing along library books that are multiples in our collection.

Please come and check out our Library this Fall! We increased our holdings by possibly 1000 books donated by several local philanthropists and the collection has been reorganized for easier access. We also started a collection of multimedia resources including CDs by Andrea Gibson and a video that Cheryl Dunye donated during her visit.

Want to share the wealth? If you have books relevant to Women and Gender Studies, you might consider donating them to NVCC. We are longing for videos, CDs and other multimedia resources for the Women and Gender Studies collection.
Welcome to Vicki Kirsch, Associate Director

Vicki Kirsch joined the Women and Gender Studies Program and Center in early January 2008 after living in the Boston metro area for over a decade where she was most recently Assistant Director and Director of Training of the Wheelock College Counseling Center, Teaching Associate in Psychiatry at the Harvard University Medical School, Clinician in the Program for Psychotherapy at Cambridge Hospital and had a private psychotherapy practice. Previous to that, she was Clinical Coordinator in the Women’s Development Center, and the Director of the Women’s Center at Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester, MA.

After majoring in Philosophy and Theology at Georgetown University, she went to the University of Chicago and received her MA in Divinity. She returned to the DC area and spent the next two years teaching in the MA in Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown, working at the Smithsonian, and teaching Dressage at Potomac Horse Center. Vicki’s three areas of concentration for the PhD at Emory University were Feminist Theory, Feminism and Psychoanalysis, and Women and Religion. She received a travel grant from Emory to complete her dissertation research in Paris on “The Erotic and the Sacred: Natalie Barney and her Circle.” Prof. Kirsch received a Post-Doc fellowship at Emory to teach in the Institute of Liberal Arts for an additional year. In 1997, Prof. Kirsch received her MSW in Clinical Social Work from Boston University and was a Fellow at the Daniels Institute of Boston University (1996-7) and a Fellow of the American Psychoanalytic Association (2001-2002.)

Prof. Kirsch has taught courses in Hinduism and Buddhism, feminist spirituality, psychoanalysis, women writers, feminist theory, Harlem Renaissance, Women in Paris (1900-1945), women’s communities, myth and symbol in women’s lives, lesbian literatures, and feminist psychology. She has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in varied settings from the Atlanta College of Art, Goddard College, and Clark University to Emory University and the College of William and Mary where she was Visiting Asst. Professor of Women’s Studies for three years.

This Fall and Spring, Prof. Kirsch will be teaching two interdisciplinary courses: “Women, Sex and Psyche” which uses literature, poetry, psychoanalysis, clinical case materials and feminist psychologies to respond to questions of sexuality, voice, and journey, and “The Erotic and the Sacred,” which looks at contemporary literature and poetry as well as sacred texts, feminist theology and spirituality to respond to questions about aspects of the self and shared human experience.

Welcome to Saida Hodžić, Assistant Professor of Women and Gender Studies

Saida Hodžić joined the Women and Gender Studies faculty in Fall 2007. Completing her Ph.D. from the Joint Program in Medical Anthropology at UC Berkeley and UC, San Francisco, she also earned a certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality from the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies at UC, Berkeley. Her previous degrees are from Cologne University in Germany, where she studied Cultural Anthropology as well as English and Spanish Philology.

Hodžić studies the dynamics of culture, power, gender, and social change in the globalized world. Currently, she is writing a book titled “Of Rebels, Spirits, and Social Engineers: The Problems with Ending Female Genital Cutting.” This ethnography of efforts to stop cutting is based on fieldwork and archival research in Ghana, United States, and Western Europe. The book focuses on global frictions that structure how African and global actors co-produce knowledge and laws about female genital cutting and use these to advocate against cutting. Her Ph.D. dissertation, “Performing Development: Women’s NGOs, Donors, and the Postcolonial Ghanaian State”, analyzes the reasons why Ghanaian NGOs and government make culture and tradition the ground of struggles over women’s rights. Her publications and work in progress includes articles on NGOs (NGOization, the effects of UN women’s rights regime on Ghana), domestic violence and globalization of activism, female genital cutting (Ghanaian discourses, history of medicine, and globalized governmentality), development industry and the gift economy, and scholarly implications of fighting prejudice in representations of Africa.

This Fall, returning from overseas conducting research for her upcoming book, Professor Hodžić will be teaching WMST 300 Gender, Sexuality, Culture: Transnational Perspective and WMST 630 Feminist Theory Across the Discipline. Students interested in these topics and students interested in graduate programs in Women and Gender Studies at Mason are welcome to stop by her office on Mondays and Wednesdays this Fall.
Congratulations Graduates!

Graduation 2008 was a huge celebration with twelve graduating WMST Minors, one Certificate in WMST student and four MAIS in WMST graduates. Graduates, their families, faculty, staff, and friends crammed into the Women and Gender Studies Center on May 15th to honor, celebrate, and share the day. Graduates received certificates and WMST mugs filled with WMST memories and pewter acorns. In her graduation send-off, Vicki Kirsch borrowed from Emerson, “The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn” and reminded graduating students of their individual potential and that they are carrying a piece of WMST at Mason always with them.

Minor in WMST
Mischa Blanchone
Kristen Durbin - Award for Outstanding Achievement in Women & Gender Studies
Maria Gonzalez
Lauren Hill
Alec Knight - Award for Academic Excellence in Women & Gender Studies
Sarah Larkin
Sarah Lemnios
Jessica Marshall
Tonia Haus
Jessica Schaefer
Hannah Shaw
Madeline Wiley

Graduate Certificate in WMST
Devin Ward-Thommes

MAIS in WMST
Burcu Borhan
Kathleen Glass
Nicole Barretto McCoy - MAIS Outstanding Thesis Award
Rachel Muth

We have to use feminism all together as a tool to dismantle patriarchies so that all of us together can rise. Ani DiFranco
WMST Achievements


Tamara Harvey (English) and the other members of the Global Gender Justice Organizing committee put on a remarkable Conference: Debra Bergoffen, Paula Gilbert, Tamara Harvey, Connie McNeely, Suzanne Scott, Karen Wolf. Tamara also presented at the following conferences: "Fourth generation rights and feminism before the first wave: Rethinking the history of feminism in order to forge its future," at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Minneapolis, MN, June 12-15, 2008; "Feminist discourse, bodily integrity, and human rights before and beyond the Enlightenment" at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, March 27-30, 2008; and "Hagiography and Community: Resisting female exceptionalism in hagiographical writing by and about women" at the Southern Historical Association Conference, Richmond, VA, October 31-November 3, 2007. She also had the following publication: "Encyclopedic Panamazonia: Comparing "Exceptional Women" of the Americas and Europe," Approaches to Teaching Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, eds. Emili Bergmann and Stacey Schiau, (New York: Modern Language Association, 2007): 112-118.

Saida Hodžić (Women and Gender Studies) has several projects in process. She is currently writing chapters for two books The NGO Boom: Critical Feminist Perspectives, edited by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal and the forthcoming book originating from the Gender Justice and Human Rights conference. She has also written a chapter titled "The End of Controversy? NGO Advocacy for New Laws in Ghana" which focuses on the differing conditions of possibility for laws against domestic violence and female genital cutting; in process for Domestic Violence and the Law in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Roberts, R. et al. Eds. Ohio University Press. In addition to presenting at the Global Gender Justice Symposium, Saida presented papers at the Africa Council Presentation Series at American University and at an invited session for the Association for Feminist Anthropology and Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists at the American Anthropological Association December 2007. Saida received a Faculty Research Development Award from George Mason for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 for her research on female genital cutting across Africa.

Connie Kirkland (Sexual Assault Services) was a speaker at the International Coalition Against Sexual Harassment Conference in Boston, MA in August. She also authored, "Responding to Sexually Victimized College Students," a chapter in Understanding and Preventing Campus Violence/ by Michele A. Paludi, Praeger Publishers, Inc. Connie also received these two grants for Sexual Assault Services for 2008-09: Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women federal funds to Sexual Assault Services; Verizon Foundation funds to Sexual Assault Services to develop and implement the AnyOne Can Campaign/, an initiative to reduce dating violence on campus; and 2007-2008- Virginia Department of Health/Centers for Disease Control federal funds to coordinate the statewide annual campus sexual assault conference, held in May, 2008.

Nicole McCoy (MAIS in Women and Gender Studies) presented a paper at the 2008 Eastern Sociological Society Conference in New York City in March. She also presented at the GMU Gender Research Conference in May and at the National Women’s Studies Association meeting in Cincinnati, OH in June. Nicole will be starting the Ph.D. program in Sociology Fall 2008 and she received the Presidential Award for the Sociology PhD.
WMST Achievements

Susan Miller (WMST Program Coordinator and MAIS student with focus on Women and Gender Studies) presented a research paper at the Gender Research Conference titled “Gendered Expectations of University Modern Dance Students.” She also moderated a panel for the 2008 Visual Culture Symposium and was a panelist at the Roundtable Discussion of “Art and Gender Politics” for Women’s History Month.

Lisa Rabin (Spanish, Modern and Classical Languages) began an adult Spanish and English literacy class in the Colmure (Guayacán) community with the collaboration of two students of Spanish and several community organizations, including Tenants and Workers United. She won two grants for this project: the State Farm Good Neighbor Global Youth Services Day Award, and the American Studies Association (ASA) Community Partnership Grant. Compensated by stipends from the ASA, two students of Spanish at Mason will teach adult bilingual ESL in Colmure in 2008-2009. Lisa and her colleagues in Spanish Jennifer Leeman and Esperanza Roman-Mendoza were awarded a $5,000 Faculty and Research Development Award from CHSS for travel in May 2008 to Stanford University, where they researched the Ernesto Galarraga papers. The grant was recently featured in the Gazette: gazette.gmu.edu/articles/122858/.


Stephanie Tiosanco (MAIS in Public Policy and Women’s Studies Candidate for Spring 2009) won the Zonta International Edith Clark Nalls GMU Scholarship and the Fair Lakes League 2008 Employee Scholarship for academic performance and community service.

WMST’s Faculty Affiliates

Amal Amireh
Ann Baker
Debra Bergoffen
Robert Bernard
Amy Best
Junior Bridge
Beth Bullard
Zofia Burr
Suzanne Carbonneau
Lauren Cattaneo
Jane Turner Censer
Sandra Cheldelin
Rose Cherubin
Julie Christensen
Dina Copelman
Shannon Davis
Marion Deshmukh
Kelly Dunne
Kim Eby
Sheila Follilot
Sheryl Friedley
Cynthia Fuchs
Paula Gilbert
Jon B. Gould
Lisa Gring-Pemble
Sumaiya Hamdani
Nancy Hanrahan
Tamara Harvey
Devin Hodges
Saida Hodzic
Lois Horton
Kristen Johnsen-Neshati
Deborah Kaplan
Eden King
Vicki Kirsch
Lisa Koch
Cindy Lont
Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach
Laura Mann
Patricia Masters
Susan Miller
Karen Misencik
Deirdre Moloney
Janette Muir
Ann Paikovich
Elizabeth Patten
Lisa Rabin
Priscilla Regan
Yvette Richards Jordan
Janine Ricouart
Karen Rosenblum
Kristin Samuelian
Ingrid Sandie-Staroste
Ramnon Sanusi
Linda Schwartzstein
Suzanne Scott
Linda Seligmann
R. Claire Snyder
Peter Stearns
Anita Taylor
Ellen Wile Todd
Toni-Michelle Travis
Ricardo Vivancos Perez
Margaret Yocom
Terry Zawacki

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive. Dalai Lama
Partial Calendar for Fall Semester

- September 2 3pm Welcome Week Reception in Center
- September 23 1:30pm Fall for the Book - Joy Harjo Public Reading
- September 24 3pm Fall for the Book - Lisa Moore Public Reading
- October 14 - 17 Turn Off the Violence Week
- October 14 7pm Take Back The Night – at The Clocktower
- October 30 3pm Halloween Party

Preview of Spring Semester

March brings the Feminist Art Show, the Scholarly Lecture by Tamara Harvey, Ph.D., a visit by Lucy Lippard on March 5th, the Sojourner Truth Lecture, and the Visual Culture Symposium on March 26th.

Save the Date! Vulnerable Bodies: Philosophical Papers in honor of Debra Bergoffen will be held on April 16th. And later in the month, the Leadership Tea.

May brings the Gender Research Conference and Graduation Festivities.