

WOMEN'S STUDIES
Fall Newsletter
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY
SEPTEMBER 2009

Director's Corner
Christy Burns



Welcome back! I hope your classes and research are going well. We are in the process of compiling our spring list of courses. Thanks to the faculty, chairs, and directors who have been willing and eager to cross-list with us. If you haven't yet contacted us and have what might be a viable Women's Studies course, please let us know. We will e-mail a full list of spring courses once the second round of scheduling is completed. You may print, post, and share them with your students. In fact, you might print *this* newsletter as well. We send a few copies around, but you can always help spread the news.

Welcome Back Party

Women's Studies is throwing a party for all our students, faculty, and affiliates. Come and bring a friend. We will have beer, wine, and non-alcoholic refreshments, and an array of foods. Tom Linneman, our #1 campus DJ (and chair of Sociology in his spare time), will be providing music for **dancing**. Yes, we are joyful feminists. Come eat, drink, chat, and dance if you are willing. **Thurs., Sept. 24th, 6:30-9:00 p.m in Tidewater B, Sadler Center.** RSVP clburn@wm.edu.

Are Queer Women Religious?
Understanding Where They Go and Why

Melissa Wilcox, Dir, Gender Studies Program, Whitman College, will give a brown bag talk at noon, Wednesday 10/21, sponsored by Women's Studies, Religious Studies, and Sociology. Place: Morton 314. Bring lunch & a friend.

Former W&M Student Rachel Seher to
Speak on Gendered Identity in High
School Girls

Women's Studies is co-sponsoring a speaker invited by the Government Department, Friday 10/23 at noon: Prof. Rachel Seher of DePaul University will present research from her recent Yale dissertation about power relations and gendered-identity formation among high school girls. Her topic will be, "Condoms, Bongs, and Visible Thongs: Personal Identity as a Site of Political Resistance among Adolescent Females." Rachel is a 1998 W&M graduate and now teaches a variety of courses about women and politics and feminist theory at DePaul. Place: Morton 37.

What do graduated Women's Studies
Majors do for a living?

Turn the page and see! Jaye Marolla writes from Thailand. We also have news from other graduates.

Contact Women's Studies if...

you would like to get involved, or if you have questions about items in this newsletter. Please contact me (Christy Burns, Director). I'm most easily reached by e-mail: clburn@wm.edu. Or you may call our office at: 757-221-2457 in Morton 322. And please welcome **Barbara Brown** at the desk!

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Where Former Women's Studies Students Are Now:

Jaye Marolla sends news from Thailand, where she is studying healing and Buddhism while teaching English. She writes: Awat-dee-ka! Hello dear friends and warm greetings from sunny Thailand! As my time here has unfolded I was shocked to realize that a year has passed since my arrival. Time certainly flies when you are embracing a new home, country, culture, and way of being in the world.



So I have been here long enough to attain a driver's and motorbike license, and can report trips to the DMV are universally slow, grueling, and a test of one's patience. Yet the amazing thing here is that no one gets angry and impatient. People wait calmly for hours and there's even a lunch break, all the employees and customers stop to refuel, and then business continues and people queue up again. Wonderful!

I've also been here long enough to try such delicacies as fried intestine (much to my students' approval, although I don't recommend it) yet still can't bring myself to snack on dried squid... a local favorite. But there are some delicious dishes and I've even learned to cook a few.

My first 8 months were spent in the northern city of Chiang Mai, a popular tourist destination and hub of learning and experiential tourism. While there I began to study Traditional Thai massage with Pichest Boonthoome, a master of the healing art with over 30 years of experience. Equally astounding is the international community of students that seek out his expertise, ranging from beginners to practitioners of 20+ years. I also participated in my first 10-day meditation at one of the Buddhist temples, an experience I highly recommend. I truly feel blessed to explore these traditions of healing arts and spirituality from "the roots up" and within the context of the local culture from which they came. Such a gift to be a westerner living abroad in a state of absorption and observation versus extraction and spectatorship.

I am also teaching English here in my hometown of Rayong (2.5 hours SE of Bangkok, 5 minutes from the sea), where I have been the past 4 months. My students are predominantly adults ages 25-50+, and are truly a delight! The respect teachers garner in Asia makes the profession an entirely different experience than any classroom I witnessed in the U.S. And for me getting to connect with a local population, hear of their lives, and help them improve their language skills and boost confidence is a tremendous gift. Most students are seeking to learn English in order to gain better employment or achieve a higher level of schooling.

It is possible to live your dreams, and I feel I am doing just that. Naturally, they may not play out as planned, but as Gandhi said, "Existence is pure gold nothing else is needed."



For news of our recent graduates, turn the page!

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Ann Rainey was a Psychology and Women Studies double major, looking for work in human services. She writes: In two months I got my job as a Case Manager for the Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) at Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare (www.brhb.org). Blue Ridge is a community service board that provides mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disorder services to the Roanoke Valley. PACT is a special program that serves adult clients with serious mental illness, who are at high risk of being hospitalized or arrested. I deliver medications, and connect the clients to community resources. I teach independent living skills and do a lot of education about the effects of substance abuse. It's a very dynamic and challenging job, one that makes you feel very grateful to have the basics like food, shelter, and education.

Caroline Mullis, a Women's Studies and Neuroscience major, is now a Research Technologist at Johns Hopkins University.



Caroline writes: Post-graduation I am researching in an International HIV lab at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. One of the major projects I was hired to work involves the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN). We perform tests that are capable of determining the percentage of newly infected individuals (incidence) in a community. We are ultimately establishing the role of current HIV education programs on transmission. In addition, we work with samples from around the world. I hope to explore some of the questions I began asking about gender and HIV transmission through my work in this lab. My understanding of gender issues is a continual influence in my scientific work.

Wendy Jenkins is working as a Victim Advocate Response Coordinator for the Army Community Service, Fort Lee, VA.



Wendy writes: I applied to over 150 jobs within 3 months. When I saw the job posting for a position with the Department of Defense as a sexual assault victim advocate response coordinator, I knew I had to have that job. And I was offered the job. I am learning about sexual assault procedures in the eyes of the Dept of Defense and the Army. I love my job and the people I work with. Luckily coming from William and Mary with a Women's Studies degree I got my foot in the door. College was so easy compared to the workforce that I admit I miss it greatly! But I am thankful for the workshops, seminars and lectures that helped prepare me for job hunting and adjusting to the life of a career woman.



Jamie Hood is pursuing a PhD in English Literature and a Joint MA in Gender Studies at Brandeis University.

For more news on our graduates, go to www.wm.edu/womensstudies/ and see current students.

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Faculty & Courses

Visiting Assistant Professor **Beth Currans** is continuing with us this year. With three of our six core faculty on leave, we are also benefitting from two jointly-appointed leave replacements: **Danielle Currier** (WMST/Sociology) and **Melanie Dawson** (WMST/English). **Nancy Gray, Leisa Meyer, and Christy Burns** are here as core faculty. We wish **Jenny Putzi, Suzanne Raitt, and Gul Ozyegin** restful and productive sabbaticals, with stimulating research and reading.

Wendy Korwin, a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies, will be teaching an exciting new course for us on "Bodies in Transition." Check out the description:

WMST 390B:01 Bodies in Transition 3 credits
Wendy Korwin MW 14:00-15:20 Morton 314

This class takes two approaches to studying the body in transition. First, we will pay attention to the ways in which the human body is unsettled rather than static, capable of transforming from child to adult, from healthy to infirm, or from one gender to another. These transitions are greeted by a host of reactions, from the subjects in flux as well as outside observers. Excitement, distrust, and repulsion are just a few common reactions to corporeal change, and we will spend time exploring the implications of each. But this course also steps outside the bounds of any single body or particular kind of bodily transformation to consider just how the human body becomes an artifact – a text to be represented and studied by doctors, artists, authors, and by us as scholars. Some of the larger questions we'll pose this semester include: Do we hold our own bodies to a kind of progress narrative? Why might some changes be considered normal while others are marked as deviant? Is the prospect of change more terrifying than its refusal or failure? Have authors represented hybrid or in-between states as triumphant or unlivable? How does our own engagement with our ever-changing bodies inform the way we view our world?

Become an affiliate: If you would like to receive newsletters, e-mails about conferences, special opportunities, grants, and talks related to women's issues, gender, and sexuality. We try to send notices only once to twice/month. Faculty, students, friends are welcome. Students who are majors and minors should be on their list-serve as well. Let us know if you want to be added. Contact clburn@wm.edu, Christy Burns, Director.

New Women's Studies Website: Suzanne Raitt, who continues to bless us with her technical wizardry, has worked with our campus web advisors to create a fabulous new "re:web" webpage for Women's Studies. Take a look. We have news, opportunities, stories of alums, old newsletters, course offerings, and more. Go to www.wm.edu/womensstudies/

Our longtime administrative assistant, **Ann Repeta**, has left us for a very fine job with Student Activities. Our students have long delighted in her welcoming presence, and so we know she will do well in her new position. Thanks to **Jessee Vasold** and **Barbara Brown** for helping out while we are searching for a new office assistant. We also have had great help from **Pat Luke** and **Kathy O'Brien**, who are office managers in Economics and English.