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Letter from the Director

Last year, under the able leadership of Professor Kathleen Wellman, the Women's and Gender Studies Program reviewed, updated, and streamlined many functions and processes. My transition to a new role as Program Director was made much easier by last year's improvements. I would like to thank the Women's and Gender Studies Council, the Executive Committee, and the Dean of Dedman College, Tom DiPiero, for the time and effort they have given in support of the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

This year saw the long-awaited launch of the Women's and Gender Studies Faculty Associates Program. Professors Maxime Foerster, Beth Newman, Dayna Oscherwitz, Nia Parson, Libby Ross and Martha Satz make up the first cohort of Faculty Associates. Faculty appointed as Associates serve for three years, during which they teach one existing WGS course or develop a new one. Associates also participate in the Faculty Seminar and join the Women's and Gender Studies Council. Our new Associates bring fresh ideas and expertise. This year, Libby Ross and Maxime Foerster both developed new courses and were active participants on the Council. Additionally, Libby served as member of the Executive Committee. The program has been enriched by the contributions of our new Associates, and we are excited about the courses and projects currently under development (see page 5).



Joci Caldwell-Ryan,
Interim Director

The WGS Program has been active on campus and in community events this year. Professor Robert Jensen, Professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin, gave a lecture highlighting themes from his newest book, *The End of Patriarchy: Radical Feminism for Men* (see page 2). As a result of Dr. Jensen's visit, I was invited to represent the WGS Program at the [Annual Book Festival](#) at the Dallas Public Library on April 29, 2017, an event that attracts several thousand people each year. I sat on a panel with Dr. Robert Jensen and Kiva Harper, a licensed clinical social worker at the University of Texas at Arlington, on the topic of radical feminism for men. I was also invited to speak at the Junior World Affairs Council Forum at Martin High School in Arlington, Texas on the topic of gender and women's rights. The talk was titled "Gender and Women's Rights: Is the Gender Lens Enough?" On campus, Jessica Lott developed a workshop for the 2017 Women's Symposium titled "Can You See Me? The Politics of Body Image" (see page 4). For the third year, the WGS Program was an institutional co-sponsor for the

Duke Feminist Theory Workshop. Beth Newman shares her reflections on the event (see page 3).

We are also pleased to share the reflections of our newest group of Maynard Scholars (see page 9). The Maynard Scholarships and Awards are made possible by the generous gifts of Mr. William Maynard, who established the endowment to honor his sister, Professor Betty Maynard. Betty Maynard taught in the sociology department and was a founder of the SMU Women's and Gender Studies Program. One of the Maynard Scholars, Jessica Pires-Jancose, is also the winner of the Ann Early Award, named in honor of another founder of the program, Professor Ann Early (see page 8).

As the academic year draws to a close, I want to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their hard work and commitment to the Women's and Gender Studies Program. Professors Kathleen Wellman, Beth Newman, Sheri Kunovich, and Libby Ross were an invaluable source of wise counsel and practical knowledge. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Kate Boswell and Haley Feuerbacher for their excellent teaching of our core course, "Gender: Images and Perspectives." I owe a special debt to Jessica Lott, our graduate assistant, for helping me to negotiate a steep learning curve, and to Anna Curran, our work-study student.

Thanks for your interest in and support of the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

Joci Caldwell-Ryan

Robert Jensen: Radical Feminism for Men



On February 22, Dr. Robert Jensen visited SMU to lecture on his newest book, [*The End of Patriarchy: Radical Feminism for Men*](#) (2017, Spinifex Press). Bob Jensen is a professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas in Austin, where he has taught since 1992. A prolific writer (the author of eight books and more than 60 book chapters and journal articles), Bob Jensen has been described by sociologist Michael Kimmel as "a thorn in the side of patriarchy."

The core message of *The End of Patriarchy* is that a radical feminist critique of patriarchy remains the best, and perhaps the only, real solution to institutionalized male dominance. Throughout the book, Bob seeks to understand why radical feminism has lost ground to liberal/postmodern feminism in the last few decades and is actively rejected by some in the feminist community today. Chapters exploring pornography, rape, and

radical feminist approaches to gender inequality are familiar ground for the author, so it is not surprising that the most controversial aspect of the book is the final chapter, entitled "Transgenderism: Biology, Politics, and Ecology." Here he asks whether or not the transgender movement offers a productive political challenge to patriarchy, the central task of radical feminism, and concludes that at present it does not.

Bob begins by arguing that the sex/gender distinction, which was a distinctive feature of feminist analyses beginning in the 1970's, is still valid. He then argues that while "transgenderism" may appear to be a more revolutionary approach than radical feminism, the movement is limited by conceptual and ideological murkiness. He questions whether the abolition of gender is possible or even desirable. Acutely aware of the divisive history of topics both old (pornography) and new (transgender identity) within the feminist community, he frequently reminds readers that his purpose is to foster debate and critical thought and offer testimony to the power of radical feminism in helping him understand his own life.

Bob's talk was attended by about 25 faculty, students, and community members. Due to time constraints, Bob focused on sharing the path that led him to embrace radical feminism, key points of his critique of transgenderism, and discussion of the reaction his work has received. The lively Q&A afterwards went nearly an hour beyond the scheduled time slot. It was clear that many of the attendees were familiar with debates within feminism regarding transgender identity; their questions and comments revealed the generational

fault lines of Second and Third Wave feminisms. The acronym “TERF” (trans-excluding radical feminist) appears only in Rebecca Whisnant’s afterword to *The End of Patriarchy*, but Bob was challenged to explain how his position could impact those who identify as transgender. Although heated at times, the discussion was productive in unraveling the complex dynamics of the current debate surrounding the radical feminist critique of “transgenderism” and its place within broader feminist circles. It is clear that feminism(s) are alive and well at SMU!

Duke Feminist Theory Workshop

Dr. Beth Newman



Joci Caldwell-Ryan and Beth Newman enjoying the Duke campus

Duke University’s Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies Program held its [eleventh annual Feminist Theory Workshop](#), and Joci Caldwell-Ryan and I had the pleasure of being two of over two hundred attendees. (SMU has been an institutional co-sponsor for the last three years.) The workshop features four lectures by prominent scholars, who provide some of their work for us to read in advance. After hearing the four talks, we divide into smaller groups and spend some time mulling them over to find areas of overlap and difference. We then reconvene to hear a panel of three participants offer their “takes” on the talks, and to participate in a long and lively final Q & A. All of this happens over a day and a half, so the experience is intense—a powerful injection of contemporary feminist thought, and a great shot in the arm as one’s energies are beginning to flag after spring break!

The Workshop aims at representing the broad interdisciplinary and intersectional concerns of feminist scholarship. This year we heard a superb presentation by Kathi Weeks (Duke, Women’s Studies) about the changing ideologies of work in the current “post-work” economy—one in which we are likely to be plugged into our jobs around the clock, possibly in a workplace that is also the home—and often expected to “love” what we do. Katherine McKittrick (Gender Studies, Queen’s University) gave a fascinating and productively disturbing account of social scientists’ use of predictive algorithms—which (she noted) are very adept at calculating accurately the likelihood that a black person will die prematurely, but seem otherwise incapable of measuring anything of positive value for black life. The feminist art historian Amelia Jones surveyed the development of feminist and queer accounts of art history, neatly crystallizing developments since the 1970s. Christina Crosby (English/Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Wesleyan) spoke very much from the heart about mourning the loss of her able body after a horrible cycling accident severely injured her spinal cord, leaving her paralyzed in all four limbs. (She has regained some use of her arms and hands.)

All the talks were by turns stimulating, provocative, and instructive; but it was Crosby’s talk, an outgrowth of her memoir [A Body, Undone](#), that moved me most—in part because I have multiple connections to her, though mostly indirect. I too am an English professor; we are both Victorianists who love *Middlemarch* (a novel that crops up in her talk and her writing); I, too, am a cyclist; and our paths crossed years ago at a dinner party that we both recall with pleasure. Now, years later, she is seeking to understand her life as a disabled person—one who became suddenly dependent upon others for very basic and intimate functions. She is using the best tools she knows to reflect upon her story: feminist theory, disability studies, queer studies, and carefully chosen words arranged in understated, beautifully shaped sentences. When I asked her to sign a copy of her memoir, she wrote—slowly, laboriously, but decisively--“Words matter.”



Cristina Crosby, her partner, and Beth Newman

Retired Art History Professor Turns to Murder (Writing)

Dr. Alessandra Comini



This could be the headline for a story on what this particular SMU professor emerita has been up to since retiring in 2005 from teaching classes of 150 students in Dallas Hall's hallowed auditorium. Facebook keeps them in my life and pairing fact with fiction keeps my brain sizzling. After writing eight scholarly books (one of them nominated for a National Book Award) during a long career, it has been equally stimulating and challenging to propel my pseudonymous heroine—intrepid, 80-year-old Megan Crespi—through mysterious encounters and dangerous paths. From Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka of Vienna to Edvard Munch of Oslo, Crespi's travels take her across Europe in search of stolen artworks. And now, at last, I have had a chance to write about a *woman* artist, the great German sculptor and graphic artist, Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), who lost a son in World War I and a grandson in World War II. Her potent images inspire daring thefts, attract unusual characters, and lead Crespi into labyrinthine situations that somehow jell into startling denouements.

University Distinguished Professor of Art History Emerita Alessandra Comini has found a new career: writing art history murder mystery books. Look for her former students' rave reviews of them on [Amazon](#) or go to [megancrespi.com](#).

Body Positivity at the Women's Symposium

Jessica Lott

The SMU Women and LGBT Center hosts an annual [Women's Symposium](#). It is a day-long event featuring a luncheon, workshops, community awards, and a plenary session. This year was the 52nd annual symposium, and the theme was "My Body, Not Their Politics." The folks at the Women and LGBT center asked us at the WGS Program to put together a break-out session on body image. The WGS Program Director, Joci Caldwell-Ryan, knows that I am always happy to chat about intersections of gender, power, and bodies. My side interest (if a graduate student is allowed to have such a thing), is fat activism and fat studies. So Joci asked if I would like to lead the session, and I happily agreed. We titled the session "Can You See Me? The Politics of Body Image." Our session explored the politics of the body and our relationships to body image. Leading the session, with Joci there to assist, was a wonderful experience. We estimated around 25 would attend, but had to pull in extra chairs for a full room of 40. Attendees were mostly women, from smart young high school students to invested college professors and community members.



Our session was after the luncheon, which featured a lecture by [Wendy Davis](#), most famous for her filibuster in the Texas Senate in support of abortion rights. Davis spoke passionately about women in government, including experiences of sexism. She shared how she and her body were perceived, including her iconic pink [sneakers](#) and her opponents' derisive nickname for her, "Abortion Barbie." Participants came to our workshop inspired and ready to talk. Body image is often a difficult topic to discuss, so I used clothing as a neutral entry-point for discussion with an activity I called "What Are you Wearing?" I took a cue from second-wave

feminist consciousness raising and encouraged attendees to build connections – with each other and to structural inequality - around common personal experiences.

I explained to the audience that how we dress is linked with how we feel and that there are many factors that influence how we dress. Everyone made a list of five things they regularly wear (e.g. clothes, makeup, jewelry) and a few words for how each item makes them feel (e.g. cute, fun, boring, professional). I opened the floor to participants to share an item from their list and soon, we were finding common experiences. I took those opportunities to open up discussions about gender presentation, sexism, body size, and more. Participants began asking questions of the room as well. We tossed around ideas about who or what influences our clothing choices and if there is a political aspect to how we dress. I ended the session asking by them if the context around clothing choices affects how we see and treat our bodies.

I left the session feeling energized. I was delighted that so many participants opened up about their experiences and supported others as they shared their stories. I hope attendees left with new tools to frame their daily experiences, or at least left feeling heard.

Thank you to the WGS Program and the Women and LGBT Center for providing me with this opportunity. The Women's Symposium is always an uplifting event, and I was honored to be a part of the program this year.



The packed room at our workshop!
Photo credit: Lauren Winterhalder

Jessica Lott is a Ph.D. Candidate in Cultural Anthropology and a WGS Graduate Certificate Student. Her dissertation is an ethnographic study of reproductive choice and voluntarily childless Latinos/as in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

WGS Faculty Associate Program

This year, the WGS Program began its Faculty Associates Program. Our goal is to create a collegial, interdisciplinary, diverse community of teachers and scholars who provide a robust curriculum (and other learning experiences) for its students, participate in decision-making about the WGS Program, and bring awareness of intellectual work on women, gender, and sexuality to the wider campus and the community. Members of this program maintain a clear body of knowledge that is consistent with the program's academic mission, and they maintain a vested interest in the success of the WGS Program. This cohort of members has already brought fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the WGS Program; we are delighted to introduce them to you here.

Maxime Foerster



Maxime's research has been fundamentally rooted in gender issues. His first book, *La Différence des sexes à l'épreuve de la République* (2006), examines women's rights during the French Revolution. Issues of gender, sexuality and feminism were central to his history of transsexualism in France. His dissertation at the University Michigan, *French Romanticism and the Reinvention of Love*, analyzed dialectics of femininity and masculinity through "heterosexual trouble" in French Romantic novels. Preparing this project for publication is the focus of his current scholarship. Maxime has also developed a course with David Doyle devoted to the historical and political study of sexual minorities (lesbians, gays, transgender subjects and sex workers). Several of Maxime's classes focus on gender, including "Social Justice in 19th century French Literature," and Maxime would also like to develop a core course on literature solely written by women.

Nia Parson



Nia's scholarship to date has focused on the gendered nature of traumatic experience and efforts at recovery, particularly intimate partner violence against women in Chile and the US. She has served on the board of the Association for Feminist Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association and the editorial board of the journal *Violence Against Women*. Her book ([*Traumatic States: Gendered Violence, Suffering and Care in Chile*](#)) and peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, all attend to gender.

Nia's courses explore the relationship between gender, violence, and human rights and make a crucial contribution to the WGST Program at SMU. Her current course, "Gender Violence: Anthropological Perspectives," is regularly offered with WGST credit. A key component of the course is the volunteer internship dimension, where students engage with community organizations focused on issues related to gender-based intimate partner violence against women.

Beth Newman

Beth's scholarship continues to address issues of gender, as did her book [*Subjects on Display: Psychoanalysis, Social Expectation, and Victorian Femininity*](#) (2004). Her book took a feminist and psychoanalytic approach to canonical Victorian fiction and complicated the discourse about the "male gaze." Her 1996 teaching edition of [*Jane Eyre*](#) for Bedford/St. Martin's highlighted feminist approaches; it remains a feature in the second edition (2014). Her current scholarship, an article about the late nineteenth- early twentieth-century poet Alice Meynell, considers an essay of hers as a feminist response to one of the most famous pieces by Walter Pater. Beth is also writing about two novels by Mary Augusta Ward, a contemporary of Meynell's, as a response to both secularism and issues of sexuality. Beth teaches a number of courses for WGST: "Victorian Gender;" "Gender at the Fin de Siècle," an English course on Victorian Women Writers; and a core course, "Advanced Feminist Theory."



Dayna Oscherwitz



Although Dayna's scholarship foregrounds race and national identity, gender is an important feature. Her earlier work on the Guadeloupean writer, Gisèle Pineau and the Cameroonian writer Calixthe Beyala, explored the intersection of gender and race in the postcolonial context. A recent book chapter on Sembène Ousmane explored the relationship between gender and genre in African cinema. An article she is currently writing looks at globalization and Jihad through three North African films to both connect these phenomena and analyze them as shaped by shifting conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Dayna is working to submit her course, "North African Cinema" (currently in the World Languages department) for WGST credit so our students can learn about issues of gender in North Africa through film and selected secondary texts, particularly as they intersect with religious and national identities. She also plans to teach our undergraduate core course, "Gender: Images and Perspectives" in the future.

Libby Russ



Libby's research focuses on intersections of gender, race, and national and cultural identities in the work of women writers from across the Americas. Her book, [*The Plantation in the Post-Slavery Imagination*](#) (2009), studied novels by women writers from the Spanish Caribbean and the U.S. South to consider how they looked at the plantation past to reimagine traditional constructions of gender, race, and nation. Her current research focuses on women writers from the Dominican Republic, especially Aída Cartagena Portalatín. Her next book will explore how recent Dominican and Dominican diaspora women writers have participated in and react against narratives of nationhood. Libby has developed a new course for WGST credit, "Women's Rights and Human Rights in Literature by Latin American Women" on Latin American women writers and hopes to teach one of our WGST core courses in the future.

Martha Satz

Martha will continue her long association with WGST. This year alone, she is co-editing and contributing to a book entitled *Toni Morrison and Mothering*, and contributing an article on Ann Petry's *The Street* to an anthology *American Realisms: Essays on Genders, 1865-1950*. She will be a respondent in a panel on American Jewish Women Humorists at this year's Association for Jewish Studies and will present a paper on women's literature about adoption at this year's Modern Language Association. She plans to teach in the next rotation of Advanced Feminist Theory and to continue to teach two of her regular courses which are part of the WGST course listings: "Ethical implications of Children's Literature" and "Contexts of Disability." Martha's other English departmental courses often take a feminist slant in discussing works by Hurston, Walker, and Morrison and Austen, Charlotte Bronte, and George Eliot.



WGS Alums at Women's Marches



We know that professors, alums, and students alike turned up for the [Women's March on Washington](#) and supporting marches around the country on January 21, 2017. One alumna shared her experience:

"As a SMU Women's and Gender Studies Alum, I was proud to have participated this weekend in the Women's March here in Wyoming. I truly enjoyed all of my Women's & Gender Studies courses and professors but in particular I dedicate this photo to my hero Professor Ann Early." - Wendy Volk, class of '87

Ann Early Award Winner

Jessica Pires-Jancose

Jessica is currently in Peru completing an Engaged Learning project. She shares some of her initial findings on feminism in Peru with us here.



The goal of my Engaged Learning proposal was to determine “What does feminism in Peru look like?”

But the longer I’m here the more I realize that this was perhaps not the correct question to ask.

There is no such thing as a “Peruvian feminism” in the same way that there is no such thing as an “American feminism” or an “Indian feminism” and so on. I cannot possibly say that Peruvian women believe this or fight for that. Peru, like any country, has an unbelievably diverse population racially, ethnically, economically, etc. And each major segment of the population (mestizo, andino, afro, etc) has its own incredibly specific history that impacts what each of these populations look like and the problems that they face today. Combine that with the fact that Peru as a whole has gone through extensive periods of terrorism, military dictatorships, power transitions, recessions, and human rights violations in its recent history (and that each of these periods

has impacted every segment of the population - albeit some more than others) and what you have is a collection of very intricate movements existing within the country.

Even in trying to categorize the different branches of feminism that exist here - popular women’s feminism, upper/middle-class mainstream feminism in wealthy areas of Lima, indigenous feminism (in the Andean region and in the rainforest), Afro-Peruvian feminism, and more - you eliminate the diversity and the voice of the subgroups that exist within each branch. In order to create momentum and strength in numbers within movements one, of course, has to acknowledge that many subgroups will be silenced. For example, in the Women’s Marches that took place after our current president’s inauguration many non-white women (Native American women, Black women, etc.) expressed that they felt silenced by white women when they tried to bring up specific struggles experienced by those within their racial/ethnic groups. Many white women responded to these concerns saying that women of color should stop trying to “divide the movement” by bringing up trivial problems such as racial oppression. Thus, subgroups within the movement were silenced for the “coherence” of the movement as a whole.

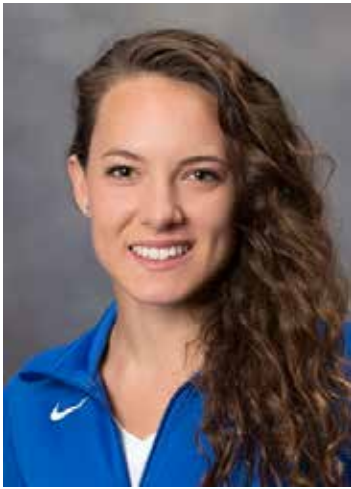
In this example, and in many others, we see that minority women’s voices are lost when movements become generalized. I struggle to assert that an “indigenous feminism” exists in Peru when there are such stark differences between indigenous groups living in the Andean region and those living within the Amazonian region - and within each of these subgroups there of course exists even more distinct pueblos and peoples. I struggle to generalize a “popular women’s feminism” when there are so many popular groups existing throughout the country. Perhaps it is better to ask: “What are the different forms of feminism that exist? How do these feminisms interact?” To generalize Peruvian women, or any women, is to do them a disservice. Feminism is beautiful in its diversity, and I hope to be able to do its intricacy justice.



Jessica in Peru

Maynard Award Winners

Marné Erasmus



The first Women and Gender Studies (WGST) class that I took at SMU was “Women in US History to 1900,” taught by Dr. Crista DeLuzio. In all honesty, I was not thrilled at the prospect of taking a class that I prematurely and wrongly judged to be a stereotypical “feminist” class. I am happy to report that by the end of my first semester at SMU, I had been transformed into a fierce and proud feminist! My first WGST class taught me the importance of learning about the achievements of women in all facets of life. The sad truth (of which I had been ignorant) is that most mainstream approaches to history had overlooked the roles and accomplishments of women.

The WGST courses at SMU have had a significant impact on my development and self-respect. Through these courses, I have learned that although history has for the most part been written by, for, and about men, the course of history would not have been the same without the influence of women. I have

become fascinated with the way academics have brought to life the previously silenced voices of women throughout history, and I love learning about the ways women have been assertive and strong, even though early historians did not document them as such. By deciding to minor in WGST, I made a conscious decision to become an agent – not a bystander – in the process of making the world more inclusive and equal. WGST has taught me new ways to interpret social, biological, economic and political culture, and most importantly, it has taught me to be an assertive and fearless woman. This education has been invaluable.

Marné’s activities include: Majors in Political Science, History, and Religious Studies; Women’s Swim Team (SMU Swimming and Diving Most Valuable Award); South African National Swim Team (2009-2017); SMU Department of Religious Studies Writing Award; Afrikaans language tutor

Spencer Gutierrez

What is most interesting to me about Women’s and Gender Studies is perhaps what is most commonly misunderstood – the courses are not just about the study of women’s history, feminist theory, or contemplating the issues of gender. Certainly, these topics are interesting, important, and worthwhile, but what is most intriguing to me is the intersectionality taught in these courses: the fact that what one learns in each course will carry and cross over to the other courses. I think that putting everything together is where things can get really interesting.

In my WGST courses, I have been afforded freedom to study and explore topics of my choosing, rather than being restricted. The most formative and interesting courses for me have been “Philosophy of Gender” and “Ethnicity, Culture, and Gender.” These courses covered a range of topics, but of particular interest to me were the final projects I was assigned. These projects offered an opportunity to critically analyze topics of interest, in these particular cases, body image and racism, through popular culture. Everything, I believe, can be the subject of academic analysis, and I owe it to my WGST courses and instructors for reassuring this belief in me.



Spencer’s activities include: Majors in Philosophy and Corporate Communications and Public Affairs; Award of Achievement from SMU Multicultural Student Affairs; Dallas Urban Debate Alliance tournament staff (2015-present); Philosophy Club

Jessica Pires-Jancose



My journey with feminism began my freshman year thanks to WGST 2322; it was here that I first learned about how language is constructed to privilege masculinity, about body positivity, about combating victim blaming, and so much more. There is power in having an academic feminist framework to analyze and deconstruct sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination, and it is a gift I appreciate daily. It was in 2322 that I first learned about intersectionality, a concept that has proved invaluable to me in my human rights and anthropology classes. I now have the ability to consider the concept of inequality from an intersectional perspective and the tools to ask: "How does this population's gender, race, class, level of education, and more affect the problems that they face and the type of recourse that they are able to access?"

The lessons of my WGST classes can be applied to nearly every course I have ever taken – but I believe these lessons are even more applicable outside of the classroom. These lessons gave me the confidence to walk into the Women and LGBT Center my sophomore year and motivated me to become president of the Feminist Equality Movement (FEM) a year later. Every day these lessons continue to give me the confidence to fight for gender equality and speak out even when the people and institutions around me scream, "I don't want to hear it!"

My WGST classes changed the trajectory of my future and have ignited a passion within me to devote my life to fighting for women's rights. Whether you see me tomorrow or in 20 years, I will be fighting with all of my strength for gender equality, and for this confidence and passion I have the SMU WGST department to thank.

Jessica's activities include: Majors in Health and Society, Human Rights, and Pre-Medicine; President's Scholar (academic scholarship for full tuition, room and board); Mortar Board; Phi Beta Kappa; Mustang Heroes Project Leader; Vagina Monologues Co-Chair and Master of Ceremonies 2015-present

In my second semester at Southern Methodist University, I was close to completing a History minor. I had just completed a course on women in American History that I picked on a whim to fill up my schedule. Because I enjoyed the women and gender portion of the history class, I decided to be ambitious and pick up a second minor. Jumping into the Women's and Gender Studies minor, I did not know what to expect. I was surprised by the experience of taking WGS courses and learned some unexpected skills.

Women's and Gender Studies courses have trained me to think critically and see the connections between each discipline, but they have also, surprisingly, made me more empathetic. I have never considered myself to be sympathetic, much less an empathetic person, but WGST classes pushed me to think beyond myself. What I have noticed, especially since I have taken more WGST history courses, is that WGST puts the human element back in these events that have become uninspiring route retellings in a history book, most likely because documents concerning women, or others who are not educated men, come from personal diaries, novels, and/or inheritance. Studying this type of history and these personal documents reminded me that history is comprised of real living accounts. As I study literature and contemporary works in my English and creative writing classes, I am reminded of the lives behind the words and what they must have experienced in order to produce their story. So as I try to explain how WGST impacted my education, I'd say it has returned the human aspect to words and terms, and became a medium in which I can learn to empathize.

Young Hee's activities include: Major in English; Phi Beta Kappa

Young Hee Somemoto



Heather Flynn



When I started my undergraduate studies, all I knew was that I wanted to work with kids. That was it. My psychology and sociology majors in combination with my WGST minor have led me to a goal of pursuing my LMFT license (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist). This path will allow me to work with children and help promote healthy and functional relationships (familial, romantic, etc.) in our society. I desperately want teenagers, young adults, and people of any age, to understand what healthy relationships look like and what steps they should take if they find themselves in an unhealthy relationship. I aspire to have a positive impact on others' lives, using my experiences and past to relate to clients and help them with their personal struggles. I feel as if I am capable of helping on an even larger scale. For these reasons, I wish to pursue a Masters in Counseling and ultimately become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

Heather's activities include: Majors in Psychology and Sociology; Research Assistant at SMU Family Research Center; SMU Equestrian Team 2014-2016

Melissa Kraft

Studying Women and Gender Studies has had a profound impact on me both in and out of the classroom. Minor in Women and Gender Studies has made me a better student, leader, activist, and friend. WGST classes have been some of the most challenging, thought provoking, and engaging courses that I have taken at SMU, and I am so grateful for Betty Maynard for creating SMU's Women and Gender Studies Program.

My minor in Women and Gender Studies is applicable not just to my WGST courses, but to almost all of my other classes. I have applied my knowledge about Title IX to my Sports and Society class, analyzed social issues in my Social Problems class using feminist theory, and even impressed graduate students in my psychology research lab with my knowledge of hegemonic masculinity. Having a WGS background has allowed me to examine various topics through a feminist lens by looking at social issues from a gender plus power perspective. Gender impacts every institution and aspect of our lives and having a background in Women and Gender Studies has not only given me a better understanding of gender, but also of the world surrounding us.



I have also been able to bring my knowledge gained from Women and Gender Studies to my leadership positions outside of the classroom. I serve as a Peer Dialogue Leader in Armstrong Residential Commons, and I do a lot of work with diversity and social justice education. Because of my Women and Gender Studies background, many of the events that I've put on are related to gender issues. I've hosted "Genderbread," where residents were able to decorate and eat gingerbread cookies while also discussing differences between gender identity, gender expression, sex, romantic attraction, and sexual attraction. I've also collaborated with Feminist Equality Movement to host a "What is a Feminist?" panel to educate Armstrong residents about misconceptions about feminism. I am extremely lucky to go to a school like SMU with an incredible Women's and Gender Studies Program, and it's important for me to share my knowledge with others and to serve my community however I can. Studying Women's and Gender Studies has not only provided me with a more in-depth understanding in my psychology and sociology majors, but it has also provided me invaluable knowledge, connections, and personal growth, and for that I am forever grateful.

Melissa's activities include: Majors in Psychology and Sociology; SMU Hunt Leadership Scholar; Membership Chair for Active Minds (mental health organization at SMU); Student Campus Services Advisory Panel

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