

# WGSS Newsletter

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



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## *Signs* Comes to Northeastern!

WGSS is thrilled to welcome the pioneering feminist journal *Signs* to Northeastern University. As of January 1st, after ten years at Rutgers University under the amazing leadership of Prof. Mary Hawke, WGSS Program Director Suzanna Walters takes over as Editor-in-Chief. Prof. Carla Kaplan of WGSS and English will serve as Chair of the Board of Associate Editors. We have assembled an impressive editorial board that includes feminist scholars from Northeastern but also draws on the rich resources of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (*continued on page 2*).

## Signs @ 40: Journal of Women in Culture and Society

2014 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. The journal has contributed four decades of research, writing, and art to feminist scholarship. Topics have included film, gender theory, law, philosophy, and much more. Published articles and featured art are never restricted by geography. Instead, *Signs* makes a point of highlighting narratives from around the globe. From the beginning, the journal adopted the belief that “truth is never monolithic” and crafted an interdisciplinary approach to storytelling. Forty years later, *Signs* is the leading international journal in women’s and gender studies. Check out the retrospective website at <http://signsat40.signsjournal.org>.

### Feminist Scholarship Through the Decades



Yampolsky - *Mujeres Mazahua* (1989)



Martinez - *The Traits of Both* (1993)



Ashevak - *Women with Fish* (2006)

(Cont.) In welcoming *Signs* to Northeastern we also welcome our two *Signs* staff members – Miranda Outman-Kramer and Andy Mazzaschi – and our three graduate assistants, Firuzeh Shokooh Valle (Sociology), Victoria Papa (English), and Laura Hartmann (English).

Started in 1975 and published continuously since, *Signs* is recognized as the leading international journal in women’s and gender studies, at the forefront of new directions in feminist scholarship. Challenging the boundaries of knowledge concerning women’s and men’s lives in diverse regions of the globe, *Signs* publishes scholarship that raises new questions and develops innovative approaches to our understanding of the past and present. What makes feminist scholarship published in *Signs* distinctive is not necessarily the subject of investigation or particular methods of inquiry but the effort to cultivate alternative research practices that further feminist, queer, and antiracist goals of social transformation.

*Signs* publishes pathbreaking articles, review essays, comparative perspectives, and retrospectives of interdisciplinary interest addressing gender, race, culture, class, nation, and sexuality. Whether critical, theoretical, or empirical, articles published in *Signs* generate theories, concepts, analytical categories, and methodological innovations that enable new ways of thinking, new ways of seeing, and new ways of living.

## Inaugural Editorial: Thinking and Doing Feminism

It is with great pride and pleasure that I join the distinguished ranks of editors of *Signs*. Along with my colleague Carla Kaplan, who will serve as Chair of the Board of Associate Editors, I am excited to begin this new endeavor. Under Mary Hawkesworth's inspired editorship and with the steady support of the University of Chicago Press, *Signs* continues to represent the best of feminist scholarship and to offer a model of journal

to actually increase print subscriptions but has also deepened its feminist commitments to intersectional theorizing, transnational breadth, and robust interdisciplinarity. From the Catharine Stimpson Prize for Outstanding Feminist Scholarship to virtual issues and the launch of *Films for the Feminist Classroom*, the last ten years at Rutgers have been enormously productive ones, pushing the journal in ways both structural and intellectual

heritage of the journal. At the same time, new leadership always provides an opportunity for new vision and for a reimagining of the project itself. Our cultural moment demands innovative strategies: feminism is increasingly stabilized in the (neoliberal) academy as it also finds itself fighting retrenchment around the world; attacks on women's bodily autonomy move ceaselessly ahead even as young feminist activists find creative new strategies to resist them; gender becomes a more malleable and contested site, but gendered power and violence have hardly disappeared. And feminist currents now move in an ever more digital sea; how we read, how we know, how we teach, how we engage politically are being reformed by the Web, social media, and other forms of virtual communication. Any journal – and most especially a journal with profound commitments to social justice, sexual freedom, and gender equity such as *Signs* – must reckon with what it means to “think and do feminism” in an era of online everything, and in light of these and other contradictions and challenges.

That said, five core concerns broadly animate our editorial vision (*continued on next page*).

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publishing to others. Mary's staff and Editorial Board have most assuredly brought the journal into the twenty-first century, enhancing *Signs*' digital presence and reach while at the same pushing the intellectual envelope with feminist scholarship of the highest caliber from an astoundingly diverse range of geographical locations and disciplinary homes. Under the ten years of Mary's editorship, *Signs* has not only become one of the few academic journals

and always substantively engaged with the changing terrain of both feminist theory and journal publishing. It remains, in our minds and undoubtedly in the minds of most feminist scholars, *the* internationally respected journal in the field.

So, in sum, what's not broke doesn't need fixing: we've inherited a gem. Therefore, a core component of our editorial vision entails preserving the traditions and



First, we believe that the field of women's studies must substantively reckon with the provocations and contributions of gender and sexuality studies. The relationship between theories of sexuality and theories of gender has a long and productive history, arguably initiated by Gayle Rubin's classic 1984

article

"Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality."

Since that moment, the relationship between feminist theory and what became known as queer theory has been

debated and analyzed in journals, edited volumes, monographs, syllabi, and conferences. *Signs* is unusually well positioned to engage head on with the challenges of these discourses and to model queer/sexuality studies with a feminist lens. We intend to pursue this exceedingly fruitful dialogue, especially in thematic review essays and special issues devoted to the tough questions that come up when feminist

theory and queer theory, gender and sexuality, productively engage.

Second, we are committed to recentring attention to local and transnational racial and ethnic difference, particularly as they circulate in and through those questions of sexuality/gender discussed above. Feminist scholarship has always been marked by encounters and emendations, the dual move of critical reflexivity and analytic innovation. These debates and revisions have come from many locations: from women of color who challenged the assumptions of whiteness implicit in much

feminist theorizing, from lesbians who critiqued the heterosexism not just of mainstream feminist movements but of feminist analysis itself, from theorists and activists who insisted that "the West" not be presumed the automatic site of a privileged theoretical enterprise. These voices have been insistent and



consistent, pushing feminist theory to interrogate its own lacunae and to engage in self-reflexive rethinking of the very project of feminist scholarship. From this ferment were born black feminist thought, radical feminism, transnational feminism, and—most pervasively perhaps—the very idea of intersectionality laid out first by legal theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. While these discussions have in no way disappeared, new ones have emerged, and *Signs* must pioneer ever more multivocal strands of feminist theorizing by creating increased opportunities for dialogue and debate.

Read the full editorial at [http://www.northeastern.edu/womensstudies/news\\_events/recent\\_publications/signs\\_editorial/](http://www.northeastern.edu/womensstudies/news_events/recent_publications/signs_editorial/)

Suzanna Walters  
Northeastern University

This editorial was previously published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2015).

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014

*Prof Moya Bailey's Intro to WGSS class created a digital magazine.*



## The Project

Students worked as a group to create a digital magazine that reflected their engagement of class concepts and themes within women's, gender, and sexuality studies. Students learned In-Design software as well as organizational strategies that helped them throw a launch party. Students will take a piece of the class with them as well as the skills and content that they learned.

## The Inspiration

In graduate school, Professor Bailey took a course that required students to write papers and host a mini-conference to present their

work. She introduced this model of creating a product in a class to WMNS 1103.

## The Synthesis

Students addressed topics from the class in the magazine in both articles and advertisements. The group of students who worked on advertising created a satirical ad based on gender stereotypes. They created content that spoke to intersectionality, a central theoretical concept explored in the class.

## The Launch Party

Students hosted a launch party to introduce their friends to the magazine. They found the space, procured snacks and created a lively program to share the magazine with the Northeastern community. They divided the program into three sections. First, three students shared their experience writing articles for the magazine, which was followed by a student panel. Lastly, two students sang songs they felt connected to the class as the audience hovered around laptops to look at the magazine.

## New Student Group @ NU

### Queer Student Union (QSU)

is a group of Northeastern University undergraduate LGBTQQIAP-identified students and allies, dedicated to political action and activism that centers on gender and sexuality.

### Why was this group started?

QSU was born out of a potluck for queer identified folks hosted by the Progressive Student Alliance (PSA) in October. Many who attended felt that there were insufficient resources for LGBTQ students on campus, and so attendees worked together to create a new group on campus. QSU strives to create a safe and collaborative space in which students can discuss and navigate through their forming identities while learning from each other.

### How is QSU different from other LGBTQ groups on campus?

There's a clear need for a student group at Northeastern for trans and queer folks that focuses on activism (*continued on next page*).

View the magazine at [http://issuu.com/moyabailey/docs/iwgss\\_class\\_magazine\\_2014](http://issuu.com/moyabailey/docs/iwgss_class_magazine_2014)

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014

## New Student Group @ NU

It is important for QSU to provide a safe space for all queer students to exemplify a broader spectrum of queer personalities as opposed to stereotypical expectations. QSU provides a space for questioning students who are conflicted with accepting their sexuality because they shy away from the stereotypical expectations.

## What are the goals of QSU?

QSU is committed to radical political work. They plan to work on one or two concrete campaigns throughout the spring semester and also hope to collaborate with other politically-minded groups and build a strong coalition that aims to dismantle oppression in all its forms. For example, QSU is partnering with Black and Pink, an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and "free world" allies. QSU recently had a gathering to make holiday cards for prisoners.

Founding member Sofia Perez Arias says, "We want to create a community that centers the voices and leadership of trans and queer people whose voices tend to be most marginalized or erased from mainstream LGBTQ spaces - trans women of color, working class folks, survivors of assault, etc."

## National Women's Studies Association Conference



(Carla Kaplan, Suzanna Walters, and Mary Hawke at NWSA 2014)

WGSS faculty had a strong presence at this year's National Women's Studies Association conference held in sunny San Juan, Puerto Rico. Post-doc Moya Bailey, Visiting Scholar Banu Subramaniam, and both Suzanna Walters and Carla Kaplan were a part of the largest NWSA meeting ever.

Besides the usual talks and caucus meetings, Suzanna discussed her latest book at an "Author Meets Critics" session and *Signs* publisher Jenny Ringblom hosted a lovely reception to welcome Carla and Suzanna to the journal.

Next year we're off to Milwaukee where Suzanna will get to meet with other feminist journal editors as part of an NWSA tradition of gathering journal editors together at meetings to share notes on the state of feminist publishing.

## Northeastern Announces First Special Issue of *Signs*

*Signs* invites submissions for a special issue titled "Pleasure and Danger: Sexual Freedom and Feminism in the Twenty-First Century," slated for publication in the Autumn 2016 issue.

For more information, visit [http://www.northeastern.edu/womensstudies/programs\\_research/other\\_opportunities/signs\\_journal/](http://www.northeastern.edu/womensstudies/programs_research/other_opportunities/signs_journal/).

# EVENTS CALENDAR

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## January

**22<sup>nd</sup>**      **Signs Kick-Off**  
Raytheon Amphitheater, 5pm  
Faculty Celebration

**28<sup>th</sup>**      **Meet the Author: Suzanna Walters**  
90 Snell Library, 12pm  
*The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions Are Sabotaging Gay Equality*

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## February

**4<sup>th</sup>**      **A Literary Reflection on the House Ballroom Scene**  
Cabral Center, Time TBA

**12<sup>th</sup>**      **#transform(ing)dh Writing and Research: An Autoethnography of Digital Humanities Feminist Ethics**  
270 Holmes Hall, 3pm  
Lecture by Professor Moya Bailey

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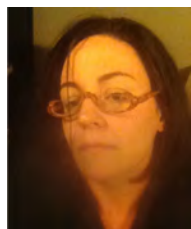
## March

**18<sup>th</sup>**      **Women Take the Reel Film Festival**  
310R Renaissance Park, 5pm  
Presented by WGSS at Northeastern University & GCWS

**20<sup>th</sup>**      **Pleasure and Danger: Sexual Freedom and Feminism Now**  
Cabral Center, 8:30am – 5:30pm  
Annual WGSS Symposium

# NEW FACES AT WGSS

## Signs Editorial Staff



**Miranda Outman** is the managing editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Cultural and Society*. She has been with the journal since 2002. Previously she served as a series editor at the UCLA

Center for Labor Research and Education and on the editorial staff of Tikkun Magazine. She is also the coeditor, with Susana Galán, of "Gendered Bodies in the Protest Sphere," a Comparative Perspectives Symposium published in *Signs* (vol. 40, no. 1 [2014]), featuring contributions on the global wave of protest movements that commenced in 2010 and is ongoing today.



**Andrew Mazzaschi** has served as deputy editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* since 2012 and has been working at the journal since 2008. He

received his PhD in Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University in 2014. His dissertation, "Bodies of Value: Transnational Discourses and Practices of Plastic Surgery," examines how plastic surgery simultaneously racializes and genders through its capacity to invest in bodies and explores plastic surgery's complex and shifting relationship to various forms of global capitalism. He has taught widely in Women's and Gender Studies.

## WGSS welcomes a new member to our Executive Committee!



**Barbara Guthrie, PhD, RN, FAAN**, is the Independence Foundation Professor of Nursing and the director of the PhD nursing program at

Northeastern's Bouve College of Health Sciences. For seven years, she was the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Yale University School of Nursing (YSN). Prior to accepting the position at Yale University School of Nursing, Dr. Guthrie held a dual appointment at the University of Michigan as an associate professor in the Division of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction and Women Studies.

## Meet our new co-op:



**Amy Joy Stahl** is a fourth-year Sociology major with a minor in WGSS. Within those fields, she's particularly interested in quantitative

research, youth development and civic engagement, and gender articulation. She completed her first two co-ops at NEU's Center of Community Service and the National Center on Time and Learning, and she's very excited to be taking on the WGSS / *Signs* position for her final co-op!



# NEW FACES AT WGSS

## Graduate Assistants for *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*

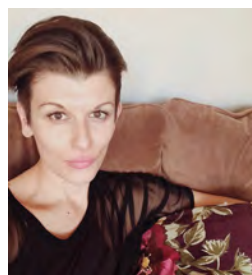
*Signs* receives more than 400 manuscripts each year and publishes four issues (1056 pages) each year. These Graduate Assistants will work with the Editor-in-Chief, Deputy Editor, and Managing Editor on both manuscript acquisition and production. This year, graduate assistants will work on various social media initiatives, such as ***Signs on the Syllabus***, and *Signs* virtual issues. They will also provide editorial assistance to the journal.

## WGSS welcomes three graduate assistants for Spring 2015



**Laura Hartmann-Villalta** is an English PhD Candidate at Northeastern University. Her dissertation, "Witness to War:

Photography, Anglophone Women's Writing, and the Spanish Civil War," unites literary and visual analysis with biographical portraits of foreign women writers and photographers who went to Spain during the war to report, document, and advocate for foreign intervention. Her involvement with Spanish Civil War scholarship began while earning her undergraduate degree in Madrid at St. Louis University, Madrid. She pursued this interest through her English MA at Virginia Tech University and her Spanish MA at St. Louis University.



**Victoria Papa** is a sixth-year doctoral candidate in the Department of English. Her research focuses on minority American writers of the twentieth century and contemporary theories

of trauma and temporality. Her dissertation, *The Invention of Survival: Time and the Transformation of Trauma in American Modernist Literature*, analyzes marginalized modernists' depictions of time in the context of surviving trauma. Victoria holds a certificate in Women's Studies from the GCWS and an MA in English from University at Albany, SUNY. Her additional research interests include: performance studies, critical race theory, queer theory, and visual culture.



**Firuzeh Shokooh Valle** is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Northeastern University. Her dissertation research focuses on the intersection between gender, technology and development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Firuzeh has an M.A. in Journalism, and a certificate in Women's, Gender and Sexuality from Northeastern University. She received her B.A. in Latin American Studies from the University of Puerto Rico.

She is also an award-winning journalist who has reported for numerous media outlets in her native Puerto Rico and abroad.

# COMING UP IN 2015

## Visiting Scholars Program

### Academic Year 2015 - 2016

Each year the WGSS program hosts a new group of 1-3 competitively selected scholars from the U.S. and abroad for a period of one academic year. The WGSS Visiting Scholars Program is open to scholars (including ABD) of all disciplines who would enjoy working in an interdisciplinary environment that encourages critical feminist exploration addressing intersections of gender and sexuality with race, class, nation, religion, and a wide range of social justice issues.

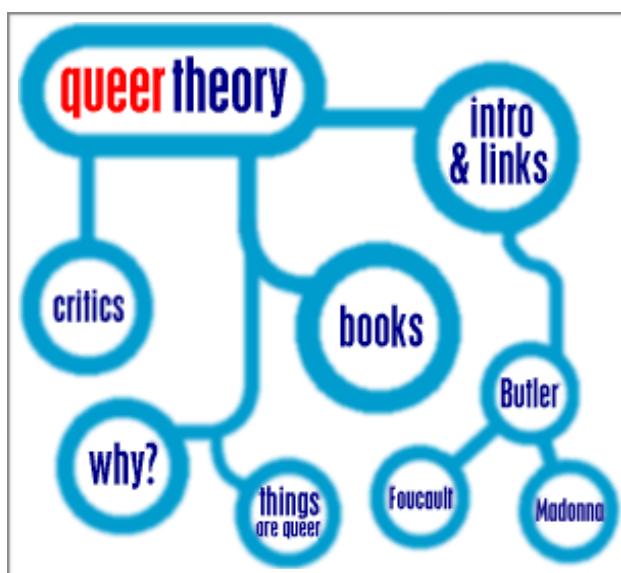
Full application details can be viewed at [http://www.northeastern.edu/womensstudies/programs\\_research/](http://www.northeastern.edu/womensstudies/programs_research/).

## New Course

### WMNS 7100: Queer Theory

#### Fall 2015

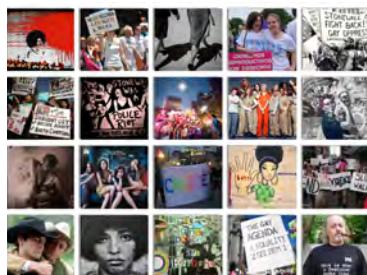
This graduate course introduces the core texts and key debates that have shaped queer theory and examines the intersections between queer theory and feminism and critical race theory. Analyzing foundational queer and feminist texts provides an understanding of expansive and radical contemporary queer politics, pushing beyond narrow constructions of identity politics, anti-discrimination policy, and rights-based reforms. Engages Queer Theory by means of a rich philosophical and political interrogation of the meaning and content of "queer."



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# Spring 2015

## UNDERGRADUATE COURSES



### WMNS 1101

Sex, Gender and Pop Culture

Taught by Professor Suzanna Walters

Mondays and Thursdays

11:45am - 1:25pm

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# WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

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### ADDITIONAL CROSS-LISTED COURSES

#### AFRS / WMNS 1185

Gender in the African Diaspora

#### COMM / WMNS 2304

Communication and Gender

#### RELS / WMNS 1271

Sex in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

### AFFILIATED ELECTIVES

#### CINE 3500

Film Theory

#### COMM 1131

Sex, Relationships and Communication

#### ENGL 3339

Topics in Literary Criticisms:  
Queer Theory

#### ENGL 3678

Bedrooms and Battlefields:  
Hebrew Bible and the Origins of  
Sex, Gender, and Ethnicity

#### HUSV 2900

Gender Violence: Bystander  
Education Theory & Practice

#### INTL 2400

Politics of Islam and Gender

#### MUSC 1139

Popular Music, Sexuality, and the  
New Global Order

#### PSYC 1200

Psychology of Women

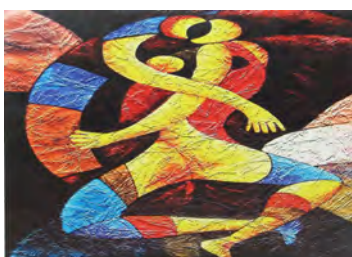
### CORE AND CROSS-LISTED COURSES



#### SOCL / WMNS 1260

Gender in a Changing Society

Considers why and how gender is constructed in American society, and looks at different theories of gender.



#### SOCL / WMNS 1255

Sociology of the Family

Considers changes in contemporary families in terms of gender, family composition; women's labor force and other transformations.



#### INTL / WMNS 2480

Women and World Politics

Introduces a variety of issues facing women across the globe. These could include economic policy, conflict and war, human rights/women's rights, political power, and collective action.



#### HUSV 2800

Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression in Practice and Policy

Introduces students to efforts among social and nonprofit organizations working to reduce heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

For full course descriptions visit [northeastern.edu/registrar/banner-schedule.html](http://northeastern.edu/registrar/banner-schedule.html)

**WMNS 7976**

**Directed Study in WGSS**

Offers independent work under the direction of members of the department on chosen topics. Students planning to take courses at the GCWS should register for this class.

Requires departmental approval.

**ENGL 7215 Topics in 20th Century American Literature: Harlem Renaissance in Black & White**

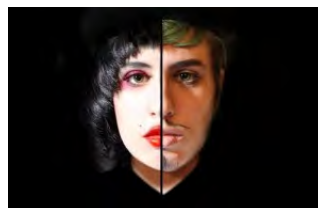
Examines an issue or issues in twentieth-century American literature, such as women in twentieth-century American writing; surrealism in modern and contemporary American poetry; naturalism and the city in the modern American novel; autobiography by American women writers of color; and race, ethnicity, and the oral tradition in ethnic American literature.

- ▶ Professor Carla Kaplan
- ▶ Wednesday, 3:30pm - 5:59pm
- ▶ 400B Holmes Hall

**ENGL 7351 Topics in Literary Study**

Focuses on literature on a thematic, formal, or generic basis. May include black women writers, poetry of nature.

- ▶ Professor Marina Leslie
- ▶ Tuesday, 3:30pm - 5:59pm
- ▶ Snell Library 119



**SOCL 7265**

**Sociology of Gender**

Examines the origins of feminist sociology, its contributions to gender studies and to sociology, and directions of research. Covers feminist critiques of mainstream sociology, i.e., Parsonian structural functionalism, as well as of critical or Marxist sociology. Theoretical debates include critique of “sex role” theory and its replacement by multilayered notions of gender.

- ▶ Professor Linda Blum
- ▶ Tuesday, 2:30pm - 5:00pm
- ▶ Location TBA



**SOCL 7222**

**Gender and Globalization**

Explores current issues and debates relating to the gendered effects of globalization and neoliberal reforms and the entanglement of their economic, social, and cultural effects. Gender research on globalization has expanded notions of work and migration to include the politics of location as well as the feminization of labor in transnational production. This seminar focuses on new forms of subjectivities, ideologies, sovereignty, and notions of citizenship in postindustrial and postcolonial settings.

- ▶ Professor Nina Sylvanus
- ▶ Thursdays, 5:30pm - 8:00pm
- ▶ Location TBA



# Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

## Graduate Certificate: Spring 2015 Courses

### Graduate Consortium of Women's Studies

#### Gender, Race, and the Complexities of Science and Technology

Science and Technology are relatively insulated from wider public deliberation -- art and literary criticism are familiar; but not "science criticism." Yet there is a large body of social interpretation of science and technology, to which feminist, anti-racist, and other critical analysts and activists have made significant contributions. Building on this work, this course sets out to challenge the barriers of expertise, gender, race, class, and place that restrict wider access to and understanding of the production of scientific knowledge and technologies.

**Thursdays, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

**February 5 - May 14, 2015**

**Meets at MIT, Building and Room TBD**

#### Feminist Inquiry

Feminist Inquiry is a seminar designed to investigate the conceptual frameworks that inform practices of feminist interrogation, critique, analysis, and research across a range of disciplines.

We will focus on epistemology and methodology: the types of questions asked, the assumptions that serve as foundation, the frameworks that structure the method of inquiry, the values and power relations inherent in particular approaches, and the criteria used to determine what constitutes knowledge.

**Mondays, 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**February 2 - May 11, 2015**

**Meets at MIT, Building and Room TBD**

#### Faculty



**Peter Taylor** is a Professor at UMass Boston, where he directs the graduate programs on Science in a Changing World and Critical and Creative Thinking.



**Kim Surkan** has taught in the Women's and Gender Studies Program at MIT since 2005.



#### Faculty



**Jo Trigilio** is the Director of the Graduate Program in Gender and Cultural Studies at Simmons College, and holds a joint appointment in the departments of Women's and Gender Studies, and Philosophy.



**Sabina E. Vaught** is Associate Professor of Education, American Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Tufts University.