

# Fall 2020 Newsletter

## Table of Contents

### PAGE 2

- FALL 2020 EVENTS

### PAGE 3-4

- NEW FACES IN WGSS

### PAGE 5

- SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN  
IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

### PAGE 6

- UPDATES FROM THE GCWS

### PAGE 7-8

- A TIP OF THE FEMINIST CAP

### PAGE 9

- WGSS SPRING COURSES

## Contact Information

263 HOLMES HALL

617.373.4984

wgss@northeastern.edu

## A Message from the Program Director

What a difference a few months make... When last I wrote one of these, things seemed a bit more hopeful. Trump, yes, but the prospect of a President Warren sparked some serious joy in this old feminist's heart and we seemed perhaps on the verge of at least edging out of the morass.

Now? Well, between a global pandemic and the mismanagement of that pandemic by an ever more unhinged President and the endless brutalization of black bodies by unleashed and federally legitimated white supremacy... it is hard indeed to feel anything but abject terror.

And yet hope there is. In the vibrant and persistent and, yes, woman-led resistance that is Black Lives Matter in all its iterations. In the modeling of feminist leadership in times of crisis (we heart you Jacinda Ardern, Katrin Jakobsdottir, Angela Merkel, Sanna Marin, Tsai Ing-wen... and all the other women leaders who demonstrated once again that feminist governance is really the only kind worth having). In the promise of our first woman of color vice president.

So this is not a usual time and WGSS cannot pretend to be "business as usual." Yes, we welcome old faculty and new (a warm feminist welcome to **Margot Abels**, joint appointment with Human Services and WGSS and **K.J. Rawson**, joint appointment with WGSS and English and our two visiting scholars **Nafisa Tanjeem** and **Rebekah Rollston**) -- read more about these new faces on pages 3-4. Yes, we have classes and symposia. Our rescheduled symposium will be offered virtually on **October 30th** with the theme of **"#Feminism: Gender and the 2020 Election"** and we once again offer a unique symposium experience where scholars engage with activists and journalists in an intense and gratifying one-day event. We're thrilled to be offering a keynote this year by **Zerlina Maxwell**, pundit extraordinaire on MSNBC and other venues. Please see page 2 for more details and make sure to put October 30th on your calendar! Yes, *Signs* continues to do fabulous work (check out our forthcoming symposium where **"Feminists Theorize COVID-19"** offers up important analyses of our current pandemic, which you can read more about on page 6).

But, for me at least, all I can imagine at this moment is focusing on resistance. To Trumpism, to white supremacy, to the erosion of democratic norms and the rule of law, to the wanton disregard of human suffering. And always, always, to the stupidity that is patriarchy. Really, enough already.

So vote, register others to vote, sign up to be a poll worker, make calls. And hit the streets when you can. Because it is no overstatement to say that our lives really do depend on it.

As always, in sisterhood and solidarity –  
*Prof. Suzanna Walters*



# Fall 2020 Events



## **#Feminism: Gender and the 2020 Election Spring Symposium Rescheduled to Fall**

The WGSS program and the Northeastern Humanities Center are pleased to announce that our seventh annual Women's History Month Symposium -- **#Feminism: Gender & the 2020 Election** -- has been rescheduled as a completely virtual event for **Friday, October 30** with all original panelists joining us for the event. The Symposium was originally intended to take place in March, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was postponed indefinitely. But the pandemic is not stopping the election; democracy marches forward. Determined to convene on this critically important topic in advance of the November elections, the WGSS program worked with our incredible panelists to reschedule in an online format to ensure we can safely engage in this crucial dialogue prior to the elections.

This year we turn our focus to the ballots and discuss how women have shaped and continue to shape the electoral landscape with **#Feminism: Gender & the 2020 Election**. This upcoming election is arguably the most consequential in recent memory. Expert panelists will consider how gender and feminist activism should inform our thinking about the upcoming elections. We will look at how feminists might engage social movements, digital spaces, and broader communities in trying to effect social change. Panels will invite conversations about new forms of media in the hands of feminist activists, historical perspectives on gender and electoral

politics (in celebration of the anniversary of suffrage), mainstream media coverage of elections through the lens of gender, and leveraging the unprecedented visibility of women (particularly women of color) in both electoral and grassroots politics. We will promote an active dialogue among scholars, activists, journalists, and community organizers in a broad discussion of both the limitations and potentials of electoral politics for enacting substantive feminist transformations.

The day will be broken up into three sections – a keynote address by **Zerlina Maxwell** and two additional panels—throughout the day to give participants a break from the screen between sessions. Registration for each panel is required to receive the Zoom link to the session; early registrants will receive a free digital copy of Maxwell's new book: *The End of White Politics*. **Register here to participate: <https://wgss2020electionsymposium.eventbrite.com>**. You don't want to miss this critical examination of gender and electoral politics! The **virtual event begins at 10:00 AM** with Maxwell's keynote address and will be followed by the panels, beginning at **1:00-2:15 PM and 3:00-4:15 PM**. All panel times are EST.

## **Fall Feminist Faculty (Virtual) Welcome Cocktail Party** **September 17, 6:00-8:0pm EST**

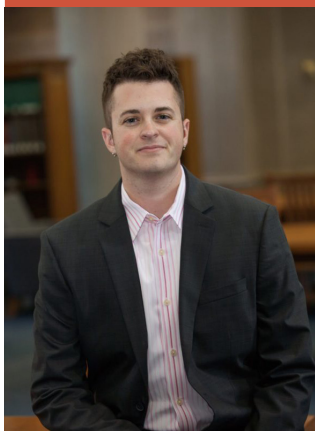
All feminist faculty are invited to join the WGSS program director and executive committee for a virtual cocktail hour on **Thursday, September 17 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm EST** to kick off this very strange semester. Bring feminist colleagues who are new to Northeastern or who have been wanting to get involved with the program and come prepared to introduce yourself and talk for two minutes or less about the feminist work you've been engaging in recently (this could be research, writing, activism, performance... the sky is the limit). This is an informal chance to get to know feminist colleagues and to make connections across units. Email program coordinator Kiki Samko at [k.samko@northeastern.edu](mailto:k.samko@northeastern.edu) for the Zoom link.



## K.J. Rawson

*Associate Professor of English and WGSS*

K.J. Rawson is an Associate Professor of **English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies** at Northeastern University. He is also the founder and director of the **Digital Transgender Archive**, an award-winning online repository of trans-related historical materials, and he is the co-chair of the editorial board of the **Homosaurus**, an international LGBTQ linked data vocabulary.



Rawson's work is at the intersections of the Digital Humanities and Rhetoric, LGBTQ+, and Feminist Studies. Focusing on archives as key sites of cultural power, he studies the rhetorical work of queer and transgender archival collections in both brick-and-mortar and digital spaces. He has co-edited special issues of *Peitho* and *TSQ* and co-edited *Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

## Margot Abels

*Teaching Professor of Human Services and WGSS*

This Fall, Margot begins a new role on campus as an Assistant Teaching Professor, jointly appointed to the **WGSS** and the **Human Services programs**. In her ten years at Northeastern, she completed the doctoral program in Sociology (2017) and has taught a variety of courses as both an adjunct and visiting professor. Her work is situated at the intersection of medical sociology and inequality studies, although, at present, her priorities include learning CANVAS, transforming her courses to be taught online and making the best of quarantine. She heads into the new semester feeling fortunate to be teaching three of her favorite classes – **Gender & Reproductive Justice, Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression in Policy and Practice** and **Introduction to WGSS**.



# New Faces in WGSS

## Nafisa Tanjeem

*WGSS Visiting Scholar*

Nafisa Tanjeem is an **Assistant Professor of Gender, Race, and Sexuality Studies and Global Studies at Lesley University**. She is currently serving as a Visiting Scholar at the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program of Northeastern University in the academic year 2020-21.

Before joining Lesley, Nafisa taught at Rutgers University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Dhaka. She has been actively involved in community organizing and social justice activism. As Community Organizer of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA), she designed and implemented local campaigns aimed at promoting poverty reduction, gender equity, and youth engagement among South Asian immigrant communities in Toronto, Canada. She was also an organizer of United Students Against Sweatshops in the USA and "Meye" (Women) network in Bangladesh.



## Rebekah Rollston

*WGSS Visiting Scholar*



Rebekah L. Rollston, MD, MPH, is Founder of Doctors For A Healthy US, LLC; Affiliate Editor-in-Chief of the Harvard Primary Care Blog; and **Family Medicine Physician at Cambridge Health Alliance**.

She earned her Medical Degree from East Tennessee State University Quillen College of Medicine and her Master of Public Health (MPH) from the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health.

Her professional interests focus on social influencers of health & health equity, gender-based violence, and sexual & reproductive health.

## Giorgia Shields

*Signs Graduate Assistant*



Giorgia Shields is excited to begin her second year as a graduate assistant at *Signs*. A second year student in the Sociology PhD program at Northeastern University, her research interests focus on online

anti-feminist and men's rights activist communities, with particular attention to expressions of sexual violence and white supremacy.

## Eamon Schlotterback

*Signs Graduate Assistant*



Eamon Schlotterback is a PhD candidate in literature studying transgender life narrative and trans theory. Eamon is a graduate research assistant at *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, the Digital Transgender Archive, and the Homosaurus. Currently Eamon is working on a dissertation considering practices of self-creation in transgender life narratives which draws insight from the theoretical projects of Sylvia Wynter and Michel Foucault.

# New Faces in WGSS

## Colleen Nugent

*Signs Graduate Assistant*



Colleen is a PhD student in World History at Northeastern University, continuing after earning her MA from Northeastern in 2019. She completed her BA in History and Political Science from Union College in 2016. She has a graduate certificate in Digital Humanities, and is currently pursuing the graduate certificates in Women's, Gender, and

Sexuality Studies and Public History. Her research interests lie broadly in how the colonial relationship colors the modern interaction between the British state and their migrants from majority Muslim former colonies.

## Sofia Ciprian

*WGSS Program Assistant & Signs Editorial Intern Co-Op*



Sofia is the Summer II/Fall 2020 Co-op for WGSS and *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

Sofia is a fourth year studying Political Science and Communications, with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Last spring, she was an Organizing and Alliances intern for Oxfam America and worked with the Campaigns team.

Sofia is currently working on a research project that will analyze how the gender binary impacts one's sense of identity. Her focus in her studies lies primarily in public policy and social justice.



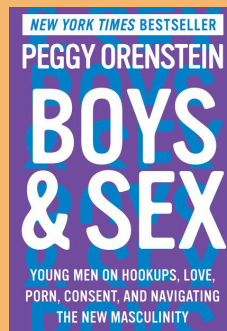
# S I G N S

## About *Signs*

Recognized as the leading international journal in women's and gender studies, *Signs* is 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 anti-racist goals of social transformation. *Signs* is published by the University of Chicago Press. Make sure to check out the *Signs* website, [www.signsjournal.org](http://www.signsjournal.org), for access to new releases.

## The Feminist Public Intellectuals Project

The Feminist Public Intellectuals Project continues to offer sophisticated analysis of pressing contemporary issues for free. Most recently, feminist commentators from inside and outside the academy weighed in on **Peggy Orenstein's latest book, *Boys and Sex***. This "Short Takes" featured commentaries from **Tristan Bridges**, **Nora Caplan-Bricker**, **Rachel Giese**, and **Lisa Wade**, plus a response from **Orenstein** herself. Keep a lookout for our next "Short Takes" forum on **Kate Manne's** new book ***Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women***, which will be out later this fall.



As uprisings against police violence erupted across the country (and the world) this past summer, *Signs* [offered free access to seventeen articles](#) that address violence and carcerality, highlight feminist antiracist activism, expose racism in health care, and analyze racial and sexual politics.

### Recent and Forthcoming Issues

**"Public Feminisms,"** a special issue edited by **Suzanna Danuta Walters**, was published in summer 2020.

Our next special issue, **"Rage,"** will be published in summer 2021. The issue is guest edited by **Carla Kaplan**, **Durba Mitra**, and **Sarah Haley**.

We are also planning a symposium addressing the current pandemic, **"Feminists Theorize COVID-19,"** with contributions from leading scholars that address the gendered, intersectional dynamics of disease, quarantine, and their attendant new forms of sociality.

## Calls for Papers

*Signs* is excited to announce a call for papers for our next special issue, **"Complexities of Care and Caring."** Over the past four decades of feminist scholarship and practice, notions of care and caring, as noun and verb, have had great traction across disciplinary divides, spurring debate while challenging binaries of equality and difference, public and private, the cold hand of the market and the warmth of home, the rational and irrational, and paid and unpaid labor. This special issue invites reassessments across disciplines, broadly questioning and complicating feminist histories, debates, and politics of care and caring. The deadline for submissions is **December 15, 2021**. The issue will be guest edited by **Linda Blum** (North-eastern University); **Martha Albertson** (Emory University); and **Amber Jamilla Musser** (George Washington University).

All *Signs* call for papers can be found at [signsjournal.org/cfps](http://signsjournal.org/cfps).



The Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality (GCWS) is located at MIT and brings together students and teachers from nine different schools in the Boston area. The goal of the Consortium is to come together under a similar devotion to interdisciplinary graduate teaching, research, and scholarship in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

The GCWS offers the opportunity to study under an educational model of representative and consensual governance in a collaborative environment. Through the act of sharing resources and faculty, an ever-evolving learning space is established wherein a new interdisciplinary understanding of research and teaching is discovered. For more information about the GCWS and a full list of their courses, visit their website [here](#)!

## Upcoming Events

### **Feminisms Unbound - Stillness and (Social) Movement**

*November 19, 2020 6:30-8:30PM*

*Taking our cue from activist organizing around statues and other monuments that has been at the center of movements for social justice here in the US and around the world, we invite your reflections on what it means to move, to be moved, and to be still, and how these can become resources for feminist and antiracist reflection and organizing.*

*Register for the Zoom link [here](#).*

## GCWS Course Offerings

### **Workshop for Dissertation Writers in Women's and Gender Studies - Full year**

*Dr. Karl Surkan, MIT*

This course provides support for students in multiple aspects of the dissertation process, including preparation of the dissertation proposal, conducting research, and writing. Together we will establish a writing community to share resources and strategies, create individualized writing plans, and facilitate peer review and feedback. The course will be flexible to help students at different stages of the process. This is a full year course and meets every other week on Mondays from 4:00-7:00PM.

### **Visual Transgressions: Gendered Identities in Art and Culture - Fall 2020**

*Dr. Gannit Ankori, Brandeis University*

*Dr. Karl Surkan, MIT*

### **Women in Science and Academia: Challenges and Policy Solutions - Spring 2021**

*Dr. Gerhard Sonnert, Harvard University*

*Dr. Kathrin Zippel, Northeastern University*

### **Death and Feminism - Spring 2021**

*Dr. Harleen Singh, Brandeis University*

*Dr. Jyoti Puri, Simmons University*

# Tip of the Feminist Cap

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many changes in how we gather and celebrate our achievements as a community; however it is also giving us an opportunity to find new ways to connect and enjoy the triumphs of those around us. In this section of our newsletter, we offer a virtual “tip of the feminist cap” to celebrate our colleagues and remind each other that there is still a lot of good happening around us. Congratulations to all for their great work!

**Hillary Chute** (Distinguished Professor of English and Art + Design) wrote an article, “**Can Comics Save Your Life?**” that was published in **Public Books**. The article considers how comics are used to visualize idealistic futures and the important role that comics have played amidst the pandemic.



**Brooke Foucault Welles** (Assistant Professor of Communication Studies), **Moya Bailey** (Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and WGSS) and **Sarah J. Jackson** (University of Pennsylvania) co-authored a book, **Hashtag Activism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice**, which was released on March 4.

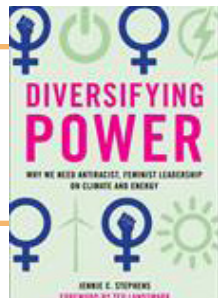
Welles, Bailey and Jackson also won this year’s **International Communication Association’s Applied/Public Policy Research Award** for their collective work on online activism.

**Martha Davis** (Professor of Law) co-authored an infertility and human rights publication, “**Infertility and Human Rights: A Jurisprudential Survey**” that was published in July in the **Columbia Journal of Gender and Law**.

**Moya Bailey** (Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and WGSS) will be at MIT as the **MLK Visiting Professor** in Women’s and Gender Studies for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Bailey also published an article, “**A radical reckoning: a Black woman’s racial revenge in Black Mirror’s ‘Black Museum’**” in **Feminist Media Studies** this year.

**Jennie C. Stephens’s** book **Diversifying Power: Why We Need Antiracist, Feminist Leadership on Climate and Energy** is expected to be released on September 17 with Island Press.



# Tip of the Feminist Cap

Lori Lefkovitz published two essays as book chapters this spring. The first, **“The Sense of Beshert: Contingency** in Dara Horn’s *The World to Come* and Nicole Krauss’s *The History of Love*” appeared in *Teaching Jewish American Literature*. The second, **“Invisible Ink: The Limits of Recovery”**, co-authored with Julia Epstein, appeared in *Translated Memories: Transgenerational Perspectives on the Holocaust* st.



**Laura Nelson** (Assistant Professor of Sociology) and **Kathrin Zippel** (Professor of Sociology) were awarded a grant from **the National Science Foundation** to support their project entitled, **“Innovation Networks: The Creation and Diffusion of Gender Equity Ideas in Universities.”**

**Dani Snyder-Young** (Assistant Professor of Theatre) received the American Theatre and Drama Society **Publication Subvention Award** for her book *Privileged Spectatorship: Theatrical Interventions in White Supremacy*, which comes out in October 2020 from Northwestern University Press.

Snyder-Young will act as the PI on a 2020-2022 grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts** for “theatre participation and arts-integrated peer leadership in substance addiction recovery processes,” along with **Alisa Lincoln** (Bouve College of Health Sciences, Sociology).

**Kara Swanson** (Associate Professor of Law) was named the **2020 Arthur Molella Distinguished Fellow at the Lemelson Center** for the Study of Innovation and Invention at the Smithsonian Museum of American History. Swanson plans to be in residence in Spring 2021.

Swanson’s article, **“Inventing the Woman Voter: Suffrage, Ability, and Patents”** was published in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* in August.

Serena Parekh (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Director of PPE Program) will publish her new book, ***No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis***, in October with Oxford University Press.



## No Refuge

Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis

Serena Parekh

*“Through first-person accounts of the dehumanizing conditions refugees endure, [Parekh] works to clarify the challenges for Western countries who provide asylum and the dangers faced by those who seek and cannot find it.”*  
—Publishers Weekly



# Spring 2020 Courses



**It's only the beginning of the fall semester but we are preparing our spring course line to keep your feminist learning coming!**

Stay tuned on our website for all affiliated and crosslisted course opportunities coming up in the spring.

## **WMNS 1103. Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.**

*Instructor Galen Bunting*

Offers an interdisciplinary course introducing key themes in gender and sexuality studies. Offers students an opportunity to learn core concepts that inform our understanding of how gender and sexuality are socially constructed and are experienced in everyday life. Drawing on women's studies, queer studies, masculinity studies, and allied areas, the course analyzes gender, sexuality, and other dimensions of identity; explores critical issues of gender, sex, and power; and studies gendered/sexed identities in both national and transnational contexts. Topics include the gendered conceptions of love, sexuality, and violence; biological arguments about gender and sexuality; the social construction of

sexuality and gender; intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality; masculinities and femininities; theories of sexual difference; gender and the state; and gender and popular culture. **This course is required for the WGSS minor and fulfills the NUPath requirements for Engaging Difference and Diversity, and Understanding Societies and Institutions.**

## **WMNS/MSCR 2505. Digital Feminisms.**

*Professor Gloria Sutton*

Explores the unique ways that feminist activism and theory are impacted by the increasing digital nature of our world. From hashtags to Tumblr, feminists are using digital tools and platforms to aid in the pursuit of social justice. Offers students an opportunity to develop a timeline that traces feminists' engagement with the Internet, new media, and technological innovations from the late seventies to the present. Examines the strengths and challenges that the digital world creates for feminist engagement. MSCR 2505 and WMNS 2505 are cross-listed. **Fulfills the NUPath requirements for Exploring Creative Expression and Innovation, Interpreting Culture, and Writing Intensive in the Major.**

## **ENGL 4400. Opening the (Queer) Archive.**

*Professor K.J. Rawson*

Offers a seminar designed to introduce students to the rich archival holdings in the greater Boston area and to offer training in the materials and methods of primary source research. Primary materials include a wide range of resources, including books, manuscripts, letters, pamphlets, broadsides, journals, maps, illustrations, photographs, etc., from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. This course will count towards the WGSS minor as an elective due to its focus on queer archives.

## **WMNS 6100. Theorizing Gender and Sexuality.**

*Professor Suzanna Walters*

Seeks to challenge and expand our understanding of the relationship between biological sex; gendered identities; and sexual "preferences," practices, and life ways. This interdisciplinary course offers debates around sex, gender, sexuality, and the body that push beyond binary models reliant on a simple "nature/culture" distinction. Focuses on dynamic and variable aspects of sexuality, sex, and gender within and across cultures, representational forms, and historical periods, analyzing the circumstances in which they undergo significant challenge or transformation. Uses particular paradigmatic "case studies" to push hard at the boundaries of sex and gender and to dialogue around contesting conceptualizations of "the body," "sex," and "gender," particularly as they circulate in specific discourses of feminism, queer theory, and poststructuralism; ethnic studies; critical race theory; and cultural studies. **This is the required foundational course for the WGSS graduate certificate.**