

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Fall 2023 Newsletter

A Message From the Director...



A warm welcome back to you all – I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and we're rested and ready to recommit to smashing the patriarchy or at least putting a few dents in it...

I'd like to give a warm feminist welcome to the new members of our Executive Committee: Victoria Cain (History), Candice Delmas (Philosophy and Political Science), Denise Khor (Asian American Studies and Visual Studies), Katherine Kraschel (Law), Isabel Martinez (Latinx, Latin American and Caribbean Studies), and Sasha Sabherwal (Anthropology and Asian Studies). Thanks for joining Team Feminism – where the scholars are salty and the drinks are strong. And welcome to the new team of *Signs* staff: Merrily Leblanc (Sociology), Elisa Fuhrken (English), and Anthony Burke, our undergrad co-op student. To round us out we are joined this year by a new scholar in residence: Porntip Israsena Twishime! [Read more about our new team members on page 2.]

As usual, WGSS has a full roster of activities and courses for this year – see pages 9-11 for more info on all our courses and cross-listings across the campus.

We are thrilled to be the recipients of Tier One grant that launched in July: ***The Reproductive Justice Research Collaborative*** – more info on page 3. We're really trying to address this (horrific) post-Dobbs moment to ask, “what can we – as feminist scholars in the academy – do to help community partners and repro advocates?” Partnering with colleagues at Mills and RJ community organizations in both the Bay Area and the greater Boston area, we will be planning workshops, developing websites and digital tools, and thinking through creative strategies to navigate this new normal. Please be in touch with me or Kiki if you want to get involved!

And don't forget to plan to attend our “marquee” event: the Women's History Month symposium, held on March 15th. This year, WGSS and *Signs* join forces to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this stellar journal, housed now at Northeastern since 2015. See page 6 for more details and make sure to put March 15th on your calendar!

As always, make sure you check out the *Signs* website <http://signsjournal.org> to see what's happening over there – we've got lots of open access materials (including a special section on abortion rights and reproductive justice) and interviews and information on feminist scholarship around the world. And don't forget to land on our Feminist Public Intellectuals Project to listen to interviews with feminist luminaries and short takes on books that occupy the feminist imagination <http://signsjournal.org/feminist-public-intellectuals-project/> If you're a grad student interested in working with *Signs*, please get in touch!

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

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Northeastern University • CSSH

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

Visit our website for Northeastern University WGSS news, events, people, academics, and more! (click image above)

New Faces in WGSS



Porntip (Ploy) Israsena Twishime (she/they) - WGSS Visiting Scholar 2023-2024

Porntip (Ploy) Israsena Twishime is a storyteller and scholar. She researches stories and storytelling as a mode of communication and a methodology for communication studies. Her creative research practice considers the relationships between empire, race, gender, class, and sexuality in Asian America. This work draws upon the political and theoretical traditions of Asian American cultural production and literature, queer and feminist of color critique, and performance studies. In addition to being a 2023-2024 Visiting Scholar in the Women's Gender & Sexuality Studies Program at Northeastern University, they are also a Pauline Scheer's Fellow at GrubStreet creative writing center in Boston.



Merrily Leblanc (she/her) - Signs Graduate Assistant

Merrily is currently pursuing her PhD in sociology at Northeastern, as well as the Graduate Certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She completed her BA in Sociology and Psychology with a minor in Women and Gender Studies from Stony Brook University. Her research background is in the social and behavioral sciences studying discrimination and health. Her current research interests are gender, sexuality, and health. Merrily has worked as the Senior Research Assistant at the Fenway Institute at Fenway Health. She is also involved with Northeastern University's Institute for Health, Equity and Social Justice as well as the Harvard Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Health Equity Research Collaborative.



Elisa Fuhrken (she/her) - Signs Graduate Assistant

Elisa is currently pursuing her PhD in English literature. Her current research interests include 19th century American literature, women writers, performance theory, feminist studies, and archival studies. She is currently developing an archive of performance for 19th century women writers. Elisa holds a masters in English literature with a minor in Gender Studies from the University of Mississippi, where she was nominated for the Sue Hart Award for best paper in Gender Studies for her paper on Sherwood Bonner and Ida B. Wells. Elisa has also presented her research at NeMLA, SAMLA, and SEWSA.

Anthony Burke (he/him) - WGSS & Signs Undergraduate Co-op

Anthony is a 3rd-year undergraduate student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Philosophy with minors in Graphic and Information Design and Linguistics. He enjoys learning about the intersections of language, culture, and philosophy, and is currently conducting research surrounding the construction of gender in law in the United States from the early 20th century to the present.

Welcome to the Executive Committee!

[Victoria Cain](#)

(History)

[Candice Delmas](#)

(Philosophy and Political Science)

[Denise Khor](#)

(Asian American Studies and Visual Studies)

[Katherine Kraschel](#)

(School of Law)

[Isabel Martinez](#)

(Latinx, Latin American & Caribbean Studies)

[Sasha Sabherwal](#)

(Anthropology and Asian Studies)

Tip of the Feminist Cap

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN WGSS

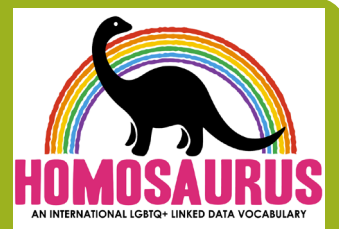
Announcing: Reproductive Justice Research Collaborative!

The WGSS program is proud to announce that we have been selected for Tier One grant funding through Northeastern University to develop the Reproductive Justice Research Collaborative. Tier One grants are internal funding opportunities that encourage interdisciplinary research projects at Northeastern. The co-PIs on this grant are shown below (in order): Suzanna Walters (WGSS & Sociology), Alisa Lincoln (Bouvé & Sociology), Wendy Parmet (Law), Jessica Linker (History & NULab), Meg Heckman (Journalism), and Natalee Kehaulani Bauer (Mills College Ethnic Studies, CS GS). This team will work with an intergenerational and intersectional team, including students from Sociology, Health Sciences, Journalism, and Law to conduct a landscape analysis of reproductive justice through the lenses of law, journalism/media, policy, and advocacy in service of building relationships between advocacy organizations on the ground in Boston and Oakland (and potentially beyond) and Universities. The group plans to prototype a comprehensive website pulling together and synthesizing information from various streams that will support individuals and groups seeking information on reproductive justice from a variety of angles. We seek to find and fill the gaps in information and figure out how universities and academics can best support the work of activists and advocates in the fight for reproductive justice. If you are interested in getting involved in this work or learning more, please contact Program Manager Kiki Samko (k.samko@northeastern.edu).



K.J. Rawson, Associate Professor of English and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, has received an NEH grant for his project The Homosaurus, an international linked data vocabulary of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) terms.

[Click here to learn more!](#)



Jennie Stephens, Dean's Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy, will be a Radcliffe Fellow for 2023-2024. At Harvard Radcliffe Institute she will complete her book on reimagining the transformative potential of higher education to advance climate justice, accelerate fossil fuel phaseout, and support systemic, structural, social, and economic change.

Her work has also been published in two academic articles this year: "[Climate justice in higher education: a proposed paradigm shift towards a transformative role for colleges and universities](#)" (*Climatic Change*) and "[Fossil fuel companies' climate communication strategies: Industry messaging on renewables and natural gas](#)" (*Energy Research & Social Science*).



Tip of the Feminist Cap



Natalie Shibley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies is co-editing a collection with Dorothy Roberts (Penn) and Eram Alam (Harvard) titled *Ordering the Human: The Global Spread of Racial Science*. The collection has entered production at Columbia University Press, with a scheduled publication date of May 2024!

Natalie also has an article set to be published in the *Journal of Military History*. The article, titled "Policing Venereal Disease at Ft. Huachuca, 1941-1945", is to be published in April 2024.

Allyson Crays, a JD student who is also pursuing a certificate in WGSS and the Law, has published a paper titled "Limitations of Current Menstrual Equity Advocacy and a Path Towards Justice" in the *UCLA Journal of Gender & Law*. Crays wrote the initial draft of it for the final in Professor Libby Adler's Sexuality, Gender, and the Law class. To read the paper, click the image to the right!

UCLA
JOURNAL OF
GENDER & LAW



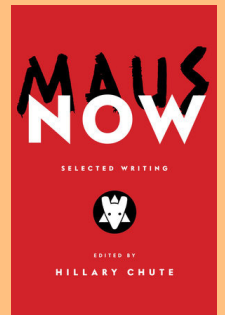
Hillary Chute, Distinguished Professor of English and Art + Design has a book titled [Maus Now: Selected Writing](#), which came out from Pantheon in November 2022. You can also check out her related [essay in the Atlantic](#), about Maus as a banned book.



Her chapter [When Am I Supposed to Stop Asking You for Advice?](#) in the collection *Feminists Reclaim Mentorship* came out in February 2023.

Finally, *The LGBTQ+ Comics Studies Reader*, which Professor Chute contributed to, has recently won an Eisner Award for best Scholarly Work (it's like the Oscars of the comics industry). Check out her chapter here:

<https://www.upress.state.ms.us/Books/T/The-LGBTQ-Comics-Studies-Reader>



Alicia Modestino, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Urban Affairs/Economics and Research Director at the Dukakis Center, has received the [2023 Northeastern University Global Network Accelerator Award](#). The award celebrates faculty whose research and teaching span disciplines, colleges, campuses, countries, and industry sectors, connecting diverse communities of problem-solvers to create measurable change.

She has also had two peer-reviewed articles published this year: School's Out: How Summer Youth Employment Programs Impact Academic Outcomes (*Education Finance and Policy*) and Optimizing Return and Secure Disposal of Prescription Opioids to Reduce the Diversion to Secondary Users and Black Market (*Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, forthcoming).

Finally, Alicia is also the Principal Investigator of several current research projects, including the NU Summer Scholars Programs (Boston, Oakland - Lao, and Oakland - Hayward), [Care Can't Wait](#), and Measuring the Economic Impact of the Job Quality Benchmarking Index.



Reflections on the 2023 Symposium

In March 2023, over 200 community members gathered in the Cabral Center at the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute for the ninth annual WGSS women's history month symposium. The 2023 event, "Feminists on the Politics of Crisis" asked major figures in feminism

All Symposium photos by Praagna Kashyap



Lizz Winstead

to reflect on three critical crises facing the world today: the climate emergency, censorship of progressive speech, and restrictions on bodily autonomy. The event kicked off on Thursday night with a full house for feminist comedian and organizer Lizz Winstead presenting "Activism IS Self-Care." Winstead is a stand-up comic and the co-creator of *The Daily Show* and also is the founder of Abortion Access Front (Abortion AF), a group organizing for abortion access. Winstead's 20-minute comedy set had the audience in stitches; a follow up conversation with WGSS program director Professor Suzanna Walters led to reflection and galvanized the crowd. To see what Abortion AF is up to and how you can get involved, visit <https://www.aafont.org/>.

The event continued the next day with three panels. Opening the day, CSSH Dean Uta Poiger welcomed the packed audience to the event and Professor Walters reflected on the current moment bringing us together. The first panel, "Fueled by Misogyny: Gender and the Climate Crisis", invited Cara Daggett (Virginia Tech), Chelse Mikael Frazier (Cornell University, Ask An Amazon), and Adenike Oladosu (iLeadClimate) to reflect



Adenike Oladosu, Cara Daggett, Chelse Mikael Frazier, Régine Jean-Charles

on the ongoing climate emergency. Daggett discussed petromasculinities, Frazier looked at climate change through the lens of Toni Cade Bambara's *The Salt Eaters*, and Oladosu reflected on her work in Nigeria with her group iLeadClimate. Professor Régine Jean-Charles (Director, Africana Studies; Dean's Professor of Culture and Social Justice) moderated the panel.

Following this panel was "Don't Say...: On Censorship and Organizing for Progressive/Feminist Speech", which asked panelists to talk about the various restrictions happening in education, the media, in policy, and legislation. Paisley Currah (Brooklyn College and CUNY) spoke on the anti-trans movement and how to resist the right and center. Martha Hickson, a librarian on the front lines, spoke about her fight against book banning in high schools and beyond. Karsonya Wise Whitehead (Loyola University, President of the National Women's Studies Association) spoke about how minority voices are silenced and how to fight back to center these voices instead. Professor Carla Kaplan (English, CSGS, and WGSS) moderated this panel, which generated many questions and inspired action among the audience.



Karsonya Wise, Paisley Currah, Martha Hickson

Reflections on the 2023 Symposium

The day wrapped up with a panel on bodily autonomy: “Feminist Rage and Resistance: Lessons Learned for Post-Roe Activism.” This panel engaged Rebecca Hart Holder, executive director of Reproductive Equity Now, who spoke about expanding abortion access in a post-Dobbs world and what the moral obligation of “blue” states is in the wake of this decision. Paula Avila-Guillen of the Women’s Equality Center, spoke about her work in the Green Wave Movement in Latin America and gave an inspiring look at what activism can accomplish. She distributed green bandanas to the crowd. Finally, Robin Marty, who runs the West Alabama Women’s Center, spoke about her work in that Center on the day that the Dobbs decision came down and the gut-wrenching decisions that had to be made surrounding caring for patients and risking arrest for providers. Professor Kara Swanson (Law) moderated the panel, fielding many questions from the audience about how to get involved.



Paula Avila-Guillen , Rebecca Hart Holder, Robin Marty



Over the course of the day, we welcomed more than 200 people into the conversation and also livestreamed the panels to our colleagues across the global network. Thank you to all who attended, particularly our panelists and our hosts at Cabral! Thank you also to our co-sponsors, including: the Northeastern Humanities Center, Snell Library; the School of Law; Africana Studies Program; Human Services Program; and the Departments of Cultures, Societies, and Global Studies; English; Health Sciences; International Affairs; Philosophy & Religion; Political Science; and Sociology & Anthropology. We look forward to our tenth annual symposium on March 15, 2024!

Looking Ahead: Spring 2024 Symposium

Join WGSS program and *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* for the tenth annual WGSS Women’s History Month Symposium and a celebration of fifty years of the journal in publication! The Spring 2024 symposium, “Feminist Foundations, Feminist Futures: Celebrating *Signs* at Fifty” will be held on Friday, March 15 in the Cabral Center at the John D. O’Bryant African American Institute. This symposium will reflect on the fifty years of feminist scholarship, asking panelists to think big about persistent conundrums and theoretical throughlines that have shaped the field. The day will consist of four roundtables: “Our Histories, Ourselves”, “Feminist Praxis in Perilous Times”, “Thinking Feminism for the Future”, and “Public Feminism and the Place of Provocation”. Our list of panelists is still in progress, but we are pleased to welcome Jane Ward, Treva Lindsay, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Lorna Bracewell, Sophie Lewis, Breanne Fahs, Chandra Mohanty, Andi Zeisler, Soraya Chemaly, and Mary Anne Case. The day will also feature interviews with past journal editors. Save the date now and stay tuned for more information!

Upcoming Events

NU SHARE Presents:



A celebration of all things pleasure! Including games, trivia, crafts, prizes, and resources from community partners. DM @northeasternshare with questions and for accommodations.

September 18
7:30-9:30pm
Curry Student Center Ballroom

LLACS Speaker Series: Latinxs and Comedy



Selenis Leyva will speak about her experiences as an AfroLatina in comedy and her activism around these and LGBTQIA+ issues.

September 21
Blackman Auditorium
6:00-8:00pm

Manon Garcia Talk on *The Joy of Consent*



Manon Garcia on her new book *The Joy of Consent*. Co-sponsored with Philosophy & Religion

September 29
909 Renaissance Park
10:30am-12:00pm

Global Asian Studies Speaker Series: Rethinking Korea



First lecture: "Minor Cosmopolitanism: Korean-Language Transpacific Genre Fiction During the Interwar Period." Click the image for more information!

September 28
4:00-6:00pm
909 Renaissance Park

Spring 2024 Symposium, "Feminist Foundations, Feminist Futures: Celebrating Signs at 50"



10th annual WGSS Women's History Month Symposium

March 15, 2024
Cabral Center

[@northeasternwgss](https://www.instagram.com/northeasternwgss)



Follow WGSS on Instagram for more WGSS events and updates, as well as a variety of information from the world of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality studies!

SIGNS

Call for Papers!

Lesbian Studies, Now

A special issue edited by Suzanna Danuta Walters, Emily Owens, and Mairead Sullivan

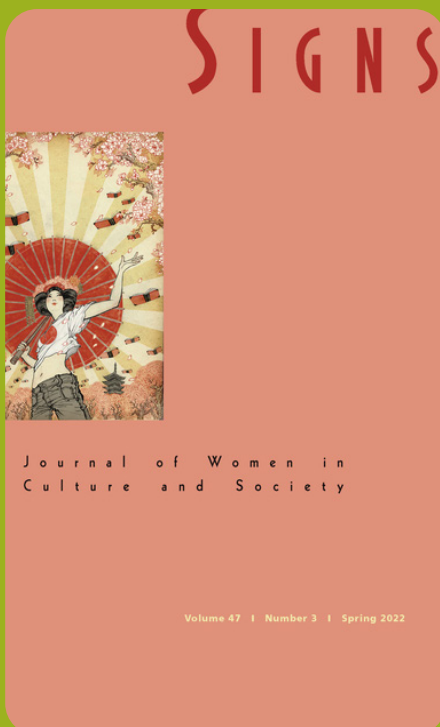
In the contemporary cultural imagination, lesbian feminism holds all of midtwentieth-century feminism's highest aspirations and its worst mistakes. The figure of the lesbian looms large in the ever-present nostalgia for second-wave feminism and the early years of women's studies, in eulogies to shuttered bars and bookstores, and in the promises and perils of butch-femme couplings and gender aesthetics that have been hailed as the precursor to contemporary gender nonconformity. We use this special issue to stage and unfold the debates that mark the field as active, contested, and very much alive.

Signs particularly encourages transdisciplinary and transnational essays that address substantive feminist questions, debates, and controversies without employing disciplinary or academic jargon. We seek essays that are passionate, strongly argued, and willing to take risks.

Deadline for submissions, December 15, 2023.

For general submission guidelines visit our website:

<http://signsjournal.org/for-authors/author-guidelines/>



Forthcoming issue:

Complexities of Care and Caring

A special issue edited by Linda Blum, Amber Jamilla Musser, and Martha Fineman. Forthcoming Autumn 2023.

“Espanta Cigüeñas: Race and Abortion in the US-Mexico Borderlands”

Winner of the 2023 Catharine Stimpson Prize for Outstanding Feminist Scholarship: Lina-Maria Murillo for her article “Espanta Cigüeñas: Race and Abortion in the US-Mexico Borderlands”. Published in *Signs* 47.3

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/724439>

Spring 2024 Courses

Courses in WGSS

Intro to WGSS

(WMNS 1103)

Tues, Fr

9:50-11:30 am

Professor Margot Abels



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. **Attribute(s):** NUpath Difference/Diversity, NUpath Societies/Institutions

Gender, Race, and Medicine

(WMNS/AFAM/HIST 1225)

Mon, Wed, Thr

1:35-2:40 pm

Professor Natalie Shibley



Examines the basic tenets of “scientific objectivity” and foundational scientific ideas about race, sex, and gender and what these have meant for marginalized groups in society, particularly when they seek medical care. Introduces feminist science theories ranging from linguistic metaphors of the immune system, to the medicalization of race, to critiques of the sexual binary. Emphasizes contemporary as well as historical moments to trace the evolution of “scientific truth” and its impact on the U.S. cultural landscape. Offers students an opportunity to develop the skills to critically question what they “know” about science and the scientific process and revisit their disciplinary training as a site for critical analysis. **Attribute(s):** NUpath Difference/Diversity

Gender & Sexuality in World History

(WMNS/HIST 2373)

Mon, Thr

11:45 am – 1:25 pm

Professor Natalie Shibley



Introduces key concepts in the fields of gender and identity studies as they apply to world history since about 1800. Offers students an opportunity to understand the critical significance of gender, sex, sexuality, and identity to world events and how these contentious subjects influence the contemporary world. Surveys a series of major movements in geopolitics, labor, economics, culture, and society in order to analyze how individual and group identities, as well as mass assumptions about behavior and performance, have shaped these events. Gender, sex, and sexuality are integral to class discussions of work, welfare, art, culture, violence, war, and activism. **Attribute(s):** NUpath Difference/Diversity, NUpath Interpreting Culture

Spring 2024 Courses

Courses in WGSS (continued)

American Women Writers

(WMNS/AFAM/ENGL 2455)

Mon, Wed

2:50-4:30 pm

Professor Carla Kaplan



Surveys the diversity of American women's writing to ask what it means to describe writers as disparate as Phillis Wheatley, Edith Wharton, Toni Morrison, and Alison Bechdel as part of the same "tradition." With attention to all genres of American women's writing, introduces issues of genre and gender; literary identification; canons; the politics of recuperation; silence and masquerade; gender and sexuality; intersectionality; sexual and literary politics, compulsory heterosexuality, and more. **Attribute(s):** NUPath Difference/Diversity, NUPath Interpreting Culture

Prerequisite(s): ENGW 1111 with a minimum grade of C or ENGW 1102 with a minimum grade of C or ENGL 1111 with a minimum grade of C or ENGL 1102 with a minimum grade of C

Gender, Social Justice, and Transnational Activism

(WMNS/ANTH/POLS 3100)

Tues, 11:45-1:25

Thr, 2:50-4:30

Professor Layla Brown



Introduces key issues, themes, and debates in feminist transnational theory, practice, and activism in contemporary contexts and how it has changed under socioeconomic, political, and cultural processes of globalization. Examines differences among women relating to race, class, sexuality, national identity, and political economy in reckoning with possibilities for sustainable social justice. Students interrogate the relationship between the local and global; the production of knowledge in different regional spaces; the pragmatics of political mobilization; the varying contours of "social justice"; and other key issues. Offers students an opportunity to discuss the impact of globalization, neoliberalism, and state and intimate violence on gendered politics and relations and to contend with the politics of difference, to debate its challenges, and to imagine possible futures for transnational gender justice. **Attribute(s):** NUPath Difference/Diversity, NUPath Societies/Institutions

Gender, Sexuality, and the Law

(WMNS/PHIL/POLS 3500)

Mon, Wed

2:50-4:30 pm

Professor Libby Adler



Examines the legal regulation of gender and sexuality. Investigates concrete legal cases to study the history of constitutional interpretation and the current status of rights for women and sexual minorities. Focuses on important theoretical issues emerging in the writings of diverse feminist and queer legal scholars. Addresses debates over the value of conventional equality approaches in legal doctrine; equality vs. difference perspectives; ways in which legal language constructs gender and sexuality; the incorporation of sexuality and gender in ideologies of law; and the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race in legal doctrine and legal theory. **Attribute(s):** NUPath Ethical Reasoning, NUPath Societies/Institutions

Spring 2024 Courses

Crosslisted Electives

COMM/WMNS 2304: Communication and Gender

Multiple sections, multiple times and instructors

ENGL/WMNS 2451: Postcolonial Women Writers

Mon, Tues, Thr
10:30-11:35am
Professor Nicole Aljoe

THTR 2500/WMNS 2501: Breaking the Glass Ceiling/Women in Theatre

Wed, Fri
11:45am-1:25pm
Professor Melinda Lopez

HUSV/WMNS 2800: Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression

Wed, Fri
11:45 am-1:25 pm
Professor Margot Abels

CRIM/WMNS 3110: Gender, Crime, and Justice

Mon, Wed
2:50-4:30pm
Professor TBD

MSCR/WMNS 3392: Gender & Film

Mon, Wed
2:50-4:30pm
Professor Laurel Ahnert

