

## WOMEN'S, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES PROGRAM NEWS



Dear WGSS friends--

The semester is winding down here in Williamstown. Students are preregistering for fall classes. An energetic cohort of thirteen rising juniors has just declared their WGSS majors. We will graduate seven senior majors in June - we will miss them and wish them the best.

Kieran Honderich took another group of students to Uganda over Winter Study - read about their amazing experiences inside.

The upcoming academic year will bring a few changes for the WGSS program. We welcome Katie Kent back to the classroom after two years as director of the Williams Exeter

Programme at Oxford and one year of sabbatical. Katie has played a huge role in the development of the WGSS program over the years, and we are delighted to have her back.

I will be stepping down as chair of WGSS as of June 30th, and will be replaced by Sara Dubow, Associate Professor of History. Sara's research and teaching interests examine the intersections of gender, law, and politics in 20th century U.S. history. Her book *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America* was published in 2011 by Oxford University Press. I am pleased to be

leaving the program in such good hands.

It has been a privilege to chair WGSS for the past three years. I have been honored to work with such an amazing group of faculty, staff, students, and alums. Thanks to all of you for your many contributions to the program.

All best wishes,  
Lucie Schmidt



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## WGSS Professor and Students Return to Uganda to Continue Partnerships



Eight students spent Winter Study in Uganda with WGSS Professor Kieran Honderich and two Ugandan co-leaders working with pairs of HIV+, trans\* and other marginalized youth to develop small businesses. The Ugandan youth belong to grassroots groups of AIDS and transgender activists that Professor Honderich and groups of Williams students have been working with for several years to build their capacity in different ways, including video and computer trainings, and helping them to open internet cafes. This year the Williams students – Angela Liu ('15), Paula Mejia ('17), Austin Nguyen ('15),

Roxana Rodriguez ('17), Evelyn Rojas ('16), Yasmin Ruvalcaba ('17), Penny Sun ('16) and Chelsea Thomeer ('17) - worked in pairs with the Ugandan groups to develop proposals for small businesses that would bring them financial independence. The proposals ranged from a chicken farm to a stationery store, to a

boutique selling used clothes. Some pairs traveled to other parts of the country to the activists' homes while others stayed in Kampala. Then the whole group gathered on the Ssese Islands of Lake Victoria to present the proposals. *(cont'd next page.)*





(cont'd) At the end of the three weeks two proposals were selected to receive startup loans with slow repayment schedules and zero interest, funded in large part by fundraising work the students had done before leaving campus. The successful proposals were for a boutique in downtown Kampala to be created by two trans women, and a stationery store on one of the Ssesse Islands to be created by two young women living with HIV. The Williams group finished their time in Uganda with a few days on safari, seeing some of Uganda's amazing beauty, surprising a group of lions with a fresh kill, and visiting Grace Villa, the home for vulnerable girls created by Ruth Ndyabahika, who visited campus last fall.

The Williams group and their Ugandan colleagues created and registered an organization to continue this work. We hope next year's group will build



further on this strong foundation, with this year's business startups helping to mentor new pairs, continuing to build a network of support. One student commented about their experience that "while confronting privilege can be an uncomfortable experience, I think it is key to personal growth and I hope to continue to have these moments of checking my privilege as a mobile American college student." Another that "I don't think I've ever spoken in class [or] in a group as much as I did over this Winter Study; nor have I ever been so confident about sharing my opinions and experiences and feeling heard, valuable, productive," and a third that "I was so pleased to find that instead of being perceived as egocentric, rich Americans that had come to impose rules of conduct and standards on a different country, we were given the

opportunity to hear directly from the very people we were trying to uplift and empower on what would be most beneficial and realistic for them. It was not as if we were 'giving aid'; rather, we were working alongside the Ugandans to support their goals...My Winter Study experience was enriching beyond anything I could have imagined...If the College is setting out to provide a liberal arts education, going to Uganda was like a final exam. It challenged me and my understanding in ways sitting in class never had."



## Meeting Professor Sara Dubow, Our New Chair of WGSS



### *How does it feel to be the incoming Chair of WGSS?*

I'm really excited about it. I've been on the WGSS Advisory Board since I came to Williams in 2007, so I have watched and learned from Katie Kent and Lucie Schmidt, and am looking forward to following in their footsteps. I've met a lot of WGSS students in my courses, most of which are cross-listed, but because I haven't taught 101 in a while and don't teach 202, I don't always get to know as many of the WGSS students as I would like. I am really excited to get to know the students in the major and the even larger group of students who take WGSS classes.

### *Are there any goals or initiatives you see on the horizon?*

I would like to continue the conversations about our curriculum and major that we've been having. Because faculty teaching WGSS courses come from a lot of different departments, we don't always get a chance to see each other or talk with other about our teaching and scholarship, so I'm hoping to continue to build a strong community of faculty committed to WGSS where we can have those conversations with each other and with our students. I'm also really looking forward to talking with student majors and other students involved with WGSS about what they see as the strengths and weakness of the program, and in supporting them in their work.

### *You're teaching the senior seminar next year. Can you tell us a bit about that class and about your own research?*

I'm really excited about this class, which is called "Sexual Rights, Gender, Equality, and Religious Liberty: Conflicts in Law, Culture, and Politics." This is a class that has grown out of my own research into the legal and political history of perceived conflicts between religious liberty and gender equality and sexual rights in the context of reproductive rights and LGBT rights in recent U.S. history. This course will consider a set of these conflicts, including issues relating to reproductive rights and LGBT rights, but also considering cases involving religious attire in public spaces, family and domestic law, and international human rights law. The course will be comparative, as we'll look at case studies in different countries; historical, as we'll examine and why these conflicts have escalated over the past forty years; and interdisciplinary, as we'll look at how historians, legal scholars, anthropologists, theologians, political scientists, activists, and journalists have thought about these conflicts differently. Students will get to do a final project on a case study of their choice, so I'm also looking forward to learning a lot.

## Faculty Updates



**Vivian L. Huang** (Bolin Fellow) just published an article entitled "Modern, Modular, Model: Mika Tajima and a Racial Good-Enough Environment" in the *Journal of Asian American Studies*.

Professor **Rhon Manigault-Bryant** has co-edited a special issue of the journal *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society* Volume 4, Issue 2 (April 2015) on "Religion and Fat." In it, she authored the lead



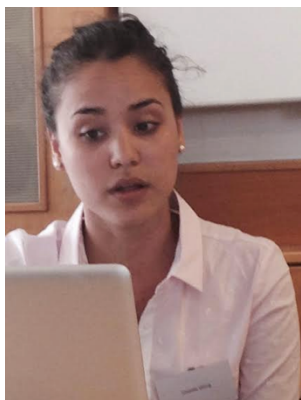
essay, "Religion and Fat=Protestant Christianity and Weight Loss? On the Intersections of Fat Studies and Religious Studies" with her co-editors Lynne Gerber and Susan Hill. In addition, Rhon had two monographs come out last year, including her single-authored book *Talking to the Dead: Religion, Music, and Lived Memory among Gullah/Geechee Women* (Duke University Press, 2014). She was also the lead editor of and a contributor to the anthology *Womanist and Black Feminist Responses to Tyler Perry's Productions*, which she co-authored with Tamura A. Lomax and Carol A. Duncan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Lastly, Rhon contributed a chapter to the anthology *Black Women and Popular Culture: The Conversation Continues*, edited by Adria Goldman, VaNatta Ford, Alexa Harris and Natasha Howard (Lexington, 2014). Her chapter is entitled, "Don't Make Me Hop After You...' Black Womanhood and the Dangerous Body in Popular Film."

Professor **Gregory Mitchell** recently gave a plenary address at Oberlin College's Performance & Ethnography Symposium. The lecture was entitled, "Sex Work as Performative Labor: Racialized Masculinity and the Social Choreography of a Male Brothel in Brazil." He also recently published a chapter entitled "Economies of Masculinity: Variants of Male Sex Work in Urban Brazil" in *Men Who Sell Sex: Global Perspectives*. He has several articles heading into press, including a co-authored paper entitled "Discretionary Policing, or the Lesser Part of Valor: Prostitution, Law Enforcement, and Unregulated Regulation in Rio de Janeiro's Sexual Economy" for the *Annual Review Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement*, as well as "Latin Homosexuality, Gay-for-Pay Porn, and Social Science's Racial Other" in the journal *Porn Studies*, and "Development and Damnation in Brazil: Sex Trafficking, Moral Panics, and Homonationalism during Global Sporting Events," in *GLQ*.





## Chienfa Wong ('16) Presents ADRF Research in Austria



WGSS/Economics major and Alison Davis Fellow Chienfa Wong ('16) traveled to Vienna, Austria to present her original research at a conference entitled Troubling Prostitution. Her presentation, "The Ideological Goal Behind the Campaign to Eradicate Prostitution in 1960s Cuba," examined Fidel Castro's speeches in the 1960s and 1990s regarding sex work and sexual tourism in Cuba in order to better understand how economic changes such as the Fall of the Soviet Union

changed the way the Cuban state viewed its own

relationship to this sexual economy. Wong, who was the only undergraduate accepted to speak and whose proposal received the highest score possible among applicants, spoke alongside Professor Susan Dewey (University of Wyoming) and Professor Tiantian Zheng (SUNY), two scholars whose books and research she had studied in her first year at Williams. Wong plans to return home to Cuba this summer to pursue her research on Castro's speeches and the changing roles of women in Cuba, gathering information she will use in her senior honors thesis in WGSS next year.



## Emma Sulkowicz Speaks at Williams



Emma Sulkowicz, a fourth year visual arts major at Columbia University known for her activism and performance art work, *Carry That Weight*, spoke this semester. Sulkowicz made national headlines when she began carrying her mattress with her on campus until Columbia expels the student she alleges to have sexually assaulted her. Williams students had previously carried mattresses in solidarity with Sulkowicz, raising awareness about sexual assault on campus.

# W G S S F A L L 2 0 1 5 C O U R S E S

101 - Intro to Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies	Kent/Cowden/ Honderich
152 - Fourteenth Amendment & the Meaning of Equality	Dubow
177: Gender and Sexuality in Music	Campbell
212 - Ethics and Reproductive Technologies	Pedroni
214 - From Putin to Pussy Riot: Discourses of Post-Soviet Gender	Cassiday
246T - India's Identities: Religion, Caste, and Gender	Gutschow
248T - Carmen, 1845 to Now	Bloxam
251 - Arab Women Memoirs: Writing Feminist History	Equeiq
252 - Modern Women Writers and the City	Druxes
255 - "Disease" in Modern Chinese Literature and Culture	He
262 - Language, Interaction, and Power in Everyday Life	Kowalski
310 - Womanist/Black Feminist Thought	Manigault- Bryant
314 - Paradoxes of Human Rights and Humanitarianism	Kowalski
319 - Gender and the Family in Chinese History	Reinhardt
333 - The Nineteenth-Century British Novel	Case
334 - Islamic Feminism	Yacoob
338 - Latina/o Musical Cultures: Sounding out Gender, Race, and Sexuality	Cepeda
343 - Representations of Racial-Sexual Violence from Enslavement to Emancipation	James
376 - Sex, Gender, and the Law in U.S. History	Dubow
377 - Legacies of The Gothic Novel: Feminism and Horror in The Transatlantic World	Raza-Kolb
383 - Whiteness and Race in the History of the United States	Brown
396 - Modern Pleasure	Cowden
403 - Image, Violence, and the Feminine Note: WGSS Elective; Not the WGSS Jr/Sr Sem	Martinez- Ragusto