

# gender DYNAMIC

Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, Northwestern University, 2015

*Edith Kreeger Wolf lecture series in GSS*

Sini Anderson, Clare Hemmings and Elizabeth Grosz

*Honoring Alex Owen*

GSS celebrates the foundational  
work of retiring faculty member

Alexandra Owen

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE



The Gender & Sexuality Studies Program at Northwestern is an interdisciplinary program, with faculty affiliates drawn from more than 25 departments across four of the University's schools.

1800 Sherman, 4th FL. Evanston, IL  
60208-2211.  
Phone: 847.491.5871 Email: [gender@northwestern.edu](mailto:gender@northwestern.edu)  
Web: [www.genderstudies.northwestern.edu/](http://www.genderstudies.northwestern.edu/)

Director: Janice Radway  
Associate Director/DUS: Amy Partridge  
Program Assistants: Jasmine Tucker & Jeremy Cornelius  
Newsletter Design: Elizabeth Bohl and Gabe Bergado

The Gender & Sexuality Studies Advisory Board  
Kate Baldwin (American Studies)  
Nicola Beisel (Sociology)  
Héctor Carrillo (Gender & Sexuality Studies and Sociology)  
Huey Copeland (Art History)  
Nicholas Davis (Gender & Sexuality Studies and English)  
Mary Dietz (Gender & Sexuality Studies & Political Science)  
Ryan Dohoney (Music Studies)  
Jillana Enteen (Gender & Sexuality Studies)  
Kasey Evans (English)  
Lane Fenrich (Gender & Sexuality Studies)  
E. Patrick Johnson (Performance Studies)  
Tessie Liu (Gender & Sexuality Studies and History)  
Jeffrey Masten (Gender & Sexuality Studies and English)  
Alexandra Owen (Gender & Sexuality Studies and History)  
Amy Partridge (Gender & Sexuality Studies)  
Janice Radway (Communication Studies)  
Rámon Rivera-Servera (Performance Studies)  
Helen Thompson (English)  
Gregory Ward (Linguistics)  
Paola Zamperini (Asian Languages and Cultures)

## Fundraising campaign for undergraduate research

The Gender and Sexuality Studies Program is pleased to announce a new fundraising initiative. We are establishing two new programs to provide small grants to our undergraduates for summer research. One will fund research projects that address women's, feminist, or gender issues; the other will fund research projects that address LGBT or sexuality issues. (We hope to receive many applications from students with projects that qualify as both!)

We need your help to fund this initiative, which is entirely supported by donations from our friends, family and alumni. Gifts of any amount are appreciated; please help support one of our wonderful students next summer. Substantial or recurring donations may result in a named award.

Please send donations to:

Gender and Sexuality Studies Program  
Northwestern University  
1800 Sherman, 4th FL.  
Evanston, IL  
60208-2211



It's been a year of many transitions in Gender and Sexuality Studies. I took over a thriving program from departing Director, Mary Weismantal this fall. Shortly thereafter, we learned that Alex Owen, one of our core faculty members, would retire in summer 2015. This news was greeted with real sadness as well as a desire to recognize Alex's impact on the program and to continue to build on all that she accomplished during her tenure at NU. This spring, we collaborated with the History Department in designing a grand celebration of Alex's scholarship, pedagogy, and institution building in a day-long conference featuring her former students and a panel of GSS faculty, led by Tessie Liu and Jeffrey Masten, who reviewed the program's history and Alex's central role in it. Soon, you will be able to see their thoughtful remarks on the program website.

In December, the Advisory Board met to review the state of GSS – which has been highly successful in adding more courses to our roster and attracting more students, both graduate and undergraduate, to them– and began discussions about an upcoming faculty search, which will be led by Mary Weismantal, who has generously agreed to step in as Acting Director next year while I am on academic leave at the National Humanities Center.

In keeping with our focused attention on relations between pasts and the futures they make possible, our Kreeger Wolf speaker's series this year featured film-maker Sini Anderson, producer and director of *The Punk Singer* (about Kathleen Hanna and Riot Grrrl feminism of the 1990s), as well as Clare Hemmings from the London School of Economics and Elizabeth Grosz from Duke. Each in her own way addressed the question of how to tell feminist histories so as to enable new alliances, new modes of thought, and open-ended possibilities for the future.

This winter our much-loved Program Assistant, Emily Gilbert, moved to a new position in the Weinberg Dean's Office and Jeremy Cornelius, the SPAN Program Assistant, will be leaving to matriculate as a graduate student in the Louisiana State University English Department this fall. Both have been critical to the recent success of the program and will be keenly missed. We welcome our new Program Assistant, Jasmine Tucker, who comes to us from Howard University and, most recently, from Loyola University, where she completed a Master's Degree in Cultural and Educational Policy. We introduced Jasmine to the GSS community at our recent Award Ceremony where we celebrated our graduating seniors, honored our thesis students and outstanding undergraduates, and recognized our graduate student fellowship winners and those completing their degrees.

It's easy to see from this and the rest of the newsletter that GSS has been strengthened by the participation and contributions of many. As always, we are sorry to see so community members move on but, at the same time, we are excited for them as they begin new stages in their lives. We ourselves look forward to a future made stronger by their presence here and to building on what they have made possible. In closing, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Advisory Board for their hard work this year and recognize the expert assistance and wise guidance of Amy Partridge, Associate Director and Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Nick Davis, Director of Graduate Studies. Finally, we want to thank all of you for your continuing interest in the program.

Jan Radway, Director of Gender & Sexuality Studies

# CONTENTS



SPAN faculty-graduate reading group on Sexual Violence/Assault and the Problem on 'Consent' [Photo courtesy of Jeremy Cornelius]

## FACULTY

- 4 Alex Owen retirement
- 5 2014-15 Edith Kreeger Wolf lecture series in GSS
- 7 Faculty updates; SPAN awards recipients 2014-15

## SPAN

- 8 SPAN Year in Review; Aaron Norton on making bio-sexual subjects
- 9 Kai M. Green on histories of black queer communities

## GRADUATE

- 10 GSS introduces new teaching assistants
- 11 Graduate Program Year in Review; Graduate Student Updates

## UNDERGRADUATE

- 12 Undergraduate Year in Review; Undergraduate Awards; Updates
- 13 GSS seniors complete theses

## FACULTY

# GSS celebrates the work of Alex Owen

Professor Alex Owen came to Northwestern University in 1992 as Associate Professor of History and Women's Studies and as one of the first two tenure-line joint appointments in the newly established Women's Studies Program. Alex has taught one of our two core courses, "Roots of Feminism," since her arrival, designed one of our first upper-division seminars in sexuality studies, "Sexuality and Its Discontents," and developed a wildly popular graduate seminar in "Women's and Gender History." By the late 1990s, Alex and members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Women's Studies Program had secured resources for new course development, faculty-graduate seminars, and new rotating faculty positions in the program and she became the founding Director of the vastly expanded and newly renamed Gender Studies Program in 2000. In 2011, Alex and Mary Dietz co-chaired a committee tasked with redesigning the undergraduate curriculum to reflect our ongoing, evolving, and expanding commitments to feminism(s) in conjunction with sexuality studies and in 2012 we established a stand-alone undergraduate major in the newly renamed Gender and Sexuality Studies Program.

Alex announced her retirement this year and on May 29th the History Department and Gender and Sexuality Studies collaborated on a daylong conference in Alex's honor. In a two-part panel entitled "Building Feminist Futures," GSS faculty members offered comments on Alex's central role in building a thriving GSS program sustained by a dedicated community of scholars at Northwestern. We include some excerpts from the panel below.

*"You've heard a lot about Alex's course "Roots of Feminism" in which the changing meaning of feminism is intellectually and politically built in to students' understanding of the imbrication of feminist critical engagement with successive Western cultural, social, and political systems and theories. Alex's own formation is significant as well. Being part of the long moment when British Marxist feminism turned to psychoanalysis – first Freudian and then Lacanian – without abandoning the social (I'm thinking of scholars like Juliet Mitchell, Jacqueline Rose, and historian Sally Alexander), this training has played a foundational role in the kind of institutional leadership that Alex has offered. In many respects, her roster of classes anticipated our eventual direction. I'm reminded that we relied on her other signature undergrad class "Sexuality and Its Discontents" to introduce students to the other "F" word – Foucault.*

*So, while the "and" between "gender" and "sexuality studies" makes it seem like an additive procedure, it really is not. The appellation should focus us on the tensions instead. We need the "and" because gender and sexuality are not reducible to each other. We need both to set them in dialogue. As we celebrate Alex's role in building GSS, we need to recognize that Alex's theoretical orientation and empirical work begins with troubling that fit.*

**–Tessie Liu, Assoc. Prof. in History and GSS**

*"I have never heard Alex describe "Roots of Feminism" as the crux of our undergraduate curriculum, though we as her colleagues often have; like "Advanced Feminist Theory" at the graduate level, "Roots" is the magnetic pole around which all our GSS courses attract, the frame of reference each student holds in common. That differs from saying "Roots of Feminism" or feminism as a whole*



Alex Owen received the E. LeRoy Hall Award for Teaching Excellence for 2012-2013 from WCAS.

*is the foundation of the program, or the gateway for all students. Alex has never positioned her course or intellectual orientations as ordinary or overarching, but she has been crucial in inoculating our community against any amnesia or distortion about how feminisms make possible and continually contextualizes the many political and intellectual movements that are its closest if not always its stablest cognates. She has also been a progenitor and role model of the kind of close, candid camaraderie—among individuals and among disciplines—that makes our intellectual complementarities possible, preventing conceptual hierarchies or institutional antagonisms from calcifying. Working alongside her, and with all my cohorts in this program she was so pivotal in building, entails a standing invitation to keep the conversations across queer, feminist, LGBT, gender, and sexuality studies difficult, fruitful, and surprising—not just between courses and colleagues, but within our own projects."*

**–Nick Davis, Assoc. Prof. in English and GSS and Dir. of Graduate Studies in GSS**

*"What is the committee's remit? Is that beyond our remit?", I remember Alex asking in that ad hoc committee – using what I think of as a distinctly Alex word. Remit –coming from Latin for "to send in reply or exchange, to give back, return, to push or throw back" – is one of those strange words where etymology now seems to run against the grain of current usage; it is, says the OED, "Chiefly Brit." (no surprise there) and means a "set of instructions, a brief; an area of authority or responsibility. Freq. in [the phrase] beyond . . . one's remit." One of the lessons in feminist institution building, in building a feminist future, we've learned from Alex Owen, to the great benefit of Gender and Sexuality Studies, is this: don't accede to your remit; do imagine what's said to be beyond your "area of authority or responsibility"; build something beyond a home for your own research; provide "a set of instructions, a brief." Push or (if necessary) throw back your own Plan. Write, and then implement, your own remit."*

**–Jeffrey Masten, Prof. in English and GSS**

# Edith Kreeger Wolf Lectures

*This year's Edith Kreeger Wolf lecturers: Sini Anderson, Clare Hemmings and Elizabeth Grosz*

*The Edith Kreeger Wolf Endowment brings scholars, professionals, and public figures to Northwestern, with the goal of deepening students' familiarity with accomplishments women have brought to their fields of scholarship, the arts, public services, and the professions.*

## SINI ANDERSON'S THE PUNK SINGER

**By Leigh Goldstein** (PhD Candidate, Screen Cultures Program & GSS)

During her visit this fall, Documentary Filmmaker Sini Anderson screened her feature film, *The Punk Singer* (2013), which chronicles the feminist commitments and artistic achievements of Kathleen Hanna. Hanna is perhaps most widely known as the lead singer of Bikini Kill, and as a pivotal figure in the 1990s feminist punk rock movement Riot Grrrl. Anderson's film provides an extensive portrait of that era of Hanna's life, incorporating archival footage of some of the band's landmark performances, but also explores Hanna's post-Bikini Kill musical projects and her more recent struggle with Lyme disease.

Toby Vail, Kim Gordon, Allison Wolfe, and Tavi Gevenson are among the many talking heads who surface in the film, volunteering their perspectives on Hanna's story and its feminist motivations. It is Hanna, however, who amounts to the most eloquent

and magnetic commentator. In explaining her move away from punk rock and towards electronica, for example, Hanna reads the musical transition as an innovation in her ongoing commitment to feminist politics: "In Bikini Kill I was singing to an elusive asshole male that was fucking the world over and I was allowing oth-



Cover of the Punk Singer [Photo courtesy of Stagebuddy.com]

er women to watch me do that, and I really wanted to start directly singing to other women."

After the screening, Anderson fielded questions about the film's archive, explaining that she drew on institutional resources, such as university zine collections, as well as personal collections, to give a sense of Riot Grrrl's visual aesthetics. She also offered a brief description of her follow-up film, *So Sick*, a documentary about Lyme disease. Framing the film as an outgrowth of *The Punk Singer*, Anderson explained that through her association with Hanna she came to realize that Lyme disease is a feminist issue and that her new film would tell the stories of many female artists who had spent years having their symptoms misdiagnosed and their appeals for treatment ignored.



Sini Anderson [Photo courtesy of Sini Anderson LinkedIn]

## CLARE HEMMINGS ON EMMA GOLDMAN AND THE FUTURE(S) OF GENDER STUDIES

**By Carla Della Gatta** (PhD, Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Drama & GSS)

Clare Hemmings, Professor of Feminist Theory and Director of the Gender Institute at the London School of Economics, delivered two lectures at Northwestern in February of 2015. Her February 25th lecture, "Considering Emma: Queer Feminist Theory and Affective Method," revisits the legacy of Emma Goldman and her significance for contemporary queer theory and activism. Hemmings' work on Goldman recuperates the forgotten intersections of anarchy and queer theory to illuminate "the unfinished nature of queer feminist history" today.

Hemmings attempts to think through Goldman's complex relationships to sexuality, feminism, women, and anarchism through Goldman's personal correspondence with Almeda Sperry. Though Sperry's letters to Goldman are located in the archive, Goldman's letters to Sperry are not and Hemmings makes use of psychoanalytic theory and memory studies to imaginatively reconstruct Goldman's missing letters.

The following day, Professor Hemmings offered her mentorship and insight to graduate students over lunch where she discussed the importance of integrating affect studies into feminist methodologies as well as the importance of (and institutional challenges to) incorporating transnational materials and analyses into gender and sexuality studies curricula.



Goldman speaking to a crowd in Union Square, New York City, 1916

In her February 26th lecture, "Is 'Gender Studies' Singular? Institutional Stories of Queer/Feminist Difference," Hemmings questioned the singular nature of the field of gender studies given the actual interplay between theories of gender, sexuality, queerness, and critical race theory. She also contested the common teleological narrative that assumes that the study of feminism had been replaced by gender studies, which has largely been replaced by sexuality studies as "Women's Studies" become "Gender Studies" and, finally, "Gender & Sexuality Studies" programs. Hemmings argues that these shifts have diminished our understanding of the intersectionality within and amongst these fields and used the example of the term "queer feminist" to illustrate the mutual entanglements of feminist and queer theories and identifications.

## ELIZABETH GROSZ ON IRIGARAY, ETHICS, AND ARTS

**by Jeffrey Kosbie** (JD/PhD, Sociology)

On May 5, 2015, Elizabeth Grosz, Professor of Women's Studies at Duke University, delivered a talk at Northwestern entitled "Irigaray, Ethics, and Arts: Ontologies, Topologies, Temporalities." Speaking to a packed room, Grosz used Irigaray as a starting point to rethink the notion of sexual difference. In a wide-ranging lecture, Grosz sought to demonstrate how masculine features of science, the arts, and philosophy shape how we know sexual difference and proposed to use the "losers" of intellectual history to imagine new futures and new ways of becoming. In particular, Grosz suggested that we turn to pre-Socratic philosophy as a source of imagining an alternative philosophy, one that focuses on

the interconnectedness of things and disciplines, as a way of thinking through sexual difference without relying on the assumption of individual identity.

In a lively exchange during the Q & A session, Grosz and audience members debated what we mean by the term "culture" and the extent to which cultures shape our understandings and perceptions of sexual difference. Grosz argued that the ontological experience of sexual difference precedes our cultural interpretation of it, pointing out that every culture has at least two sexes, and every culture must address the question of how to live with others.

## Faculty Updates >>>

**Linda Phyllis Austern** (Musicology) published “Domestic Song and the Circulation of Masculine Social Energy in Early Modern England” in *Gender and Song in Early Modern England*, edited by Leslie Dunn and Katherine Larson (Ashgate, 2014), and “‘Lo Here I Burn’: Musical Figurations and Fantasies of Male Desire in Early Modern England” in *Eroticism in Early Modern Music*, edited by Bonnie J. Blackburn and Laurie Stras (Ashgate, 2015).

**Héctor Carrillo** (Sociology and GSS) published “Dual Pathways: Mexican Gay Immigrants, their U.S-born Partners, and the Dynamics of Sexual Globalization” in *Intimacies and Cultural Change: Perspectives on Contemporary Mexico*, edited by Daniel Nehring, Rosario Esteinou, and Emmanuel Alvarado (Ashgate, 2014) and co-authored “Border crossings and shifting sexualities among Mexican gay immigrant men: Beyond monolithic conceptions” with Jorge Fontdevila in *Sexualities* 17:8 and “Immigrant Sexual Citizenship: Intersectional Templates among Mexican Gay Immigrants to the United States” with Steven Epstein in *Citizenship Studies* 18:3/4.

**Nick Davis** (English and GSS) gave talks from his upcoming book project on depictions of sexual consent in contemporary global cinema at Clemson University, the University of Oregon, and Northwestern. He was recently elected to a three-year term on the Executive Board of the Society for Cinema & Media Studies and invited to publish features in *Sight and Sound* and *Film Comment* magazines related to his ongoing work at the crossroads of cinema, gender, and sexuality studies.

**Ryan Dohoney** (Musicology) was awarded a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies for the 2015-16 academic year.

**Alice Eagly** (Psychology) is serving as President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. This year she received The Eminent Leadership Scholar Award from the Network of Leadership Scholars in the Academy of Management and will be receiving an honorary degree, Doctorat honoris causa de l’Université de Lausanne, in May.

**Steven Epstein** (Sociology and Science & Human Culture Program) delivered a keynote address on “Inventing Sexual Health” at a conference on “Thinking Gender and Sexuality in the 21st Century,” sponsored by the Centre for Sex, Gender and Sexuality at Durham University. He published an article entitled “‘For Men Arousal Is Orientation’: Bodily Truthing, Technosexual Scripts, and the Materialization of Sexualities through the Phalometric Test” (with Tom Waidzunus) in *Social Studies of Science*. In addition, he and Héctor Carrillo published “Immigrant Sexual Citizenship: Intersectional Templates among Mexican Gay Immigrants to the United States” in *Citizenship Studies*.

**Kai M. Green** (SPAN post-doc) received a faculty research grant to conduct research at the Schomburg on Black Trans\* archival methods and was named in *The Nation* as one of six scholars reimagining Black politics.

**Jan Radway** (Communications) won a year-long fellowship to the National Humanities Center in North Carolina, where she will be in residence next year to work on her book, *Girls, Zines, and their Travels: Re-imagining Subjectivity and Sociality in the 1990s and Beyond*. She delivered the keynote address, “Riot Grrrrl History, Underground Itineraries, and Girl Zine Networks,” at the Annual Meeting of the British Association for American Studies and delivered lectures on girl zines at the University of Kansas, Western Illinois University, and the University of Washington. She continues to serve as co-chair of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession of the Modern Language Association and was recently elected as Women in the Profession Delegate to the MLA General Assembly. The 2014 meeting of the Popular Culture Association included a double session devoted to discussion of Radway’s *Reading the Romance*, 30 years after it was first published.

**Gregory Ward** (Linguistics and Philosophy) received a grant from the Hewlett Curricular Fellowship Program to adapt his newly-launched Language and Gender course (GSS 234) to satisfy the proposed Social Inequalities and Diversity (SID) requirement at Northwestern.

## SPAN Award Recipients ‘14–’15

### SPAN Graduate Summer Research Grants:

**-Robin Bartram** — “Uncertain Sexualities and Unusual Women: Museum Depictions of Jane Addams and Emily Dickinson”

**-Catherine Harrington** — “Producing Prison: Prison representation and the negotiation of industry, technology and race 1970-present”

**-Ryan Lei** — “Who is included when talking about ‘Gays’?: The role of prototypicality on ethnic majority and minority member’s group identification and support for collective action”

**-Erik Lovell** — “Negotiating Queer and Religious Identities: Integrating Contradictory Cultural Frameworks”

**-Mollie McQuillan** — “Social Relationships and Health in Transgender Adolescents: A Pilot Study”

### Dissertation Fellowship:

**-Stefan Vogler** — “Civic Epistemologies of Sex: How the U.S. State Adjudicates Sexual Rights”

## SPAN Year in Review

This was a busy academic year for SPAN, with activities that included a faculty-graduate reading group during the Winter quarter, our annual workshop in the spring, and several funding competitions. The reading group, facilitated by Amy Partridge, took up the timely topic of “Sexual Violence/Assault and the Problem of ‘Consent.’” Our workshop, called “Remapping the Erotic: Changing Contours in Studies of Sexualities, Identities, and Social Regulation,” began with a keynote address by Jafari Allen of Yale University, followed by a full day of panels that featured the work of an upcoming generation of sexuality studies scholars.

Our postdoctoral fellows, Kai M. Green and Aaron Norton, spent the first of two years in residence at Northwestern. Kai, who gave a public lecture called “Into the Darkness: A Quare (Re)Membering of Los Angeles in a Time of Crises,” offered classes on “Queer in the City” and “Gender, Sexuality and Race: Black Queer Looks.” Aaron gave a public lecture called “‘You Mean You’re Not Circumcised!’ Male Circumcision Campaigns for HIV-prevention



and the Making of Bio-sexual Subjects,” and he taught a class on “Sexuality and HIV/AIDS.”

As the year comes to a close, we are sorry to be saying goodbye to our Program Assistant, Jeremy Cornelius, though we wish him well as he heads off to graduate school. Jeremy deserves credit for revamping the SPAN website and turning it into a more functional source of information, initiating the SPAN weekly announcements, and doing a lot of behind-the-scenes work to make SPAN function. We’ll miss him!

We look forward to 2015-16, when we will once again provide a range of funding opportunities for faculty and graduate students. See you all in the fall!

-Héctor Carrillo and Steve Epstein SPAN Co-directors

*For more information about SPAN and funding opportunities, please visit: <http://www.sexualities.northwestern.edu/>. If you would like to receive SPAN announcements by email, please email [sexualities@northwestern.edu](mailto:sexualities@northwestern.edu).*

*SPAN is a project of the Gender and Sexualities Studies Program in collaboration with the Science in Human Culture Program (SHC) and Cells to Society (C2S)—The Center on Social Disparities and Health at the Institute for Policy Research.*

## Making bio-sexual subjects

*Postdoc Aaron Norton explores male circumcision campaigns for HIV prevention*

**By Stefan Vogler** (PhD Candidate, Sociology & GSS)

On October 30th, incoming SPAN Postdoctoral Fellow Aaron Norton delivered a talk entitled “You mean you’re not circumcised! Male circumcision campaigns for HIV prevention and the making of bio-sexual subjects.” Norton examined how efforts to convince African men to get circumcised created new conceptions of risk. What ethical tensions arise when a part of the body, the foreskin, becomes “risky”? Ultimately, he argued that campaigns engender new understandings of “good” and “bad” bio-sexual subjects.

In the early-2000s, three randomized controlled trials conducted in Africa were stopped early when they revealed that the circumcised men in the trials were at substantially lower risk of contracting HIV. Subsequently, in 2007, the World Health Organization officially recommended circumcision as an HIV prevention strategy. Since that time, Norton argued, initiatives in several African countries have *(continued on page 9)*



Aaron Norton, SPAN post-doc [Photo courtesy of Jeremy Cornelius]

positioned circumcision as the ethical choice to protect not only oneself but also one's partners and community from unnecessary HIV risk. In this context, to not be circumcised becomes both stigmatizing and the mark of a bad bio-sexual subject. Whereas limiting one's sexual partners and using condoms may have once been enough to be a good bio-sexual subject, now the good (male) subject should also be circumcised. In this way, sexual risk takes on a new valence by problematizing the body itself. Norton closed with some ethical considerations, including the possibility that circumcision campaigns re-stigmatize (or perpetuate the stigmatization of) black bodies as sexually risky and the difficulties of translating population-level risk statistics to the individual-level.

## Out of the darkness

*Postdoc Kai M. Green explores the "darkness" to illuminate the histories of Black queer communities*

By Theo Greene (PhD Candidate, Sociology & GSS)

On October 16th, SPAN Postdoctoral Fellow Kai M. Green delivered a talk entitled "Into the Darkness: A Quare (Re)Membering of Los Angeles in a Time of Crises." Based on his dissertation research of Black queer communities in South Los Angeles, Green explores the various ways in which Black queer communities created, appropriated, and reimagined Black queer space since the start of the AIDS crisis in 1981. The AIDS crisis further exacerbated the material and ideological struggles within Black communities like South Los Angeles already plagued by drug abuse, gang violence, and larger economic disinvestment. Despite the complete erasure of Black queer communities in mainstream responses to AIDS during the 1980s and 1990s, Black Angelenos produced "technologies of survival" to support, educate, chronicle, and preserve Black queer experiences in ways that complicate traditional misunderstandings about both the mutual exclusivity of Blackness and queerness and the singularity of the Black experience more broadly.

Drawing on a combination of qualitative methods, Green theorizes "darkness" as a frame for understanding processes associated with the production and maintenance of Black queer geographies in South Los Angeles. First, darkness functions not only as the physical embodiment of Blackness, but also the physical manifestation of HIV/AIDS. Green parallels the stigma and discrimination associated with Black bodies to queer bodies marked by AIDS in the early days of the crisis. Second, darkness represents the intellectual void created by scholarship on both gay and Black Los Angeles, both of which completely overlook the production and maintenance of Black LGBT community spaces in Los Angeles. Finally, the darkness operates as a site of situated knowledge, where the recovery of a Black queer past calls into question the nature of knowledge production itself. Yet to relegate or dismiss darkness

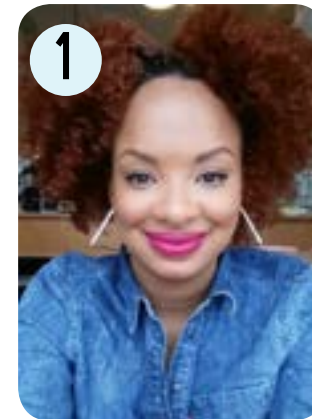


Kai Green, SPAN post-doc [Photo courtesy of Jeremy Cornelius]

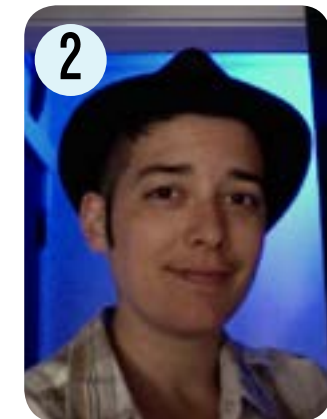
as a negative or a void is to miss the point entirely. Black LGBT Angelenos, argues Green, draw productively on darkness as pivotal to creating, remembering, and preserving local histories.

The multidimensionality of darkness as a theoretical framework enables Green to marshal an impressive array of evidence to highlight the political and socio-cultural diversity of Black people, Black (queer) space, and community. "Writing the land" in spaces like South L.A.'s Annual Kingdom Day Parade or in Black Churches do more than make Black LGBT folks visible to the broader Black community; they also reenergize the political possibility of sites that have become largely symbolic in the post-King/Age of Obama. At the same time, the specific sites that Black LGBT communities create for themselves also draw attention to efforts within Black queer communities to understand and articulate difference. Green's talk produced an engaging discussion about the epistemological possibilities of "darkness" as a viable source of knowledge production in the social sciences.

## Introducing GSS Teaching Assistants 15'-16'



**1 Shoniqua Roach** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Performance Studies and is pursuing the Gender and Sexuality Studies, African American and Diaspora Studies, and Critical Theory Certificates. Her dissertation, "Something Akin to Liberation: Black Women, Sexuality, & Performance," employs performance, Black feminist and historical methodologies to interrogate how contemporary Black women mobilize popular performance forms as a means of advocating for, rehearsing, and realizing forms of sexual autonomy. She looks forward to teaching "Hip-Hop Culture & Black Feminisms" for GSS in Spring 2016.



**2 Rae Langes** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Performance Studies and is pursuing the Gender and Sexuality Studies Certificate. Rae's dissertation, "Performing Monstrosity: Queer and Transgender Tactics of Resistance in Twenty-First Century United States," focuses on LGBTQ artists who deploy tropes of monstrosity in performance to reflect, resist, and refigure constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and national belonging. Rae recently published an essay entitled, "Cornholes and Corn Mothers: Cooking up Queer Futures in *Anatural Birth*," in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.



**3 Megan Geigner** is a PhD Candidate in the Interdisciplinary Theatre & Drama Program and has taught courses on gender and race in drama and theatrical performance. Her dissertation explores how Irish, Polish, and Italian immigrant communities used theatre and performance to address anti-immigrant discourse in turn-of-the-century Chicago. She has been published in *Modern Drama*, *New England Theatre Journal*, *Theatre History Studies*, *Cosmopolitan Review*, and *Theatre Journal*. Megan is also a professional dramaturg and has worked on shows at Northwestern University and at Court, TimeLine, and other theatres in Chicago.



**4 Kara Johnson** is a PhD Candidate in the English Department and is pursuing the Gender and Sexuality Studies Certificate. She teaches courses on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literatures and feminism(s). Her dissertation, "Writing Work: Narratives of Literary Labor," examines the thematic relationship between creating literature and other forms of labor in works by Herman Melville, Mark Twain, and Helen Keller. Kara was awarded the Lawrence Lipking Fellowship for dissertation research at the Newberry Library and is a Graduate Fellow for the Brady Program in Ethics and Civic Life and Graduate Affiliate with the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities at Northwestern.

## GSS Graduate Program Year in Review

By **Nick Davis** (Director of Graduate Studies GSS)

The GSS Certificate and the GSS and SPAN Graduate Clusters continue to enroll more students than ever. To our delight, the rigorous interdisciplinary work these students do in these two curricular tracks keep reaping well-earned rewards, including tenure-track jobs at Bowdoin College (Theo Greene), the University of Southern California (Carla Della Gatta), and Tufts University (we miss you, Kareem Khubchandani!). Equally exciting are the prestigious fellowships our students earned from organizations like the American Council of Learned Societies, the Center for European Studies, the Chabreja Center for Historical Studies, the Newberry Library, and the Sexualities Project at Northwestern. Our grads presented new work at multiple conferences near and far—sometimes quite far!—and sustained vital intellectual and artistic traditions at nearby events like *Queertopia!*, *Queergasm*, the Chicago-wide *Engendering Change* conference, and the annual SPAN Symposium. This fall, we will welcome four new Cluster Fellowship recipients into GSS and SPAN, in the fields of African American Studies, Anthropology, Art History, and Theatre and Drama, joining the dozens of other students across multiple departments, programs, and colleges that already make GSS such a thriving community for graduate training.



SPAN Co-Director Steven Epstein and Angela Leone at SPAN mentoring group [Photo courtesy of Jeremy Cornelius]

## Graduate Student Updates >>>

**Clare Forstie** (PhD Candidate, Sociology & GSS Certificate) was awarded a University Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, where she is currently teaching, conducting research for her dissertation, and facilitating programming for the Doyle Center for Gender and Sexuality. She presented at the American Sociological Association's 2014 Annual Meeting and at the Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting in 2015, where she presented preliminary results from her dissertation on LGBTQ friendships. Her book chapter, "Trigger Warnings," is forthcoming in *Queer Studies and Education: Critical Concepts for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Nelson Rodriguez, Edward Brockenbrough, Jennifer Ingrey, and Wayne Martino.

**Carla Della Gatta** (PhD, Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Drama & GSS Certificate) was a GSS Teaching Assistant this year and designed and taught a new course on "Latina Theatre & Feminisms" in Winter quarter. She will begin a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Critical Studies - Theatre at the University of Southern California in the fall.

**Jeff Kosbie** (JD/PhD, Sociology) successfully defended his dissertation, "Contested Identities: A History of LGBT Legal Mobilization and the Ethics of Impact," in April. This summer, he plans to move to San Francisco, take the California Bar Exam and apply for litigation jobs that will allow him to use his background in the legal and policy issues that impact LGBTQ communities.

**Rae Langes** (PhD Candidate, Performance Studies & GSS Certificate) staged *Bound by Other Ties*, which interrogates relationships between state regulation of gender nonconforming people and queer kinship, for the Chicago Home Theater Festival (see [www.chicagohtf.org](http://www.chicagohtf.org)). Rae received a SPAN Summer Research Grant, a SPAN Graduate Student Conference Travel funding and the Buffet Institute Graduate Student Conference Travel Award this past year. Next year, Rae will be a Teaching Assistant for GSS and will teach a new course on "Gender, Sexuality, and Monstrosity in Contemporary U.S. Culture" in winter 2016.

## GSS Undergraduate Program Year in Review

By **Amy Partridge** (Assoc. Director of Undergraduate Studies GSS)

We congratulate our 33 graduating seniors and look forward to following their future trajectories and contributions to the field! Special kudos to our five senior thesis students who were all awarded honors by WCAS and to Bea Sullivan-Knoff who was awarded the Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs Prize for her thesis entitled "Shaping Bodies, Shaping Society: German trans law, the effects of socialization and sex-amending legislation on body image and health in the trans community." To find out more about our students' many accomplishments this year see the thesis abstracts, updates, and the full list of award winners below.

We continue to offer a wide range of courses at the undergraduate level and are pleased to announce a number of exciting new additions to the undergraduate curriculum in 2015-16. Next year's GSS TA's will teach new courses on "Hip-Hop Culture and Black Feminisms," "Femininity and Theatrical Performance" and "Gender, Sexuality and Monstrosity in Contemporary U.S. Culture." We are also delighted to be co-listing Prof. Marquez's new course on "Xicana Feminisms" in Winter quarter and Prof. Zamperini's "East Asian Masculinities" and Prof. Brueck's "Indo-Pakistani Women Writers" in spring. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with our current undergraduate students in the classroom and on campus events.

## Undergraduate Awards

**RAE ARLENE MOSES  
LEADERSHIP AWARD**

Elizabeth Anne Bohl  
(GSS & Psychology '15)

**BETTY JO TETTER  
DOBBS PRIZE**

Bea Cordelia Sullivan-Knoff  
(GS & Theatre '15)

## OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

**Freshman:**  
Marisa Philomena Dipaolo  
(GSS & Spanish '18)

**Sophomore:**  
Tess Madeline Levin  
(GSS & American Studies '17)

**Junior:**  
Cristina Nicole Polenica  
(GSS & Social Policy '16)

## Undergraduate Updates

**Lucy Bloomberg** (2016) was awarded a Summer Undergraduate Research Grant to conduct archival research on Jane, an underground abortion service in Chicago from 1969-1973, and will begin a senior thesis in American Studies in the fall.

**Lauren Goldstein** (2018) was awarded a Summer Internship Grant from NCA and will be interning in the Social Media department of Birchbox in New York this summer.

**Beatrice Hagney** (2018) will study abroad in Prague this fall through CIEE's Central European Studies program.

**Emily Anne Karpinski** (2015) will begin a Masters in Social Work program at the University of Texas, Austin in the fall.

## Alumni Updates

**Gabe Bergado** (2014) is a staff writer for the news site *The Daily Dot* where he covers web culture and online communities with a focus on LGBTQ issues and youth cultures.

**Sarah Daoud** (2013) is working as a resource advocate at the Broadway Youth Center in Chicago and will begin a Masters of Social Work program in the fall.

**Keith Miller** (2010) is working on a research project about Millennial men's negotiations with the mandates of masculinity entitled "Pillow Talk: The Truth Behind Beauty, Masculinity and Male Desire," which will culminate in a book, an art exhibit and a large-scale marketing campaign.

**Anthony (Tony) Rella** (2004) is working for the Seattle Counseling Service, a community mental health agency that specializes in serving LGBTQ communities, and advises other mental health professionals in providing culturally competent care to LGBTQ clients as a Sexual Minority Specialist for King County, Washington.

# Five GSS seniors complete theses

## Problematizing Victimhood:

*The failure of the state and the commercial sexual exploitation of minors*

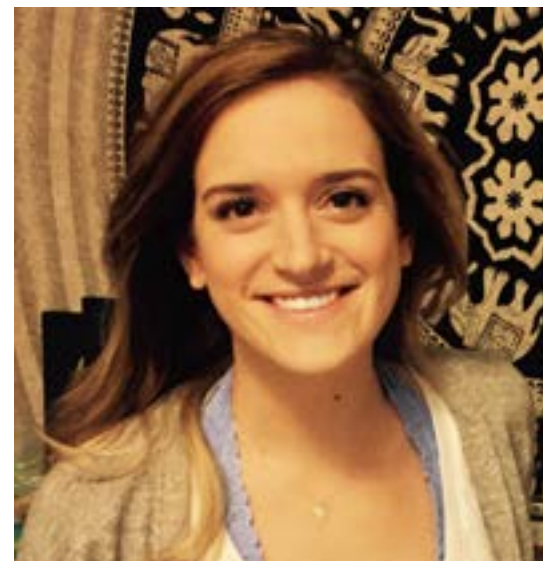
In the United States, girls who are under the age of consent can be, and are, arrested for prostitution in lieu of being offered legal protection and rehabilitative services. These protections and services are only available to those girls who are identified as “victims” by specific government and non-profit organizations. I argue that this need to claim victimhood to receive attention under the law objectifies those girls who are often most in need of care and protection by promoting a “punishing pimps and rescuing the girls” approach to the problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of minors. I use Wendy Brown’s theories of masculine domination to expose the ways this narrative reinforces structural inequalities and use Joan Tronto’s *Caring Democracy* to conceive of a system of care that provides care for girls, in whatever form they need, and does not rely on the racist, classist, and sexist structures currently in place.



—Elizabeth Bohl (Psychology & GSS '15)

## The Apatow Bromance as a Rearticulation of Masculinity

My project explores the emergent genre of ‘bromance comedies’ and looks specifically at bromance films created and influenced by director/producer Judd Apatow. I examine five of these “Apatown” bromance films: *Superbad*, *Pineapple Express*, *Funny People*, *This is the End*, and *The Interview*. These films portray a version of masculinity that permits their male characters to be much more emotionally expressive than other representations of masculinity allow. To explore what exactly makes these films’ portrayal of masculinity substantively different than prior iterations of masculinity, I focused on how these films work through two main conflicts inherent in the definition of masculinity, as defined by sociolinguist Scott F. Kiesling. The first of these conflicts is between the masculine imperatives to both assert one’s heterosexuality and also to show solidarity with other men. The second conflict is between the masculine imperative to assert dominance over others and, again, the dictate to display male solidarity. I utilized the Apatown films and promotional material surrounding the films to analyze how these films’ portrayals of ‘bromantic’ relationships contend with these two conflicts associated with traditional definitions of masculinity.



—Emily Karpinski (Psychology & GSS '15)

## Hook Up and Rape ‘Cultures’:

*Recovering Power Relations in the Discourse of Sexual Assault on College Campuses*

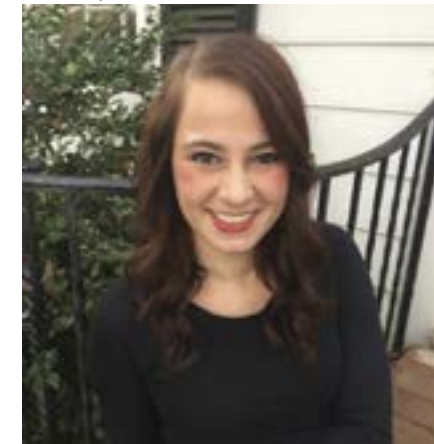
My thesis explores the emergence of the terms ‘hook up culture’ and ‘rape culture’ within the contemporary discourse of sexual assault on college campuses. The terms ‘hook up’ and ‘rape,’ which have been explored as structures of power and domination from a feminist perspective, have now been reconstructed as all-encompassing ‘cultures’ to describe the behaviors and perceptions of United States college students. Using a radical feminist and a choice feminist lens, I analyze the linguistic move to ‘culture’ in order to assess the implications of these terms on the practical experiences of students. I argue that the use of these terms represents a turn away from an analysis of structures of power and domination in discussions of sexuality and ultimately serves to normalize sexual assault.



—Jennifer Katz (Social Policy & GS '15)

## From Wishes to Princes:

*Disney’s Response to Popular Notions of Feminism in the Production of Princess Films*



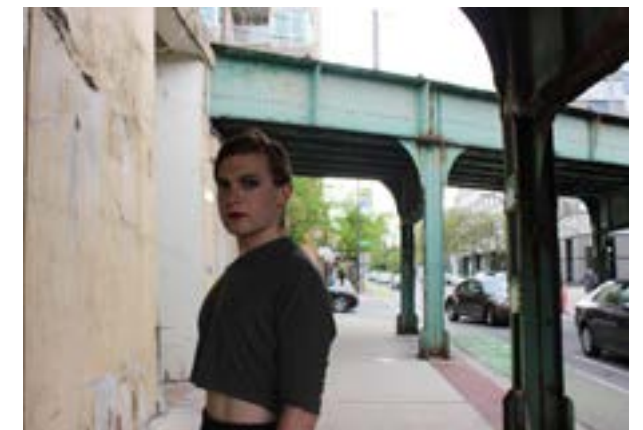
—Emily Mannheimer (Political Science & GS, Spanish minor '15)

Audiences went wild for Disney’s *Frozen* in 2013, some praising Disney for giving girls an empowering tale of sisterhood and a moral that greatly differed from *Snow White*’s “Someday My Prince Will Come.” But exactly how different are *Frozen* and other recent Disney princess films from their earlier films? In this thesis, I explore the progression of the Disney princess brand. I examine *Frozen* (2013), *Tangled* (2010), and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) to note the ways that Disney has recently sought to change the princess narrative and to portray femininity. I examine online feminist sources, newspaper film reviews, and academic journals and compare these to my own readings of these films to argue that, though the princesses have become more similar to the personalities and attitudes of young women today, there are still significant differences between academic feminisms and the interpretation of feminism at Disney.

## Shaping Bodies, Shaping Society:

*German Trans Law, the Effects of Socialization and Sex-Amending Legislation on Body Image and Health in the Trans Community*

For more than thirty years German law mandated genital reassignment surgery and sterilization in order for citizens to legally amend their sex. As of 2011, these mandates have been repealed and a broader range of bodies are now legally intelligible. In this thesis, I ask what effects this change in legal status has had on German trans citizens’ body image, if the law does in fact construct the bodies over which it reigns? Extrapolating from interviews and testimonies collected while on a URG grant in Berlin, I argue that the accumulative effects of socialization in a society that still does not make space for trans identities outweighs the effects of this new legislation. I end by suggesting legislation that would actually afford all citizens an equal opportunity for gender self-determination and corporeal coherence.



—Bea Cordelia Sullivan-Knoff (Theatre & GS '15)



Gender & Sexuality Studies Program  
Northwestern University  
1800 Sherman,  
4th FL.  
Evanston, IL 60208-2211.

First Class  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 205  
Evanston, IL 60201