

A photograph of two women standing outdoors in front of lush green foliage. The woman on the left has short grey hair, wears black-rimmed glasses, a white button-down shirt over a blue and white patterned top, and is smiling. The woman on the right has short grey hair, wears red-rimmed glasses, a red V-neck t-shirt, and a silver watch on her left wrist; she is also smiling. The background consists of various green plants and trees, with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

# gender DYNAMIC

Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, Northwestern University, 2014

## *Gender & Sexuality Studies Names New Director*

Janice Radway to begin in Fall 2014

## *SPAN hosts Anne Fausto-Sterling*

Annual SPAN workshop on "Desiring Categories:  
Predicaments of Binaries, Boundaries & Classifications  
in Sexuality Studies"





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.

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Riley Snorton (Communication Studies)  
Gregory Ward (Linguistics)  
Mary Weismantel (Anthropology)  
Michelle Wright (African American Studies)

## Fundraising campaign for undergraduate research

The Gender and Sexuality Studies Program is pleased to announce a new fund-raising 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 alums. 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.

GENDER  
sexuality &  
STUDIES

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE



June is a time for goodbyes, but also for hellos. We hug our departing graduates (see pages 11-12 and 17-18) and look back over the past year, including our Kreeger Wolf lecture series on structural violence (see pages 5-6). But we also look forward to next year, when we'll welcome our new T.A.s (see page 14), post-docs and cluster fellows. And after all, we don't really say good-bye to our graduating seniors: they're just turning into our latest crop of alums (see pages 19-20).

This year's goodbyes and hellos start with me: after three years as Program Director, I'm turning the reins over to my colleague, distinguished feminist scholar Jan Radway (pictured on our cover). Jan is the Walter Dill Scott Professor in Communication Studies and a professor of American studies and gender studies; she is also the Director of the Rhetoric and Public Culture Program. I can still remember my excitement when I first read Jan's book *Reading the Romance*, that pathbreaking exemplar of feminist methodology; it has been a pleasure to get to know her as a colleague and to work with her as a member of the GSS Advisory Board, and it is an even greater pleasure to introduce her to you now as our incoming director.

Some of the most poignant goodbyes are to our graduate Teaching Assistants, who are such an integral part of the program. But we are delighted for Kareem Khubchandani and Eli Krell, both of whom are leaving us to assume prestigious postdoctoral appointments. And some of the most exciting hellos are to our incoming SPAN post-docs, Kai Greene and Aaron Norton, profiled on page 8.

One of the greatest pleasures in directing the program is working with a great group of core administrative faculty and staff, including Nick Davis, Director of Graduate Studies; Amy Partridge, Associate Director & Director of Undergraduate Studies; Emily Gilbert, Program Assistant; and Jeremy Cornelius, SPAN Program Assistant. Our weekly meetings this year have helped keep us all on track, but they've also been a lot of fun; I don't know how many other offices on campus have such a high quotient of laughter.

Speaking of offices, the other big news for us this year is our pending move to temporary quarters on the fourth floor of 1800 Sherman; we invite everyone, including visiting alums and prospective students, to visit us there. This is your community, and you are always welcome.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small upward flick.

Mary Weismantel, Director of Gender & Sexuality Studies



Undergraduates: Paige Rotondo, Natalie Houchins, Bea Sullivan-Knoff, and Lindsey Amer at the GSS awards reception. [Photo courtesy of Gabe Bergado]

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## Davis discusses his book, *The Desiring-Image*

By **Samantha Caiola** (Journalism & Gender Studies '14)

Associate Professor of English and Gender & Sexuality Studies Nick Davis can't get through a 30-minute interview without sporadic knocks on his office door from one of the many senior thesis writers he worked with this year.

The young English/GSS professor is a favorite among students for his wit, creativity, and exhaustive knowledge of cinema—traits that became apparent to a much wider audience with the recent release of his first book: *The Desiring Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema* (Oxford UP, 2013).

The idea for the book, which aims to unpack the complex theories of French philosopher Deleuze while making new arguments about the representation of desire in film, is based on his graduate work at Cornell. Since arriving at Northwestern in 2006, he has worked on the book in spurts while teaching a breadth of courses, including "Introduction to Queer Cinema," "Contemporary Women Filmmakers," and a graduate "Queer Theory" course.

The 250-page paperback, which is available on Amazon and through Oxford University Press, deals with the way non-normative desire is produced in commercial cinema. Davis emphasizes the unpredictability of desire rather than a notion of fixed systems by connecting Deleuzian and queer theory to films like *Shortbus*, *Dead Ringers*, *Beau Travail*, and *Velvet Goldmine*.

"I loved and was challenged by these movies," said Davis. "It was never frustrating to watch them again and again."

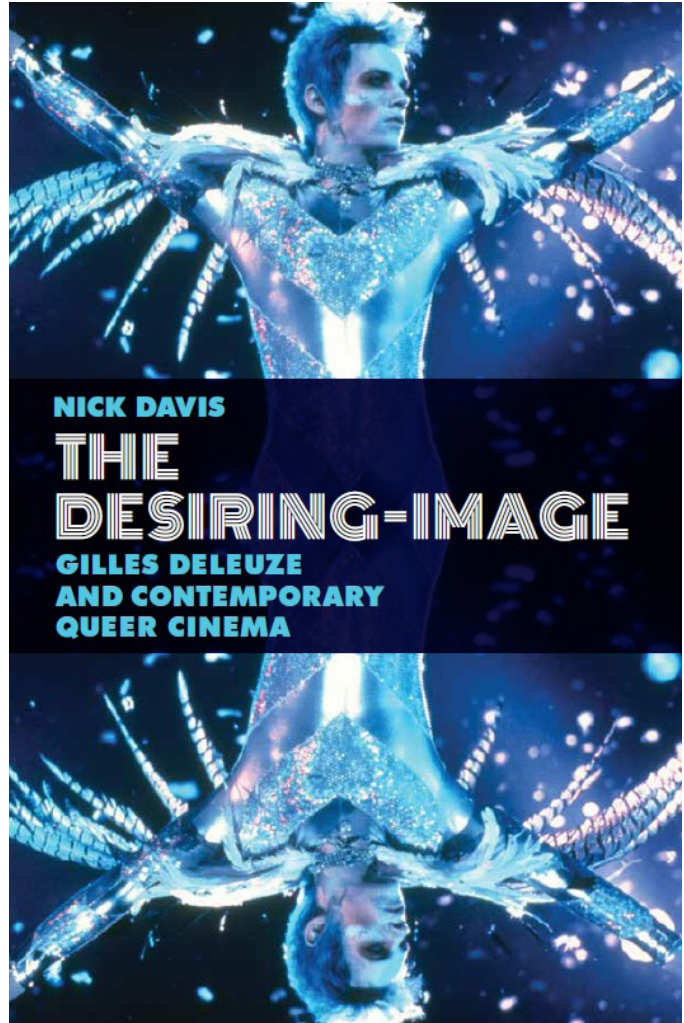
Repeated film viewing is one of Davis's favorite hobbies, as anyone can tell from his movie review website, "Nick's Flick Picks," where he critiques both mainstream and queer cinema.

When not watching movies, writing articles or advising English theses candidates, Davis can be found giving talks around campus. This winter he was asked to conduct a public interview with Pulitzer and Emmy-winning

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**"I LOVED AND WAS CHALLENGED BY THESE MOVIES," SAID DAVIS. "IT WAS NEVER FRUSTRATING TO WATCH THEM AGAIN AND AGAIN."**

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Cover of *The Desiring Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema*. [Photo courtesy of Nick Davis]

playwright Tony Kushner for the Contemporary Thought Speaker Series. Earlier this year he spoke to the Sexual Health & Assault Peer Educators (SHAPE) about the portrayal of sexual coercion and rape on screen—a topic he said could serve as the basis for his next book.

Davis said being around students, particularly Gender & Sexuality Studies students with second and third areas of study, was hugely influential during his formative writing periods. While teaching in the GSS department Davis was exposed to ideas from literature majors, historians, artists and even engineers, all of whom raised new questions for his book and beyond.

"Whenever you're working in gender and sexuality studies, you're constantly seeing disciplines put together," said Davis. "The students and faculty here, they're all doing that."

## Kreeger Wolf Lectures

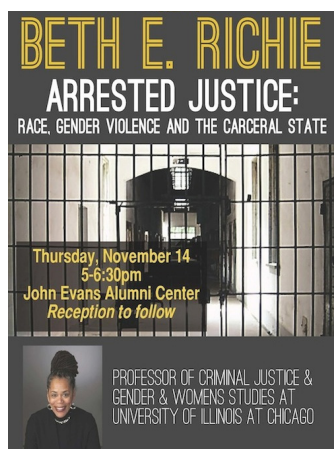
*Edith Kreeger Wolf lecture series focuses on structural violence against women*

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 service, and the professions.

The 2013-2014 Edith Kreeger Wolf lecture series in Gender & Sexuality Studies explored the topic of "Structural Violence Against Women: Prisons, Camps, Factories & Families." Beth Richie, Professor of Criminal Justice and Gender & Women's Studies at the UIC, delivered the first lecture of the series in November on "Arrested Justice: Race, Gender and the Carceral State." Helen

Kinsella, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, delivered a lecture entitled "Afghan Good Enough: Gender and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan" in January. In April, Christine Walley, Professor of Anthropology at MIT, delivered the last lecture in the series, "*The Exit Zero Project: A Transmedia Exploration of Family, Deindustrialization, and Social Class in Chicago.*"

We asked our undergraduate and graduate students to report back on this year's Kreeger-Wolf lecture series. Here are some of their thoughts on this important new work in gender & sexuality studies.



**RICHIE REVISITS THE  
ISSUE OF VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN IN  
THE CONTEXT OF  
MASS INCARCERATION  
AND THE RISE OF A  
PRISON NATION**

For Richie, current approaches to gendered violence focus too much on personal responsibility and are "framed against individual episodic acts of violence, but not against a patriarchal carceral state." Ritchie's proposed solution is to "redirect resources towards building community infrastructure." As opposed to relying solely on legal deterrence to prevent crime, this approach has the benefit of effectively targeting the root social causes of violence against women, and more importantly, of working to reduce racial and class inequalities rather than reinforcing them.

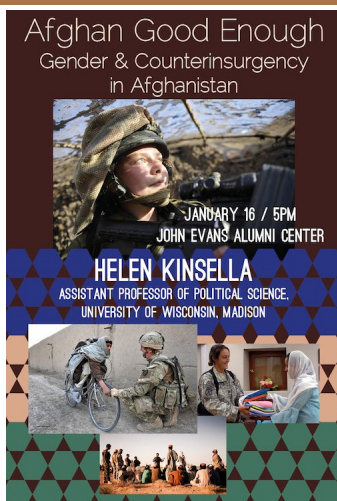
**By Nancy Su (WCAS '17)**

Although the buildup of the prison nation has led to some women feeling safer, as a result of the institution of harsher punishments for violent crimes, the use of increasingly advanced technoscientific tools to monitor those deemed "threatening," and a "fundamentally conservative public commitment to maintaining 'law and order,'" such benefits have been highly stratified. For women of color living in marginalized communities, these "benefits" have resulted in their increased criminalization by "state-operated systems of domination" and they may now be in greater danger than ever before. Ritchie presents three cases of women of color who have suffered this kind of structural violence: Mrs. B, Tanya and the New Jersey 4. Ultimately, Ritchie calls for an end to the prison nation in which "conservative state forces have gradually but systematically eroded the rights, privileges, and opportunities" afforded to disadvantaged groups and for a feminist abolition project.

**By Grace Kong (Economics '17)**

In her talk entitled "Arrested Justice: Race, Gender Violence and the Carceral State," Professor Richie explores Black women's experience of gender violence in the United States. The rise of a "prison nation," or the shift to a "punishment-oriented state" that criminalizes marginalized communities and norm-violating behavior, Richie argues, has made Black women especially vulnerable. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world and state and federal resources are increasingly channeled into funding prisons and police forces. While it has been argued that this protects women against gendered violence by putting perpetrators behind bars, Ritchie argues that this approach disproportionately benefits white women of privilege because Black women (and queer women) who do not fit the normative image of the "innocent female victim" are more likely to be prosecuted than to be defended. As a result, Black women are often unable to obtain protection from state authorities when they are victims of male violence.





## KINSELLA EXPLORES THE CENTRALITY OF GENDER IN COUNTER- INSURGENCY STRATEGIES IN AFGHANISTAN

**By Madhuri Sathish** (Journalism and French '15)

On January 16, Professor Helen Kinsella spoke about a policy mandate called “Afghan Good Enough,” focusing specifically on the biopolitics of counterinsurgency and the role of women in recent U.S. national security policies in Afghanistan. Kinsella pointed out that this discourse has been almost entirely disarticulated from women’s rights. The United States’ entry into Afghanistan after 9/11 was rife with talk about the liberation of women and the importance of freeing women from the Taliban’s oppressive regime. Now, all that matters is leaving the region behind without completely destabilizing it. However, that does not mean the United States has entirely eliminated women’s roles in foreign policy; indeed, Kinsella argued that women have become the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy because allying with women is understood as a means to winning over entire families. Using gender as an analytic framework when analyzing the notion of “Afghan Good Enough” is useful in that it reveals the close ties between the counterinsurgency and Afghan women; it enables us to see how women are being used as pawns in a cost-benefit analysis, even as they are understood as crucial to the success of U.S. foreign policy.

**By Natalie Houchins** (Theater and Gender Studies '14)

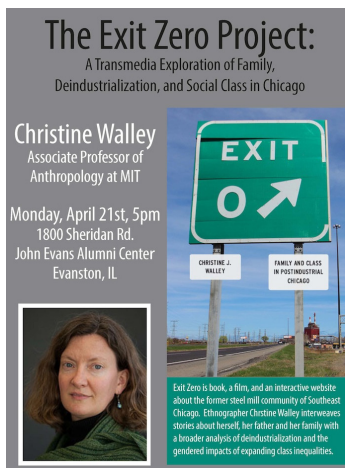
“Afghan Good Enough” is a term that was coined to characterize the current exit strategy that the US is employing in Afghanistan; once Afghanistan is stable enough to minimally govern itself, we will have done our job. Gone is the Bush-era idealism that the US would somehow turn Afghanistan into a liberal democracy. What has set in now is pure pragmatism: we need to cut our costs, prevent further American deaths, and stop incurring damage to our international reputation. This war has gone on for almost thirteen years, and it seems to have come to its natural end: Osama Bin Laden is dead, revenge is fulfilled, and we should get on home. But what does this mean for the women of Afghanistan? What started as a war for their liberation and safety, an irony hopelessly lost on the American people, is now far too costly to continue.

**By Catherine Reid** (Journalism and Gender Studies '15)

An article in the *Daily Beast* describes “Afghan good enough” as a U.S. military slogan for “limiting our objectives to what is achievable and not overreaching.” According to Professor Helen Kinsella, overreaching is exactly what we’re not doing for Afghan women. In “Afghan Good Enough: Gender and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” Kinsella argued “Afghan good enough” relies on the objectification and manipulation of “third world” women to serve the needs of U.S. counterinsurgents. As Kinsella noted, when we first entered Afghanistan, it was partly under the guise of fighting for women’s liberation. Laura Bush ignited women across the U.S with her radio address, calling the brutal oppression of women a “central goal” of the terrorists. This narrative justified the invasion of Afghanistan, even as Afghan women became the tools through which the U.S. waged war in their country. “Women are an ends and a means to a battle,” and “War lordism by the Taliban or the U.S. is bad for women” Kinsella said.

**By Clare Forstie** (PhD Candidate, Sociology & GSS)

Walley wove together the thematic threads of gender, class, and race to frame a familiar set of post-industrial stories in new, affectively engaging, and challenging ways. Drawing from her family’s multi-generational experience working for Wisconsin Steel and the havoc wrought on the Southeast Chicago communities sustained by the mill after its closure, *Exit Zero* further articulated the lingering instantiation of class in bodies. Walley’s emphasis on the everyday experience of class and the related co-construction of gender, race, and class in industrial work and the communities such work engenders, provided a fruitful map for unpacking issues too often segregated in academic discourse. Walley’s accessible style and the project’s rootedness in storytelling as a route to communicate complex social contexts demonstrated how academics can and should engage with, and transform, our own communities and biographies.



## CHRISTINE WALLEY'S EXIT ZERO TRANSMEDIA PROJECT ARTICULATES CLASS THROUGH PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY NARRATIVES

## Faculty Updates&gt;&gt;&gt;

**Kate Baldwin's** (Communication Studies) book, *Cold War Hot Kitchen* is now under contract with UPNE's Remapping the Transnational Series, edited by Donald Pease. This year, she gave a conference presentation on Langston Hughes and his Soviet work at The Fralin Gallery at UVA; a paper titled "Contemporary Labors: Negotiating the Lines between Work and Play" at MoM Museum, NYC; a paper titled "Stilyagi, Soviet, Style" at the ACLA at NYU; and participated as a respondent at the Post45 annual collective symposium at the University of Chicago.

**Nick Davis** (Gender & Sexuality Studies and English) earned tenure in English and Gender & Sexuality Studies in May 2013. In June, Oxford University Press published his first book, *The Desiring-Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema*. In the year since, he has given invited talks about the book and its possible sequels at UC Berkeley, Texas A&M University, and Clemson University, and he presented at the Society for Cinema & Media Studies Conference in Seattle. He also served as a competition juror at two film festivals and wrote about this year's Academy Awards for *The Washington Post*, *The Advocate*, and *Der Spiegel*.

**Micaela di Leonardo** (Anthropology) is an ACLS Fellow this year and is writing "Grown Folks Radio" on an under-noticed black American radio show with progressive politics. At the AAA Meetings in Chicago last November, she responded to a feminist "kind of fest-schritt" panel, made up of 8 of her former and current Ph.D. students, on Americanist culture and political economy. She also spoke at the Performance Studies Cultural Struggles symposium honoring the late Dwight Conquergood in May.

**Ryan Dohoney** (Music) organized and moderated "How to Sound Gay: A Conversation with David Halperin" at the 2013 meeting of the American Musicological Society and published an essay on "John Cage, Julius Eastman, and the Homosexual Ego" in *Tomorrow is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, edited by Benjamin Piekut (University of Michigan Press, 2014).

**Steven Epstein** (Sociology and Humanities) published "The Pharmaceuticalization of Sexual Risk: Vaccine Development and the New Politics of Cancer Prevention" in *Social Science & Medicine* (with Laura Mamo). His article with Héctor Carrillo, "Immigrant Sexual Citizenship: Intersectional Templates among Mexican Gay Immigrants to the United States," is forthcoming in *Citizenship Studies*. Epstein presented his ongoing research on "sexual health as buzzword" at Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University. He continues to co-direct the Sexualities Project at Northwestern (SPAN).

**Jillana Enteen** (Gender & Sexuality Studies) travelled to Thailand for her research on their medical tourism industry and on Gender Reassignment/Confirmation surgeries for non-Thais, with support from SPAN. She published "Transitioning Online: Cosmetic Surgery Tourism Thailand" in *Television and New Media Studies* and presented a paper at the Association for Internet Research annual conference in Denver. This year, she also designed a new undergraduate course on "Transitions: Medical Tourism and Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality" and continued to co-direct the faculty/graduate Northwestern University Digital Humanities Lab.

**Kyle Henry's** (RTVF) film *Fourplay* will have its Brazilian premiere at the Rio Festival Gay de Cinema 2014 in July. More information about the film can be found here <http://fourplayfilm.com/>

**E. Patrick Johnson** (Performance Studies and African American Studies) received the Otto René Castillo Award for Political Theatre in New York City for his one-man-show, *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men Of the South*. In addition to a two-week run in NY, *Sweet Tea* played in Durham, NC in February. E. Patrick also did a staged reading of his latest project, *Honeypot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women* at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in March.

**Phyllis Lassner** (The Writing Program) has been awarded the International Diamond Jubilee Fellowship at Southampton University, UK. The article she co-wrote with Danny Cohen, "Magical Transports and Transformations: The Lessons of Children's Holocaust Fiction," is published in the current *Journal of Jewish American Studies* and her essay, "Dark Spaces of Holocaust Memory: Second Generation German Narratives of Desire and Absence" will be published in the forthcoming issue of *The Holocaust and Memory*.

**Ann Shola Orloff** (Sociology) will spend 2014-15 at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford to work on her manuscript, *Toward a Gender-Open Future? Transformations in Gender, Global Capitalism and Systems of Social Provision and Regulation*, which aims to describe and explain gendered policy transformations -- most centrally the increasing support for mothers' paid employment -- over the last half-century, in the US and Sweden.

**Alex Owen** (History and Gender & Sexuality Studies) was honored to receive the E. LeRoy Hall Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences in June 2013. She conducted research in the U.K. in Winter 2014, and participated in a round-table at Northwestern in the Spring with Matt Houlbrook (*Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-57*) and Seth Koven (*Slumming: Social and Sexual Politics in Victorian London*). She discusses the bi-sexuality of an infamous renegade occultist in her contribution to the edited volume *Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism*, Henrik Bogdan & Martin P. Starr, eds. (published in German translation by Edition Roter Drache, 2014)

**Ramón H. Rivera-Servera** (Performance Studies) received the Lambda Literary Book Award in LGBTQ Studies, the Latino Studies Book Award from the Latin American Studies Association, the Outstanding Publication Award from the Congress on Research in Dance, and a special citation for the de la Torre Bueno Book Prize from the Society of Dance History Scholars for *Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Studies* (University of Michigan Press, 2012). He published *solo/black/woman: scripts, interviews and essays* (co-edited with Prof. E. Patrick Johnson) and *The Goodman Theatre's Festival Latino: Six Plays* (co-edited with Prof. Henry Godinez) both with Northwestern University Press.

**Sarah Rodriguez's** (Medical Humanities and Bioethics) book, *Female Circumcision and Clitoridectomy in the United States: A History of a Medical Treatment*, will be published this fall by the University of Rochester Press.

**Mary Weismantel** (Anthropology) published three articles in edited volumes this year. She also was invited to lecture at the University of Toronto and McMaster University, and presented papers in the Plenary Session of the Theory in Archaeology Group [U.S.] annual meetings, and at the Society for American Archaeology annual meetings; she served as a discussant for panels on gender and sexuality at both of those meetings.



# Sexualities Project at Northwestern

## SPAN Year in Review

This school year was the first of a new phase after renewal of funding for SPAN by Provost Daniel Linzer. The past nine months were marked by solidification and strengthening of our project, along with our usual array of activities, including a yearly workshop, a reading group during the Winter quarter, and several funding competitions. The most visible change was the hiring of our Program Assistant, Jeremy Cornelius. A cheerful presence in the GSS office, Jeremy deserves credit for revamping the SPAN website and turning it into a more functional source of information, as well as initiating the SPAN weekly announcements.

We look forward to 2014-15, when we will once again provide a range of funding opportunities for faculty and graduate students. We will also welcome two new postdoctoral fellows, Kai Green and Aaron Norton. Speaking of postdocs, we are proud of the successes of SPAN's first cohort, Evren Savci and Kirsten Leng. Evren is com-

pleting her first year as Assistant Professor in the Women and Gender Studies Department at San Francisco State University, while Kirsten will be beginning as Assistant Professor in the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

See you all in the fall!

—Héctor Carrillo and Steve Epstein  
SPAN Co-directors

*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.*

For more information about SPAN and funding opportunities, please visit:

<http://www.sexualities.northwestern.edu/>.

If you would like to receive SPAN announcements, please email [sexualities@northwestern.edu](mailto:sexualities@northwestern.edu).



## Introducing the SPAN Post-Docs

### Aaron Norton

Aaron Norton, whose work engages with Science and Technology Studies, recently received his PhD from the Department of Psychology at UC Davis. Currently, he is Graduate Fellow for the UC Davis Center for Science and Innovation Studies. His research interests include feminist-science and technology studies approaches to the study of gender and sexuality, attitudes toward LGBT people, and the biopolitics of HIV-risk categorization and prevention. Aaron's dissertation traces the science, ethics, and politics of male circumcision's emergence as an HIV-risk category and prevention strategy. He has published articles in *BioSocieties*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Sex Roles*, *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, and from a prior life, the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.



### Kai M. Green

Kai M. Green is a writer, scholar, poet, filmmaker, abolitionist, and feminist. For the past six years, he has been in Los Angeles building locally with Black LGBT communities, while also working to complete his dissertation, "Into the Darkness: A Black Queer (Re)Membering of Los Angeles in a Time of Crises." Kai is completing his graduate work at The University of Southern California in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity. He will also receive graduate certificates in Gender Studies and Visual Anthropology. Kai is invested in developing models of healthy and loving Black masculinities. Through his writing and organizing, Kai has become a strong, visible voice in the Black Trans community and the general LGBT community.



# SPAN Workshop: “Desiring Categories: Predicaments of Binaries, Boundaries, and Classifications in Sexuality Studies”

*This year’s SPAN Workshop addresses the complexities of classification*

By **Anna Terwiel** (PhD Candidate, Political Science & GSS Certificate)

Riley Snorton (Communication Studies) observed in Friday’s opening talk that the media love to classify Black artists as the “first gay rapper.” Their eagerness to do so, he argued, reveals not only their ongoing association of Blackness with homophobia but also the demand that Black artists present their “true selves” to the public. Might plasticity, understood as insincerity, objecthood, and transformation, open up new ways of being, looking, and being seen? Psychiatrist Vernon Rosario addressed the complexities of classification from a different angle: that of treating children with Disorders of Sexual Development (DSD) in the clinic. In some cases, neither anatomy, genes, chromosomes, hormones, or children’s preference for Dora or superhero stickers provides physicians with a conclusive answer to the question, “What is this child’s sex and gender?” English and Women’s Studies scholar Valerie Traub turned to the category of “the lesbian,” too easily dismissed as a quaint minoritized identity. Instead, Traub argued, the lesbian indicates a limit-category for the study of history and sexuality that Queer Theory has ignored at its peril. Anthropologist Martin Manalansan argued in the



Martin Manalansan, C Riley Snorton, and Jay Grossman at “Desiring Categories” Workshop [Photo Courtesy of Gabe Bergado]

day’s concluding talk that the Filipino sex/gender category “bakla,” which is in dialogue with and resistant to the Euro-American “LGBT” classificatory scheme, illuminates the travel of sex/gender categories through post-colonial migration, diaspora, and imperialism.

## “How do we get from babies to gendered beings?": Anne Fausto Sterling’s SPAN Workshop keynote address

By **Heather Evans** (History & GSS '14)

Anne Fausto-Sterling, Professor of Biology and Gender Studies at Brown, began her lecture “I Was Born a Baby: The Dynamic Development of Gender Variability” by asking the audience “how do we get from babies to gendered beings?” This crucial question guides her research on gender acquisition. Fausto-Sterling noted that embodied gender begins as pre-symbolic coding that is generated from sensory receptors triggered by touch from parents or the way a baby is spoken to. These early cues become embodied and only later does gender become

symbolic and lead to gender labeling and receptive self-labeling. Fausto-Sterling argued that each child’s gender landscape, which shapes the way they define their own genders, are developed in their interactions with a range of social and environmental factors. Gender identification seems to be innate or “natural” because these factors are introduced so early. Babies are born babies, and yes, they are born with certain characteristics that make them biologically “male”, “female” or somewhere in between, but it is early social and parental interactions that starts babies on a path to discovering gender, and that usually means “male” or “female.”



In her lecture, “I Was Born a Baby: The Dynamic Development of Gender Variability,” Fausto-Sterling began with the assertion that human development is a continuous, iterative process. She pointed out that studies of neonatal sex trait differences reveal males to have a larger head circumference and higher birth weight, whereas females have a higher APGAR score. These neonatal differences are important to the extent that they impact infant irritability and sleep patterns, which, in turn, affect how adults interact with the child and how the child is nurtured in his or her early life. This example, Fausto-Sterling argues, allows us to recognize that embodied gender begins as “pre-symbolic coding”: Gender gets encoded in the brain and nervous system of the infant before he or she has entered the symbolic order. Later, gender acquisition moves from the pre-symbolic to the symbolic realm as infants encounter gendered toys and begin to associate gendered play with affection, excitement, and encouragement. In the end, Fausto-Sterling argues that her research suggests that a child’s gender identity is formed in the first three years of life.



Anne Fausto-Sterling delivers keynote at SPAN workshop  
[Photo Courtesy of Gabe Bergado]

Fausto-Sterling's lecture made interesting use of theories of human development, longitudinal studies, and observations of socialization patterns to explore the processes by which gender is acquired.

## SPAN Award Recipients '13-'14

**-Clare Forstie** (PhD Candidate, Sociology & GSS Cluster): "Queer Connections: Making Friends in Community and Identity Contexts"

**-Roy Gomez Cruz** (PhD Candidate, Performance Studies): "Flexible Bodies and Fluid Sexualities: Performance and Training in the Contemporary Circus"

**-Rae Langes** (PhD Candidate, Performance Studies): "Beacons of Freakdom: Performances of Monstrosity at the Edges of Queer"

**-Angela Leone** (PhD Candidate, Rhetoric & Public Culture): "Born Wild, Created to be Free: Sexual Promiscuity, Western Masculinity, and Religion in Professional Bull Riding"

**-Ryan Mack** (PhD Candidate, Sociology & GSS Cluster): "PrEP'ing for Prevention: Understanding the (potential) Spread of Prophylactic HIV Medication"

**-Kellie Owens** (PhD Candidate, Sociology, Science in Human Culture, & Medical Humanities): "From the Delivery Room to the Bedroom: How obstetricians and midwives view their role in the sexual health of their patients"

**-Karly-Lynne Scott** (PhD Candidate, RTVF/ Screen Cultures): "Supersensual: Erotic Engagements with Media and the Extension, Reconfiguration and Remapping of the Spectatorial Sensorium"

**-Beth Hartman** (PhD Candidate, Anthropology): “Hearing the Dance: An Ethnographic and Ethnomusicological Study of Stripping in the Midwestern US”  
**-Meiver de la Cruz** (PhD Candidate, Performance Studies): “Economies of Authenticity: Belly Dance and Post-9/11 Nationalism in the United States”

**-Jillana Enteen** (GSS): “Transexions: Complexities of GRS in Thailand”  
**-Michael Newcomb** (Medical Social Sciences): “Strengthening Same-Sex Couples through Relationship Education”  
**-Mary Weismantel** (Anthropology, GSS): “The Moche Sex Pots Project”

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[www.genderstudies.northwestern.edu](http://www.genderstudies.northwestern.edu)

# GRADUATE

**Alexandra Lindgren-Gibson** is pursuing a PhD in History and a GSS certificate. She is currently ABD.

**Dissertation:** "British Working-Class Culture and Family Life in Victorian India: Renegotiating Class, Sexuality and Race, 1858-1914"

**Future Plans:** Alex accepted the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for 2014-15 and the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture, and Society Emerging Scholars International Research Fellowship to support research in the National Archives of India in New Delhi in Winter 2014. She was also awarded, but declined, the Mellon-Council for European Studies Dissertation Completion Fellowship 2014-2015.

**Thoughts on the future(s) of GSS:** I love teaching GSS classes and introducing students to gender and sexuality studies in History courses, because thinking about the past through gender and sexuality helps students see how ideas, categories, or concepts they take for granted have a genealogy and are not monolithic and unchanging. I've recently been participating in a teaching workshop through the History Department and am developing a course on the history of shopping that teaches students to consider the relationship between developments in capitalism, changing ideas about the family and women's roles, and new forms of subjectivity, through a topic that has traditionally been seen as frivolous, feminine, and apolitical.



ALEXANDRA LINDGREN-GIBSON

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The Gender & Sexuality Studies Program at Northwestern offers a Graduate Certificate in GSS that attracts students pursuing PhDs in a wide range of disciplines. 55 PhD students are currently pursuing the certificate and 6 completed their PhD and were awarded a GSS certificate this year. Below we profile four of our graduate students. We asked each to tell us about their plans for next year and to comment on the future(s) of Gender and Sexuality Studies.



KAREEM KHUBCHANDANI

**Kareem Khubchandani** received his PhD in Performance Studies and completed the certificate in Gender & Sexuality Studies in June 2014. He was awarded a 2013-2014 GSS Teaching Assistantship and TA'ed for two of our undergraduate course ("Sexual Subjects: Introduction to Sexuality Studies" and "Beyond the Binary") and taught his own course on "Queer of Color: Interventions in Theatre, Dance and Performance Art" this past year.

**Dissertation:** "Ishtyle: Queer Nightlife Performance in India and the South Asian Diaspora"

**Future Plans:** Kareem will be an Embry Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, beginning in the Fall of 2014.

**Thoughts on the future(s) of GSS:** At several recent conferences I've attended, Audre Lorde's essay "The Uses of the Erotic" has been invoked to explore embodied methodologies and to recuperate women of color feminisms that have been occluded by the rise of queer theory. At Austin, I will be teaching a Feminist Methodologies class that will rely on women of color feminisms to interrogate dialogic performance as an ethical research method and to attend to the body as a site of critical politics and political pleasures.



**Elias Krell** received his PhD in Performance Studies and completed the certificate in Gender & Sexuality Studies in June 2014. He was awarded a 2013-2014 GSS Teaching Assistantship and TA'ed for "Sexual Subjects: Introduction to Sexuality Studies" and "Gender & Political Philosophy," and taught his own course on "Transforming Feminisms: A Critical Introduction to Trans(gender) Studies" this past year.

**Dissertation:** "Singing Strange: Transvocality in North American Music Performance"

**Future Plans:** Eli will begin a two-year Consortium for Faculty Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship in Feminist and Queer Studies at Vassar College, beginning in the Fall of 2014. This year, Eli was also awarded a Northwestern University Career Development Grant.

**Thoughts on the future(s) of GSS:** One of the choicest futures of the field is manifesting at the intersections of critical ethnic studies and gender & sexuality studies. In Fall 2014, I will join the faculty of the Feminist and Queer Studies Program at Vassar College. My research and teaching at Vassar will continue to explore performance, theory, and activism as practices of social justice and decolonization. For example, I will teach a course on trans of color critique, which centers race as an analytic within contemporary feminist, queer, and trans activism. I will also be curating a Queer & Trans of Color Performance Series at Vassar over the course of the next two years.



ELIAS KRELL

**Teri Chettiar** received her PhD in History and completed the certificate in Gender & Sexuality Studies in the summer of 2013. She was awarded a 2012-2013 GSS Teaching Assistantship and taught a course in GSS in spring quarter on "Gender, Sexuality & Medicine", in addition to TAing for two of our introductory undergraduate courses.

**Dissertation:** "The Psychiatric Family: Citizenship, Private Life, and Emotional Health in Welfare-State Britain"

**Future Plans:** Teri began a three-year Postdoctoral Fellowship in August of 2013 through the Berlin Center for the History of Knowledge, a joint initiative between the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and Humboldt University in Berlin.

**Thoughts on the future(s) of GSS:** Since beginning my postdoc, I've been developing a new transnational dimension to my research, which explores how emerging models of healthy psychological development served to naturalize and normalize a certain kind of emotionally intimate heterosexual child-producing ideal for monogamous marriage in the decades after 1945. I've been following the movement of British and American psychological techniques for cultivating stable nuclear families (including family counseling, marriage therapy, and child guidance centers for "delinquent" youth) to a range of "developing" African and Asian nations since the early 1940s, including Nigeria, India, South Africa, and the Philippines. I see this work as contributing to a growing body of transnational gender and sexuality studies scholarship that examines the relationship between the creation of new global political networks post-1945 and efforts to "modernize" sexual life and family practices in a variety of post-colonial nations.



TERI CHETTIAR

# Queertopia! 7.0: Vibrant Morphologies

**By Kareem Khubchandani** (Performance Studies PhD & GSS Certificate '14)

Naisargi Dave's keynote address at Queertopia! 7.0, "Vibrant Morphologies," meditated on the question, "If not through identity, how do we give shape to our lives?" Her keynote was a beautiful culmination to the series of papers and conversations at this year's Queertopia!, each of which grappled with the pitfalls and possibilities of staging LGBTQ identities in global contexts. Paper topics considered this question in relation to polygamy, pornography, pride parades, asylum law and hate crime legislation, instances of sexual racism, and the case of the Olympics. These projects also interrogated the utility of queer theory outside of the U.S. in global sites such as Kampala, Soche, Sao Paulo, Cape Town, the U.S.-Mexico border, and Bangalore. By critiquing the stagnation of queer theory as it gets taken up as a respectable form of gender politics and by evidencing the uptake and remixing of queer theory in the context of global activism, these papers represent an important and invigorating contribution to queer studies.

Queergasm a night of performance hosted in conjunction with Queertopia! [Photo Courtesy of Deniz Alpay]



## Engendering Change Graduate Conference

This year the annual Chicago-area graduate student conference Engendering Change returned to Northwestern. Francesca Royster, Professor of English at DePaul University, delivered the keynote, "Engendering Funky Futures: Labelle, Meshell Ndegeocello, and Janelle Monae," on Friday, April 4th. Saturday featured graduate panels that interrogated the usefulness of gender as an analytic for assessing a range of institutional sites, community formations and cultural practices and included panels on "Reproduction & Health," "Representation in Public Discourse," and "Public Embodiment, Embodied Publics." For more information, see *The Windy City Times* April 9th articles on the keynote address and on the "Mediating Communities" and "Structures, Governance, and Self-Fashioning" panels.



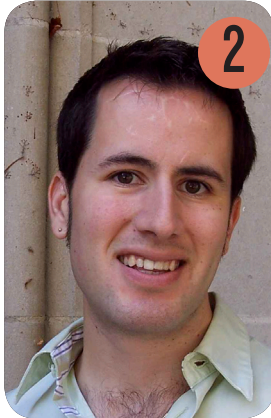
Conference Panel at Engendering Change [Photo Courtesy of Elias Krell]



# Introducing next year's teaching assistants



**1 Carla Della Gatta** is a PhD candidate in Theatre & Drama and is pursuing the Gender & Sexuality Studies Certificate. Her dissertation is entitled "Shakespeare & Latinidad: Twenty-first Century Intracultural Performance." Her work has appeared in several peer-reviewed journals as well as in collections published by Oxford University Press and Palgrave Macmillan. She spent the last ten months doing research at the Biblioteca Nacional de España.



**2 Jeff Kosbie** is a JD/PhD Candidate in Law and Sociology. His dissertation, "Contested Identities: A History of LGBT Legal Mobilization and the Ethics of Impact," uses organizational histories of major LGBT legal organizations to theorize the contested nature of legal strategy. He sees a key role for sound empirical research in informing normative legal theory.



**3 Leigh Goldstein** is a PhD Candidate in the Screen Cultures Program and a Gender and Sexuality Studies Certificate student. She writes about media history, women's culture and feminist theory, and she has published articles in several media studies journals, including *Critical Studies in Television* and *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*.

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## GSS Graduate Student Colloquium

Debuting this winter in its new format as a for-credit course, the GSS Graduate Colloquium met semi-weekly throughout winter and spring quarters. The colloquium offers a center of gravity for graduate students pursuing gender- and sexuality-related projects in various disciplines, including African-American Studies, Art Theory and Practice, English, Performance Studies, Political Science, and Sociology. Coordinated by Professor Kasey Evans (English), the colloquium divided its time between discussions of published work by established scholars working in gender and sexuality studies and workshops of graduate student work-in-progress. This year's readings included work by Beth Richie (Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago); Helen Kinsella (Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison); Christine Walley (Anthropology, MIT); Kathryn Schwarz (English, Vanderbilt University); and the late great Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Next year's colloquium will once again meet

every other Friday afternoon from 12:00–2:00 p.m. during winter and spring quarters, once again with Kasey at the nominal helm; she welcomes any and all GSS faculty and graduate students who can benefit from ongoing interdisciplinary conversation.



GENDER  
sexuality &  
STUDIES

# Graduate Student Updates >>>

**Clare Forstie's** (PhD Candidate, Sociology and Gender & Sexuality Studies Cluster) book chapter, "Bittersweet Emotions, Identities, and Sexualities: Insights from a Lesbian Community Space," was published in *Selves, Symbols and Sexualities: An Interactionist Anthology*, edited by Staci Newmahr and Thomas Weinberg (SAGE Publications, 2014). In March, she also presented her paper "After Closing Time: Affective Engagements with Space, Visibility, and Memory in a Lesbian Bar" at the Queer Nightlife symposium at Northwestern and on "Conspicuous absences: Urban spaces, virtual spaces, and patterns of gendered invisibility" at the Queering the Quotidian conference at Georgia State University in Atlanta. In addition, she organized an interdisciplinary conference on Sexual Reputations with Gary Alan Fine in November at Northwestern, where they presented their co-authored paper "Signaling Perversion: Reputational Audiences in Midcentury Politics." Finally, she won an honorary mention for the Robert F. Winch Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant in the fall.

**Carla Della Gatta** (PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Gender & Sexuality Studies Certificate) presented on "Homosocial and Paternal Bonds in The Merchant of Venice," at St. Louis University, Madrid Campus, in February 2014. Her article, "Repertory and Patriarchy: Adapting La Dama Boba and The Taming of the Shrew for a Twenty-first Century 'Foreign' Audience" will be published in the *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, in Spring 2015. Della Gatta was also awarded a Gender and Sexuality Studies Teaching Assistantship at Northwestern for 2014-2015.

**Kareem Khubchandani** (PhD Performance Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies Certificate) successfully defended his dissertation, "Ishtyle: Queer Nightlife Performance in India and the South Asian Diaspora" this Spring and will begin as the Embry Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin in Fall 2014. This year he also co-curated the annual Queertopia! conference at Northwestern and directed *My Asian Mom* at Chicago Dramatists. His article, "Staging Transgender Solidarities at Bangalore Pride" will be published in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* this fall.

**Jeffrey Kosbie** (JD/PhD Candidate, Sociology and Law) taught "History of LGBTQ Legal Activism" for the Gender and Sexuality Studies Program in Winter 2014 and published "Beyond Queer vs. LGBT: Discursive Community and Marriage Mobilization in Massachusetts" in *The Marrying Kind? Debating Same-Sex Marriage within the Lesbian and Gay Movement* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013). He was also awarded a Gender and Sexuality Studies Teaching Assistantship at Northwestern for 2014-2015.

**Elias Krell** (PhD Performance Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies Certificate) successfully defended his dissertation in December 2013 and will begin a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Vassar College in Fall 2014. He recently published in the Queer/Trans Special Issue of the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, in the edited volume *Trans Bodies/Trans Selves* (Oxford UP, 2014), and has essays forthcoming in *Feminist Formations* and in *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies* (Oxford UP). Eli presented at the Cultural Studies Association Conference, New York University Music Department's At the Limits of Hearing Conference, and at the American Popular Culture Association Conference as part of the BDSM/Fetish/Kink Studies

Group. This year, he also co-chaired the Engendering Change graduate student conference at Northwestern. Finally, his music project, "Elias Krell & the No Good," recently released their third album and was selected to perform in the national "Trans 100" event in May, hosted by Laverne Cox.

**Rae Langes** (PhD Candidate, Performance Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies Certificate) served on the executive committee for In Bodies We Trust: Performance, Affect, and Political Economy, an interdisciplinary graduate student conference held at Northwestern in October 2013. In November 2013, Rae presented "Aberrant Desires: Searching for the Monstrously Queer in/through José Hernández' Redemption of Ishtar Bukkake" on the Top Debut Papers Panel at the 99th Annual National Communication Association conference and on "Monstrous Futures: Transitioning Discourses of Queer Reproduction" at the Midwest Modern Language Association conference.

**Melissa Minor Peters** (PhD Anthropology) successfully defended her dissertation, "Kuchus in the Balance: Queer Lives under Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill." In March, she was interviewed on the NPR-syndicated WBEZ program "Worldview," where she discussed the effect of the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act on Ugandan lives: <https://soundcloud.com/wbez-worldview/ugandans-challenge-anti>. In April, she was invited to Dartmouth College to lead a panel of experts on the political, social, and economic context of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act and once again appeared on "Worldview" to discuss the emergence of LGBT Pride festivals in Africa. She also defend her MPH thesis, "Invisible in Plain Sight: Transgender Ugandans in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment" and co-curated this year's Queertopia! conference at Northwestern.

**Anna Terwiel** (PhD Candidate, Political Science & Gender & Sexuality Studies Certificate) became a Graduate Affiliate of the Medical Humanities & Bioethics Program at the Feinberg School of Medicine in 2013-14.

**Rhaisa Williams** (PhD Candidate, Performance Studies) became ABD in June 2013. In November, she presented her work at the American Society for Theater Research (ASTR) and at the Women and Gender Seminar at the Newberry Library in March. She was also awarded a 2014 Mellon Travel and Research Grant.



## GSS Undergraduate Program Year in Review

By Amy Partridge (Assoc. Dir. & DUS, GSS)

We congratulate our 25 graduating seniors and look forward to following their future trajectories and contributions to the field!

Senior thesis students, Elyssa Cherney, Samantha Sainsbury and Riley Smith, all received honors from WCAS. Elyssa was also awarded the Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs Prize for her thesis on “*Kumari* Worship in a Global World: Transnational Feminism and Nepal’s Living Goddess”, and was selected to present her research at the WCAS 2014 Undergraduate Research and Arts Exposition. Two of our rising seniors, Jennifer Katz and Bea Sullivan-Knopf, were awarded WCAS Summer Undergraduate Research Grants to fund summer research on their 2014-2015 senior thesis projects. To find out more about our students’ many accomplishments this year, see the updates, the full list of award winners, and graduating senior Samantha Caiola’s interviews with Kyra Jones (’14) and alum Camille Beredjick (’15) below.

We are pleased to announce a number of new additions to the undergraduate curriculum. This year we partnered with the Chicago Field Studies Program (CFS) to place our students in internships that focused on issues of race, gender and sexuality through the CFS “Social Justice” seminar, taught in Winter 2014 by NU alum Mariame Kaba, Founding Director of Project Nia. We are excited to be offering two Professional Linkage Seminars in 2014-2015, the popular “International Development and the Politics of Gender” taught by Joan Sherman and a new seminar on “Policing Gender and Sexuality” taught by Andrea Ritchie (JD Howard University). Prof. Gregory Ward (Linguistics) will also be offering a new 200-level Gender & Sexuality Studies course on “Language and Gender” in Winter 2015 and the incoming SPAN post-docs, Kai Green (PhD University of Southern California) and Aaron Norton (PhD University of California, Davis) will each be offering new undergraduate courses next year.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with our undergraduate students in the classroom and on campus events. One of the most memorable events this year was Owen Daniel-McCarter’s talk on “Trans Law and Liberation” hosted by the Gender Studies Undergraduate Advisory Board (GSUAB), which is described by graduating senior Elise Chagas below.



Owen Daniel-McCarter [Photo Courtesy of Owen Daniel-McCarter]

### *Owen Daniel-McCarter on “Trans Law and Liberation”*

*On March 4, 2014, Owen Daniel-McCarter, founding member of the Transformative Justice Law Project (TJLP) and Legal Director and Staff Attorney at the TransLife Center, was invited by GSUAB to talk about legal and activist approaches to trans liberation.*

By Elise Chagas (Art History and Gender Studies ’14)

Owen Daniel-McCarter described the specific nature of discrimination that transgender people face and identified four inextricably linked areas of discrimination—housing, employment, education, and medical care—that together create a bewildering matrix of oppression as trans people confront these interlocking systems of administrative governance. He then described his work as a founder member of the Transformative Justice Law Project (TJLP) and as Legal Director and Staff Attorney at Chicago House, both of which attempt to combat this systemic oppression by building supportive communities that can assist individuals navigate complicated discriminatory barriers.

The goal of both projects is to redistribute the unequal distribution of life chances. In keeping with their core values of self-determination, prison abolition and transformative justice, TJLP provides legal services, programming and education on trans liberation, and hosts a range of other projects including a “glam team” that meets trans women upon release from prison and aids them in their transition to the outside. The Chicago House’s TransLife Center provides legal advocacy, health and medical care, and employment workshops.

# Three seniors complete theses

## Fulfillment, Regulation, and Moderation:

### *Defining the sex-positive community on edenfantasys.com*

My project explores the online community of a sex-positive sex shop, Edenfantasys.com. I examined discussion forums and product reviews hosted by the site as well as site policies to investigate how a “sex-positive” community is constituted on this website. My research takes up the following questions: How does EdenFantasys.com construct itself as a sex-positive business? How do consumers contribute to and make sense of the sex-positive mission of this for-profit, online business? What are the features and policies governing community production and moderation and what kind of community is forged as a result? Finally, how closely does this market-driven, web-based community’s definition of sex-positivity resemble other articulations of this concept? I argue that EdenFantasys.com produces a community which relies on an individualized (often heteronormative) conception of sex-positivity that ultimately proves unable to theorize and politicize subtle forms of sex-negativity and their effects, to offer a critique of heteronormativity, or to encour-



age and celebrate sexual fluidity, despite the important work this site does in supporting and educating community members.

—Samantha Sainsbury (Psychology & GSS ‘14)

## *Kumari Worship in a Global World:*

### *Transnational feminism and Nepal’s living goddess*

Across Nepal’s Kathmandu Valley, six prepubescent girls are venerated as living Hindu and Buddhist goddesses until they begin menstruation. While some of these girls serve as goddesses, they cannot attend school or live with their families. Though most scholarship on *Kumari* worship provides theological accounts of the custom, my project examines whether *Kumari* worship is perceived as a feminist issue in Nepal. I spent two weeks in Nepal and conducted 15 semi-formal interviews. I also relied on primary documents including a 2005 Nepal Supreme Court case that challenged the tradition’s constitutionality. In my interviews with Nepalese people who worship *Kumari* and who work in gender-related fields, three major themes emerged: *Kumari* worship as linked to identity, *Kumari* worship as a gender issue, but not a feminist issue and *Kumari* worship as a religious and indigenous right. Using a feminist theory of critical judgment, this study contributes to ongoing debates over cultural relativism and sheds light on the possibilities and limitations of a transnational feminist movement based on a monolithic definition of human rights. How we perceive *Kumari* worship – as oppressive, as celebratory or as somewhere in between – holds lessons for how western



feminists can distinguish between human rights violations and traditions that are just different from our own. In this thesis, I hope to build a more fluid definition of human rights determined in part by local context and add to the ongoing debate about how an ethical, responsive transnational feminism might work.

—Elyssa Cherney (Journalism and GS ‘14)



# Navigating Healthcare from the Margins:

*Healthcare experiences of lesbian and bisexual women in Cape Town, South Africa*

“Navigating Healthcare from the Margins: Healthcare experiences of lesbian and bisexual women in Cape Town, South Africa” investigates the experiences and perceptions of sexual minority women accessing healthcare in Cape Town. The health needs and disparities of LGBT persons worldwide have only recently begun to be recognized and addressed, and South African lesbian and bisexual (LB) women may face unique challenges that are not currently addressed by the country’s healthcare system. My study investigates these challenges by exploring the obstacles women face in accessing LGBT-affirming services, their fear of stigma or discrimination, and the availability of relevant sexual health information. Through 22 qualitative interviews with self-identified LB women, I identify three major themes: differences between public and private care, a lack of available sexual health information, and suggestions for improvements. LB women’s differing experiences in the public and private health sec-



tors are further illuminated by the concepts of cultural capital and intersectionality, which impact the ways in which patients perceive and respond to heteronormativity and discrimination.

—Riley Smith (GSS ‘14)

## Graduating senior on GSS and activism

By **Samantha Caoila** (Journalism and Gender Studies ‘14)

For Kyra Jones, stage performance is about more than entertainment.

The Gender & Sexuality Studies/Theatre senior has made a name for herself both on and off campus as an actress and advocate working to raise awareness about rape culture. Through her work with the Student Health and Peer Educators (SHAPE) and Chicago’s Rape Victim Advocates (RVA), she has focused her research around victims of sexual assault, particularly women of color.

Jones was first drawn to this line of work after viewing a Wildcat Welcome role-play exercise that portrayed sexual assault insensitively. Determined to provide more comprehensive programming addressing rape culture, she joined theatre professor Michael Rohd to create the programming now in place. She went on to become the events co-chair for SHAPE, an organizer for Sex Week, and a staff member at the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE).

During her undergraduate career, Jones developed an interest in the relationship between race, history and gender—which she attributes to the intersectional approach of many of her GSS courses. Her independent study project explored the high proportion of CARE clients who are students of color, and led to the creation of a task force on the issue.

“Part of why I love the GSS Program so much is that it offers such a comprehensive view,” said Jones. “You don’t get that in other departments.”

Most recently, Jones acquired an undergraduate re-



Cast of *Gathering Honey*  
[Photo Courtesy of Kyra Jones]

search grant and a GSS scholarship to travel to North Carolina, where she performed in Professor E. Patrick Johnson’s *Gathering Honey*. The stage piece is an adaption of Johnson’s forthcoming book *Honeypot*, an oral history of black lesbians in the south, many of whom were victims of sexual violence.

Post-graduation Jones aspires to write comedy and to lend a much-needed black female voice to television and film. “I’ll always keep issues of gender and sexuality in the work I do,” she said.



# Alum uses GSS education when working with students

By **Samantha Caoila** (Journalism and Gender Studies '14)

Juggling a full-time position and a blog with 80,000 followers is no cakewalk. But it's life as usual for Gender & Sexuality Studies (GSS) alum Camille Beredjick ('13), founder of popular LGBT news blog Gay Writes and a digital communications assistant for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

As an undergraduate, Camille wrote for campus media while also running her own site, which consolidates and analyzes LGBT news from around the world. She is responsible for the founding of NU's chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists' Association and a new GSS Studies/Journalism course entitled "Reporting on Gender and Sexual Minorities."

"That's one of the things I'm proudest of," said Beredjick. "Since I got to NU we'd been pushing for a class that covered these topics. When we brought it to the attention of GSS it became clear that this was something people thought about on a grander scale. The GSS connection helped us to get the course off the ground and to make the coursework a little bit deeper."

Beredjick's interest in education brought her to New York City, where she now works with national non-profit GLSEN to combat LGBT bullying in schools. She assists students of diverse racial, economic and religious backgrounds on a day-to-day basis- something she said



CAMILLE BEREDJICK

she is more equipped to do having come out of the GSS program.

"There's not a one size fits all way to help a student dealing with bullying," she said. "Gender Studies did a really great job introducing me to that."

When not reporting and blogging, Beredjick was busy completing her GSS senior thesis entitled "Pride and Politics: The Sociopolitical Implications of Gay Pride Parades."

## Undergraduate Awards

### RAE ARLENE MOSES LEADERSHIP AWARD

{ TESSA OWENS  
(GENDER & SEXUALITY  
STUDIES '14) }

### GEORGE C. CASEY PRIZE

{ KAREN CHEN  
(MEDILL '14)  
PAIGE ROTONDO  
(COMM STUDIE '14) }

### BETTY JO TETTER DOBBS PRIZE

{ ELYSSA CHERNEY  
(MEDILL &  
GENDER STUDIES '14) }

## OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

[ FRESHMAN:  
BEATRICE HAGNEY  
(GENDER & SEXUALITY  
STUDIES '17) ]

[ SOPHOMORE:  
SARAH MOSS  
(PSYCHOLOGY AND GENDER &  
SEXUALITY STUDIES '16) ]

[ JUNIOR:  
BEA SULLIVAN-KNOFF  
(RTVF AND GENDER &  
SEXUALITY STUDIES '15) ]



# Undergraduate Student Updates >>>

**Lindsay Amer** (2014) will begin an MA program in Theatre and Performance Studies at Queen Mary University of London, where she will focus on themes of gender and sexuality in new works for young people at London's National Theatre, in Fall 2014.

**Elizabeth Bohl** (2015) is spending her summer interning at Samrakshak Samuha Nepal (SASANE) and hiking Mt. Kilimanjaro with Mountains for Moms Northwestern. When she returns to campus in the fall, she will begin work on her Gender and Sexuality Studies senior thesis.

**Lucy Blumberg** (2016) is spending the summer studying public health as a Hill-Urbana Fellow in Cuba.

**Samantha Caiola** (2014) will move to Sacramento after graduation to work as a health reporting intern at *The Sacramento Bee*. During her undergraduate career at Northwestern she did regular freelance reporting for *The Windy City Times*, Chicago's major LGBT newspaper, and produced a major centerpiece for *The Chicago Bureau*, an online juvenile justice publication, about the struggles of transgender youth to acquire hormones for transition. She also co-founded the Northwestern chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association and helped to implement a new LGBT reporting class, which is cross-listed in Gender & Sexuality Studies.

**Elyssa Cherney** (2014) will be carving out a career reporting about gender and sexuality for main stream publications. Her first shot is in Little Rock, Arkansas where she'll be interning on the state desk.

**Jennifer Katz** (2015) was awarded a Summer Undergraduate Research Grant to begin research for her senior thesis in Gender & Sexuality Studies.

**Gina Krupp** (2015) is currently studying abroad in Stellenbosch, South Africa through Northwestern's IPD program.

**Jasmine Pena** (2016) secured an internship this summer on the Operations Team at Bloomberg Philanthropies in New York.

**Riley Smith** (2014) has been admitted to The Ohio State University College of Medicine, and will begin the program in Fall 2014.

**Bea Sullivan-Knoff** (2015) studied abroad from July-December in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she worked with Capicúa, a local LGBT grassroots organization. She was awarded a Summer Undergraduate Research Grant to travel to Berlin to start her senior thesis research on the effects of socialization and sex-change legislation on body image and health in the transgender community in Berlin and Chicago. This year, she also performed at the Louder Than a Bomb finals, at the most recent *Encyclopedia Show* in Chicago, and at the QPGSA 5th Annual *Queergasm!* and continues to host a blog about transgender issues.



Tessa Owens [Photo Courtesy of Gabe Bergado]

# Alumni Updates >>>

**Blaine Bookey** ('03) is Associate Director/Staff Attorney at the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, where she has worked for the last three years. Over the last year, they have been involved in asylum cases at the appellate levels to advance the rights of women and men fleeing gender-based persecution, including domestic violence and sex trafficking, which are often not recognized by the courts as deserving of refugee protection. The Center has also published a comprehensive report on the treatment of unaccompanied migrant children in the U.S. that offers key recommendations to the government about how to meet our obligations to these kids and launched a project supported by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women that provides legal aid services for displaced women in Afghanistan and Tajikistan in an effort to develop new models for combining litigation with grassroots organizing.

**Jeff Cattel** ('13) is working as an editor at *Corporate Learning Network* and *Human Resources IQ*, two leading trade publications that cover training, learning, development and HR, where he has covered various topics such as diversity and gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

**Derrick Clifton** ('12) began the MSJ program at Medill last summer and has contributed news and analysis to *The Huffington Post*, *Windy City Times*, *The Daily Dot* and various other publications. He will be the featured guest for the June 2014 episode of *The Gay Agenda*, an online talk show based in Chicago where he will be discussing various justice issues on university campuses. Derrick is an incoming editorial fellow at PolicyMic.

**Tristan Powell** ('13) recently joined the development team at Empire State Pride Agenda in New York.

