



DEPARTMENT OF **WOMEN'S, GENDER  
AND SEXUALITY STUDIES**



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## REFLECTIONS / Message from the Chair

As I near the end of my term as chair of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Ohio State, I have been reflecting on the last eight+ amazing years in the department. I can say without a doubt that being chair of WGSS has been the most exciting and productive time of my entire academic career. I have had the opportunity to work with highly accomplished and dedicated core faculty and a large and engaged group of affiliated faculty members from all over the university. Our current office staff has been outstanding, providing excellent support for me and all members of the department. Teaching WGSS graduate and undergraduate students has brought me much joy and I continue to stay in touch with many of them as they go on to pursue exciting academic programs and careers. Many of our alumni have been very generous over the years, supporting programs and initiatives that have made the department thrive. Moreover, our department has received consistently strong support from the College of Arts and Sciences, especially our divisional dean.

During my tenure as chair, WGSS went through an external review and we are getting ready for another review scheduled for the upcoming academic year. We hired eight new faculty members, changed our name from Women's Studies to Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, made the transition from a quarter to a semester system, revamped our graduate and undergraduate curriculum, strengthened student learning assessment, hosted U.S. and international visiting scholars, organized several conferences and symposia, and sponsored numerous noteworthy speakers and events (a few of which are highlighted in this newsletter). In my role as chair, I have aimed to sustain a departmental culture that is collegial and collaborative, where there is continual interaction among all members, decisions are transparent, and everyone is encouraged to do their best work. While this is an ideal that cannot be achieved perfectly, my departmental colleagues, who are full of wisdom, commitment and dedication to our field, have been a constant inspiration. I am profoundly grateful

and honored to have had the opportunity to lead such wonderful faculty, staff and students.

As I look towards the future, I am certain that a new WGSS chair will lead us to new heights and accomplishments. We are excited to have launched a national search and look forward to selecting a new chair in spring of 2015.

With warmest wishes,

Jill Bystydzienski



Dr. Jill Bystydzienski,  
Women's, Gender and  
Sexuality Studies  
professor and chair



## INTERSECTIONS / Graduate Student Update

Our WGSS graduate students have been busy in both academics and activism this year. To begin with, Krista Benson’s dissertation research has led her to Spokane, WA, where she is studying indigenous youth in and around the prison system, Krista is building a hybrid archival and ethnographic research project.

Here in Columbus, Sara Rodríguez-Argüelles Riva has stepped up to volunteer as a legal translator for undocumented Central American children who have crossed the border without adult guardians. Sara helps these children communicate with their legal advocates in order to secure residency and safe living conditions. Sara also recently lent her expertise on immigration and sex work to a journalism student at Humboldt State University for her research on prostitution.

In August, Tay Glover initiated a gofundme fundraiser to help Columbus residents travel to Ferguson, MO in solidarity with Ferguson citizens. Through the Columbus to Ferguson Freedom Ride fundraiser Glover raised over \$3,000, and among the long list of donors was black feminist scholar Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw. Thanks to these generous donations, Glover raised enough money for Columbus residents and WGSS members, including faculty member Dr. Treva Lindsey, to travel to Ferguson to participate in solidarity with members of the community.

MacRorie Dean and Jon Branfman have been teaching feminist, sex-positive, queer-friendly sexual health lessons in OSU classes and dorm programs. Alongside clear, detailed information on

sexual health, these lessons emphasize how to communicate about consent and enjoyment.

Lauren Rose Strand, undergraduate academic advisor, has also led feminist outreach and education at OSU this semester. One event that she, Sara Rodríguez-Argüelles Riva, and Jon Branfman co-led was a presentation of feminist analysis of pop culture at one of our campus dorms. After screening an episode of Modern Family with the students, Lauren, Sara, and Jon facilitated a discussion of privilege, oppression, gender, race, class, and sexuality. We hope that events like this will raise our department’s profile on campus and give students a taste of the types of discussions we hold in WGSS classrooms.

PhD candidate Sierra Austin has begun working as the Director of Leadership and Inclusion Programs at YWCA Columbus. Sierra is responsible for the direct development, planning, training, and implementation of diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and race relations programming both internally and externally.

Finally, WGSS is delighted that three of last year’s PhD graduates have moved on to jobs at other universities this academic year. Dr. Amanda Rossie has been working as a visiting assistant professor at the College of New Jersey’s Women’s and Gender Studies Department. Dr. Dima Kaedbey is now an assistant professor at Denison University’s Women’s Studies Department and Dr. Ally Day is in her first year at the University of Toledo as an assistant professor in their Disability Studies Program. Congratulations!

# ADDITIONS / New Graduate Students

**Kelli Amador (MA).** Kelli is originally from Salt Lake City, Utah. She graduated from the University of Utah Magna Cum Laude in 2013 with an honors bachelors degree in Speech Communication and Spanish, with minors in Russian and International Relations. She began law school at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law in the fall of 2013, and is a dual degree student in law and the WGSS program. She has lived abroad in Spain and Siberia. She wrote her honors thesis on “Gendered Attitudes in Women's Reproductive Healthcare Legislation.”

**Courtney Hammond (MA).** Courtney earned her BA in Psychology with a minor in Gender Studies from Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah. During her undergraduate career she presented on issues surrounding sexuality and power dynamics in relationships at numerous university conferences as well as conducted safe zone trainings for the University of Utah LGBT Resource Center. Courtney’s research interests include queer studies, intimate relationship dynamics, and sexuality.

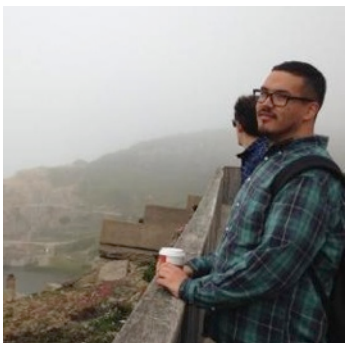
**Kristen Kolenz (MA-PhD).** Kristen earned a BA in Philosophy from John Carroll University in Cleveland, OH in 2011. Before returning to

school, she worked as an activist and advocate in Guatemala around issues of sex work, indigenous rights and migration. Her research interests include alternative identities, activism and art in Latin America.

**Marie Lerma (MA-PhD).** Marie earned a BA in History and Women's Studies from California State University, Fresno where she also acted in various officer roles in the feminist activist club Women's Alliance. Her research interests include Chicana and Latina women in the US, political efficacy and a host of other topics.

**Gustav Meuschke (MA-PhD).** Gustav received his BA in Gender & Sexuality Studies from Vassar College. His research interests include queer theory, queer of color critique, art and photography, urban culture, and gentrification. Specifically, his work explores the visual and cultural history of queer public sex in New York City during the 1970s and '80s.

**Angela Tu (MA).** Angela earned her BA in Gender Studies from UCLA. Her area of interest is sexual assault and law. She hopes to become an advocate for survivors of sexual assault and sexual violence.



Kelli Amador, Courtney Hammond, Kristen Kolenz, Marie Lerma, Gustav Meuschke, and Anglea Tu (pictured left to right)

## HIGHLIGHTS / New WGSS Faculty

This year has brought two new very exciting faculty members to the department: Juno Parreñas and Charlene Gilbert.

**Dr. Juno Salazar Parreñas'** qualitative work on transnational ecological responsibility within and beyond Southeast Asia traverses scale between the intersubjective and the global in order to think about environmental violence, political economy, and gendered relations beyond the human. Invested in interdisciplinary inquiry across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, she has a PhD in Anthropology from Harvard University and postdoctoral fellowships from Agrarian Studies at Yale University and the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis.

Her article, "Producing Affect: Transnational Volunteerism in a Malaysian Orangutan Rehabilitation Center," won the 2013 GAD Prize for Exemplary Cross-Field Scholarship, the largest prize for an article within the American Anthropological Association. She is currently working on her book manuscript, *Forced Life: Disciplining Orangutans and Workers on Borneo*, which argues that supporting biodiversity entails losing an aspiration for human hegemony and instead accepting a mutual vulnerability shared with multitudes of life forms. Her future ethnographic work investigates toxicity and the material traces of American imperialism in Manila, Philippines. Her work speaks to feminist science studies, cultural anthropology, and environmental humanities.

**Dr. Charlene Gilbert** is the new dean and director of The Ohio State University at Lima and our newest faculty member in the department. For the past 18 years Dr. Gilbert has been an independent documentary filmmaker, teacher and scholar. She is a national film producer for public television and her current projects include an experimental documentary project on the institutionalization of people with disabilities. As an independent documentary filmmaker, Charlene Gilbert has produced two award-winning feature documentaries and several short non-fiction films. In addition, she has presented papers, lectures and participated in round-table discussions at meetings of the American Studies Association, the Society of Cinema Studies, the National Women's Studies Association, the University Film and Video Association, and numerous other conferences throughout the U.S. Dr. Gilbert is also a sought-after lecturer who has been invited to give talks at Duke University, Columbia University, Clemson University, SUNY Buffalo, Purdue University and the University of Milwaukee.

Charlene Gilbert is the recipient of several awards and fellowships including the Rockefeller Media Fellowship, Harvard University's Bunting Fellowship, and the Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship award. Gilbert received her bachelor's degree from Yale University and her Master of Fine Arts degree from Temple University.



Dr. Juno Parreñas and Dr. Charlene Gilbert (pictured left to right)

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS / Faculty

**Jill M. Bystydzienski** published “Changing Institutional Culture through Peer Mentoring of Women STEM Faculty,” with Nicole Thomas and Anand Desai in *Innovative Higher Education*, 40 (2), 2014.

**Cynthia Burack** became an associate editor for the journal *New Political Science*. She also published *Tough Love: Sexuality, Compassion, and the Christian Right* (SUNY Press, 2014), and co-edited *Right-Wing Populism and the Media*, with Claire Snyder-Hall (Routledge Press, 2014).

**Lynn Itagaki** was awarded the 2014 Diversity Enhancement Award by the College of Arts & Humanities. She published “United States, Inc.: Citizens United and the Shareholder Citizen,” in *Kalfou* 1(2), (Fall 2014): 114-137; and “The Autobiographical IOU: The Debtor-Citizen and the Reliably Liable Life Narrative,” in *Biography* 37(1), (Winter 2014): 93-123.

**Guisela Latorre** received a special recognition award from the Office for Disability Services for faculty and staff who have made Ohio State a better place for students with disabilities.

**Treva Lindsey** traveled to over 15 different cities this year to deliver lectures and lead workshops at various universities and conferences. She also was featured on multiple HuffPost Live conversations on topics such as internet misogyny and black feminism. She was featured on thefeministwire.com’s “Feminists We Love” segment.

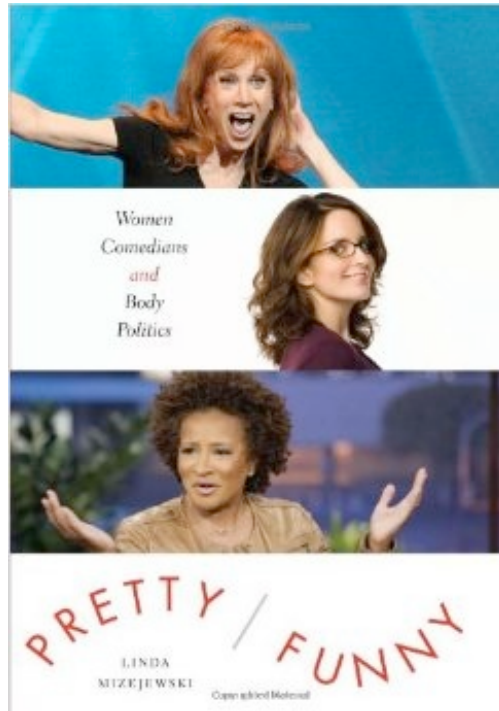
**Katherine Marino** was awarded the 2014 Lerner-Scott Prize for the best doctoral dissertation in US women’s history for her manuscript, “La Vanguardia Feminista: Pan-American Feminism and the Rise of International Women’s Rights, 1915-1946.”

**Linda Mizejewski** published *Pretty/Funny: Women Comedians and Body Politics* (University of Texas Press, 2014). *Pretty/Funny* was reviewed by: Ms. Magazine, Salon.com, Time.com, Wisconsin Public Radio, and WOSU All Sides with Ann Fisher. She also published “It Happened One Night,” in *Oxford Bibliographies in Cinema and Media Studies*, Ed. Krin Gabbard. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

**Cathy Rakowski** co-published “Challenges and Opportunities for a Human Rights Frame in South Korea: Context and Strategizing in the Anti-Domestic Violence Movement,” with Min Sook Heo, in *Violence Against Women* 20(5), (May 2014).

**Wendy Smooth** has been selected as a 2014-2015 CIC Academic Leadership Fellow (ALP) representing The Ohio State University. She also has been appointed to the final selection committee for the 2015 Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship in Women’s Studies. While gearing up for the critical midterm elections, Wendy Smooth also engaged in a discussion on the role of black women in electoral politics at the Center for American Progress.

**Mary Thomas** received two grant awards for 2014-2015: Global Midwest Award, Humanities Without Walls, and the Antipode Foundation International Workshop Award.



Dr. Linda Mizejewski’s *Pretty/Funny: Women Comedians and Body Politics* (University of Texas Press, 2014)

# HIGHLIGHTS / Professor Anita Hill Visits OSU

During autumn semester, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies organized and co-sponsored a two-day symposium at OSU with Professor Anita Hill, "From Anita Hill to the White House Task Force on Sexual Assault; 1991 to Today." On the evening of Thursday, November 7, a screening of the recent feature documentary, *Anita: Speaking Truth to Power*, directed and produced by Academy-Award-winning filmmaker Freida Lee Mock, kicked off the events. Over 900 students, OSU affiliates, and community members gathered in the Mershon Auditorium for the screening, followed by a Q&A with Hill and Mock that was skillfully moderated by WGSS Associate Professor Wendy Smooth.

The film revisits the 1991 Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings, when Hill publicly testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that then Supreme Court Nominee Clarence Thomas had sexually harassed her. The film also reveals Anita Hill's life as a professor and advocate following the hearings, and underscores how the 1991 hearings galvanized new awareness of and responses to sexual harassment, spurred a groundswell of feminist activism in the U.S., and pushed forward new awareness of how race and gender intersect in women's lives and in more expansive framings of gender equality. The lasting power of these events was palpable in the Mershon Auditorium, which felt electric. The audience gave Professor Hill three standing ovations over the course of the evening.

Professor Hill, currently Senior Advisor to the Provost of Law, Public Policy and Women's Studies at the Heller Graduate School of Policy and Management at Brandeis University, was a powerful, eloquent, and inspiring speaker. In the Q&A she emphasized the role that everyone must play in addressing the problems surrounding sexual assault and harassment that remain today – reforming our institutions and policies to create just processes and to hold people accountable, creating safe spaces and building community, and honoring the human experience at the heart of all these issues. "We have to make it safe," she said, "for the most vulnerable to tell their stories."

The next morning the conversation continued in the Saxbe Auditorium at the Moritz College of Law in a panel discussion, "Responding to Gendered Violence in Society, Law, and on College Campuses." After introductory comments by OSU History and WGSS Professor Katherine Marino and by community leader Brenda Jackson Drake, Professor Hill spoke about how we can learn from the past in our activism and legal work today. She outlined how the failures of process during the Senate Judiciary Hearings in 1991, must inform our reforms today to make processes fair and not to denigrate or question the integrity of the survivor of sexual violence who comes forward. After Hill spoke, Professor Martha Chamallas, Robert J. Lynn Chair in Law at Moritz, reflected on the ongoing legal and cultural legacy of the Hill testimony. Katie Hanna, executive director of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, spoke about the current mobilization around sexual assault and Title IX on college campuses. OSU graduate student and graduate administrative associate at the Multi-Cultural Center's No Place for Hate Task Commission Gisell Jeter-Bennett underscored the need for safe spaces for young people and students to talk about experiences of sexual violence. OSU undergraduates Emaline Wise and Brea Porter also spoke about the lessons they have learned from their experiences as, respectively, president of the Girls Circle Project and counselor at the Sexual Assault Resource Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), and president of Unplugging Society: A Women of Color Thinktank.

WGSS is deeply grateful to Professor Hill and to Freida Lee Mock for coming to OSU, sharing their work, and profoundly inspiring the campus and community. Their visit has led to continuing dialogues about how we can better respond to sexual violence and make the processes safe and just, and has given students the courage to speak out about their own experiences. As one student said after the events, "seeing that film and hearing her speak at both events opened my eyes to so much. Professor Hill makes you feel like you can stand up and never stay quiet, and speak up about what you feel is right." Public responses to the event can be found via the Twitter hashtag #ANITATruthToPower.

-Assistant Professor Katherine Marino

Filmmaker Freida Mock, Anita Hill and WGSS Faculty member Wendy Smooth during the 2014 Anita Hill Symposium at OSU





## ADDITIONS / Visiting Professor Erika Alm

This fall semester, WGSS had the privilege of hosting Assistant Professor Erika Alm, from the Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Her research explores normative assumptions about sex, gender and sexuality in discourses on non-normative gender expressions. Professor Alm taught a combined undergraduate and graduate course this semester titled “Critical Perspectives on Cisnormativity” which helped develop a conversation about intersex and trans\* distinction and semblance. This course also followed up on last winter’s WGSS workshop on trans\* issues in the classroom with community organizer Cherno Biko (TransOhio, Trans Women of Color Collective of Ohio) and Professor Jian Chen (Department of English) for faculty and graduate students. Professor Alm has made significant contributions to our department’s discourse on gender expression and sexuality and we are all grateful to have been able to host her here at OSU!

Here is Dr. Alm’s account of her work and experience in WGSS:

My pedagogical work and research feed off one another. In conversations with students I am confronted with other questions than the ones I typically pose in the confinements of my study. So to be paired with a group of students with very diverse backgrounds--some majoring in WGSS, others in other disciplines, such as counseling, linguistics, neuroscience, dance and comparative literature, undergraduates and graduates, many with experiences of activist work, all committed to making a critical intervention into structural cisnormativity--has been a gift and a challenge. As a class we investigated context-specific expressions of cisnormativity and how they are structured by sexism, racism, colonialism and ableism. We discussed how geopolitically specific conditions, like legal recognition and access to medical health care, interact with transnational ones, like neoliberal discourses on human rights. The students helped me keep the focus on trans\* and intersex people’s lived experiences of cisnormative structures, and engage with everyday experiences of discrimination and resistance. We were fortunate enough to have fierce activists share their knowledge with us in the classroom, and hopefully the conversations we started will continue both inside and outside of our academic walls.

Throughout the fall I tried to make the most of the opportunity of being part of a vibrant educational environment with close ties to civil society. I attended community conversations, events, vigils etc., to learn more about strategies for community outreach approaches in teaching practices. I also had invaluable chances to network with U.S. based intersex and trans\* scholars and activists, in being able to invite scholars to OSU, and in being invited myself to research symposiums. For all this I am very grateful. I have enjoyed my stay in WGSS at OSU immensely, from the research surges to the everyday conversations with students and colleagues among staff and faculty. On a professional level I hope that

my stay here can serve as a foundation for an institutional relation between WGSS at OSU and the Department of Cultural Sciences at the University of Gothenburg. On a personal level I hope that this is just the beginning of challenging, politically charged feminist friendships.



Erika Alm, assistant professor of Gender Studies at the Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg, Sweden



## HIGHLIGHTS / 2014 Major Events

### Ongoing

femUNITY undergraduate film series

### February 21

Professor Jian Chen from the English Department and Cherno Biko from the Trans\* Women of Color Collective of Ohio facilitated a trans\* pedagogies and activism workshop with faculty and graduate students.

### March 21

María Lugones, associate professor at Binghamton University in New York visited campus for a faculty and graduate seminar titled, "Indigenous Movements and Decolonial Feminism," and delivered a public lecture, "Revisiting Gender."

### April 3 to 4

Alison Kafer, associate professor at Southwestern University, Texas, visited campus and gave a public lecture titled, "Feminist, Queer, Crip Practice," facilitated a faculty and graduate seminar pedagogy workshop, and conducted a (dis)ability pedagogy workshop.

### April 9

Rosemarie Tong, Distinguished Professor of Health Care Ethics in the Department of Philosophy and director of the Center for Applied and Professional Ethics at University of North Carolina, visited campus to deliver the Elizabeth D. Gee Distinguished Lecture in Ethics.

### July 7-11

WGSS at OSU with *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* hosted the inaugural Transnational Feminisms Summer Institute, a five-day collaborative conference with over 85 participants from around the world who engaged with important issues in the field of transnational feminism.

### August 28

WGSS faculty and graduate students came together to facilitate a powerful teach-in about the issues surrounding Michael Brown and Ferguson, MO. A panel of faculty and students discussed issues of police brutality and people of color.

### September 29

Ellen Feder, associate professor at the American University, visited campus and delivered a public lecture, "Normalizing Atypical Sex Anatomies: A Question of Ethics or Culture?" She followed up with a faculty and graduate student seminar, "The Problem of Intersex."

### October 14

WGSS Assistant Professor Treva Lindsey delivered a public lecture, "Pop Feminism?: An Exploration of Emergent Feminist Standpoints in U.S. Popular Culture."

### October 23

Cary Gabriel Costello, associate professor at the University of Milwaukee, visited OSU campus to deliver a lecture titled, "Intersex and Trans\* Communities: Sex and Gender Struggles".

### November 6 to 7

Professor Anita Hill visited OSU campus along with documentary filmmaker Freida Mock to screen Mock's film *ANITA: Speaking Truth to Power*. Dr. Hill also participated in a panel on issues surrounding campus sexual assault.

### November 21

Professor Erika Alm, assistant professor of gender studies at the Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, delivered a lecture titled, "An Orientation Towards Consensus: Situating the Somatechnics of Intersex."

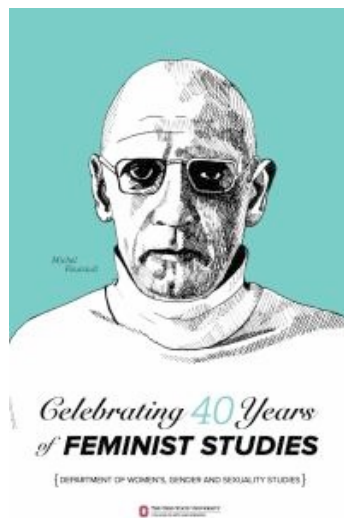
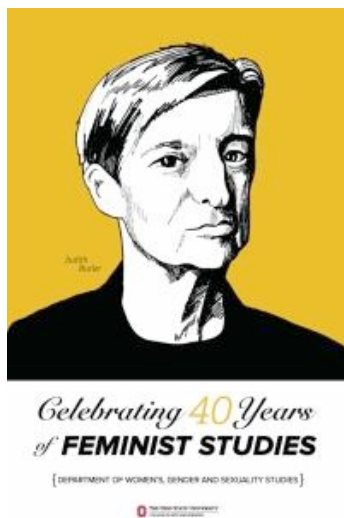
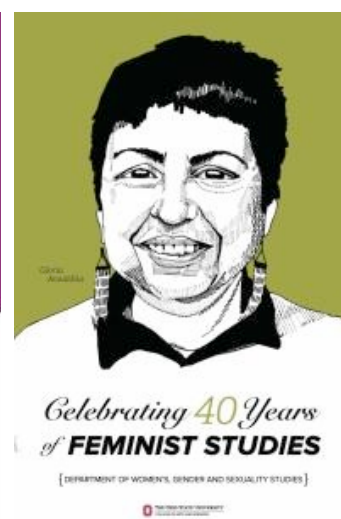
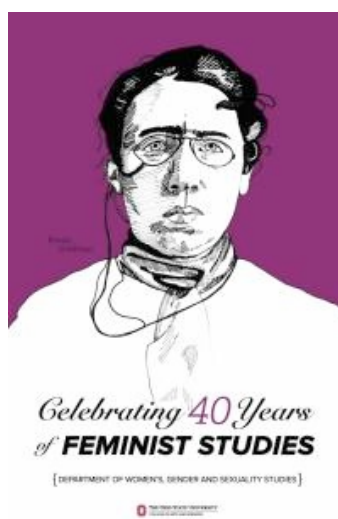
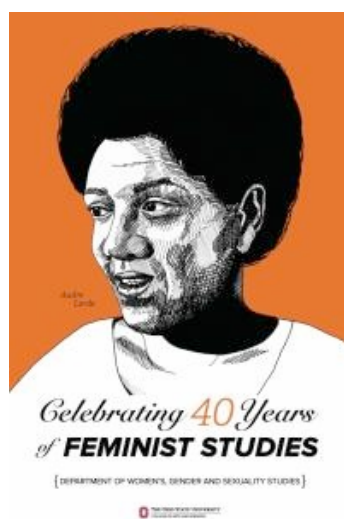
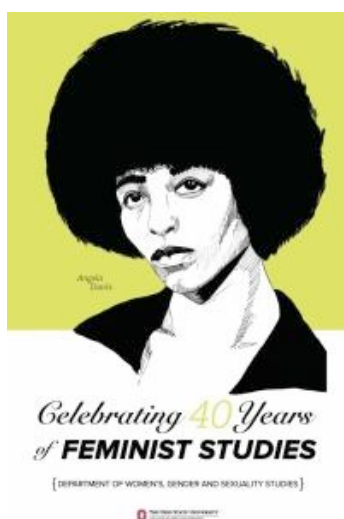
# HORIZONS / 40th Anniversary of Feminist Studies at OSU

In 1971 the first women's studies course was offered at the Ohio State University and until 1975 when the office was recognized as a program, the founding members strove to cultivate a feminist voice on OSU campus via newsletters, curriculum development and research grant procurement. Today, the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at OSU boasts that the department was one of the earliest created of its kind and now is an intellectually vibrant home to 18 core faculty members, over 60-affiliated faculty, 100 majors, 200 minors, and 30 graduate students. The hard work of the department's founders has certainly paid off.

2015 will be a year full of remembering and appreciating the past of feminist studies at OSU, but also an important year for looking forward. As we close in on the end of Professor Jill Bystydzienski's chairship, we are honoring

and commemorating her incredible leadership over the past eight years while conducting a national external search with optimism for a new chair to lead the department into the future. In addition, the department hopes to create new outreach and engagement initiatives as well as study abroad opportunities to keep feminist studies innovative.

On May 1st, 2015 we will be hosting a 40th Anniversary party to invite founders, past chairs, alumni and the current WGSS community to celebrate the department's history and future. In conjunction, we are launching a 40th Anniversary fundraising campaign. With each gift of \$40 or more to the department, the donor will receive a hand drawn and custom-designed poster to showcase their appreciation of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies!



You can select your favorite feminist icon: Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, Emma Goldman, Gloria Anzaldúa, Judith Butler or Michel Foucault.

## **SUPPORT** / Share the Vision

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed a generous gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
to be directed into a fund of my choice (choose right)

### Development Funds

- Elizabeth D. Gee Distinguished Lecture in Ethics (313218)
- Elizabeth D. Gee Fund for Graduate Student Grants (308718)
- Max Rice and Sarah Smith Fund (313141)
- Mildred Munday Scholarship (645073)
- WGSS Department Program Support (306738)
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## **Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies**

286 University Hall  
230 N. Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
[wgss.osu.edu](http://wgss.osu.edu)