

2nd Annual Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies Conference
BEYOND REVOLUTION OR BEHIND IT?
The Politics and Practice of Contemporary feminism across
Academic and Activist Communities

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, March 23

5:00 PM – 9:30 PM

REGISTRATION: 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Outside 32-123, Stata Center

OPENING REMARKS & KEYNOTE PANEL: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

32-123, Stata Center

Opening Remarks

Wendy Luttrell, GCWS co-chair and Nancy Pforzheimer Aronson Associate Professor in Human Development and Education

Chris Bobel, GCWS co-chair and Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston

Keynote Conversation: "Intergenerational Feminisms"

Includes a screening of *Left on Pearl: Women Take Over*, a new film by Rochelle Ruthchild, and accompanying dialogue with local feminist activists.

Presenters:

Rochelle Ruthchild, Filmmaker and Professor, Union Institute and University

Ramani Sripada, Director of Programs & Capacity Building Assistance, Massachusetts Asian & Pacific Islanders (MAP) for Health

Rekia Jina Jibrin, Founder and Director, Y.P.A.C.T. (Youth for Prevention, Action and Change through Thought)

Nakeeda Burns, Program Coordinator, Y.P.A.C.T. (Youth for Prevention, Action and Change through Thought)

Moderator: Meredith Evans (PhD Candidate, UMB; Grad Conference organizer)

There have been many pronouncements of the death of feminism, most notably a Time Magazine cover story in 1998 that provocatively inquired "Is feminism dead?" Many media sources have declared this era "post-feminism" and debate the apathy of youth and the

relevance (or lack thereof) of feminism today. However, with women's reproductive rights being threatened and an increasing wage gap between the genders, where is the collective outrage and action? The existence of a so-called third wave of feminism is often questioned due to a lack of women-focused collective action among young people. However, after interviewing many students' on campuses across America, Paul Loeb (1995) found that contemporary students juggle more causes than their 1960's activist counterparts, and "more consciously address difficult fault lines of race, sex and class ..." (p. 5). This dilution of activism across "causes" may be giving the illusion of an apathetic student body. This hypothesis complements a third wave feminist view of social justice and change that emphasizes the need to address dominance hierarchies across race, class, ability and sexual orientation, not simply gender. As Mocha Jean Herrup (1995) eloquently explains, in order "to fight AIDS we must fight homophobia, and to fight homophobia, we must fight racism, and so on. We face a choice between focusing our energies on one issue or acting with the knowledge that oppression is interrelated and pursuing a more broad-based, but perhaps more indirect, approach" (p. 247). This suggests that there continues to be a vital feminist movement despite appearances to the contrary. Given these shifts in meaning, what does it mean to be a feminist activist? How has the way we think about feminism changed between 1970 and today? What are the most pressing concerns facing feminist activists, scholars and health care providers today? What kinds of intergenerational collaborations might be possible?

CLOSING EVENT: 8:15 – 9:30
32-123. Stata Center

Refreshments Provided during intermission (8 – 8:15 PM)

Vocal performance by ZILI

The Friday evening panel will close with a concert by Zili, a local women's singing group that creates music which bridges cultures, generations, and continents. With captivating sounds that evoke the African continent, zili retraces routes of forced exile and cultural resistance through diasporic rhythm and song. Powerful Haitian, Brazilian and West African rhythms infuse zili's original creations and traditional folksongs, while zili inspires its audiences to dance and even teaches them how. Reconnecting Haitian mizik rasin, jazz, roots reggae, samba, Cuban son, and neo soul, zili honors its influences while creating a sound that is uniquely its own. All female, zili takes its name from Haitian spiritual entity, Ezili, who is envisaged as mother, lover, and warrior. Zili's songs are sensual, political, self-reflective, positive, and invoke love. Zili's lyrics glide seamlessly from English to Kreyòl to Portuguese to Spanish, spinning tales and visions of lives lived and yet to be.

Saturday, March 24

8:00 AM – 8:00 PM

REGISTRATION: 8:00 – 9:00 AM

WELCOME & KEYNOTE PANEL: 9:00 – 11:30 AM

32-123, Stata Center

Keynote Conversation:

“Negotiating Citizenship: Active Strategies for Survival and Change”

Presenters:

Charlotte Ryan, Co-Director, Boston College Media Research and Action Project

Nancy Naples, Professor of Women’s Studies and Sociology, University of Connecticut

Scherazade Daruvalla King, Founder and Director, Project Think Different

Lisa Dodson, Professor of Sociology, Boston College

Moderator: Wendy Luttrell, *Nancy Pforzheimer Aronson Associate Professor in Human Development and Education*

These panelists recognize the agency of all citizens and their ability to negotiate and subvert the unequal social world. Working within, between, and outside of academia, their work enables empowerment among populations that often struggle to survive and be heard. The panelists will speak about their efforts and the efforts of others to begin a revolution for equality that spans communities and disciplines.

Workshops & Mentorship Sessions

Section 1: 11:30 – 1:00 PM

Locations noted below

Session A: COLLABORATING ACROSS GRASSROOTS AND ACADEMIC SPACES: Challenges and Reflections

Location: Room 32-124

We will be exploring where each of us is situated in terms of community and academic spaces and reflecting on challenges that have come up in our work as well as the way we negotiate them. Among the questions we will be discussing are: To what extent is there a different value placed on knowledge that emerges from the academy and knowledge that emerges from the community? Where do these biases come from and what can we do to overcome them? What kinds of power differences exist between members of the academy and members of the community? In what ways do

academicians need to recognize and be sensitive to these differences in order for successful collaboration across spaces to occur?

A roundtable discussion led by and including:

Marlene Gerber Fried, Professor of Philosophy, Hampshire College; and Director, Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program

Ester Shapiro, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology and Latino Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston

Nalina Narain, Ph.D Candidate, Health Services Research, Brandeis University Heller School of Social Policy

Yoko Harumi, Trafficking Victims Outreach & Services Network (TVOS)

Yvette Modestin, Founder and Director, Encuentro Diaspora Afro

Session B: RESEARCH & ACTIVISM FOR CHANGE: Students work toward improving their high school

Location: Room 32-155

Presenters:

Jessica Maddon-Fuoco, New Mission High School, Assistant Head of School

Stephanie Sibley, Coordinator, Student Researchers for High School Renewal (SRHSR) & New Mission High School student participants in the Student Research for Action (RAC) Project

This session has two objectives: 1) to show a replicable school-based model that engages urban secondary school students in powerful research projects that can both help students see themselves as change agents and be a catalyst for school improvement and 2) to provide participants with materials from critical research projects including research tools, end products, and strategies for creating similar opportunities in their home schools and communities.

Session C: ACTIVISM IN EDUCATION / EDUCATION IN ACTIVISM: Techniques for Challenging Sexism and Other Forms of Oppression

Location: Room 32-144

John Cawthorne, Dean, Lynch School of Education Office for Students and Outreach

Emily Hogan, Union of Concerned Scientists & National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) Boston

Women principally teach early and elementary education, yet these levels of our education system are the least respected by society. Many activist groups work on particular issues of oppression, yet most of these groups do not have structures in place to address instances of other types of oppression within their group. This session will offer techniques to challenge sexism and other forms of oppression that can be used in a variety of settings, first by exploring the ways in which teachers and parents have successfully used schools as anti-sexism organizing tools, and then by introducing "The Empowerment Period," a formal process that can be implemented in activist spaces to empower traditionally marginalized group members and to educate the group about oppression of all kinds.

LUNCH WORKSHOPS

1:00 – 2:00 PM

Forbes Café and Student Street (Lunch Provided)

Workshop 1: BIODRAG

Workshop Discussants:

Rachelle Beaudion, Department of Digital Media MFA program, Rhode Island School of Design

John Ewing, Department of Digital Media MFA program, Rhode Island School of Design

Carmen Montoya, Department of Digital Media MFA program, Rhode Island School of Design

Discussion Leader: Catherine D'Ignazio, Lecturer, Department of Digital Media, Rhode Island School of Design

Biodrag in the vernacular, is a term used to designate people performing the gender of their assigned, "biological" sex. The Biodrag performance art project is a lived experiment in personal gender boundary transgression. Rather than donning exaggerated costumes, we dress in our own clothing, recombining pieces to create an alternate gender reality. We create gender expressions that are close to our daily experience; genders that we feel we should live up to but do not, genders that we could have been; genders that make us uncomfortable; and/or genders that we actively try not to be in "real" life. We use society in general as a stage and most people have no idea that we are conducting a performance. The seemingly subtle changes we make open a surprisingly intense psychological space in which we begin to reevaluate our personal gender expressions and ultimately our sense of who we are. Workshop participants will design their own Biodrag research project and discuss the ways in which they perform gender in their daily lives. Participants can then submit their research findings on www.Biodrag.net. The website operates as a virtual research database and clearinghouse for gender critique and consciousness raising.

Workshop 2: PUBLIC POLICY AND PERSONAL POLITICS

Workshop Discussants:

Amy Lubitow, PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, Northeastern University

Mia Davis, Organizer, National Campaign for Save Cosmetics

Erin Boles, Associate Executive Director, Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC)

This workshop seeks to illuminate the overlapping goals of public policy initiatives, academic research and the personal political influences on both of these. Discussants will focus specifically on the issue of cosmetic and body care products and both the health issues and policy questions that surround them. Specifically, the discussants will raise questions about the health and safety of cosmetics products and the cosmetics industry and the policy implications raised by such issues. An academic student of environmental sociology will discuss the capitalist and political aims in relation to existing industry structures and issues. An activist will consider the manner in which groups organize around this issue and how individuals are involved at the grassroots level. Two policy organizers will discuss the legislative aspects in relation to cosmetic and body care products and will specifically address the ways in which the Massachusetts state legislature is handling this issue. Ultimately, the goal of this workshop is to

reveal and discuss the multiple and overlapping layers of groups and organizations actively working to make the consumption of these goods safer.

Workshop 3: FEMINIST RESEARCH PRACTICE AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRACTICE FEMINIST RESEARCH?

Workshop Leader:

Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Women's Studies Department, Boston College

This is an interactive workshop for researchers who would like to learn more about feminist interviewing. We will practice some basic listening and reflexivity skills and will get in touch with our researcher standpoint. We discuss how to interview across differences in power and authority and will examine some basic issues of representation of our research findings from a feminist perspective.

Workshop 4: A CONVERSATION WITH AFRO-DIASPORA WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS, ACADEMICS, AND ACTIVISTS ON TRANSFORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND PRACTICES TOWARD INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY JUSTICE

Workshop Co-Leaders:

Ana Irma Rivera Lassen, Professor of Law at the University of Puerto Rico

Yvette Modestin, founder of Boston's Encuentro Diaspora Afro

Workshop Participants: Contributors to the Afro-Latina Women of Power Conferences from Latin America and the Caribbean, for event press release and participant bios visit <http://harlemworld.blog.com/1605672/>

Yvette Modestin, founder of Boston's Encuentro Diaspora Afro, has brought a group of highly accomplished Afro-Latina politicians, leaders, activists and academics to Boston following their attendance at the United Nations meetings on the Status of Women and in the 2nd Annual Women of Power Conference, co-sponsored by The Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, the Global Afro Latino and Caribbean Initiative, and Boston's Afro-Diaspora Encuentro. The workshop will be moderated by Ana Irma Rivera Lassen, a feminist activist since the early seventies and is a prominent human rights activist. She is a co-founder in Puerto Rico of several important organizations in the defense of the rights of women, of the fight against the racism, and the right to sexual orientation. Among her more recent publications, *Women of African Descent and Human Rights*, was included in Counterpoint, an anthology of race in Puerto Rico published in 2005. She is a member of the Latin American and the Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women Rights (CLADEM), and co-editor of Documents of the Puerto Rican Feminist Movement: Facsimiles of History. The workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to hear from and speak with Afro-Latina leaders working throughout Latin America and the Caribbean whose activism bridges diverse local and global communities and who will share their work toward inclusive justice.

CONCURRENT STUDENT PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Section A: 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Locations noted below

Room 32-124: **PERFORMING AMONG ONE'S 'PEERS': IDENTITY, INEQUALITY, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

- **"Getting beyond Systemic Whiteness within Women's and Gender Studies: A Black Female Ontology"** – Amie Breeze Harper, Harvard University Extension [MA, *Technologies in Education*]
- **"Contemporary Feminism as Philosophy: Toward a Fluid Depiction of Feminism, Experienced Through Dialogue in Academia and its Reach Beyond"** – Rosalia Mannino, Simmons College [MA, *Communications Management & Gender/Cultural Studies Program*]
- **"Can Achievement Goal Adoption Mitigate Stereotype Threat among Women?"** – Omoniyi Adekanmbi, Tufts University [PhD Candidate, *Social Psychology Program*]

Moderator: Sandy Alexandre, Assistant Professor of Literature and Women's Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Room 32-144: **INSIDE OUT: PRISON, WOMEN, AND PERFORMANCE**

Panel Discussion:

This panel will present a range of perspectives on "Telling My Story", a performance program designed for female inmates and college students and which reflects a successful example of community-based theater for social change.

Discussants include:

- **Ivy Schweitzer**, Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies, Dartmouth College, and Prison Program
- **Pati Hernandez**, Activist, Dancer, and Puppeteer (Bread and Puppet Theater), and Prison Program Director
- **Christina Stoltz**, MA student in Comparative Literature, Dartmouth College; Prison Program participant

Room 32-155: **TROUBLING TERMINOLOGY: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN POLICY, SOCIETY, AND THE LAW**

- **"The Personal is the Political, Except when it comes to Marriage: Same-Sex Marriage, A Feminist and Queer Perspective"** – Katherine Rickenbacker, Northeastern University [PhD Candidate, *Sociology Department*] and Margaret Gram Crehan, Northeastern University [Ph.D. Candidate, *Law, Policy and Society Program*]
- **"Separating 'sex' from 'gender identity or expression': Promises and Perils"** – Shane Landrum, Brandeis University [Joint MA & PhD Program, *History Department*]
- **"Feminist Disagreement (Comparatively) Recast"** – Rosalind Dixon, Harvard Law School [SJD Program]
- **"Hoping to Make the Kingdom New: The Evolution of a Post-Gay [Chic]/Post-Race Society"**, Morgan Darby, Simmons College, [MA, *Gender/Cultural Studies Program*]

Moderator: Dona Yarbrough, Ph.D., Director, LGBT Center & Lecturer in the Women's Studies program, Tufts University

CONCURRENT STUDENT PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Section B: 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Locations noted below

Room 32-124: **THE PERSONAL IS THE PEDAGOGICAL: THE CLASSROOM AS A SPACE FOR REVOLUTION**

Presenter and Discussant: Annalyssa Gypsy Murphy, Clark University [Ph.D. Candidate, Women's Studies; & Instructor: Salem State College, North Shore Community College, and Merrimack College]

With student discussants:

- **Erika Garcia**, North Shore Community College
- **Matiely Lugo**, North Shore Community College
- **Sar Neak**, North Shore Community College
- **Genevieve Morse**, Salem State College
- **Diana Corona-Figueroa**, Salem State College
- **Chris Joseph**, Merrimack College
- **Kathleen Curran**, Merrimack College

Room 32-144: **PROMISES, POSITIONS, AND PITFALLS: REFLECTIONS ON ACTIVISM AND INEQUALITY**

- **"Political Economy of Domestic Labor: Conditions of Possibility and Methods of Transformation"** – Prita Lal, Columbia University *[MA Program, South Asian Studies]*
- **"Sarbat's Feminism: An interpretation and analysis"** – Neelam Maheshwari, Brandeis University *[MA Program, International Development]*
- **"Diversity and Community Organizing: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in the Community Organizing Process"** – Jonathan Christiansen, Boston College *[MA Program, Sociology Department]*

Moderator: Shahla Haeri, Director of the Women's Studies Program and Assistant Professor of cultural Anthropology at Boston University

Room 32-155: **REPRESENTATIONS: LOOKING AT IMAGINED BODIES AND IDENTITIES**

- **"The Candid Uncanny: Toward a Productive Mourning in the Work of Kara Walker"** – Erin Cory, Boston College *[MA Program, English Department]*
- **"Leap of Faith? Death, Possibility, and Political Praxis in Brokeback Mountain"** – Christopher Kelly, Boston College *[Ph.D Program, Sociology Department]*
- **"Dominant and Controlling Images: The Hegemonic Reproduction of Black Masculinity in Sex and the City"** – Stephanie Papadakis, Brandeis University *[MA Program, Anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies]*
- **"Strangers by Night: A Feminist Analysis of American Alcohol Advertisements"** – Eve Wartenberg Condon, Simmons College *[MA Program, English Department]*

Moderator: Robin Bernstein, Assistant Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality and of History and Literature at Harvard University

Workshops & Mentorship Sessions

Section 2: 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Locations noted below

32-124: HEALTH ACTIVISM AND THE BODY

Workshop Leaders:

Ester Shapiro, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology and Latino Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston

Chris Bobel, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston

The content of this session will be shaped by the individual needs and questions raised by the attendees. Attendees planning or currently undertaking projects relating to health activism and the body (e.g., outreach work, master's theses, dissertations, etc.) are invited to come to this session with ideas, questions and/or drafts of works in progress. Mentors in the field will be available to share some of their own experiences, to provide individual feedback, and to facilitate group discussion.

Room 32- 144: THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM: MAKING ANOTHER WORLD POSSIBLE?

Discussion Facilitators:

Kim Foltz, Co-coordinator, North American Alliance for Fair Employment (NAFFE)

Dorotea Manuela, Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Coalition

Room 32-155: COMBINING FEMINISM IN ACADEMIA AND SOCIAL ACTION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIA ITSELF

Discussion Facilitator:

Paula Caplan, Nonresident Fellow, DuBois Institute, Harvard University & former Full Professor of Applied Psychology and Head of the Centre for Women's Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

We will discuss some of the experiences that I have had over two decades of conducting research, doing clinical work, writing and speaking in the service of public education, and social action about problems in the mental health system and the fifteen years I have spent doing research, writing and speaking, and social action related to problems in academia. This work has been done both in the U.S. and Canada. This presentation will be followed with an open discussion about what it means to carry on an activist practice while working within the academic system. Participants are encouraged to bring research or practice questions to the table for discussion.

Closing Event

6:30 – 8:00 PM

Forbes Café, Stata Center

The conference will close on Saturday with a networking reception in the Forbes Cafe in the Stata Center. Please stay for the closing celebration and remarks and the reception -- wine and hors d'oeuvres will be provided.