Erin Newcomb comes to SUNY New Paltz after completing a Ph.D. in Women’s Studies and Literacy Education at The Pennsylvania State University and spending a year “off” writing.

Although Erin’s areas of expertise include feminist theories and literacy studies, she also incorporates literature and theology into her scholarship. Currently, Erin teaches first-year composition, a survey of early American literature, and Women: Images and Realities. Next semester, she looks forward to another round of Women: Images and Realities as well as a thematic composition course on “Magic and Power.”
Facilitators: Goowwrrrii  PPaarraammeess, Educational Studies
SSuuzzaannnnee  KKeellllyy, Women’s Studies
DDaanniieellllee  WWaallllaaccee, Black Studies
RRiicckkiiee  SSoolliinnggeerr, Historian and author of
Pregnancy and Power (NYU, 2005)

What do we see when we analyze the narratives of gender, race, class, and age in the stories and images that have been generated over the course of the election season? What do we learn when we look at how stereotypes have been deployed and redefined by journalists, pundits, bloggers, voters, and the candidates themselves? What does all this suggest about our country and U.S. Presidential politics at the start of the 21st century?

Irish Travellers: A Discussion of Women’s Rights in a Cultural Context
Wednesday, November 5, 2008
3:30-5pm, Honors Center
Clare Kelly-Barra, Educational Opportunity Program Advisor

Irish travellers are an indigenous minority group in Ireland. Clare Kelly-Barra will describe Irish traveller culture and nomadic life, focusing on Irish traveller women, the discrimination they face, violence against traveller women, media stereotypes and perceptions, and the role of women in the Irish traveller movement.

Women’s Studies Colloquia

Countdown 2008: The Electoral Politics of Gender, Race, Class, and Age
Wednesday, October 29, 2008
3:30-5:30pm, Honors Center, College Hall

Gowwrrii  PPaarammeswwaran, Educational Studies
SSuuzzaannnnee  KKeellllyy, Women’s Studies
DDaanniieellllee  WWaallllaaccee, Black Studies
RRiicckkiiee  SSoolliinnggeerr, Historian and author of
Pregnancy and Power (NYU, 2005)

Faculty-Student Research Collaboration –
Studying the “Ex-Gay” Phenomenon

During summer 2008, with funding from a SUNY New Paltz “Summer Undergraduate Research Experience” (SURE) Award, Women’s Studies minor Ellice Litwak (’09) and professor Karl Bryant studied a slice of the contemporary U.S. “Ex-Gay” movement. While the “Ex-Gay” phenomenon is largely religion-based, Ellice and Karl’s research explored an understudied aspect of the movement—the role of scientists and other experts.

Although treating homosexuality as a pathology has been discredited for many years, today there are still pockets of mental health practitioners whose work is designed to “cure” homosexuals. Ellice and Karl studied one such group by examining the work of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), a professional organization that argues for the legitimacy of conversion therapies for homosexuality. By examining texts produced by NARTH members (including materials from NARTH’s website), Ellice and Karl were able to track the “public face” that NARTH puts on the work it does. They found that NARTH members legitimate their work via three inter-related processes: (1) leveraging “science” to bolster their own claims and to discredit their detractors; (2) drawing on a model of homosexual development that stresses fluid notions of sexuality, thus opening the door for change; and (3) co-opting contemporary multicultural discourses that stress tolerance and diversity (here arguing that true tolerance and diversity should include people who want to “leave homosexuality”).

Ellice presented findings from the summer project at the Fall SURE Research Symposium and will present more of their findings at the Marist Women & Society Conference in October 2008. The project is ongoing, with Ellice and Karl planning to continue their collaborative research throughout the academic year.

For more information on the SURE program (and other SUNY New Paltz programs that support faculty-student collaborative research), go to <http://www.newpaltz.edu/research/usr.html>.

Ellice Litwak
Karl Bryant (Sociology and Women’s Studies) guest co-edited a special issue of the journal Sexualities on “Re-theorizing Homophobias” with Salvador Vidal-Ortiz of the Sociology Department at American University in Washington, D.C. The August ’08 issue includes an article by Bryant, “In Defense of Gay Children? ‘Progay’ Homophobia and the Production of Homonormativity.”

Katherine French (History) has been promoted to Professor.

Anita González (Theatre Arts) received a Visiting Scholars Exchange Grant from the American Society for Theatre Research for her project, “Liverpool Trading: Theatrical Exchanges of Afro-Caribbean, African American, and British Performances.” Gonzalez is collaborating with James Frieze of Liverpool John Moores University in the UK.

Heather Hewett (English and Women’s Studies) published an essay in Mothering in the Third Wave, out this month from Demeter Press. When she is not on campus at New Paltz, she is participating as a Global Scholar in an interdisciplinary seminar, “The Culture of Rights/The Rights of Culture,” sponsored by the Rutgers Institute for Research on Women. The seminar gathers 21 scholars and activists to discuss research projects examining the multiple intersections of women’s human rights and culture.


Suzanne Kelly (Women’s Studies) wrote an op-ed piece, “The Sensuous Classroom: Focusing on the Embodiment of Learning,” in the July 25 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education. With the support of a labor/management professional development award, Amy Kesselman (Women’s Studies) participated in a week long program at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women, located in Cambridge, MA. The program, entitled “Sequels to the 1960’s,” combined keynote speakers about various social movements with seminars in which scholars working on the movements of the 1960’s and 70’s discussed their work.

Susan Lewis (History) has been promoted to Associate Professor.


Margaret Wade-Lewis (Black Studies and Linguistics) won the 2008 Book Award for Creative Scholarship from the College Language Association for her biography, Lorenzo Dow Turner: Father of Gullah Studies (U. of South Carolina, 2007). She also published a bibliographic article on the Black woman linguist, Beryl Loftman Bailey, in the African American National Biography (Oxford University, 2008).

On July 29, Sarah Wyman (English) welcomed Clio Wyman Miller into the world. Clio is the muse of history.


Toni Adams was one of my most brilliant students. She lived and studied with great intensity and related to other students and faculty with a sweetness and generosity that I will always remember.

Toni’s perceptive comments in class discussions often made us consider the subject in new ways. Her class projects were always ambitious. In the senior seminar, she chose to research Guatemalan women’s weavings, create a slide show of their work, construct a back strap loom like the ones the weavers use and weave a piece of cloth. She completed everything except the weaving and dazzled us all with her slide show and interdisciplinary research.

Toni graduated in 1987. She was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor in January 2006 and died on August 15, 2008. I saw Toni only occasionally since she graduated but always felt enriched by our visits. I will miss her.

– Amy Kesselman
We’re looking for you!
New address? New phone? New email?
Let us know so we can keep you up to date.
Call 845-257-2975 or
email chandlec@newpaltz.edu