

From the Coordinator

Greetings from Southside House! This Spring, we have several exciting events lined up. In March, we are sponsoring a Women's History Month panel that will explore the relationship between personal life and political activism over the past three generations of feminism.

Our Colloquium Series continues this semester with talks planned by faculty and students. Finally, we are beginning to plant the seeds of our next conference, to be held during the 2009-2010 academic year. We welcome feedback and ideas – as well as news updates of your own.

—Heather A. Hewett



Women's History Month – Three generations talk about feminism

**“The Personal and the Political:
Three Generations of Feminism”**

An intergenerational panel
co-sponsored by the Women's Studies Program
and the History Department
Monday, March 24, 2008
5:00-7:00pm, Honors Center, College Hall

How have feminists across generations understood the relationship between personal transformation and political activism? What tensions and insights surface from the intersections of personal life and social change? What visions and projects do women share across generations? How is our understanding of the second and third waves of feminism evolving, and what is feminism's future?

Come join three generations of feminists in a discussion about the relationship between personal life and political activism during the last fifty years of the women's movement!

The panel will feature writer **Deborah Siegel, Ph.D.**, author of *Sisterhood, Interrupted: From Radical Women to Grrls Gone Wild* (Palgrave Macmillan 2007). Siegel is at the forefront of reexamining the feminist movement and



Deborah Siegel

the ways in which younger women are reinventing feminism.

Contrary to those who have proclaimed the women's movement dead, or too divided between older and younger generations, Siegel has brought attention to the continuities that cross generational lines. In *Sisterhood, Interrupted*, Siegel examines how the relationship between individual change and collective action has emerged as a recurring theme for both the second and third waves of feminism.



Amy Kesselman at a Chicago Women's Liberation Union action in 1968.

Siegel will be joined by **Amy Kesselman**, Professor of Women's Studies at SUNY New Paltz, a historian of second-wave feminism, and one of the founders of the women's liberation movement of the late 1960's.

Our third panelist, **Elizabeth Gross**, president of the SUNY New Paltz chapter of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, will join them in what we hope will be a lively discussion that brings together intellectual inquiry, personal reflection and intergenerational understanding.

He really said that –

Crouching Tiger Meets Hidden Dragon at SUNY New Paltz

Lionel Tiger, Charles Darwin Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University and author, among other things, of *The Decline of Males*, visited our campus last month in honor of Darwin Day. Invited by the evolutionary studies program, Tiger gave a presentation in the evening, and spoke in the afternoon about his views about sex differences.

In advance of his visit he sent an article he wrote for the *Wall Street Journal* in which he harshly criticized feminism, women's studies and efforts to improve the position of women, such as the Violence Against Women Act.

Observing that his piece was full of hateful, unsupported allegations, a group of faculty members from Women's Studies, Sociology, Biology and Psychology collaborated on a flyer entitled "Did he Really Say That? A Closer Look at the Work of Lionel Tiger." The flyer questioned Tiger's claims and countered them with information about the lives of women, women's studies programs and other issues.

At the afternoon session Tiger repeated his claim that the advances of women have led to the decline of men, pointing to the fact that more women than men are in college. **Peter Kaufman** of the Sociology Dept pointed out that this needed to be understood in the context of the fact that women with two years of college only earn on average what male high school graduates earn.

Several faculty members noted the lack of evidence for Tiger's claims. **Brian Obach** of Sociology pointed out that social science disciplines follow a methodology for verifying theories which Tiger ignored. **Giordana Grossi** of Psychology also noted that Tiger lacked evidence to support his arguments.

One of Darwin's most significant contributions argued **Alison Nash** of the Psychology department, was the enormous amount of evidence he amassed to support the theory of evolution. It was appropriate to celebrate Darwin Day by challenging polemical complaints about the decline of men supported by no evidence at all.

Women's Studies Offers Summer Course on AIDS

During the first summer session Denise Oliver-Velez will be teaching "Aids, Gender and Sexuality, a Global Perspective." The course will explore the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and children, sex workers and men who have sex with men. It will cover the cultural, social, epidemiological, political, psychological, public health and policy dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

Topics will include prevention, education,

care and treatment issues for women, drug use and addiction, sex work, social stigma and the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and social class.

Students will examine the role of national and international agencies and policy makers as well as grass-roots and community activism. Denise Oliver-Velez is an applied anthropologist who teaches courses in Anthropology and Women's Studies.

Women's Studies Colloquia

"Math is Hard!": Do Statistics Students Agree with Barbie?

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

5-6:30pm, Honors Center, College Hall

Professor **Alison Nash** (Psychology) and students **Meredith Verderosa, Allison Trusso, Jaymie Lowitt** and **Stephanie Olear** examine the evidence.

Seniors Colloquium

Wednesday, May 8, 2008

4-6pm, Honors Center, College Hall

Women's Studies seniors **Risa Alfieri, Amanda Dutton, Shulie Hoffman, Jess Krollage, Stephanie Paruolo, Dana Ronnquist, Nicole Rynston, Giovanna Velez** and **Crystal Vuole** will present their research projects.

“Queering childhood” –

Bryant’s colloquium on pathologizing gender-variant behavior

On February 6, Karl Bryant, the new faculty member in Women’s Studies and Sociology, presented his work on the diagnosis of “Gender



Identity Disorder” (GID) as part of the Honors Center colloquium series.

When Bryant was five years old, his parents, concerned about his insufficient masculinity, took him to UCLA to see psychiatrist Richard Greene. The biweekly visits continued for three

years and then less frequently until he was 13 when, finding Dr. Greene’s questions uncomfortably intrusive, he refused to return.

Many years later Professor Bryant found Dr. Greene’s 1987 book, *The “Sissy Boy” Syndrome and the Development of Homosexuality*, and discovered that he had been one of Dr. Greene’s subjects.

Drawing both on his experience and his research, Bryant discussed the history of GID, a diagnosis invented by Dr. Green, and raised questions about what it has meant to pathologize gender-variant behavior in children.

Queering childhood, he suggests, would include supporting children whose behavior does not conform to prevailing ideas about gender.

Faculty News

Katherine French (History) published her book, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion after the Black Death*, with the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Amy Kesselman (Women’s Studies) will be on sabbatical during the 2008-09 academic year, when she’ll be continuing her work on the New Haven Women’s Liberation Movement.

Susan Lewis (History) published an article, “Business Widows of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Albany, New York,” in *Women on Their Own* (Rutgers University Press, 2008) as well as a college art appreciation textbook (co-authored with her husband, Richard Lewis, Chair of Art and Art History at Marist College), *The Power of Art* (Wadsworth/Cengage).

In June, she will present a talk at the Conference on New York History with **Morgan Gwendwald** (Sojourner Truth Library) entitled “Lydia Thompson and her British Blondes: Cross-dressing, Celebrity, and Stalking in Gilded Age New York.”

Professor Lewis will be teaching WOM316, History of Women in the U.S. to 1880, in Fall 2008.

Kate McCoy (Educational Studies) will be teaching Women and Drugs in Fall 2008. This class examines the historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts of women’s drug use and

its consequences in the US. Students will look at the effects of racism, sexism, and classism on women’s drug use and its consequences, with a special focus on health, legal, and “moral” issues.

Peri Rainbow (Women’s Studies), Trauma Treatment Consultant for the Orange County Trauma Initiative, will facilitate a conference for mental health professionals this month highlighting her work on vicarious traumatization and safety.

She is also coordinating a conference for mental health professionals, “Mind, Body, Spirit: Integrated Approaches to the Treatment of Post Traumatic Stress,” to be held on April 7 in Middletown, NY.

Nancy Schniedewind (Educational Studies) has helped to put together a Multicultural Summer Institute, entitled “Teaching for a Multicultural World,” to be held July 8-10. Designed for upper elementary teachers and secondary teachers of social studies and language arts, the institute will feature veteran teachers Bill Bigelow (editor of *Rethinking Schools*) and Beverly Braxton.

Participants will learn how to bring the history and lives of members of subordinate social groups into the social studies and language arts curricula. Registration deadline is May 12.

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