

University of Iowa
Women's Studies
September 1999

Newsletter



Anyone who has wandered past my office during the weeks since the new semester began, has no doubt been witness to what I like to think of as a work-in-progress. Just at the point when I thought I had completely organized my desk and created a system for dealing with every eventuality, the actual business of DEO-ing Women's Studies became a reality, and my mastery of the paper work has accordingly slipped a bit. Who would have thought that administering a program with 10 mostly joint-appointed faculty and just 8 graduate students would be so complex?

I've moved into the Chair's spacious corner office just two years after leaving San Francisco, my home for the preceding 30 years, to join the Iowa Women's Studies Program. During that time, I worked with the other faculty to come up with a plan for our Ph.D. program, including the production of our program brochure and other publicity materials, our first venture into the wild and wonderful world of graduate admissions, and the design of new courses unlike any courses any of us had ever taken ourselves. We've admitted two classes of graduate students, and our first cohort of three has come through a year as guinea-pig/pioneers with grace and humor. Five new students, to whom they can pass down the

wisdom they've accumulated over the past year, have now joined them.

We've also expanded our core faculty with the arrival of Johanna Schoen (jointly appointed with History) and Rosemarie Scullion (jointly appointed with French and Italian). Their presence is particularly welcome in that they broaden and diversify our existing strengths in both feminist criticism and reproductive issues, but also add new areas not previously represented in the faculty core.

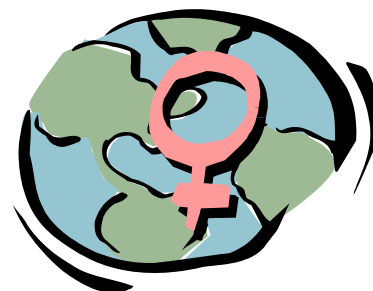
Rosemarie brings expertise in twentieth-century French literature and film to the Program, and will be inaugurating several new courses in the near future, one on French women writers in the 20th century (in English), another on women in French cinema, and still another on gender and modernity in the West.

Johanna's work focuses on women's reproductive health in the United States, particularly foregrounding the place of race and class in reproductive health policy. She will be teaching a graduate course on the history of feminisms in spring 2000, and also plans to develop a new course on the history of sexuality.

Now that we've all survived the first year of the graduate program, some needed procedural clarifications and changes will be set in motion. Stay tuned for a new version of the Student Guide, with more

explicit descriptions of expectations for Qualifying Papers, committee formation, and preparation for the Comprehensive Exams, as well as for the announcement of new course offerings. In response to unrelenting student demand in recent years, the core faculty decided to begin the process of launching a women's studies major, hopefully to start up in the fall of 2001. Please share your ideas about undergraduate education in women's studies with Jael Silliman and myself as we begin the development of the proposal.

Ellen Lewin



Women's Studies Program

Faculty:
Ellen Lewin, Chair
Florence Babb
Susan Birrell
Jane Desmond
Anne Donadey
Laura Donaldson
Johanna Schoen
Rosemarie Scullion
Jael Silliman
Margery Wolf

Staff:
Carrie Louvar
Laura Kastens
(newsletter editor)

New Faculty

Johanna Schoen "I joined the Women's Studies program and the department of History this fall. I received my Ph.D. in American History from the University of North Carolina in 1996. This semester, I am on leave as a Social Science Research Council Sexuality Research Fellow, desperately trying to finish a book manuscript on the history of birth control, sterilization, and abortion in public health and welfare in the 20th Century. I will be teaching courses on American women's history, the history of sexuality, reproductive technologies, women and health, and related issues.

I am very excited about being in Iowa City, having moved with my partner and seven-year-old son (plus a cat and guinea pig) from Toledo, Ohio, where we had to get on the freeway and drive 10 minutes just to get a gallon of milk. I love being able to bike and walk everywhere I need to go, having the *Sunday New York Times* delivered to my front porch, and having a big back yard — even though that means that I have to spend 2 1/2 hours each week mowing!

I grew up in Germany and came to the US twelve years ago to go to graduate school. Since academic unemployment in Germany is quite high and German universities are not a particularly congenial place for women working on feminist issues, I never really considered going back. I am pretty much addicted to my work. But if I don't work, I run, watch the Simpsons, play Lego, or read."

Rosemarie Scullion joins the Women's Studies Program after more than a decade of teaching in the Department of French &

Italian. She holds a Ph.D. Degree in French Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1987), where she pursued interdisciplinary work in French Historical and Cultural Studies and specialized in 20th Century French literature and Contemporary Literary Theory. Rosemarie joined the faculty of the University of Iowa in August 1987 and since that time has offered graduate and undergraduate courses on a range of topics including Contemporary French Literary Theory, the Modern French Novel, French Women Writers and French Feminist Theory, as well as on interdisciplinary subjects such as The Nazi Occupation of France, New Historicisms in France from the Annales to Foucault and The Holocaust in French Literature and Film. In the Spring 2000 semester, Rosemarie will be teaching French Women Writers of the Twentieth Century (in English translation). In the coming years, she plans to offer students in the Program in Women's Studies new courses on Gender in French Cinema, French Feminist and Gender Theory, European Modernity and the Cultural Construction of Gender, and on the Sexual Politics of European Fascism.

Rosemarie has published and/or edited numerous articles and books. Current research projects include two books; co-editing a special issue of *South Central Review* entitled "'Cinéma Engagé': Social Critique and Political Activism in French and Francophone Film," and contributing a chapter on gender and family politics in the 1942 French film *Le Voile Bleu* and its immediate postwar Hollywood remake *The Blue Veil* (1951), that will appear in a collection devoted to *Gender and French Cinema* to be

published in Great Britain and the US.

Rosemarie has a home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where she lives, travels to spend weekends and breaks with her spouse, Jalil Shirvani. Her favorite pastime is goofing off with her spunky eight- and ten-year-old nieces and trying to beat them at a game of basketball, which, to her surprise and delight, has been known to occur!

New Staff

Laura Kastens joins the Women's Studies Program as secretary. Previously, she was at the Iowa Drug Information Service, a division of the College of Pharmacy, located on the Oakdale Campus. Laura has lived in Iowa City for a little over a year, moving with her family from Columbia, Missouri, when her husband took the position of Director of the Hawkeye Marching Band at The University of Iowa. She has a degree in Music Education, and is active in the Iowa City Community Band, and her church handbell and vocal choirs. She and her husband have two children - Brian, a junior at West High School, and Jamie, in 8th grade at Northwest Junior High.

Faculty News

Anne Donadey had an article published, " 'Elle a rallumé le vif du passé: L'écriture-palimpseste d'Assia Djebar" in *Postcolonialisme et Autobiographie*, ed. Alfred Hornung and Ernstpeter Ruhe. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998.

Laura Donaldson published "On Medicine Women and White Shame-Ans: New Age

Native Americanism and Commodity Fetishism as Pop Culture Feminism" in *SIGNS, Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 1999, pgs 677-696.

Florence Babb is on leave this fall and completing work on her book "After the Revolution: Mapping Gender and Cultural Politics in Neoliberal Nicaragua". She has an article in press in the journal *City and Society* entitled "Remaking the City: Managua is Nicaragua."

Jael Silliman and Annanya Bhattacharjee have a paper entitled "Relocating Women's Studies and Activism : A Dialogue" which will appear in *Women's Studies Quarterly* 27, nos. 3 & 4 (fall/winter 1999), *Expanding the Classroom: Fostering Active Learning and Activism*, edited by Colette A. Hyman and Diane Lichtenstein.

Jael Silliman visited the University of Iowa Semester in South India Program in Mysore this summer. This innovative program, in addition to offering core humanities curriculum and language instruction, also highlights gender, science, development and modernization processes in India through courses designed around these themes. A new course has been developed this year entitled *Indian Women : Tradition and Change* that will provide students with an opportunity to learn about key women's concerns in India as well as to meet with leading feminists who will give guest lectures to the students. Students have the opportunity to intern with specialized and dynamic think tanks, NGOs and women's groups in the region. This program runs from mid-August to mid-December. For more information on the program (which costs the same

as it does to spend a semester at the University of Iowa (fare to India and lodging included)) check the web site at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~uiabroad/India>, or speak with Phil Carls at Study Abroad, Jael Silliman at Women's Studies or other faculty in the South Asia Studies Program.

New PhD Students

Sreevidya Kalaramadam (Vidya) Vidya completed her undergrad in Women's Studies, Journalism and Literature from Bangalore University, India, in 1992. After a Master's in Mass Communication (Bangalore University, 1994) she joined a local NGO called the ISST – Institute of Social Studies Trust. She worked on a couple of projects researching women's role in the political decentralization process in India. She came to the US in 1997 to do a Master's in Women's Studies at Georgia State University. During this time, she interned with CARE – the International Development Organization in Atlanta, where she worked as a Research Assistant for the Aging & Health in A South Asian Community project. The focus of her work will and has been Gender and Development, largely to understand the politics of development processes, the role of development organizations, and the philosophy of social change. Her regional focus is South Asia.

Jennifer Getting Jennifer received her BA in Psychology from Kalamazoo College in June, 1999.

Jill Duquaine Jill earned her BA in Social Change &

Development from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay in 1997, then spent 2 years in the American Studies Program here at the U of I before transferring to the Women's Studies Program. She has a 5-year old daughter - Samara.

Sukrittaya Jukping Krishna holds both BA and MA degrees from Universities in Thailand in International Affairs & Diplomacy, and an MA from Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Elise LoBue Elise holds a BA in English/Women's Studies from Illinois Wesleyan University. Upon completion of her degree, she spent 2 years with the Peace Corps in Kazakhstan.

Student News

Fiona Young has an entry on Artificial Insemination now in the final editing stages. It will be included in the forthcoming *Historical and Multicultural Encyclopedia of Female Reproductive Rights in the United States* from Greenwood publishers.

Sreevidya Kalaramadam attended the Graduate (Feminist) Students Conference in Austin, Texas, in February 1999, and will be going to the 27th South Asian Conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in October, where she will present a paper entitled "Where are we now? Movements in the political participation of women in India."



"Heterosexual Privilege"

A reworking of "White Privilege"

Student Journal Entry from Introduction to Women's Studies, Fall 1998

By Kirsten Wolfe

I've been thinking a lot lately about Peggy McIntosh's article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." I thought it was a very intriguing article when I read it the first time, but the more I think about it, the more I see that it has a lot of meaning to my life in other ways. Just as I benefit from white privilege, I also am at a disadvantage from what I call "straight privilege." The definition I gave in class the first week for white privilege was "not having to be aware of one's race every day." And when I started thinking about straight privilege, I became aware that the same was true of heterosexuality. I am forced to think about my sexuality every day of my life, and it is often the little things that set it off. Even when I don't mention my sexuality all day long, there is something that makes me very aware that I am gay. Here is an incomplete list of straight privileges that contribute to this:

1. If you (and I use 'you' to address heterosexuals) need to move, you can be pretty sure you won't be denied housing because you're straight.
2. *You can be sure that heterosexuals are represented, fairly or unfairly, in every television show.*
3. You can reserve a single hotel room with your significant other and not receive strange looks.
4. *You can walk hand-in-hand with your significant other and not fear for your physical safety.*
5. You don't have to look for a job based on the company's record of hiring heterosexuals and treating them fairly.
6. *You can talk about your significant other without being accused of pushing your sexuality on other people.*
7. When someone asks if you're dating someone, you don't have to consider their likely reaction before answering.
8. *You don't have to switch pronouns when speaking with conservative people about your significant other.*
9. You can be sure that you won't read attacks on your "lifestyle" in the paper at least once a week.
10. *Religious groups aren't launching campaigns to try to rearrange your identity and take away your civil rights.*
11. You can go to most any grocery store and find magazines that reflect your "culture."
12. *You can always find a gynecologist who's comfortable talking about your sex life.*
13. You are probably never asked if you know what a beneficiary is when you name your significant other as yours.
14. *You and your significant other can share romantic moments in your own home with your shades up.*
15. You can send flowers to your significant other without pretending to be someone's secretary.
16. *If you decide to publicly affirm your love in some sort of commitment ceremony, you can easily find someone willing to perform the ceremony.*
17. Your best friend probably won't hesitate to be your maid of honor.
18. *Your parents likely want to be present for such a ceremony.*
19. You probably don't have friends who say they are fine with who you are but just don't want to see you showing affection for your significant other.
20. *It is not a surprise when you and significant other have been together for a number of years.*
21. People don't ask you to speak for the entire heterosexual community.
22. *You are never asked when you became straight.*
23. You are never asked if you are straight because it's trendy.
24. *No one hopes your heterosexuality is a phase.*

These are just a few of the things that I encounter on a daily basis, and no matter how absolutely cool some of my straight friends are, they take these things for granted. Sometimes discrimination is very subtle, but it is almost always present. Maybe someday....

*1st International Women
in French Conference
April 6-8, 2000
Macalester & Carleton Colleges
Northfield, Minnesota
Contact: Dana Strand
(dstrand@carlton.edu)
Or Joelle Vitiello (vitiello@macalester.edu)*

**WAY UP XVII: A Conference for
Women in Higher Education**

**November 4-5, 1999
Collins Plaza
Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

The Way Up conference is for women who have chosen or who are interested in positions of leadership in higher education.

In particular, The Way Up conference:

- E Explores ways institutions can identify, assist and promote women into leadership positions.
- E Reviews state and national issues in higher education, particularly as they relate to women.
- E Promotes growth, development and self-confidence of participants.
- E Assists participants in enhancing their knowledge of higher education and their skills as leaders.

For more information, visit the web address at www.mac.drake.edu/org/women/WayUp.html



*FALL 1999 SEMINAR SERIES IN
SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES
Presents a series of lectures, some of
which will have a gender focus
They include:*

*"Gender, Violence and Diaspora: Writing
Transregional Histories in South Asia"
Dr. Anne Hardgrove, September 9*

*"Transforming Population Policies: India,
the International Conference on Population
and Development (ICPD) and Current
Perspectives"
Anuradha Kumar, November 4*

*"The Women of the Ambedkar Movement"
Eleanor Zelliot, December 9*

Time and location: 4:15-5:30 315 Phillips Hall

