

Gender Studies Program – Research Workshops

In order to advance the program's commitment to inter-disciplinary research and inquiry into the subject of gender, the Gender Studies Program is pleased to announce an upcoming series of research workshops. The events will include presentations by advanced undergraduates majoring in Gender Studies as well as graduate students and faculty members from a variety of departments who work in the area of gender and sexuality. The workshop will begin with the week's presenter giving a brief lecture on his or her current research in the field, followed by a seminar-style discussion. Workshops are held on **Fridays from 12:00 - 1:00 pm in 339 O'Shaughnessy** unless otherwise specified below.

Fall 2009:

September 4

Presenter: Dr. Laura Schwartz

University of Oxford - Career Development Fellow in History

Title: Infidel Conversations: Counter-Conversion Experience in the Lives of Freethinking Feminists, England c. 1830-1889

Historians of religion have long acknowledged the importance of conversion to the lives of evangelical Christians in the nineteenth-century and to the wider culture of the period. Less attention, however, has been paid to the process of 'counter-conversion' - the rejection of one's former faith in favour of militant opposition to religion. The counter-conversion experience was a common motif and propaganda-tool within the Secularist movement - a set of membership organisations and societies that emerged from the 1850s onwards with the goal of cleansing society of religious superstition and promoting freedom of thought. Prominent feminists within the movement wrote and spoke publicly about their experience of counter-conversion, holding it up as a model for others to follow. This paper will explore the gender dynamics of these counter-conversion accounts, approaching them as both lived experiences and autobiographical narratives. Loss of faith was almost invariably accompanied by rebellion against a male authority figure, and in some cases women left their husbands to join the Secularist movement. Counter-conversion was also represented as a process of enlightenment, during which the woman who underwent it was able to lay claim to 'Truth' and 'Reason' and thus assume a traditionally 'masculine' authorial voice. This paper will therefore ask whether it is possible to read counter-conversion as a process of 'politicisation', given that rejection of religion led Secularist women to feminism as well as to Freethought. In doing so, it will engage with wider conceptual questions as to how historians should approach the personal experience of belief (or loss of it) of those in the past. Laura Schwartz is a Career Development Fellow in History at the University of Oxford. She completed her thesis on 'Infidel Feminism: Secularism, Religion and Women's Rights in England, c. 1830-1889' in 2008, and she is now working on a history of women's education at Oxford. Her article 'Freethought, Free Love and Feminism: Secularist Debates on Marriage and Sexual Morality in England, c.1850-89', won the Claire Evans Prize in 2008 and will be published in *Women's History Review* next year. She is a team-member of the Raphael Samuel History Centre and a founding member of the History of Feminism Network.

September 25

Presenter: Dr. Barbara Taylor

University of East London - Professor of Modern History

Gender Studies Program Distinguished Visiting Professor

Title: Enlightenment and the Uses of Woman

Enlightenment views of women were strongly polarised. Barbara Taylor investigates the myths of Woman promulgated by Enlightenment intellectuals, in particular the Janus-faced doctrine of 'female influence' that dominated eighteenth-century writings on women, simultaneously portraying them as acquisitive hedonists and as paragons of self-sacrificial benevolence. The paper explores the cultural anxieties fuelling these antonymous myths, the feminist response to them, and their legacies to modern gender ideology.

October 9

Presenters: Dr. Denise Riley & Dr. Barbara Taylor

Riley: University of East Anglia

- Professor of English Literature & Director of the MA in Poetry

Taylor: University of East London - Professor of Modern History, Gender Studies Program Distinguished Visiting Professor

Title: British Feminism in the 1970s

The British women's movement of the late twentieth century had its roots in leftwing and trade union politics. Its campaigns developed in dialogue with the welfarist traditions of British social democracy. This background gave British feminism a different flavour from the 1970s North American women's movement. The rise of women's studies in Britain reflected this also, with the strongest initiatives coming not from well-known writers and academics, as in North America, but from women teachers in the leftwing adult education sector. In this session two veteran British feminists discuss the distinctive features of the 1970s British WLM, and consider its legacies for twenty-first century feminism.

October 16

Presenter: Dr. Kathryn King

University of Montevallo - Professor of English

Title: Eliza Haywood at the Sign of Fame; or, The Possibilities of Political Biography

Best known as the author of scandal chronicles and racy amatory fictions, Eliza Haywood (1693?-1756) seems at first an odd candidate for a political biography. But it turns out that in spite of her disclaimer that she "never wrote any thing in a political way," Haywood was immersed in oppositional politics almost from the start of her long career as marketplace writer. Her works offer a distinctively female perspective on public and private life, forge links between party-political networks and the worlds of the drawing room, tea table, and conversational circle, and expose the misogyny of much political thought even as they craft new identities for women in the political nation.

November 6

Presenter: Sami Schalk

MFA Creative Writing/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: Female in the City: A Working Feminist Poetics of Embodied Female Experience

This presentation, compiled of a poetry manifesta and a series of poems, will address, mainly through example, how serious feminist issues can be utilized and explored in accessible and creative ways within poetry. My goal is to use specific moments and images to tell a story of embodied female experience which is both personal and political. The poetry in this presentation will attempt to teach without preaching, connect without controlling and open the door for other women to tell the truth of their lives through creative means (written word or otherwise).

Presenter: Ryan Downey

MFA Creative Writing/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: Writing (A)cross Genre/Gender: A Mash-Up of Gurlisque, Hybrid, and Erasure Methods and Modes

This presentation, a reading of hybrid works (written by the presenter), will highlight the methodology of experimental poetry forms in relation to issues of gender performativity and construction. Through the use of various modes of "difficult" poetics, we will begin to disassemble the norms that we attach to language and to bodies. Forms may include "Self-Help" book erasures, reconstitutions of the "grotesque" body, and re-appropriated "domestic" forms of writing.

November 20

Presenter: Dr. Norma Clarke

Kingston University London

- Professor in English Literature & Creative Writing

Gender Studies Program - Distinguished Visiting Professor

Title: “What is our mammas bewitches...?” Tradition, the female poet, and her children in the early eighteenth-century

It is a commonplace that marriage and family interfere with the workings of the poetic muse. Cyril Connolly’s influential formulation, ‘the pram in the hallway is the enemy of art’ was a warning to men, but what about the woman poet? Two important female poets in the early eighteenth-century had children and in different ways those children were significant in their poetic careers. This talk will introduce Mary Barber (c1690-1757) and Laetitia Pilkington (c1708-50) and consider how far gender and motherhood shaped their lives and writings in Dublin and London in the 1730s and 1740s.

Spring 2010:

January 22

Presenter: Jacqui Weeks

PhD English/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: Sensing Monsters: Carol Ann Duffy’s “Mrs. Beast”

Playing off of two decades of prolific feminist fairy tale writing, Carol Ann Duffy subverts the romance of “once upon a time” by reanimating the submissive heroine of deVillanueve’s morality tale “Beauty and the Beast” as the powerful, arrogant “Mrs. Beast.” Frightening and larger-than-life, this monster-wife is forcefully embodied and fully sensate. By appropriating a familiar tale, Duffy ensures that her readers are already primed to notice any departure from the pre-set plot arc, but, ultimately, the power of fairy tale archetypes seems to be reaffirmed by the tremendous lengths to which the poet must go to (re)form it.

February 5

Presenter: Lourdes Hurtado

PhD History/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: The Peruvian Civilized Barracks and the Feminine/Backward Maternal Home

During the 1960s and 1970s -in the middle of the Cold War- the Peruvian military still considered conscription as one of the main vehicles for national integration and for transforming young Peruvian men into suitable defenders of the nation. In those decades, army officers had to deal with two main issues that were affecting the country’s development: the high rate of illiteracy among conscripts who came from rural and Andean areas, and the menace of foreign ideologies such as hippism and international communism, which might eventually affect Peru’s national security. This paper explores how army officers imagined the space of the barracks -a masculine, rational space- where young conscripts were turned into real men, in opposition to the maternal and feminine urban/rural home that was prone to negative or deviant/foreign influences.

February 26

Presenter: Regina Ingiosi

MST Theology/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: The Catholic Identity and the Gendered Soul

The practices of the Roman Catholic Church indicate a theological anthropology that emphasizes gender as a constitutive attribute of the human person. Via conciliar documents, this paper begins by clarifying and analyzing the Church’s official teaching on the role of gender in understanding human identity and by attempting to highlight some key Catholic theologians who have contributed to this position. From there, the argument will shift to the speculative: Is there room for disagreement? Can there be an alternative, yet authentically Catholic position? The conclusion of the paper opens a dialogue on additional interpretations of the status of gender in the human person.

March 19

Presenter: Encarnación Juárez-Almendros

Department of Romance Languages and Literatures

Fellow of the Medieval Institute

Fellow of the Nanovic Institute for European Studies

Disability Studies Forum, <http://disabilityforum.nd.edu/>

Title: Syphilis and Prostitution in Early Modern Spanish Literature

April 9

Presenter: Monique Gregg

PhD History/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: The Covenant: Resolving Theological Conflict Regarding Sexual Orientation in an Ecumenical Religious Youth Ministry for High School Adolescents

April 23

Co-Presenter: Emily DiFillipo

MFA Creative Writing/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: The Post-Franco Context and the Female Self: Esther Tusquets' The Same Sea as Every Summer

Co-Presenter: Dan Hicks

PhD Philosophy/Gender Studies Graduate Minor

Title: Is Longino's conception of objectivity feminist?

The account of objectivity in Helen Longino's *Science as Social Knowledge* has been regarded as an unusually successful and productive encounter between feminist philosophy and mainstream philosophy of science. However, not all feminists are happy with the account of objectivity Longino develops in this and her later *The Fate of Knowledge*. I have encountered three feminist philosophers who have all offered one especially compelling feminist critique of Longino: far from vindicating or privileging the work of feminist scientists, Longino's account actually requires the inclusion of anti-feminist and misogynist scientists to balance out the possibility of feminist bias. I call this objection the 'Nazi problem', for its claim that her view requires even the inclusion of Nazi scientists in objective inquiry. In this paper I will take up the Nazi problem. I will first present the basic features of Longino's account of objectivity and the Nazi problem. I then present a response which I call the good faith argument. I next turn to a serious objection to the good faith argument: it is just as objectionable, on feminist grounds, as the Nazi problem it is meant to address. In the conclusion, I go on to argue that Longino's account of objectivity shares this problem with John Rawls' account of reasonable persons in *Political Liberalism*. Dealing with this problem therefore requires a two-sided approach, incorporating both philosophy of science and political philosophy.