Contact Information

**Director:** Prof. Suzanna Walters  
*s.walters@neu.edu*  
Office: 561 Holmes  
Phone: (617) 373-8519

**Program Coordinator:** Kiki Samko  
*k.samko@neu.edu*  
Office: 524 Holmes  
Phone: (617) 373-4984
Message from the Director

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all back from what I hope was a delightful summer break. My first year at Northeastern was productive and exciting and I want to thank the faculty and administrators who helped make my transition to Northeastern such an easy one. WGSS continues to grow in ways that promise to enrich the intellectual and cultural climate here and in the broader Boston area.

First, let me welcome some new additions to our community. Claire Gardner – an undergraduate student minoring in WGSS and majoring in Sociology – has been working in the office this summer and will continue in the fall. She’s been a great help to me as we update the website, re-organize the office, and prepare for a new year.

After a rigorous search (with over 100 applicants!) we have hired a new Program Coordinator for WGSS! Kiki Samko has been working for the past 5 years at Tufts, where she was the Administrative Assistant to the VP for Human Resources. She brings with her a wealth of robust administrative experience and a real excitement to help us build the Program. Kiki will start in mid-August and I hope all of us will help integrate her into the Northeastern community.

We also have a new visiting scholar with us this year: Phyllis Thompson is a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at Harvard and is due to defend her dissertation this fall. Her research— on Domestic Pleasures: Dreams of Joy and Fulfillment in American Home Life— promises to intersect nicely with WGSS faculty interests and we anticipate her full participation in our community this coming academic year. Keep on the lookout for more info on Phyllis and her work.

This past year brought numerous important changes to the program. Highlights include:

- The addition of two faculty—myself and English Professor Carla Kaplan—as official (partial) appointments in the Program, a necessary step toward a more robust and regularized curriculum.
- Changes to both the undergraduate minor and the graduate certificate.
- Two new WGSS courses, one of which is being offered by me this fall (“Sex, Gender, and Pop Culture”).
- Administrative revisions that resulted in a wonderful new Executive Committee, which will serve for a full three-year term.
- Initiation of a Forum on Feminist Scholarship that will provide a much-needed venue for collaboration around a varied array of topics in the field of gender and sexuality studies.

Please read our newsletter and check out our updated website for more detailed information about WGSS. And have a great semester!

-Suzanna Danuta Walters
“Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings.”
-Cheris Kramarae

Dedicated Faculty Lines

WGSS now has two dedicated faculty lines—Professor Suzanna Walters of Sociology (50%) and Professor Carla Kaplan of English (25%).

New Undergraduate Course!

Sex, Gender, and Pop Culture

This new course for Fall 2013 - taught by WGSS Director Suzanna Walters - examines how femininities, masculinities, and different forms of sexual identity are produced and represented within popular culture. Using theories and concepts from both feminist/sexuality studies and popular culture studies, we will analyze popular media for their treatment of gender and sexuality and the intersection of those categories with race and class identities. This class explores the visual representation of women (and men) and analyzes how visual and textual media shape our attitudes and identities.

Queer Theory and Politics

Professor Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman, C. Heike Schotten, Suzanna Walters

Tuesdays 5:30PM – 8:30PM

MIT Building and Room TBD

Watch out for new graduate consortium courses coming in the spring! See page 6 for details.
Undergraduate Minor:

The curriculum for the Undergraduate Minor in WGSS was thoroughly reviewed and revised. New requirements for elective courses have been established and include a newly approved course list and the development of a new WGSS course, WMNS1101: *Sex, Gender, and Pop Culture*. In addition, we were able to get gifted faculty to teach our Intro course: visiting scholar Shannon Weber taught for us this past year and Prof. Kimberly Juanita Brown of English is scheduled to teach it in the Spring of 2014.

Graduate Certificate:

The curriculum for the Graduate Certificate Program was also thoroughly reviewed and revised. It is crucial that core courses – at the very least – be WGSS courses that are designed with our specific interdisciplinary mandate front and center. Here, too, we reviewed and revised the elective courses, establishing a new course list and creating a new required course, WMNS 6100: *Theorizing Gender and Sexuality*, which is now officially approved by the College.
Upcoming Courses

Undergraduate - Fall

**WGSS**
**WMNS 1101: Sex, Gender, and Pop Culture**
Professor Suzanna Walters, CRN: 16347
See page 3 for more details!

**Anthropology**
**ANTH 1101: Peoples and Cultures**
Professor Carie Hersh, Alan Klein
CRN: 10929, 10930

**ANTH 2302: Gender and Sexuality: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**
Professor Nina Sylvanus, CRN: 10307

**English**
**ENGL 4670: Modern African-American Literature**
Professor Kimberly Brown, CRN: 14481

**ENGL 4710: Junior/Senior Seminar: Trickster in American Literature**
Professor Bonnie TuSmith, CRN: 10648

**Human Services**
**HUSV 3580: Rape Crisis Training: Techniques in Counseling**
Professor Stephanie Decandia, CRN: 10220

**Music**
**MUSC 1139: Popular Music, Sexuality, and the New Global Order**
Professor Alessandra Ciucci, CRN: 14011

**Political Science**
**POLS 5101: LGBT Issues in Public Policy**
Professor Sean Cahill, CRN: 16150

**Religious Studies**
**RELS 1271: Sex in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**
Professor Michael Hartwig, CRN: 13547

**RELS 1280: Introduction to Islam**
Professor Elizabeth Bucar, CRN: 14108

**Sociology**
**SOCL 1260: Gender in a Changing Society**
Professor Kathrin Zippel, CRN: 13876

**SOCL 4580: Special Topics in Sociology: Sexuality**
Professor Christopher Chambers, CRN: 14078
Graduate Courses

Counseling & Applied Education

Psychology

CAEP 6380: Seminar in Feminist Psychology
Professor Mary Ballou, CRN: 16261, Wednesdays 1:00PM – 3:30 PM

English

ENGL 7359: Modern & Contemporary Jewish Literature
Professor Lori Lefkovitz, CRN: 16203 Mondays 3:30 - 6:00 pm

ENGL 7286: Victorian Literature- Gender & Victorian Literature
Professor Laura Green, CRN: 16201 Thursdays 3:30 PM – 6:00PM

Law

LAW 7588: Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights
Professor Aziza Ahmed Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:10PM – 3:40PM

Sociology

SOCL 7273: Gender and Social Policy
Professor Kathrin Zippel, CRN: 16332 Mondays 4:35PM – 6:35PM

Upcoming Courses

Graduate Consortium

Fall 2013
Workshop for Dissertation Writers in Women's & Gender Studies
Professor Kimberly Brown Wednesdays 5:00PM – 8:00PM

Understanding Pornography
Professors Sarah Leonard, Emily Rothman, Maria San Filippo Day and time TBA

Spring 2014
Feminist Inquiry
Professors Linda Blum, Kim Sukan Wednesdays 5:30PM – 8:30PM

Screen Women: Body Narratives in Popular American Film
Professors Emily Fox-Kales, Suzanne Leonard Mondays 6:00PM – 9:00PM

Queer Theory & Politics
Professors Walters, Schotten, Abdur-Rahman Tuesdays 5:30-8:30
See red sidebar, left, for more details!
Introducing the members of the 2013-2016 WGSS executive committee:

**Professor Aziza Ahmed** of the School of Law

Prof. Ahmed’s research focuses on health, gender, sexuality, HIV, and reproductive health. Her work is interdisciplinary and draws on a range of scholarship including legal theory, feminist sociology, and science and technology studies. Ahmed teaches Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, Property Law, and International Health Law: Governance, Rights, and Development. She has published widely on gender, sexuality, and the law. Prof. Ahmed served as an expert member of the Technical Advisory Group on HIV and the Law convened by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and as an expert for the American Bar Association. She is on the board of the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

**Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown** of the English Department

Prof. Brown’s research focuses on the interplay of literature and visual culture throughout the African diaspora in the 20th century. Her book, *The Repeating Body: Slavery’s Visual Resonance in the Contemporary*, explores the legacy of slavery through black women’s cultural representations. She is interested in the visuality of indifference; how it impacts the discourse of gender, race, and nation; and the residual effects of this indifference. Brown loves photography, so most of her work relates to the photographic in some way. During graduate school, Brown thought a lot about the invisibility of black women in the American archive. "Wherever policy met public culture...it seemed that black women were central, silent, and hyper-visible." She therefore decided to spend her career exploring what this might mean. Brown states, "I am always amazed that more people are not interested in women’s studies as a field of intellectual work...how do humanities and social science scholars explain ignoring fifty-one percent of the population without missing a beat?"
Executive Committee (continued)

Professor Elizabeth Bucar of the Philosophy and Religion Department

Prof. Bucar’s area of expertise is comparative religious ethics, with a focus on Islam and Christianity. She focuses on topics from feminist ethics to women’s social movements to sex change operations, as well as topics like the Islamic veil and transsexuality within religion. “Basically,” she says, “if you combine religion in some way (religious communities, religious ideals, assumptions about religion) with sex and gender, I am likely to be intrigued!” She is currently working on two projects. The first is a comparative study of transsexuality in the Catholic and Shi’i ethics “The purpose of my research,” she explains, “is not to judge what tradition ‘gets sexuality right,’ but rather to provide new intellectual ground for understanding how gendered categories of the human have historically held theological significance.” She is also writing a book-length comparative study on Islamic veiling fashion in Tehran, Istanbul, and Jakarta. “I am interested in how veiled Muslim women reconcile intentionally enhancing their appearance with the Islamic virtue of modesty,” she says. “I have observed substantial theological and ethical conversations taking place about the value of female beauty, which I argue are influencing local and global Islamic discourses about virtue.”

Professor Laura Frader of the History Department

Prof. Frader’s research focuses on the history of women and gender in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, with an emphasis on France. Her work has focused on the gender dimensions of inequality, social justice, and democracy. According to Frader, “To understand gender fully requires an understanding of how gender difference developed historically.” She has focused on France because the country has a very interesting gender history—the French were very progressive on a number of gender fronts, yet women were denied rights for a long time. France also has had progressive social policies regarding work and motherhood. Her new work examines equality policies in Europe more broadly. A current project examines the discourses and politics of citizenship and nationality in the European Community through a history of EU gender equality policies since the Treaty of Rome (1957) and their impact on member states. A second project focuses on ideas about cultural difference and sexuality in France by examining how knowledge about colonial subjects was produced and conveyed.
Executive Committee (continued)

**Professor Denise Horn** of the International Affairs Department

Prof. Horn’s research focuses on democratization, civil society, and the construction of gender roles in this context. Her work also analyzes the connection between democratization and development (specifically social entrepreneurship) and how women’s roles as citizens can be enhanced or limited by these developmental factors. Her work cuts across disciplinary boundaries and she draws from several different fields: comparative politics, political theory and feminist philosophy, sociology, and development studies. Horn is interested in the interdisciplinary field of WGSS because she is deeply committed to activism and human rights issues and finds that this approach satisfies her desire to combine activism and scholarship. She states, “Feminist International Relations is one of the most interesting, exciting fields in the discipline.”

**Professor Sarah Jackson** of the Communication Studies Department

Prof. Jackson’s research focuses on how social and political identities are constructed in the public sphere. Specifically, she is interested in how language and media in America define, negotiate, and limit understanding of identity (especially factors such as race, gender, and class). She is currently working on a book, “Black Celebrity, Racial Politics, and the Press.” (continued)

**Professor Laura Green** of the English Department

Prof. Laura Green’s research focuses on Victorian Literature with particular interests in the representation of women and gender and in the novel as narrative form. Her first book, *Educating Women: Cultural Conflict and Victorian Literature* (2001), looked at how the enormous changes in women’s educational opportunities within the Victorian period were represented—or not—in Victorian novels of women’s experience. Her recent study, *Literary Identification: From Charlotte Brontë to Tsitsi Dangarembga*, considers how a tradition of fictions of female development is produced through readers’ identification with female protagonists and authors. Professor Green has taught graduate and undergraduate classes in women’s, gender, and queer studies as well as in Victorian literature and culture. Her most recent essay, “George Elliot: Gender and Sexuality,” appeared in the *Blackwell Companion to George Elliot* (2013), edited by Amanda Anderson and Harry Shaw.
**Professor Sarah Jackson** of the Communication Studies Department

*(continued from previous page)*...In her teaching, Jackson focuses on the intersection that exists between our identities and how we communicate about identity. She became interested in women's studies because of the influence of "a couple of wonderful women professors" who introduced her to feminist media criticism and black feminist theory. Because of their influence, she has always been interested in how women and gender identity are represented in media and politics, as well as how understandings of race and colonialism intersect with these representations.

**Professor Carla Kaplan** of the WGSS and English Departments


**Professor Lori Lefkovitz** of the Jewish Studies Department

Prof. Lefkovitz’s research focuses on identity and representation in literature. She hones in on patterns such as our ideas about the nuclear family, masculinity, femininity, beauty, ethnicity, and sexuality. “I try to expose the power of stories. The subjects of my books range widely over time and genre, from Victorian fiction to Bible, but they all examine how literary patterns create ruts in the communal psyche and enforce cultural norms." Her work also focuses on Jewish studies, and therefore her work is consistently interdisciplinary. She reads wearing the lenses of psychoanalytic, gender, and queer theories. Lefkovitz has always been interested in gender and sexuality. Her family of origin communicated a consciousness about identity as fundamental to self-understanding and justice. “I appreciated that gender, sexuality, and ethnicity were sometimes matters of life and death and often matters of fairness.”


There are two streams to Prof. Moghadam’s research. First, she studies transnational feminist networks, their organizational features and strategies, their relationship to the globalization process, and their contributions to global civil society. Secondly, she studies development, political economy, women’s labor force participation, social policy, and feminist movements, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. Moghadam’s interest in women’s studies was sparked when she began studying the gender dynamics of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, compared to the objectives and outcomes of the 1978 Saur Revolution in Afghanistan. After that, she began to focus on various other aspects of women, gender, and the state of gender politics in the Middle East and North Africa.

Prof. Serena Parekh focuses her research on social and political philosophy, as well as human rights, especially in regards to refugees. She is in the process of writing a book about our moral obligations to help refugees. She uses a feminist lens in her research to look at global justice, arguing that people do not take violations against women seriously enough, and that this is a global human rights issue. She became interested in the field of women’s studies while working in philosophy. Philosophy has traditionally been a male dominated field and Professor Parekh was excited to find other women writing about philosophy and different theoretical perspectives.
What is the WGSS Faculty up to?

**Carla Kaplan**
Professor Kaplan is currently on sabbatical for the 2013-14 academic year. She has a major new trade book coming out in September from Harper—*Miss Anne in Harlem: The White Women of the Harlem Renaissance*—and is at Wellesley this year as the Mary L. Cornille Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities.

**Liz Bucar**
Professor Bucar is currently working on two new book projects—*The Good of Ambiguous Bodies: Transsexuality in the Catholic and Shi’i Ethics* and *Pious Fashion: The Virtues of Veiled Fashionistas*.

**Suzanna Walters**
Professor Walters has been inducted into the 2013-14 Humanities Center Resident Fellowship Program. Walters will work on a project titled “The Viral is Political: Sexual Identity, Sexual Violence, Social Media.” Her new trade book—*The Tolerance Trap: Gays, Straights, and the Quest for Real Equality*—will be out in the spring with NYU Press.

**Sarah Jackson**
Professor Jackson has a book due out in 2014—*Black Celebrity, Racial Politics, and the Press*—as part of Routledge’s Transformations in Race and Media series.

**Serena Parekh**
Professor Parekh is currently writing a book which focuses on our moral obligations to refugees.

---

**Laura Green**
Green’s recent book—*Literary Identification from Charlotte Brontë to Tsitsi Dangarembga*—discusses novels, memoirs, and essays by nineteenth-, twenthieth-, and twenty-first-century women writers from England, France, Africa, and the United States to analyze the bonds among women readers, characters, and authors that make up the experience of “literary identification.”

**Denise Horn**
Professor Horn’s second book, *Democratic Governance and Social Entrepreneurship: Civic Participation and the Future of Democracy* (Routledge) was released in February 2013. She will be on leave in Spring 2014 on a Fulbright Grant to Indonesia.

The Faculty of WGSS have been funded as a 2013-14 Collaborative Research Cluster, studying “Sexual Citizenship: Identities, Policies, Theories.” We hope this is the beginning of a long series of WGSS working groups.
Carla Kaplan will be holding two book readings for her new novel Miss Anne in Harlem: The White Women of the Black Renaissance. The first will be held at Porter Square Books, 25 White Street, Cambridge on September 17th at 7 PM. The second will occur at the Harvard Bookstore, 1256 Mass Ave, Cambridge, on October 11th at 3 PM (with a book party to follow).

The NWSA (National Women’s Studies Association) national conference will be held this year from November 7th to the 13th in Cincinnati, Ohio. Visit www.nwsa.org/registration to register.

On November 13th, a panel on “Gay Rights After Gay Marriage” will be held as part of the “Conflict, Civility, Respect, Peace” series, featuring our director, Suzanna Walters; Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court Roderick L. Ireland; and gay marriage legal pioneer Mary Bonauto.

Applications to take a GCWS course have an August 21st fall deadline—make sure to check out the grad offerings of the Consortium!
We were very pleased to have two wonderful Visiting Scholars join us last year – Leigh Gilmore and Shannon Weber. Both got involved in our research (e.g., the Body/Embodiment Collaborative Cluster), gave talks and presentations, participated in Program events, and even successfully taught a section of Intro for us.

Our 2013-2014 Visiting Scholar is **Phyllis Thompson**, a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies with a Secondary Field in Women, Gender, and Sexuality at Harvard University who expects to defend her dissertation in November of 2013. Ms. Thompson’s project, “Domestic Pleasures: Dreams of Joy and Fulfillment in American Home Life,” is a cultural history of licit pleasures within twentieth-century North American domestic life and looks to have substantive commonality with research foci within our community. We anticipate her full participation and engagement with the program.
Future Plans

WGSS is currently in the midst of a rethinking of its “mission” and a re-imagination of its future. Our move here is two-fold: 1) to enhance and regularize existing curricular offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and 2) to develop a robust, interdisciplinary, and generative Forum on Feminist Scholarship that will bring together scholars throughout the Boston area, igniting Northeastern as a locus for research on gender and sexuality. While the contours of this future—are still to be mapped out, the following points summarize our current ambitions:

- Develop a closer relationship to the Graduate Consortium. To this end, Carla Kaplan will be assuming the co-director of the board of GCWS this coming fall, which will enable greater NEU involvement and leadership.
- Provide curricular oversight for the College on courses pertaining to gender and sexuality.
- Continue to move partial lines as appropriate into WGSS to enable development of a regularized curriculum.
- Further develop our media and social media presence via website development, Twitter, Facebook, and regularized e-newsletters.
- Aggressively pursue editorship of the flagship journal Signs as it leaves its current home of Rutgers University.
- Add one or two post-doctoral teaching fellowships to our program, with the goal of bringing them in for the 2014-2015 academic year.
- Continue to provide regular colloquia and reinvigorate the “Feminist Scholar Speaker Series.” Work toward a semi-annual feminist conference to be held at Northeastern, with the first to be held in March of 2015 on the topic of “Gender and Sexualities across Borders: an international dialogue”.
- Initiate discussions with allied units to discuss potential “niche” MA programs (e.g. “Gender and Transnational Activism” with IAF; “Sexuality and Public Health” with Bouvé).
- Work with our colleagues across the university to develop collaborative clusters and research foci, garnering both internal and external funding.
Visions and plans of the Executive Committee:

“Future Plans (continued)"

“I would like to see WGSS broaden its interests geographically as well as topically.”
-Professor Moghadam

“We need to figure out what the students want—what are students interested in, what do they hope to gain from the program? Discussion with students is key.”
-Professor Frader

“I hope that our program will host occasional research brown bag lunches so that we can learn from and support one another.”
-Professor Jackson

“My students are thinking hard about new and exciting topics within WGSS, such as transgender individuals. We need to create a forum for students that we can respond to and engage in.”
-Professor Green

“My vision is two-fold: we encourage more departments to hire scholars who focus on gender, women, and sexuality; and to offer more classes across disciplines.”
-Professor Horn

“Engaging students where they are can go a long way. Students want to have these conversations, to be able to speak freely about the very concepts (legal, political and cultural) affecting their lives.”
-Professor Brown