

From the Director's Desk



JUDITH W. PAGE
DIRECTOR, CWSGR

I've always loved the excitement of a new academic year. When I was a child, it was mostly the crisp and clean notebooks—my blank slates—and the new box of

crayons that signified a beginning and hope for the year to come. As director of a vibrant center, my excitement focuses our new and returning students and on reconnecting with colleagues. We've all gone our separate ways over the summer, returning with lots to tell about summer research and distant travels to France, India, Israel, Jordan, Nicaragua, and Peru, to name a few of the countries that faculty and students have visited. Here we are now, back again on

campus and ready to share those experiences.

For my summer adventure, I attended an international conference on William Wordsworth in his home village of Grasmere, in the Lake District of northern England. I had been invited to give an address on any subject related to the poet, so I chose a topic related to my new research but as yet unexplored territory for me: his relation to Beatrix Potter. We all know Potter as the author of those marvelous

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Happy 35th Anniversary, Women's Studies!

Contributed by Jaquie Resnick

In the mid 1970's, women students had been admitted to the University for fewer than 30 years. Women represented about 12 % of the faculty, the majority at instructor rank, and only 5% full professors. When the Women's Studies certificate program was proposed, the idea was considered controversial, met with skepticism about sufficient substance and suspicion about the concomitant social/political women's movement. Provisional approval was offered - the only program to have a

probationary status at the time! As one of six women faculty on the original steering committee, I was the youngest, most recent PhD. It was exhilarating and humbling to be part of this historic moment, working with a group of wise and uppity women, accomplished in their careers and committed to founding a women's studies program despite the chilly climate. I learned many lessons about changing entrenched systems that remain salient today – assess

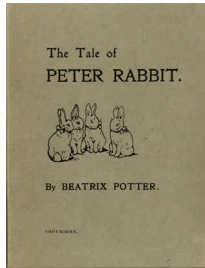
the prevailing culture, plan strategically, develop allies, know when to hold firm and when to compromise, focus on achieving goals. I observed ways to confront and rebut sexism with aplomb and humor. I witnessed strength in our diversity, exemplified by the various academic disciplines, lifestyles and backgrounds. This was an

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ORIGINAL UF WOMEN'S STUDIES STEERING COMMITTEE JAQUIE RESNICK, RUTH McQUOWN, MADELYN LOCKHART, MAXINE MARGOLIS, FAYE GARY HARRIS, IRENE THOMPSON

From the Director's Desk, continued from page 1



little books, the *Tale of Peter Rabbit* and the other brilliant tales of impertinent bunnies and mischievous

kittens: but how many of us know that Potter had a second career as a great environmentalist who lived in the same region as Wordsworth had celebrated and who had a lasting influence on the preservation of land and historical buildings? Potter never called herself a feminist or became active in the suffragette

movement, but she was a force of nature and certainly lived the life (1866-1943) consistent with the feminist movements that surrounded her.

We tend to think our work of recovery is nearly complete, at least with regard to women in the 19th and 20th centuries—that we know who accomplished what or who wrote important but forgotten books. And certainly feminist studies have uncovered a wealth of material and opened new avenues of thought. But the

case of Beatrix Potter shows that there is always more to learn. So let the learning begin, and join with us for exciting discussions of Zora Neale Hurston and Betty Friedan, to name just two of the figures we will explore in our programs this year. And I will gladly talk about Beatrix Potter to anyone who will listen!



“THE WOMEN HAVE RECEIVED ME WITH OPEN ARMS, AND THEY HAVE SHARED THEIR STORIES AND STRUGGLES, WHICH I CONSIDER THE GREATEST ADVENTURE OF THIS YEAR.”

—NATHALIA HERNANDEZ OCHOA, WST MA STUDENT SPEAKING ABOUT HER SUMMER RESEARCHING IN EL SALVADOR

(SEE PAGE 4)

CWSGR Creates Program Highlighting Florida History

Florida is home to the oldest continuously-inhabited European-founded city—St. Augustine, established in 1565. What have women been doing in the state for the last 450 or so years? You're not alone in asking that question. The CWSGR routinely receives requests for programs on Florida women's history—requests we just as routinely have to turn down because none of our faculty are experts on the subject. In the last year, however, we decided to develop some expertise, and are now proud to say that we have a

45-minute narrated slide presentation on the topic available for public programming and community engagement. “Jump at the Sun: Women in Florida History” was created by former Women's Studies minor Vanessa Attia (the “Feminist Archivist” profiled in the spring 2012 Newsletter) and Associate Director Trysh Travis, using archival materials from the special collections libraries of UF and other state universities as well as the Florida Historical

Society. It traces women's contributions to Florida's political, artistic, and educational history, and sparks discussion about the state of the state today. The response to “Jump at the Sun” has been so great that we have created a companion piece, “A Short History of LGBT Florida,” which will premiere during Gainesville's Pride Days this September (see Upcoming Events in the Center, below). If your class or group is interested in either presentation, please contact Trysh Travis at ttravis@ufl.edu.

Happy Anniversary, Women's Studies! continued from page 1

empowering experience for an early career academic, something we continue today to foster in our new colleagues.

Success for women's studies at its inception meant approval of a fledgling certificate program, with one interdisciplinary course and

partial reduction in teaching load for the director. Now, thanks to the tremendous efforts and decades of commitment of numerous women's studies advocates, there is a vibrant Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research, offering

undergraduate and graduate degrees, attracting outstanding faculty, housed in a dedicated building, Ustler Hall. While there are many exciting goals yet to be realized, and challenges abound, there is much to celebrate on our 35th anniversary!

Welcome New Graduate Students

We are pleased to welcome to the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research 5 new graduate students who will join our graduate cohort of 7 MA candidates. Our incoming class will enrich our graduate program with their wealth of expertise in social justice activism, art, and politics. Please join us in welcoming **Roselyn Almonte, Tiffany Lee, Caroline Joan Picart, Deanna Tomasetti, and Karina Vado** to the MA program in Women's Studies.

Roselyn Almonte joins us from the University of South Florida where she graduated this past Spring 2012 with a Bachelor's of Arts in philosophy, and a minor in women's and gender studies, and history. Her parents are from the Dominican Republic, and she believes that her upbringing in a dynamic Dominican family has had a direct impact on her passion to continue her education in women's and gender studies. Her main academic interests lie in postcolonial feminism, Afro-Latina/o studies, LGBTQ studies, Asian-American and African-American Diaspora. She is passionate about art and enjoys painting with acrylics.

Tiffany Lee received her BA in History from Middle Tennessee State University, with minors in Women's and Gender Studies and Religion. Her research interests include women's history and historiography, sexuality, globalism and intersectionality, and feminist theory. She is dedicated to fighting gender discrimination through

education, community outreach, and political activism. Her post-graduate goals include working for a non-governmental organization and seeking entrance into public policy and politics. She also has a passion for early childhood development and the performing arts.



NEW M.A. STUDENTS (L TO R) ROSELYN ALMONTE, KARINA VADO, CAROLINE JOAN S. PICART (STANDING), TIFFANY LEE, AND DEANNA TOMASETTI GATHER IN THE CENTER FOLLOWING THEIR GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION.

Caroline Joan ("Kay") S. Picart (M.Phil., Cambridge University; Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University) is a candidate in the JD/MA Program interested in Critical Race Theory, Gender, and Intellectual Property. Recently, she co-edited three books on the rhetorics of monstrosity: *Draculas, Vampires, and Other Undead Forms: Essays on Gender, Race and Culture* (2009), *Dracula in Visual Media* (Lord Ruthven Award in Non-Fiction, 2011) and *Speaking of Monsters* (2012). From 2008-2009, she produced and hosted a radio show. Kay won the 2006 US Open championship in cabaret (a mix of ballroom, ballet and gymnastics) and runs a successful dance consultancy; as an artist, she has exhibited and sold visual art nationally and internationally.

Deanna Tomasetti graduated from Western Illinois University in 2009 with a

BA in Sociology and Women's Studies. She was selected as a Western SCAI scholar and received a grant for her research concerning the relationship between population shifts and racially-motivated violent crime. After graduating, she moved to Florida to work as a social studies teacher, coach, and mentor for students in Osceola county. Her research interests and methods include social movements, quantitative analysis, intersectionality, pregnancy, and sexualities. After completing her MA at University of Florida, she plans to continue her graduate study in a doctoral program in Sociology with an emphasis on gender and demography. Deanna hopes to pursue an academic career or one with the US Census Bureau.

Karina Vado was born and raised in South Florida but is of Nicaraguan descent. Her parents left Nicaragua in 1986, attempting to escape from the Sandinista Revolutionary Party's regime. This has since inspired her to look at the shifting of gender roles that occurred starting from the Somoza dictatorship to the Sandinista revolution and thereafter. She received her BA (Honors) in English from the University of Florida. Her research interests include psychoanalytic theory, feminist theory, literary theory, postcolonial theory and rhetorical theory. Currently, she is the Women's Student Association (WSA) Executive Director for Women's History Month 2013.



Graduate Students' Notes from the Field

Three of our MA candidates spent the summer overseas—pursuing MA thesis research and documenting political events. Cathy Jean, Molly Green, and Nathalia Hernandez Ochoa reflect on their summer travels.



MA CANDIDATE CATHY JEAN AND HER HUSBAND HASHEM AND HER SON LIAM IN FRONT OF AL-HUSSEIN MOSQUE IN KHAN EL KHALILI, CAIRO

During the Summer 2012, **Cathy Jean** visited with family and friends in Egypt, where, she witnessed the presidential elections, the dissolution of parliament, the re-instatement of parliament by the

newly elected president, constitutional debates, and power plays between the military, the judiciary and the executive. She reflects on her experience: “Cairo is the same place I remember prior to the revolution, but a more lively and vibrant version. Political debates in the coffee shops and among street vendors along the Nile are commonplace now. This is a time of tumultuous transition, but hopefully of promise for the Egyptian people.”

Molly Green spent the summer in Granada, Nicaragua conducting research for her Master's thesis thanks to a generous grant from the Center for Latin American Studies and the Tinker



MOLLY GREEN TAKES A REST IN FRONT OF IGLESIA GUADELOUPE

Foundation. While in Nicaragua, she interviewed many members of the local community, as well as foreign visitors, to explore the relationships between

Nicaraguan men and women from the United States and the ways that these relationships reflect post-colonial concepts. After wrapping up her research abroad, Molly has been focusing on planning orientation and welcoming activities for new graduate students as part of the Graduate Assistants United union.

Nathalia Hernandez Ochoa spent the summer in El Salvador gathering data for her MA thesis project entitled "Women's Roles in El Salvador's Revolutionary War: Middle Lower Class and Peasant Women's Guerrilla Mobilization." She was fortunate to interview more than 20 rural women, who participated or lived in the revolution in different ways. She writes: “I have visited three communities highly affected by the war, which are located in different departments of the country (Morazan, Chalatenango, and Cabanas). The women have received me with open arms, and they have shared their stories and struggles, which I consider the greatest adventure of this year. I have been traveling around the country to talk to all of these women, and each of them has a painful and valuable life lesson to share.”

This summer, **Michelle Harris** worked on researching content for her graduate thesis project, which will focus on updating and enhancing one of the few online resources for feminist science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction. Her main interest is to expand the academic accessibility of this website by creating detailed sections on prominent authors, themes, and media as well as a



NATHALIA CONCLUDES AN INTERVIEW IN LOS RANCHOS, CHALATENANGO, EL SALVADOR

database of academic articles and reviews. Besides continuing research for her thesis project, Michelle also began writing for the online local news site Examiner.com as Gainesville's “feminist geek examiner,” and worked on developing one of her graduate papers for submission to an upcoming academic conference on science fiction media.

Kelly Korman spent the summer assisting in the creation of a database for the Alachua County Public Schools menu planners to consolidate the nutritional information of their school lunch meals. In the process she facilitated discussion between local Jose's Tempeh and the School Board in an effort to introduce tempeh to the public school menu. Kelly also wrote grant applications for Florida Organic Growers and will be doing follow-up work on the gardens she built with them for her master's project this Fall. In the works currently is an Edible Landscaping club that will bring raised beds to the gardening grounds near Lake Alice.

With an Attitude of Gratitude

Thanks to everyone whose generosity keeps the center viable, including the following donors:

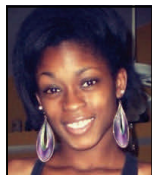
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MA STUDENTS GATHER IN USTLER HALL FOLLOWING A PROGRAM

Alumnae Spotlight: Myeshia Bennett, Grassroots Organizer



Myeshia Bennett graduated in spring 2012. While at UF she worked with Victory Over Violence, the Vagina Monologues, and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and interned at Bread & Roses Women's Health Center. She is currently enlisted in the United States Air Force and awaiting her first assignment.

“So what are you going to do with THAT degree?” goes down in history as the most-asked and most-annoying question put to WST majors. It’s annoying, first, because it seems like the only question people can think of. Then it’s annoying because a lot of times we don’t know the answer—well, I didn’t, anyway. This isn’t to say I didn’t know what I wanted to do with my degree, just that I didn’t know if the working world was going to be receptive to what I could offer it.

Then I met Alex Williams, who came into my WST Capstone course in mid-April to speak to us about Grassroots Campaigns, a company

that partners with organizations like Planned Parenthood, OxFam America, the Sierra Club, etc. on their issue campaigns, helping with voter mobilizing, fundraising, petitioning, and things of that nature. I was completely taken with the element of activism this organization offered – so taken that I set up an individual meeting for the following morning. Two weeks before graduation, I learned I’d been chosen as an assistant director for the Orlando office, working with the American Civil Liberties Union on their gay rights campaign. I loved the mission.

But it’s time for a moment of honesty: I HATE CANVASSING. I knew Florida was neither all the way red nor blue – but I didn’t foresee the resistance I met from the citizens of Orlando. Standing in the middle of Park Ave. asking people, “Do you support gay rights?” isn’t exactly the best tactic to find supporters. I find myself being told offensive things and called nasty names

based on my race and gender. My most memorable interaction so far has been with an elderly white man. He told me, “You’re not working for equality. You’re working for the devil and trying to make the gays the preferred people. Well, I prefer that they all be put on an island with no food or water. They’ll have to eat each other to survive then they will eventually die off and none of us God-fearing people will have to kill them. I’m surprised a Negro is standing up for the gays. Such a shame.” These kinds of conversations are more common than I expected.

It’s been a struggle because I can’t respond the way I want to, since I represent Grassroots and the ACLU; I’m not just Myeshia anymore. Through my time at Grassroots I have learned how to separate my personal opinions from the mission of the organization and to operate objectively and professionally. I won’t say this is exactly what I pictured myself doing after graduation, but I will say that I am grateful for the opportunity—and the (lukewarm) welcome into the working world.

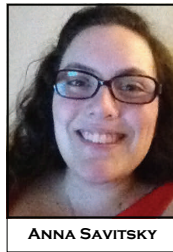
CWSGR Students Talk about Teach for America



HANNAH SMOOT



LAUREN SMITH



ANNA SAVITSKY

Last year, as Women's Studies senior Hannah Smoot went through the application process for the extremely competitive Teach for America (TFA) program, which places teachers in hard-to-staff schools all over the country, the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research mobilized its network—in the form of MA candidate Lauren Smith and alum Anna Savitsky (2008)—to support her. Both are TFA veterans: Lauren taught high school English in Greenwood, Mississippi from 2009-2011; Anna was a second grade teacher at Jacksonville North Shore from 2008-2010, then taught reading at KIPP Jacksonville, a charter school founded by TFA alums until earlier this year, when she returned to TFA as an administrator. Unsurprisingly, their advice was good, and Hannah was among the 11% of the applicants selected to join the TFA corps in the 2011-12 academic year. One Sunday in August, we sat down to discuss the connections between Women's Studies and TFA. Anna had to leave the conversation early, and Hannah joined us by phone from her un-air-conditioned kindergarten classroom at Sallie B. Howard School in Wilson, North Carolina, where she was getting ready for her first day of school. An excerpt appears here.

DR. TRAVIS: *You mentioned that you felt your Women's Studies backgrounds prepared you well for TFA. Can you just talk a little bit about how?*

HANNAH: *In thinking about gender and sexuality, but for me mainly thinking just about teaching—teaching empowerment. My last semester at UF I worked at a school for part of my Gender and Food Politics course, and a lot of that was just noticing how empowerment works within teaching. I guess I never thought I was made to be a teacher, but from that project I really started thinking about it, and, when I entered into TFA, I just found that those things really aligned with what they were trying to get us to do. Like helping the children to see what assets they have and working from there. Teaching in an English Language Learners class this summer, a lot of these kids were embarrassed that they couldn't speak English, but they spoke Spanish. You can show them, like... WOW, you speak two languages. That's a huge asset! Just kind of make them proud of that.*

DR. T: *So, the idea of empowerment would be logical for a Women's Studies major. But did it seem like a lot of other people in your training were just figuring that out as they went along?*

HANNAH: *Kind of, yeah. At times, I was almost feeling out of it because the people in TFA are just so amazing. But I think a lot of people were very much aware of the importance of gender and sexuality or empowerment through teaching and it was just kind of...common sense.*

DR. T: *Lauren, I'm curious about whether your Women's Studies background was relevant to your*

training and your experience.

LAUREN: *I would say that my experience was very similar to Hannah's. Everyone in TFA started that way, with the idea not just to get kids to pass the test, but to empower them and just to open their eyes and inform them, especially because we were teaching in such a rural setting. There were three of us at my school—I taught English Language Arts and the others were math teachers. We were very much committed to teaching as empowerment; we were there to do more than educate the kids so that they could pass the tests. The local teachers might have told you the same thing. I worked with an amazing, amazing staff; they were so welcoming to us. They wanted the best for their students.*

But in my school and in every public school in Mississippi the focus is entirely on state testing. That is just the way it is. So it is very difficult to reconcile your desire to empower students, to expose them to different ideas, mindsets and beliefs, with my actual job, which was to get them to pass a state test. We constantly kept this idea of empowerment in our minds but sometimes it was harder than others to implement it.

DR. T: *Can you give me your operational definition of "empowerment?" That's a word that can be like "excellence." It's not clear if anybody agrees on the definition, so what do you mean by it?*

LAUREN: *Empowerment, to me if I was really going to give it a*

"FOR ME THE BIGGEST THING IS JUST GETTING THEM EXCITED ABOUT LEARNING, AND MAKING THEM REALIZE THAT THEY IF THEY WANT TO DO WELL THEY HAVE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE WITHIN THEIR LIVES"

-HANNAH SMOOT
UF CLASS OF 2012
MAJOR: WOMEN'S STUDIES

definition, meant getting my students so that one, they could graduate from high school, and two, they would have the authority and agency to make their own choices. In terms of how I used it when I was teaching and in terms of how TFA thinks about it, “empowerment” is very much getting kids ready, whether you are a kindergarten or a high school teacher, getting them ready to graduate from high school – which a lot of their peers do not do – and go on to some kind of setting of higher education.

I believe that, but I also believe in a much broader and more feminist definition of empowerment that is simply giving someone the tools necessary to have their own agency. And that could mean agency to go to a different college than everyone else does if that is what they want to do. Or to go into a vocational program for a particular skill or trade that they are interested in. Or to be in a good relationship if that is what they want, one in which they are not being abused. I think of empowerment in much broader terms than simply getting a kid ready to go to college.

DR. T: *Hannah, what are you thinking about in terms of agency for your kindergarteners?*

HANNAH: *For me the biggest thing is just getting them excited about learning, and making them realize that they if they want to do well they have to take the initiative within their lives. Like Lauren said, a lot of TFA is getting someone ready for college or making them want to go there. This summer one of my frustrations was seeing how everything is data driven. You need to make “x” amount of growth in such-and-such time, and within the first week I was really frustrated with that. And my adviser said realistically, the biggest thing you can do for these kids is to change their attitude and really just get them excited about learning and let them see what they can do. So I changed my mindset and that is what I focused on. I just showed them how much I cared, how excited I was to be there, and they just fed in to that. You know: “SHE is so excited about me and I’ve never*

had a teacher this excited about me before....”

By the end of the five weeks, I was actually shocked at how much my kids grew within the numbers. For me, the biggest accomplishment was just keeping their attitude positive, but then in turn the data was great! We had about 50% growth, which was crazy for me. And I think it came from just changing my attitude and in turn kind of helping them change theirs.



SINCE TEACH FOR AMERICA WAS LAUNCHED IN 1990, THE ORGANIZATION HAS PLACED MORE THAN 17,000 RECENT COLLEGE GRADS IN FAILING URBAN AND RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO HELP CLOSE THE EDUCATIONAL DISPARITY GAP.

Alumnae Spotlight: Quinn Jackson, Feminist Healthcare Provider



Quinn Jackson, a native of Orlando, attended Dr. Phillips High School. Here she talks about how her UF Women’s Studies

coursework shaped her interests in women’s—and feminist—health care.

I was never one of those kids who knew what she wanted to do from a young age. I did not play with stethoscopes. I did not watch ER or Grey’s Anatomy and dream of being those doctors one day. Majoring in Women’s Studies led me to pursue medicine. As part of Dr. Anita Anantharam’s service learning course, I started volunteering with Planned Parenthood as a pregnancy options counselor. I fell in love with reproductive health and realized this was what I wanted to do with my life. At UF, I took many

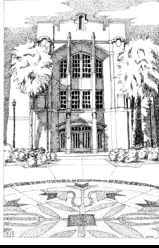
sexuality and health education courses for the major and classes from the pre-medical curriculum as electives. I continued to work at Planned Parenthood part time as a Family Planning Assistant. For my internship, I worked at Bread and Roses Women’s Center, another reproductive health clinic. I was also in the clubs Gators for HIV Education and PRIDE Student Union.

Once I graduated, I began working full time with Planned Parenthood. Other than the obvious connection to Women’s Studies—reproductive rights—there are many aspects of my job that relate to my coursework. At least once a week we see a patient dealing with intimate partner violence. And every day I see how the intersections of race, class,

and gender affect my patients’ ability to access healthcare. Because of my experience with Women’s Studies and Planned Parenthood, my biggest career goal is to become a physician who supports and trusts women. It is no secret that access to reproductive services are under attack, but the problem is much greater. Far fewer physicians are choosing to provide abortions and many medical programs refuse to even train students and residents in the procedure; some states allow pharmacists to refuse to fill adult women’s prescriptions for legal birth control their doctors have recommended. My time at UF inspired me to dedicate my life to the fight for reproductive rights.



**VISIT US IN
BEAUTIFUL
USTLER
HALL, IN
THE HEART
OF THE UF
CAMPUS.**



Mark your Calendar for Upcoming Events in the Center!

Please mark your calendar for the following events, sponsored or co-sponsored by the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research. For all events, see our website for more information on the programs and co-sponsorships.

Thursday, Sept 13th, 3:30-5:00 pm:

**Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research
Opening Reception**

The Atrium of Ustler Hall

Wednesday, Sept 19th, 6:30 pm:

**"Women, Work, and Family in the 2012 Presidential
Election"** (A Roundtable Discussion)

Room 180 of the Levin College of Law

Friday, Sept 21st, Noon-2:00 pm:

**"Attention Training with Performance Studies
Scholar and Artist Laura Cull"** (A Workshop)

The Atrium of Ustler Hall

Thursday, Sept 27th, 7:00 pm:

"A Short History of LGBT Florida" (A Presentation)

Pride Community Center, 3131 NW 13th Street,
Gainesville (352) 377-8915

Friday, Oct 26th:

**"The Legacy of Zora Neale Hurston:
Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of
Their Eyes Were Watching God"**

11:15 am, Exhibit of materials from the Hurston
collection, Smathers Library, Room 1A

12:00-1:30 pm, *Jump at the Sun*, a film written and
produced by Kristy Andersen, Smathers Library,
Room 1A

2-4pm, Roundtable discussion and reception,
The Atrium of Ustler Hall

Upcoming Spring Semester Events

February 21st-22nd, 2013:

**"Disciples of Flora:
Gardens in History and Culture"**

This interdisciplinary conference will explore the place
and vitality of gardens as cultural objects and
repositories of meaning. Schedule and locations to be
announced.

March 13th, 2013:

"*The Feminine Mystique* at Fifty: 1963-2013"

A Symposium

2:30-4:00 p.m: Roundtable discussion

4:00-5:00 p.m: Book signing and reception

6:00 p.m: Public Lecture

March 18th, 2013, noon:

Panel Discussion: *The Hunger Games*

The Atrium of Ustler Hall

April TBA:

**Activist Lawyering: A Roundtable
and Information Session**

The Atrium of Ustler Hall

