

From the Chair's Desk



DR. BONNIE MORADI
CHAIR

I am delighted to share exciting developments in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies this year.

This fall, we welcomed three new tenure-track colleagues to the department. **Drs. Olivia Adams, Ocqua Murrell, and Cinnamon Williams** started their Assistant Professor positions with us in August (See pages 12 and 13 for more information). They have quickly become active contributors to the research, teaching, and service mission of the department, college, and UF. As the features about them in this issue indicate, they are establishing their research

programs at UF and already garnering recognition in the field. They are presenting their research at national and international venues. They are advancing our core curriculum and launching exciting courses in Black feminism, girlhoods, and history of medicine. They are engaging students at welcome and recruitment events at UF and beyond. We are delighted to have their expertise and collaboration at UF!

Another key achievement is that the department was awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a series of initiatives to highlight women's studies strengths in experiential learning and career readiness. The project advances institutional priorities by a) supporting community-engaged

student research, b) implementing a career pathways series that engages students and the community, and c) amplifying narratives about the significance and value of the field. We will achieve these aims through multiple activities. Specifically, we are forming faculty-student-community collaboratives to launch research projects that will benefit communities and provide students with valuable research experiences. We are organizing a series of speakers who translate gender/race/sexuality scholarship into impactful careers and entrepreneurship. We are planning a panel of alums to discuss their career pathways. And, in collaboration with Beyond120, we are offering *Professional Pathways in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies*, a spring 2024

(Continued on page 2)



Inside this issue:	
Mellon Career Pathways Events	2
Good Wishes for Dr. Anantharam	4
Attitude of Gratitude	5
Alum Spotlight: Taylor Burch	6
Book Nook	7
Consider an M.A. in the Department	8
Call for Grant Proposals	9
Alum Spotlight: Yinlu Zhu	10
A Meaningful Internship: Katz	11
Welcome New Faculty	12
Welcome New MA Students	14
Welcome Back MA Candidates	15
Graduate Certificates Offered	16

From the Chair's Desk, continued

(Continued from page 1)

*"A THREAD ACROSS
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THEIR LIFE, WORK
AND COMMUNITIES.."*

*-BONNIE MORADI,
CHAIR*

graduate and undergraduate course to guide students in imagining and launching their own innovative career paths.

A thread across all these activities is to showcase and celebrate all the ways our students, graduates, and friends experience the positive impact of gender,

sexuality, and women's studies in their life, work, and communities. Your stories are integral to this effort. Your stories assert our longstanding strengths in scholarship, education, and community engagement.

Please take a moment to complete our alum and friends [survey](#) and join us

in telling the many inspiring stories of gender, sexuality, and women's studies!

Scan QR code below to participate.



Mellon Career Pathways Events Bring International Experts

In November 2023, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, our department and the Center for European Studies collaborated to bring two experts on gender equality from the UK: Holly Dustin, Cultural Transformation Projects Lead, in the House of Commons, UK Parliament; and Janet Veitch, independent equalities consultant who previously established the Women's National Commission in the UK civil service. Both Holly and Janet were founding members of the End

Violence Against Women coalition, where Holly was director from 2006-2015.

While in Gainesville, Holly Dustin and Janet Veitch looked unsuccessfully for alligators and sunshine, and participated in two public events. On November 13th, Ustler Hall hosted gender equality experts Dustin and Veitch, along with Professor Danaya Wright from the UF Levin College of Law. Together they explored approaches to gender equality in the US and UK.

The following day, Holly and Janet were star speakers at a 'Lunch and Learn' event about their careers in gender equality work. Students in Dr. Coy's WST3325 *Violence Against Women* course submitted questions for Holly and Janet about the challenges they had faced, and their proudest achievements. Students Sonbol Bahramikamangar, Kenise Jackson, and Kayla Jhagroo moderated the discussion. Kenise and Kayla reflected on that experience.

(Continued on page 3)

Mellon Career Pathways Events Bring International Experts, continued



INVITED GUESTS, JANET VEITCH (LEFT) AND HOLLY DUSTIN (RIGHT), SPEAK TO AN AUDIENCE OF FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN USTLER HALL.

(Continued from page 2)

Kenise Jackson, Marketing, class of '26:

The gender equality panel I helped moderate was a delightful experience that broadened my perspective and honed my skills. In preparation, I researched the expansive contributions of Holly Dustin and Janet Veitch within the realm of gender equality. Studying their work allowed me to craft insightful questions that could unveil their unique insights during the discussion. As a moderator, I aimed to foster an environment where their voices could shine. Actively listening to their stories and expertise not only increased my understanding of gender equality but also enhanced my ability to moderate discussions on sensitive topics. Being part of this panel discussion not only deepened my understanding of gender equality but also provided me with invaluable skills crucial for my future professional endeavors. It was a pivotal moment in my academic journey, shaping me into a more confident and capable communicator.

Kayla Jhagroo, History, class of '25:

To prepare for our role, we compiled questions from audience members and wrote a script that contributed to the conversational and interactive tone of the event. Reading such thoughtful and well-articulated questions from our classmates was just as exciting as hearing the illuminating answers from our invited guests!

Leading this conversation demonstrated to each of us the power of engaging in experiential learning, especially because conversations such as these have the potential to expand the perspectives and aspirations of students on their educational journeys. This event provided us with practical experience in leading discussions that stimulate critical thinking, enhancing our abilities to engage and inspire students effectively. Additionally, it equipped us with valuable insights into creating inclusive and conducive learning environments, fostering our capacity to adapt and innovate within educational settings.

It was an honor to engage with such accomplished leaders in the field of gender equality and facilitate a dialogue that showcased the diverse voices of our student audience.



(STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT) KENISE JACKSON, KAYLA JHAGROO, AND SONBOL BAHRAMIKAMANGAR ACTED AS STUDENT MODERATORS FOR THE LUNCH AND LEARN EVENT.

Gratitude and Good Wishes for Faculty Colleague



Our colleague, **Dr. Anita Anantharam**, accepted a position in the Department of Religion this fall. We offer our deep gratitude for all her contributions over the years. Dr. Anantharam joined the Department (at the time Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research) in 2006 and was a key contributor to the unit's growth and success since then. Her research, teaching, and service contributions were shaped by her steadfast commitment to equipping students with applicable skills to set them up for success in careers and next stages of their life. We wish Dr. Anantharam great success in the next chapter of her career and look forward to continuing connections.

Opportunities for Giving

We appreciate the generosity of our donors at all levels. Here are some unique opportunities for gift-giving:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| \$500 | Send a student to a regional or national meeting, or fund a student's research trip |
| \$5000 | Sponsor a major named lecture (one time event) |
| \$5000 | Support faculty research for the summer (Faculty Summer Research Fellowship) |
| \$5000 | Course development (New Course Development Grant) |

For major gifts and other naming opportunities, please contact
Christy Popwell, Director of Development, CLAS: (352) 392-1964 or cpopwell@ufl.edu.

UF Students Attend Women's Conference of Florida



Rachel Eloy (left) and Marie Vazquez (right), who were nominated as part of the College Women on the Rise Program, attended the Women's Conference of Florida held in Tampa on September 8th. The conference offered panel discussions, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities, in addition to keynote addresses from nationally-recognized speakers. The students benefitted from funds provided by *Beyond 120*, a professional development and experiential learning program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Since 2017, the College Women on the Rise program has benefited 376 college women and awarded \$76,000 in educational scholarships.

With an Attitude of Gratitude

Thanks to everyone whose generosity helps us continue to thrive, including the following donors:

- ♥ Gregory R. Allen
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- ♥ Arts Association of Alachua County
- ♥ Association for Academic Women
- ♥ Dr. Laurie A. Bankston
- ♥ Steven R. Berry
- ♥ Dr. Marni A. Brown and Mr. Casey A. Brown
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- ♥ John H. Williams, Jr.
- ♥ Catherine F. Wright & James M. Wright
- ♥ Dr. Alyssa Zucker
- ♥ Chuck Woods

Gifts are used to fund conferences, educational travel for graduate students, scholarship funds, speaker honoraria, and exhibit support. [Visit this link for more information about giving.](#)

Alum Spotlight: Dr. Taylor Burtch

Women's Studies Education Shapes Education & Career Trajectory



DR. TAYLOR BURTBCH

Taylor Burtch graduated with an MA in Women's Studies in Spring 2018. She went on to earn her PhD in Higher Education at UF in Summer 2023 and is now working as a postdoctoral researcher for The Center for Postsecondary Success at Florida State University.

When I began the Women's Studies master's program in 2016, I had a passion for gender studies and social justice but very abstract plans about how I might translate those motivations into a scholarly agenda or a sustainable career. I was truly amazed at how much a full-time, 2-year program could contribute to my growth as a person and how many diverse opportunities I would have to hone my skills in writing, teaching, and engaging with community partners.

I consider myself foundationally shaped by the classes I took during the program, including LGBTQ+ Health and Women and Therapy. Much of what I know about feminist and intersectional theory comes from these seminars and the space they created for me to grapple critically with my own positionality and with the systems of power and

privilege that go unacknowledged in most academic spaces. I relied heavily on this knowledge throughout my PhD program in Higher Education, learning new ways to translate critical theory and praxis to the study of college access and success for multiply marginalized students.

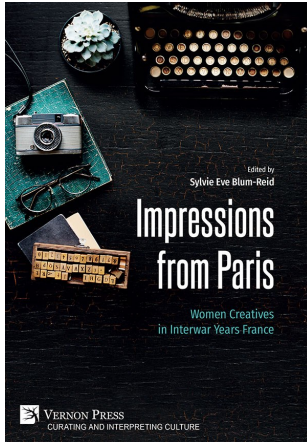
My educational and career trajectory is equally shaped by the experiences afforded to me by the Department's flexible internship and non-thesis project options. My internship with Pace Center for Girls as part of my credit-bearing coursework in the program set the seed for not only a final project connecting theory to praxis in ways that felt personal, tangible, and meaningful, but also an ongoing community partnership. In the years since completing my master's, I have remained involved with Pace as a volunteer and research partner. For my dissertation, I collaborated with the organization's data team to expand on my master's project and explore the role of identity, trauma, and adversity in students' postsecondary pathways.

In addition to my program classes and research, I was incredibly fortunate to TA and

lead multiple classes in and outside of the department, including *Humanities Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality* and the then required course for first-year UF freshmen, *What is the Good Life?* I consider these teaching experiences (as well as the mentorship I received from faculty in these roles) as central to my development as an interdisciplinary scholar who can engage in critical dialogue across diverse spaces. This skill has proven invaluable to my personal and professional development.

Upon completion of my postdoctoral position with Florida State, I will continue forging my path as a scholar-activist through research and advocacy. I am eternally grateful to the faculty in the department for their investments in me and for helping me to identify and use my voice. I can confidently say that while my career is still unfolding, I will continue to prioritize justice and equity in my work and have the skills and confidence to do so, even when I am met with resistance. I have the department to thank for that.

Book Nook: Recently Published Books by Center Faculty Affiliates



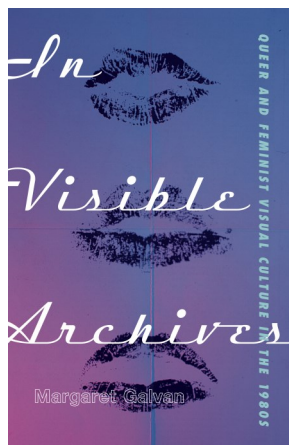
Sylvie Eve Blum-Reid, *Impressions from Paris: Women Creatives in Interwar Years France*, Vernon Press, 2023, by Melba Joyce Boyd (*Wayne State University*), Dantzel Cenatiempo (*University of Washington*), Adeline Soldin (*Dickinson College*), Sherry Buckberrough

(*University of Hartford*), Sylvie Eve Blum-Reid (*University of Florida*), Catherine Portuges (*University of Massachusetts Amherst*), Catherine R. Montfort (*Santa Clara University*), Clara Oropeza (*Santa Barbara City College*), Samia I. Spencer (*Auburn University*)

Dr. Blum-Reid is a Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and an affiliate of the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies Research.

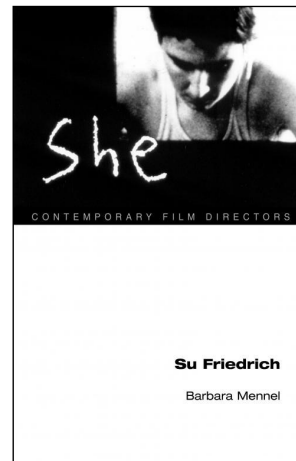
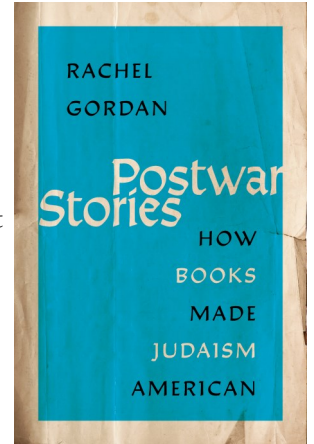
Margaret Galvan, *In Visible Archives: Queer and Feminist Visual Culture in the 1980s*, University of Minnesota Press, 2023

Dr. Galvan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and an affiliate of the Center for Gender, Sexualities and Women's Studies Research.



Rachel Gordan, *Postwar Stories: How Books Made Judaism American*, Oxford University Press, 2023

Dr. Gordan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion, and an affiliate of the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies Research.

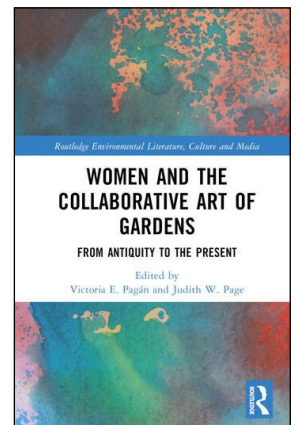


Barbara Mennel, *Su Friedrich* (Series: Contemporary Film Directors) University of Illinois Press, 2023

Dr. Mennel is a Professor in the Departments of English and Literatures, Languages, and Cultures and an affiliate of the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies Research.

Victoria E. Pagán and Judith W. Page, *Women and the Collaborative Art of Gardens: From Antiquity to the Present*, Routledge, 2024.

Dr. Victoria Pagán is Professor of Classics and an affiliate of the Center; Dr. Judith Page is Professor and Distinguished Teaching Scholar Emerita at the University of Florida, an affiliate, and a former Director of the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies Research.



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**DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY
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The Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Call for Proposals for Awards and Grants

We invite students and faculty to submit proposals for the following awards and grants:



AAUW Gainesville Student Grant: The AAUW Gainesville Branch Student Grant provides up to \$1000 to support women's studies students to conduct research, education, or initiatives that align with AAUW's mission: <https://www.aauw.org/> and <https://gainesville-fl.aauw.net>



CHARLES T. WOODS, JR.

Charles T. Woods Faculty Grant: The Charles T. Woods Faculty Grant supports faculty research or service intervention projects that benefit LGBTQ+ communities. Grants of up to \$6,000 will be awarded that can be used over a period of one academic year in the form of salary (e.g., summer, course release) or reimbursement

for expenses required for the project. All projects should clearly connect research and praxis, with an applied component that benefits LGBTQ+ communities.

Charles T. Woods Student Grant: The Charles T. Woods Student Grant supports student research or service/community projects that benefit LGBTQ+ communities. Grants of up to \$4,000 will be awarded that can be used over a period of one academic year in the form of salary (e.g., summer, graduate assistantship) or reimbursement for expenses required for the project. All projects should clearly connect research and praxis, with an applied component that benefits LGBTQ+ communities.

All proposals are due March 15, 2024, and should be submitted via the application portal on the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies website. Please visit <https://wst.ufl.edu/funding/> for more information.



Alum Spotlight: Yinlu Zhu

Women's Studies Education Shapes Career Opportunities



YINLU ZHU

Yinlu Zhu (she/her) graduated in 2022 with a BA in Women's Studies, a BS in Biology, and a minor in Health Disparities in Society. She is now the Head of Product for Vot-ER, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to integrate civic engagement into healthcare. She will start medical school in 2024 to pursue a career as a physician advocate focused on improving how healthcare systems address the social and political determinants of health.

In my sophomore year, I started volunteering as a care coordinator for a free primary care clinic in Gainesville. While working with uninsured and underinsured patients, I realized how socioeconomic status, race, gender, and immigration status played a significant role in their access to healthcare and social services. At that point, I decided to pursue a Women's Studies major and a minor in Health Disparities to gain the historical context and skills to better address the injustices I witnessed at the free clinic and personally experienced as an immigrant to the U.S. The gender studies coursework I took and the mentorship I gained have influenced my

approach to health equity.

While taking Discrimination and Health with Dr. Zucker, I got to dive deeper into the importance of public policy in alleviating health disparities. I vividly remember learning about The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act and feeling simultaneously excited about legislation that so clearly advanced health equity and frustrated that it had taken so long to address the maternal health crisis in a country with so many resources.

This tension led to my decision to continue working for Vot-ER, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to integrate civic engagement into healthcare, as my Practicum in Health Disparities site. I had started volunteering for Vot-ER at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the practicum enabled me to dive deeper into my work and understand how to drive policy change through healthcare settings. Vot-ER motivates and trains healthcare professionals to promote civic engagement among their patients and colleagues. Local elections have a significant impact on the availability and distribution of resources in a community, and helping people to vote is

one way to bolster their agency over social determinants of health.

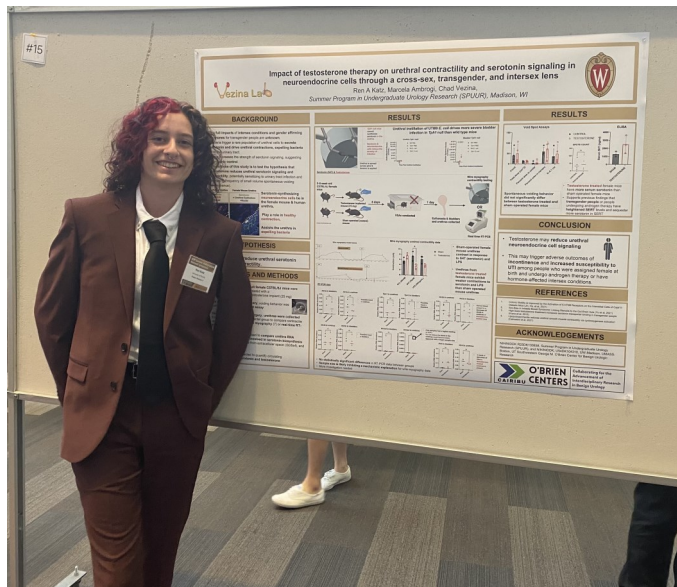
I now work full-time at Vot-ER. As the Head of Product, I manage the organization's voter engagement tools, data, and technology. I've been especially grateful for the insights I gained from taking Data Feminisms and Gender, Race, and Science with Dr. Shaikh. Part of my role involves making decisions about what data to collect, what civic technology to use, and how to measure our impact. Dr. Shaikh's insights about technology and data have enabled me to approach those decisions with a social justice framework. Applying a gender studies lens has been critical to unearthing the implications of integrating emerging technologies and AI into our approach to voter engagement. As I prepare for a career in medicine, I'm particularly grateful for my Women's Studies degree because it has given me hope and helped me better envision my role in making healthcare more just and accessible.



"APPLYING A GENDER STUDIES LENS HAS BEEN CRITICAL TO UNEARTHING THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTEGRATING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND AI INTO OUR APPROACH TO VOTER ENGAGEMENT."

-YINLU ZHU,
UF CLASS OF 2022

Women's Studies Double Major Finds Meaningful Internship



Ren Katz is a junior at UF, majoring in Women's Studies (with a specialization in Theories and Politics of Sexuality) and Biology.

This summer I had the opportunity to do research as a part of the Summer Program for Undergraduate Urology Research program at UW-Madison working with Dr. Chad Vezina and graduate student Marcela Amberogi.

My research interests lie in trans and queer studies, especially focused on trans healthcare and effects of hormone replacement therapy (HRT). These interests have strengthened throughout the course of my academic career as a Women's Studies and Biology dual degree student, and through my own journey of transition. This summer, I was able to further the collective of knowledge into the effects of testosterone HRT through the study of serotonin. I focused specifically on neuroendocrine cells in the urethra (in humans and mice) that synthesize serotonin. You might be thinking, isn't serotonin just a neurotransmitter? Actually, 90% of the serotonin in your body lies outside your central nervous system!

Neuroendocrine cells are in three main places in the body—the lungs, gut, and urethra—and are hypothesized

to assist in infection protection. Marcela's prior research suggested that estrogen may play a role in how these cells are able to function. However, no one had investigated the possible effects of testosterone on these cells in the urethra. That's where I came in.

I inserted testosterone (T) implants under the skin in 6 female adult mice and compared them to 6 control mice one-week post-implant. Although these implants have limitations, and they aren't a direct replication of human HRT or hormonal intersex conditions, they're as close as we can get to studying trans and intersex issues in a model organism. No evidence of incontinence was found, but this could be due to the short duration of the implant. We found that the urethras of the T-implanted mice exhibited significantly weaker contraction to serotonin and bacteria than the control mice. A few serotonin receptors that may assist in contraction were also reduced in the urethras of T-treated mice. This means testosterone may reduce urethral neuroendocrine signaling which in turn may trigger adverse outcomes of incontinence and increased susceptibility of UTI among people assigned female at birth (AFAB) who undergo androgen therapy or have hormone-affected intersex conditions. Post-menopausal AFAB people of all gender identities who use topical T may also be affected. However, we don't know yet whether estrogen or testosterone levels are more important to neuroendocrine cells.

This summer was really satisfying for me, knowing that I was helping my community and contributing to under-researched populations. I am hopeful that in the future evidence-based information about "UTIs and testosterone" or any information about our trans bodies for that matter, will be readily available and won't be something transmascs have to scour Reddit to learn about.

Welcome New Faculty

DR. OLIVIA ADAMS



The department welcomes Dr. Olivia Adams as an Assistant Professor. After completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Chicago in Gender and Sexuality Studies and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Dr. Adams earned a Ph.D. in Gender

Studies at Indiana University Bloomington, where she also trained at the Kinsey Institute.

Dr. Adams' scholarship focuses on chronic vulvovaginal pain (CVVP) and folks' experiences trying to access a diagnosis and/or treatment. Like many chronic pain conditions, the CVVP conditions are unfortunately characterized by extensive diagnostic delay and other negative healthcare seeking experiences, like one's pain being dismissed by a provider or receiving poor advice for pain management. Her own experiences as a CVVP patient and as a peer sex educator in college opened her eyes to widespread sexual healthcare problems and how feminist theories can help make sense of them.

Dr. Adams is committed to addressing two large gaps in the research literature on CVVP patient experience – the experiences of women of color and LGBTQ+-identified people who are managing CVVP. She is especially interested in tracing the histories of chattel slavery and the professionalization of gynecology through to what Patricia Hill Collins calls the 'controlling images' that affect Black women and girls' ability to move throughout the world, especially when it comes to sexual and reproductive healthcare. She is also interested in the role of heteronormativity and the coital imperative in the healthcare seeking experience, especially regarding the ways in which the CVVP conditions have been linked to

distinctly sexual problems that are oftentimes framed and researched in the context of heterosexuality.

In the classroom, Dr. Adams contributes core courses like Introduction to Health Disparities, and electives related to women's health. She is excited by the close ties that the department has with the wider Gainesville community through its various student internship and colloquium programs and to draw on student expertise of the Gainesville and broader North Central Florida area as she works to incorporate more community-focused methodologies into her research.

When she's not immersed in research and teaching, you may find Dr. Adams playing video games. As an avid gamer, Dr. Adams loves thinking about video game culture with a gender, sexuality, and women's studies lens.

DR. OCQUA GERLYN MURRELL



The department welcomes Dr. Ocqua Gerlyn Murrell (Dr. OG) as an Assistant Professor. After completing her undergraduate degrees in International Studies and Anthropology at the University of Southern Indiana, Dr. OG earned a Ph.D. in Sociology and a

graduate certificate in Women's and Gender Studies at Virginia Tech.

A scholar focusing on Black girlhood, Dr. OG has conducted two phases of a longitudinal study of the transition from girlhood to womanhood, following a group of girls on the island of Sint Maarten. Most scholarship on girls and women in the Caribbean focuses on anglophone or Hispanic culture; thus, her research in the Dutch West Indies fills a gap in the knowledge base. She is interested in

Welcome New Faculty

how girls narrate, navigate, and negotiate experiences at different life phases. Dr. OG is from the Caribbean herself and moved to the US with her father at age 4. The move was traumatic, and the US did not feel like home. The distance did give her perspective which she brings to her research as both an insider and an outsider to the culture of girlhood and womanhood in Sint Maarten.

Dr. OG loves teaching and interacting with students. She had a great mentor and saw how much energy, time, and care her mentor poured into her praxis. This set the standard for how Dr. OG wants to be for her students. Because she is close in age and doesn't look "traditional," students find her to be relatable. Dr. OG has a strong understanding of the difficulties Black and brown students often face. She is excited to obtain research funding to hire students to collaborate with her on scholarship.

Dr. OG has 14 siblings; she is the oldest child on her mom's side and the youngest on her dad's. Growing up, she played alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone from 5th to 12th grade. At UF, she has decorated her office in a cheerful and welcoming way with vibrant art. It is well stocked with snacks and drinks. Dr. OG welcomes visitors to stop by to meet her and enjoy some refreshment.

DR. CINNAMON WILLIAMS



The department welcomes Dr. Cinnamon Williams as an Assistant Professor. After completing her undergraduate degree at Williams College in American Studies (including time studying Comparative Women's Studies at Spelman College), Dr. Williams worked as a sex educator at Planned Parenthood; that experience shaped

her perspective and fueled her passion for interdisciplinary work and social justice. This pivotal experience taught Dr. Williams about the complexities of pedagogy and working with young people amidst a politically turbulent climate in 2016. It was during this time that she developed a deeper understanding of reproductive justice outside of the South.

Driven by a professor's encouragement and a love for interdisciplinary approaches, Dr. Williams attended graduate school at Northwestern University, earning a Ph.D. in Black Studies and a certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies. Dr. Williams' scholarship offers valuable insights into Black feminist perspectives on reproductive labor across historical and contemporary contexts.

Currently, Dr. Williams is working on a book manuscript, tentatively titled *Slave of a Slave No More: Gender, Domestic Labor, and Black Feminist Theories of Domestic Life*. The project explores how Black feminists reimagined the structure of Black domestic life between the 1960s and the 1980s. Methodologically, Dr. Williams employs archival research and theoretical analysis, analyzing personal manifestos, pamphlets, and flyers to offer a history of Black feminist thinking about reproductive labor.

In Spring 2024, Dr. Williams will teach Foundations and Futures of Black Feminist Theory. She will guide students to engage with classic texts by scholars like Audre Lorde and Barbara Christian, as well as newer works, fostering a nuanced understanding of evolving Black feminist discourse.

Returning to the South to teach Black feminist theory at UF, Dr. Williams feels a profound sense of commitment. Her presence symbolizes a dedication to transformative academic and political work, providing a space for critical thinking and scholarly evolution.



Welcome New Graduate Students



We are excited to welcome our new graduate students to the Department's MA program: Sonbol Bahramikamangar, Amya Ellison, Mary Kate DiFresco, Alexandria Gibson, Whitney Rodriguez, and Zuzu Tadeushuk. Their research interests cover a myriad of topics, and they each bring a rich range of experiences and accomplishments.



Sonbol Bahramikamangar's research interests are violence against women in the Middle East and challenges to Middle Eastern women, especially Kurdish women in Iran. Through research of non-traditional sources, Sonbol seeks to amplify the voices of those historically overlooked.



Amya Ellison obtained their bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Florida. They are currently working on developing their non-thesis project centered around Black women and fems' experiences with misogynoir on predominantly white institutions. The project is rooted in Black Feminist Theory, and a Radical Healing framework.



Mary Kate DiFresco's research interests include ecofeminism, environmental justice, and queer theory. They are a double gator, graduating from UF in 2023 with their B.S. in Natural Resources and Conservation. Mary Kate hopes to use her background in environmental justice to create purposeful research that centers the experiences of womxn and the lgbtq+ community.



Alexandria Gibson is interested in Black feminism, Afro-Caribbean Feminism, and Reproductive Health Disparities. Before coming to UF, she received her B.S. in Alternative and Complementary Medicine. Some of her favorite topics are "celebrating the power of menstruation" and "Decoding PMS". Gibson is actively researching the

history and prevalence of traditional healing throughout communities of women in the African Diaspora. Alexandria serves the Gainesville community by working with organizations curating inclusive workshops centered around self-love, sexuality and women's pleasure that utilize creative art and spirituality as a catalyst to healing.



Whitney Rodriguez holds an MA in Latin American Studies from UF. Whitney's research interests are the intersections of race and racism, Black feminism, Black studies, queer studies, gender, sexuality, intercultural communication, and artistic expression. Whitney's paper, "Futures of Wayward Lives," was recently accepted for presentation at the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism and Scholarship (AJAAS) 2024 Conference.



Zuzu Tadeushuk is interested in embodiment and aesthetics. Before entering academia, she worked as a fashion model for five years, which shaped her interest in interpretations of the body. She received her BA in

English and Women's Studies at Wesleyan University, where she researched display and domesticity in Victorian literature, fascism in American literature, and studied biography and memoir. Zuzu also has interests in teaching (openly), writing (creatively), and organizing (optimistically)!

Welcome Back MA Candidates

Welcome Back, Second-Year MA Candidates! We are delighted to welcome back our second-year MA candidates as they continue their endeavors and their theses and projects.



Mona Ashour is an activist and member in the United Nations Association (UNA) and UNICEF and her academic and community service efforts are directed towards the prevention of gender violence and Violence against Women (VAW). After finishing an internship as Director of Events with Gainesville UNA, she started a new internship as Director of Advocacy. Ashour begins this academic year as “President of Ambassadors” in Off-Campus Life, a Division of UF Student Life. In October 2023, she was awarded a Certificate of Outstanding Merit by the UF International Center.



Rose Capo is currently working on her master’s project under the supervision of committee chair Dr. Jillian Hernandez that is a documentary film centered on self-identifying queer Floridians and how they use digital media to access a comprehensive sex education. Rose aims to have her documentary accessible for free online and used as a sex education resource.



Ecem Ece is interested in LGBTQ+ activism, queer space and migration, transnational feminism, as well as queer and feminist methodologies. Currently, Ecem is working on their manuscript on the evolving dynamics in families of origin of lesbian, gay, and trans children through their coming out, alongside their mothers’ exploration of ally activism within the queer movement in Turkey.



Ceci Luna is working on their thesis, “Pendejx Pleasure Praxis: -X and -E and Queer Latinx World-Making,” which critically examines the relationship between gender-inclusive suffixes such as -x and -e as a tool for queer Latinx gender and sexual expression and the articulation of queer Latinx imaginaries under the advisement of Dr. Jillian Hernandez. Ceci Luna was awarded a grant from the Charles T. Woods Endowment and a Grinter Fellowship in support of their research.



Angel McGee is a second-year MA student. She is currently writing her MA thesis under the guidance of Dr. Alyssa Zucker. Her research includes Black Joy as a means of resistance to social inequality and racial injustice. Angel conducted the oral history interviews of several Black men living in Western Europe and is using the #blackboyjoy movement as a means of exploring the intersections of race, class, gender and nationality with her co-researchers.

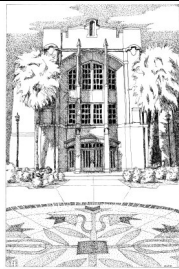


Tegan Smith is currently working on her thesis project under the supervision of Dr. Hina Shaikh. Her project thinks together ecofeminism and counterhumanism as critiques of and alternatives to the Western system of knowledge. Tegan Smith was awarded a grant from the Charles T. Woods Endowment and a Grinter Fellowship in support of her research.

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Two Graduate Certificates Offered in the Department

Students pursuing graduate work in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies will become acquainted with various feminist (and other appropriate) theoretical approaches and methodologies for examining the role of gender in cultural systems. Gender will be understood in intersection with other categories, including race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, religion, ability, age, and nationality.

The Women's Studies Certificate (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on interdisciplinary issues related to feminist theory and practice.

The Gender and Development (GAD) certificate is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on issues related to gender and development.

Graduate and professional students from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in either certificate program offered in the Department.

Applications for the certificate must be submitted to the Department's Graduate Coordinator, [Dr. Jillian Hernandez](#). For more information visit the Department's graduate certificate page at <http://wst.ufl.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-certificates/>