

July 2020 Issue

WILD TONGUE NEWSLETTER



Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

WILD TONGUE NEWSLETTER

Contents

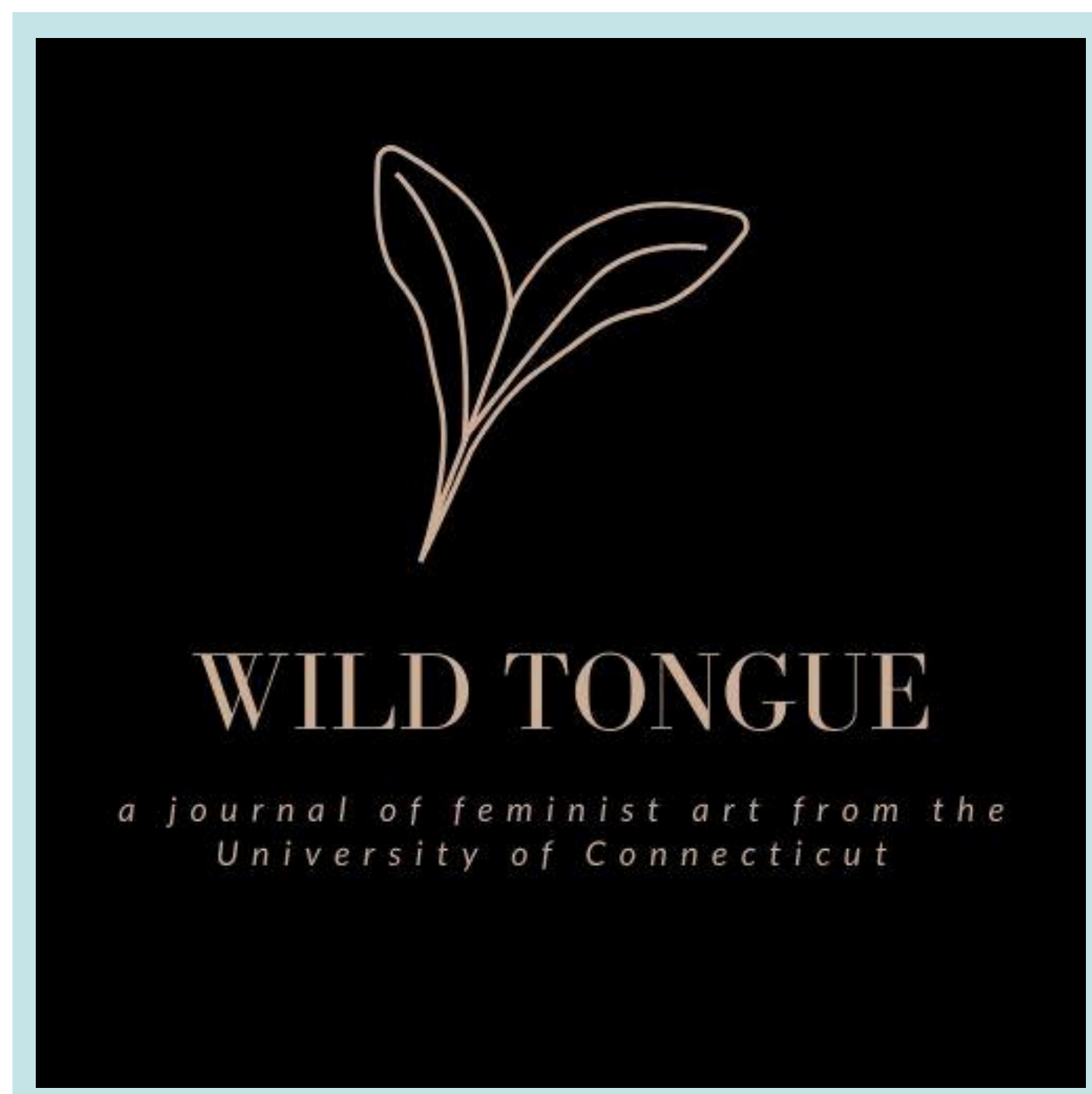
Introducing Wild Tongue	04	
	05	Letter from the Editor-In-Chief
Letter from the <i>Wild Tongue</i> Intern	06	
	07	Statement from Centers, Institutes, and Programs on Racial Injustice and Ending White Supremacy
WGSS Award Winners	09	
	13	WGSS Class of 2020 Q&A
WGSS Alumni Q&A	19	
	25	Faculty Spotlights
Get to Know the <i>Wild Tongue</i> Intern	26	

Introducing *Wild Tongue*

By: Mick Powell

Wild Tongue: A Journal of Contemporary Feminist Art is a biannual publication curated by faculty and students in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, and American Studies Program at the University of Connecticut. In the spring, WT will publish the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program's annual newsletter. In the fall, we will publish an arts journal of contemporary feminist poetry, prose, translations, visual art, and multimedia pieces that focus on, respond to, and/or engage with intersectional feminist themes. Accepting work created by artists across the world, *Wild Tongue* will be completely digitally published, making the journal widely accessible and affordable.

Wild Tongue aims to amplify the voices and visions of emerging feminist artists through publication, creative workshops, and curated social media content. Additionally, the journal will host creative workshops, readings, and educational events at the University of Connecticut, highlighting the work of established feminist artists.



Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

By: Mick Powell

Dear friends, feminists, allies, and accomplices,

Welcome to the first issue of the Wild Tongue Annual Newsletter presented by the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at the University of Connecticut! We are publishing this newsletter in a moment that, for many of us, is filled with heartache, anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. A moment that feels unprecedented, and yet, a moment that existed before itself. A moment whose contemporary consequences and outcomes will most certainly change the course of the rest of our lives. In this moment, we are inspired by and invested in the movements for all Black lives, police accountability and abolition, community care and safety particularly for Black trans women, and the restructuring of our healthcare system to ensure everyone has equitable access to meet their needs.

This newsletter highlights the WGSS Program's continued commitment to examining the intersections of our lives: within the newsletter, you'll find the Statement from Centers, Institutes, and Programs on Racial Injustice and Ending White Supremacy, Grace Lemire's (CLAS '21) informative digital zine, "COVID 19 and Black America," and Matthew Gray Brush's (CLAS '18) timely speech for the WGSS 2020 Commencement Ceremony. You'll also find so many celebrations, updates, introductions, and farewells. In total, this year has been transformative for us--as a unit and as individuals. We are excited to share these happenings with you, our friends and supporters.

With the utmost sincerity, we would like to extend gratitude to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, and Interim Director, Dr. Sherry Zane for their generous support of Wild Tongue; to all of the graduating majors and minors who shared their experiences; to the alumni and faculty who contributed their stories; and to Alexis Taylor, the very first Wild Tongue Intern, whose dedication to the journal is incredibly valuable and meaningful.

Thank you for being here.

With care and in community,

M. Mick Powell, Editor-in-Chief

Letter from the *Wild Tongue* Intern

By: Alex Taylor

When we first started creating this newsletter during Spring Break, returning to campus before the end of the semester still felt like a possibility. That feels ridiculous now. These past four months have been heavy, as we mourn lives lost due to COVID-19, police brutality, and racism.

This newsletter was intended to be a small way to celebrate the WGSS Class of 2020, who had to graduate without celebration and provide some levity to us while quarantining. We also wanted to offer a bit of hope to all WGSS undergraduates through the alumni interviews. With so much uncertainty, it can be useful to look to those who've come before us for guidance or as proof that it can be done and that success exists in many forms.

Now, amidst the massive organizing, mobilizing, and conversation happening all across the country, particularly around Black Lives Matter and sexual violence, we still intend this newsletter to do all of those things, but we also want it to serve as a reminder to take care of yourself. As Rachel Cargle often shares on her social media platforms, self care and rest are acts of resistance. Be sure to incorporate self care practices into the other forms of activism you're involved in. This isn't me giving myself or others permission to stop-- not at all. Instead, it's to encourage all of us to make sure that we're taking care of ourselves so that we can be in it for the long haul.

So take a moment to read this newsletter and then keep going because this work does not end once we all return to campus.

Alex

Statement from Centers, Institutes, and Programs on Racial Injustice and Ending White Supremacy

We, the faculty and staff of the interdisciplinary Centers, Institutes, and Programs, stand together to express our shock, our heartbreak, and our outrage at the horrific and senseless killing of George Floyd and the ongoing violence against Black people.

George Floyd, David McAtee, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor, Kathryn Johnston, Ayiana Stanley-Jones, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland. Too many to list and too many to forget.

Each of these names represents a human being, dehumanized, rendered invisible, a Black life cut short by brutality and wanton violence.

We cannot look away. We cannot remain indifferent. We cannot be silent.

We must expose and confront the deep, pervasive, systemic issues that continue to fuel one tragedy after another. We must work together to bring real change. As academic units and programs of the university founded on principles of social justice and human rights we reaffirm our commitment to educating the next generation of healers and freedom fighters. The vision of change, which this crisis on top of a catastrophic pandemic calls for, is a broad, systemic, and intergenerational strategy. We recognize that broad societal change cannot be legislated alone, but must be cultivated community by community, day by day. To that end, we reaffirm our commitment to creating communities of accountability; implementing actions that dismantle the status quo of white supremacy; and amplifying the voices and experiences of people of color.

As a first step, we encourage you to join us in programs that will bring communities into conversation including the AACC Town Hall Meeting, presented by The H. Fred Simons African American Cultural Center: [The COVID-19 Pandemic and Racism in the African-American Community](#).

We also encourage you to read the public statement on anti-black violence from the Africana Studies Institute: <https://africana.uconn.edu/public-statement-on-anti-black-violence>

We stand together with communities of color across the country as they yet again are subject to pain and suffering at the hands of a racist and unjust system. We support our students, from the African American, Asian American, Puerto Rican and Latin American, Women's and Rainbow Centers, and Native American Cultural Programs, and all who are struggling to demand recognition of their rights and transformation of the conditions in which they live. We are not silent. We are not indifferent. We are implicated and, therefore, responsible. We will not stand idly by while the blood of our community members cries from the ground.

Justice is not a natural part of the lifecycle of the United States, nor is it a product of evolution; it is always the outcome of struggle."

— Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, From #BlackLivesMatter To Black Liberation

You are not alone. We are with you.

In solidarity,

African American Cultural Center

Africana Studies Institute

American Studies Program

Asian American Cultural Center

Asian and Asian American Studies Institute

Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life

El Instituto (Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies)

Human Rights Institute

Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center

Rainbow Center

Thomas J. Dodd Research Center

Women's Center

Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program

WGSS Award Winners

The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program is proud to present annual awards to undergraduate and graduate students whose scholarship, activism, art, teaching, and involvement on campus make critical feminist contributions to the WGSS Program and the UConn community at-large. Congratulations to our 2020 award winners!

Feminist Praxis Award
Chase Going Woodhouse Prize
WGSS Excellence Award
Kristie Ann Wood Endowment Scholarship
Kristie Ann Wood Endowment Scholarship
Excellence in Graduate Teaching
Gladys Tantaquidgeon Award
Feminist Arts Award
Excellence in Graduate Teaching
Susan Porter Benson Graduate Research Award

Shamayeta Bhattacharya
Kathleen Cruz
Sara Defazio
Gabrielle Haynes
Emilie Hryszko
Koyel Khan
Sage Phillips
Angelica Sistrunk
Ruth Z. Yuste-Alonso
Anna Ziering



Shamayeta Bhattacharya

Shamayeta Bhattacharya is a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut. Her broad research interest is cultural, gender and medical geography with a focus in GIS. She is presently working on transgender health accessibility and their experience at different activity spaces in Kolkata, India as part of her PH.D. She uses mixed method and spatial statistical approach in her research. Her broader research goal includes empowering the transgender community and articulating about the healthcare needs of the transgender community via her research.



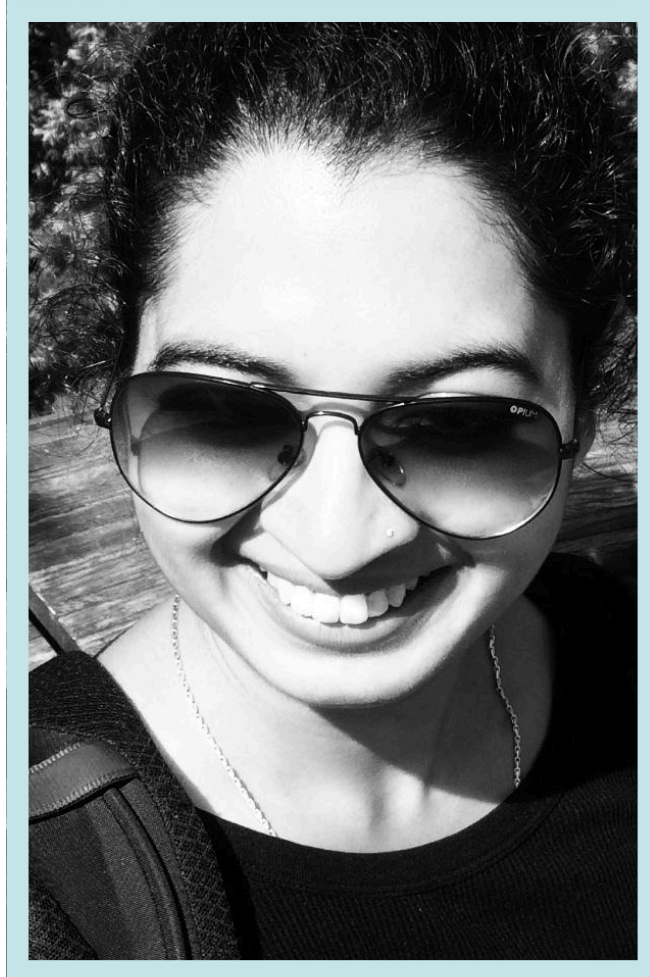
Kathleen Cruz

Kathleen Cruz is a sophomore Marketing major, Digital Marketing and Analytics concentration, and Management / Women Gender Sexuality Studies (WGSS) double minor. In addition, she is the Assistant General Manager of the university's television station (UCTV), a First Year Experience Mentor for the Business Connections Learning community, an Asian/ Asian American Mentoring Program Mentor, and one of the founding members of Asian Business Society (BLU) and Business Leaders of UConn (BLU). Through her work, she strives to uplift the perspectives of the underrepresented in mainstream, professional settings. In her spare time, Kate enjoys photography and videography. You can find her work at katecruzphotography.com or [instagram.com/theكاتsnaps](https://www.instagram.com/theكاتsnaps).



Sara DeFazio

Sara DeFazio has enthusiastically utilized the Women Gender Sexuality Studies curriculum in her prevention and empowerment work at the UConn Women's Center and as a Residential Assistant. She has facilitated over a hundred consent workshops for first semester students. She also successfully launched and facilitated the new student led support group for victim/survivors of sexual violence known as In-Power. She has demonstrated a clear commitment to gender equity work and looks forward to continuing her education at the New York University Silver School of Social Work.



Koyel Khan

Koyel Khan is a graduate student in the department of Sociology and teaches in the Women's, Gender and Sexualities program. Her research focuses on cultural production with an emphasis on gender and sexuality. She is extremely passionate about teaching. Her fervor for social inclusion and social justice motivates her to hone her teaching in a way that ensures an inclusive classroom. She implements practices that maximize learning outcomes and student success. She aims to ensure that her students develop analytical skills, the competence to think critically, and the ability to communicate knowledge coherently.



Gabrielle Haynes

Gabrielle Haynes is a double major in psychology and WGSS. College is one of the hardest things she has ever done. After being up for dismissal following her freshman year, she can say she is so blessed to be the first person in her family to graduate with a four-year degree, and on time at that! She wants to thank her family, people from her church, friends and faculty for their help in her journey. She wants to pay special thanks to Dr. Sherry Zane for writing her letters of recommendation for grad school! She wants to also thank the WGSS program. It has shaped the person she is today. It also informed her about the internship with Planned Parenthood at UConn, which has given her clarity in what she wants to receive her next degree in, a Master of Public Health. She is so excited to further educate herself at UConn and see what this next transition has in store!



Sage Phillips

From Old Town, ME, Sage is a sophomore majoring in Political Science and Human Rights with a minor in Native American & Indigenous Studies. Prior to attending UConn, Sage was among the top Native American and Indigenous students selected to participate in Dartmouth College's Native American Community program. This program ignited a passion within her and fueled her desire for social justice amongst people of color. As a member of the Penobscot Indian Nation, Sage is now one of a small contingency of Native American students attending UConn. Sage has taken on a major role in helping to expand resources available to Native American students as well as all students of color at UConn. Dedicated to social justice for her people, Sage hopes to one day pursue law school with a concentration in Tribal Law, or work within Tribal Policy focused on issues related but not limited to Education, Culture, and Land. Prior to beginning her work with the Native American Cultural Programs in the fall of 2019, Sage was selected as a UConn delegate to NCORE, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in America's Higher Education, attending the annual conference in May of 2019 in Portland, Oregon. Sage was recently chosen as a member to UConn President Thomas Katsouleas' Council on Race and Diversity. Her role on the council is to advocate and represent on behalf of the Native student population as well as to promote and uplift all students of color on campus. Also dedicated to the outside community while working from within, Sage is a member of the Statewide Coalition to Ban the use of Native American Mascots in the State of Connecticut, serving alongside faculty and staff from UConn, the Akomawt Educational Initiative, and Tribal Youth Council leaders from the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Tribal Nations. On campus, a student assistant for the Native American Cultural Programs (NACP), Sage has presented herself among faculty members to initiate conversations fostering discussion around expanding the NACP to become the sixth Cultural Center at UConn. Sage hopes that through navigating the process of expansion and seeking out information to help NACP, her work will serve as a road map for other groups of color who also wish to have a Cultural Center. Rewarded for her work surrounding leadership, Sage was selected as a member of the Leadership Legacy Experience 2020 cohort, recognizing the University's most exceptional student leaders. Sage works to pay homage to her ancestors and continues to practice the ways of her culture through ceremony and helping to better the environment however she can, all while dedicating her efforts to UConn being at good relation with the land it stands on.

Angelica Sistrunk

Angelica Sistrunk is a junior Linguistics/Psychology major and artist. She is currently an intern for UConn's public interest research group (UConnPIRG), and the Editor in Chief of The Vision, UConn's Black arts and wellness journal. Her goal is to combine her passion for the arts and psychology by continuing higher education as an Art Therapy graduate student. She hopes to help others start their healing journeys with the power of art. In her spare time, Angelica enjoys creating pieces of work and watching Netflix. You can find her working around campus or at <https://www.instagram.com/angethmoonchild/>.



Ruth Z. Yuste-Alonso

Ruth Z. Yuste-Alonso is a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree in Spanish Studies in the Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages. She currently works as an instructor and teaching assistant for the Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages and the Program of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Her research focuses on gender analysis of films by contemporary Spanish women directors with an emphasis on the interplay between gender, genre, and gaze. She strongly believes in the transformative power of education and envisions the college classroom as an inclusive collaborative space where instructors and students learn from one another and promote community, creativity, and critical thinking. Passionate about language and visual culture and deeply aware of how media texts shape the ways in which we see and interact with the world, she strives to help students develop their critical eye to become fluent in these modes of seeing and thinking our surroundings, so that they are better equipped to scrutinize and navigate today's hypermediated society.



Anna Ziering

Anna Ziering is an English PhD candidate at the University of Connecticut with certificates in WGSS and American Studies. Her research interests include deviant erotics, queer temporality, desire studies, and 20th century American literature. Her work has appeared in MELUS and is forthcoming with The Black Scholar. Her dissertation brings queer-of-color critique, Black feminism, and American Studies together in an exploration of how erotics and narrative form might contribute to material resistance to neoliberalism, and a practical study of how they have done so over the past sixty years. She holds a BA from Barnard College ('11), an MFA from Boston University ('15), and an MA from the University of Connecticut ('17).

WGSS Class of 2020 Q&A

We asked some of the WGSS Class of 2020 graduates about their time at UConn and their plans now that they've graduated.

Fatima Ali
(she, her, hers)



Fatima is a Human Development and Family Sciences major with minors in WGSS, Human Rights, and Business Fundamentals from Stratford, CT.

Rachel Breault
(she, her, hers)



Rachel is a WGSS and Human Development and Family Studies double major with a minor in English from Essex, CT.

Sara DeFazio
(she, her, hers)



Sara is a Sociology and WGSS double major from Riverside, CT.

Olivia Emmanuel
(she, her, hers)



Olivia is a Nursing major with a minor in WGSS from Rocky Hill, CT.

Gabby Ferrell
(she, her, hers)



Gabby is a Journalism major with minors in WGSS and Sociology from Manchester, CT.

Destini Hall
(she, her, hers)



Destini is an Economics major with minors in WGSS and Healthcare Management and Insurance Studies from Wethersfield, CT.

Katie Hare
(she, her, hers)



Katie is a Sociology major with a WGSS minor from Mansfield, CT.

Emilie Hryszko
(she, her, hers)



Emilie is a WGSS and Psychology double major from Glendale, NY.

Stephanie Kaesmann
(she, her, hers)



Stephanie is an English and Psychology double major with a minor in WGSS from Stratford, CT.

Kaycelee Klein
(she, her, hers)



Kaceylee is an English and Political Science double major with a minor in WGSS from Monroe, CT.

Molly Kozlowski
(she, her, hers)



Molly is a Finance major with a minor in WGSS from Westbrook, CT.

Pheobe Ploof
(she, her, hers)



Pheobe is a Political Science major with minors in WGSS and Africana Studies from Norwich, CT.

Hannah Smith
(she, her, hers)



Hannah is a History and WGSS double major with minors in Spanish, Political Science, and Human Rights from Orange, CT.

Q: Why did you choose to major or minor in WGSS?

I believe that it's important to know, be aware, understand, and work with all people of all backgrounds/identities and learn about their experiences. Diversity is important. WGSS is the perfect minor to help me achieve that.

- Fatima

I chose to make my second major WGSS because I think the topics are incredibly applicable to both daily life as well as in any career. As a future higher education professional I think it is important to understand diverse identities and how they affect a person's experience.

- Rachel

The first WGSS class that I took was the Seminar on Rape Education and Awareness, taught by Lauren Donais. Throughout the semester, she created a space that fostered community, open conversations, and learning. The topic was difficult to discuss at the beginning but the more comfortable we became, the more we realized how deep issues of gender inequity really were. I decided to take another WGSS class the following semester, where the same thing happened. Four WGSS classes later, I decided that it was what I wanted to study.

- Sara

I chose to minor in WGSS after I took a class as a gen ed and I saw that it allows you to see the world through a different lens.

- Olivia

2016 was my first year at UConn. This was also the year that Trump was elected president, and I hadn't heard women, gender, or sexuality issues brought up that much before. More than I've ever seen, people everywhere were advocating for the rights they felt were being swept away from them. After doing research and having many conversations with the people around me, I grew inspired to further my education in this area by taking some courses. My passion grew which led me to making it one of my minors and is the best decision I've made during my time at UConn.

- Gabby

I wanted to minor in something that I was interested in but not too well versed in— WGSS was perfect to me because I could be in an engaging environment with like minded peers who I could have those conversations with and actually learn more about the society we live in— past, present, and future.

- Destini

It's an important topic to be knowledgeable about and it has countless applications to the world around us.

- Katie

I chose to major in WGSS because I am very liberal in my views and believe that everyone deserves to have a voice. I wanted to work alongside those who are often denied rights due to their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and religious affiliations.

- Emilie

I had always been interested in women's studies but it wasn't until I had taken a few English courses that double-dipped in WGSS that really prompted me to take the minor. It was the best decision I made in college (even better than dropping my math major!) because it opened my eyes and taught me so much.

- Stephanie

WGSS was the most interdisciplinary program I could find, and it helped fill in the gaps that were missing in both English and polisci.

- Kaceylee

My first class was primarily discussion based so all of us were encouraged to share our thoughts on class content. I felt very comfortable engaging in these conversations, and as a result grew more confident with my ability to speak up in all my classes. Focusing more on the content, each of these classes challenged my understanding of feminism and the world in a unique way. I'm very grateful for the WGSS department and their classes!

- Molly

WGSS is such a dynamic and intersectional study, I found it really applicable to the other areas I am interested in and it provides a rounded lens with which to approach humanity topics and research in my future.

- Phoebe

The courses in WGSS at UConn are so diverse and intersectional. I have been able to apply everything I have learned in WGSS to my other studies. The WGSS professors at UConn are also so passionate about this work!

- Hannah

Q: What did you enjoy most about WGSS classes? What was one favorite memory from your time in WGSS?

Going to the Franklin Street Works was a great time with Professor Smith. I loved the kind approach to learning and the safe space environments that have been created in these classes. It is a comfortable community that's very inclusive.

- Fatima

I enjoyed the discussion aspect. It's really interesting to hear different perspectives. One of my favorite things I did during WGSS was making a project with my roommate and fellow WGSS major on issues with hospital births and high c-section rates as well as alternative birthing options. We made a video that was informative, fun to do some acting for, and we interviewed some people for it and it was interesting to hear their thoughts.

- Rachel

I mostly enjoyed the sense of community learning that happened in all of my classes. I always felt like I was a part of something bigger than myself and I was happy to be making deep long-lasting connections. My favorite memory from a WGSS class happened last year. Without any prompting from our professor, my entire class showed up to the Take Back the Night event. We all marched together to bring awareness to sexual assault on campus. Even a few WGSS professors were marching with us. I felt connected to everyone and supported by the department as a whole.

- Sara

Sherry Zane was gracious enough to let me independent study under her after I had her in a course. I was able to delve more into what interested me, midwifery, under great leadership.

- Olivia

What I enjoyed most about the WGSS classes was the chance to discuss important issues that are uncomfortable to talk about in public. Not many people feel encouraged to bring up issues like abortion, gay rights, sexual assault, colorism, etc., but in these classes I experienced students speak their mind. It's therapeutic to have these open, safe spaces to talk out our thoughts in guided discussions in a climate where everyone is against each other.

- Gabby

My professors made it so easy to love the material and love learning. I have not had a WGSS professor that I wouldn't be able to speak to again in post-grad for advice or just catching up on life. My favorite memory was when Professor Powell did her music unit within one of my feminism courses because it was so fun to relate stuff I listen to and what I was brought up around and see where women are imprinted in that puzzle. Music truly is a big part of my life and a way to spread a powerful message if you use the platform to its full potential.

- Destini

I enjoyed intersectional learning, and the variety of topics covered by the classes. I especially enjoyed WGSS film and arts related courses.

- Katie

I enjoyed how open-minded and accepting all my WGSS professors were and how every opinion was treated respectfully. My favorite memories are in Barb Gurr's class because she truly encapsulates what it means to put feminist theory in praxis.

- Emilie

Personally, I loved becoming friends with my professors and having understanding and thoughtful mentors who really empathized with my struggles. I can't pick just one memory, but I can say my favorite class was Women and Health with Ingrid Semaan. It was the most informative and interesting class I've ever taken. I recommend it to every student I meet.

- Stephanie

I loved all the readings in Ingrid Semaan's classes, as well as the workshops she brought in to break up the lectures. My favorite memory from a WGSS class was watching the shock of all the students' who hadn't taken a class with Ingrid before when she recommended "Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism: And Other Arguments for Economic Independence."

- Kaceylee

My classmates and professors both come from a very diverse background. I enjoyed hearing what each of them have to say, and learning about their perceptions on the world, as well as their life experiences. As a part of my minor, I got the opportunity to intern with a non-profit organization, BRAVE Girls Leadership Inc. That by far was my favorite memory/experience from my time in WGSS (and perhaps at UConn).

- Molly

WGSS classes are really inclusive places, I found a lot of the time I was able to learn from both my professors and my peers which is rare. They are places where students are encouraged to speak out and to discuss in an open environment, WGSS classes always feel less structured and restrictive than classes in my other disciplines.

- Phoebe

Q: How did you incorporate what you learned in WGSS classes into your time at UConn (i.e. clubs, jobs, and other activities)?

I have overall become a better person through this minor, as it has helped me be around diversity. I am more knowledgeable and aware of my own struggles as a woman.

- Fatima

I was lucky enough to work at the UConn Women's Center for the past three years. I took what I learned about gender based violence into both of my roles as a Violence Against Women Prevention Program Peer Facilitator and as one of the Co-Facilitators for In-Power. I learned so much about intersectionality, oppression, and activism through my WGSS courses. That knowledge helped me create more inclusive dialogues on campus. The learning I did made me a better facilitator and activist over all.

- Sara

The knowledge I have obtained in my WGSS classes has already helped me connect and interact better with my patients and I know it will continue to do so my entire career!.

- Olivia

What I learned in my WGSS classes directly infiltrated the way that I mentor youth girls. I took the ideas I learned about society's standards of image, the patriarchy, the glass-ceiling and made it comprehensible for these girls that were being affected by it but couldn't really understand why or how. These courses were empowering not only for me but for the people I was able to share the information with, including family members and friends.

- Gabby

I definitely spoke to my friends about what I was learning and would often find myself pointing out things I learned in my WGSS courses that happened around me during everyday life. I was able to find these personal connections in class and bring them to my close family and friends— and that's the best type of learning because then I was learning and teaching what I was taught.

- Destini

WGSS helped me to think more critically about what is going on around me, and be compassionate to others. As a sister of Pi Beta Phi, it is important to me to represent the best that women can be and let the women around me shine.

- Katie

During my time at UConn, I was an active member of Between Women, a group aimed at creating a safe community for those who identify as women and are members of the LGBTQIA+ community. I participated in as many protests and rallies I could, and I never silenced my beliefs in the face of opposition.

- Emilie

I staged a protest set to Hairspray's "I Know Where I've Been" after one of my performing arts club's shows about women in theatre. I also themed another show around intersectionality in order to include diverse storylines in a very white-washed and male-dominated craft. In my classes, I was able to see a more complete picture when looking at psychological research and English literature characters.

- Stephanie

I completed an honors thesis that was founded on the principles of intersectionality I learned in WGSS. I focused on the narratives of incarcerated women and made sure that I read widely, deeply, and diversely.

- Kaceylee

Last year I was a part of an organization that required us to do community service. As a leader in that organization, I encouraged members to not only attend BRAVE sponsored events, but also events hosted by the WGSS department. It was great seeing multiple worlds in my life collide!

- Molly

I got involved at the women's center through friends of mine also in the WGSS program and I integrated a lot of the knowledge gained in my WGSS courses into my other studies.

- Pheobe

Q: What are your plans after graduation and how do you see your major or minor in WGSS supporting your future goals?

WGSS is a crucial minor for me as I plan to work with people of all backgrounds and identities in Human Rights. It has allowed me to understand individuality in terms of care and needs.

- Fatima

I'm going to UMaine to get my Master's in Higher Education and I've noticed that their curriculum is very social justice based and really makes sure when discussing topics to keep in mind identities and how they interest. That is a core concept of WGSS as well so I am very used to doing that and thus comfortable speaking on such things as well as have factual knowledge to bring into play.

- Rachel

I am currently planning on attending NYU Silver, in order to obtain my Masters in Social Work. My time in WGSS has become fundamental to my understanding of the way that trauma and oppression work to keep people down. It has also been fundamental to my understanding that community and healing can work as a way to uplift those that may need it.

- Sara

I will be going into the nursing field during a difficult time for healthcare in our country. I know that my knowledge of people will help me to remember to treat the person, not just the disease.

- Olivia

My plans after graduation are mastering in WGSS. My undergraduate courses have influenced me so much that I want to take my research further to be able to make a deeper impact in my career. I plan to combine my major and masters to create a unique position where i'm able to combine both of my skill sets. A major thank-you goes out to every single WGSS staff— from the professors to the student interns— that advocate for this field in their everyday work. Your impact is larger than you can imagine.

- Gabby

I plan to work in the healthcare sector so I love being able to learn about all identities because everybody deserves the human right of self-identity and also the right to healthcare. And being able to understand this all allows me to advocate for my patients and be able to educate others on the ignorance that may come with social norms.

- Destini

I will be moving to Boston to pursue a career in museum development and administration, and hope to bring my understanding of diverse issues in as they apply to the institutions I will be a part of.

- Katie

After graduation, I will be studying for a master's degree in Criminology and Justice. This field is oftentimes very discriminatory, and I truly believe I can work towards the inclusion of all identities and promote feminist teachings to transform the criminal justice system.

- Emilie

I plan to get my Ph.D in English with a focus in rhetoric and composition. With my background in WGSS and psychology, I will be able to look at the study and practice of writing with more scrutiny. I plan to do research on the differences in men and women's writing and those in underserved communities who don't have the advanced access to language arts education that privileged communities do.

- Stephanie

I am heading to the University of California, Davis to complete an English PhD and a JD. WGSS created the foundation of my academic thought, and I will continue to be intersectional and interdisciplinary in everything I do.

- Kaceylee

I will be working at Travelers in their Financial Management Leadership Development Program while pursuing my Masters in Financial Risk Management at UConn (Go Huskies!). Although the majority of my work will consist of number crunching and financial analysis, I also plan on continuing my involvement within their Women's Mentor Program. I hope to integrate what I learned in these classes into this Employee Group!

- Molly

I plan to go on to a masters program in Political Science in which I will utilize my WGSS knowledge everyday to keep an interdisciplinary lens in my research and my studies.

- Pheobe

I will be pursuing my Master's degree in International Relations at the London School of Economics. I intend to combine my studies of WGSS and bring an intersectional perspective to my master's program.

- Hannah

Q: What do you want to take with you from your time in WGSS?

I want to take the community, support, knowledge, and love with me after I graduate. I hope to come back and spend some time reconnecting with people in the future.

- Fatima

I want to take with me not only the applicable skills but the knowledge that there are so many wonderfully talented people out there, such as my peers, who have taken the time to study these topics and will be moving into their varied respective careers, thus bringing the knowledge into a variety of fields. I also really enjoyed the people, discussions, and overall connection that has come from it and want to take that and keep an openness and curiosity moving forward in how I approach my relationships with others.

- Rachel

A sense of community and an understanding of the complexity of oppression, intersectionality, and the construct of gender as a whole.

- Sara

I came into WGSS classes completely unaware of many things we talk about, like intersectionality. I come out knowing that I bettered myself and that I believe a WGSS class should be a gen ed requirement for all students!

- Olivia

What I plan to take away from my time in WGSS is the ability to remain open-minded. Coming into these courses, there were a lot of things that I had to learn. I came from a place where I knew I supported women and everyone in the LGBTQ+ community, but still was uneducated about the specifics of the oppression and marginalization they faced. If it wasn't for letting go of my misconceptions and hegemonies from my culture, family, and society that I took on, I would not be where I am today. I can only pray that more people will do the same and realize that there is so much work to be done for these communities, but also so much hope for our world.

- Gabby

Definitely a more analytical side when looking at other's point of view. It is sometimes hard to understand what others are going through or experience if it is not in your own realm. Hearing of all identities and many strifes that everybody goes through allows me to be even more empathetic than I considered myself to be before learning so much through WGSS.

- Destini

I want to take the ability to think of the needs of others and to be an ally to communities that may not directly apply to me. It's important to not only find solutions to your own disparities, but to raise others up as well.

- Katie

I want to take with me the accepting nature of WGSS and the open-mindedness to realize that there is not one universal identity a person should bear, despite what society deems is "normal." Most of all, WGSS has taught me to live my truth, even if it may not be accepted by those in power.

- Emilie

Everything! I can't see myself doing anything without using WGSS. It's impossible to get a complete view of anything when you don't take an intersectional approach.

- Stephanie

I want to remember to be empathetic to a variety of identities, but also to fight tooth and nail to support the most vulnerable populations.

- Kaceylee

In all of my classes, my professors encourage me to look at situations from an intersectional lens. It's made me realize that most things in life are multi-dimensional. I feel as though analysis from an intersectional lens is applicable and crucial across all sectors in life, and that's a major skill I want to take with me as I enter into the adult world!

- Molly

I want to take all the friends that I made, the things I learned about people from all walks of life, and the atmosphere of real personhood that WGSS grants each and every student.

- Pheobe

WGSS Alumni Q&A: Introducing the Alumni

In the time of social distancing, we wanted to catch up with our alumni! We asked them about their time at UConn and in the WGSS Program, their current endeavors, and what advice they have for WGSS students. Check out their responses below!

If you are a WGSS graduate (major, minor, or Feminist Studies Certificate graduate), please join our [Facebook Group](#) for WGSS Alumni!

Paola Pérez (She/Her/Hers)

Paola is a member of the class of 2017. She majored in WGSS and Latino and Latin American Studies (LLAS) and minored in French Studies. She currently is a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania.

Wafa Simpore (She/Her/Hers)

Wafa is a member of the class of 2016. She majored in WGSS and is currently completing a Masters in Social Work at Simmons College.

Julia Wilson (She/Her/Hers)

Julia is a member of the class of 2018. She majored in WGSS and Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) and is currently a graduate student at the University of Chicago.

Matthew Gray Brush, MPH (He/Him/His)

Matthew is a member of the class of 2017. He majored in WGSS and Human Rights. He is currently a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Fielding School of Public Health in the Department of Community Health Sciences with a specialization in Health Education and Promotion.

Adam Kocurek (He/Him/His)

Adam Kocurek is a member of the class of 2016. He graduated with dual degrees in History and WGSS and a minor in English. He is currently a PhD candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Samantha Rogers (She/Her/Hers)

Samantha is a member of the class of 2018. She majored in WGSS and is currently a student at the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law



Q: Why did you choose to major in WGSS?

I chose this interdisciplinary major because it taught me to engage in critical thinking and effective communication. More importantly, WGSS taught me to analyze the ways in which gender and sexuality intersects with class, race, and ability.

- Paola, Class of 2017

I chose this major because it aligned with my beliefs, fed my need for advocacy, encouraged my need to help other, and embraced solidarity along with analytical thinking with everything put in front of me.

- Wafa, Class of 2016

I took an introductory WGSS course my first year of college and it changed my life. From there I started taking more WGSS classes, got involved in campus organizing, worked at the Women's Center... it was a snowball!

- Julia, Class of 2018

During my time at UConn, I officially changed my major three times, and several times more in my head. I was convinced as a first year that the only way I could successfully enter the medical field was to have a STEM major and pursue the "pre-med" route. I chose to major in WGSS because I saw a need for knowledge of humanity in fields based on scientific research and fact. WGSS helped me find my niche in public health by revealing to me the extent to which social forces shape our lives, and ultimately how to investigate and address the foundational causes of health inequalities.

- Matthew, Class of 2017

I chose to major in WGSS for a number of reasons—the big ones being that in WGSS, I had my identity validated and I found a community, both scholarly and platonic, that enriched me as a scholar, as an activist, and as a friend. WGSS gave me the tools and the skillset to become a more critical citizen and educator. It also complemented my other degree and minor.

- Adam, Class of 2016

I took Gender and Globalization as a freshman with Barb Gurr and I loved the class and everything we talked about. The topics we talk about in WGSS are something I am passionate about and care about, and I wanted to major in something I was passionate about. I also really admired the faculty in WGSS and was excited about learning from people who were involved and passionate about what they taught.

- Samantha, Class of 2018

Q: What kind of work do you do professionally? How does WGSS relate to your current career or career goals?

Currently, I am a Master of Social Work candidate at the University of Pennsylvania. My degree in WGSS, combined with social work, provides the essential tools of social change on systematic problems of injustices.

- Paola, Class of 2017

My work current goes with clinical therapy as a future social worker. As well as a proud member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. who encourages sisterhood, service, and scholarship. Both of those aspects of my professional life was started with my major as a WGSS student by learning the history of those who came before me and what mountains they could move. My major as a WGSS student also reminds me to ground my work in intersectionality so all aspects of others identities can be considered, which is extremely important as a social worker.

- Wafa, Class of 2016

I am currently in graduate school for social work. I have worked at a shelter for women experiencing homelessness and now provide counseling for adult and child survivors of domestic violence. WGSS gave me a passion for doing gender equity work with an intersectional lens.

- Julia, Class of 2018

While I was a grad student at UCLA, I worked as a college academic mentor, where I advised undergraduates through the multitude of challenges they face personally and academically. My work in the public health field centers the sexual and reproductive health needs of transgender and gender non-conforming communities. I am a Certified Family Planning Health worker, and am also seeking a Certified Health Education Specialist certification. I hope to work in the medical field where I am able to contribute to whole-person, culturally sensitive care for trans people by helping providers learn how to better serve these communities.

- Matthew, Class of 2017

I am a PhD candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center in the History department. I am a Modern Americanist studying 20th century history of gender and sexuality, LGBT history, labor history, and history of activism and radicalism. I have completed the coursework necessary to receive the Certificate in Women's Studies in the Women's Studies department there. In addition to teaching courses in Modern American History at Hunter College, I also work in student government, as a peer mentor in my department, and as a public history tour guide of New York City. WGSS has informed everything I do, from my pedagogy as an educator to my research and activism.

- Adam, Class of 2016

I'm currently in my second year of law school. When I graduate and pass the bar exam, I want to practice in the public interest law world, specifically working with domestic violence and family law. I knew I wanted to use my degree in my career and I wanted to help people, so law school seemed like a logical next step. WGSS has given me the tools not only to be aware of domestic violence and how it affects survivors/victims, but also has given me tools to think and approach situations with an intersectional lens. For instance, a client's reservations about asking the police to assist with service of process or calling the police at all for help are completely understandable when we consider race or if someone is undocumented. Even asking for certain remedies from the court in a civil protection order petition may have consequences based on status; for instance, asking for child support may affect other public benefits, creating a choice between asking for child support or continuing to receive public benefits.

- Samantha, Class of 2018

Q: Are you involved with any initiatives or organizations within your community?

I volunteer for the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline as a bilingual hotline counselor. I provide crisis intervention, safety planning, resources and referrals within the city.

- Paola, Class of 2017

I started recently becoming more involved with the organizations in my community through my work as a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.

- Wafa, Class of 2016

Yes— I am a steering committee member in the Doctoral Students' Council at the Graduate Center, meaning I serve as a student leader and advocate in our university's graduate student government. I am also a peer mentor coordinator in my department, and am an active member of our union. I also am a member of CLAGS, the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, at the Graduate Center.

- Adam, Class of 2016

I am involved in some student groups on campus, including Students for Public Interest Law and Women's Law Caucus. I am also involved in pro bono work, volunteering my time teaching about law and social justice to high school students through the Street Law program and through doing client intake at a Worker's Rights Clinic. Additionally, I am working as a certified student attorney in one of my school's in-house legal clinics Families and the Law representing survivors/victims of domestic violence with family law and immigration law matters.

- Samantha, Class of 2018

Q: What is one favorite memory from your time in WGSS?

Creating lasting friendships with other WGSS students.

- Paola, Class of 2017

Exploring the greater world as a WGSS student through an alternative spring break. It brought value to the studies I'd put work into.

- Wafa, Class of 2016

Meeting one of my best friends in the world!! WGSS has so many awesome people and I wish that I had made more of an effort to get to know others in the major sooner.

- Julia, Class of 2018

One of my favorite classes in WGSS was Feminisms, which for some reason was taught in the basement of one of the chem buildings (if I remember correctly?) by Dr. Breen. We read so many great works in that class including Stone Butch Blues, my annotated and tear-stained copy of which I still have on my bookcase today.

- Matthew, Class of 2017

It's so hard to pick just one! I loved having deep and meaningful academic discussions with people who would ultimately become life-long friends.

- Adam, Class of 2016

One of my favorite memories from WGSS was attending a lecture with Laverne Cox! She is an amazing and engaging speaker and it was wonderful to hear her speak about her life, experiences, and advocacy.

- Samantha, Class of 2018

Q: What advice do you have for recent and soon-to-be WGSS graduates?

Apply for those jobs and/or graduate programs that seem "out of reach." You may never know what life has in store for you.

- Paola, Class of 2017

Become a sponge to the experiences and wealth of knowledge given to you as a WGSS student at UConn. Your time and knowledge is so much more valuable than you might realize and a pleasure to call yourself some of the few (and lucky!) to accomplish a degree in the discipline.

- Wafa, Class of 2016

Be proud of your degree! I spent too much time letting other people tell me that WGSS was dumb/a waste of money/useless, etc. WGSS was one of the best decisions I ever made and has continued to aid me personally and professionally. I'm so proud of my education and wouldn't trade it for anything. Also not caring what other people think is a great skill :)

- Julia, Class of 2018

Try to remember that everything in your life thus far has led you to this moment, now— and that each obstacle and challenge has shaped you into the person you are today. Even what you consider to be your greatest failures have helped you grow and improve. As you emerge from college into a world of great unknowns, know that you hold great power simply just by being you. Seek out a place and persons in this world that makes you feel like everything you have been through has led you to exactly where you are supposed to be.

- Matthew, Class of 2017

Keep your chin up! Never forget the importance of the humanities, arts, and social sciences. There will always be people who will hear your major and make a negative judgement of it and you— tone them out. WGSS can take you anywhere. Furthermore, college should not just be about finding a job— it should also be about making better, more well-informed and responsible citizens in a global community, and that's exactly what WGSS does for its majors and minors. Be brave, be grateful, be angry, and be kind!

- Adam, Class of 2016

My first piece of advice for WGSS graduates is no matter what you do, love what you do. WGSS offers so many different opportunities to use our degrees and no matter what you do with it, you have to love what you're doing and be passionate about what you're doing. My second piece of advice for WGSS graduates is if you are working in a field or want to work in a field that requires you to help others with their traumas, it is okay and necessary to take care of yourself, too! Vicarious trauma is real, and you need to take care of yourself first before you can help others cope with their traumas. Self-care is not selfish, it is necessary. It is good to know your prospective employer's attitudes about self-care and vicarious trauma and how they work to support you.

- Samantha, Class of 2018

Faculty Spotlights

Welcome!

Ariana Reilly Codr (She/Her/Hers)

Assistant Professor in Residence

Research and Hobbies: My research focuses on gender and narrative—especially the stories we tell about who, what, and how we love. When I am not teaching or working on my research, I enjoy gardening, cats, and reading.

Favorite Thing About WGSS: Without a doubt, the best part of WGSS so far has been the people—my colleagues and students!



Mick Powell (She/Her/Hers)

Assistant Professor in Residence

Research and Hobbies: My research and creative practice focus on queer black feminist poetics, experiences and narratives of violence, and histories of feminist art. My hobbies include reading and writing poetry, making playlists, making collages, and spending time with my wife and our dog!

Favorite Thing About WGSS: My favorite thing about the WGSS Program is that it feels like home. So grateful to be surrounded by such incredible students and colleagues/collaborators!



Laura Mauldin (She/Her/Hers)

Assistant Professor

Congratulations to Laura for recently being awarded tenure and for publishing two articles: "They Told Me My Name: Developing a Deaf Identity" appearing in *Symbolic Interaction* and "It's Not That Way You Know, She Has a Good Future": Women's Experiences of Disability and Community-based Rehabilitation in Sri Lanka in *Research in Social Science and Disability, Volume 11*.



Autumn Chidester (She/Her/Hers)

Student Admin Trainee

Research and Hobbies: Video games (mostly Animal Crossing: New Leaf as of currently), listening to music, drawing, as well as playing Dungeons and Dragons. I'll also be trying to teach myself how to play the kalimba soon! As far as academics go, I go to a study group/tea hour when the semester's on, and I edit the WGSS website, as well as post on our social media.

Favorite Thing About WGSS: The welcoming environment! It's always nice to come in and greet everyone since I'm one of the first few people to come in. I also love the flexibility between my class schedule and my work schedule.

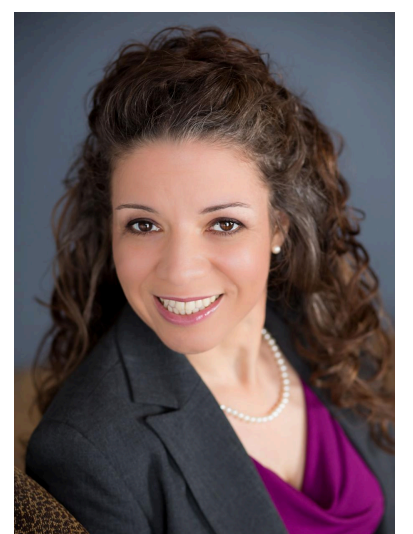


Congratulations!

Evelyn Simien (She/Her/Hers)

Professor

Congratulations to Evelyn for recently publishing three articles including "A Portrait of Marginality in Sport and Education: Toward a Theory of Intersectionality and Race-Gendered Experiences for Black Female College Athletes" in the *Journal of Women, Politics, and Public Policy*.



Ryan Watson (He/Him/His)

Assistant Professor

Congratulations to Ryan for recently being awarded new and renewed NIH grants totaling over a million dollars as well as two early career awards from the Society of Research on Adolescence and American Association of University Professors (UConn).. He has also published 17 papers.



Get to Know the *Wild* Tongue Intern Alex Taylor

Why Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies? Why Human Rights? What connections do you make between the two majors?

I didn't come to UConn with the intent of majoring in WGSS or Human Rights. I knew that I wanted to explore those topics, but I actually had planned to get a dual degree in art and English. I'd known also for a while that I'd wanted to take a gender studies class when I got here. But I thought that it would literally end up being just a class or two, I didn't think that UConn had a whole major for what I thought would only be a class or two at the whole university. I stuck with WGSS and Human Rights because both of my first WGSS and HRTS classes opened my eyes in ways that made it so that I can never shut them again, if that makes sense. They also gave me language to talk about patriarchy and homophobia that I'd needed for myself for so long. They also balance each other out. WGSS is more social justice oriented and easier to use in everyday interactions whereas the right-based language of human rights is useful for challenging large power structures.

What's your favorite WGSS class you've taken? What classes are you looking forward to next semester/year?

My favorite WGSS class thus far has definitely been WGSS 2124 Gender and Globalization with Dr. Barbara Gurr. It was the first WGSS class that I'd ever taken. The course introduced a lot of feminist theories including intersectional feminism and delved deep into colonization in ways that I never had during any schooling prior to that. Even as I am still learning and unlearning, it's wild to think back at how green I was compared to now. Now I don't know how to not look at the world through an anti-bias anti-racist lens. I'm looking forward to taking WGSS 3562: History of Women and Gender in the United States, 1850-Present and HIST 3563: African American History to 1865. So often, we get told glossed over versions of history and so I'm excited to deepen my understanding of how we got to our current moment.

What do you want to do career-wise after graduation?

After I finish my undergraduate career, I want to get a Masters of Education and my teaching certificate to teach secondary social studies. I've known for a while that I wanted to work as some sort of public servant, but I only realized that teaching was something that I wanted to do after I took some elective courses for my human rights major.

Why teaching? How do you plan to use WGSS and HRTS in your high school classroom?

I want to teach secondary social studies mainly because I want to teach the histories that I did start to learn until I got to college. I want to help break the cycle of indoctrinating kids with straight, cis, white men's history which is where my WGSS and HRTS knowledge is so important. And it's not even just a matter of taking what I've learned and adding that into the curriculum. WGSS and HRTS will influence how I teach which is probably more important, anyway. I also want to teach because I never had a queer teacher until I got to UConn-- at least not a teacher who was out-- who I could look up to. So I want to be that teacher for high schoolers because they need and they deserve it.

What about your art? How do you see art playing a role in your life in the future, if at all?

My art is something that I do just for me. Even when I thought that I wanted to major in art, I always forgot that showing in galleries and selling work was supposed to be the goal because I just liked doing it. I really like figure drawing because I think it's so hard. I love the challenge of capturing the essence of a person or their posture because oftentimes it's such a fine line. Sometimes you stumble onto a good drawing but most of the time you have to rework it until the piece clicks. So for me, my art will be selfish, it will be something that I do not to serve anyone other than myself.

Are you involved in any organizations or extracurriculars on campus?

The biggest thing I do on campus is that I work as a Resident Assistant (RA) and it takes up a lot of my time and energy. I try to bring WGSS into that space as much as I can too. Last year I created a bulletin board for Women's History Month where I asked residents to add a picture of a woman, famous or not, to the board and say why she inspired them. Next year I want to expand outside of the binary and make it a semester long or year long floor project. I'm also a member of HOLDUP which is an organization centered around leadership development. One thing that we do in HOLDUP is we go to local schools and hold short leadership workshops a few times throughout a semester. I've only been able to be a facilitator for one semester, but it just affirmed that I want to work with young people in schools.

How have you been taking care of yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic? Any self-care tips?

I've been watching a lot of Netflix with friends over Netflix Party which I love because there's none of that awkward anxious feeling that a lot of people have when the camera is on them but you can still talk to friends and hang out. I'd also recommend letting yourself gravitate towards whatever brings you joy. For me, that's reading and watching stuff that has some element of magic. And I don't mean like card tricks and sleights of hand, I mean like Magic magic. So I've been watching Avatar and picking up YA series that I haven't read since high school because they're just so fun for me and let me forget temporarily about everything going on.

What's your favorite movie or TV show? Or what movie/show can you watch over and over without ever getting sick of it?

I can watch Pride and Prejudice (2005) endlessly. I'm not even a big period piece romance movie person, but I love that movie.

Who's your favorite famous feminist?

AOC. I love how transparent she is about what it's like to be in the House and her IG lives especially when she used to show her plants. She always seems to be asking herself what's best for her communities, not what's best for her political career. Despite having the spotlight thrown onto her so abruptly when she first won and the amount of people that root for her to fail, she does the job with grace.

What emoji do you use the most and why?

I use the thumbs up emoji the most to show my tone through texting. I don't want people to think I'm mad or pissed off when I'm sending a short text or something so I add the thumbs up.

From New Jersey, Alex is a rising senior at UConn double majoring in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Human Rights with minors in art and English. During the academic year, she works on campus as a Resident Assistant where she supports predominantly first-year students in their transition to college. After graduation she plans on continuing her education in a masters and teacher certification program to become a social studies teacher. Her goal is not only to help students succeed, but to join those already working to radically reimagine the education system through an anti-bias anti-racist curriculum.



**Thank you for taking
the time to read this
newsletter, from
WGSS and the *Wild
Tongue* Team**

