From the Director’s Desk: Spring 2008

Kathy Gentile

At the beginning of fall semester, we were very pleased to welcome two new assistant professors to IWGS, Zoë Peterson, who is a joint appointment with Psychology, and Kristin Carbone-Lopez, a joint appointment with Criminology and Criminal Justice. As you will see in their faculty profiles in this newsletter, both faculty members will offer new courses for the Women’s and Gender Studies curriculum, and both are engaged in feminist research in the social sciences. Kristin Carbone-Lopez presented her work on the influence of women’s risky lifestyle choices on violent victimization to a packed house during an IWGS Colloquium in October. Zoë Peterson will be presenting her research on sex in unequal power relationships in an IWGS Colloquium in April. With our two new faculty members, IWGS now has seven core faculty who teach a range of disciplinary courses, conduct feminist and gender research, and who are committed to our programs.

This spring we are continuing our successful IWGS Colloquium Series and our Gender Conversations on key gender issues which we began during fall semester. IWGS is also co-sponsoring a number of other events, including the first UMSL production of The Vagina Monologues, performed by UMSL students on Feb. 27 and 28, following a week-long series of V-Day activities, including self-defense classes and films. Our IWGS student club, Voices for Gender Equality, and particularly the club president, Monica Swindle, worked very hard to bring students and campus organizations together to present The Vagina Monologues to our campus community. Profits from ticket sales went to LAAW, Legal Advocates for Abused Women, and RAVEN, Rape and Violence End Now.

In April, we will be sponsoring the world premiere of another original play by Steven Clark, Hypatia. Last April, IWGS co-sponsored his play, The Countess of the Dial, a brilliant dramatic defense of the life and writings of Margaret Fuller, the 19th-century Transcendentalist and feminist writer. The new play will portray the life and times of Hypatia, the Greek female mathematician and philosopher who was murdered by a Christian mob in Alexandria in 415.

On April 3 & 4, IWGS is sponsoring our first regional conference, Sexing the Look: the Impact of Sexualized Imagery in Popular Visual Culture. Scholars from across the Midwest will be giving presentations on a provocative variety of topics including feminist anti-pornography rhetoric, Senegalese erotic postcards, sexing the Toyota truck, creating erotic identities on online dating sites, and Bridget Jones’s grotesque body. Our keynote speaker will be the internationally known award-winning filmmaker and media professor, Sut Jhally, from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The conference will also feature several of his films, including Dreamworlds III and Killing Us Softly 3, as well as other short films, such as War Zone and Body Beautiful. Although we will charge a conference fee to cover our expenses, I encourage faculty, students, and community friends to attend one or both days. We will be offering a number of fee subventions for students. Go to this link to register for the conference: http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/conted/arts-sciences/conferences/sexingthelook/index.html.

Sut Jhally, Ph.D.  Dr. Kathy Gentile
IWGS Welcomes Kristin Carbone-Lopez
Researching Women’s Experiences of Victimization

New IWGS Assistant Professor
Kristin Carbone-Lopez

By Ellen Reed

The first IWGS faculty colloquium of fall 2007-08 provided an opportunity for participants to consider “Drugs, Alcohol, and Risk: A Lifestyle Explanation of Women’s Violent Victimization.” The event also introduced a new assistant professor, Kristin Carbone-Lopez, to the greater IWGS community. Carbone-Lopez has a joint appointment with Criminology and Criminal Justice.

According to Carbone-Lopez, while a great deal of research suggests that the proportions of women in jail/prison samples who report violence by an intimate partner are much higher than the general population, there has been little research into trying to explain this risk.

“I focus on the role of women’s risky activities (such as alcohol and drug use) as well as their involvement with criminal men in understanding their experiences of partner violence.”

During the summer semester 2007, Carbone-Lopez brought to her first UMSL students a course on Gender, Crime and Justice. This course provides an opportunity for Carbone-Lopez to exercise her strengths and interests in both women’s and gender studies and in criminology. These combined interests helped influence her decision to apply for the joint appointee position. As Carbone-Lopez reflects, "when I saw that one of the top criminology schools in the country was advertising a joint appointment with women’s and gender studies, I knew I had to apply!"

During Carbone-Lopez’ graduate work in sociology at the University of Minnesota, she worked closely with her mentor, Professor Candace Krutschnitt, to develop and refine her interest in women’s experiences of victimization. She has published several related works, including “Revictimizing the Victims: Interviewing Women Victims of Interpersonal Violence” in The Journal of Interpersonal Violence, (2007).

Currently, Carbone-Lopez is continuing her research on victimization and lifestyle risk factors among incarcerated women while incorporating this focus area into a teaching environment. In her courses Gender, Crime and Justice and Social Control of Female Offenders, she hopes to challenge stereotypes about women offenders and women’s victimization that students bring into the classroom.

Helping students become excellent officers and academics is a high priority. "I strive to engage students in thinking critically about the complex layers of social controls, situations, and influences that enable or cause some people to commit crimes." By broadening the focus on women’s lives into a discussion of gendering and gender differences, Carbone-Lopez intends to encourage a more nuanced inclusion of gender as a social control that propels some women into both victimization and offending.

Working directly with women offenders who have experienced violent victimization can have a dramatic impact on the researcher. Carbone-Lopez became acutely aware that many women needed to be validated by simply talking through their experiences in an environment free from judgment. The stories proved to be difficult to hear without absorbing some of the emotional strife the women expressed. Carbone-Lopez, needed time to decompress in the safety of her own home in order to keep moving forward with the research.

“I wasn’t prepared for how hard it would be to listen to the women talk about their victimization—what a toll it would take on me as the researcher.”

As Carbone-Lopez considers the future in gender analysis in criminology and other fields, she hopes to play a vital role. “I hope to contribute to the growth of academically rigorous feminist studies.” She also would like to encourage greater diversity in criminology researchers and in the realm of studies that such diversity will ultimately generate.

Carbone-Lopez brings to St. Louis more than her work, referring to her young daughter and husband as her favorite distractions.

IWGS welcomes Carbone-Lopez and family to the University and to the St. Louis region, and the Institute looks forward to the contributions Carbone-Lopez will make toward understanding the complexities of women’s experiences with violence, victimization and offending.
IWGS Welcomes Visiting Professor Don Conway-Long

Course on Men finds a home in Women’s and Gender Studies

By Ellen Reed

When Dr. Don Conway-Long presented his course, Masculinities, in the summer of 2007, the IWGS opened a new pathway for analyzing the “inner working of sex/gender systems.” As Conway-Long explains, “gender means more than ‘women and the feminine’ and a serious critique of an array of masculinities “widens the frame” through which we understand the construction of genders. Significantly, understanding the social, economic, and political benefits and costs of hegemonic masculinity provides insight into the development and enforcement of gender, race, and class inequities.

A visiting professor from Webster University, Conway-Long chairs Webster’s Behavioral and Social Sciences Department and teaches courses in gender and critical masculinity studies, Islam and the Middle East, China, class, ethnicity, power, violence, and social theory.

Aside from academics, Conway-Long is no stranger to feminist frameworks. As a pro-feminist male committed to understanding masculine construction and the interplay of power and privilege between genders, Conway-Long was instrumental in the development of a pro-feminist movement to stop violence against women. Following a series of conferences on Men and Masculinities in the 1970’s, Conway-Long joined an effort that led to the launch of RAVEN in St. Louis—the third oldest batterer’s intervention program in the United States.

While Conway-Long is the first to bring to IWGS a course that focuses on men and masculinity, it may well become a permanent fixture. Kathy Gentile, IWGS Director, reports that some students were initially “dubious about taking a course on men.” However, the evaluations from this first course have been so positive that Conway-Long will repeat his course for IWGS during the summer ‘08 session.

IWGS Welcomes Zoë Peterson
Examining the Sexual Scripts of Rape

New Joint IWGS Appointee, Assistant Professor of Psychology Zoë Peterson

By Jeannita Triggs

Dr. Zoë Peterson is one of the newest additions to the IWGS family and UMSL faculty. She earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Kansas where she also completed a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies. Her interest in women’s issues began during her undergraduate years at Macalester College. She enrolled in a number of women’s studies courses, including “Psychology of Women,” and found them intriguing. Her interests in gender related issues grew out of her work in civic engagement endeavors. She worked as an advocate at a shelter for battered women, an experience which led to her interest in researching gender-related violence.

During her graduate years at the University of Kansas, she conducted research on unacknowledged rape victims, women who have had sexual experiences that they do not believe legally qualify as rape. Dr. Peterson’s community research led her to examine the “sexual scripts” that often guide an individual’s expectations in sexual situations. She used her research in the community for her dissertation: “Conceptualizing the ‘Wantedness’ of Women’s Consensual and Nonconsensual Sexual Experiences: Implications for How Women Label Their Experiences with Rape.”

A two year Clinical Research Postdoctoral Fellowship with The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction afforded her the opportunity to continue her community research while serving as a sex therapist to both individuals and couples.

As for her future at UMSL, she is currently teaching courses in the Psychology of Women and Women and Mental Health and plans to teach a course on Human Sexuality in the future. She looks forward to both further research and teaching at UMSL. Dr. Peterson reports that UMSL students have been very receptive of her in the classroom and she is “struck by the students’ enthusiasm and willingness to contribute to class discussions.”

Examining the “sexual scripts” that often guide an individual’s expectations in sexual situations.

Dr. Peterson’s current interests lie in individual perceptions of nonconsensual sexual experiences. When asked about her most recent research work and future interests she shared, “I recently published an article on how college students define the term ‘sex.’ I am also beginning some new research examining how men conceptualize sexual coercion and rape and what motivates men to perpetrate acquaintance rape.” She feels confident that “understanding how men think about concepts like sexual coercion and sexual consent may help in the development of effective rape prevention strategies.”
On Nov. 29, 2007, our Institute and campus heard a moving lecture and call to action, “Multiple Jeopardy: Women and HIV/AIDS in Botswana” by Dr. Peggy Gabo Ntseane, a senior lecturer in the Department of Adult Education of the University of Botswana. Dr. Ntseane told us that in spite of aggressive efforts by the government, private agencies, and the international community to address HIV prevention, women in Botswana have been put in multiple jeopardy.

Botswana has the second-highest HIV/AIDS infection rate in the world. Because of inequalities that exist between the sexes, women in Botswana bear the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Dr. Ntseane showed how the global network of international organizations that fund HIV/AIDS research tends to universalize the epidemic and erroneously assumes that men and women in different cultures have equal power to negotiate safer sex. In Botswana, the concept of the individual is alien, and people act as part of a collective in considering how their actions would affect others in the family and community. Many of these actions are dictated by the indigenous cultures that perpetuate restrictive gender roles for women: “Lose your culture; lose your identity.” Therefore, solving the AIDS/HIV crisis is as much a social problem as a health problem, and change in sexual behaviors is very slow.

Dr. Ntseane was only the second woman in Botswana to receive a doctorate in adult education. Most of her current work focuses on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the female population of Botswana.

But now that I have completed my internship, I am happy to report that I was not subjected to any odd tasks, and not once did I retrieve a cup of coffee for anyone. More importantly, I was treated like a “real” employee by the entire staff and was given considerable responsibilities including: editing articles as they were submitted, drafting emails to potential and pre-existing clients, and updating their media kits. I edited the June/July and August/September journals, which included a number of articles on women’s health.

My internship through the Institute for Women’s and Gender Studies was a very positive experience in many ways. Through my internship I was given the opportunity to gain work experience and network with others in the field—all while having fun and earning credit toward my Women’s and Gender Studies graduate certificate. The director, Kathy Gentile, and Assistant Director, Kathleen Nigro, were very accommodating and worked with my schedule, which was important; in addition to taking classes toward my Master’s degree in English, I also have a full-time job.

After my internship ended, I was offered the position of assistant editor at the newspaper—a position I gladly accepted. I couldn’t have asked for a more rewarding experience.
IWGS Small Grants Awards Spring 2007:
Laura Westhoff, Kathleen Nigro, Nan Sweet, Colleen McKee, Jody Miller, Farida Jalalzai.

Dr. Kathleen Nigro, IWGS, presented “Kate Chopin, Free Love, and ‘Super’-spiritual Influences” at the American Literature Conference in Boston in May 2007.

Dr. Kathy Gentile, English and Women’s Studies, has published an essay, “The Triumph of Beast Over Beauty in Gothic Film,” in Le Gothic: Influences and Appropriations in Europe and America, Palgrave.

Dr. Sally Barr Ebest, English and Women’s and Gender Studies, is co-editor, with Kathleen McInerney, of a new book, Too Smart to be Sentimental: Contemporary Irish American Women Writers, University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

Dr. Carol Peck, Optometry, presented a paper with Ph.D. student, Brian Foutch, “Gender and Ovarian Hormone Effect on the Relative Contribution of Chromaticity to Brightness Perception,” at the October 2007 meeting of the American Academy of Optometry.

Dr. Janet Y. Murray, E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor for Developing Women Leaders & Entrepreneurs in International Business, joined the Women in the Academy of International Business Executive Board as the Vice President on July 1, 2007 for a two-year term. She organized and co-chaired a panel, “Women Leaders in International Business Education: Four Deans Tell it Like it is,” Academy of International Business Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, June 2007.


Dr. Jody Miller, CCJ and Women’s and Gender Studies, received the 2007 Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Service. Drs. Zhang, Sheldon, Ko-Lin Chin and Miller published “Women’s Participation in Chinese Transnational Human Smuggling: A Gendered Market Perspective,” in Criminology. 45 (3): 699-733. The UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project, recently named, Operation Teardrop, and coordinated by Jody Miller, is providing attention to the children of Tamil tea estate workers, the most disadvantaged segment of Sri Lanka’s population. With the assistance of UMSL English faculty member and IWGS affiliate, Dr. Lynn Staley, and students in her spring 2007 Business Writing courses, Jody had an extremely productive summer at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam, UMSL’s newly sponsored school.

Dr. Zoë Peterson, Psychology and IWGS, published “What is sex and why does it matter” in the Journal of Sex Research.


Dr. Virginia Navarro was awarded the College of Education’s Outstanding Faculty Award from the Division of Teaching and Learning at their spring banquet.

English and WGS Lecturer Colleen McKee’s poem “The Red Slip,” will appear in the 2008 Women’s Artist Datebook.
RAVEN: My Internship

By Kathleen Wurm,
Undergraduate Certificate, Fall '07

I think about my overall experience as an intern with RAVEN, the anti-violence men’s organization, as life-altering. Although I received some information about the agency when I interviewed for the intern position, this information gave me little insight about what my future at RAVEN would resemble or what I might encounter. Before I started the internship in summer 2007, I was apprehensive about the entire situation. I dislike unfamiliar situations and was anxious about working with a male population that I found intimidating.

For the first month of my internship, I observed numerous activities such as intake assessments, exit interviews, staffings, group sessions, and case management responsibilities. In addition, I attended meetings and trainings found in the Domestic Violence Community which enhanced my knowledge and insight about how domestic violence is a gendered issue. For the second month of my internship, I was able to take on additional responsibilities in the areas of group facilitation, intake assessments, and case management. These responsibilities gave me the opportunity to acquire new skills that enhanced my personal, professional, and human development while also giving me the opportunity to envision myself in the role as a professional actively working in a professional environment.

RAVEN provided me with a phenomenal learning environment. Without encouragement and understanding, I would have never felt comfortable enough to ask questions or make mistakes; hence, my skill and knowledge levels would have never progressed. Without encouragement and understanding, I do not believe the men in the program would ever admit their abuse or emotions; hence, the men and their belief systems would never change and violence against women would continue. Throughout my entire internship, RAVEN gave me the opportunity to ask numerous questions and make frequent mistakes which allowed me to be successful. From my experience, I came to believe that the men in the program also have the opportunity to be successful and overcome their violent histories.

One negative component of the internship was the intense continuum of emotions that I experienced. When I began my internship, I had little confidence in my ability to learn and perform new skills. As my time at RAVEN progressed, my responsibilities as an intern also progressed. I will never forget the intense emotions of despondency and defeatism I often felt when I was acquiring these new skills and responsibilities that allowed me to become more active in group facilitation, intake assessments, and case management. It took a significant amount of energy for me to overcome these obstacles and the intense continuum of emotions left me feeling exhausted. Overcoming some of my own fears enhanced my internship experience.

As a woman and gender-sensitive person in the field of domestic violence, I had a naive understanding about domestic violence when I began my internship. Although I have been studying women’s and gender issues for years, I always perceived domestic violence to be a women’s issue. Through my internship with RAVEN, I learned that domestic violence is very much a gender issue that negatively impacts both men and women. This new understanding allowed me the opportunity to reevaluate my own gender-awareness. In addition, with this new understanding, I was able to treat both the men and the women involved in the domestic violence situations I encountered with gendered sensitivity and equality. Furthermore, this new understanding gave me the opportunity to examine how my gender affected the clients and how the clients’ gender affected me. I realized that my gender made the men self-conscious because they were afraid that I was judging them. I also realized that the clients’ gender made me self-conscious because I was afraid that they were judging my credibility. By the end of my internship with RAVEN, I had learned as much from the men as they had learned from me.

By interning at a feminist anti-violence agency, I was able to utilize the women’s and gender focused goals I created in activities such as group facilitation, intake assessments, and case management. In group, I have had the opportunity to discuss with the men how femininity and masculinity are socially constructed concepts that hold dangerous consequences for both men and women. In addition, group gave me the opportunity to practice with the men how men and women can respectfully communicate and interact with each other. I have encountered both men and women in crisis situations, and I have offered them both referrals and resources to help intervene. Overall, RAVEN provided me with a great opportunity to understand how gender affects the social problem of domestic violence.

“I learned that domestic violence is very much a gender issue that negatively impacts both men and women.”
Your supervisor frequently makes comments about your body, ostensibly as compliments for what he refers to as your "sexy figure." These comments make you uncomfortable, and you have told this man to stop. However, he has dismissed your complaints as over-reactions to his meaningless teasing. You wonder if you can continue to work in the same department.

It has come to your attention that one of your colleagues is spending considerable time alone with one of his female students. You are aware that this student has struggled to make passing grades, and you are worried that the dynamics at play in this situation are placing this student - and the instructor - in a very vulnerable position.

Would you know what to do if you were confronted with either of these situations?

Deborah Burris, director of the Office for Equal Opportunity at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, is delivering the message that Sexual Harassment is against University Policy.

By Ellen Reed

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By Ellen Reed

To ensure appropriate institutional response, Burris joined forces with Sheryl Rose of the Missouri Commission of Human Rights to implement a massive training process to reach the many layers of responsible parties on campus. The first training was delivered to the University’s senior administrators, including the Chancellor and cabinets.

Following management training, OEO launched a series of 10 two hour workshops over a four week period in the fall of 2007. During these trainings, 350 participants learned to define and identify behaviors that constitute damaging sexual harassment and/or that create a hostile or dangerous environment. In addition, participants were instructed on the impact of sexual harassment, both on the victim and on the institution, and they were provided techniques for intervention, including directing students and faculty to the appropriate offices for reporting and investigation.

“We hear much less of the old excuse of ‘oh, he didn’t really mean it.’” Instead, there has been a shift toward delving into the vulnerable settings that might contribute to unsafe situations, such as relationships between graduate students and faculty or “end of the semester” parties in which both students and faculty might participate. Both students and faculty need to understand the gray areas, the illegality of harassing behaviors, and the means for reporting someone who is victimizing another through such behavior.

“The goal is to provide education that will prevent harassment in the first place. But training is also to ensure that campus personnel know the University’s policy and understand the disciplinary actions that can take place.” The policy settles much debate on how sexual harassment is defined, and it solidifies the University’s commitment to a “positive discrimination-free environment.” It also provides clear guidelines on non-retaliation against those who report harassment or discrimination and redress for victims and disciplinary action against offenders.

While sexual harassment is an unfortunate reality that most immediately and frequently impacts women in subordinate positions, the responsibility for creating safe, responsive environments for learning and working rests with administrators and representatives of the institution.

Burris summarized the significance this training holds for the University, saying “This campus is committed to being inviting to all and to creating an environment in which people feel free to pursue their academic careers without concerns about harassment of any type.”

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The Office of Equal Opportunity provides services to the campus community which will insure compliance with all federal, state, and local equal opportunity laws and regulations and promote campus diversity.

The Office of Equal Opportunity is located in room 127 in Wood’s Hall on the North Campus of the University of Missouri—St. Louis. More information on the OEO is available at 314.516.5695.
IWGS Off Campus

Through the Advanced Credit program at UMSL, high school students have the opportunity to take our Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies course (WGST 2102) and to earn college credit toward a degree at UMSL. I have visited all of the classes where we have students enrolled, and I have been very impressed with the level of discussion I have experienced at the secondary schools. The bulletin board in this picture was designed by Leslie Scoopmire’s class at Pattonville High School. She tells me it caused quite a stir in the social studies hallway and made some faculty members nervous because of the spelling of "womyn." The day I visited, we watched the first episode of the Mary Tyler Moore Show and analyzed Susan J. Douglas’ article, "Why the Shirelles Mattered: Girl Groups on the Cusp of a Feminist Awakening."

Kathleen Butterly Nigro, Ph.D.

IWGS Certificates Awarded

FALL 2007
Undergraduate Certificates
Kathleen Wurm
Bryonie Carter

SPRING 2008
Graduate Certificate
Olivia Ayes

Undergraduate Certificates
Devry Becker
Lisa Clancy
Lora Coulter
Monica Swindle
Tawanna Gandy
Jessica Harris

2007 Writing Awards

GRADUATE CREATIVE
1st Prize: Capachina Bianka Taylor
But why would I want to be Black
and To my mother who had never been to America
until after her wedding day.

Honorable Mention: Olivia Ayes
Though I am cold here, world, I am safe.

Honorable Mention: Cynthia Webber
The Grain Bin.

UNDERGRADUATE CREATIVE
1st Prize: Julia Murphy
Kentucky Raised, Ohio Grown

UNDERGRADUATE NONFICTION
1st Prize: Laura Fleming
Delicacy and Depravity:
Women Healers in 19th Century America.

Honorable Mention: Devry Alois Becker
Metrosexuality.
The 9th Street Abbey was the site for the fall 2007 IWGS Fundraiser.

Proceeds from this fundraiser help support several scholarship opportunities for students.

IWGS - CALENDAR of EVENTS - Spring 2008

February 7: “Reasonable Accommodation: Disability Studies & Liberal Education” Michael Berube Paterno—Family Prof in Lit — Pennsylvania State University
February 15: Statehouse Sisters: Conversations with Women Leaders
February 18: “Show Me the Women: The Impact of Term Limits on Women in the Missouri Legislature” — Dayna Stock—IWGS Colloquium
February 27/28: “The Vagina Monologues” UMSL Student Performance
March 12: Trailblazers Awards Ceremony
March 13: Preventing Sexual Harassment on Campus — UMSL/AAUW Forum & Discussion
March 17: Monday Noon Presentation — Josh Aronson, filmmaker
March 18: “Beautiful Daughters” film screening—discussion led by Josh Aronson
March 20: Maxine Clark, Founder of Build-A-Bear—Distinguished Speaker Series
April TBA: “The Tragedy of Hypatia” by Steven Clark, World premiere play.
April 3 & 4: Sexing the Look: The Impact of Sexualized Imagery in Popular Culture—Regional Conference
       Keynote Speaker: Sut Jhally—Professor of Media Studies & Filmmaker
April 16: “Women Rule—Shattering the Executive Glass Ceiling” — IWGS Colloquium—Farida Jalalzai
April 22: “Sex and Power: Characteristics & Consequences of Sexual Relationships between Individuals with Unequal Institutional Power” — IWGS Colloquium — Zoë Peterson
May 1: IWGS Awards Reception
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