

# MARY & WILLIAM



FALL 2011: Issue 1

the Women's Studies Program Newsletter

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## MARY & WILLIAM NEWSLETTER

### A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Current and Former Students, Faculty, and Friends of Women's Studies,

I am delighted to be elected and appointed as the new Director of the Women's Studies Program. I look forward to leading our program for the next three years, and am continually inspired by our gifted students, dedicated faculty, and passionate Women's Studies friends. Our brilliant former directors Nancy Gray, Leisa Meyer, Suzanne Raitt, and Christy Burns as well as multi-disciplinary members of the various Women's Studies committees are always very generous in lending their expertise and creative talents. We work collectively to create new opportunities for our students to make a difference in the world. Their energy and unwavering commitment for making us stronger in every way are vital for creating novel structures in innovative curriculum and feminist activism. Our Office Manager Lee Nguyen is peerless in adding efficiency, innovation, and greenness to the office operations. By providing vital financial support for student awards, assistantships, internships and student research experiences, the Carol Woody Internship scholarship, the Gove Endowment, the Friends of Women's Studies, and the Charles Center Student Assistant Program allow us to accomplish our mission.

With this issue, we welcome the new Mary & William Newsletter. I hope you like our new name and look as well as the enhanced content. Our student editor Mira Nair '12, who is the creative and managing talent behind this issue, won the contest for re-naming this newsletter. She is already at work to create an exciting Spring 2012 issue. Please contact her (menair@email.wm.edu) or me if you are interested in contributing to the Mary & William Newsletter as student, faculty, and alumna journalists. We welcome your participation in this exciting new project.

This fall we have already hosted four well-attended events. At the Welcome Back, and the Women's Studies Homecoming receptions, we



*Gul Ozyegin*

celebrated our wonderful network of current and former students, faculty, and friends of Women's Studies. Professor Preston gave a Brownbag lecture on 19th-century singer Emma Abbott. Professor Davis focused her Brownbag lecture on women survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Thank you to all who attended for your delightful presence at these events. We look forward to seeing many of you at our future events and have some pictures for you in this issue. Please stay connected by visiting our office on the third floor of Morton, our website, Facebook page, and through email. I would love to hear from you.

With best wishes,

*Gul Ozyegin*

Gul Ozyegin  
Director of the William & Mary Women's Studies Program  
(757) 221 2453  
gxozye@wm.edu

### MARCHING AGAINST VICTIM-BLAMING AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: AN INTERVIEW

Michele Hunter graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a BA in English and creative writing from Agnes Scott College, a women's liberal arts school in Decatur, Georgia. She decided to go to law school to pursue a career in media law after studying journalism and serving as editor of her college newspaper. She is now a third-year student at William & Mary Law School. She interned for Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia last summer and stayed on for fall and is also a court advocate for Avalon: A Center for Women and Children. She is looking for jobs focused on public interest and hopes to continue providing civil legal services to the underprivileged community.

Ms Hunter is the vice president of the Women's Law Society, which proudly supports women law students by providing them with a social community, mentor program, access to study tips, networking events, and interesting lecture opportunities. WLS focuses on bringing information and fostering discussion on legal issues that effect women to both the College and Williamsburg community.

#### ***Can you define Slut Walks and give a bit of their history?***

Slut Walk is a protest movement that seeks to bring awareness to sexual assault and victim blaming. After a Toronto police officer told a group of students in January (2011) that not dressing "like sluts" could help them avoid being raped, a handful of Toronto women organized the first SlutWalk. Thousands of women attended, some in their lingerie, others wearing jeans and sneakers. Many carried signs saying "My dress is not a yes," and, "Don't tell us how to dress. Tell men not to rape." In less than a year, these grassroots protests have occurred in 75 cities around the world and have become what some have argued is the most successful feminist movement of the last 20 years.

#### ***How have Slut Walks varied across cities?***

The most noticeable difference is that each Slut Walk reflects the unique language and culture of the city and country in which it takes place. For example in Delhi, SlutWalk organizers used the name "Besharmi Morcha," "beshram" meaning something similar to "slut". Their goals, listed on their website, included "To fight all violations, in their various forms, against women in public space", reflecting the challenges that Indian women face every day.

#### ***Do you think they have been successful in achieving their purpose?***

If we are talking about the purpose of bringing attention and awareness to the tendency of our society to shame victims of sexual assault and harassment by asking what they did to "deserve" it, then yes; the sheer number of people involved in the SlutWalk movement and the hundreds of articles and debates it has spawned worldwide are testaments to the success of the movement.

As to whether the eventual goal of fostering a culture that focuses on the actions of offenders instead of victims has been met, I think it is too soon to tell. Last spring, the New York Times published an article about the gang rape of an 11 year old girl who was described as wearing a lot of make-up and dressing older than her age, resulting in national outrage over the coverage of the story. When this type of outrage over blaming victims of sexual assault becomes the rule rather than the exception, we will know that real change is taking place.

#### ***How are Slut Walks controversial?***

Organizing under the word "slut" is obviously controversial and has generated a great deal of criticism. Some have said that participants hope to reclaim this ugly word, but I believe SlutWalks are about asking the world to recognize just how dirty this word is. The name is actually quite symbolic of the goal of the protests: it is time that we—not just as women, but as people—tell the world that we will no longer stand aside while victims are degraded by such words and mentalities.

Another controversial issue is the fact that some of the protestors choose to wear very little clothing. Some even paint their bare bodies with the word "slut." While the more scantily clad of the marchers receive the most attention, this is not the central theme of SlutWalks. Organizers ask women to wear whatever they want to because whatever they choose wear, or for that matter, not to wear, does not make them any less deserving of safety from violence and harassment.

#### ***Have Slut Walks stirred debates among feminists?***

Yes, there has been a lot of debate about SlutWalks in the feminist community. Although the goals of SlutWalks are widely appreciated by most, the "how" to achieve them are no more or less contro-

by Mira Nair '12, editor



*The Women's Law Society Executive Board*

versial than any discussion that has occurred among feminists, past and present Many in the early 20th century thought that wearing bloomers would negatively effect the suffrage movement and not every women who fought for gender equality in the 70's thought that refusing to wear bras would propel the goal forward. However, those feminists who do not like the name or the idea of wearing suggestive clothing are offering other ideas to expose and stop victim blaming. The more choices women have in aligning themselves against the degradation of victims, the better.

#### ***Should we have a Slut Walk in Williamsburg? How do you think this could benefit students and our community***

I think whether we "should" have a SlutWalk in Williamsburg is a question that has to be answered by our community. William and Mary's Women's Law Society and the Women's Studies Department hope to open the door to that conversation. A Williamsburg SlutWalk would give students and residents a way to show visitors as well as the rest of the country and the world that whether women wear layers of colonial fabrics or short skirts, our community stands up for women's rights to make those choices without being called names or being blamed if they are victimized. In Williamsburg, both on campus and off, we clearly stand for offender blaming.



*Fall  
Welcome  
Back  
Reception*







## MARY & WILLIAM NEWSLETTER

Slut Walk  
Korea posters



Sukyoung Kim



### KOREA'S WANNABE FEMINISTS

by Charlotte Tregelles, Feminist Law and Policy

Despite the dismal rain on the morning of July 16th, 2011, more than a hundred people showed up to participate in Korea's first Slut Walk in Seoul's main financial district, Gwang-Hwanon. The colorful crowd consisted of women and men, dressed in what made them feel comfortable and sexy. Sukyoung Kim, a junior from Korea's Yonsei University who is spending a semester at William and Mary, was one of the organizers of Korea's Slut Walk. In an interview with her, she explains that the participants were meant to dress in whatever made them feel good about themselves, and it didn't necessarily have to be "revealing"—“I could feel sexy in a business suit or my grandma's sweater,” Sukyoung says. She continues, “I could also wear high heels, but I'm going to do so because I want to, not to please him.”

Slut Walks, which originated in Toronto, have been gaining popularity and the demonstrations are now taking place all over the world. Although they are all meant to challenge the notion of blaming sexual assault victims rather than their attackers, Sukyoung described a particular situation in Korea that had spurred on the creation of a Slut Walk: Recently, a female medical student at Korea University had been sexually harassed by a group of male classmates while on a leadership retreat. After notifying the school about the harassment, the young woman was shocked to learn that the young men involved had not been punished, and that she would even be forced to take her final exams in the same room as them. In a lawsuit that the young woman brought against the male classmates involved, the defendants' lawyers accused the woman of being

### Updates from alumni of Women's Studies WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

CASEY ALLEN SEARS, Class of 2011, Double major in Neuroscience and Women's Studies

I'm in my first year of Teach for America stationed in Indianapolis. Right now I teach at a charter school that primarily serves low-income students who have histories of difficulty in educational settings for one reason or another. My content areas include chemistry and anatomy, but honestly I find myself trying to teach empowerment and agency along with the sciences. It's incredibly difficult having just transitioned out of W&M, but it's an experience that has let me put my leadership skills to the test in a way that the ivory tower couldn't on its own. I feel like WMST led me to this experience and prepared me for how to think, however few things could have prepared me for the reality of shaping the futures of young minds. In short this new adventure is crazy and real, and I'm going to survive it.

AVINA ROSS, Class of 2009. Double major in Sociology and Women's Studies.

I am currently working as the State Coordinator for local domestic violence fatality review teams in Virginia, through the Department of Health and Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. I am also in my final year of graduate work. I plan to graduate from VCU in the Spring with a Masters of Science in Sociology. In

drunk and dressed inappropriately at the time of the harassment. Sukyoung described the Slut Walk as being “really necessary” in an atmosphere that continues to blame women for the sexual crimes committed against them.

One of the most remarkable factors of Korea's Slut Walk, and especially of the college students' involvement in it, is the apparent lack of a women's studies curriculum in most of the country's universities. Sukyoung described her own university, which does not have a women's studies department, although there are a few cultural anthropology classes that may focus on gender. She also believes that this is typical of most of Korea's universities—even Ewha Women's University, a close neighbor of Sukyoung's school, offers a women's studies minor, but no major.

When asked how, with this lack of feminist learning, she became so involved in feminist issues, Sukyoung replied that she has gained much of her knowledge on the topic from leaflets and magazines distributed by feminist student groups on campus. Because of this lack of formal feminist education, Sukyoung also said, “A number of feminists actually objected to [the Slut Walk] because we did not have enough background in feminist theory. We were amateurs.” However, she also asserted, “We were proud to be amateurs, or ‘wannabe feminists.’” Regardless of their lack of a formal women's studies curriculum, Sukyoung and the other organizers of the Slut Walk had found a way to peacefully display their outrage at the recent cases of punishing women for being the victims of sexual crimes.

the future, I plan to continue working as an advocate for victims of sexual and domestic violence through state government or a nonprofit agency. A PhD or JD may also be in my future, but not anytime soon.

KAREN WOLF, Class of 2003. Double major in Computer Science and Women's Studies

I did a short stint with the Feminist Majority Foundation (2004-2005). I finished my M.A. in Women and Gender Studies at George Mason University in 2010. I'm currently working in student affairs at Mason, mostly doing websites, but that means I get to work with the Women's Center and the LGBTQ Resources Office, along with other offices. It's a great, feminist-friendly workplace! I live in Falls Church, and I'm still close with several of my WM friends.

Voices of current Women's Studies students.

### WHY AM I A WOMEN'S STUDIES MAJOR OR MINOR?

FAITH BARTON, current Junior, Women's Studies major.

What I've discovered throughout my college career, during class, from professors, from friends, and from fellow students, is the importance of Women's Studies in changing perspective and ways of thinking, about social constructions of not just gender, but basically all social identifying factors, for recognizing patterns of injustice throughout history and between cultures, and the different forms oppression and the activism against it can take. I believe I have begun to build a much more comprehensive understanding of the world, of culture and society, than I had before discovering Women's Studies, and the tools of analysis and feminist theory (of all kinds, from all walks of life) I am learning continue that process.

MIRA NAIR, current Senior, Women's Studies major.

My experiences, beliefs, and a desire for new understandings of the world around me drew me to Women's Studies. My mother raised me as a feminist, and throughout my life I have been told by just being myself I was breaking social norms and not acting or thinking like how a woman should. In the Women's Studies classroom students are trained to see the familiar in a wholly different light. I found from the start of my studies that there are many rewards, both academic and personal, to being a Women's Studies major. The friendship and support I have found among faculty and students in Women's Studies is invaluable. The interdisciplinary nature of the program has allowed me to take courses across History, English, Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics, Environmental Science, and many others. The rigor, topical depth, and interdisciplinary breadth of a Women's Studies education has equipped me with writing and analytical skills that will behoove me in whatever post-graduation career path I may embark on.

JENIKA MCCRAY, current Junior, Women's Studies major

I am a junior at the college and I recently switched from being a Biology major to a Women's Studies major. I felt that with this particular major I would have more career choices that would allow me to help people directly. I'm very much into volunteering and community service (as I am also a member of Alpha Phi Omega-- the service fraternity on campus) and I felt that by learning more about gender, race, class and society would allow me to empathize and help people in the future, and I felt that there are limited careers in the Biology field that helps people directly other than being a doctor.

VALERIE THIBEAULT, current Junior, Women's Studies major.

When I came to the College in 2009 I was very set on being an English and Environmental Policy double major. English classes proved to be the same old same old, and I was very pleasantly surprised when I took Intro to Women's Studies in the spring at how refreshing and enjoyable the class was. Women's Studies presents new perspectives on what it means to be female, male, asexual, lesbian, gay, gender queer, every conceivable way to express yourself, and also ways to interpret how people portray themselves in society, and how society responds to it. I love Women's Studies because it challenges you to both think outside of your comfort zone and look more deeply into yourself. Women's Studies offers a kind of consciousness and acceptance that I would love to see more of.



2011 Women's Studies Homecoming reception



Course Spotlight  
INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES

Editor Mira Nair sat down with Women's Studies 205: Introduction to Women's Studies coordinator Professor Victoria Castillo to talk about the course.

Could you give an introduction to the design and purpose of Introduction to Women's Studies?

WMST 205 is the introductory course in women's studies that all women's studies majors are required to take, but it is also a course that many non-majors enjoy as well, even if they have never studied anything on women, gender, and sexuality. And although the title of the course might suggest that it is only for women, many men have also taken the course and other women's studies classes. And, indeed, we encourage it since women's studies also examines issues of gender (which includes masculinity and men) and sexuality. As far as the format of the course, WMST 205 has small seminar-style classes that are capped at 17 students, which is unlike many other introductory courses that have large lecture classes. There are usually around 6 sections of 205 every spring. These seminar-style classes reflect the type of course that 205 is--one that encourages discussion and introspection on the readings and topics. We also have regular forums many Tuesday evenings during the semester (which is why 205 is a 4-credit course), where we bring together all the sections of 205 into a larger class to watch a film or invite guest speakers to discuss issues relevant to women, gender, and sexuality studies. Another element of the course is that we tend to emphasize the role of activism. Instead of taking a final exam, students propose and design a Community Action Project (CAP) on campus. Finally, in WMST 205, we stress the importance of cross-cultural analysis and look at the many differences among women in the context of the U.S. as well as internationally.

What are CAP projects and what makes them so unique?

Activism has historically been a significant part of women's studies and the feminist movement in the U.S. and international contexts, and so faculty in women's studies designed the Community Action Project assignment to reflect this history. The CAPs give students the opportunity to engage in the design and implementation of an activist project on the William and Mary campus or in the Williamsburg community. For example, some groups have produced documentaries or magazines on women's studies issues, another group worked with the bookstore to encourage them to provide W&M col-

lege clothing that is not made from sweatshop labor. Some of these projects may seem like a lot of work initially, and it certainly can be, but most students seem to enjoy this unique experience. Moreover, the 205 instructors are conscientious about the workload and so often devote class time or forum time to work on the CAPs.

Who are Mellon Fellows?

Women's Studies majors who are usually juniors or seniors. One Mellon Fellow is assigned to each section of 205 and is in charge of helping students to formulate their activist proposals, give students recommendations for resources, and help coordinate the implementation of the CAPs. It's a wonderful opportunity for Women's Studies majors to mentor and work with other students on a collaborative project. Moreover, they are incredibly helpful to the 205 instructors, because they tend to know more about resources on campus and many have participated in a variety of organizations and activist groups. For their work, the Mellon Fellows are given a small stipend.

What are the benefits of taking Intro to WMST for students not planning on a WMST major or minor?

The most practical reason is that it fulfills the GER4C requirement, which is the cross-cultural issues requirement. Another benefit is that is filled with interesting and passionate students. Also, taking the course is beneficial because it provides skills that can be applied in other disciplines. In fact, many disciplines such as English, government, psychology, sociology, and even the natural sciences have been influenced by women's studies and its analysis of gender and sexuality. The intro course encourages students to ask new questions within the traditional disciplines and across disciplines. For example, what happens if you use a gender perspective to analyze the international economy, rather than just assume that the economy affects men and women in the same way? It opens up new areas of enquiry that potentially lead to the formation of new knowledge about a particular issue. In college, students are not solely taught to memorize facts about what has been learned before by other scholars, hopefully students learn to ask unique questions and formulate new ideas or areas of investigation. The university is not a place of stagnant knowledge; we are constantly learning new things and rethinking how we understood ideas in the past.



Professor Victoria Castillo

A sample of past COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECTS

- “Ninety Years of Women at William & Mary:” a lecture/fundraiser to raise money for a memorial to the fresh-women of 1918
- IF Fund: For feminist student events on campus
- The MANual: A 'zine with student contributions (writing and images) about male sexuality and masculinity (a companion publication to LIPS)
- Beauty, Actually: Promoted a positive body image through discussing and analyzing the media's effect on how we perceive beauty and body image.

Women's Studies  
SPRING 2012 COURSES

WMST 150W.01 FRSM: AMERICAN WOMEN'S DIARIES

WMST 205 INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES (6 Sections)

WMST 290.01 SEXUALITY IN AMERICA

WMST 290.02 GENDER AND IMMIGRATION IN IRISH LITERATURE AND FILM

WMST 305.01 INDIAN WOMEN ACTIVISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS

WMST 312.01/2 COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY:  
SOCIETIES AND COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN TRADITION

WMST 317.01 WOMEN IN ISLAM

WMST 304.01 GENDER AND SOCIETY

WMST 380.01 RHYMES WITH WITCH:  
SEXUAL POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

WMST 390.01 GODS AND GODDESSES

WMST 390.02 WILLIAM FAULKNER

WMST 390.03 WOMEN IN AFRICA & THE DIASPORA:  
COLLECTIVE AGENCY AND ACTION

WMST 390.04 VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES:  
RACE, GENDER, AND THE AMERICAN WAY

WMST 390.05 THE NUDE IN AMERICAN ART AND SOCIETY

WMST 390A.02 DIVORCE-VICTORIAN& EDWARDIAN NOVEL

WMST 405.01 FEMINIST THEORY

WMST 416.01 LITERATURE AND THE FORMATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

WMST 490.02 POWER AND INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

WMST 490.03 FAMILIES AND KINSHIP

WMST 490.05 RACE, CLASS, GENDER IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

WMST 490.06 IMAGING THE AMERICAN WOMAN

Putzi, J

Autumn, B

Mann, K.

Castillo, V.

Prokhorov, A

Gable, N.

Meyer, L

Burns, C.

Fowler, M

Ozyegin, G.

Sonn, M.

Freeman, M

Gray, N.

Gupta, R.

Donaldson, S.

Sanford, M.

Smith, M.

Gerhold, E.

Raitt, S.

Castillo, V.

Heacox, Tw

Hanley, C.

Sun, K.

Ritcher, C.

Gerhold, E



2011 Women's Studies Homecoming reception



Brownbaggin' it with Prof. Davis



Brownbaggin' it with Prof. Preston



WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM  
COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY  
P.O. BOX 8795  
WILLIAMSBURG, VA 23187-8795



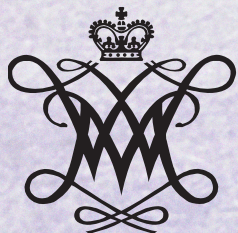
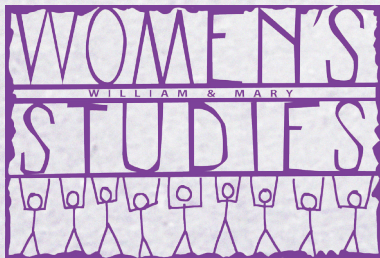
## MARY & WILLIAM NEWSLETTER

*Editor*

Mira Nair '12

*Director of Women's Studies*

Gul Ozyegin



William & Mary

## GIVE TO WOMEN'S STUDIES

Your contribution to the Women's Studies Program will help our faculty members provide the best learning experience to our students. You can contribute online with your credit card, using our secure web server at: <http://www.wm.edu/as/womensstudies/support/index.php> The contribution form will be pre-selected to direct your gift to the general academic fund for the Women's Studies Program, which supports student and faculty needs directly.

To contribute by mail, make your check payable to The College of William and Mary Foundation. Please be sure in your check's memo area to note how you are designating your gift to Women's Studies.

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