

Fall 2023

WGS News

Women's and Gender Studies Department at UMass Dartmouth Newsletter



What Is WGS?

Women's and Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that fosters active analysis of how gender (together with race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, ability) affects our lives. WGS draws upon anthropology, art history, crime and justice studies, economics, history, literature, philosophy, political science, sociology, and the visual arts. WGS students reflect on how gender structures societies past and present and how it affects people at the individual and group levels; they study the historical factors that have shaped the status of women from varying backgrounds and countries; and they explore paths to achieve equality for all people.

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Teresa Vojack, WGS Major, Class of 2025



After an almost 30-year hiatus in my academic career, I made the decision to go back to school and finish what I started!

Many have asked me, "Why come back now?", and the answer was simple, I am doing this for me. The second question I get is how one goes from studying business/law and ends up as a Women's and Gender Studies major 30 years later. The answer is a little more complex.

I have been in the business field for many years running companies. I have been the owner of a telecom construction company and currently own my own consulting company where I offer services to other companies related to administrative management. I personally felt that going back to school to take more courses in business, law, or management would be rather redundant at this juncture in my life. It

might have been easier, but it wasn't what I really wanted to do.

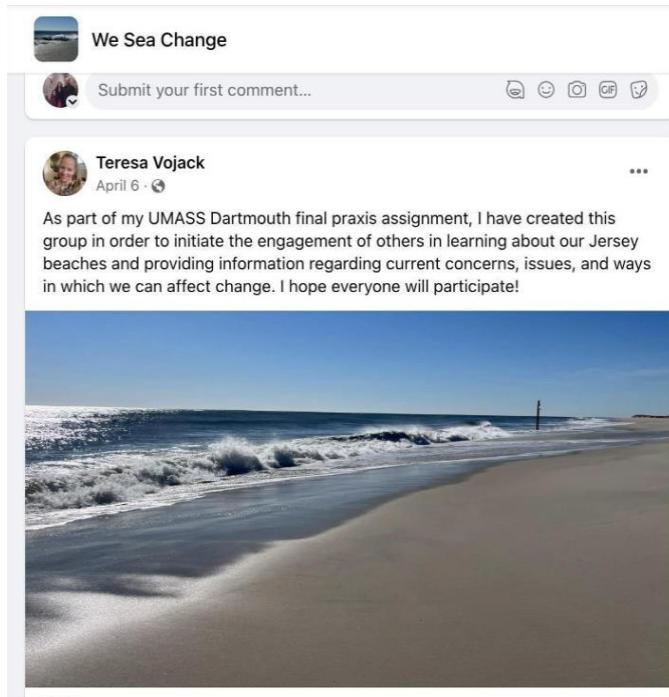
So, I asked myself, what is something I am passionate about? What is something that I really want to learn more about?

In 2020, during covid and amidst the presidential election, I found that social media had become extremely toxic! I could not find a safe or peaceful place... In order to get away from it all, I decided to create a group for women on Facebook. A group free from politics wherein we could share supportive and positive information, insight, and support. The more I delved into this, the more I realized how much I enjoyed sharing in this collective group where we shared a voice of understanding and perspective. I wanted to learn more about women and gender in general so that I could educate myself more. I began reading books (via author Elizabeth Gilbert's group) written solely by Black female authors. Many were biographical. I was astounded at the level of social consciousness that these books exhibited. I was embarrassed by my own lack of awareness. I couldn't stop soaking up their stories and listening to their experiences as they related to a plethora of areas involving social justice. I understood there was much to learn through authors such as Tarana Burke, Iyanla Vanzant, Ashley C. Ford, Brit Bennett, Abi Dare, Luvie Ajayi Jones, Yaba Blay, Michelle Zauner, and Min Jin Lee, to name a few. I decided to take a free online course through Harvard about women in history as seen through the stories associated with artifacts. I loved it! That is when I knew what I wanted to do!

After searching around, I found UMass Dartmouth's online program for Women's and Gender Studies. I was thrilled! I had no idea the journey that this would lead me on and the doors it would blow open. Working with such distinguished

professors has been an incredible experience. The community of online students encompasses a beautiful array of knowledge, backgrounds, and experiences. It is nothing short of exceptional.

One of the most eye-opening moments for me, as a person and as a student, was examining my own preconceived notions and my place in terms of understanding others. Excavating who I was and what that means in terms of my location to others. It reminded me of that moment in fourth grade when I got my first pair of glasses and suddenly my vision changed dramatically as things were now in focus.



We Sea Change

Submit your first comment...

Teresa Vojack April 6 · 

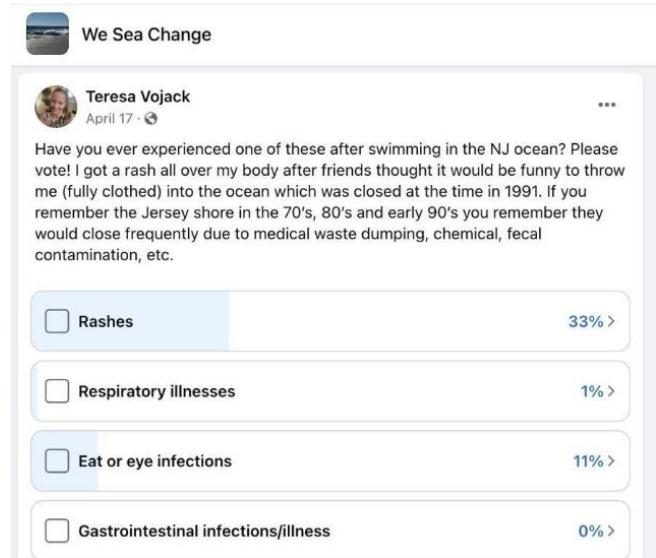
As part of my UMASS Dartmouth final praxis assignment, I have created this group in order to initiate the engagement of others in learning about our Jersey beaches and providing information regarding current concerns, issues, and ways in which we can affect change. I hope everyone will participate!



I had Professor Arruda for my first two classes, and I can say without hesitation that she helped lay a strong foundation for the major and the many topics of study within the major. Exposure to great minds such as bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Beverly Tatum, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, and Kimberlé Crenshaw (and the list goes on) was inspiring.

In my Ecofeminism class, with Professor Gardner, we designed our own blogs. Each week we posted

our responses to topics to our blog and were able to explore enhancing our writing with linking images, videos, and other resources. I especially enjoyed the project where we got to create and implement our own activism in action.



We Sea Change

Teresa Vojack April 17 · 

Have you ever experienced one of these after swimming in the NJ ocean? Please vote! I got a rash all over my body after friends thought it would be funny to throw me (fully clothed) into the ocean which was closed at the time in 1991. If you remember the Jersey shore in the 70's, 80's and early 90's you remember they would close frequently due to medical waste dumping, chemical, fecal contamination, etc.

Option	Percentage
Rashes	33% >
Respiratory illnesses	1% >
Eat or eye infections	11% >
Gastrointestinal infections/illness	0% >

I created a Facebook group called “We Sea Change” where I focused on the beaches of New Jersey (where I live) and the environmental issues impacting the shorelines as a result of climate change. The group was interactive, with prompts and polls designed to engage others while educating them about various topics. I have kept the group active to this day and still use it to post about ongoing issues and beach cleanup events.

We Sea Change

Teresa Vojack April 10 · [...](#)

Poll Question #1: What are the primary coastal hazards that lead to loss of life and damage of property and infrastructure on the jersey shore? (I will post the answer tonight.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Beach Erosion	5% >
<input type="checkbox"/> Flooding	1% >
<input type="checkbox"/> Storms	0% >
<input type="checkbox"/> All Of The Above	94% >
Add poll option...	

As I continue down my WGS path I want to add that this is a very personal journey for me. As the mother of two LGBTQIA adult children, I feel a certain responsibility to myself and to those around me to become not just informed, but to garner the skills necessary to articulate truth to power, to sharpen my listening skills so that others are heard, and to serve as a support when advocating for others. This course of study has changed my life so much that I am actually contemplating a career change when I am finished. I turned fifty this year, and if I can share anything with the younger minds of today it is this: It is never too late to start something new.

Korey Pimental, WGS Minor, Class of 2015



Development at the Chicago Opera Theater. I am currently serving as their Development Manager where I'm doing grant management, donor relations, and corporate sponsorship.

My WGS minor gave me a great lens to talk about the arts in public space as well as nonprofits in general. In addition, I was given a language to talk about equity, diversity, and inclusion.

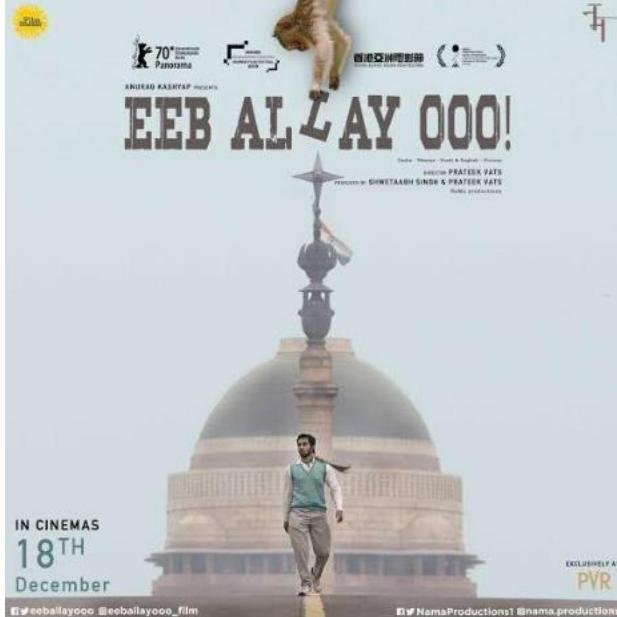
Outside of that, I'm also a professional actor, theatre director, and producer. Much of what I work on as a director/producer comes from an intersectional lens. I am particularly invested in viewing Shakespearean text as intersectional in production and excavating what this dead man's words mean in 2023. I also freelance as a disability and accessibility consultant.

Faculty

Professor Anupama Arora, English and Women's and Gender Studies

Professor Anupama Arora co-authored the article, “[Of Women, Gay Men, and Dead Cats: The Precarity of Neoliberal Aspirations in Made in Heaven \(2019\)](#),” Critical South Asian Studies (August 2023). The article examines the gendered and class dimensions of neoliberal precarity as depicted in season one of the hugely popular and acclaimed nine-episode web series, [Made in Heaven](#), which premiered on Amazon Prime Video in 2019. She also presented her work at two conferences in October 2023. At the [Northeast Popular Culture Association's \(NEPCA\)](#) conference, she presented a paper titled, "The Precarity of Neoliberal Aspirations in Eeb Allay Ooo!" The paper examined the independent film [Eeb Allay Ooo!](#) (2019). The film's onomatopoeic title refers to the guttural calls made by men hired to repel monkeys by mimicking the sounds of a langur (a large monkey with a black face framed by white fur), which scare away rhesus monkeys who have overtaken residential neighborhoods in New Delhi, India. The paper examined how the film allows for an investigation into the enmeshment between neoliberalism, Hindu nationalism, and masculinity. At the 51st Annual [Conference on South Asia](#) in Madison, Wisconsin, she co-organized, and presented her paper on, a round-table panel discussion titled, "Shah Rukh Khan, Stardom, and Neoliberal Politics in Contemporary India."





Professor Aneesa A. Baboolal, Crime and Justice Studies

Assistant Professor in the [Department of Crime and Justice Studies](#) at UMassDartmouth, Dr. Baboolal's research interests include gender-based violence across intersecting identities, including race/ethnicity and immigrant and religious minority status.

Baboolal, A. A. (2023). "Undercover and Uncovered: [Muslim Women's](#)

Res
istance to Islamophobic Violence" in [Victims & Offenders](#).

Baboolal, A. A. (2023). "Gender-Based Violence in the English-speaking Caribbean" in D. S.



Peterson, J. A. Shroeder & D. Zhang (eds.), *International Responses to Gender-Based Domestic Violence: Gender-Specific & Sociocultural Approaches* (Routledge).

Professor Catherine Villanueva Gardner, Women's and Gender Studies and Philosophy



Professor Catherine V. Gardner was awarded a UMassD Open Education Resource (OER) grant to create an OER textbook for [WGS 101: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies](#). A WGS OER textbook reflects our department's commitment to educational equity by offering free access to course content. It also allows for the updating of information and content in the rapidly changing field of Women's and Gender Studies.

Forthcoming publication: "Love in the Time of Post-Punk." In Joshua Heter and Richard Greene, eds. *Post-Punk and Philosophy*. Carus Books.

Professor Pamela Karimi, Art History, CVPA

In September 2023, the [Deedee Shattuck Gallery](#) hosted an exhibition marking the first anniversary of Iran's "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising. This distinctive display featured the works of a brave activist artist based in Tehran, Meysam Azarzad, who has endured time in the infamous Evin political prison. Professor Pamela Karimi (Art History, CVPA) curated this exhibition, along with alumna Merri Cyr (MFA, CVPA '19). This exhibition was made possible through a grant from the Westport Cultural Council's Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust Grant.



For more information:

- ["Woman Life Freedom" CVPA News](#)
- Show Review in [Hyperallergic](#)

- [Echoes of a Rebellion: Meysam Azarzad's Visual Chronicle of the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' Uprising](#)
- [Pamela Karimi Discusses Meysam Azarzad's Visual Chronicle of the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' Uprising in Iran.](#)

Professor Anna M. Klobucka, Portuguese and Women's and Gender Studies

Prof. Anna M. Klobucka was the recipient of a Research and Professional Development grant from the College of Arts and Sciences for archival research in the Azores in June 2023. Prof. Klobucka spent several weeks in Ponta Delgada, on the island of São Miguel, researching the life and works of [Alice Moderno](#) (1867-1946), a feminist and animal rights activist and multifaceted professional pioneer, as well as an open lesbian whose life partnership with educator [Maria Evelina de Sousa](#) (1879-1946) was of profound significance to both women's public careers. Accessing primary- source materials in Azorean collections allowed Prof. Klobucka to compile an extensive record of Moderno's activities – such as the complete run of the newspaper A Folha (1902-1917) Moderno singlehandedly founded and edited – which she aims to integrate in her book-length study in progress, [Among Women: Cultural Agency, Sociability, and Sexuality on the Margins of Portuguese Modernism](#).



Events

Queer Scholars Speaker Series 2023-24

WGS co-sponsored the "Queer Scholars Speaker Series 2023-24" with the Center for Women, Gender, and Sexuality (CWGS). The series invites the campus community to hear more about research about queer subjects, and/or from queer scholars. This program is part of CWGS's LGBTQIA+ History Month programming. The series featured four speakers on the following topics:

[Kaden Paulson-Smith, Assistant Teaching Professor of Crime & Justice Studies, "Uprooting Colonial Legacies: 'The World's Harshest Anti-Gay Laws'"](#)

In May 2023, Uganda was condemned internationally for passing "one of the world's harshest anti-gay laws," which has intensified the vilification of and violence against queer and trans people throughout the country. What is missing from global media coverage and politicians' statements, however, are calls to hold the British Empire accountable for originally writing Uganda's penal code and most of the world's 65 anti-gay laws still on the books today. Many activists have given their lives to transform this legal landscape, leading to victories like the world's first constitutional

amendment prohibiting discrimination based on gender and sexuality in South Africa. More research aims to support movements to uproot these colonial legacies, and to challenge global campaigns that seek to preserve them, such as those backed by U.S. right-wing evangelical groups that were uncovered the last time Uganda worsened its legislation against queerness a decade ago. My presentation discusses how the British first criminalized, policed, and punished what they perceived as “unnatural offenses” in Tanzania (next door to Uganda). Using buried archival records, I trace the development and contestation of British colonial policing, which aimed to establish a social order based on white cis heteronormative values. Connections between past and present policing not only point to continued decolonization as a path toward queer liberation, but these continuities might also demand more broadly challenging the carceral capitalist state.

Melissa Wilkinson, Assistant Teaching Professor of Art, "The Representation of the Body in Painting and Queer Context"

As a studio artist and painter, my research focus is the traditional studio production of objects. My current practice focuses on the queered body as appropriated from antiquated gender performance. In my presentation, I discuss the evolution and historical contextualization of the queer body in painting. Using my own work as well as the art historical canon to draw from, I examine the conundrums facing figurative painters today as well as discussed the process from conception to design and execution of my own creative research as an openly lesbian artist. More specifically, I address the weighing question of the “feminine gaze” and personal motivations while investigating questions of desire in portraiture today.

Nicholas Santavicca, Associate Professor of English and Communication, “Queer Approaches to the Classroom: Students as Educators & Educators as Students”

This presentation combats the reasons society does not see LGBTQ representation in classroom spaces and offers “queered” pedagogical approaches for teaching students from diverse backgrounds. My research places value on every educator and student through prioritizing inclusivity. Qualitative narratives carefully articulate what (queer) inclusivity is, why it matters for all educators, students, and administrators, and what can happen when inclusive environments are not created and/or sustained.

When prompted to think about marginalized educators and students, most literature and research focuses on federal/state laws and instances of bullying. My research is farther reaching and provides (queered) solutions for queer individuals’ needs and challenges. We addressed the ability of the LGBTQ community to see themselves represented in the curriculum of schools, discussed in the language of society, and valued in all discourse settings. In addition, we used queerness as a lens through which to reimagine classroom spaces and institutions of higher learning.

Shannon Avery-Desmarais, Assistant Professor of Nursing, "Nursing During the Pandemic: The Role of Stress, Social Support and Resilience on the Mental Health of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ Nurses"

Purpose: The quantitative study sought to explore the role of stress, social support and resilience on anxiety and depression in a sample of lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) nurses and non-LGBTQ nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. While anxiety and depression are more prevalent in the LGBTQ community, little

is known about this disparity in LGBTQ-identified nurses.

Methods: A national, convenience sample of 2967 self-identified non-LGBTQ and LGBTQ nurses completed an online survey in October 2020. Levels of anxiety and depression, workplace stress, resilience and social support were compared between the LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ nurses using independent sample t-tests. Standard multiple regression used data from LGBTQ nurses with minority stress (MS), workplace stress, resilience and social support as independent variables and anxiety and depression as dependent variables.

Results: The incidence of anxiety and depression was significantly higher in the population of LGBTQ than in non-LGBTQ nurses. Work-related stress and social support were similar in both groups. However, LGBTQ nurses had significantly lower levels of resilience and reported moderate levels of minority stress. MS was responsible for a markedly higher percentage of variability in anxiety and depression than other independent variables.

Conclusion: Anxiety, depression and inadequate resilience can all lead to nurse burnout. This has negative implications for the nursing shortage as well as the diversity of the nursing workforce. This research is a call to action for healthcare institutions to identify and combat MS as well as provide mental health wellness initiatives for all nurses--especially those who identify as LGBTQ.



QUEER SPEAKER SERIES 2023-24

12:00-
1:00 PM

CAMPUS
CENTER
ROOM
207

Center for Women,
Gender & Sexuality

UMass Dartmouth
207 MacLean Campus Center | @umassd_cw

Oct 4	Kaden Paulson-Smith Assistant Teaching Professor of Crime & Justice Studies "Uprooting Colonial Legacies: The World's Harshest Anti-Gay Laws"
Oct 11	Melissa Wilkinson Assistant Teaching Professor of Art "The Representation of the Body in Painting and Queer Context"
Oct 18	Nicholas Santavicca Associate Professor of English & Communication "Queer Approaches to the Classroom: Students as Educators & Educators as Students"
Oct 23	Shannon Avery-Desmarais Assistant Professor of Nursing "Nursing During the Pandemic: The Role of Stress, Social Support and Resilience on the Mental Health of LGBTQ and non- LGBTQ Nurses " Lunch will be served cwgs@umassd.edu Co-Sponsored by Women's & Gender Studies



Journal of Feminist Scholarship

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

JOURNAL OF FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP

The *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* is a twice-yearly, peer-reviewed, open-access journal published online and aimed at promoting feminist scholarship across the disciplines, as well as expanding the reach and definitions of feminist research. [»](#)

Currently, *JFS* is published through a collaborative feminist and institutional relationship between the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and the University of Rhode Island.

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM OF THE *JOURNAL OF FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP*



Anupama Arora



Jeannette E. Riley



Anna M. Klobucka [»](#)



Erin K. Kraft



Heather M. Turcotte



Jessica Frazier

From its inception, *JFS* has been committed to a mission to disseminate peer reviewed feminist interdisciplinary scholarship across the social sciences and humanities at no cost to authors or readers. The journal has always maintained a commitment to open-access publication, academic rigor, and political relevance, as well as privileging transnational, intersectional, and interdisciplinary orientations.

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Spring Course Offerings



In-Person & Blended Courses

- WGS 101-01B/02B Intro to Women's and Gender Studies. Professor Catherine Gardner (Blended)
- WGS 101-03 Intro to Women's and Gender Studies. Professor Elisabeth Arruda
- WGS 270-01 Latin American Civilization. Professor Cristina Mehrtens
- WGS 300-1/02 Topics in WGS: Abolitionism
 - Section 01 Professor Kaden Paulson Smit
 - Section 02 Professor Viviane Saleh-Hanna
- WGS 300-04 Topics: Intersectional Criminology. Professor Toniqua Mikell
- WGS 300-05B Topics in WGS: Race, Gender, & Biomedicine. Professor Kristen McHenry (Blended)
- WGS 300-06 Topics: Sex, Gender, & the History of Early Modern Medicine in Europe. Professor Stephanie O'Hara
- WGS 304-01 Fourth-Wave Feminism. Professor Stephanie O'Hara
- WGS 337-01 Reproductive Rights & Health. Professor Heidi Berggren
- WGS 349-01 Gender & Sexuality in Bollywood Films. Professor Anupama Arora
- WGS 499-01 WGS Capstone. Professor Stephanie O'Hara

Online Courses

- WGS 101-7101 Intro to Women's and Gender Studies. Professor Elisabeth Arruda
- WGS 304-7101 Fourth-Wave Feminism. Professor Catherine Gardner
- WGS 325-7101 Sex, Marriage, & Family. Professor Karen Straight
- WGS 332-7101 Sex Roles & Politics. Professor Heidi Berggren
- WGS 363-7101 Gender & Occupations across Cultures. Professor Cristina Mehrtens
- WGS 499-7101 WGS Capstone. Professor Stephanie O'Hara

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