



# WGS News: 2023 (Spring)

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# Students

## Kayla Rausch, WGS Minor

I decided to pursue a minor in Women's and Gender Studies to complement my Art History major and to delve further into my passion for studies of feminism and intersectionality. My area of personal interest focuses on gender in modern and contemporary art, and having this minor will serve as an extension of what I have learned in my art history classes. This combined knowledge will help me to develop a more focused narrative of the lives and roles of women in art, whether they are the subjects of artwork or the artists themselves. Moreover, the minor has allowed me to utilize relevant and practical concepts gleaned from class discussions and readings and apply them to understanding prevailing current issues and real-world situations.

The courses I have taken in the Women's and Gender Studies program have greatly ranged in content, which has provided me with extensive knowledge in a variety of subjects pertaining to women and gender in both historical and contemporary contexts, from theory and criticism to practical application. Many of my upper-level Women's and Gender Studies classes were cross-listed with different programs, including History, Philosophy, Crime and Justice Studies, and Portuguese. The material covered in these classes has overlapped in some regard, particularly in addressing the importance of elevating the voices of women and marginalized groups and raising awareness of their struggles. Each class was uniquely valuable and often expanded upon prevalent themes discussed in other courses. My two foundations courses were of utmost importance in establishing a foundation upon which broad information and an introduction to feminist theories can be situated. These courses prepared me well for the more specific and focused subjects to come in the upper-level courses I am currently taking. Many of these courses contain a practical component in which we apply what we have learned either toward a project designed to promote public awareness,



through presentation or a community-engaging activity, or toward a project designed to be undertaken individually, through writing or a praxis assignment, that demonstrates what we have taken away from the core concepts that have been covered both throughout the semester and collectively from related courses with overlapping themes.

After graduation, I hope to continue my studies in the field, either through formal education or simply as a personal research endeavor that I can use in conjunction with my art history background. Particularly, I intend to further study Western material culture through the lens of feminist theory and apply an intersectional approach to the interpretation of art and societal context to better understand the role that women and marginalized people have played in canonical art history and how these roles are deciphered within current art discourses.

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*The Women's and Gender Studies minor has provided me with the skills to blend key concepts and theory with practical experience that can result in an individual and more far-reaching impact as we strive to examine lived experiences and current events faced by women and communities who endure disadvantages through a wide-encompassing and intersectional approach that is outside of the traditional and dominant androcentric perspective.*

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## Zoe Lellios, WGS Major (and CJS major)

I have had the privilege of working as an intern with the *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* (JFS) for two semesters. Founded at UMass Dartmouth in 2011, JFS is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, open-access journal aimed at promoting feminist scholarship across the disciplines. As a JFS intern, I have received invaluable mentorship and professional development experience. My editorial and communication skills have grown a lot. My responsibilities have been multi-directional and have included managing media content, as well as editing, proofing, and formatting articles for publication.

My biggest achievement has been the creation and management of the Instagram account for JFS, @journaloffeministscholarship. Through weekly meetings, Professor Anupama Arora, the co-executive editor of the journal, guided and mentored me to survey other prominent journals that publish feminist and women's and gender studies scholarship, study their social media presence and research the strategies they use to attract and reach more readership. In addition, to create posts for JFS, I have been familiarizing myself with feminist scholarship that the journal has published over a decade, which has also helped me with academic work in my classes. I have been creating 1-2 weekly posts with accompanying captions and hashtags that reflect and publicize the content of the journal in an effective and visually engaging manner.



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*As a double major in WGS and CJS, I hope to go to graduate school and pursue a future career in domestic-violence advocacy and abolition advocacy, and this internship has been a very fulfilling opportunity to gain new skills, learn to communicate with a wide range of audiences, and build my resume.*

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# Rose Costa, Major in Women's & Gender Studies and minors in Portuguese and Sociology.

## "My GroundingScape is My Therapy"

Terry Tempest Williams' words in her book *Red* remind us that our surroundings shape who we are and influence the way we behave and interact with the world around us. She writes, "Each of us belongs to a particular landscape, one that informs who we are, a place that carries our history, our dreams, holds us to a moral line of behavior that transcends thought" (19). For me, this landscape is wherever I can immerse myself in the essence of who I am and feel grounded, whether that be in the hiking trails of Rio, backyard vegetable and flowerbeds, or on my deck surrounded by container gardens and potted plants.



Growing up in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, I was fortunate to have a childhood surrounded by the city's natural beauty. The warm climate, sandy beaches, and abundant fauna and flora provided endless opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the outdoors. The sounds of wildlife such as the mico monkey, swallows, and other small animals filled the air, and gave me the chance to listen and observe these amazing creatures up close. I learned from an early age to respect and appreciate nature and its sounds, as well as the wilderness and its quietude. The wildflowers that grew around me added even more beauty to the already stunning landscape, and I learned about the different types of plants and their uses.

My family has a rich history rooted in agriculture and farming. My grandparents owned a small farmland in Viseu, Portugal, and my father and his brothers grew up working the fields with my grandfather, planting and harvesting their food. As bell hooks writes in *Touching the Earth*, "the land belonged to everyone ... we are part of the Earth and it is part of us" (364). This deep connection to the land and the satisfaction of providing for oneself passed down to my siblings and me – along with the gift of a "green thumb" – and is a fundamental part of who we are, our identity, and our values.

As an adult, I moved around frequently with the military and was allowed only a few houseplants. Once I returned to civilian life, I was happiest when living in Westport, MA. It was there that I felt closest to the earth that created me, and it was there that the land became my groundingscape and my therapy. The soil in my hands and under my fingernails, and the constantly dirt-stained knees of my pants offered me the peace I needed to feel connected to my roots, to my beloved parents, and to their legacy. Whether planting my vegetable gardens and flower beds or caring for my indoor plants, there was a constant exchange between the Earth and me. I gave it the nourishment and respect it deserves, and it gave me the grounding peace I needed. I cherished the land, my land, and felt immense gratitude for our Earth for the life-giving soil and the abundance it provided me. Even now, living in a condo in the city, I still replicate, on a much smaller scale, that which connects me to the earth, which gives me peace and brings me true happiness.



This deep connection to the land and nature brings my life a sense of fulfillment and purpose. By continuing to honor and appreciate the gifts of the earth, my bedrock of democracy bears my history and, in many ways, a part of my legacy as a nurturer of all living things, preserving the natural world for future generations.

It is important to remember that we are not separate from nature, but rather an integral part of it. The landscapes in which we reside shape us in countless ways, and it is our responsibility to honor and respect them. We must recognize that our actions have consequences and that we must take steps to ensure that our use of natural resources is sustainable and responsible; otherwise, we might disappear along with our landscape. By reducing our carbon footprint, supporting renewable energy, and engaging in conservation efforts, we can help to mitigate the negative effects of human activity on the environment.



In Rio de Janeiro and beyond, it is crucial that we remember that we are not separate from nature, but rather an integral part of it. By honoring and respecting the landscapes in which we reside, we can ensure that they continue to inform and inspire us for generations to come. Only then can we truly appreciate the beauty and wonder of the world around us, and work to protect it for future generations.

#### Works Cited

hooks, bell. "Touching The Earth." *Orion Magazine*, 1996, <https://orionmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/bellhooksarticle.pdf>.

Williams, Terry Tempest. "Home Work." *Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert*, Vintage Books, New York , NY, 2002, pp. 3-19.



# Alumni Stories

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## WGS Alumni Stories

"WGS prepared me to work with and support peoples of all backgrounds, as is needed in social work."



**KAZUMI ALMEIDA**

WGS Major, 2020

Graduate Student in Social Work

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

UMass Dartmouth

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## WGS Alumni Stories

"Women's studies helped shape the lens in which I look at the world. I want everyone to be liberated to be themselves and live with love in their hearts."



**SASHA SANDERS**

WGS Minor, 2013

Special Ed Teacher, NYC

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

UMass Dartmouth

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## WGS Alumni Stories

"Feminism impacts everything I do, and to have the academic logic and reasoning behind how I view the world and go about each day is priceless."



**DENISE SHULTZ**

WGS Major, 2011

Chief of Staff, Dewpoint Therapeutics

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

UMass Dartmouth

# Faculty

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



Anupama Arora and Nikki P. Sylvia co-authored a journal article titled "'Just Like Everyone Else:' Queer Representation in Post-millennial Bollywood." This article examines Shelly Chopra Dhar's *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga* (How I Felt When I Saw That Girl, 2019) and Hitesh Kewalya's *Shubh Mangal Zyaada Saavdhan* (Be Extra Wary of Marriage, 2020), the first two popular Hindi-language films on same-sex love that were released after the Supreme Court of India—on September 6, 2018—declared unconstitutional Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the centuries-old law against sodomy. The article is forthcoming in *Feminist Media Studies*, a journal that "provides a

transdisciplinary, transnational forum for researchers pursuing feminist approaches to the field of media and communication studies."

Nikki P. Sylvia is a first-generation college student who graduated with a degree in psychology from UMass Dartmouth, in 2022; she hopes to pursue field experience and a Master's degree in counseling and social work. Anupama Arora is Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at UMass Dartmouth.



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

Professor Catherine Villanueva Gardner's peer-reviewed article, "Utilitarianism," will appear in 2023 in the *Oxford Handbook of American and British Women Philosophers in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Alison Stone and Lydia Moland and published by the Oxford University Press.



## Dr. Elizabeth Lehr, Departments of English & Communication and Women's & Gender Studies

This semester (Spring 2023), I jumped at the chance to teach a UMass Dartmouth course, WGS/PHL 104: Identities: Gender, Race, Sexuality, to a class of high school students at Brockton Public High School as part of the Commonwealth Collegiate Academy (CCA) at UMass Dartmouth. For the sake of the students and their realities, it's particularly apt that WGS be involved in CCA.



From my home, I Zoom in for lectures and direct the students' instruction online. It's been an eye-opening experience, both for the students and for myself. For them, the need to read articles, sometimes scholarly; write brief essays; and schedule time to do coursework outside of class was a surprise. For me, their deep level of interest in the material and their analytical abilities were unexpected. The students are engaged in class discussion about the topics and related issues, and they are asking important questions. As we cover the polemic history and narratives of the ideologies we call sexism, racism, and heterosexism, they are grasping the topics' relevance to their lives and to the systems that control

their lives. Much of the knowledge that we faculty take for granted is new to them.

The question they ask me most frequently is, "How will we make this (sexism, racism, heterosexism) change?" They are taking ownership of building their knowledge about the narratives and how those narratives are used to oppress. These wonderful young people are preparing themselves to take on important roles in society while I have been able to help them prepare to be successful college students. Since this is likely my last teaching gig—my coda to 21 years of teaching—I'm particularly pleased to have experienced this course with these students as my final act of feminist teaching activism.

# Professor Bridget A. Teboh, History and Women's and Gender Studies

## **Media Appearances, Interviews & Invited Talks:**

2023, Morgan State University, The Echono-Wilson Global Leadership Lecture Series. "The Anglophone/Ambazonian Conflict in The Cameroons: Leadership Crisis or an Unfinished Decolonization?" Part 2, at Office of Global Partnerships-Africa, Morgan State University, January 27, 2023.

2022, Morgan State University, The Echono-Wilson Global Leadership Lecture Series. "The Anglophone/Ambazonian Conflict in The Cameroons: Leadership Crisis or an Unfinished Decolonization?" Part 1, at Office of Global Partnerships-Africa, Morgan State Univ. December 8, 2022.

2022, ABC Ambazonia, *UNDAUNTED*. "The Cameroons at War: History, Naming Patterns, and Gender Violence in Ambazonia," at the ABC Amba News Conference, May 16-20, 2022.

Virtual. See links:

[Facebook](#)

Watch from 1:39 minute mark: [Facebook](#)

2022, ABC Ambazonia (ABC Amba TV), *UNDAUNTED*. "Historicity and Legality of the Ambazonian Quest for Freedom," at the ABC Amba News Conference, May 16-20, 2022.

Virtual. Link: [Facebook](#)



## **Conference Presentations (2022-23):**

"Ambazonian Youths on the Move: Wasted Talent, Mobility and Creativity in times of War." 65th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, *African Urbanites: Mobility, Creativity and Challenges*, Philadelphia, PA, Nov. 17-19, 2022.

"Barefoot Soldiers and Restoration Forces of Ambazonia." 21st Africa Conference at the University of Texas at Austin, April 02, 2023.

## **Other Professional Experience:**

2021-present, Board of Directors, Spears *Gender Studies in/on Africa Series*.

2020-present, Editorial Advisory Committee, Spears Book Series, *Spears Studies in African and African Diaspora History*.

2018- present, Series Co-Editor, *Spears History Book Series*.

# Contact Us

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