

# Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies

"Gender studies at Cornell centers on incorporating activism and community engagement with scholarship and analysis, providing the opportunity to intern, volunteer, and engage with feminist issues." Tori Barnes-Brus, Associate Professor, Sociology and Gender Studies

**G**ender, sexuality, and women's studies (GSS) is an interdisciplinary program that emphasizes:

- Intersectionality, which highlights the diversity of human experience and the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, and other social categories.
- Interdisciplinarity, which features the synthesis of theoretical and methodological approaches grounded in multiple disciplines.
- Social justice and feminist perspectives, which facilitate the investigation of power dynamics, oppression, and social change practices across historical and cultural contexts; and the integration of academic approaches, activism, and service.

In addition to a set of core courses, the program includes a wide range of cross-listed courses from disciplines as varied as anthropology, art, classic and modern languages, history, politics, sociology, psychology, and others.

#### ACTIVISM AND OUTREACH

A vital part of our gender, sexuality, and women's studies program is an emphasis on activism and community engagement. Cornell offers many opportunities for feminist social action and involvement in the surrounding community, including internships at places like local domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, anti-violence male coalitions, and organic farms.

#### FEMINIST SYMPOSIUM

To promote research related to gender, sexuality, and women's studies, the GSS program and Third Wave Resource Group co-host a biannual Feminist Symposium. This symposium allows students and professors to present research, projects, and artwork that pertain specifically to feminist and women's issues. The keynote speaker for the 2016 symposium was Taté Walker, a human rights and social justice activist, editor of Native Peoples Magazine, author of the blog "Righting Red," and a Lakota storyteller.

#### BENEFITS OF ONE COURSE AT A TIME

The One Course At A Time curriculum offers the freedom of long class periods and removes other academic priorities for students. Students and faculty take the time to dive in and discuss, challenge, and rethink real-world issues, as well as the personal and political aspects of gender, sexuality, and other related identities.

With One Course At A Time, gender, sexuality, and women's studies majors spend their capstone course engaged in full-time research for an entire block, without interruption from other courses. Students select their own research topics and work closely with faculty advisors to craft an individual project suited to both their topical interest and their post-Cornell aspirations. Recent senior capstone projects have included:

- Research, performance, and analysis of feminism and dance
- Short documentary of college student's perceptions of beauty ideals & body image
- Video and analysis of double-bind representations of women in

## Faculty Bios & Courses

### TORI BARNES-BRUS

*Associate Professor of Sociology*

Teaches courses on inequality, social control, reproduction, media, and gender studies that emphasize social justice and civic engagement through field trips, guest speakers, and assignments that requires students to share their expertise with a public audience. Her research investigates the social construction and implications of pregnancy, birth, and abortion, as well as the commercialization of mothering, womanhood, and women's health. Ph.D., sociology, University of Kansas.

### TYLER CARRINGTON

*Assistant Professor of German Studies and History*

Teaches courses on German culture and gender and sexuality. His recent book explores the history of love in turn-of-the-century Berlin and his new project explores German-American life in the Midwest. Ph.D., history, University of Illinois.

### ERIN DAVIS

*Professor of Sociology*

Explores cultural diversity and social inequalities, focusing on gender, sexualities, bodies, and identities, in her courses and her research. Ph.D., sociology, University of Virginia.

### JOHN GRUBER-MILLER

*Professor of Classical Studies*

His courses on Women in Antiquity and Love and Sexuality in Greece and Rome offer students opportunities to see their own cultural perspectives through others' eyes in a feminist, crosscultural, and historical context. Ph.D., classics, The Ohio State University.

politics

- Poetry and photography exploring gender, identity, and feminism
- Internship at LGBTQ Senior Center that involved development and evaluation of programming advocacy
- Internship with sexual assault advocacy organization that included development of sexual violence prevention educational materials for use on college campus
- Research paper exploring shifting gender ideologies across familial generations
- Research paper investigating menstruation suppression
- Research paper analyzing gendered division of labor and space in South Africa

#### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Gender, sexuality, and women's studies at Cornell is an interdisciplinary program offering both a major and minor. The program includes an introductory course, a core course on social justice, and a capstone project for our majors, as well as a wide variety of cross-listed courses from a wide range of departments. Students also participate in a co-curricular lecture series featuring guest speakers, panel discussions, and documentaries hosted by GSS faculty. Recent topics have included drag king culture, reproductive health, and feminism in the current political era.

Each GSS major develops a planned program of study, drawing from a variety of disciplines with a brief rationale, which is approved by the major advisor and a secondary program advisor from a second division of the college. In consultation with these advisors, students also: (a) select courses and/or contexts in which they will acquire the theoretical and methodological skills to complete a capstone project, and (b) indicates how the proposed course of study provides intersectional, global, and historical perspectives relevant to the study of women, gender, and sexuality.

#### AFTER CORNELL

Graduates of the program have left Cornell with the knowledge and skills to pursue a wide range of careers and graduate studies, including work with victims of domestic violence, a directorship of a campus women's center, and graduate studies in social work, public health, women's history, sociology, and political science. Below are a few profiles that exemplify how former students' careers have evolved over time and enact the priorities associated with the gender,

sexuality, and women's studies program.

**Kate Brogan '18** conducted research on the contradictory media representations of Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential election. She works as a youth advocate at the Harriet Tubman Center, an organization that helps women, men, youth and families who have experienced relationship violence, elder abuse, addiction, sexual exploitation or other forms of trauma in the Twin Cities area.

**Hannah Altman '13** conducted a semester-long Healthy Relationships class at the Iowa Juvenile Home under the Skylark Project with the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence as her senior capstone project. After graduation, Altman worked as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer at the Shelter House Fairweather Lodge, a recovery program for people with mental illness who are seeking community, long-term stable housing, and supported employment. She's now a housing counselor working on homelessness and eviction prevention and rapid rehousing in Bozeman, Montana.

**Liz Bennett '10** completed the Cornell Geiger Fellow in Advocacy, working with community organizations, writing and executing volunteer training and recruitment strategies, and training and running a phone bank. Following graduation she worked for a firm that provides financial planning for individuals with disabilities, and was then employed as a regional organizer and advocate for One Iowa, working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons in Iowa. She now works as a trainer for internet company Big Daddy and was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives for District 65, Cedar Rapids.

**Lena Hann '06** completed her Master of Public Health degree and worked as the education programs coordinator for Planned Parenthood of Illinois. She then worked as the coordinator of the Master of Public Health Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She also served on the board of directors at the Greater Community AIDS project and volunteered with Rape Advocacy Counseling and Education Services. Hann received her Ph.D. in Community Health and Gender and Women's Studies and is assistant professor of Public Health at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Hann shared her research on reproductive health practices with students in two classes that count toward the GSS major.

#### MICHELLE HERDER

*Associate Professor of History*

Serves as co-chair for GSS in 2018-2019. Her research explores gender, women, and religion in medieval and early modern Europe, with broader teaching interests in the history of women and gender. Ph.D., history, Yale University.

#### CHRISTINA PENN-GOETSCH

*Professor of Art History*

Much of her research focuses on gender studies. She recently wrote the definition for "Feminist Art" for The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies. Ph.D., art history, University of Iowa.

#### MISHA QUILL

*Assistant Professor of Anthropology*

Researches and teaches on human rights, humanitarianism, gender, justice, medical anthropology, and religious practice. Ph.D., cultural anthropology, University of Iowa. Graduate Certificate in gender, women's and sexuality studies, University of Iowa.

#### APARNA THOMAS

*Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies*

With a joint appointment in the department of politics and the gender, sexuality, and women's studies program, her courses broadly intersect the fields of international relations, comparative government, and gender, sexuality, and women's studies. She also leads a course on gender and development in India every other year. Ph.D., political science, Western Michigan University.

#### REBECCA WINES

*Assistant Professor of French*

Serves as co-chair for GSS in 2018-2019. The courses that she teaches in gender, sexuality, and women's studies emphasize the critical importance of cultural context and the analysis of how texts—broadly understood—shape our understandings of ourselves and others. Ph.D., French literature, University of Michigan.