

# studies

college of arts and sciences • university of south carolina

## 2008 WOST Conference



Dr. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson

The 21st Annual Women's Studies Conference will be held Thursday and Friday, February 28-February 29, 2008, at the Daniel Management Center, Moore School of Business. The conference theme is "Representing Bodies: Disability, Difference and Identity." The conference opens on Thursday with a screening of the film "Liebe Perla" at 2:30 at the Nickelodeon at 937 Main Street. The film is the story of the friendship between Perla, the last living member of a Jewish family of dwarfs that survived Dr. Mengele's

experiments in Auschwitz and Hannelore, a Christian born in postwar Germany, who is searching for a lost Nazi film of Perla's family. Their correspondence raises issues of birth and death, anger and forgiveness, and the basic right of the different to life.

The opening reception will follow at 4:30 in the Daniel Management Center, 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the Darla Moore School of Business followed by the opening keynote, "Extraordinary Bodies: Images of Disability in Art and Popular Culture", presented by Dr. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Professor of Women's Studies, Emory University. Her fields of study are feminist theory, American literature, and disability studies. Her scholarly and professional activities are devoted to developing the field of disability studies in the humanities and in women's studies.

Garland-Thomson argues that disability is a concept, a social identity, a community, and a shared human experience that pervades history, art, literature, artifacts—indeed, all aspects of human culture. Images reveal the way we think about disability and people with disabilities, especially women. That is, images shape the way we understand the intertwining

human variations we understand as gender, race, and disability. In the climate fostering diversity and minority rights that has been encouraged by the larger civil rights movement, new ways of seeing and representing disability have emerged in US public culture. Disabled people have entered the public sphere much more fully in the last 30 years due to a newly accessible built environment, positive disability identity politics, and legal mandates for integration. Her presentation traces the entry of disabled women into the public sphere of visibility, from the displays of disabled women as curiosities, to early photographs, charity campaigns, pornography, advertising, and the new disability art. It shows that images can both dismantle and erect the institutional, attitudinal, legislative, and architectural barriers that keep people with disabilities from full participation in the society

Dr. Garland-Thomson is the author of *Staring: How We Look* (Oxford UP, forthcoming 2007), *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Literature and Culture* (Columbia UP, 1997); editor of *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (NYU Press, 1996), and co-editor of *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities* (MLA Press, 2002). She is currently writing a book called *Cure or Kill: The Cultural Logic of Euthanasia*, which traces eugenic thought through American literature.

Friday will be devoted to concurrent sessions, the awards luncheon, and a closing plenary. Louise B. Jennings, Associate Professor of Educational Research and Social Foundations, USC Columbia, will present the 2008 Josephine Abney Award Lecture: Educadoras as Agents of Change: Working toward Radical Democratization of Brazilian Schools. Concurrent sessions run all day Friday with a closing plenary by Dr. Stephen Hall, Director of the Georgia State Office of Developmental Disabilities. He and his colleagues are dedicated to health, safety, well-being, and the realization of a meaningful life for everyone in Georgia that has developmental disabilities. The conference concludes with a dance performance, "An Evening of Dance Masterpieces: Diversion of Angels/Deuce Coupe," 7:30 p.m., Koger Center for the Arts. Admission free to conference participants.

## Mary Baskins Waters Award in Social Work and Women's Studies



Dr. Mary Baskins Waters

We are pleased to announce the Mary Baskins Waters Award in Social Work and Women's Studies. This award will be given annually to support a doctoral student in the College of Social Work who is pursuing a Certificate of Graduate Studies in Women's Studies. The student's research focus should be on issues that affect the psychosocial health and well-being of women.

Dr. Mary Baskin Waters has been a stalwart supporter of Women's Studies with time, money, and unflagging energy since the program first began. In describing her decision to fund this award Dr. Baskin Waters says "It was my great pleasure to create this award opportunity for a deserving doctoral candidate. It is unique because it combines two programs — Social Work and Women's Studies — that I care deeply about. The combination is a good match because, for example, there is nothing more urgent in today's society than the eradication of gender bias and anti-social behaviors

demonstrated by domestic violence, sexual assault, and the inability to obtain adequate health care."

Dr. Baskin Waters received a Certificate of Graduate studies in Women's Studies in 1993, the first year the certificate was awarded. Today she regularly teaches in the program and has created a service learning course for us, *Women and Society: A Service Learning Approach*. It teaches women's studies through individualized placements in community organizations where students can work directly with important social issues such as domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, medically underserved individuals, homelessness, and incarcerated youth. This course fits perfectly with our commitment to community outreach and social justice.

Dr. Baskin Water's generous gift will also help to fund the annual Women's Studies Conference and this year for the first time the College of Social Work will be a co-sponsor of the conference. We are looking forward to working with Social Work and to collaborations with the larger community.

Thank you Mary!

# Notes from the Director: Women's Studies to Become Women's and Gender Studies



Next year marks the 35th anniversary of Women's Studies at USC Columbia. It will also mark the first year of Women's and Gender Studies. Yes, we are changing the name! My role in this process began with my arrival last summer and the discussions initiated at the Core and Affiliate Retreats. But the process began much earlier, ten years ago to be exact, when Lynn Weber in her remarks in this newsletter asked, "What's in a Name?"

The points that Dr. Weber made in her comments then are still true today: Women's Studies is no longer only about women, nor is its scholarship only done by women. Gender, a concept central to Women's Studies, is a way of organizing relationships of dominance and subordination, and systems of gender inequality are interwoven with other systems of inequality such as race, class, sexuality and nation. Yet, the historical rationale for the creation of Women's Studies, the persistent inequities between women and men, the marginalization of women in the academic canons, and the second class status of activities and behaviors associated with women still persist today. (Throwing like a girl still remains a term of derision!) I hope that the new name, Women's and Gender Studies, will reflect these tensions while at the

same time, keep women at the center. Let me explain further.

First, the argument for including gender in the title is this: Gender is a relational concept referring to social constructions of femininity and masculinity, and it can be used to understand individual identities, political and economic systems, and symbolic and cultural meanings. As such it is integral to the ways in which privilege, subordination, and resistance are created and maintained in society. Using gender as a category of analysis has become commonplace in most disciplines from English, to history, to biology. Explorations of literary texts, of social histories, and human sexuality have all been enriched by gender analyses.

As our mission statement indicates, the lens of gender is also a prism that reflects class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality. Intersectionality is a theoretical paradigm and methodology that foregrounds the fact that inequality and privilege are always multilayered and multidimensional. Our commitment to intersectional analysis means that Women's and Gender Studies at USC is not only about advancing the status of women, but rather it is about transformation and intuitional change that promotes the well being of everyone, not only the elites. Thus including gender in our name foregrounds the program's commitment to the relationship between social justice, globalization, women's health and well being, and community activism.

So why not just change the name to Gender Studies? It certainly is shorter! The feminist historian, Alice Kessler-Harris, addressed this very issue in her essay, "Do We Still Need Women's History," which was recently published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Kessler-Harris readily acknowledges the explanatory potential of gender and celebrates its widespread use in writing history. However, she

cautions us not to abandon the history of women. Gender, she argues, obscures as much as it reveals. Thus we need to remember to look at the particular ways that women, various in race, class, nationality, and sexuality, engaged in their worlds. In order for gender to be a *critical* lens and challenge a normative view of the world through the eyes of men, we must continue to study and understand the lives of women. In other words, valorizing women's lives and experiences provides a vantage point for revealing the ways in which status quo thinking marginalizes women, people of color, and sexual minorities.

Thus our new title, Women's and Gender Studies, acknowledges that our teaching and research agendas include both women and men, while keeping women at the center. It acknowledges that the goals of the women's movement have not been met and that in our search for social justice for everyone, we must not lose sight of the centrality of women to Women's and Gender Studies.

Finally let me note that adding gender to the title of women's studies programs is becoming commonplace in prestigious universities throughout the country. It is already the practice among the branch campuses and the College of Charleston. Thus changing our name will foster collaboration between Columbia and the branch campuses and contribute to a South Carolina identity for Women's and Gender Studies centers and programs.

As you all know, Women's Studies at USC has a long and distinguished history. The Women's Studies Faculty, both the core and the affiliates, and the Partnership Council feel that this change honors that history and think that this change will contribute to our reputation as one of the leading and most innovative programs in Women's and Gender Studies today. ■

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at the University of South Carolina

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## Welcome Back

We are happy to welcome back Dr. Lynn Weber and Dr. Laura Woliver from their much deserved sabbaticals. We hope they missed us as much as we missed them!

## The South Carolina Law Review Announces Its 2008 Symposium, The Roberts Court and Equal Protection: Gender, Race, and Class

The symposium will address recent Supreme Court decisions regarding equal protection and possible areas for new litigation. The symposium will be held on February 29 in the University of South Carolina School of Law's auditorium, located at 701 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29208, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.. The registration fee is \$45. Please visit the South Carolina Law Review web site at <http://www.sclawreview.org/symposium/index.php> for registration information.

## Plato Conference:

On March 20-22, 2008, the University of South Carolina, Columbia will host an international and interdisciplinary conference on Plato and Platonisms from antiquity through the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the present. Sponsored by the Classics and Comparative Literature Programs, by the Departments of Philosophy and Political Science, as well as by the College of Arts and Sciences and private donors, All sessions are open to the public. For detailed information, please consult the conference website at: [www.cas.sc.edu/dllc/CPLT/activities/10thannuconcpf.html](http://www.cas.sc.edu/dllc/CPLT/activities/10thannuconcpf.html)

# Kudos

**Drucilla K. Barker** and her co-author Susan F. Feiner have an article forthcoming in a special issue of *Frontiers* titled "Affect, Race, and Class: An Interpretive Reading of Caring Labor." She also has an essay with Darla Schumm, "Feminism and Ethics," forthcoming in the *Elgar Companion to Ethics and Economics*, edited by Irene Van Staveren.

**Tawanda Greer** was appointed to serve a 1-year renewable term on the Editorial Board for the *Journal of Black Psychology*, one of the leading outlets in the country for the psychological study of persons of African descent.

**Ed Madden**, Undergraduate Director in Women's Studies, has been awarded an Associate Professional Development Award from the College of Arts and Sciences for research in Ireland. His new essay publications include, "The Anus of Tiresias: Sodomy, Alchemy, Metamorphosis" [on fiction of Marcel Jouhandeau], *French Literature Series* 34 (2007). His new poetry publications include "Sacrifice," in *Best New Poets 2007: 50 Poems from Emerging Writers*. Natasha Trethewey, ed. Charlottesville VA: Samovar Press with Meridian, 2007.

**DeAnne K. Hilfinger Messias**, Graduate Director of Women's Studies, gave research presentations at the Association for Community Health Nursing Educators Conference in Kansas City, Navigating the Global American South Conference, Research Triangle Park, NC and Latino Immigration to New Settlement Areas, Columbia SC. She was an invited delegate to a

think tank at the University of Pennsylvania in 2007, *Women's Health is the Community's Health: Impacting Women's Lives in Urban Places*. Her new publications include an essay co-authored with J.F. DeJoseph, J. F. (2007) "The personal work of a first pregnancy: Transforming identities, relationships, and women's work." *Women & Health*, 45(4), 41-64.

**Deborah Parra-Medina and DeAnne Messias** served on the steering committee and as judges for the Carolina Women's Health Research Forum last fall.

**Ann Ramsdell** was awarded a grant from the National Institutes of Health for her research project "Development of Xenopus as a Model to Study Congenital Heart Disease"

Returned from her sabbatical, **Lynn Weber** is the senior editor of a book project of the national collaborative "Social Science Research Council Research Network on Persons Displaced by Hurricane Katrina," PI, Kai Erickson, Senior Analyst, Lynn Weber. Her new publications include "New Directions in Social Policy: The Case of Women's Health." Pp. 669-679, in Sharlene Hesse-Biber, ed., *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007.

**Laura Woliver** has given over 20 media interviews concerning the 2008 elections, including interviews with the *Washington Post*, CNN, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, the Associated Press, and ABC News. Dr. Woliver chaired a panel on "Women and Leadership," at Southern Political

Science Convention, 2008. Her new publications include a review essay on reproductive politics published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32 (Winter 2007): 549-554.

**Arlene Bowers Andrews**, Professor in the USC College of Social Work and WOST affiliate, has been selected as a Fahs-Beck Fellow by the Fahs-Beck Fund for Research and Experimentation at The New York Community Trust. She has received a grant for pilot work on the project, "Effects of Shared Leadership on Service Providers and Parents for Vulnerable Families."

**Lisa Hammond**, Associate Professor of English and WOST affiliate, USC - Lancaster, won the 2006 Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize with her chapbook of poetry, *Moving House*, which was published last fall by Texas Review Press.

**Denise Shaw**, Assistant Professor of English and WOST affiliate, USC - Union published a book: *The Rape Narrative in the American South: A Psychoanalytical Examination of Sexual Violence and the Melancholic Internalization of Loss in the Modern Southern Novel*. New York: Mellen, 2007.

**Adrian Laseter**, a graduate certificate student in WOST, received a graduate student merit scholarship from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

**Mekell Mikell**, a graduate certificate student in WOST, was profiled in an article in *The State* newsletter for her work as volunteer coordinator for the Hillary Clinton for President campaign in Columbia. ■

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR! SPRING 2008

### WOST 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Women's Studies Conference

Thursday & Friday, February 28 & 29, Daniel Management Center  
8th Floor, Moore School of Business

Theme: "Representing Bodies: Disability, Difference and Identity"

#### Thursday, February 28, 2008

2:30 pm Helen Hill Memorial Screening, "Liebe Perla," Nickelodeon, 937 Main St.  
4:30 pm Opening Reception, Daniel Management Center  
8th Floor, Moore School of Business  
5:30 pm Opening Keynote (Lumpkin Auditorium, Daniel Management Center)  
Title: "Representing Bodies: Disability, Difference and Identity"  
Speaker: Rosemarie Garland-Thomson  
Professor of Women's Studies  
Emory University

#### Friday, February 29, 2008

8:30 am Registration  
9:30 am Concurrent Paper Sessions  
11:45 am Lunch, Lumpkin Dining Area, Daniel Management Center  
1:00 pm WOST AWARDS PRESENTATION, Lumpkin Auditorium  
Josephine Abney Award Lecture,  
Title: "Educadoras as Agents of Change: Working toward Radical Democratization of Brazilian Schools"  
Speaker: Louise Jennings, Department of Educational Studies  
College of Education  
2:15 pm Concurrent Paper Sessions  
3:45 pm Closing Plenary Lumpkin Auditorium  
Speaker: Dr. Stephen Hall, Director, Office of Developmental Disabilities,  
Georgia Department of Human Resources

The film screening and Keynote Lecture on Thursday, February 28th, are free and open to the public. A registration fee is required for conference attendance on Friday, February 29th (\$50 general registration, \$20 student registration - fee includes materials, luncheon and receptions). Registration forms are available in the Women's Studies Program Office, 201 Fliinn Hall and/or the Women's Studies website [www.cas.sc.edu/WOST](http://www.cas.sc.edu/WOST). For more information, please call the WOST Office at (803) 777-4007.

#### RESEARCH SERIES LECTURES: (Reception follows lectures)

##### Wednesday, March 5, 2008, 3:30 p.m., Gambrell 250

"Students Creating New Knowledge"  
Women's Studies Graduate Students' Panel

##### Thursday, March 20, 2008, 3:30 p.m., Gambrell 151

Title: "Quare Fellas: Marginality and Masculinity in Contemporary Irish Literature"  
Speaker: Ed Madden, Ph.D., Department of English



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## Mission Statement

### University of South Carolina Women's Studies Program

Women's studies at the University of South Carolina promotes understanding of the diverse array of women's experiences through a complete program of teaching, research, and service to the University, the local community, the state, the nation, and the global community. Through its teaching mission, women's studies shares this knowledge with students so that they learn to think critically, to communicate effectively, to solve problems, and to interpret human experience. Through its research mission, women's studies reconceptualizes existing knowledge and creates new knowledge through the lens of gender and the prism of diversity. Emerging from an activist tradition, women's studies serves University, local, state, national, and global communities by acting as a resource and guide for issues related to women and gender.

Our teaching, research, and service missions interweave as we create, share, and apply knowledge, skills, and values that promote the full participation of women in society. At the core of the work of women's studies teaching and research at the University of South Carolina are broad but fundamental questions that drive examinations of the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of inequality. ■

## Support USC Women's Studies and the Women's Well-Being Initiative

The Women's Studies Program is growing. We invite you to join our efforts to promote the understanding essential to improving the lives of women and girls by becoming a Friend of Women's Studies.

\$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  \$500  \$1,000  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my gift for the following:

Women's Studies Endowment \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Initiative for Women's Well-Being \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Send information about the Women's Studies Program.

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Please return to: Women's Studies Program, 201 Flinn Hall, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

\*All gifts to USC Foundations are used to support the University of South Carolina. Checks can also be made payable to the USC Treasurer's Office; these gifts are managed by the State of South Carolina. All gifts qualify as tax deductions under appropriate laws.