

The 4th Annual

Gender Research Conference

May 9, 2011
Research 1, Room 163



Hosted by Women and Gender Studies
George Mason University



Women and Gender Studies
4400 University Drive 5B6 Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: (703) 993-2896 Fax: (703) 993-1818

May, 2011

Welcome to the 4th Annual Gender Research Conference. Hosted by Women and Gender Studies, the annual event provides a forum for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research and to participate in a scholarly dialogue on gender.

The Gender Research Conference began as the culminating feature of the Gender Research Project. Following a two-semester course designed to teach undergraduate and graduate students about the fundamental tools of social research, the Gender Research Conference serves as a forum for these students to present their research to the Mason community. The conference aims to bring together undergraduate and graduate students from all majors.

The conference expanded this year to include presentations from students who were doing gender research outside of the Gender Research Project. A call for presentations was advertised widely across campus. Twelve students were selected to present alongside the three dedicated students from our course.

This year's conference also featured a roundtable discussion facilitated by current Mason faculty. The goal of this panel was to educate students about other research done by faculty and staff that they may not be aware of and to encourage students to continue to do research beyond this classroom.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Scott', written in a cursive style.

Suzanne Scott
Director of Women and Gender Studies

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Schedule at a Glance

10-10:15	Welcome: Suzanne Scott, Director of Women & Gender Studies Ingrid Sandole-Staroste, Gender Research Project Instructor
10:15-11:15	Session 1: Results from the Gender Research Project Frances Rutherford, <i>Success in Professional Teaching Careers: A Case Study of Women Professors at George Mason University</i> Jennifer Maloney, <i>Cultural Fusion: Bridging Diversity on a University Campus</i> Lulu Geza, <i>A Place to Call Home: Community & Identity on George Mason Women's Club Rugby Team</i>
11:30-12:30	Session 2: Student Research on Gender Julie Anderson, <i>Warriors in the Academy: Veterans Transition from Military to Mason</i> Lily Bolourian, <i>Gender Equality in America: Are We There Yet?</i> Yeme Mehari, <i>Representations of Gender in the Smithsonian</i>
12:30-1:15	Research Beyond the Classroom: Faculty Perspectives Roundtable
1:30-2:30	Session 3: Student Research on Gender Sara Hussaini, <i>Alternative Approaches to Human Trafficking in Pakistan</i> Andrea Rutan, <i>Female Aherence to Islam & Veiling in Germany: An Individualistic Practice of Ethics</i> Sarah Faragalla, <i>Muslim Women and the Veil</i>
2:40-3:40	Session 4: Student Research on Gender Christine Cartwright, <i>Madness in Lessing's, The Golden Notebook & The Grass is Singing</i> Mabinty Quarshie, <i>Black Feminist Statement Revised</i> Justin Roykovich, <i>The Redux as Redefinition</i>
3:50-4:50	Session 5: Student Research on Gender Nicole McCoy, <i>The Brazillian Mulata: Race, Identity, and the Body</i> Sara Wright, <i>Family Narratives and the Body</i> Sara Mitcho, <i>Different Bodies, Different Lives, & The Universal Vulnterability: The Importance of Ontology in the Field of Feminist Ethics</i>
4:50-5:00	Closing Remarks

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 1

10:15-11:15

Findings from the Gender Research Project:

Frances Rutherford

Graduate Student– Women and Gender Studies

Success in Professional Teaching Careers: A Case Study of Women Professors at George Mason University

My research examines career success and barriers as defined by five women professors on the Fairfax Campus of George Mason University. My findings relate to my two key research questions: 1) How do women professors define success in their professional teaching careers at George Mason University? and 2) What barriers (if any) do women professors identify that keep them from achieving success? This case study is significant because it focuses attention on the experiences of women faculty members at GMU and suggests that gendered differences exist among faculty. It illuminates the effects of those differences and adds to the knowledge about the choices women professors make in achieving success and facing the barriers that impede their success.

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 1

10:15-11:15

Findings from the Gender Research Project:

Jennifer Maloney

Graduate Student, Women and Gender Studies

Cultural Fusion: Bridging Diversity on a University Campus

Cultural Fusion, an annual student-led event at George Mason University since 2008, is the subject of this case study. This study seeks to gauge the importance of Cultural Fusion to the Mason community by learning how it relates to, reaches out to, and engages with students; how it contributes to cultural awareness and understanding; and whether gender plays a role. A feminist methodology is used, and in-depth interviews with students provide grounds for much of the analysis. Finding areas relate to gender, student leadership, and that Cultural Fusion means different things to different students. These findings relate to feminist theory that discusses relationships between gender and culture, current studies on women and leadership that may be reflective of second wave feminism, and third wave feminism that is inclusive of those who do not identify as feminists. Findings also contribute to scholarship on student leadership development that acknowledges collaboration and positive change; and explores human motivation theory in relation to one's view of self and the world at large. Whether promoted by those who organize it or as understood by those who participate in it, Cultural Fusion seems to provide a space for students to walk through and among the various cultural representations at Mason, creating bridges as they do so, and even making new friends.

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 1

10:15-11:15

Findings from the Gender Research Project:

Lulu Geza

Graduate Student, Sociology

A Place to Call Home: Community and Identity on George Mason Women's Club Rugby Team

The stereotype that women who play sports are gay or queer-identified is something I have always been grappling with, as a queer-identified woman who loves sports. If the stereotype is true that there are so many queer-identified women playing sports,

would it be a safe space for queer-identified women to be out?

Furthermore, would it be a safe space for butch women, black women, Latina women, poor women, immigrant women, anti-consumerist women, Muslim women, Asian women, overweight women, atheist women, women who are into S&M, women who speak English as their second language, and out trans-identified women to bring their

whole selves? I want to study women's experiences playing on sports teams, particularly the experience of those on my collegiate club rugby team and using Judith Butler's idea of performance (which she limits to gender) to see how they realize their identities in the team space. How do we feel, as female-bodied athletes inhabiting an all-female space, that we impose the broader culture's standards as far as femininity, women's roles, and other identity categories on to each other? A significant part of being on a team like my rugby team, where we spend more than half of the days in a week together, is how we show up in that space; how we enforce and reject

"American" norms, or create our own social normative behavior.

The exploration of my rugby team is significant for me as a queer-identified woman who loves to play sports, but also because studies on femininity rarely talk about this "side of women," but instead sports like rugby are studied in masculinity studies.

Besides my obvious interest in both sports and studies in intersectionalities of identity, the negative experience of two teammates on another sports team at Mason when the rest of their team found out they were dating inspired my study. And of course, my interests do not lie solely in gender, sexuality, or race, but in the way one negotiates the framings of zir identities and brings zirsself to a social/team situation.

Page 5

Women and Gender Studies

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 2
11:30-12:30

Julie Anderson
Graduate Student– Sociology

Warriors in the Academy: Veterans' Transition from the Military to Mason

Abstract: Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are enrolling in higher education in rapidly increasing numbers. An unexamined aspect of men's military-to-civilian re-integration is their identity work regarding gender. If gender is "done" as context-specific performance or asserted through "manhood acts," then transitions are junctures when gender identity may be confronted or challenged. Using data from focus groups and interviews with veterans at Mason, I consider this identity work as a key component of their transition.

Lily Bolourian
Undergraduate Student, Government and International Politics

Gender Equality in America: Are We There Yet?

Numerous legislation has been passed throughout the years to help prevent against gender inequalities in an array of fields but does that mean that we have reached true equality among genders? This paper discusses just how far away women are from being considered an equal under the law and in society.

Yeme Mehari
Undergraduate Student, International Studies
Representations of Gender in the Smithsonian American History Museum

Page 6

Women and Gender Studies

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 3

1:30– 2:30

Andrea Rutan

Graduate Student, Sociology

Female Adherence to Islam and Veiling in Germany: An Individualistic Practice of Ethics?

Abstract: Headscarves have become a central issue in the public sphere of Europe, increasingly to conjecture the question of immigrant integration. The sustained belief that Muslim women in Germany are Kopftuchfrauen obscures their agency to redefine membership within and outside their adopted culture. I argue that the wearing of the

Hidschab rather represents her cultural preference and that the viewing of the headscarf as a symbol of oppression is form of cultural and national ideological manipulation.

Sara Hussaini

Graduate Student, Women and Gender Studies

Alternative Approaches to Human Trafficking in Pakistan

This research paper is an overview of the various modes of human trafficking across, through and within Pakistan's borders. It addresses the issue of human trafficking in the context of transnational crime and corruption in the region of South Asia. In addition to policy, it stresses the importance of a comprehensive approach that stems out of contextualizing historical, religious, cultural, and economic framework. The paper suggests alternative approaches to human rights violations in modern day slavery, specifically in the Subcontinent.

Sarah Faragalla

Undergraduate Student, Global Affairs & Psychology

Muslim Women and the Veil

The paper focused on understanding first the veil itself. The implications of the veil were then evaluated in three contexts: Egypt, France, and the United States. The role of women within each context is visibly defined by the history and context of the veil.

This ultimately reveals that the veil simply cannot be understood in terms of a universal culture, but the context must always be taken into account.

Page 7

Women and Gender Studies

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 4

2:40-3:40

Christine Cartwright
Graduate Student, English

The Purpose of Madness in Lessing's The Golden Notebook and The Grass is Singing
Lessing uses madness in *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and *The Grass is Singing* (1950) to show patriarchy and oppression of women and to present madness as a healing process for the psyche. But the critical aspects of her work are twofold: Lessing foresees third-wave feminism in which "masculine" and "feminine" terms are blurred and supplanted by the concept of the "individual," and secondly, she views connections between people contributing to both individual and universal wholeness.

Mabinty Quarshi
Undergraduate, English
Black Feminist Statement Revised

In this essay I critique the essay The Combahee River Collective. I compare the article to the Anita Hill Clarence Thomas controversy, Patricia Hill Collin's *Black Sexual Politics*, and Mrinalina Sinha "Gender and Nation" I discuss why there was a need to write the Combahee River Collective. I also discuss the issues that Black women have faced and what Black feminism is.

Justin Roykovich
Undergraduate, Art and Visual Technology
The Redux as Redefinition

The Redux as Redefinition produces a semiotic analysis of how culture is sometimes stolen and made a commodity through the entertainment and media machine. It specifically uses the example of how Madonna capitalized upon the "voguing" phenomenon, turning it from a marginalized African-American/Latino youth movement to a beacon of identity for white, gay men.

4th Annual Gender Research Conference

Session 5

3:50– 4:50

Nicole McCoy

Graduate Student, Sociology

The Brazilian Mulata: Race, Identity, and the Body

In the Brazilian social imaginary the mulata (mixed-race female) the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and the nation. The prominence of the concept of the mulata draws attention to the relationship between the symbolic and the material body as it relates to its commodification, manipulation, veneration, and yet abstract presence. This paper seeks to discuss the how the image of the mulata informs the process of identity formation for Brazilian women and how this image is deployed for projects of self-understanding and economic opportunities.

Sara Wright

Graduate Student, Women and Gender Studies

Family Narratives and the Body

The body is both a cultural artifact and shaped by culture. Mothers can have a profound influence on ideas about the body, body image and sexuality in their daughters. This project explores what women have learned about their bodies from their mothers as young or adolescent children. This paper presents the results of ethnographic field study in a local faith community with the purposes of learning more about ideas of the body, experiences of embodiment and cultural beliefs about the body.

Sara Mitcho

Graduate Student, Cultural Students/Women and Gender Studies

Different Bodies, Different Lives, and Universal Vulnerability: The Importance of Ontology in the Field of Feminist Ethics

My paper traces the history of feminist ethics from Mary Wollstonecraft to care feminism to recent arguments about universal vulnerability to argue that work in the field sometimes fails to comprehensively address human ontology. I argue that theories that balance acknowledgement of differences in bodies and lived experiences with identification of what is universal about humanity (rather than doing one or the other) can be most helpful in advancing both the field of feminist ethics and ethical theory in general.

Page 9

Women and Gender Studies



Women and Gender Studies

Johnson Center 240 K

Phone: (703) 993-2896 Fax: (703) 993-1818

wmst@gmu.edu

wmst.gmu.edu