Women’s Studies Programs™

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Gender & Gender Identity Colloquium

Texas Tech University — Friday, October 23rd, 2015
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. | TTU Student Union Building | Red Raider Lounge

Program Schedule

8:30 a.m. - Check In & Registration
9:00 a.m. - 9:50 a.m. - Session I
10:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m. - Session II
11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. - Session III
12:00 p.m. – 12:50 p.m. - Session IV
--Lunch - $10 box lunch
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Keynote Speaker
Presentation 1

Intentionally Recursive: Building a Participatory, Feminist Mentoring Model for Women in Technical Communication, Kristen R. Moore

- This presentation reports on an initiative to improve mentoring of faculty and practitioners in technical communication that has been underway for three years. Drawing on feminist methodologies, we have focused on listening to needs expressed by women in Technical Communication (#womeninTC), comparing what they expressed about their experiences and needs to literature on mentoring models, and developing resources that do a more comprehensive job of addressing their experiences and needs. This presentation will explain the model for mentoring that we developed, with examples for how the recursive and participatory approach we use might be deployed in other organizations and disciplines.

Presentation 2

Latina Adolescents and (Post) Feminism: A Content Analysis of Feminist and Traditional Ideologies in Nonprofit Online Magazines, Marilda Oviedo

- Research on media targeted at adolescent girls focuses mostly on the negative impact that ideologies such as conspicuous consumption and body image surveillance have on adolescent self-conceptualization of identity. Few studies use post-feminist frameworks to examine the dominant ideologies of advocacy or non-profit media organizations intended to empower girls. Via content analysis, this article demonstrates the dominant ideologies found in two online magazines hosted by an organization that advocates for the media education of Latina adolescents. Findings show that feminist ideologies far outnumber some of the traditional ideologies likely to be advanced by mainstream, commercial media. However, for an organization aimed at media education of Latinas, talk of ethnicity/race was limited. This implies the need for more post-feminist scholarship on the intersectionality of ethnicity and gender and its impact on adolescent identity formation and the capacity of noncommercial media to counter the ideologies found in mainstream media.

Presentation 3

Communication Between Transgender Healthcare Patients and Healthcare Providers: A Review, by Dalton Richardson

- This paper explores current literature on communication between transgender healthcare patients and their healthcare providers. Three areas of specific analysis are offered. The first section focuses on communication tactics utilized during general healthcare check-ups; the second section focuses on tactics utilized when discussing hormone therapy; the third section focuses on tactics utilized when discussing sex reassignment surgery. Finally, this paper offers areas of further study for transgender communication studies.

Presentation 4

“I don’t need feminism”: A Content Analysis of (Dis)Empowerment, Sexualization, and Bodies of Women Who Hate Feminism, Samantha Christopher, Tori Heebner, Alejandra Moreno, Kirsten Dalquist, Kelly Chroback, and Elizabeth Sharp

- Negative and inaccurate media portrayals of feminism has served as a barrier for women self-identifying as feminists for decades (e.g., Faludi, 1990). More recently, post-feminism has complicated the landscape by co-opting feminist concepts to promote consumerism and hyper-sexualization of women’s bodies. Embedded in post-feminism is the belief that equality has been
achieved and individuals are living lives directed by their own choices (Budgeon, 2001). These ideas coupled with media-fueled stereotypes of “second wave” feminists and linked to large numbers of young women who reject the feminist label (Aronson, 2003). Moreover, there exist groups of young women who not only disagree with feminism, but also forcefully denounce feminism. One such group is the “Women Against Feminism” (WAF) Facebook page. To explore images and content associated with WAF, photographs with 800 or more “likes” on WAF page are being considered for analysis. Images and comments were examined using content analysis, focusing on how women’s bodies are sexualized and/or objectified within the context of feminist and post-feminist discourses.

Presentation 5
Injecting Feminism into Undergraduate Research: In Defense of Jessica’s Valenti’s Full Frontal Feminism: As Young Women’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters, Lauren Kelly, Samantha Christopher, Kirsten Dalquist, Kim Gambrell, and Elizabeth Sharp

- Research has consistently indicated that misperceptions and misunderstandings of feminism are common in the wider culture and within the academy (Budgeon 2001; McCabe, 2005; Rich, 2005; author citation), fueling hesitations for college students to engage in feminist discussions (Webber, 2006) and to participate in feminist research. All of these issues raise the question: How do feminist-identified faculty and feminist-identified graduate students effectively encourage undergraduate students to learn and apply feminist theories in their research projects? To answer this question we experimented with a popular press book, Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters. We (two PhD students and a faculty member) intentionally sought to find ways to stimulate productive discussions and promote clearer understandings of fundamental tenants of feminism among a group of undergraduate research assistants working with the faculty member. In this presentation, we discuss the ways in which the book helped facilitate feminist understandings, set the tone for the work of the research team, and served as site of critical analysis. We share research assistants’ reactions, our reflections, and some cautions about the book.

Presentation 6
Who Killed the Powerpoint Star? Using Student-Created Videos in an Undergraduate Classroom, Ben Finlayson, John Purcell, Kim Gambrell, and Elizabeth Sharp

- Students are highly engaged with visual media and many feminist scholars have developed innovative teaching assignments to more effectively engage students with course material. In this presentation, we explore a student assignment in an undergraduate cross-listed HDFS/WS course on Gender Development. The assignment required that students create a four-minute video, applying main points from the course. We share the background of the project, student responses to the project, and feature one of the best videos from the course—the video features fundamental concepts of sex/gender. The graduate teaching assistant from the class will offer a critical reflection about developing and grading the video assignment across three semesters. Undergraduate students who made the videos will discuss their experience of creating the videos. The video featured is provided here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYNUZPKChPA

Presentation 7
Feminist framings for films: Taking the Classroom to the Community, John Purcell, Rebecca Oldham, Sam Christopher, Dana Weiser, and Elizabeth Sharp

- “Sexism | Cinema” is an interdisciplinary film series which considers how sexism is embedded, endorsed, and/or challenged in cinema. To date, there have been seven films screened, each of which has been followed by a 30-minute discussion led by TTU faculty members and/or expert guest speakers. All members of the TTU and Lubbock community are encouraged to attend. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the following elements of the film series: the impetus for the
creation of the film series, the film series as a form of active feminist self-care, content and themes in film selection and discussion, reactions from graduate students on film presentation and discussion, contributions made by the film series, and recommendations for future film series.

Presentation 8
Solving Inequalities: The Limitations of "Grittiness" as a Measure of Fiction, Nancy Dinan

- In 1998, Harper's ran a piece by Francine Prose, "Scent of a Woman's Ink," that decried the difference in the reception by the critical public between novels by male and female writers. Thirteen years later, she followed up, responding specifically to V. S. Naipaul's infamous claim "that no woman was his equal and that he too could instantly sniff out that telltale estrogenic ink." As an early career novelist who happens to be a woman, this particular issue has intrigued me for some time. This paper responds to Prose's two articles, using examples from Lauren Groff, Cormac McCarthy, and Ernest Hemingway, and incorporating a trend remarked upon by Richard Russo in his essay "In Defense of Omniscience;" that is, that often the very adjectives that describe work considered to be masculine are also used to describe fiction that uses the omniscient point of view. The response examines what novelists can learn from the omniscient point of view that might help us get to this difference between masculine and feminine writing, and that might help us ascribe value, as empirically as possible, to these traits. As Prose acknowledges in the 2011 article, this is an ongoing predicament for women writers, and an issue as timely as it ever was, even almost twenty years later.

Presentation 9
Oppression or Liberty? The Garcia Sisters in How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Iracema M. Quintero

- My essay "Oppression or Liberty" discusses the problem with viewing the topics of immigration and gender within the typical binary oppressor/oppressed narrative. I use the Garcia sisters, main characters in the novel How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez, as examples of what problems may arise when trying to understand the world through a binary lens. The sisters are of a higher social status in the Dominican Republic (DR); however, they are wanted (and considered criminals) by Trujillo. When they move to the United States, they assume their lives will be better, but they find that their lives are worse. Additionally, the family spends a great deal of their lives traveling to and from the DR and U.S. The sisters are stuck between the borderlands of two worlds. This places them in a subaltern space in regards to their cultural and gender identity. Moreover, men are valued more than women in the Chicano culture. When living in the DR, they are able to participate in rebellious avenues, which gave them agency. When the sisters move to the United States, they feel as if their lives are undervalued even more since these avenues are no longer attainable in the United States. The Garcia sisters serve as a model of an alternative way of looking at (im)migration and gender since their lives do not fit well into the traditional oppressor/oppressed narrative.

Presentation 10
Women and Politics in Africa Today, Jessica Foumena

- While Americans are still trying to figure out whether they should elect their first female Head of State, numerous African countries have made this bold move years ago. Liberia, Central African Republic and most recently Mauritius are the African countries currently led by
women. Therefore, women are not just on the rise in African politics, they rule. As girls, African women have been prepared to hold important responsibilities. In fact, African women are the cornerstones of their communities. For most of them, they are more likely to take great personal pride in ensuring the well-being of their families rather than seeking public recognition. Raised in patriarchal societies where their work is generally taken for granted, African women have been taught not to be celebrated, in spite of all their sacrifices and hard work. Unfortunately, this is still happening in our 21st century. Our world still overlooks the leadership roles taken by African women in politics and in their respective communities. For most people around the globe, the international media narrative still portrays African women as victims. The international community still sees African women as silent and desperate beings who are just waiting to be rescued, when African women are heroines, if not living legends, for their families, their communities and their countries. In this presentation, we will talk about women and politics in Africa today and why the world needs starting having conversations with African women.

**Presentation 11**
*Mobile Masculinities: An Investigation of Hegemonic Masculinity in Gay Dating Apps*, Nathian Shae Rodriguez, Lindsey E. Blumell, & Jennifer Huemmer

- This study investigates how hegemonic masculinity manifests through user profiles of gay dating mobile applications. Authors employed both a quantitative and qualitative mixed-method approach, investigating 500 individual user profiles in the gay dating apps Scruff, Growler, GuySpy and Hornet. This exploratory study utilized a textual analysis that included visual elements and personal narratives. Findings indicate that multiple masculinities manifest in gay dating apps that are socially inspired and indicative of hegemonic masculinity influences. It was found that Growlr and Scruff attracted a wider range of users who either identified as very masculine or less masculine, whereas Hornet and GuySpy users projected more neutral and less masculine identities respectively. The qualitative findings were able to uncover and address the nuances of communication strategies of masculinities that were not detected by quantitative methods. Although a preponderance of the findings point toward a hypermasculine, sexualized user in search of other masculine partners for sexual activity, it was also found that the apps were utilized for the construction of more meaningful, long-term relationships.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Blaine Bookey, co-chair of the Board of MADRE
- Blaine Bookey is a Legal Director and Adjunct Professor at the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, University of California Hastings College of the Law. At the Center, Blaine's work focuses on advancing protection for women, children and LGBT individuals fleeing persecution. Prior to joining the Center, Blaine served as a federal appellate judicial law clerk and a fellow at the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti/Bureau des Avocats Internationaux where she first began collaborating with MADRE to support grassroots organizations and Haitian lawyers fighting to end sexual and gender-based violence. She is a graduate of Hastings and also holds an undergraduate degree in Social Policy and Gender Studies from Northwestern University.