



# BRIDGING

University  
of Maryland

Department of Women's  
Studies

Fall 2009/Spring 2010

## Women's Studies Pilots Study-Abroad Program in Transnational Feminism to Trinidad and Tobago



The Department of Women's Studies is offering its first ever study abroad program during the Winter of 2010 to Trinidad and Tobago. The upper-level undergraduate course entitled "Gender, Sexuality and Globalization: Transnational Feminism and the Anglophone Caribbean" will be led by faculty director Prof. Michelle Rowley.

The course will address several key themes, including transnational feminist advocacy, Caribbean feminism, domestic violence, and reproductive rights in the Anglophone Caribbean. It aims to: introduce students to a transnational feminist theoretical framework, explore the terrain of Caribbean activism and feminisms, explore the regional legislative terrain on areas such as domestic violence, and reproductive rights, explore how gender is reflected and created through material culture, and analyze the personal implications of crossing borders and developing cultural literacy.

The Department will partner with the Center for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago, which will host students in the more formal classroom setting. Students' days will be loosely divided between the class-

room, where they will discuss women's movements and become acquainted with local and regional theorists on race, gender, and sexuality. The rest of their time will be spent in a service-learning environment.

"There is a strong service learning component. Though the study-abroad period is too short for an in-depth service learning experience, we do want students to get a sense of the importance of delivering service and of using their time to help," says Prof. Rowley, who has been arranging service-learning collaborations with several non-governmental organizations in Trinidad and Tobago, including reproductive rights and labor organizations. Prof. Rowley has designed the course so that the institutional relationships developed will be sustainable over a long period. Once the learning infrastructure is in place, any other faculty member in the department should be able to lead future offerings of the course.

She adds that it is important for students to view the Caribbean as more than just a tourist destination.

"Students who sign up for this course will investigate the political and cul-

tural landscapes of the Caribbean, and should show a willingness to engage with the fact that there's a range of lived realities in the region that extends beyond the space of consumption and leisure."

Students will also have the opportunity to work with the environmental non-governmental organization, the Asa Wright Nature Center, in the run-up to the carnival in Trinidad and Tobago to study the center's innovations in ecology. In addition, participants will also be working with local communities in the run-up to carnival, as part of the social ethnography component of the course. The course runs from January 9-23, 2010.

For more information on the Trinidad and Tobago study-abroad program, visit [www.international.umd.edu/studyabroad/8076](http://www.international.umd.edu/studyabroad/8076)

View an informational clip about this and other study-abroad programs at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYyWxzElbno](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYyWxzElbno)

## UMD Women's Studies at the NWSA

*The University of Maryland will have a formidable presence at this year's Annual Conference of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA). Graduate students and faculty will be well represented at the conference, which will be held in Atlanta, GA from November 12-15, 2009, and is themed "Difficult Dialogues." The Department will host an open house to celebrate the ninth anniversary of the graduate program, and will use this opportunity to recruit new students. The following UMD students and faculty will participate in the conference:*

**Anaya McMurray, Mel Lewis, Rajani Bhatia and Bettina Judd** will present a panel: "Making Visible Marginal Centers: Towards a Conceptual/Theoretical Framework for Thinking, Speaking, Listening, and Working Margin to Margin." This panel proposes a methodology that facilitates theoretical explorations of marginal identities. In so doing it focuses on 1) thinking more expansively about black women's music and spirituality in the hip-hop generation, 2) utilizing black folklore as a tool for lifting queer and feminist themes in hip-hop, 3) re-imagining contexts that undo singular notions of stratified reproductive identity, and 4) exploring lesbian classroom embodiments at the intersection of black queer theory and black feminist thought.

**Denise Shupiko and Jing Song**, along with Dong Li from the Ohio State University will present the panel: "Globalization, Transnational Feminism, and Local Culture." This panel explores how globalization processes have affected women in both oppressive and empowering ways. Employing a transnational feminist perspective, members of the panel examine this theme in three specific contexts: American-Russian collaboration in networks against human trafficking, women's labor participation in modern-day China, and the boundary-crossing potential of Kyoko Mori's *Polite Lies*.

**Ana Perez, Angel Miles, Barbara Boswell**, and alumnus **Laura Logie** will present "New Directions: New Terrains of Intersectionality." This panel seeks to push the boundaries of the concept by examining its utility and limitations in a range of locations where intersectionality has not been a traditional feminist approach: in examining health disparities of Latinadades within Central and South American immigrant communities; in producing an intersectional racial theory; in developing a framework for intersectional disability studies; and in examining the concept's utility in an African feminist context.

**Prof. Michelle Rowley** will present a paper "Transnational Circuits of 'Survivance': Reading beyond 'homophobia' to Lived Lives," which examines the erasure of sexual minorities from development studies. She will also moderate a panel called "Traveling Feminisms: Solidarities, Obstructions, and Appropriations in a Transnational World."

**Prof. Bonnie Thornton Dill** will deliver the Presidential Session, "Intersectionality Re-examined," along with Prof. Kimberlé Crenshaw. Both scholars will return to some of the pressing questions and key issues raised in their earlier work and also to discuss the ways in which intersectionality has (or has not) been taken up in the field of Women's Studies today. They will engage in a conversation about their work, share individual reflections, and consider questions from the audience.

**Prof. Ruth Enid Zambrana** will participate in a roundtable discussion titled "Defying the Odds: Women of Color and U.S. Women's & Gender Studies." Other participants include Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Kesho Y. Scott, Tricia Lin, and Suzanne Benally. This round table addresses women of color thinking, speaking, working margin to center and margin to margin. The voices of "women of color" remain "exotic" and marginalized in women's and gender studies in the U.S.

**Prof. Seung-kyung Kim** will also host a book signing to celebrate the release of the second edition of her book, *Feminist Theory Reader: Local And Global Perspectives*, edited with Carole McCann.

Alumni **Clare Ching Jen, Kimberly Williams, Heather Rellihan** and **L. Ayu Saraswati** will also participate in the conference. Clare Jen will present a poster session, "'Masked Asian/American Woman': Matters of Risk, Responsibility, and (Trans)National (In)Security;" Kimberly Williams will present on a panel titled "The Politics and Possibilities of Transnational Feminist Arts Activism;" and L. Ayu Saraswati and Heather Rellihan will form part of a panel presentation entitled, "Affecting Memory: Troubling History Through Literature."

### Bonnie Thornton Dill appointed Visiting Professor of Distinguished Teaching at Princeton University

Chair of the Women's Studies Department Prof. Bonnie Thornton Dill has taken up the position of 2009-2010 Visiting Professor of Distinguished Teaching in the Department of Sociology at Princeton University. Prof. Seung-kyung Kim will act as interim Chair of the Department in Prof. Dill's absence.

While at Princeton, Prof. Dill will teach a course titled, "Inequality: Race, Class and Gender" that will be cross listed in Women's Studies and Afro American Studies. Her research aims during the visiting professorship are twofold: she will analyze and write up preliminary data collected on two Ph.D. programs, one in mathematics, and one in philosophy, that have graduated an extraordinary number of Black women Ph.D.'s. In addition, Prof. Dill will begin developing a new research project on the "roots" of intersectionality in different disciplines, including an investigation into the challenges inherent as the concept has traveled.

## Student, Alumni and Faculty News

**Julie R. Enszer** had two poems, "For Judith Remembering Jane Cooper and Grace Paley" and "After the Revolution," published in *Feminist Studies*; and has published one poem, "Absolutely No Car Repairs in the Parking Lot," in *On the Issues Magazine*; and the poem, "Constantin Brancusi's *The Kiss*" in the *Windy City Times Pride Literary Supplement*.

**Mel Michelle Lewis** is the 2009 Doctoral Teaching Fellow for the University of Maryland Honors Humanities Program. Mel was also presented with the 2008-2009 Advocate for Equity Award from the Office of LGBT Equity.

**Angel Miles** received a summer research grant from the Graduate School to complete her dissertation proposal during the summer and progress towards candidacy. In addition, Angel has been granted a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) dissertation fellowship to complete her dissertation, "Homeownership Issues Affecting African American Women with Physical Disabilities."



**Ana Perez with faculty mentors Michelle Rowley and Seung-kyung Kim**

**Ana Perez** has been awarded the Center for Teaching Excellence's (CTE) Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award for 2009. Ana was also awarded the CTE-Lilly Graduate Teaching Fellowship, a one-year fellowship designed to bring together graduate students from various disciplines to work on a teaching and learning project to improve undergraduate education.

**Jing Song** has been awarded the Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship from the Graduate School at the University of Maryland. She will use the award to complete her dissertation, "Global Assimilation and Global Alienation: Lives of Professional Women in Contemporary China."

**Kimberlee Staking** co-presented a paper, "Cross-continental Transdisciplinary Conceptions of Women's Health and Well-Being: Growth of Learners in an Online Constructivist Learning Environment," with Vivienne Bozalek of the University of Western Cape, South Africa, at the 2008 International Society of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

**Amy Washburn** has been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Union County College, Elizabeth, New Jersey. She will teach English Composition I & II, Women in Literature, World Literature, Black American

Literature, Introduction to Poetry, and Introduction to Contemporary Literature. During the past year she has delivered several conference presentations, including, "Read the (Red) Leaves;" Revolution, Naturalized & Nature, Revolutionized in Merle Collins' Angel," at the Stony Brook Women's Studies Conference, New York.

### Alumni and Faculty News

**Kimberly Williams** has been appointed Assistant Professor of Women's Studies in the Department of Humanities at Mount Royal University in Calgary, AB, Canada, where she is currently teaching "Feminist Theories" and an introductory course entitled "Issues for Women Globally." The revised book manuscript of her dissertation, entitled *Imagining Russia: Toward a Feminist Analysis of American Nationalism in U.S.-Russian Relations*, was selected as one of three finalists in the SUNY Press Dissertation/First Book Prize in Women's and Gender Studies. Her article, "Crime, Corruption, and Chaos: Sex Trafficking and the 'Failure' of U.S. Russia Policy," will be published in the Winter 2010 issue of the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*.

**J.V. Sapinosa** successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, titled "From 'Quare' to 'Kweer:' Towards a Queer Asian American Critique." His dissertation focuses on the movement towards a queer Asian American critique, or "kweer studies," and directs attention to nationality and national belonging as a way of expanding beyond the black/white binary which currently predominates. J.V. will serve as Acting Assistant Director of LGBT Studies at UMD, where he will teach while overseeing day-to-day operations for the program, including advising.

**Ruth E. Zambrana**, Director of CRGE and **Laura A. Logie**, Assistant Director, will be attending the 137<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Exposition of the American Public Health Association in Philadelphia, PA from November 8-11. Drawing data from Laura's dissertation, a poster session and a paper session were accepted. Logie and Zambrana will present, amongst others, a paper titled, "Health Care Factors most likely to Predict Self-Perceived Health Status among Central and South American Immigrants." They gratefully acknowledge the Latino Health Initiative (LHI) of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) for the survey design, administration of the survey and access to the database for this study.

**Katie King** has returned from sabbatical, during which she completed a draft of her new book, "Networked Reenactments, Flexible Knowledges under Globalization." She presented a paper at the Digital Humanities Annual Meetings for a feminist panel on Blogger Grrrls entitled "Are Social Media Virtual Worlds? Getting at Cognitive Sensation." This paper will appear in a special issue of the PA Journal in the coming year, "Visualizing the Archive." She will be the keynote speaker at The Social Life of Methods Feminist Conference (Fall 2010) in Oxford, England.

## Women's Studies set to partner with the IAF

The Department of Women's Studies has launched a process of exploring exciting new research opportunities for both students and faculty with the Inter-American Foundation (IAF).

As an independent agency of the United States government, the IAF provides grants to non-governmental and community-based organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean for innovative, sustainable and participatory self-help programs. To better execute its mission, the IAF has approached the Department with the aim of developing several collaborative projects, focusing on gender and development, and gender mainstreaming in non-governmental organizations.

Acting Chair of the Department of Women's Studies, Prof. Seung-kyung Kim has indicated that all levels of Women's Studies community will benefit from the proposed collaboration. Women's Studies faculty are considering delivering seminars on gender and development to the organization. A project to place graduate and undergraduate students in internships with the IAF is also in the pipeline. These projects may be especially beneficial to students who are bilingual, and have specialized research interests in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Director of the IAF's Office of Evaluation, Dr. Emilia Rodriguez-Stein, says the Women's Studies Department was an obvious choice for its partnership. "The Department is one of the best in the country for its approach to applied research and superb understanding of the issues that women around the globe face, and particularly in developing nations. I also know some faculty members are the best scholars and most accomplished writers in the field," she says.

## E. Ethelbert Miller to speak at "This, Too, Is Women's Studies" Series

After a successful inaugural year, the "This, Too, is Women's Studies" speaker series continues in the Fall of 2009 with a reading and lecture by acclaimed local writer, E. Ethelbert Miller. Miller will lead a discussion titled



"Masculinity and Memoir" on October 21 at 6pm. He will discuss his second memoir, *The 5th Inning*, published earlier this year. Following on *Fathering Words: The Making of an African American Writer* (2000), *The 5th Inning* finds Miller returning to baseball, the game of his youth, as a metaphor that will provide the measurement of his life. He reflects upon his life and whether it will be entered into the official record books as a success or failure.

Well-known as a literary activist, E. Ethelbert Miller is the board chairperson of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and The Writer's Center. He edits *Poet Lore* magazine, and since 1974, he has been the director of the African American Resource Center at Howard University. Miller is the former chair of the Humanities Council of Washington, D.C. and a former core faculty member of the Bennington Writing Seminars at Bennington College.

## Women's Studies Welcomes a New Cohort of Ph.D. students

**Renina Jarmon** has a BA from the New School, New York, in Psychology, and is concerned with the importance of labor, power and inequity. She left law school because she "cared about critiquing the larger cultural and social system in which our interpretations of the law are informed. There was a distinction between working within a system to reinforce gender paradigms as an agent of change to analyze, expose and potentially transform these systems," she says. Her research areas of interest are broadly: women, labor and the city, sustainability, politics and new economies, black female sexuality and pop culture.

**Michélé Prince** has a BA in Women's Studies and Political Science from the University of Washington. Through her research she hopes to reclaim a space for Black women and Black mothers in US popular culture. Michélé's research interests include motherhood, motherhood and masculinity, and the politics of the female body. She wants to do comparative work on the range of motherhood types and the social construction of racial identities and bodies. Michélé is an IRT and McNair Scholar.

**Katie White** earned a BA in English and Women's Studies from Georgetown University, and has an MA from San Diego State in Women's Studies. She is interested in food, people, place and memory. Her investigations have led her to learn how certain foods came to be commonly consumed in the mid-Atlantic and southeastern US with a primary interest in Gullah culture and communities. Katie's focus on food and gender led to her interests in the African diaspora, and violence against women, especially in the Congo.

**Yuen Mei Wong** is a Fulbright scholar with a BA in Film and Political Science from the University of Science of Malaysia-Penang, and an MA in Feminist Media Studies from the same university. Currently Yuen Mei is a recipient of the Awards Program for Young Scholars in Southeast Asia and China on Gender, Sexuality and Health. Her future project is informed by feminism scholarship and social construction theory in examining Chinese women's same-sex sexuality in post-colonial Malaysia, with a focus on the lived experiences, gender/sexual identities and subjectivities of a Chinese community of women located in the city of Malacca.