

Women's Studies News

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Page 1: EnRiching the campus with poetry

Page 2: Vagina Monologues review

Page 3: WMS Fall '09 Highlights ; Outstanding Women Awards

Page 4: Spotlight on first graduating WMS majors

Page 5: Spotlight on graduating majors continued ; Siren submissions

Page 6: Women's History Month

Page 7: New WMS faculty spotlights ; Rich continued

Page 8: WMS Director's Report

Check out our website, WMS on the web:

www.umassd.edu/CAS/WMS

EnRiching the campus with poetry

by Jeannette Riley

World-renowned poet and activist Adrienne Rich will be the honored guest and read her poetry at the 2nd Annual Women's Studies Program and Women's Resource Center Fundraiser on April, 30 at 5:30 p.m. on the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth campus. The public is invited to participate in this fundraising event, which is co-sponsored by the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts.

Rich is a widely acclaimed literary figure who, in her writing, explores women's experiences, identities and histories. In her book of essays, *What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*, Rich writes that "the reading or hearing of a poem can transform consciousness" as poetry creates the "seeing and touching of another, of others, through language." Known for coining the phrase, "The personal is the political," for more than fifty years, Adrienne Rich's eloquent and visionary writings have shaped the world of poetry as well as feminist and political thought.

Rich will join the UMass Dartmouth community for the second annual fundraiser to support the Women's Studies Program endowment for student scholarships and the work of the Women's Resource Center on campus and in the community.

The first fundraising event held in February 2008 featured Gloria Steinem who spoke with an audience of over 200 people about her "aha" moments in the women's movement and her lifelong work to create women's social equality. Steinem's presence helped establish



the Women's Studies endowment for student scholarships and raised over \$25,000. The first scholarships to a student majoring in Women's Studies and a student minoring in Women's Studies will be awarded this spring for the Fall 2009 semester.

In addition to providing a reading of her work, along with commentary, Rich will sign books for interested people immediately following the dinner and reading. Books will be on sale at the event from the UMass Dartmouth Campus Store. A raffle of a framed broadside of an autographed Rich poem will also be held.

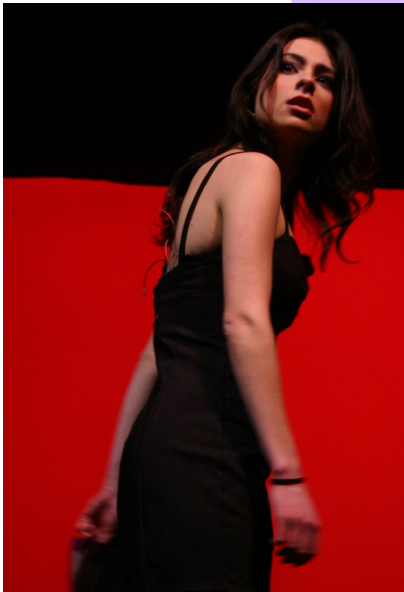
Since receiving the Yale Younger Poets Award at the age of 21, Adrienne Rich continues to exceed her own literary boundaries. Her poetry has been honored with a National Book Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, the first Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, and the National Poetry Association Award for Distinguished Service to the Art of Poetry, among others. She has also been distinguished by an Academy of American Poets Fellowship and a MacArthur Fellowship. She is the

see RICH page 7

Vagina Monologues opens lips, eyes and hearts at UMass Dartmouth

On February 20th and 21st, 2009, The Vagina Monologues showed for two successful performances at the Angus Bailey Auditorium. The show has become a perennial favorite for both men and women at UMass Dartmouth, being performed for the fourth time in as many years and nine times total.

Over 400 people from UMass Dartmouth and the greater community attended the shows, with many saying this was the best year yet for the vaginas of UMassD.



The show shares the stories, memories, thoughts, and feelings of women, all based on over 200 interviews conducted by playwright Eve Ensler and presented in the form of monologues. Subjects covered include sexuality, a variety of names for the vagina, feelings on pubic hair, orgasms, and birth. Crowd favorites include "My Angry Vagina," a woman's rumination on her angry genitalia, and "The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy," in which a female sex worker demonstrates several types of orgasms for the audience, were performed by Stephanie Luz and Olivia Sahlin, respectively and were received

particularly well this year.

Three personal monologues from cast members were also included in this year's rendition of the show, a tradition that began the previous year.



The cast and production team also chose to highlight the issue of domestic violence in their performance. The cast wore purple and black as a way to support the purple ribbon campaign, which commemorates victims and survivors of domestic violence. Two optional monologues "The Crooked Braid" and "They Beat the Girl out of My Boy... Or So They Tried" - both monologues about abuse - were chosen by the directors to highlight this serious issue. Finally, all proceeds from the show were donated to the Domestic Violence Prevention program at the Women's Center, Inc. in New Bedford and to the women of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The show was not received without controversy. This year's advertising campaign included several racy teaser posters with slogans such as "Read our lips. They're open and waiting for you to come" and "You should come. We will too," were met with mixed reactions. Instantly recognizable by their logo, color theme and style, the eye-catching posters were first approved and later removed. One administrator explained that the recent budget crisis at UMass has caused many people to lose their sense of humor, and noted that many people were offended by the sexual allusions the posters contained. Regardless, there is no

doubt that this year's advertising campaign was highly effective, as the show had the highest attendance and raised more money than any VMons in recent history.

This year's production was directed by seniors Megan Gauthier and Laura McHugh, spending their second and final year together as a directing team.

The two were immensely proud of this year's production, particularly "the highly talented and cohesive cast, which really is what makes or breaks a production," says McHugh.

The Vagina Monologues 2009 was an undoubted success in terms of entertainment, artistic quality, and as a charitable fundraiser. Let us hope that future years continue the strong legacy of vaginas at UMass Dartmouth!



WMS Fall '09 Course Highlights

ENL/WMS 347: Contemporary Women Novelists

Prof. Jeannette Riley

In this course, we will read novels by contemporary women writers from the United States, Canada, India, and Jamaica. We will read these works against a backdrop of feminist literary criticism as we examine how the identity of "Woman" necessarily intersects and merges with the identities of race, class, sexuality, and history. These theoretical readings are intended to help us bring different perspectives to the texts in order to fully analyze the novels we are reading.

Our goal is to move beyond reader response reactions to the novels, as well as learn more about the history and issues inherent to the field of feminist literary criticism. We will also discuss how these novels (re)present contemporary issues. In doing so, we will discover and examine how "[I]f one is a woman, that is surely not all one is" (Butler).

PSY/WMS 375: Psychology of Sex Differences

Prof. Thomas Boone

In this active learning style class, we will read assigned texts and hold discussions on various theories and research that consider the question of sex differences. We will examine sexism and stereotypes both in the world and in our daily lives, going so far as to perform an act that is atypical of our gender for the purpose of thinking about how our societal ideals influence the way we act.

At the completion of this course, you should be able to discuss the major questions and issues regarding sex differences and how such differences, real or perceived, might impact your day-to-day life.

SOC/ANT/WMS 300: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Identity and Culture

Prof. Penn Reeve

In this course, we will examine what is meant by sexual orientation and transgender identity and their relationship to each other. We will look at the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights movements as well as the social history of same gender relations and gender variation in the US, including the process of "coming out." We will also discuss the social construction of gender and sexual identity, including variations in identity thoughts and behavior as well as homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in US social institutions.

We will explore the importance of religion in forming opinions about homosexuality and gender variation. Finally, we will discuss the current debate in the US over the legitimacy of gay adoptions, and gays serving in the military.

PSC/WMS 216: President Obama and the Politics of Welfare Reform

Prof. Heidi Berggren

In this class, our first task will be to gain some perspective on the policies and politics related to welfare in the United States by putting these into a broader theoretical, historical and comparative context. We will then focus specifically on the politics of welfare and welfare reform in the United States. We will highlight certain negative themes, including the roles played by assumptions about race and social class and assumptions about men, women, work and family. We will also examine the economic, partisan, ideological, interest group, public-opinion, and mass-media components of the politics of welfare. In undertaking these tasks, we will follow and assess both the impact of the stimulus package President Obama signed in his early days in office and other policy changes he has made that are relevant to welfare.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2009 Outstanding Women's Awards!

Staff Award : Beth-Anne Vieira
Faculty Award : Brenda Berube
Student Award: Sherrie Anne Andre

Congratulations to the first graduating Women's Studies Majors!

Meghan Thompson

Senior Meghan Thompson is big- chief[tess] on campus at UMass Dartmouth. She is one of the founding sisters of Iota Delta Nu sorority, an ARD in Hickory/Birch and one of the first students to graduate with a major in Women's Studies - with a dual major in Psychology.

Thompson is excited to be one of the first to graduate with a WMS degree. She is uncertain as to her future career plans, but knows that she would like to go back to school for a Master's Degree. Ideally, she would like to work with women or children in some way that benefits them, which was no doubt fueled by her involvement in Women's Studies.

Of her experience in WMS courses at UMassD, Thompson notes, "I have learned about female empowerment and feminism." She discusses how feminism is misunderstood by our society and asserts that people should be more open minded when it comes to the topic, adding: "They just might find out that they are feminists, too!"

Since becoming involved in Women's Studies, Thompson has worked with the Women's Shelter in New Bedford, donating both personal care products and school supplies for children along with a group of other women. She has also become more involved with the Women's Resource Center, working with Dr. Juli Parker, Director of the WRC, to put on the early feminist play "Trifles," written by Susan Glaspell.

Thompson's favorite Women's Studies class was "actually a combined history class that looked at women in Africa." She admits, "At first, I was not a fan of this class, and then we began talking about controversial issues that really got me thinking about different types of activism that I could take part in to change the lives of women." She is also quite fond of "Mothers and Daughters," a class taught by Dr. Parker which explores the complex relationship between mothers and daughters. Says Thompson of the course, "It's really opening my eyes



to motherhood and is helping me to understand where my mother is coming from on different issues."

We wish Thompson the best of luck in her endeavours and expect to see great things from her.

Michelle Hall

Senior Michelle Hall is one of four graduating Women's Studies Majors. As if dual-majoring in both Psychology and WMS isn't enough, Hall also holds the position of a third year RA in Oak Glen Hall and is a founder of the Iota Delta Nu sorority.

Hall, formerly of Winchester Massachusetts, originally took WMS 101 as a general education course and never though she would end up being a Women's Studies major. She explains "After I took the initial class, I decided I really liked the issues discussed and became a minor." As she progressed through her minor, she became increasingly

interested in the issues and decided to become a double major.

Her favorite Women's Studies class was WMS 101 (Introduction



to Women's Studies) because "it laid such a good foundation for all of the other classes to follow," she says. She adds, "I really wish that

WMS 101 was made into a larger class so it would be available to more students. I think this would help add more students to the program.

Overall, Hall is very glad that she decided to take WMS 101 and proud to be one of the first graduating WMS majors. Her future plans include taking a year off and then hopefully pursuing Law School.

We wish Hall the best of luck in her studies and hope she will continue to follow her path to success.

First graduating Women's Studies Majors continued

Yvonne Hitchens

Yvonne Hitchens is set to graduate with a Women's Studies Major. She began her career at UMass Dartmouth as a Liberal Arts major and notes, "I started working on my degree later in life!"

After taking the eye-opening class History of Feminist Thought, Hitchens realized how unfairly women have been treated throughout history and how little protection there is for women - legally and otherwise. While taking the course, it was brought to her attention that Women's Studies was going to become a major. Professor Elizabeth Lehr suggested that it might be good for her.

Once she declared WMS as her major, she gushes "I felt comfortable that it was, in fact, a good fit, and it has made me explore my own experiences and priorities as a woman and work in what ways I can to change both myself and others."

Although Hitchens has not

done any work specifically through WMS at UMass Dartmouth due to family and work commitments, over the last few years she has been involved with Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign. She has also participated in protests in New York City and engaged in letter-writing campaigns toward oppressive governments.

Hitchen's favorite Women's Studies class was American Women Playwrights with Professor Houser. She explains "I have always enjoyed the theater and plays chosen for the class gave a wonderful cross-section of women's lives and experiences. It was a class that was a break away from some of the feminist theory and explored women's lives through the arts."

Hitchens' future plans include going to Boston University's School of Social Work for Fall 2009. Although she already works in



the field, she is looking forward to internship placements with BU to broaden her perspective regarding women and their place in the world.

We would like to congratulate Yvonne for her acceptance to BU and we wish her the best of luck in pursuing her desired career.

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UMass Dartmouth celebrates Women's History Month

by Megan Gauthier

Every March, the Women's Resource Center goes all out to celebrate Women's History Month - and this year is no exception! Over the course of the month, the WRC - in conjunction with other Departments and organizations, including the International Student & Scholar Center - hosted an astounding eleven events honoring women.

The events kicked off with a viewing of the film "Disposable Men," which looks at African-American males in contemporary media. Hosted by the Mentors in Violence Prevention, which is a program of the WRC, the movie was followed by a Panel Discussion.

A lecture was held in the Library Browsing Area on March 5, which looked into "The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade," led by RISD Photography Professor, Ann Fessler.

On Sunday, March 8, the New Bedford YWCA in conjunction with UMass Dartmouth's FMLA brought "Sweet Indulgence" to over 150 women from the community. Females flocked to the Woodland Commons for free massages, makeovers, psychic readings, fruit, raffles and spa treatments.

March 9 marked UMass Dartmouth's celebration of

International Women's Day (which was actually on March 8). The day's events included 5 guest speakers, including Keynote Speaker Dr. Sorosh Roshan, followed by the presentation of the 2009 Outstanding Women Awards.

Later that evening, the movie "Persopolis," which tells the story of an Iranian girl growing up under the Islamic Revolution, was presented by Professor Stephanie O'Hara. There was a second showing of the movie on March 31.

On March 10, the WRC co-sponsored a Fundraiser for Afghan Midwives with the Nursing Department and Midwives Associates. A movie on Afghan Midwives was played, followed by a panel on Global Women's Health.

The Shotokan Karate Club held a free Women's Self-Defense Clinic at the fitness center on March 11 to teach women ways to protect themselves, which is crucial to a campus environment.

On March 23, Dr. Anupama Arora spoke about prominent Indian literary and political figure Sarojini Naidu in America. Later that evening, Professor of History, Bridgette Sheridan, from Framingham State, discussed midwifery in pre-revolutionary France.

Dario Borim aired a special edition of the radio show

"Brazilliance" and explored "100 years of Women's Songwriting in Brazil" from 3 to 6 p.m. on UMD's own radio station, 89.3 on March 26.

Five lectures on "Women, Religion and Power" were presented on March 30 in the Library Browsing Area. Rose Horton discussed the passion of early Christian women martyrs, Matthew Thomas Sneider offered insight into "the mystic as crusader," Stephanie O'Hara discussed "The Defiant Nuns of Port Royal," Steven Baden presented "American Feminine Spirituality" and Robin Robinson presented 'We Had No Fear of Poverty...': Young Woman Religious in the Time of the Mortal Hunger."

Your celebration of womanhood should not be restricted to one month! The WRC celebrates females all year round and are thrilled to present American poet and feminist Adrienne Rich on April 30 as part of the annual UMass Dartmouth WRC and WMS Program fundraiser.

For more information on the WRC or any upcoming events, please visit www.umassd.edu/wrc



The Women's Studies Department is Hiring!

Student Intern for Publications

Earn 3 credits a semester for compiling and designing a semesterly department newsletter and overseeing the production of the annual female-centered literary journal, Siren.

If you are interested, please contact U_M1Gauthier@umassd.edu for more information.

Welcoming new Women's Studies faculty and affiliates

Anumpama Arora



Dr. Anupama Arora joined the UMD English department in Fall 2008. She received her Ph.D. in English literature from Tufts University where her dissertation was

on first-generation South Asian American autobiographies. Her B.A. (Honours) English degree is from Sri Venkateswara College, Delhi University, and her M.A. (Honours) English is from Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi). Dr. Arora's area of specialization is Anglophone postcolonial literatures from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia, and South Asian American diasporic cultural productions. Her teaching and research interests include gender studies, Asian American and Asian British literature, and literary theory and criticism. At her prior institution, she taught courses on women and literature, and non-western women's literature, among others. She is currently collaborating on a book project on the documentary history of South Asians in North America.

Matthew Sneider

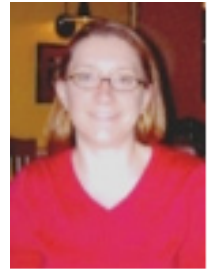
Matthew Sneider has been at UMass Dartmouth since 2004. He received his BA from the University of Colorado and his PhD in History from Brown University. His research and his publications focus on the history of confraternities in Early Modern Italy. He is currently working on lay spirituality in the country towns surrounding the city of Bologna in the 17th and 18th centuries. He likes to jump back in time too - he and a colleague have recently completed the first complete translation of the final book of Giovanni Villani's 14th century *New Chronicle*. He loves teaching WMS-316: Women and Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, a course which traces women's experience, and ideas about gender, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the Middle Ages. He invites everyone to come to the panel Women, Religion, and Power on 30 March!

Stephanie O'Hara

Stephanie O'Hara is Assistant Professor of French at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Prior to joining the faculty at UMass Dartmouth

in the fall of 2007, she was Visiting Assistant Professor of French at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (2004-2007), and Lecturer in French at Iowa State University (2003-2004). She received her Ph.D. from Duke University in 2003.

Prof. O'Hara teaches French language and literature courses. She is a specialist of early modern French literature. Her research and teaching interests also include women's studies, early modern European history, and the theory and practice of literary translation. She has completed a translation of the first European midwifery treatise written by a practicing midwife: Louise Bourgeois' *Various Observations concerning sterility, miscarriages, fertility, births, and diseases of women and newborn children* (1609), to be published by the University of Toronto Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies. She is also at work on a book project, *Poison Onstage and Offstage in Early Modern France*.



RICH: Poet Adrienne Rich to appear at UMass Dartmouth fundraiser

continued from page 1

a MacArthur Fellowship. She is the author of more than sixteen volumes of poetry, including, *Diving into the Wreck*, *The Dream of a Common Language*, *An Atlas of the Difficult World: Poems 1988-1991*, *Dark Fields of the Republic: Poems 1991-1995*, *Midnight Salvage*, and *Fox*. Her recent collection, *The School Among the Ruins*, was honored with the National Book Critics Circle Award and was chosen as one of *Library Journal's* Best Poetry picks of 2004.

The author of five books of non-fiction prose, including the famous *Of Woman Born*:

Motherhood as Experience and Institution, Rich will publish a new collection of essays, *A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society*, in April 2009.

All ticket proceeds benefit the endowment fund for student scholarships and the work of the Women's Resource Center. The student scholarships are awarded based on scholastic achievement, involvement in co-curricular activities with preference given to students from the South Coast region.

The Women's Studies Program and Women's Resource Center is especially pleased with

the support and co-sponsorship from the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, which highlights the cooperative relationship between the organizations and their common work for improving women's lives.

Tickets go on sale March 20, 2009. Sponsorship for a table of 8 is \$1,000, with individual tickets \$100. For more information, contact Dr. Juli Parker at jparker@umasd.edu or by calling 508.910.4584.

Tickets can also be ordered online at www.umassd.edu/cas/wms/rich.cfm

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Questions? Comments?
Suggestions?

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WMS Director's Report

Greetings from the Women's Studies Program! It is hard to believe that it has only been a year and a half since the WMS major began. Our **first** ever majors will be graduating in May and we wish them every success in their careers after they leave us.

Jen Riley is currently on sabbatical taking a well earned rest and writing a book. However, she is still active in many of the WMS projects, especially the second annual Women's Resource Center/ Women's Studies fundraiser. This year we are excited to have poet and feminist Adrienne Rich coming to campus on the 30th of April to

deliver a talk at a fundraising dinner. Monies raised from this event will go towards an endowment for student scholarships. In this current economic climate the ability to help students with the costs of their education grows ever more vital, especially for a program such as ours which recognizes at both an academic and a personal level the economic and social realities of our students. Tickets will go on sale in March, so please save the date and plan to attend.

The WMS program itself is blossoming. This is thanks in part to the energy of some of our newest affiliates; they are organizing some

great events and creating some wonderful new classes. The WMS online program is going full steam ahead and I hope to be able to report on its successes in the next newsletter

It looks as though this will be the last year that Megan Gauthier, our WMS student intern, is going to be the designer, editor (and writer !) of our newsletter. We shall be sorry to lose you, Megan, and thank you for all your wonderful work.

Best,
Cathy Gardner
*Interim Director,
Women's Studies*

