

Women's

Gender, and Sexuality

STUDIES

BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2023-2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

Letter from the Director

04

WGS Community Events

10

Small Grant Updates

11

Awards and Recognitions

13

New Faculty and Staff

15

Faculty Spotlight

19

New WGS Courses

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on a year that has been difficult – challenging and at times enraging – for gender and sexuality in America and around the world, I take heart from the good news and strong showing that Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies has shown here at Boston University. I am happy to report that this has been another good year for WGS; it gives me no small amount of joy to detail the growth of our program, and the accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff. This is a community in which I take great pride, and I hope you do as well.

I want to give a special thanks to G Forristall, who is just about to finish their first year as our program coordinator. I’m grateful to G not only for their deft and competent handling of the myriad of administrative tasks it takes to keep this program afloat but also for their fierce advocacy for our students.

Special thanks also go to the committed group of WGS undergraduates and alums, who this year organized both a book fair and a bake sale to raise funds for WGS and our new Community Impact Award. Congratulations to this year’s winners of the WGS Community Impact Award: Bahar Aldanmaz and Shre Venkatesan. Congratulations also to this year’s winners of the Sarah Joanne Davis Award: Elizabeth Natalie Ng and Lilian Belisle. Read more about these students and the awards they won [here](#). Many congratulations as well to the graduate students who completed the WGS certificate this year! See their names [here](#).

Our program continues to grow and thrive. This year we added five new [affiliate faculty](#) and eleven [new WGS courses](#). I am thrilled to welcome the newest member of the WGS community: Tesla Cariani. Tesla will be joining us as a full-time lecturer starting July 1st, 2024. Read more about Tesla [here](#). Our faculty are an impressive bunch. Read about some of their accomplishments [here](#). Often with their help, we have put on a number of WGS sponsored or co-sponsored events, which you can read about [here](#).

I wish all of us a restful, peaceful, and productive summer, and I look forward to joining all of you for another year of activism, scholarship, excellence, and joy with this extraordinary academic community.



WGS SPONSORED & CO-SPONSORED EVENTS



SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

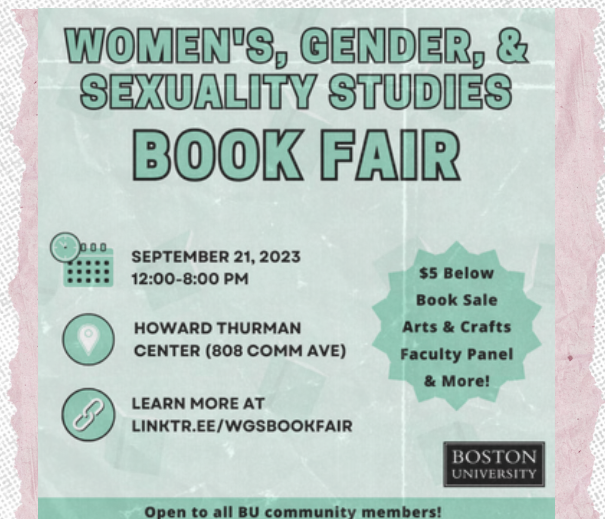
Surface Relations: Queer Forms of Asian American Inscrutability

A dialogue with author Vivian L. Huang, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at San Francisco State University specializing in race and performance studies, and respondent Evan Sakuma, PhD student in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley whose work queerly interrogates Asian american forms of kinship making.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

WGS Book Fair

The first ever student-led Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Book Fair featuring a \$5 and below book sale, bookmark crafting station, and WGS faculty panel that discussed book bans, censorship, and getting involved in WGS.



OCTOBER 10-12, 2023

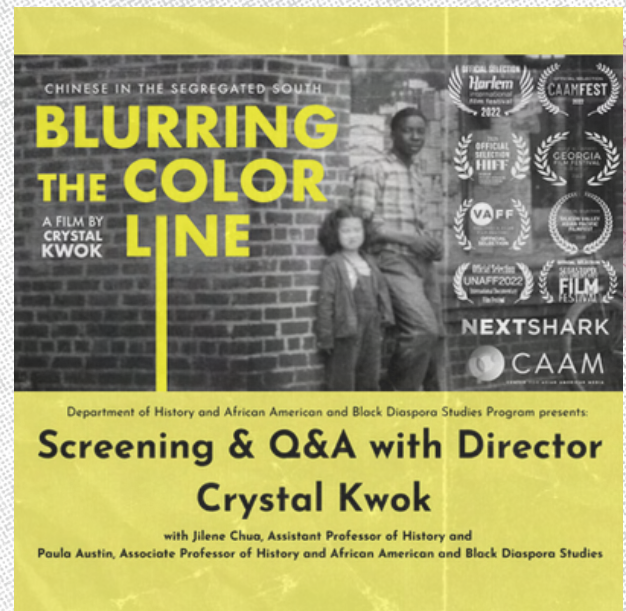
The Good Friday Agreement 20 Years On: Gendered and Grassroots Approaches to Peace and Conflict

A conference marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, centering the often overlooked "on-the-ground" efforts that operate at the intersection of gender, transitional justice, and peace-building in Northern Ireland.

OCTOBER 17, 2023

Blurring the Color Lines

What did it mean to be Chinese in Black spaces during segregation? Director Crystal Kwok digs into how her grandmother's family navigated life as grocery store owners in a black Augusta, Georgia neighborhood. The film weaves personal family stories with memories from the larger Chinese and Black communities, examining both anti-black racism and the deeply rooted structures of white supremacy and Chinese patriarchy. A Q&A with Director Crystal Kwok followed a screening of this film.



DECEMBER 4, 2023

The Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture Series: Jules Gill-Peterson on “What Sort of Work is Transition? Class, Labor, and Trans History”



JANUARY 19, 2024

Writing with Silence: Engaging with the Unspoken and Unspeakable in Humanistic and Qualitative Social Science Research Workshop

Whereas the social sciences and humanities have for a long time predominantly focused on what people say and do, scholars in and beyond anthropology are increasingly reflecting on the importance of including the unspoken and unspeakable in their analyses. This workshop, organized by Dr. Merav Shohet and Dr. Annmarie Samuels, included an introduction to ethnographic research and theory on silences and/in narratives, the presentation and discussion of participants' prepared short reflections, and a writing exercise.

JANUARY 24, 2024

Touching the Art: Book Talk & Signing with Queer Author & Activist Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore

A talk led by author and activist Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore on her new book *Touching the Art*. "A mixture of memoir, biography, criticism, and social history, *Touching the Art* is queer icon and activist Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore's interrogation of the possibilities of artistic striving, the limits of the middle-class mindset, the legacy of familial abandonment, and what art can and cannot do" ([Soft Skull Press](#)).

FEBRUARY 9, 2024

LGBTQIA+ Scholar Series: Ianna Hawkins Owen on "The Gayl Jones School of Queer Care: Cat Lawson and Consequence in Corregidora"

For Gayl Jones' neo-slave narrative novel *Corregidora* (1975), the reading and reception of descriptions of harm tend to overshadow descriptions of care for others. Among the casualties of such reading, we find the character Cat Lawson--her actions, her absent-presence, and her queer intimacy with protagonist Ursa Corregidora hinging on something other than desire. This talk engages in a painfully close reading of that intimacy and finds that Cat's literary and cultural consequence is not the flat homophobic harm she is often reduced to. Instead, Owen argues that Cat engages in a practice of black queer care that we still struggle to recognize today.

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

The Future Is Feminist

A discussion with historian Sara Rahnema on her new book *The Future is Feminist: women and Social Change in Interwar Algeria*.

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Black Trans Poetics

A poetry reading featuring Cameron Awkward-Rich, Levi Cain, and JR Mahung.

MARCH 10, 2024

23-24 Manuscript Workshop: Stereotypes & Scripts by Samia Hesni

A day of discussing WGS and Philosophy faculty member Samia Hesni's manuscript, *Stereotypes &*

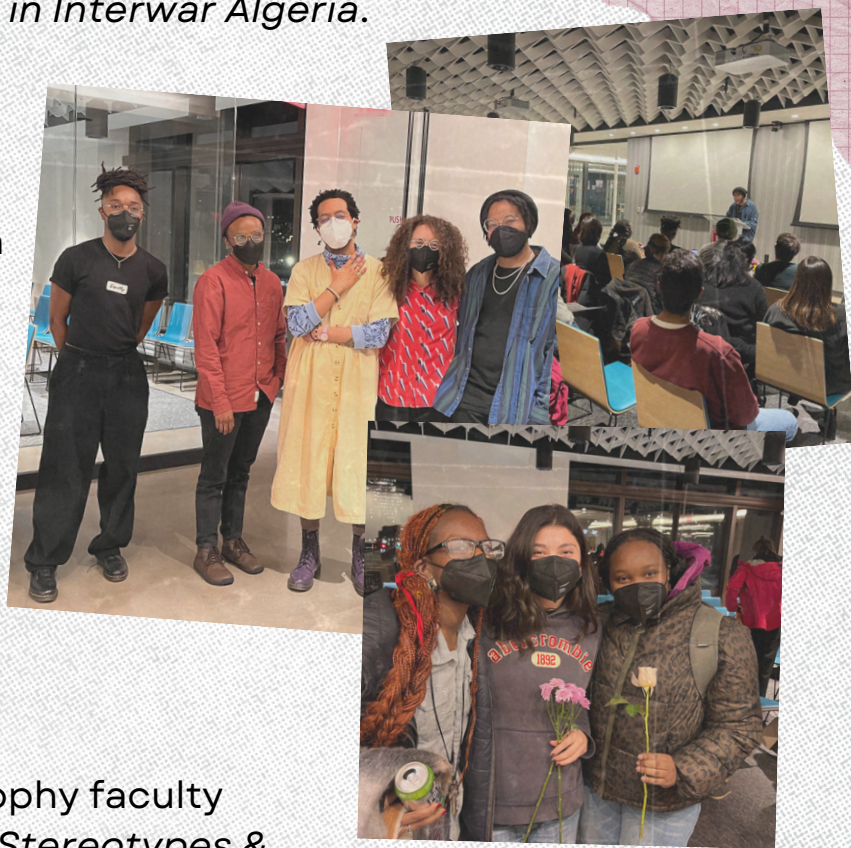
Scripts. This book analyzes two linguistic mechanisms for expressing and entrenching stereotypes: generics and social scripts. The first half of this book is primarily about the ways stereotyping language can be used to denigrate, oppress, or otherwise harm. The second half is about how the same linguistic mechanisms that entrench stereotypes can be used to resist and undermine stereotypes.



MARCH 25, 2024

Pedagogy Workshop

A WGS pedagogy workshop taught by Marie McDonough for WGS Graduate students.





MARCH 28, 2024

International Women's Day Celebration

Celebrate and honor all women in the movement of advancing art with compelling performances by renowned dancers, musicians, and poets as well as an opportunity to support women-owned businesses from around the globe at a vendor market featuring artwork, jewelry, and more!

APRIL 10, 2024

Feeling Sick: The Early Years of AIDS in Spain

Professor Dean Allbritton presented his new book *Feeling Sick*, which narrates a cultural history of the early years of the HIV/AIDS crisis in Spain as it has been told by television and print media, fiction film, ephemeral products of visual culture, and the so-called risk groups that lived through the epidemic.

APRIL 22, 2024

Discussion with Kaori Fujino

A reading and discussion with contemporary author Kaori Fujino.

MAY 1, 2024

End of the Year Party

We celebrated the end of the year, and honored students who have completed their WGS Graduate Certificate and the 2024 recipients of the Sarah Joanne Davis Award and the brand new WGS Community Impact Award.

MAY 1, 2024

The Future of Trans Studies

A discussion of Rachel Mesch's *Before Trans: Three Gender Stories from Nineteenth Century France*, followed by an informal discussion on the field of trans studies with Professors Rachel Mesch and Micah Goodrich.



SEMINAR SERIES



APRIL 3, 2024

Eman Abdelhadi “Impossible Futures: Why Women Leave American Muslim Communities”

Relationships between individual Muslim Americans and Muslim Community spaces—like mosques and Islamic schools—

shift over the life course, but these trajectories are gendered. While both women and men wander out of Muslim communities in emerging adulthood, women who leave tend to stay away while men often return. Using life history interviews, this talk empirically establishes this discrepancy and explains it. I argue that Muslim communities express their anxieties about the future by monitoring women’s bodies and behaviors, creating unintended pressures that complicate women’s relationships with Islam and drive women out of Muslim communities.

APRIL 24, 2024

Umayyah Cable “Coming Out for Community, Coming Out for the Cause: Queer Palestinian-American Activism in the 1990s”



This talk focuses on the life experience and political activism of Palestinian-American lesbian activist Huda Jadallah as a representative example of how lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT/Queer) Arab Americans came out both queer communities and Arab American communities in the 1980s and 1990s. Dr. Cable argues that this dual outness was utilized as a strategy through which to accomplish three interrelated aims: to build a queer Arab American community, utilize that community as a starting point from which to challenge anti-Arab racism within queer communities, and challenge homophobia in Arab American communities. Based on an oral history interview with Jadallah, in conjunction with analysis of Jadallah’s personal ephemera collection, this talk takes a queer archiving methodological approach to consider how outness as strategy may also be utilized with regard to queer Arab American archiving and history

SMALL GRANTS

Every year, the WGS Program awards faculty small grants to assist with research expenses and other projects. Check out this year's grantees!

Shannon Peters

I greatly appreciate receiving a WGS Small Grant to fund my research, “A Pilot Project Exploring Gender-Competent Care of Folx with Eating Disorders in LGBTQ+ Communities.” This project is conducted in collaboration with co-researchers in BU’s Nutrition Program: Paula Quatromoni and Meg Salvia. The project applies phenomenological qualitative research methods to characterize the lived experience of eating disorder treatment among members of LGBTQIA2s+ communities who seek treatment, and specifically to learn about the experience of gender-affirming eating disorder care. So far, we have conducted 16 in-depth interviews with people who have attended the first eating disorder treatment program in the country devoted to treating LGBTQIA2s+ folx. Funds were used to pay student research assistants for transcription of interview recordings. Preliminary findings have been presented at three conferences, including a poster with a student research assistant as first author. The Academy of Eating Disorders awarded our abstract the “Early Career SIG Best Abstract Award- Research Focused.”

Jennifer Cazenave

I received a small grant from WGS to pay for a French translation of my first book, *An Archive of the Catastrophe: The Unused Footage of Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah*.

Takeo Rivera

Thanks to a WGS Small Grant, Untangle, BU’s Asian American student zine, was able to publish their third issue, entitled POP! Photos are from the Untangle’s launch party this semester.



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

SARAH JOANNE DAVIS AWARD WINNERS

This annual award is given to a Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies minor who has made a significant contribution by either writing a paper in one of their WGS courses, or to their community through activism, leadership, artistic creation, publication, political engagement, or other initiatives.



**BAHAR
ALDANMAZ**



**SHRE
VENKATESAN**



**ELIZABETH
NATALIE NG**

*"How Women Have
Redefined the Saree
in Post-Colonial
India"*



**LILIAN
BELISLE**

*"The Illegibility of
Queer Nonconformity:
An Analysis of
Boundary
Maintenance in the
Context of LGBTQ+
Artists"*

WGS COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD WINNERS

The WGS Community Impact Award is presented to outstanding students whose research and/or advocacy work has made a significant, positive impact on Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) communities in ways related to the field of WGS. This award emphasizes the value of students' enduring commitment to serving marginalized communities, both during and after obtaining their degree. The award honors Christa Rose and WGS alumni's legacy of student advocacy and celebrates individuals who exemplify the values of social justice, inclusivity, and dedication to the well-being and advancement of marginalized communities.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

WGS GRADUATE CERTIFICATE COMPLETIONS

Caitlin Cooper

Ph.D, Educational Studies

Janelle Robins

JD, Law

Landon Lauder

Ph.D, Sociology

Leticia Castillo Brache

Ph.D, Philosophy

Mónica Rey

Ph.D, Religious Studies

FACULTY INTRODUCTION



MEET THE NEWEST WGS PROFESSOR



TESLA CARIANI

As a scholar and teacher of queer and trans visual cultures, I am delighted to be joining the WGS Program at BU following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Rice University's Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. I received my PhD in English as well as a graduate certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Emory University in 2021.

My research on contemporary media and literature examines how gender, sexuality, and race are fundamentally shaped by the visual. My current book project, *Visibility Will Not Save Us: Violence, Embodiment, and Affect in Queer and Trans Media*, grapples with the potential violence of—and cultural desire for—queer and trans visibility. This project investigates how issues of visibility such as witnessing, collective memory, exposure, invisibility, and hypervisibility surface across genres and at different moments within the last five decades of LGBTQ+ activism. Moving between film, literature, graphic narratives, and photography, each chapter brings together artists and authors whose work responds to histories of violence. *Visibility Will Not Save Us* traces aesthetic and narrative strategies that challenge representational conventions to offer new politics and possibilities for queer and trans life. My work has been published in *Parallax*, *PMLA*, *The LGBTQ Comics Studies Reader* (winner of the 2023 Eisner Award for Best Academic/Scholarly Work), and *The Routledge Handbook of Trans Literature*.

As a teacher, I draw on feminist and anti-racist pedagogies to inspire a sense of curiosity in the classroom. Related to practices of self-discovery, a curious orientation to the world enables students to perceive what is taken for granted—the systems, beliefs, relationships, and narratives that shape our lives and worlds. Curiosity is also a fundamental ingredient in the act of close-reading and critique. In the classroom, I cultivate curiosity as a mode of inquiry by facilitating community-engaged learning, curating diverse materials, and supporting student research.

In fall 2024, I will be teaching two courses:

CAS WS 200 Thinking Queerly: An Introduction to LGBTQ Studies. In this course, we will explore historical and contemporary formations of LGBTQIA+ politics, identities, and communities. Through the lens of gender and sexuality, we will focus on understanding systems of power, theories of social justice, and modes of resistance.

CAS WS 420 / XL 420 Queer Theory. Through readings and focused discussions, we will grapple with what is meant by “queer” and “queer theory” by exploring key issues and core debates that appear within both scholarship and histories of activism. Some major themes we will investigate along the way include: deviancy, performativity, intersectionality, embodiment, kinship, affect, and globalization.

In the future, I look forward to collaborating on initiatives that build community within the WGS Program as well as teaching courses that critically engage trans and two-spirit studies, queer theory, queer of color critique, disability studies, affect theory, visual media, and popular culture.

FACULTY INTRODUCTION

MEET OUR NEW AFFILIATE FACULTY



**CELESTE
CURINGTON**

Assistant Professor
of Sociology



AUSTIN LEE

Postdoctoral
Scholar



KERSTI FRANCIS

Postdoctoral
Scholar



RACHEL MESCH

Professor of French



**CATALINA
RODRÍGUEZ**

Assistant Professor
of Spanish

FACULTY & STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Every year we like to celebrate our faculty and staff members—who span across many disciplines—and their professional accomplishments

Jennifer Cazenave

- Jennifer published a scholarly article, “*Home as Survival: Seeing Queer Archival Lives*,” in *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* (winter 2023)
- In November 2023, Jennifer was quoted in the French newspaper *Le Monde* and gave a talk at the Centre Pompidou in Paris on the question of gender in the Shoah outtakes.

Cati Connell

- New publication (2nd author a former WGS minor, 3rd a former WGS certificate student!): Connell, Cati, io Fields, & Elliot Chudyk. 2024. “*The Myth of Lesbian Generation Loss: Finding Intergenerational Solidarities in Digital Sexual Selfhood Projects*.” *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/10894160.2024.2334138
- Cati received the outstanding Book Award, SSSP Division of Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities for *A Few Good Gays: The Gendered Compromises Behind Military Inclusion* (2023)
- Cati gave the Introduction and was the moderator for the BU Howard Zinn Memorial Lecture by Dr. Jules Gill-Peterson, BU (fall 2023)

Sean Desilets

- Sean has an article coming out this summer called “*Paul's Remediation*” that is appearing in the *Journal of Religion* in July. The article argues that Paul's letters (which are the earliest books in the New Testament) should be regarded as self-conscious media, and that understanding them as such is central to grasping their theology.
- Sean spoke at a rally in support of the BUGWU strike this last spring, arguing especially against the fake alt-grading paradigm the University is using in classes in which striking grad students are the instructors of record.

Megan Elias

- Megan J. Elias co-hosted the Queer Food Conference at BU April 27 and 28, with Alexandra D. Ketchum of McGill University. We had about 160 attendees in person and online and the event was featured in the New York Times and Boston Globe. The event brought together scholars and practitioners to explore convergences of queerness and food.

G Forristall

- G co-produced *Performers for Palestine*, raising \$4500 for various organizations and mutual aid funds.

Petrus Liu

- **Petrus has been promoted to Full Professor.**
- Petrus published *Platinum Bible of the Public Toilet*, a collection of queer stories translated from Chinese (Duke University Press, Feb. 2024).
- Petrus published “*Homonormativity’s Racial Capitalism*” in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 123, no. 1 (2024).
- Petrus published “*Queer: A Term from/of the Global South*” in *The Funambulist*, no. 50 (Nov/Dec 2023).
- Petrus published “*Queerer Marxismus in beiden Chinas. Marxismus, queerer Liberalismus und das Dilemma der beiden Chinas*” in *Queer Studies: Schlüsseltexte* (Queer Studies: Key Works) (Berlin: Suhrkamp Press, 2023).

Sarah Miller

- **Sarah has been appointed as an Assistant Professor in Sociology.**



PETRUS LIU



SARAH MILLER

Ianna Hawkins Owen

- Ianna's essay "*More: Cake, Feedism, and Asexuality*" in Social Text received honorable mention for the Crompton-Noll Prize for Best LGBTQ Studies Article from the ASA's Q/T Caucus and the MLA's GLQ Caucus. Squee! Their 2024 press release was recently shared [here](#) if you'd like to see more.

Shannon Peters

- Shannon has been appointed as a Clinical Assistant Professor.

Takeo Rivera

- Takeo Rivera (English) won the Association for Asian American Studies' 2024 book award Honorable Mention for Media, Performance, and Visual Studies for his book *Model Minority Masochism: Performing the Cultural Politics in Asian American Masculinity*.



Christa Rose

- Christa Rose was featured in Curve Magazine's 2024 LGBTQ+ Women and Nonbinary Trailblazers! The Curve team chose 50 outstanding changemakers for this inaugural list.

Christopher Schmitt

- Christopher has received tenure.

Merav Shohet

- Merav has received an Undergraduate Academic Advising Award from Boston University

Karen Warkentin

- Prof. Warkentin published five biology papers with students and collaborators:



- Lisondro-Arosemena A, Salazar-Nicholls MJ, Warkentin KM. 2024. Elevated ammonia cues hatching in red-eyed treefrogs: A mechanism for escape from drying eggs. **J Exp Zool B** early online.
- Güell BA, McDaniel JG, Warkentin KM. 2024. Egg-clutch biomechanics affect escape-hatching behavior and performance. **Integr Org Biol** 6: obae006.
- Güell BA, Warkentin KM. 2023. To hatch and hatch not: does heterochrony in onset of vestibular mechanosensing explain species differences in escape-hatching success of *Agalychnis* embryos in snake attacks? **Behav Ecol Sociobiol** 77: 141.
- Güell BA, Warkentin KM. 2023. Phenology and environmental determinants of explosive breeding in gliding treefrogs: Diel timing of rainfall matters. **Behav Ecol**
- Méndez-Narváez J, Warkentin KM. 2023. Early onset of urea synthesis and ammonia detoxification pathways in three terrestrially developing frogs. **J Comp Physiol B** 193: 523–543.
- Prof. Warkentin also published two book chapters for general audiences:
 - Warkentin KM. 2024. Lessons in patience: Frog eggs, snakes, and rain. In Crump ML (ed) *Lost Frogs and Hot Snakes: Herpetologists' Tales from the Field*. Cornell University Press. p. 235–241. [A portion of the proceeds from this book supports students to attend a herpetology meeting.]
 - Warkentin KM. 2023. From childhood curiosity to an egg-science career: Social and environmental effects on the development of an integrative biologist. In Arifin U, Caviedes-Solis IW, Poo S (Eds) *Women in Herpetology: 50 Stories from Around the World*. p. 254–259. Global Women in Herpetology. [All proceeds from book sales fund women and minority gender students to attend the World Congress of Herpetology]
- Prof. Warkentin served on the intensive advisory board for an inclusive science education project funded by the National Science Foundation, *NSF-IUSE: Fostering More Accurate and Identity-Affirming Science Teaching and Learning at Hispanic-Serving Institutions*.

NEW WGS COURSES

WS 341

The Quran

WS 345/635

Shariah Law

WS 382

Women's Literary Cultures

WS 398

Feminist Political Theory

WS 442/642

Philosophy and Feminism

WS 445/645

Gender & Islam

WS 465/665

Intersectionalities:
Theories, Methods, & Praxis

WS 460/660

Topics in LGBTQ History

WS 506

Food and Gender

WS 512

Sexual Violence

WS 542

Language, Race, and
Gender

**MORE CLASSES TO
COME IN 2024-
2025!**



WS/EN 562: Asexualities, Spring 2024

CREDITS

Design and copyediting by G Forristall

Screenshot by Ianna Hawkins Owen featuring Vivian L. Huang, Evan Sakuma, Takeo Rivera, Kathryn Lakin, and Ianna Hawkins Owen (Surface Relations: Queer Forms of Asian American Inscrutability, Page 4)

Photos by Ianna Hawkins Owen, featuring (from left to right, top to bottom) Bryeson Henry, Cameron Awkward-Rich, JR Mahung, Ianna Hawkins Owen, Levi Cain, Kyla Smith, Chloe Jad, and Reginae Echols (Black Trans Poetics, Page 7)

Photos by Susanne Sreedhar (Manuscript Workshop, page 7)

Photo by Marie McDonough (Pedagogy Workshop, page 7)

Photo by G Forristall, featuring Rachel Mesch and Micah Goodrich (The Future of Trans Studies, page 8)

Photos by Takeo Rivera of Untangle (Small Grants, page 10)

Photo by Takeo Rivera (Faculty & Staff Spotlight, Page 17)

Photo courtesy of Curve Magazine (Faculty & Staff Spotlight, Page 17)

Photos by Ianna Hawkins Owen (New WGS Courses, Page 19)