Congratulations to the Class of 2011!

I want to congratulate the graduating seniors of Women’s Studies! To earn a B.A. in Women’s Studies is a great accomplishment. Not only does your degree provide you a liberal arts education, which emphasizes critical thinking, but its interdisciplinary focus opens you to multiple careers.

There is a growing demand in professions involving social work, feminist organizations, women’s advocacy groups, women’s shelters, rape crisis centers, health care, and government agencies. Your degree in Women’s Studies will give you the leverage and confidence to lift you in careers where knowledge about gender, sexuality and women’s perspectives can lead to several specialized practice in law, nursing, medicine, midwifery, education, journalism and media. Your degree in Women’s Studies also gives you the flexibility and the edge in graduate and professional programs.

I believe that your success and accomplishments are directly linked to the faculty’s dedication and commitment to excellence. As the end of the academic year approaches, I want to thank everyone in Women’s Studies for their leadership, work and contributions to our department, especially, the department’s staff, Kris King and Renee DeGuire. I also want to thank Renee (again) and Professor Piya Chatterjee, for putting together the Spring Newsletter.

The Women’s Studies Department would love to hear from our ALUMNI!!!

Please send us your email address and an update on your accomplishments that you have accomplished after graduating with a Women’s Studies Major or Minor.

Send to:
Renee.deguire@ucr.edu
Dulce Gonzalez

I'm a fourth year student. My research covers human right violations in the periphery. I finished three short documentaries, one is about sex trade in the Dominican Republic and Cuba which covers female and male sex services, the working conditions and why they decided to become sex-workers.

The second is a documentary about women at work titled "Labor of Hope". I focus on the human rights violation at work such as maquila working conditions where women are being harassed and underpaid.

The third documentary is called "Rape in the Congo." This video was presented in the 2011 UCR Symposium presents interviews with both sides of the conflict. The soldiers talk about the reasons why they rape, and the women illustrate how they have been affected by this inhumane act of violence.

I am currently working on a documentary about the Drug War in Mexico which explores how it affected the lives of young Mexicans.

My plan for the summer is to go to Turkey and research the women, gender and Islam in Turkey.

My plan for the future is to attend Graduate School on the field of Anthropology.

Lilian Jimenez

is About to start law school at UCLA, I think about my future in pursuit of a public interest career at the intersection of race, gender, and sexual orientation. I’ve made a good choice. Leaving UCR, I think about my past. I see my high-school self, a straight-A student struck down (temporarily) by a debilitating eye disorder.

Applied to college with a shredded GPA. UCR took a chance on me when no one else would. This acceptance letter was an introduction to the heart of what UCR stood for, and what I would one day be most grateful for learning. “Value diversity”, UCR taught me to see the entire person, to embrace differences rather than be intimidated by them.

UCR’s Women’s Studies department especially deepened my understanding of diversity, Professor Chatterjee Violence against Women class taught me that there are more types of oppression and more types of victims than is too often thought. Professor Cabezas class on Gender and the Sex Trade broadened my perspective on who could “count” as a marginalized group, that it goes beyond just “race, class, and sexual orientation”. The ways in which we ignore sex workers concerns made me think about what other groups we do that to as well, and has expanded my worldview on how to battle discrimination.

I can imagine no better place to have formulated my character these past four years.
Thank you UCR, and thanks especially to the women studies’ department, for such a valuable education.

Jordon Rohde

What year? The following is a description of a thesis project underway Jordan is working with Professor Chatterjee and Hafez.

“We don’t wear pants,” stated Grace, a Sephardic Orthodox Jewish woman living just off of Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. They don’t wear pants? What in the world was she talking about? The answer turned out to be modesty—more specifically: Jewish modesty laws called tzniut.

Many people in Jewish Orthodox communities partake in these laws of dress, and I got the opportunity to live in Brooklyn and talk to women that form their entire aesthetic presentation around these laws. I became fascinated with these women that wear long flowing skirts past their knees, shirts up to their collar bone, and wear wigs made of real human hair that cost thousands of dollars. They confused, but simultaneously amazed me. These women are protecting a certain kind of purity that it never occurred to me to protect.

Modesty is an all-but-forgotten virtue in our skin-obsessed American culture. These women have found a mode of existing that allows them a space lacking in objectification, sexualization, and judgment of the their bodies.

Dressing modesty demands that others see a woman as a person rather than a object. After my initial infatuation and obsession with the notion of Jewish modesty, a research question presented itself: Are these women acting out of their own agency or are they reinforcing patriarchy?

Through my time spent researching in Brooklyn, I have gained a deeper grasp of the complexities that exist in understanding their motivations for following strict religious forms of modesty. So far it appears that these women’s motives exist somewhere in the liminal space of making independent choices and reacting to a patriarchal community structure.

I will be continuing my study of modesty within this Sephardic Orthodox Jewish community of Brooklyn for the next year, and I hope to continue loosening the buttons of this truly fascinating communal and religious practice.
Devon Sakamoto

Before completing my undergrad work at UCR in 2001, I had 2 experiences in WMST that really impacted the direction I would take my life and career in. The first was an internship I had working with pregnant and parenting young women on a high school campus. It was then that I realized that my love of WMST really intersected with a love of health and everyone’s right to be well.

The second experience was my UCDC internship in Washington DC at Advocates for Youth, where again I could focus on young people’s health, but specifically related to reproductive health and rights. After that, I decided to return to Washington DC, to the George Washington University to get my Masters in Public Health with a concentration in Maternal & Child Health.

I remember early on in my WMST program, how people would ask what I was going to do with a WMST degree, as if it wouldn’t relate to just about any career path or higher education program I’d take on. As it turns out, my WMST degree was a perfect lead-in to my MPH program, and to my future careers. Before joining the UCR staff in January of this year, I spent the past 5 years as a Health Educator in a high school/clinical setting focusing mainly on reproductive health and access to care. In addition to classroom presentations on topics like STD/HIV-prevention, healthy relationships and contraceptive options, I would also meet with patients one-on-one in the high school’s clinic to discuss birth control options and provide information about a number of reproductive health topics during students doctor visits.

Prior to that, I was a Case Manager at Planned Parenthood for pregnant and parenting teens, where I assisted young women navigate the healthcare system and receive all the information and services they needed/deserved for themselves and their babies. I can currently be found working at The Well on campus as the Coordinator for Health Education Initiatives and advisor to a student group of peer health educators, Golden ARCHES (Advocating Responsible Choices through Health Education and Support).

Riverside Mayor’s office and with local politicians. She has been involved with campus sit-ins and protests against budget cuts/fee hikes. In addition, Ms. Sorial was active in the White Ribbon Campaign, a campaign against domestic violence. She led the UCR campus-wide Barbara Boxer Senatorial campaign.

In 2011 she was one of 2 students in the U.S. invited to speak on the voting gender gap at the National Young Feminist Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. A Women’s Studies and Public Policy major she was awarded the Mentoring Summer Research Internship program scholarship to conduct research on federal policy bias against women. She plans to attend law school to advocate for women’s rights and access to reproductive healthcare.

Veronika Staffel

About three years ago, I realized that I wanted to work in motor sports. As such, post UCR I started my master’s in Sport Management at the University of San Francisco.

Upon starting my program I quickly realized what it would take to get into this tight-knit field, so I started volunteering and working any internship that may help. About a month ago I applied at Kawasaki Motor Corporation, for a research analyst position that had very similar requirements as the work I did while at UCR. Here is the link to their website if you are interested http://www.kawasaki.com/Home/Home.aspx.

Recently I was offered the position at a base salary of $60,000 a year, which is very unheard of for entry level in my field, especially being a “female” identified individual. I start on June 6th, and on June 8th, they are sending me to New York for my first research project. My official title is “Research Analyst: Marketing and Product Strategy” I am very excited about this, especially as I will be able to finish my master’s while working at Kawasaki, and they may even cover part of my tuition.

Monica Uppal

is a Women’s Studies major on a medical track. She received an award from FISC for having a cumulative GPA over 3.75. She is an active member of the sorority Pi Beta Phi helping with to promote literacy through First Books. In addition to being a member of the The National Society of Collegiate Scholars she volunteers at the Riverside Rape and Crisis Center and at the Pediatric Oncology Ward at Loma Linda Hospital. She is working with Professor Cabezas on a research study of Haitian women trafficked into the Dominican Republic.

Giselle Sorial

is the President of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, a student club that she started at UCR.

She is the Vice Chair of the College Council of Riverside which is a group made up 11 college students from the four Riverside College campuses that interacts with
the course “Trauma and Recovery:” A Collection. In 2010, Professor Christine Gailey and I co-taught the class to the next level. Thanks to the backing of the Donald A. Strauss Public Service Scholarship. With the money from the grant, I decided to design Within Her Strength, a project centered on teaching survivors of domestic and relational violence self-defense. Because I have always had this weird quirk of wanting to know everything about a subject before entering into it, I decided to explore the different types of self-defense classes currently being offered in the local Riverside area before beginning my own. Accordingly, I spent much of that first summer at local domestic violence agencies, participating in group therapy classes and skill shares. During many of these classes, I witnessed how the services offered the participants were often delivered in a patronizing or dehumanized manner. Part of this disconnect stemmed from the fact that during the summer of 2009, then Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger slashed $20.4 million in funding from 94 nonprofit shelters and outreach centers around the state. This cut resulted in the forced closing of many centers and the inability of retained staff to provide the services and time that their clients needed. Yet I also noticed that the healing that did occur in group classes stemmed from the participants and not the facilitators. Through the process of exchanging stories, laughter, and tears, the participants were able to help each other break down the walls of shame and silence that kept many of them in destructive relationships and that blinded them from being able to recognize their full worth as human beings. In acknowledging this, I was compelled to expand my idea in order to recognize the fact that sexual violence was experienced not only physically, but verbally, psychologically, emotionally, and even spiritually. Equally important was my recognition of the role that community support played in the process of individual healing.

Much of the knowledge I gained in being able to put words to the feelings and experiences I was gathering came from within my own community support system at UCR, the Women’s Studies Department. In conversations with professors and fellow students, I was able to incubate my idea and also found the support with which to take my project to the next level. Thanks to the backing of the Women’s Studies Department, in the Spring of 2010, Professor Christine Gailey and I co-taught the course “Trauma and Recovery:” A Collective Approach to Relationship Violence. Much of the knowledge I gained in Professor Gailey’s “Feminist Epistemology” Senior Seminar helped to later distinguish Trauma and Recovery as an experiential learning course. Indeed, in creating a space where we could talk about alternatives to traditional domestic violence work, we simultaneously had to redefine the dynamic between researchers and participants and teachers and students in a way that allowed the very process of research to be one of healing and restoration.

Today, Within Her Strength has grown into an organization that predicates its existence on the necessity to reactivate community members that have the potential to care for one another. Kenpo Karate is still a tool that we use in workshops but it is only one weapon in our arsenal. We also try to create a space where participants can build community and raise their collective level of political consciousness in order that, if and when sexual violence was ever to occur, the community of Within Her Strength participants would be equipped with the resources and ability to address the violence amongst ourselves without having to rely on police or government intervention.

This framing has assisted in my process in determining what I envision for myself insofar as career paths are concerned. By this I mean that, although I am attending law school this upcoming fall, I do not see law school as the end or even becoming a lawyer as ends unto themselves. Rather, my goal in going through law school is to emerge at the end with a better understanding of a framework that can often be inherently unjust in its application in relation to different bodies. I’d like to blend my knowledge of the law with my passion for community work in a way that will truly be able to shift the normative power structures that exist within our society and which play out in ways that contribute to individual instances of interpersonal violence.

**Yamane, Jessica**

is Co-founder of Within Her Strength, 2010 UCR Alumni Scholarship. With the money from the grant, I decided to design Within Her Strength, a project centered on teaching survivors of domestic and relational violence self-defense.

**Undergraduate Research:**

UCR Women's Studies encourage student scholarship. For a number of years, faculty members have supported students (majors and non-majors) conduct research, write senior theses, and give research presentations. This year, four students affiliated with the Women's Studies Department by their major and/or through their faculty mentor gave research presentations at the Symposium for Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity, which was held on May 6th and 7th at the HUB. The symposium provides an opportunity for students to present their research findings in a formal setting. Each student gives a 15-minute presentation and takes questions and comments during a one-hour session shared with two other students. It is a great experience for students who want to hone their public speaking skills. This format is similar to professional academic conferences, and thus gives students a flavor of what their professors do on a regular basis as part of their jobs. Here are the research topics of our four participants. They all did a superb job!

**Jordan Rohde (Women's Studies)** "The Ideologies of Modesty in Sephardic Orthodox Jewish Communities of Brooklyn, New York" Faculty Mentor: Professor Piya Chatterjee (Women's Studies)

**Shiraye Morgan (Anthropology)** "Exploring Alternative Birthing Methods" Faculty Mentor: Professor Chikako Takeshita (Women's Studies)

**Kristal Huff (Women's Studies/African American Studies)** "The Revolving Cycle: The 'Miss-Education' of America" Faculty Mentor: Professor Paul Green (Ethnic Studies)

**Dulce Gonzalez (Global Studies)** "Women Suffering Human Rights Violations: Rape in the Congo" Faculty Mentor: Professor Tamara Ho (Women's Studies)
Piya Chatterjee

Piya was selected to join the "Women of Color Leadership" pre-conference workshop at the National Women's Studies Association conference in November 2010. She also helped co-organize the first South Asian Women's Caucus (SAW) at the NWSA. She offered an intensive graduate student workshop at the California Institute of Integral Studies (San Francisco) in March on "the politics of witness." More recently, she was invited by UC-Berkeley's Center for Race and Gender (on the occasion of their 10th anniversary) to talk about pedagogy, gender and imperialism. She also continued with this theme at Scripps College where she was invited to speak with intercollegiate faculty at the Claremont Colleges about the challenges of teaching transnational feminisms. She is editing a new book series with the University of Illinois Press called Dissident Feminisms.

Tammy Ho

Recent Publications


Recent Conferences & Talks

Mar 2011. "Canvas of Desire: A Roundtable by Recent Conferences & Talks


On the basis of her research on Burmese supernaturalism and Buddhist immigrants, Professor Ho was selected to participate in the Wabash Center’s 2011-12 Teaching and Learning Workshop for Pre-Tenure Asian & Asian American Religion and Theology Faculty. This workshop convenes fourteen junior faculty, drawn from diverse religious specializations, and a “Leadership Team” of distinguished scholars: Kwok Pui-Lan (Episcopal Divinity School), Zayn Kassam, (Pomona College), David K. Yoo (UCLA), and Tat-siông Benny Liew (Pacific School of Religion). Sustained by grants from Lilly Endowment Inc., the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion seeks to strengthen and enhance education in North American colleges, universities, and theological schools.

Marguerite Waller

Professor Waller is co-editor Postcolonial Cinema Studies, she co-edit the book with Sandra Ponzanesi of the University of Utrecht, it has been accepted by Routledge Press and is due out in paperback and hardback editions in October, 2011. In May she gave the keynote address at the Italian graduate student conference, "Posthuman and Nonhuman in Italian Culture" at the University of Chicago.

Chikako Takeshita

During Winter 2011, Professor Takeshita gave two lectures on the history and politics of the IUD at Redlands and Riverside chapter meetings of the American Association of University Women. During Spring 2011, Professor Takeshita is working with Professor Juliet McMullin of Anthropology and Professors Coleen McNamara and Agnieszka Jawarska of Philosophy as resident fellows at the Center for Ideas and Society. The title of their residency is "Imagining an Autonomous Self in the Age of Medicalization." Professor Takeshita is preparing an article on women who write about their experiences of unexpected distressing contraceptive side effects on the Internet. She examines how women make sense of their symptoms through a collective knowledge making practice on cyberspace and subsequently take on the task of regulating their bodies.

Jane Ward

Professor Ward’s article “From Black People Are Not A Homosexual Act” to “Gay is the New Black”: Mapping White Uses of Blackness in Modern Gay Rights Campaigns in the United States (coauthored with Amy Stone) is forthcoming in “Social Identities” (17.5. 2011), and her chapter “Queer Pedagogies and the Specter of the Maternal” is forthcoming in the book Maternal Pedagogies (edited by Deborah Byrd and Fiona Green). Jane has also been asked to serve as a keynote speaker at the Fall 2011 conference on "Motherhood Studies" in Toronto, Canada.

We are proud to announce that Lauren Schwartz, Anthropology ABD will receive the annual teaching assistant award. Congratulations to her and all of our TA’s for their hard work:

Jenny Bahn
Cale Crammer
Sarah Holmes
Tina Mendoza
Shankari Patel
Patrick Randolph
Jan Roselle
An Islam of Her Own raises new questions of desire and subject hood in Islamic movements by considering how imbrications of religion and secularism animate desiring subjects. She takes as a point of departure the intersecting debates of modernity, postcoloniality and nation-state building projects within the mutually embedded history of Islamic practice and secularization projects in Egypt. Drawing on more than six years of ethnographic research of women’s Islamic activism in Egypt, She argues for the reconsideration of analytics of desire and subjectivity of religious activists that rely on conceptual binaries of secularism and religion.

Sherine Hafez ethnography challenges these binary representations of religious versus secular subjectivities in anthropology. It is concerned with moments of destabilization, inconsistency and impermanence in the processes of subject production, identity formation and cultural transformation in Islamic movements. Her objective is to enable an understanding of the heterogeneity of desire and subjectivity that embedded discourses of religion and secularism make possible in scholarship on Islamic movements, transnational feminism, religion and religious activism.
Chikako Takeshita

*The Global Biopolitics of the IUD: How Science Constructs Contraceptive Users and Women's Bodies* (MIT Press, Fall 2011)

The intrauterine device (IUD) is used by 150 million women around the world. It is the second most prevalent female method of fertility control in the global South and the third most prevalent in the global North. Over its five decades of use, the IUD has been viewed both as a means for women’s reproductive autonomy and as coercive tool of state-imposed population control, as a convenient form of birth control on a par with the pill and as a threat to women’s health. In this book, Chikako Takeshita investigates the development, marketing, and use of the IUD since the 1960s. She offers a biography of a multifaceted technological object through a feminist science studies lens, tracing the transformations of the scientific discourse around it over time and across different geographies.

Takeshita describes how developers of the IUD adapted to different social interests in their research and how changing assumptions about race, class, and female sexuality often guided scientific inquiries. The IUD, she argues, became a politically versatile technology, adaptable to both feminist and nonfeminist reproductive politics because of researchers attempts to maintain the device’s suitability for women in both the developing and the developed world. Takeshita traces the evolution of scientists concerns, from contraceptive efficacy and product safety to the politics of abortion and describes the most recent, hormone-releasing, menstruation-suppressing iteration of the IUD. Examining fifty years of IUD development and use, Takeshita finds a microcosm of the global political economy of women's bodies, health, and sexuality in the history of this contraceptive device.

Tracy Fisher

*What's Left of Blackness?* (forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan Press, Comparative Feminist Studies Series), analyzes the political transformations in black women’s socially engaged community-based political work in England from the late 1960s until the 2000s. Her book situates these transformations alongside shifts in Britain’s political economy and against the discourse and deployment of *blackness* as a political imaginary in which to engage in struggles for social justice. By weaving together ethnographic, historical, and theoretical “texts,” she argues that mapping black women’s socially engaged political groups—within Britain’s changing sociopolitical economic context—reveals the ways in which groups transformed from anti-imperialist organizations to service provisioning groups, while they redefined and expanded the very meaning of “the political.”