Director’s Note

As we gear up for the fall semester, it’s hard to believe I’ve been in this job for a year! I’m happy to say I’m enjoying it, and IWS is looking forward to a banner year in 2023-24.

I want to start by welcoming some new faces around here. Terri Hatfield has moved on to an awesome new job as an archivist in the Chesney medical archives at Johns Hopkins University. We miss her terribly but were lucky enough to hire graduate certificate alumna and long-time GTA (and newly minted PhD!) Elise Robinson into the public relations/program director position. Carla York is our new administrative assistant. The two of them, Cecilia Herles, and I make a great administrative team. This fall we also welcome Liz Browne as a tenure track assistant professor of women’s studies and art history as well as a host of new affiliates across the disciplines. Two additional IWS faculty have made exciting transitions this year: Rumya Putcha has been promoted to associate professor and Ingie Hovland is now a tenure track assistant professor of women’s studies and religion.

We have some exciting events planned for the upcoming academic year, starting with our annual Women Faculty Reception, which will be held on September 27th. Our honoree this year is Dr. Barbara McCaskill, Professor of English and an IWS affiliate. We are looking forward to celebrating her many impressive achievements and her commitment to research that makes an impact on the world around us.

As many of you know, the annual Andrea Carson Coley lecture was the first endowed LGBTQ+ lecture series in the nation. It is hard to believe the passage of time, but this year we are celebrating the event’s 30th anniversary! To mark this milestone, we are inviting contributions to help us make this year’s event extra special and to ensure the long-term stability of the series. You can find out more and donate at iws.uga.edu/support-institute (see page 7).

Our other big news is that we have recently received a $100,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation, in support of our proposal called, “Building Intersectional Southern Futures.” The funds will be used over the next three years to support undergraduate feminist interdisciplinary research and creative projects as well as coalition building among women’s and gender studies programs throughout the state. Needless to say, we are positively thrilled about this opportunity!

Last academic year was a great one as well. We hosted amazing speakers, including esteemed Lumbee scholar and Emory historian Dr. Malinda Maynor Lowery for the Women’s History Month keynote. Dr. Kristen Schilt from the University of Chicago gave the Coley lecture, which focused on her contributions to the incredible trans history documentary Framing Agnes, which I recommend to absolutely all of you.

The past year marked the first time in a long while that many of us were able to meet more regularly in person. With support from the Graduate School, Ingie Hovland and I ran a yearlong “Pedagogy and Praxis” reading group, open to IWS Graduate Certificate students and GTAs as well as core and affiliate faculty. It proved to be a really nice way to bring people together in community and we look forward to doing it again this year, focused this time on recent Black Feminist books.

With Dr. Carolyn Medine, Director of African American Studies, we also cosponsored events related to the 40th anniversary of the groundbreaking book All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of us are Brave: Black Women’s Studies, coedited by emeritus professor Dr. Patricia Bell Scott. Thanks to Pat’s generous support, we were able to provide copies of the book to roughly 35 people, including staff, undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and emeritus faculty, all of whom attended a lunchtime discussion session. It was a very special and uplifting occasion. Pat’s support also allowed us to provide small grants for creative student reaction projects to the book, which were presented at our annual student symposium.

We are looking forward to another great year and welcome all of you to join us for our events and activities. We are also working on building our IWS alumni network. To that end, please send us any updates to Elise at elise.robinson@uga.edu and be on the lookout for an alumni survey, coming to your email inbox soon.

Patricia Richards
Director, Institute for Women’s Studies
Meet new faculty member | Elizabeth Saari Browne

Elizabeth Saari Browne (she/her) completed her PhD in History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture + Art at MIT, and is jointly appointed in Art and Women’s Studies at UGA.

How did you get interested in Art history?
I was on an art track in high school, and I’m pretty sure that I was the only person who ever read the survey of art textbook! But I didn’t know that “art history” was a discipline until I got to college, and when I sat in on my first course, something clicked; I was always drawn to literature, history, philosophy, but seeing those fields and ideas explicated through material objects made sense to me. And I also liked the ability to continue working closely with artworks and artists; in between my degrees, I worked in a variety of museums (the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum), and I look forward to bringing those connections to campus, and to collaborating with the Georgia Museum of Art and the Porcelain and Decorative Arts Museum.

Are you a GA native or are you coming from out of state?
I grew up in central Florida (Lakeland), but I have been moving around the country my entire adult life: Williamsburg (VA), Gainesville (FL), Santa Barbara (CA), Cambridge (MA). I’ve been living in Georgia for the past three years and absolutely love it! I currently live in Atlanta with my high school sweetheart, Brendan, our five-year old son, Milo, and our two pit-bull mixes, Gus and Tuna.

Tell us about your current research.
I’m now at work on my manuscript about a group of objects made by the eighteenth-century French artist Claude Michel, called Clodion (1738-1814). This project addresses a group of small sculptures of terracotta (cooked clay) that have often, since the 19th century, been dismissed as frivolous and decorative, and have been gendered as feminine. They’re also of a material that, found manipulated into vessels and statues all over the world, raised, in early art histories, questions of European exceptionalism in sculpture and the specter of idolatry. But through a critical study of their materiality, their subject matter, and practices of display, the book situates these terracottas within some of the most radical aesthetic philosophies of the eighteenth century. One of my case studies, for example, looks at the proliferation of small terracotta statues of loving women and children made and exhibited during the French Revolution. Though not explicitly political in iconography, these objects embody Rousseauian sensibilité: they’re meant to encourage love of family, and by transference, love of country. But they’re contingent objects, and by the end of the century, they’re also associated with iconography reckoning with the loss of life and propaganda concerning physical and moral regeneration in the aftermath of the Terror.

Other projects I’ve recently finished include a study of attitudes toward ancient Egyptian sculpture in the eighteenth century in the context of practices of connoisseurship (“Discernment or Devotion? Egypt and Sculptural Politics in Eighteenth-Century France,” published in Art History, 2023). I’m also now working on an article about female illustrators and engravers of natural history, specifically, the artist Barbe Michel (Clodion’s sister!). I’ve identified her original drawings in the Natural History Museum, London, and the muséum nationale d’histoire naturelle in Paris, and I am excited to share her work with a broader audience.

A final project that’s wrapping up is the planning for HECAA@30, the 30th-anniversary conference of the

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Elise Robinson, PR & Program Coordinator, was hired in March and completed her doctorate in Theatre and Performance Studies with a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies in May. Her dissertation was titled *Suffrage as Performance in the British Suffragette Campaign*. She presented at last year’s National Women’s Studies Association conference on neurodivergence in the women’s studies classroom, and gave an expanded presentation on the same subject for the IWS Friday Speaker Series in February. Dr. Robinson will present at NWSA this year on “The Original Influencers: Suffragettes and Fashion Activism,” based on some of her doctoral research. In addition to her own academic work, Dr. Robinson is also serving as co-PI (with Dr. Richards) for the Mellon Multivocal Humanities Grant recently given to the IWS.

Carla York, Administrative Assistant, started at IWS in October. She has completed a number of trainings and certificates this year, including: Federal Work Study Supervisor & Liaison Training, New Staff Onboarding Series (Part Two and Three of Three), One Source Travel-Approver Responsibilities, Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion: Diversity at UGA Behind the Numbers, and Certificate in Adult Mental Health First Aid. We’re not sure how many trainings and certificates it’s possible for one person to do, but rest assured that if it’s available, Carla will do it!
in fall 2024, include: WAGG conference funds to award $500 and $1,000 grants to grad certificate students, affiliate and core faculty, and their

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2023/24 | WAGG Grant Recipients

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- IWS grad certificate students Leslyn Beckles (Learning, Leading and Organizational Development), Gabrielle Compton (Theatre and Performance Studies), Sophia Flemming (Communications), Katie Hurlock (English), Christina Crespo (Anthropology), Makeiva Jenkins (Sociology), and Vanessa Raditz (Educational Theory and Practice) & Jess Martinez (Geography)
- IWS affiliates Vivian Appler (Theatre and Performance Studies), Kathryn Manis (Special Collections), and Jane McPherson (Social Work)
- Colleagues at other GSU schools Letizia Guglielmo & Meghan Stipe (Kennesaw State) and Susan Bragg, Debaleena Ghosh, Lauren DiPaula & Ashley Jones (Georgia Southwestern State)
Women’s Studies Graduates:

2023 was a bumper-crop year for Women’s Studies Graduates! We congratulate:

PhD Graduates:


Shelly Biesel, Anthropology. Thesis Title: Confronting Legacies of Loss: Negotiating Intergenerational Inequalities in Afro-Brazilian ‘Traditional’ Communities.


WMST Grad Certificate Completion:

Gina Abelkop, English Literature
Alina Ahmed, Philosophy
Emma Ariyo, Kinesiology
Shelly Biesel, Anthropology
Emily Steen Beckwith, English
Maureen Lehto Brewster, Textiles, Merchandising & Interiors
Gabrielle Compton, Theatre and Performance Studies
Melissa Gerrior, Education
Alexis Lygoumenos, Theatre and Performance Studies

WMST Undergraduate Majors:

Alina Baiju
Meredith Eget
Jennifer John Britto
Natalie Kersnick
Sara Kirk
Vanisha Kudumuri
Kimberly Pallas
Anna Reid
Vanshika Singisetti
Hannah Barnard

Undergrad Kudos:

Jennifer John Britto and Alina Baiju (left) received the IWS Senior Leadership Awards this spring.


Janessa Harris, Women’s Studies major, published the essay “Mommy, Me, and We: Why Black Mothers Have Turned to Doulas,” in Crossings: Swarthmore Undergraduate Feminist Research Journal. Harris also participated in the Black Women and Herbalism Workshop hosted by Spelman College’s Food Studies Program.

Vanshika Singisetti, senior biology and women’s studies major, won a $300 first prize at this year’s CURO Symposium in April.

Grad Kudos:

Vera Bulla, IWS Graduate Teaching Assistant, won an Excellence in Teaching Award, the highest award for GTAs at UGA.

Sha’Mira Covington, IWS Certificate graduate, accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Fashion in UGA’s Department of Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors. Dr. Covington is also an affiliate faculty member with IWS.

Katie Hurlock and Elise Robinson, IWS GTAs, both presented work at the 2022 National Women’s Studies Association Conference. Hurlock presented “Abortion Pedagogies: On Demand, Without Apology” and Robinson presented a poster titled “Neuroqueer Feminism and the WGS Classroom.”


Christina Crespo (Anthropology and Women’s Studies) edited a special edition of UGA’s The Classic Journal titled "Resistance Through Research” featuring essays from a number of Women’s Studies undergraduates, including:

- Alina Baiju
- Jennifer John Britto
- Meredith Eget
- Sofia Castresana
- Janessa Harris
- Natalie Kersnick
- Sarah Kirk
- Marti Wolf
Josh Bedford graduated in 2020, having earned both a master’s degree and a doctorate in musicology from the Hugh Hodgson School of Music. While at UGA, Dr. Bedford was a GTA for Women’s Studies, where he taught WMST 1110 (Multicultural Perspectives on Women in the US), and MUSI 4310 (Gender and Music Video). He was also a WIP (Writing Intensive Program) TA for a number of courses, including WMST 3010 (Critical Feminist Readings) and MUSI 4250 (Women and Music). While working with WIP, Josh was a founding and managing editor of The Classic Journal, a publication created to promote the extraordinary achievements in writing and research by undergraduate students at the University of Georgia (see the featured story on page five for the journal’s most recent issue.)

Q: Tell us about your current job.

I am an Assistant Professor of Musicology at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN. There, I teach music history courses that cover topics about music from all over the world. The primary courses I teach include the History of Western Art Music, the History of American Popular Music, and the World of Music. In addition to teaching, I am also the program coordinator for the Bachelor of Arts in Music degree. I also serve as the artistic director for our premiere faculty ensemble, the Stones River Chamber Players. This academic year, I will apply to become an affiliate faculty member of the MTSU Women’s and Gender Studies Program.

Q: How has your Women’s Studies experience shaped your life post-graduation?

I have been able to travel the world thanks to the work required of me in my Women’s Studies classes. I’ve been to numerous national and international conferences, presenting on topics I researched for my Women’s Studies classes. My last elective for my Women’s Studies Certificate was Professor Marla Carlson’s course on laughter. For that class, I studied laughter and sexual violence in opera, and the paper I wrote turned into two conference presentations—one in Italy and an upcoming conference in Germany!

Q: What are your favorite memories from your time in Women’s Studies at UGA?

One of my favorite memories from Women’s Studies at UGA is Peggy McIntosh’s visit to campus and her talk to a packed auditorium of students, faculty, and community members. Peggy McIntosh’s “Invisible Knapsack” paper is practically required reading for any Women’s Studies class. Instead of simply explaining the knapsack, she focused on the evolution of her initial theories and ideas published in that pivotal work. In short, she described the importance of seeking out new information and learning from a broad range of people to continue updating, revising, and developing scholarship and research in Women’s Studies.

It’s hard to single out one individual because the entire faculty, staff, and students/colleagues are incredible. However, there are several key figures, both former and current members of the IWS, to whom I will be forever indebted: Dr. Nicole Ray, Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Dr. Patricia Richards, Dr. Cecilia Herles, Dr. Susan Thomas, Dr. Tricia Lootens, Dr. Pat Del Rey, Terri Lynn Hatfield, Cj Komp, Elise Robinson. Trust me, this list can keep going....

Q: Any advice for current Women’s Studies students?

Hang on to the friends and colleagues you make in this program. They will be continual sources of inspiration and strength as you forge your path in the world. Yes, I am speaking from experience!

LEFT: Women Faculty Reception
IWS Director Dr. Patricia Richards and guests celebrate former IWS Director Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, recipient of our 2022 Women Faculty Award.

RIGHT: Athens Pride Parade
PR & Program Coordinator Elise Robinson displays the IWS table at the 2nd annual Athens Pride Parade.

LEFT: Women’s History Month
UGA students display the IWS swag they won at the 2023 Women’s History Month International Student Coffee Hour, hosted by the IWS.

RIGHT: Food Studies Program
Women’s Studies major Janessa Harris (far right) at a Black Women and Herbalism Workshop hosted by Spelman College’s Food Studies Program.
Rainbow Resource Fair  
**September 13, 11am-2pm**  
Tate Concourse  
This event is the Pride Center’s tabling event for students to come and meet different organizations and departments within UGA and the Athens community that serve the LGBTQIA+ community. IWS will have a table with information and swag!

Women Faculty Reception  
**September 27th, 11:30am**  
Special Collections Library  
Faculty are invited to attend our annual Reception to socialize, network, and celebrate our community. Dr. Barbara McCaskill will be honored with this year’s faculty award. Contact Elise at Elise.Robinson@uga.edu for more info.

Friday Speaker Series - Fall 2023  
**September 15th, 12:40pm**  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"Let’s Talk About Sex, Baby!"  
Leah Berger-Singer, GA Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential  
**September 29th, 12:40pm**  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"Athens Pride & Queer Collective"  
Marissa Chastain, Athens Pride and Queer Collective

October 6th, 12:40pm  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"Queer Histories of/and Queer Archives”  
Dr. Kathryn Manis, UGA Special Collections Library  

October 13th, 12:40pm  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"STEM Faculty Equity Beliefs and the Importance of Conscientização.”  
Dr. Tatiane Russo-Tait, Cellular Biology

October 20th, 12:40pm  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"Women in Politics in the Caribbean: How Women are Navigating the Cultural Milieu to Acquire Political Success”  
Leslyn Beckles, College of Education

November 3rd, 12:40pm  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"Waiting for Lady Phoenix: Allegory, Gender, and the Science Performance”  
Dr. Vivian Appler, Theatre and Performance Studies

November 10th, 12:40pm  
Miller Learning Center 248  
"Can’t Stop Change: Queer Climate Stories from the Florida Frontlines”  
Vanessa Raditz, Educational Theory and Practice

... And more to come!
Support Women’s Studies

Please consider giving to Women’s Studies today. Your gift to the Institute builds on over 40 years of excellence in feminist teaching, research, and outreach in Women’s Studies at the University of Georgia. We need your support!

This year, the IWS is celebrating:

• The 30th anniversary of the Andrea Carson Coley Lecture in LGBTQ+ Studies
• The 35th year of the Friday Speaker Series
• The 31st year of the IWS Student Research Symposium.

We rely on donor support to provide these and many other events open to the campus and the wider community. If the work we do is important to you, please consider making a contribution.

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