



WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS

Fall, 2018

Volume 29, Number 1

You may like to know...

- **Save the Date!** The Huntsville Feminist Chorus will offer their spring concert on Saturday, April 13, 7:30 PM, Roberts Recital Hall.
- The Women's and Gender Studies Resource Center (WGS-RC) is refreshed and open for student and community use in CTC III.
- WGS is pleased to welcome our new student intern, Sarah Russell (photo p. 2).

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Susan Friedman Receives Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action

Dr. Susan "Suzy" Friedman is the newest recipient of the Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action, established in 2010 in honor of program co-founder Rose Norman's retirement. What most impressed the selection committee is how Friedman's academic and teaching interests in feminism, gender, and autobiography seamlessly flow into her mentoring and advising work with students and into her multifaceted community engagement.



Friedman is a lecturer in the English Department, where she teaches courses in composition and literature at the lower level and Creative Nonfiction Writing at the upper-level (a course cross-listed in the WGS minor). In addition, she regularly teaches Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies and recently supervised an independent study on Gender and Sexuality. The hallmarks of her teaching are her feminist pedagogical methods, her commitment to fostering an empathetic classroom community, and her passion for enabling individual self-expression, and ultimately, the empowerment of all students.

According to Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) minor Juno Baker, who first encountered Friedman in a freshman composi-

tion class and later took an independent study course with her, "Dr. Friedman is an amazing professor and mentor. She has been with me since the beginning of my college career, encouraging me to ask questions and look at texts in ways I previously wouldn't have considered. She lauds creativity and personal inquiry, always trying to help me and my peers become not just active readers, but also active participants in class and society."

Echoing Baker's comments, WGS minor Mia Milne emphasizes how Friedman goes above and beyond the regular requirements of her job, noting that she "is a great professor who truly cares that her students understand the material she teaches and she will go out of her way to do so. Every other

weekend, during her free time, she meets at a coffee house with myself and two other students to discuss important Women's and Gender studies texts. It's been a great opportunity for us."

Friedman's mentoring work with students extends beyond the classroom to encompass several student groups who are all interested in finding outlets for self-expression and ways to help the UAH community. For several years she sponsored UAH's Green Club and worked alongside Chargers for Sustainability when they proposed and won funding for installing water bottle filling stations around campus and placing recycling bins in the dorms and around classrooms.

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Message from the Director



Dr. Chad Thomas
Women's and Gender
Studies Director

Greetings from the Women's and Gender Studies Program at UAH!

Though this is just my first semester as director, I'm delighted to be in the position and I look forward to getting to know our community and campus partners better over the course of my appointment.

In this newsletter, you can read about WGS at UAH, including a feature on Dr. Susan Friedman (English), who is the most recent recipient of the Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action. We also introduce Amy Guerin (Theatre), our newest WGS teaching faculty.

You can also see photos from recent events, including the second "Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality" panel which was held last spring. Thanks to all of you who participated in and supported that initiative!

In addition, WGS hosted the annual spring concert of the Huntsville Feminist Chorus on April 8 with the theme "Beyond Green."

WGS also hosted a table at the annual "Soaring for Social Justice" Community Kite Festival, at John Hunt Park, sponsored by Asha Kiran and the City of Huntsville Office of Multicultural Affairs.

We also celebrated student accomplishments, including the graduation of six WGS minors! These included Kenya Carter, Emma Huber, Mia Milne, Tessia Needham, Marceilia Nobles, and Aislinn Roxie Brookshire. The WGS outstanding undergraduate achievement award went to Emma Huber and the scholarship to Juno Baker.

In August, we had a great turnout for our annual Week of Welcome Mixer, which was held in Union Grove Gallery. Students enjoyed pizza and treats, a chance to meet WGS faculty and staff, and campus and community resources that support diversity and gender equality.

Our 2018-19 WGS film series kicked off this fall with *Geek Girls*, an exploration of the "hidden half" of fan culture in the world of conventions, video games, and other rife-with-misogyny pop culture touchstones. This film screening was cosponsored by the College of Engineering and took place on Tuesday, September 25.

In the spring, we will follow up with two more films: *Run Deep* (a powerful verité portrait of trans life in rural North Carolina; cosponsored by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) on January 15, and *The Revival: Women and the Word* (chronicling the U.S. tour of a group of Black lesbian poets and musicians; cosponsored by the English Department) on March 5. Each screening will take place in Wilson Hall 168 at 7 pm and will be followed by a reception.

WGS was a cosponsor of Huntsville Shakespeare's premiere production of Shakespeare's luminous cross-dressing comedy *Twelfth Night*. This was the first in what will be several upcoming partnerships with WGS and the arts, which will include a residency by printmaker Tyanna Buie in March and UAH Theatre's spring productions of *The Trojan Women*

(adapted from Euripides by Ellen McLaughlin) and Alice Birch's *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* to be directed by UAH senior Rachel Bagley. Look for more information about these exciting events in the spring newsletter!

The WGS Program Advisory Committee recently added several new members. Outgoing WGS Director Molly Johnson (History) will transition to the PAC, and three additional members have agreed to serve: Amy Guerin (Theatre), Nicole Pacino (History), and Jennifer Sims (Sociology). The PAC also said goodbye to three longtime members and supporters: Nancy Finley (former WGS Director), David Stewart (Art, Art History, and Design) and Leslie Kaiura (World Languages and Cultures). WGS appreciates their service.

Special thanks to those of you who made contributions to the Women's and Gender Studies Program and to the Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action this past year. Your contributions help us support diverse and creative events that bring greater understanding of women's and gender issues to our community.

Please remember to check out our website at uah.edu/wgs and to "like" "Women's and Gender Studies at UAH" on Facebook to keep up to date with us before the next newsletter goes out in the spring! You can also sign up for our Online Newsletter at <http://www.uah.edu/la/departments/womens-studies/news/subscribe>.



From top: (left to right) Dr. Jennifer Sims, new WGS PAC member, Sarah Russell, new WGS student intern, and Juno Baker, WGS minor, at the Fall WOW Mixer; Tessia Needham, recent WGS graduate; Roxie Brookshire (left) and Mia Milne, recent WGS graduates.

Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality

The Women's and Gender Studies Program again hosted "Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality" this spring, co-sponsored by the UAH Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

This series was conceptualized as a way to showcase women's voices, honor the role spirituality plays in women's lives, contemplate the complexity of women's experiences of spirituality, and celebrate the religious diversity of Huntsville and North Alabama.

The Interfaith Panel and Community Conversation was held on Tuesday, April 17, in the Conference Training Center Exhibit Hall. The panel featured six local women of diverse faith traditions shar-

ing their experiences about how their spirituality shapes their lives.

After the panel, attendees engaged in roundtable conversations on topics including Reconciling Religious Identities and Experiences, Practicing Religion in a Secular World, Faith and Social Action, Spirituality Outside the Boxes, Religious Tradition in an Interfaith Community, and Gender, Sexuality, and Religion.

Community participation in this event was outstanding, with thoughtful and inspiring presentation and conversation. We are excited that this event has become a continuing tradition at UAH and look forward to the next!



At top: Panelists at the Interfaith Panel and Community Conversation: (left to right) Andrea Carter Fitch, Dr. Susan Friedman, Judy Guerry, Dr. Praveena Kommidi, Dr. Wafa Orman, Rev. Alice Syltie. Dr. Molly Johnson, moderator, presents a gift to Dr. Delois Smith in recognition of her longtime service at UAH.



Continuing: Participants in the panel and community conversation share their own stories and listen to each other's.

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Harris Paper Contest Rewards Academic and Creative Writing



Women's and Gender Studies will sponsor the 19th annual Kathryn L. Harris Women's and Gender Studies Writing Competition, which awards cash prizes for undergraduate or graduate written work that deals substantially with women, women's issues, or the study of gender. The contest accepts academic and creative submissions from students at UAH.

Last year's winners were: First Place, **Leandra Caywood**, "Weimar Women and the Rise of

Nazism," for the course *Nazi Germany and the Holocaust*; Second Place, **Mia Milne**, "A Call for the Recognition of Bisexuality in Research and Academic Texts," *WGS Independent Study: Gender and Sexuality*, and **Jennifer Wright**, "The Bronze Boy: Donatello's Ideal Lover," *Renaissance Art*.

Honorable mention went to **Jada Blankenship**, "Consequences of China's 'One-Child Policy' on Gender: A Review of the Literature," *Honors Intro. to Sociology*.

Entries for this year's competition must be submitted by email to wgs@uah.edu or in person to the WGS Program Office (CTC 203) by February 1. Faculty judges are Dr. Susan Friedman, English, and Dr. Jennifer Sims, Sociology. Winning entries must follow competition guidelines in content and format.

For more information, contact chad.thomas@uah.edu or visit www.uah.edu/wgs.



Women's and Gender Studies Students Receive Honors and Awards

Women's and Gender Studies gave the 2018 Outstanding Undergraduate Achievement Award to **Emma Huber**, a Psychology major and WGS minor. Huber was recognized for achievement in WGS classes. Her WGS Capstone Portfolio and Conference exemplified the interdisciplinary goals of WGS, as she successfully articulated how humanities and social science perspectives together enhanced her understanding of women and gender.

The 2018 WGS Outstanding Emerging Woman Artist Award, presented at the UAH Annual

Juried Student Art Exhibition, went to Art major **Alexandria Darty** for "Tina and Keith," oil-based paint marker on tarp. The award of \$100 recognizes and supports emerging women artists who show exceptional work.

About her work, Darty said, "It started with a site-specific documentary photography assignment. At first my area seemed empty, then I saw bright blue tarps in the woods. I came closer and met Tina, who invited me into her home made of tarps. Tina and another member, Keith, in the Cleveland Camp

community, told me their stories and shared their lives with me."

"People criticize the homeless," she continued. "I hear negative comments from people I know and strangers too. I have sat on the side of the road with a man and felt judgmental stares. Art can advocate for people. My drawings on tarps are 8'X11"—they demand attention. I chose this size to show Tina and Keith's importance. To make people notice them as they walk by."

For more information, contact chad.thomas@uah.edu.



Harris Scholarship Awards Academic Achievement

The Kathryn L. Harris Scholarship in Women's and Gender Studies is awarded annually to a WGS minor with demonstrated academic performance. Other considerations include participation in WGS activities and clubs or in community activities that benefit women

and girls. The 2018 scholarship went to **Juno Baker**, a Biology major with WGS and Chemistry minors, who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance and participation in WGS activities. Juno attends and helps out at all WGS events and seeks out

enrichment experiences, including two WGS independent study courses.

The scholarship award offered each year is approximately \$700. For more information, contact chad.thomas@uah.edu.

From top: (left to right) Leandra Caywood, Mia Milne, Jada Blankenship, and Jennifer Wright; Dr. Molly Johnson and Emma Huber (right); Alexandria Darty; "Tina and Keith," winning art pieces; Juno Baker.

Q&A with Molly and Chad

The outgoing WGS director asked the incoming director a few questions.

Molly: Can you talk about your background in Women's and Gender Studies?

Chad: Sure. My scholarly identity is tied to the study of women and gender. My ongoing research project is "Performing Queer Shakespeare," in which I offer a contemporary history of queer Shakespeare in modern, cross-gender cast productions. At the risk of sound too academic, my research reads iconic aspects of lesbian and gay identity (sexual role-playing, camp, drag, historical figures, spaces of community, Gay Liberation, AIDS activism, gay-bashing) alongside the strategies that certain companies use to stage productions of Shakespeare's plays (visual allusions, characterization, cross-gender casting, production metaphors, design choices). I seek out what I call "flashes of queerness" in present-day productions (since 1969) and connect those flashes with the strategies used by a number of theater companies performing Shakespeare; my project is thus both a critical investigation and a conceptual analysis. In addition to several articles, which have appeared in a variety of academic journals, I have monograph in progress.

Molly: You work with Theatre at UAH regularly. How does your creative work connect to Women's and Gender Studies?

Chad: As you mention, I am also a theatre practitioner and my creative identity is tied to the

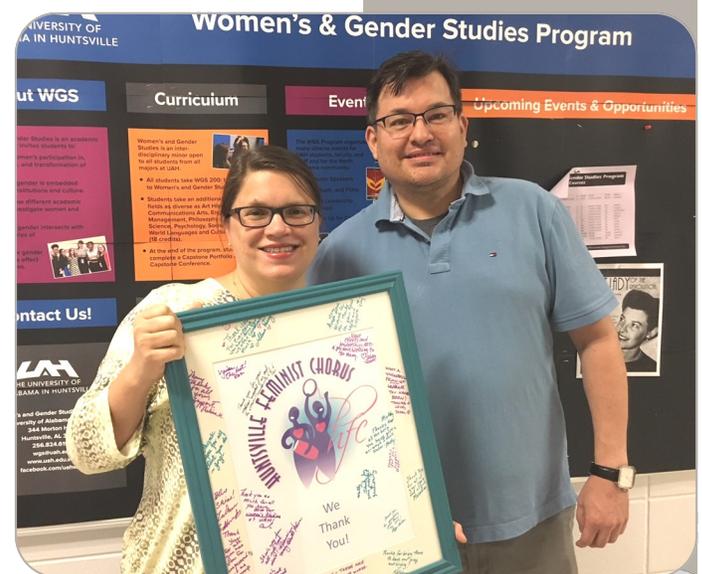
study of women and gender. For example, last spring I directed Shakespeare's *R&J* for UAH's Theatre program. This adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Joe Calarco is set in a Catholic high school and features four actors playing all the parts. The original off-Broadway production used an all-male cast, but my production at UAH was all-female. In changing the gender of the actors from male to female, I was able to explore the liminality of gender and sexuality within the patriarchal, hyper-normative world of parochial school.

And in spring 2019, I am directing a contemporary adaptation of the classical Greek tragedy *The Trojan Women* by Ellen McLaughlin. Whereas Euripides's version certainly discusses the horror of war, McLaughlin workshoped her adaptation with actual survivors of post-war sexual servitude and trauma from Bosnia in the 1990s. I anticipate this production will have even more resonance now, and I look forward to bringing this important work to UAH.

So, my creative endeavors focus on pushing back against the bonds of misogyny and heteronormativity. If folks are interested in my scholarship or theatre work, they should check out my website: <https://sites.google.com/a/uah.edu/chad-thomas>

Molly: Why were you interested in being Director of Women's and Gender Studies at UAH?

Chad: For me, it was a natural fit. Because my professional life has been committed to the issues important to WGS, I almost felt a



Dr. Molly Johnson (left) and Dr. Chad Thomas (right).

sense of duty to apply for the director position. When I came to UAH, I knew that my pedagogical approach would be meaningful for both LGBTQIA+ students and for those students who have never had direct contact with a gay person.

I've been a member of Women's and Gender Studies teaching faculty since January 2011, and in that time I have taught a "queer drama" class four or five times. After every iteration of the course, I've had students approach me to say how meaningful they found the class. At least two students who subsequently self-identified as transgender singled out that class as an impetus for their decision to come out. In addition, six or seven students have mentioned how much they appreciated reading plays that represent their own experience (rather than that of straight, white males.)

I think my favorite student comment ever came from a young

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Women's and Gender Studies Program

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WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS

Susan Friedman Receives Award (continued)

She also donated her time to the UAH community garden, offering free yoga classes in the garden so that those around campus and in Huntsville could see what UAH

has to offer. In addition, she founded the Writer's Block literary magazine, continues as its sponsor, and assists students in obtaining funding for and producing their print publication. For the past two years, Friedman has also served as a judge for the Kathryn L. Harris Women's and Gender Studies Writing Competition.

Since coming to UAH in 2008, Friedman has also continued her

research interests in the field of Women's and Gender Studies. She

has presented papers at national conferences on teaching auto-pathography to build empathy; on using student voice work in the classroom to deal with trauma; on recognizing horizontal identities in the college classroom; on speaking and writing about rape and sexual assault; and most recently, on employing "patient-doctor" clinical ethics as a pedagogical practice in the WGS classroom.

Beyond her work at UAH, Friedman donates her time and energy to giving yoga classes throughout the community for free to help with fundraising for projects, for example offering a free yoga class for participations in the walkathon of the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Health, as well as donating free yoga classes on campus to the Delta Zeta sorority as a reward for their philanthropic work.

For the last decade, Friedman has been an active member of the Huntsville Feminist Chorus, whose mission is to open hearts and minds through song. She also sings as part of the choir at Temple B'nai Shalom. She participates in and supports interfaith activities in Huntsville, most recently leading a group song at the "Songs and Chants for Unity and Protest Teach-in" at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Huntsville and serving as a panelist at the WGS "Interfaith Conversations" event.

The Women's and Gender Studies Program is grateful for Dr. Suzy Friedman's service to UAH and its students and to the North Alabama community. She truly exemplifies the spirit of Rose Norman, and we are honored to give her the Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action.



From top: Suzy Friedman (left) participated as a panelist in this year's Interfaith Conversations event; Friedman (right) with Marcellia Nobles, recent WGS graduate.

Q&A with Molly and Chad (continued)

woman (and WGS minor) who told me that class "was the gay spiritual journey I didn't realize I was craving so badly." I also hear such reactions in relation to misogyny and feminism when I teach my modern American women playwrights class. This is all to say, I have committed my professional life, both as an academic and an artist to the study of women, gender, and sexuality.

Molly: *What excites you the most about your new position?*

Chad: The people, mostly. I feel so fortunate to be able to advise the WGS minors and to help them

figure out what they are passionate about. I had teachers and mentors when I was their age who made a tremendous difference in my life, and I want to pay that debt forward.

Also, the community partners and stakeholders of WGS at UAH are so generous and committed that I'm really looking forward to getting to know them better through a variety of events.

The WGS Program Advisory Committee is outstanding, and I am excited to work with them for the next four years to help WGS grow and flourish. This means

expanding our WGS course offerings, bringing new faculty into WGS, and reinvigorating our current teaching faculty. I'd like to see UAH become a regional destination for WGS, which may mean expanding the program to include a WGS graduate certificate, or creating a WGS interdisciplinary undergraduate BA, or even incorporating more explicitly the area of sexuality studies under the umbrella of WGS. The future may hold all of these things, or none, but I know it will be exciting, and I'm so proud that I've been chosen to be the next director of WGS at UAH.

Women's and Gender Studies Featured Faculty: Amy Guerin

Amy Guerin is an Assistant Professor of Theatre in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Born in Baton Rouge, but raised in Houston, Amy received her Masters of Fine Arts in Theatre from the University of Houston. While in Houston, she started a theatre company, Nova Arts Project that was honored by the Houston Press for its creative achievement. Amy taught with the Department of Performance Studies at Texas A&M from 2006 to 2016, when she then came to UAH to help build the new theatre major.

Guerin specializes in late 20th century and 21st century American theatre. As a practitioner, this specialization is seen in directing works by 21st century playwrights Jennifer Haley (*Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom*) and Lauren Gunderson (*I and You*) and in incorporating new technology into classic plays. At Texas A&M, her 2009 production of *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream was a collaboration between Performance Studies and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering and featured flying robots within the play. Profiled by *Wired* magazine, NPR's *Science Friday*, and *Smithsonian* magazine, it remains one of the few integrated robot/human theatre productions within the U.S. As a research topic, her focus on hyper-contemporary theatre has led to articles in *Autonomous Robots*, *The Dramaturgy Protocol*, and presentations at the Southeastern Theatre Conference.

As a member of the Program Advisory Committee within WGS, Guerin is able to combine her interest in the new voices of American theatre—the voices of women, LGBTQ+, playwrights of color, and every combination thereof—into courses that take fresh approaches to production and playwriting. In spring 2019, Guerin's course, Modern American Theatre (TH 324), which fo-

cuses on 21st century theatre, is cross-listed within WGS. This course dives into the underrepresented voice and makes these playwrights known to future theatre practitioners and audiences. Along with Modern American Theatre, Guerin is also teaching Acting I (TH 221), Script Analysis (TH 150), and an Honors Seminar, titled "Boom! Kapow! Bravo! The Comic Book and Contemporary Theatre."

Outside of her work at UAH, Guerin is the co-founder and co-Artistic Director of Huntsville Shakespeare, along with WGS Director, Chad Thomas. Huntsville Shakespeare is a professional theatre company dedicated to bringing innovative productions of Shakespeare to the Huntsville metropolitan area. Their debut production of *Twelfth Night* from July 2018 was revived September 12-23 at UAH in the Wilson Theatre.



Dr. Amy Guerin is a new member of the WGS PAC. Guerin performed the role of "the pilot" in the one-person show, *Grounded*, at UAH in fall 2017.

Upcoming Spring 2019 Courses

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| WGS 200 01 | INTRO WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES | PHL 102 02 | INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS |
| ARH 103 01 | ARH SUR: NON-WESTERN TRADITIONS | PHL 102 03 | INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS |
| ARH 103 02 | ARH SUR: NON-WESTERN TRADITIONS | PHL 102 04 | INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS |
| ARH 309 01 | CONTEMPORARY ART & ISSUES | PHL 102 HI | HONORS INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS |
| ARH 310 01 | NINETEENTH CENTURY ART | PHL 303 01 | CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY |
| ARH 320 01 | WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY | PHL 335 01 | FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY |
| CM 330 01 | NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION | PSC 438 01 | CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT |
| EH 242 01 | MYTHOLOGY | PSC 440 01 | REGIONAL STUDIES: LATIN AMERICA |
| EH 242 02 | MYTHOLOGY | PY/SOC 375 01 | SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY |
| EH 462 01 | SHAKESPEARE II | SOC 105 01 | INTRO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY |
| HY 367 01 | WOMEN IN U.S. HISTORY | TH 324 01 | MODERN AMERICAN THEATRE |

For more course information, visit www.uah.edu/wgs

For course time changes, see the official UAH schedule of classes: www.uah.edu/cgi-bin/schedule.pl



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Become a Friend of Women's and Gender Studies!

Friends of Women's and Gender Studies (FWGS) is an organization of people who support the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program. The goals of FWGS include:

- Supporting community involvement in Women's and Gender Studies events
- Sponsoring cultural activities and events that honor and empower women
- Supporting women scholars, artists, and performers
- Fostering discussion of issues affecting women's lives

Annual Contribution (October 1 – September 30)

- \$10-24 Individual \$25-49 Family \$50-99 Matron \$100-249 Sponsor
 \$250-\$499 Sustaining \$500 Lifetime Contributor \$1000 Benefactor

I would like to contribute to the "Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action." \$

GIVE ONLINE! Go to www.uah.edu/giving. Select "Give Online" and designate your gift to "UAH Women's and Gender Studies."

GIVE VIA MAIL! Complete your contact information and mail your check along with this form to the address listed below.

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