

Women's Studies Newsletter

Women's Resource Center gets a new look!

Women's Resource Center Revamp
by Lynanne Page

"Wow!" I said repeatedly when I walked into the Women's Resource Center for the first time since it was re-imagined by Office Manager Carrie New and Women's Studies Program Coordinator Jeannie



Carrie New in the WRC

Carrie calls the transformation a move "from dungeon to Degas." In the old floorplan, the desk was right inside the door, so visitors "had to walk through office space to get to student space," Carrie says. Carrie drew a new, open floorplan, and she and Jeannie picked warm paint colors. They added lamps and Carrie's hand-woven baskets.



Ludlow. Although the Resource Center is still in Stevenson Hall's basement, it has been transformed into an inviting, warmly lit space.



The new look of the Women's Resource Center has made it an even better space for students, faculty members, and community members to meet, relax, discuss, read, research, and learn about



women's issues. Carrie provides several suggestions for utilizing the Resource Center:
*Anytime the center is open, anyone can come to talk, relax, or read.
*Students can research Women's Studies and other class projects.
*Faculty members can request tours of the center not just for Women's Studies classes, but for any class.
*Faculty members can include the center in a campus "treasure hunt": leave objects in several locations on campus, and ask students to obtain the objects from staff members and return them.

WRC hours are 8:30-noon, 1-4:30 M-F. To request services or ask for directions to the Women's Resource Center, call Carrie New at 581-5947.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! WST RSO

Several Women's Studies minors and interested students have revived the WST Registered Student Organization. Officers are: President, Becki Rowe; Vice President, Tara Crawford; Secretary, Ashley Wiberg; Treasurer, Amanda Wildenberg; Membership, Kristin Menas. Watch for these future projects: Feminist Bake Sale in October; The Vagina Monologues in February; and possibly a guest speaker in the spring.

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From Soup Stop: Soup Stop needs volunteers! Volunteers needed to set up, serve, and clean up, lunches Mondays through Fridays. Also needed: a volunteer coordinator to make out the monthly schedule. The ideal volunteer coordinator would be somebody who's home quite a bit, would be able to take on the commitment to do this monthly, and likes doing business by phone. If you know of anyone or if you are interested, please contact Carol Stevens at cdstevens@eiu.edu.

WOMEN'S STUDIES' NEWEST FACULTY MEMBER: KANINIKA BHATNAGAR

In Spring 2009, the Women's Studies Program welcomed our newest WST faculty member, Kaninika Bhatnagar, in the School of Technology. Dr. Bhatnagar agreed to be interviewed for the WST newsletter.

When did you come to Eastern, and from where? I came to Eastern last fall (Aug. '08), from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. I am originally from India.

When/why did you get interested in Women's Studies/women's issues? I am the only child in my family (it's unusual to have an only girl child). I studied in an all girls' institution back in India. I became more conscious of gender divide here in this country, perhaps because in India it was too much a part of me to even be noticeable. Perhaps because I grew up in a family with a very strong female role model in my mother. Both my mother and father were Ph.D.s, university professors. Academically, Women's Studies was my minor for my doctoral dissertation. I was interested in exploring gender differences in how kids perceived technology.

What are some of the important issues relative to women/gender and technology? Perception perception perception! I strongly believe in the idea of social construction of gender. 'Feminine' and 'masculine' are labels that we as a society have created. Labels are put on 'boxes,' and technology typically is placed in the 'masculine box.' Other issues include confidence, which is related to self-esteem, and access, which affects women more than men. Time and again research finds that women tend to have lower confidence in their technical

ability, and this has no correlation with their grades or any other performance measure. This ties into the notion of perceptions and also expectations. In that sense it is a function of socialization. Parental and peer socialization can reinforce/encourage some interests, and subdue/restrain others.

Can you tell me a bit about on-line teaching and gender? On-line teaching is a great vehicle for WST in particular and for minorities in general. I can tell you from my own personal experience that my voice increased manyfold just because I was able to write my answers instead of speaking them out in class—on-line work affected my participation. On-line teaching could be a way to battle women's self-perceptions, especially if we use it to work one-on-one, follow-up on somebody's responses. Personally, I prefer on-line, and perhaps that's because I'm a minority woman. I also prefer that interaction, which is more deep than broad because students think and re-think their responses; they don't just raise their hand and say the first thing that comes to mind.

There are stereotypes that on-line teaching is less engaged. It's cold only for a certain number of people; for others it's comfortable. My perspective is because I'm an outsider, so to speak.

You've developed a course on women and technology; can you tell me a little bit about it? My course is a senior seminar on women and technology. I would say it is work in progress, but we had very encouraging participation last spring. Students bring their own personal experiences to bear on the topics we discuss in class.

Unfortunately, I had only two male students in my class last term. I tried to draw them into conversation as much as possible. We discuss gender issues from a historical standpoint, and then deal more specifically with technology by women, technology for women, as well as the notion of 'feminist science.'

Is there anything else you'd like WST folks to know?

Well interdisciplinary dialogue is always a good thing. We can never have enough of it. Perhaps we need to focus more on gender dichotomy in science and technology. Because that is where jobs are, entrepreneurs are, and money is. Our society is becoming more and more technology-savvy, and technology-centered. So gender equity in technology is critical for women to not be left behind, again. WST could play a big role in increasing awareness in this regard. What we are doing in the School of Technology is also relevant to the conversation about women—WST and Technology: dialog between the two would be a good thing!

EIU'S LIVING HISTORY PROJECT, 2010

It's time to start planning for WST's 2010 Living History Project. For more information: Michelle Hopper mdhopper@eiu.edu (581-7696); Jeannie Ludlow jludlow@eiu.edu (581-6970); Gail Mason gemason@eiu.edu (581-6945). Faculty members, if you would like to recommend a student for the Living History Project, please let us know!

OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH! Please purchase purple lights for your front porch, for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (Oct.). The lights are \$3 each or two for \$5; contact HOPE to purchase. DV Awareness Month 2009 activities include:

Tues, Oct. 13 Hoops for HOPE: The EIU Women's Team is sponsoring a basketball game featuring community and EIU students as players, police and firemen as cheerleaders and hopefully "celebrity" announcers, refs, and coaches. Attendees will be asked to bring donations of canned food or other needed items.

Tues Oct 27: Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigil. This will be held at Morton Park (Rennels Pavilion) and Motherlode will play.

Women's Studies Faculty Accomplishments

GRANTS

Robin L. Murray (English) was awarded a grant for \$46,000.00 from the National Writing Project to continue the Eastern Illinois Writing Project. The project will provide K-16 teachers across the curriculum with opportunities to improve student writing and learning; extend uses of writing in all disciplines; provide schools with an effective in-service model; identify, celebrate, and enhance the professional role of successful classroom teachers; and apply a teacher-centered model to implement these goals. For more information, see www.eiu.edu/~easternnwp.

Women's Studies received a Redden Grant for \$1400.00 for the purchase of a portable projection screen and six documentary films for use in conjunction with units in our gateway course, WST 2309G.

PUBLICATIONS

Melissa Ames (English), "The (Inter)Active Soap Opera Viewer: Fantastic Practices & Mediated Communities" in *Writing (and) the Digital Generation: Essays on How Interactive Digital Media is Changing Rhetoric and Writing*. McFarland Press, 2009.

Gene Deerman (Sociology), book review of Timothy Hogsdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities in the Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, Fall 2009.

Marie Fero (EC/ELE/MLEducation), *Haunted Summer at Mill Creek*. Mirror Publications, 2009.

Jeannie Ludlow (English/WST), "Mama's Baby, Papa's . . . Mama? Toward a Faux Gestational History" in *Specs*, Fall 2009.

Letitia Moffitt (English), "The Mother Load" in *Cadillac Cicatrix*, "Puzzles and Presents" in *Broken Plate*, "That's Nothing" in *Melusine*, and "At Home" in *Two Hawks Quarterly*.

Robin L. Murray (English), "WALL-E: From Environmental Adaptation to Sentimental Nostalgia" in *Jump Cut*. Summer 2009. With Joseph Heumann; "Bambi and Mr. Bug Goes to Town: Nature, With or Without Us." Forthcoming in *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment*. With Joseph Heumann; "Women Miners, Women Protesters: A Neglected Image." Forthcoming in *The Artist as Activist in Appalachia*. University Press of North Georgia. With Joseph Heumann; "Fast, Furious, and Out of Control: Car Culture and the Transformation of the American Landscape." Forthcoming in *Framing the World* for University of Virginia Press. With Joseph Heumann; and "Ecocriticism and Interdisciplinarity: Giving a Feminist Voice to Nature." Forthcoming in *Open Words*.

PRESENTATIONS

Melissa Ames (English), "Feminist Aesthetic Strategies: The Temporal Play and Non-Linear Plots Found in Print and Visual Narratives" and "Televisual Recycling: The 00s Remediate Class & Family Critiques from the 80s" at the Midwest Modern Language Association Conference (MMLA), St Louis, MO, November 2009; and "Where Have All The Good Men Gone?: A Psychoanalytic Reading of the Absent Fathers and Damaged Dads on ABC's *Lost*" at The Midwest Popular Culture Association Conference (MPCA), Detroit, MI, October 2009.

Dagni Bredesen (English), "Marketing the Female Detective: Agents, Actors, and Ads in Victorian Popular Print" at an international conference "The Victorian Marketplace," sponsored by the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada (VISAWC) and the Victorian Studies Association of the Western United States (VISAWUSA), Vancouver, BC, October 2009.

Linda Coleman (English), organized and will chair "Building Bridges, Being Bridges: Is Our Women's Studies Teaching Still Truly Interdisciplinary?" (Women's Caucus Session) at the Midwest Modern Language Association Conference (MMLA), St Louis, MO, November 2009.

Ruth Hoberman (English), "Compromised Curators" at the North American Conference on British Studies, November 2009.

Jeannie Ludlow (English/Women's Studies), "From Waiting Periods to Waiting Rooms: Challenges Particular to Rural Women Seeking Abortion" at the Rural Women's Studies Association Triennial Conference, Bloomington, IN, September 2009; "From Abortion Rights to Reproductive Justice: The Politics of Memory and Feminist Archives" and "Queering Feminist Bioethics: Male Pregnancy" at the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA, November 2009.

Robin L. Murray (English), "A New Look at Ecology and Popular Film: Cinema on the Edge" at the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment Conference at the University of Victoria, June 2009.

Women's Studies Courses, Spring 2010

WST 2309G Women, Men, and Culture – 3 sections

9:00-9:50 a.m. MWF Sace Elder

12:30-1:45 p.m. TR Loretta Ullrich-Ferguson

3:30-4:45 p.m. TR Loretta Ullrich-Ferguson

WST 4309 – Feminist Theory 2:00-3:15 p.m. TR Jeannie Ludlow

ENG 3903 – Non-Western Women's Life Writing: Asian and the Middle-Eastern 3:30-4:45 p.m. TR Jyoti Panjwani

FCS 2831 – Women in Contemporary Society 9:00-10:15 a.m. TR Kathleen O'Rourke

PSY 3720 – Psychology of Gender 4:00-6:30 p.m. T Linda Leal

SOC 3903 - Gender Roles and Social Change 6:00-8:30 p.m. Dr. Janet Cosbey.

PLANNING TO STUDY ABROAD? Be sure to look for Women's/Gender Studies courses at the institution you'll visit! WST faculty member Ruth Hoberman is teaching a Women's Literature course at Harlaxton College in England this Spring.

WST Newsletter Committee: Kaninika Bhatnagar, Jeannie Ludlow, and Lynanne Page



Women's Studies Program
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, IL 61920-3099
Account # 121C10