Greeting from the Director,

Welcome to the Women and Gender Studies Program at the University of Southern Maine, the longest-standing feminist studies program in Northern New England. In the Fall of 2013, I stepped into a role previously occupied by Wendy Chapkis, Susan Feiner, Lorrainey Carrol, Luisa Deprez, Diana Long, and Nancy Gish—a humbling position, to be sure. Each of these women brought to the position a lifetime of connections with people in her respective scholarly and political communities, enriching the program, and forging new relationships with, for example, statewide literacy programs, political action networks, economic centers, and—of course—progressive scholarly institutions. To be affiliated with USM’s Women and Gender Studies Program is to be part of a vast network of people and possibilities. My goal this upcoming year to nurture those, and to create more.

My own scholarly and political work grows out of a new field called Animal Studies, or sometimes Human-Animal Studies, which concerns itself with historical and contemporary relationships between humans and the more-than-human world. Closely related to ecological studies, gender studies, and trauma studies, Animal Studies, writes Kari Weil in “A Report on the Animal Turn,” “stretches to the limit questions of language, of epistemology, and of ethics that have been raised in various ways by women’s studies or postcolonial studies: how to understand and give voice to others or to experiences that seem impervious to our means of understanding; how to attend to difference without appropriating or distorting it; how to hear and acknowledge what it may not be possible to say” (4). I am also on the Board of Maine Friends of Animals, Maine’s largest animal protection organization, and have been working to create connections between USM’s curriculum and Maine’s animal welfare communities.

Because the Women and Gender Studies faculty is interdisciplinary, drawn from different colleges and department across campus, and because we represent such curricular and political diversity, students can choose mentors based upon their own specialized needs and desires. And because so many of our courses are cross-listed with other departments, declaring a double major is both simple and rewarding. Please take a look at our website or Facebook page. Listen to what our former students have to say. Or come by 94 Bedford Street and have a chat with me or Lauren Webster LaFrance, the Assistant Director of the Program.

To all—concerned, activist, or simply curious—welcome. As the Women and Gender Studies Program nears its fourth decade of “stimulating thought,” we would love for you to be part of the conversation.

Lucinda Cole
Director, Women and Gender Studies
Associate Professor, Department of English

Visit: http://www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/course-list
Registration begins November 12th
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR AND THE MINOR

14 courses are required for the WGS major:
6 core courses:
WST 101i Intro to Women and Gender Studies or
EYE 109 Gender, Representation and Resistance

and
WST 201 Women, Knowledge and Power
WST 380 Politics of Difference
WST 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories
WST 490 Capstone Experience
WST 485 Internship or
WST 486 Thesis

and
2 WGS topics courses from among these categories:
Science, Technology and Health
Culture and the Arts
History and Resistance
Gender and Institutions

and
6 approved gender-related elective courses
a list is available at www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/courses

6 courses are required for the WGS minor:
1 core course at the 100-level:
WST 101i Intro to Women and Gender Studies or
EYE 109 Gender, Representation and Resistance

and
1 core course at the 200-level:
WST 201 Women, Knowledge and Power
1 core course at the 300-level:
WST 380 Politics of Difference or
WST 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories

and
3 approved gender-related elective courses:
a list is available at:
www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/courses

Fulfilling your Core Courses with Women & Gender Studies

Entry Year Experience:

EYE 109 "Gender, Representation, and Resistance"

EYE 109 "Gender, Representation, and Resistance" Drawing on many disciplines, EYE 109 asks, what is gender and how is it represented historically and cross-culturally? Students consider the impact of mass media, education and political discourse on gender construction, and explore the liberating power of pleasure. Books assigned for this course may include: Gender by R.W. Connell, Woman at Point Zero by Nawal El Saadawi, and Guerrilla Girls Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art by the Guerrilla Girls

Socio-Cultural Analysis:

WST 101 "Introduction to Women and Gender Studies"

WST 101 "Introduction to Women and Gender Studies" This course considers the economic, political, and social status of women and men and how ideas about femininity/masculinity and feminism are promoted through the media and other vehicles of culture. Books used by this course have included: Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Pipher, Dude, You’re a Fag by C. J. Pascoe and Feminist Frontiers by Richardson, Taylor & Whittier.

Cultural Interpretations:

WST 201 "Women, Knowledge and Power"

WST 201 "Women, Knowledge and Power" examines the relationship between gender, assumptions about truth, and the ways both affect how we experience the world. Books from past sections of the course have included: The Creation of Feminist Consciousness by Gerda Lerner, A Room of One’s Own by Virginia Woolf, Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood, and Black Feminist Thought by Patricia Hill Collins.

Ethical Inquiry, Social Responsibility & Citizenship:

WST 380 "Politics of Difference"

WST 380 “Politics of Difference” explores some of the consequences of using such identity categories as race, nationality, religion, and sex to shape culture and gender relations within it. Books assigned for this course have included: Gender Outlaw by Kate Bornstein, How Does it Feel to be a Problem by Moustafa Bayoumi, Hatreds by Zillah Eisenstein and Iran Awakening by Shireen Ebadi.

Diversity:

WST 201: Women, Knowledge and Power

AND

WST 390 “Contemporary Feminist Theories”

WST 390 “Contemporary Feminist Theories” introduces students to such feminist theoretical approaches as post-structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, critical race theory, and post-colonialism. The focus of the course is the intimate relationships between feminist theories and feminist practices, locally and globally.

In addition, many WGS courses also satisfy the International requirement and a WGS minor satisfies the "Cluster" requirement.
The Gender Studies Student Organization is a group for students who are interested in gender and feminist politics. We strive to be inclusive and open our doors to anyone who shares these interests, regardless of their major. We organize panel discussions, workshops and other events that examine contemporary social issues through a gender-conscious lens. This semester, we are collaborating with a variety of student groups, including the Divest UMaine movement and the Student Sociology Association. Our first event will be a panel discussion entitled “When Students Act, Administration Listens: a Brief History of Student Activism at USM.” It will be on October 23rd at 7p.m. in the Talbot Lecture Hall. In addition to this, we will be co-sponsoring the USM Royal Majesty Drag Show. If you are interested in being part of this group, please contact Paige Barker via e-mail at paige.barker@maine.edu. Our meetings are Tuesdays from 12 to 1 in the Women and Gender Studies House.

Survey of Current WGS Majors 2012-2013

WGS: A Significant Intellectual Impact

- “Every one of the professors I’ve taken courses with, including those cross-listed with other departments, have been inspiring and exceptional educators.”
- “All of my professors have been wonderful. I love this program because of the top-notch professors.”
- “The professors teaching in the Women and Gender Studies Program at USM are exceptional. No question. They challenge you, they cheer for you, and they consistently bring out your best.”
- “They create a space where your mind can creatively engage challenging theoretical material.”
- “The best experiences I have had with faculty on campus have been with WGS professors. They have truly opened my
Women & Science Discussion Continues

On the Portland and Gorham campuses, The Well – USM’s Community Wellness Centers (151 Upton Hall, Gorham and 143A Woodbury Campus Center, Portland) is a hub of student support, connection and engagement. The Well also helps students connect to the Campus Safety Project, a university-wide initiative that promotes healthy relationships at USM by providing prevention education and response training on sexual assault, stalking, and relationship abuse for students, faculty, and staff. It also coordinates campus and community-based programs and services.

Diversity continues to be a strong component of student life work at USM, and the Woodbury Campus Center houses centers and offices devoted to extending this education and support across the university: Center for Sexualities and Gender Diversity, Multicultural Student Affairs, Religious and Spiritual Life, and the Veterans Resource Center.

Student Life @ USM:
Providing Student Support, Connection and Engagement

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The Well - http://www.usm.maine.edu/studentlife/thewell

Campus Safety Project - http://usm.maine.edu/campussafetyproject

Center for Sexualities and Gender Diversity - http://www.usm.maine.edu/csgd

Multicultural Student Affairs - http://www.usm.maine.edu/mcsa

Religious and Spiritual Life - http://www.usm.maine.edu/interfaith

Veterans Resource Center - http://www.usm.maine.edu/veterans/veterans-resource-center
Answering the Question:
“What can you do with a degree in Women and Gender Studies?”

USM WGS Alumni Updates

Gina Capra (BA Women & Gender Studies, 2005) will be going to Simmons College this fall for a Master of Science in Management with a Non-Profit concentration. Additionally, she will be a Campus Leader fellow through the Futures Without Violence organization for this upcoming academic year, and during that time she will be doing domestic violence and sexual assault education, prevention and programming on the Simmons Campus.

Ryan Mack (BA Sociology, 2011) will begin the PhD program in Sociology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois this fall as a Mellon Cluster Fellow in Gender and Sexuality Studies. He plans to complete a graduate certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies.

Emily Paine (BA Women & Gender Studies and Sociology, 2008) is beginning a fully-funded MA/PhD program in Sociology at University of Texas at Austin. She’ll continue to explore intersections of gender, gender identity, sexuality, race, and health and social movements and intends to earn a graduate certificate in Gender Studies along the way.

Victoria Randall (BA Women & Gender Studies, 2010) is currently a student in Performance Studies at New York University. The WGS faculty inspired and wholeheartedly supported her thesis work exploring the intersections of burlesque and topless dancing through a lens of feminist, queer, and sexuality theory. Women and Gender Studies continues to motivate her burlesque performances and productions and infuses her graduate work with feminist and queer theory. She is interested in burlesquing every aspect of her academic career. Potential graduate projects include: “OkCupid is Not Okay: Performances of Queer Internet Dating,” production and performance of “Jane Err: A Burlesque-Draglesgue Musical;” “Hawt Disney’s The Little Seagull,” a mermaid burlesque of the Chekov play; and, “Reasons for Getting Out of Bed: A One Woman Existential Crisis.” Victoria plans to pursue a PhD in Performance Studies, American Studies, Theatre Studies, or Psychology in New York, California or Austin, Texas.

USM WGS Alum Jenna Mehnert is the new Executive Director for the Maine Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness

Jenna Mehnert, MSW, has been hired as executive director of the Maine Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the statewide advocacy organization for people affected by mental illness. Mehnert brings a diverse background as an advocate, policymaker, administrator, service provider and network builder to the position.

Mehnert previously served as the executive director of the New England Institute of Addiction Studies and spent six years leading the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. She was named the NASW Chapter Executive Director of the Year in 2011. Mehnert has extensive policy and operational experience, including her service as executive policy specialist with Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell. She also has worked for the offices of the mayor in both New York City and Washington, D.C.; as director of program management and development in the New York City Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator; and as chief of staff for the Washington, D.C., Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice.

Mehnert began her career in direct-service settings, including as a child welfare worker in Lewiston/Auburn and rape crisis hotline supervisor in Portland. For the past 10 years, Mehnert has taught graduate and undergraduate social policy, juvenile justice and women’s studies courses. She currently serves as an adjunct Gender Studies professor at the University of Maine and as an elected school board member.

The WGSAA

Founded in 2009, the USM’s Women and Gender Studies Alumnae/i Association (WGSAA) was created to provide a continuous learning community for graduates of the program. The association works to reunite graduates, faculty, and friends (both locally and afar) through a range of social and educational activities and events, as well as through our Facebook Group page (USM’s Women and Gender Studies Alumnae Association) and e-mail listserv (wgsalum-L@usm.maine.edu). The association is also intended to shed light on the wonderful work alumni are doing post-graduation and to help build stronger networks within the University and greater community. The Association works to represent our degree program, playing an integral part in supporting WGS and encouraging current and incoming students.
I have really enjoyed teaching for the Women and Gender Studies program as an Affiliated Scholar at the University of Southern Maine. My association with the program has given me the opportunity to collaborate with USM’s professors and students, as well as citizens in the community. I am a cultural anthropologist with research interests in gender as it relates to tourism, art, economics, empowerment, and community development. I have been fortunate to teach Introduction to Women and Gender Studies and Women, Knowledge, and Power for many years. This fall, I offered a new course to the WGS program titled, Women, Arts, and Global Tourism that is cross-listed with the Geography-Anthropology and Tourism and Hospitality programs. This new course explores the role of women who produce arts and crafts for the global tourist market. All over the world, women are improving their socio-economic status, investing in their families, and contributing to community development through their involvement in tourism. Tourism is perhaps the largest-scale movement of goods, services, and people in human history. Students learn about the historical and contemporary experiences of women from many different cultures such as: examples from Latin America, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia. The course content includes themes of cultural heritage, culture change, traditional versus tourist art, hosts versus guests, gender inequality, women’s empowerment, fair trade and community development.

I have also extended my teaching services beyond the university and into the Maine community. Last fall, I was a visiting scholar responsible for facilitating the “Let’s Talk About It” book series titled, “Growing Up Between Cultures,” developed by USM’s Distinguished Professor and WGS Affiliated Scholar Kathleen Ashley and sponsored by the Maine Humanities Council. Members of the Wells Public Library read memoirs representing four different geographic locations under cultural conflict (colonial and post-colonial Africans, Native Americans from the Southwest during the 1940’s and 1950’s, second generation Chinese Americans, and post-World War II Jewish immigrants from Poland). Readers examined identity formation as influenced by culture, ethnicity, race, and nationality. The series encouraged the participants to critically analyze these categories as historically constructed within systems of power where difference has often led to oppression.

As an Affiliated Scholar with the Women and Gender Studies program, I have been given the unique opportunity to encourage our students, as well as citizens in our community to value diversity and gender equality. The Women and Gender Studies program’s broad network of Affiliated Scholars has helped build a viable force of professors, students, and citizens working for positive change.
Women & Gender Studies Spring 2014 Course Listings

WST 101: Introduction of Women & Gender Studies
Gorham M/W 11:00-12:15PM Prof. Sarah Lockridge
Portland M/W 10:15-11:30AM Prof. Lorrainey Carroll
Portland TH 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Eve Raimon
Portland T 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Wendy Chapkis
Portland W 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Wendy Chapkis
Online Prof. Kim Simmons

This course explores from a variety of perspectives the following inter-related themes and topics: the economic, political, and social status of women as a group and in discrete cultural contexts; the politics of representation, or how ideas about femininity and feminism are promoted throughout the media and other vehicles of culture; the construction of “consciousness,” both through the media and through feminist tactics; women and collective action in the past, present, and future. Students are expected to practice their writing skills through formal essays. 3 credits. Satisfies core requirement for socio-cultural analysis.

WST 201: Women, Knowledge & Power
Portland T/TH 10:15-11:30AM Prof. Sarah Lockridge

This course examines the ways in which the politics of knowledge production shape culture and gender relations. It explores the ways women have historically resited, subverted, appropriated and reformed traditional bodies of thought. Prerequisites: WST 101, EYE 109 or permission of instructor. Satisfies core requirement for cultural interpretations. 3 credits.

WST 245/PHI 245: Africa, Social Justice & Exile
Portland M 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Kate Wininger
Portland T 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Kate Wininger

This course will address issues of social justice in the context of Africa and its Diaspora (the disbursement of its people outside of the continent). The immediate reason for our interest and concern is that the African refugees are people who live among us. But the stories of exile allow us to connect with social (Diane Ciekawy, Antjie Krog, Desmond Tutu), economic (George Caffentzis, Sylvia Federici), environmental (Wangari Maathai, Ken Saro-Wiwa), and cultural (Sindiwe Magona, Ngugi wa Thiong’o & Micere Githae Mugo) issues around the world. The lives of women, children and men are affected differently. Illnesses such as AIDs influence asylum decisions. Our examination of refugees and exiles will concentrate on certain parts of West Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa. Many recent immigrants to Portland are from East Africa and came here as refugees. Many issues of social justice, which arise in the cases of refugees, come from the nature of the laws in the countries where they seek asylum. For this reason it is important to know the mechanisms of judicial process in the lands in which they settle. We will then read material by some of the most famous exiles of our time (for example, Bessie Head, Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie and Edward Said) as they reflect on what it means to be homeless and without a country. We begin by exploring what drove people to seek asylum. We will hear descriptions of the challenges African people faced in their homelands. African people are coming from a continent where colonization is usually a significant part of their past. The process of de-colonization has been challenging. The departures of the colonizers left substantial inequitable social structures. The pursuit of justice is further problematized when a country has been occupied and gross inequalities sustained by people who remain in the country. This course Satisfies Ethical Inquiry. *Fulfills Non-Western Requirement for WGS Majors. 3 credits

WST 335: Sociology of the Body
Portland M 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Wendy Chapkis

This course examines the body as a text marked by, and rendered meaningful through, social categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and disease. This writing- and reading-intensive course discusses both social constructionist and biological determinist perspectives on embodied difference. 3 credits

WST 335: Species, Sex, Gender & Science Fiction
Portland M/W 2:45-4:00PM Prof. Lucinda Cole

This course explores the intersections between gender studies and science fiction by focusing specifically on the problem of species, beginning with early modern natural philosophy, and ending with twenty-first century feminist science studies. At the heart of this course are fundamental questions in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences: What does it mean to be human? How does the category of gender relate to that of species, or biological kind? How has science as a discipline contributed to, or undermined, presumably natural differences? How are feminists working within science studies bringing a new materiality to bear on poststructuralist models of understanding? The course will emphasize the contribution that women writers have made to speculative fiction, particularly in their explorations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries of gender, species, and reproduction. We will be drawing on recent scholarship in human-animal studies, science studies, and feminism studies. Creative and theoretical material will be supplemented by film. 3 credits
WST 345: Gender and Empire  
Portland M/W 11:45-1:00PM  Prof. Deepika Marya

This course will examine narratives constructed by women during occupation(s) and imperialism(s). The questions we will pursue will help illustrate what kind of literature and theory emerged under occupations and how these works defined and opened new and innovative positions. Some of the works point to alternate ways to imperial fictions of making sense of the world, works by Chandra Mohanty and Roberta Menchu will lead us to these discussions. Through the film and writing of Assia Djebar and Sara Suleri respectively, we will read and watch how the autobiographical form is used to speak of the necessity to rethink imperialism, not as the past, but its consolidation in the present, imperialism mediated. We will also read works by a woman blogger from Iraq (Riverbend) who is able to break through restrictions on her participation in the public sphere to report on the war, through internet’s anonymity to emerge as one of the prime sources information on life in Baghdad during the early days of its occupation. All readings will help construct feminism’s new forms that break away from the double standards of patriarchy and imperialism(s) and contradict their shared narratives on women under occupation. Other writers we will read include Frantz Fanon, Trin Minh-ha and Mahashweta Devi. 3 credits *Fulfills Non-Western Requirement for WGS Majors

WST 345: African-American Women’s Novels  
Portland M/W 10:15-11:30AM  Prof. Jane Kuenz

This course will examine novels written by African-American women from the late 19th through the 20th century with particular emphasis on contemporary works. Topics for discussion include 1) how these writers reinterpret the past for the present, 2) whether as a group their works constitute a coherent aesthetic tradition, 3) how their work intersects with other cultural and social forces, and 4) the aesthetic, institutional, and political issues raised by their work. Texts: Harper, Iola Leroy; Hopkins, Of One Blood; Larsen, Quicksand and Passing, Fauset, Plum Bun; Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God; Brooks, Maude Martha; Walker, The Color Purple; Morrison, Song of Solomon and Beloved; Jones, Corregidora; Marshall, Praisesong for the Widow. 3 credits

WST 355: Cinema and Women  
ONLINE  Prof. Rebecca Lockridge

This course examines representations of women in feature-length films produced in the US and in other countries around the globe between 1960 and the present. Some of the films discussed will offer resistance to social, political and intellectual marginalizing and silencing in patriarchal cultures, others are embedded in it. Student will analyze these differences by comparing scholarly research on topics that match the cinematic theme depicted in the film. The course is also designed to increase media literacy as students learn to recognize the interface between technology, culture, media, and politics as they appear in the narrative structure and in cinematic techniques—shot distance, camera angle, lighting, perspective, editing, montage—of visual rhetoric. 3 credits

WST 390: Contemporary Feminist Theories  
Portland T/TH 1:15-2:30PM  Prof. Lisa Walker

This course will introduce students to such feminist theoretical approaches as post-structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, critical race theory, and post-colonialism. The focus of the course is the intimate relationships between feminist theories and feminist practices, locally and globally. Prerequisites: WST 101I or EYE 109, WST 201 or permission of the instructor. 3 credits

WST 420: Advanced Topics: Women and Popular Culture  
Portland T 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Ardis Cameron

The relationship between women and the public realm has always been a source of intense controversy and debate. This course will explore these controversies as they unfolded over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with efforts by white and African-American women to speak in public and concluding with debates over female consumption of romance fiction and daytime television. Topics include: prostitution and commercialized leisure, vaudeville and the female spectacle, working class girls and popular culture, youth culture and courtship, celebrity culture, and women in sports and with guns. 3 credits
WST 445: Women in Film  
Prof. Rebecca Lockridge  
Portland  
W 4:10-6:40PM  
This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of critical approaches applied to the issue of women in cinema. Based on the assumption that women and men are constituted through social practices in culture (including performance of gender roles), we will examine media messages that help shape the myth of womanhood (thereby acting as a source of motives for behavior). Films will be studied, which reflect the evolution of stereotypic roles of women in the decades of the 20th century. We will discuss these in relation to readings from popular culture sources, such as newspapers and magazines, as a context for understanding subjective knowledge that might guide the expectations of audiences in each decade. 3 credits

WST 470: Independent Study  
Prof. Lucinda Cole  
This course provides junior and senior students with the opportunity to pursue a project independently, concentrate on a particular subject of concern, or conduct individually arranged reading or research studies under the advice and direction of a faculty member. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing and permission of the director. 1-4 credits

WST 485: Internship  
Prof. Lucinda Cole  
Portland  
T 4:10-6:40PM  
The internship requires students to work closely with a group, business, or organization for one semester, and to conduct research on a related topic to be presented at the annual undergraduate research conference “Thinking Matters.” Prerequisites: senior standing and Women & Gender Studies major or minor. 4-6 credits

WST 486: Thesis  
Prof. Lucinda Cole  
Portland  
The thesis allows students to pursue guided research on a topic of their choosing. The minimum length for a thesis is 30 pages and includes a substantial bibliography. Thesis students should choose three readers, including an advisor whose interests and scholarship are in line with their own. Thesis research will be presented at the annual undergraduate research conference “Thinking Matters.” Prerequisites: senior standing and Women & Gender Studies major or minor. Offered in the spring semester only. 4 credits

WST 490: Capstone Experience  
Prof. Lucinda Cole  
Portland  
T 2:45-4:00PM  
All students enrolled in either the internship or thesis option are required to participate in a capstone seminar. Students are expected to co-enroll in WST 490 and WST 485 or 486. 2 credits

For more information:  
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Youtube: USMWGS