Greetings from the Director:

As of Spring Semester 2014, Women and Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine has 31 majors and 37 minors. Having tripled our number of majors during a period when college-age students are in rapid decline, according to administrative records, suggests that our program is doing something right. So in this semester’s newsletter, I want to recount some of our many individual and collective STRENGTHS:

--Students who make their lives matter.

--Faculty whose scholarship is respected by academic peers and embedded in the world.

--Lively classes with some of USM’s most engaged students and most engaging teachers.

--A writing intensive and skills-based curriculum that prepares students to transform themselves and their communities.

--A flexible series of courses.

--Programming integrated with your course work.

--A portfolio of internships designed to help you find your way.

--A knowledgeable and detail-oriented assistant to the director who makes sure you get where you’re going.

--An academic home at 94 Bedford Street, where you can find advice, news, or a place to rest.

--A community of friends and alums deeply committed to the WGS program-- and therefore, to you and your future.

Much remains uncertain about the University of Southern Maine, its leadership, and its shifting self-definitions. Women and Gender Studies, however, has always embraced positive change, and we remain open to and hopeful about USM’s attempts to reimagine itself. As a scholarly program deeply embedded in Portland and other southern Maine towns, we intend to be central to the process of creating a university of which Portland can be proud. After all, as Alice Walker reminds us, the most “common way that people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” We do, and you do. See you at 94 Bedford Street.

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

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Fall 2013 registration begins April 14th.

Women & Gender Studies courses are now found in Mainestreet under WGS (not WST)!
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR AND THE MINOR

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

and

WGS 201 Women, Knowledge and Power
WGS 380 Politics of Difference
WGS 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories
WGS 490 Capstone Experience
WGS 485 Internship
or
WGS 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:
WGS 101i Intro to Women and Gender Studies
or
EYE 109 Gender, Representation and Resistance

and

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

and

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

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:

WGS 101 "Introduction to Women and Gender Studies"

WGS 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:

WGS 201 "Women, Knowledge and Power"

WGS 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:

WGS 380 “Politics of Difference”

WGS 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:

WGS 201: Women, Knowledge and Power

AND

WGS 390 “Contemporary Feminist Theories”

WGS 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.
On both 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.

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

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

Visit: http://www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/course-list

The Gender Studies Student Organization is a group of students committed to promoting social justice, exploring feminist concerns, and queer politics. We are inclusive to all students who share this vision, 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 is “Concepts of Kink,” an informative and lighthearted whirlwind tour through the mysterious and convoluted world of the kink community, led by sexpert Wintersong Tashlin. The event will take place on March 19th at 7 pm in the Talbot Lecture Hall. If you are interested in being part of this group, contact Paige Barker via e-mail at paige.barker@maine.edu. Our meetings are Thursdays from 2 to 3 in the Women and Gender Studies House.
**Answering the Question:**

“**What can you do with a degree in Women and Gender Studies?”**

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**Alumni Updates**

Julie Beaulieu ’00 recently defended her dissertation, “Familiar Feelings: Experiencing Eighteenth-Century Sexuality” and is a lecturer in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS) program at the University of Pittsburgh. She began working in the GSWS program after receiving a competitive teaching fellowship. More recently, as a member of the GSWS major proposal committee, she has participated in the effort to transition GSWS from a certificate program to a major. Julie has developed a new core course for the program, “Sex and Sexualities,” on the history of sexuality, which has been approved to fulfill the “historical change” general education requirement. She will continue teaching in GSWS this fall; along with “Sex and Sexualities,” she'll be teaching a writing-intensive section of feminist theory and an upper-level course in queer theory.

Danielle Bernier ’10 currently lives in Boulder, Colorado and works as a Senior Energy Advisor for a national solar company. Shortly after relocating to Boulder, Danielle participated in a training with OUT Boulder, a local non-profit that sponsors Boulder Pride and hosts a variety of events and trainings for GLBT community. As a part of the Speaking Out program, she sits on a panel of volunteers that visits local schools and universities to talk with students about her personal experience of coming out. The goal of the program is to engage young people in discussion and encourage an open dialogue with regards to sexuality and orientation. Danielle is excited to be a part of the OUT Boulder volunteer group and she is also thrilled to be working for an environmental company – contributing to both local and global efforts to make the world a better place! When she is not working or volunteering, she enjoys the mountains, the delicious cuisine, and the phenomenal music scene that Boulder offers.

Gina Capra ’05 is currently working and going to grad school at Simmons College. She is in the Master of Science in Management program with a non-profit focus. Additionally she is a campus leadership fellow through Futures Without Violence, which allows her to do dating violence and sexual assault education and awareness work on her campus.

Leisl Johnson ’95 is enrolled in a doctoral program in Leadership Studies at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire, and is currently in the dissertation phase of their degree. The program is interdisciplinary, so they have focused their dissertation on how transgender individuals are leaders in society—through the daily need to educate the public about trans identity, representing a minority population, and advocating for basic human rights in a society that does not understand or accept them. Leisl hopes to complete their study by the end of this summer.

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**Women and Gender Studies graduates make a world of difference!**
Lauren Webster LaFrance ’02 continues to run the Women and Gender Studies Program here at the University of Southern Maine as the Assistant to the Director. Her other USM hats include being an active board member of the USM chapter of the Professional Staff union (UMPSA), an Ambassador on the USM Wellness Committee and a participant in the 2013-14 USM Leadership Institute. In her spare time this winter, she and her husband Ed renovated and remodeled the kitchen of their 1908 home. Look for mention of her on MaineToday.com in an upcoming column on Southern Maine interior design.

Jenna Mehnert ’93 remains very proud of her Women's Studies degree and believes it was the best course of study to prepare her for a career in policy development and advocacy. After 16 years working outside of Maine, she is delighted to be home. While working for the mayors of DC and NYC and the governor of PA taught her a great deal about system change, she is most looking forward to building better systems here in Maine. She’s honored to be the Executive Director of National Alliance on mental Illness (NAMI) Maine, a member of the Orono School Board and adjunct faculty for the University of Maine's women, gender and sexuality department. She can never say enough how much she loved her time at USM!

The WGSAA has held two well-attended feminist happy hour takeovers this spring. The first held at LFK on February 21st and the second on March 28th at Sonny's. Connections were revived, networking was achieved and a general good time was had by all. To connect with the Alum association contact Lauren Webster LaFrance at lwebster@usm.maine.edu.

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. Find us at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/274494746441/
Women & Gender Studies Fall 2014 Course Listings

WGS 101: Introduction of Women & Gender Studies
Gorham M/W 9:30-10:45AM Prof. Sarah Lockridge
Portland T/TH 10:15-11:30AM Prof. Susan Feiner
Portland T/TH 1:15-2:30PM Prof. Susan Feiner
Portland M/W 2:45-4:00PM Prof. Jim Messerschmidt
Online Prof. Sarah Lockridge
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. 3 credits

WGS 201: Women, Knowledge & Power
Portland M/W 2:45-4:00PM Prof. Lucinda Cole

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

WGS 245/PHI 220: Philosophy of Art
Portland T 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Kate Wininger
Portland W 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Kate Wininger
Online Prof. Kate Wininger

What makes a person creative? What do artists think about their art? How do critics evaluate a work? If art is created for a cultural ritual or healing, is it to be understood differently? How do the circumstances of a work's creation and reception affect its evaluation? How does a person's class, ethnicity, or gender influence art work and its reception? Philosophers in the field of Aesthetics attempt to answer questions which artists, art historians, anthropologists, and critics ask about art. The works of art and philosophy considered will be draw from a wide variety of cultural contexts. 3 credits

WGS 345/CLA & ART 321: Art, Architecture, and Archaeology of the Ancient World/ Classical Art
Gorham T/TH 11:00AM-12:15PM Prof. Jeannine Uzzi *Fulfills Pre-1800 Requirement

This course represents the marriage of art history and classics, a meeting of the minds of two distinct disciplines; it is appropriate for students with at least one course in either field, and our initial conversations will address the interdisciplinary nature of the course. In the course students will gain an understanding of the arc of art history from the Early Bronze Age in Greece to the height of the Roman Empire with forays into other places and times that influenced or were influenced by Greek and Roman art; however, the course will not be strictly chronological, and students will also consider themes running across time and space via secondary sources offered on Blackboard. These themes include the use and gendering of space, the presentation of the body as political ideal, and the function of gender and sexuality in a variety of art historical periods and media. 3 credits
WGS 345/ART 311: Gender Identity and Modern Art  
Gorham  M/W 11:00AM-12:15PM  Prof. Donna Cassidy
This course examines the construction of gender and sexuality in Western visual arts from the late eighteenth century to the present. Students will analyze both the art and art criticism of the period, focusing on the work of female, feminist, and gay artists. 3 credits

WGS 345/ENG 385: Race and Gender at Century’s End  
Portland  T 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Lisa Walker
Race and gender are currently understood as social constructs and even fictions, but throughout U.S. history they have been also been understood as factual, and their effects have been experienced as far-reaching and real. This course explores how issues of race and gender were understood in America from about 1890 to about 1914, with some discussion of the uses and limitations of these concepts at the turn of the 20th century. We will focus on race, especially as it pertains to the differences between “black” and “white,” and its intersections with gender and sexuality through readings of short stories, essays, and novels; we will supplement our readings with analyses of short film clips and visual images. 3 credits

WGS 355: Childhood, Welfare, and the Black Family  
Portland  T/TH 2:45-4:00PM  Prof. Leroy Rowe
This course examines the relatively new field of the history of childhood and youth in America since the early-19th century. It will address topics such as: the changing legal and social meanings of childhood; historical perspectives on child welfare policies and their impact upon black youth and the black family; the historical connections between childhood and the issues of poverty, gender, race, sexuality, and class; and more recent issues such as juvenile delinquency, foster care, and transracial adoption and equality in public education. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, we will also read monographs, articles, and book chapters by scholars from other disciplines such as feminist studies, law, psychology, sociology, social work, etc.

WGS 365/SOC 393: Women, Welfare and the State  
Portland  W 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Luisa Deprez
The welfare state is often conceptualized as a state committed to modifying the play of social or market forces in order to achieve greater equality: in the broadest sense, a collection of programs designed to enhance and advance human well-being. Among the programs offered are social insurance and assistance programs that provide income protection and supportive services to persons experiencing unemployment, retirement, disability, ill health, death of a family breadwinner, or poverty as well as programs of education, housing, nutrition, and health. Not all state interventions, however, are aimed at, or actually produce, greater equality among citizens. This course explores the gender bias of social welfare policy in the US, revealing a welfare state whose adherence to central elements such as the Protestant work ethic, “family values”, and a laissez-faire economy excludes over half the population. Programs established under the presumption that they secure protection for and maximize independence of women (and men) instead reflect the gender regulatory functions of the welfare state which exacerbate women's dependent status. From both historical and theoretical perspectives, the course examines the emergence and development of the American welfare state and assesses its impact on women's lives. Policies such as Social Security and TANF (welfare) are examined as are policies focused on education and employment and work. 3 credits

WGS 365/CRM 317: Gender and Crime  
Portland  M 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Jim Messerschmidt  
Portland  W 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Jim Messerschmidt
This course concentrates on gender and its relation to crime. It explores such issues as histories of gender inequality, the gendered character of criminological theory, and how gender is related to a variety of crimes such as rape, violence in the family, crimes by women, property crimes, and corporate crime. 3 credits

WGS 380: Politics of Difference  
Portland  T 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Eve Raimon
Central to the course are the ways that "differences" are embedded and enacted in the context of power relations. While the specific content of this course is flexible, it will analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using race, ethnicity, nationality, class, age, and sexuality as categories of analysis. Prerequisites: WGS 101I or EYE 109, WGS 201 or permission of the instructor. Offered fall semester. 3 credits
WGS 420/ANES 630: The Culture of Consumption  
Portland  W 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Ardis Cameron
Consumerism is so much a part of our lives today that it seems timeless and almost natural. Yet consumerism has a long history that continues to shape the social and cultural worlds around us. This course will explore the emergence of modern consumer practices with special attention to New England from the censorious attitude of the Puritans to contemporary sartorial habits in the region. We will also explore the emergence of national trends and debates over advertising, shopping, lesbian chic, masculinity, style, urban pleasures, commodity racism, and the commodification of everyday life. 3 credits

WGS 445/CMS 484: Activism in Film  
Portland  W 4:10-6:40PM  Prof. Rebecca Lockridge
This course examines activist film as an alternative form of cinema. For example, what techniques of representation do feminist film directors employ as strategies for resisting social, political/economic, intellectual marginalizing and silencing of marginalized peoples typical of patriarchal cultures? How do feminist films frame topics such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class, disability, age, gender, sex and sexuality? What knowledge is produced? In this course, films from Hollywood to independent documentaries made in countries around the globe provide examples of the multiple perspectives, identities, and assumptions about spectatorship provided in activist films. Essays by film theorists structure class discussions and written critiques. The particular context of the film's production, levels of desire effected by the context, and meanings constructed by the cinematic techniques are examined. 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 such as shot distance, camera angle, lighting, perspective, editing, montage. 3 credits

WGS 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

For more information:
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Portland Campus
M-F 8:00 – 4:30
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Facebook: USM WGS & USM Women and Gender Studies
Youtube: USMWGS