

The 20th Annual Conference on  
Women & Gender

**TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM,  
COMMUNITY ACTIVISM  
AND THE  
POLITICS OF EMPOWERMENT**

**February 29 & March 1, 2008**

Rome Ballroom,  
University of Connecticut, Storrs

Proudly presented by:  
The University of Connecticut  
Women's Studies Program,  
the Human Rights Institute  
&  
the New England Women's Studies Association



## WELCOME

Welcome to the 20th Annual Conference on Women and Gender, co-sponsored by the Women's Studies Program, Office of Multicultural and International Affairs, the Human Rights Institute, Office of International Affairs, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Institute, New England Women's Studies Association, and Iota Iota Iota UConn Storrs Chapter.

The focus of this year's conference is "Transnational Feminism, Community Activism, and the Politics of Empowerment." We believe that in the contemporary global context, it is important to think and act transnationally as well as locally. We hope that this conference can provide the context for helping us as global citizens envision the political strategies to create a more just and humane world.

We are pleased to have keynote speakers Cecilia FireThunder and State of Connecticut Comptroller Nancy Wyman join us to provide their visions of a socially just world and their strategies for building effective movements for social justice. We also welcome Catherine Hoyser and Yi Chun Tricia Lin who will join me in a panel discussion regarding Women's Studies and Transnational Feminism in Connecticut colleges and universities. Performance artist Aya de Leon will be here to remind us of the importance of art as an effective medium of social change. We are also grateful to our presenters who have come to share their scholarship and feminist insights on pedagogy, activist research and social justice among other important themes. We encourage all participants to share their own concerns, visions and organizing efforts.

As always, it takes the work of many to bring together an event such as this and we are deeply indebted to our co-sponsors and supporters from throughout the University. For their support of this conference and of the Women's Studies Program, we are grateful to: Provost Peter Nichols, Vice Provost Ronald Taylor, and Dean Ross MacKinnon. Of course, this conference would not be possible without the assistance of many people who work behind the scenes including the Women's Studies Advisory Board, Women's Studies faculty and affiliates, especially Professors Margaret Breen, Mary Crawford, Anne D'Alleva, Françoise Dussart, Diana Meyers, Nancy Naples, and Kathleen Holgerson, Director of the Women's Center. We would also like to thank Rachel Arpin and UConn Catering Services. Thanks, also, to all of our wonderful vendors, and Suzy Staubach and her staff at the UConn Coop for their support.

I would also like to express my special thanks to Marita McComiskey, Kate Hurley-Dizigan, Coleen Spurlock and the Women's Studies student staff. And, of course, there are no words to express my gratitude to Barb Gurr for her vision and her terrific organizational work to make this conference a success.

Manisha Desai, Director  
Women's Studies Program, University of Connecticut

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Friday, February 29:

- 12:00 Registration opens  
 12:45 Welcome and Introductions  
 1:00 Opening Panel:  
*Students for Students*  
 Ayanna Bledsoe, Krysten Brown, Jungyun Gill, Eric Knudsen and Jason Ortiz, University of Connecticut
- 2:15 Break  
 2:30 Session A  
 3:45 Break  
 4:00 Session B  
 4:45 break  
 5:00 Panel Discussion:  
*Women's Studies & Transnational Feminism*  
 Manisha Desai, Director, Women's Studies  
 - University of Connecticut  
 Yi Chun Tricia Lin, Director Women's Studies,  
 - Southern Connecticut State University  
 Catherine Hoyser, Director Women's Studies,  
 - St. Joseph's College
- 6:00 Reception followed by dinner on your own  
 7:30 Aya de Leon, spoken word artist  
 (at Konover Auditorium, Dodd Research Center)

### Saturday, March 1:

- 8:30 Registration opens  
 9:30 Opening Session (Breakfast):  
*Breaking Tradition: How Nancy Wyman Became Connecticut's First Woman State Comptroller*  
 Nancy Wyman  
 - Comptroller of the State of Connecticut
- 10:30 Session C  
 11:45 Break  
 12:00 Session D  
 1:00 Lunch and performance:  
*Sangeeta Ratna*
- 2:15 Session E  
 3:30 Break  
 3:45 Closing Keynote:  
*Cutting Through the Buckskin Ceiling*  
 Cecilia FireThunder  
 - Former President of the Oglala Lakota Nation & Director of Cangleska
- 4:45 Closing Reception - please join us!

## **OPENING PANEL**

**Friday, February 29  
1:00 - 2:15 PM  
Main Dining Area**

### **Students for Students**

**Ayanna Bledsoe, Krysten Brown  
Jungyun Gill, Eric Knudsen  
Jason Ortiz  
University of Connecticut**

Moderated by Barbara Gurr, University of Connecticut

## **SESSION A**

**2:30 – 3:45 PM**

**A1: Theory and Activism in the Community: Organizing for Change**

**Moderator: TBA**

Jessica Foley, Brown University, *“To Rid Teenagers of Prejudice”:  
Interracial Youth Program Working Local YWCA, 1941-1956*

Catherine Gregory, University of Connecticut, *Democratic  
Development: Are Worker Cooperatives Working for Women?*

Yasmin Zaidi, Brandeis University, *Sharing SANGAT: Transnational  
Feminism Bending Borders in S. Asia*

**A2: Sex and the City: Empowerment and Disillusion**

Saima Anjam

Alexandra Hanson

**A3: Theory into Practice: Women’s Studies as Agency of Empowerment and Transformation**

**Moderator: Rosalyn Amenta, Southern Connecticut State University**

Jill Bassett, Southern Connecticut State University, *Feminist Fashion Show: Fundraising for Women’s Health Research while Empowering and De-Objectifying Women and Girls*

Anne Bubriski, Southern Connecticut State University, *Critical Need for Activism within Women’s Studies*

**(Session A3 continued)**

Khoi Nguyen, Southern Connecticut State University, *Theory into Practice: Women's Studies and Women's Centers as Agencies of Empowerment and Transformation*

Katherine Stephenson, Southern Connecticut State University,  
1) *Community Building, Consciousness-raising and Fund-raising: The Transformative Power of the Vagina Monologues Production*, & 2) *Empowering Young Teen Girls: The Creation of Fat Chicks*

**SESSION B****4:00 – 4:45 PM****B1: Raising Up Voices, Questioning Silences****Moderator: TBA**

Lisa Nielson, University of Maine – Orono, *"The Singing Girls" and "Effeminates" of the Early Islamic Era: Transgressing Gender Boundaries through Music*

Eda Dedevas, University of Connecticut, *The Shifting of Authorial Position and the Female Subjectivity in In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez*

Tess Bird, University of Connecticut, *Self-Betrayal and the Dark-Feminine within a Fictional Context*

**B2: Embodied Women****Moderator: TBA**

Clair Kaplan, Yale University, *HIV Prevention Developments that Enhance Women's Empowerment: Microbicides on the Horizon*

Kristen Abatsis McHenry, University of Massachusetts – Amherst, *Feminist Theory, Breast Cancer, and Transnational Activism*

**B3: Food Not Bombs!**

Rachael Roof, Food Not Bombs

Dave Rozza, Food Not Bombs

Deric Shannon, Food Not Bombs

Willie Theaker, Food Not Bombs

Abbey Willis, Food Not Bombs

**B4: The Writer, the Detective and the Feminists****Moderator: Vanessa Diana, Westfield State College**

Jennifer DiGrazia, Westfield State College

Robert Hoey, Westfield State College

Elizabeth Stassinis, Westfield State College

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

**5:00 – 6:00 PM**  
**Main Dining Area**

### **Women's Studies and Transnational Feminism**

**Manisha Desai, Director**  
Women's Studies - University of Connecticut

**Catherine Hoyser, Director**  
Women's Studies - St. Joseph's College

**Yi Chun Tricia Lin, Director**  
Women's Studies - Southern Connecticut State University

## **RECEPTION**

**6:00 PM**  
**Main Dining Area**

Please join us for a light buffet.  
A list of local restaurants has been provided so that you can  
have dinner on your own.

## **PERFORMANCE**

**Friday, 7:30 pm**  
**Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center**

### **Hip Hop, Creativity & The Body**

**Aya de Leon**  
Spoken Word Artist

**FREE ADMISSION!**

## OPENING SESSION

**Saturday, March 1, 2008**

**9:30 AM**

**Main Dining Area**

### Breaking Tradition: How Nancy Wyman Became Connecticut's First Woman State Comptroller

**Nancy Wyman**  
**Connecticut State Comptroller**

Introductory remarks by Manisha Desai, Director  
Women's Studies - University of Connecticut

**Please join us for breakfast!**

## SESSION C

**10:30 – 11:45 AM**

### **C1: The Politics of Empowerment**

**Moderator: Nikki McGary, University of Connecticut**

Nicole Eaton, Brown University, *"Women's History is Woman's Right":*

*The Power of the Past in Creating a Politics of Empowerment*

Urjasi Rudra, Brandeis University, *Disempowerment in the Lives of Immigrant South Asian Women in the United States*

Drucie Bathin, Eastern Connecticut State University, *Women and Leadership: Lessons from Burma*

### **C2: Power and Patriarchy: Negotiating Patient Agency in Pregnancy and Childbirth**

**Moderator: Molly Ferguson, University of Connecticut**

Barbara Gurr, University of Connecticut

Melissa Lavin, University of Connecticut,

*Power, Politics and Patriarchy: Patient Agency in Pregnancy and Childbirth*

### **C3: Women, Power and Development in South Asia**

**Moderator: Kelley Ready, Brandeis University**

Mansi Anand, Brandeis University, *Women's Vulnerability After Disasters: A Case Study Of Tsunami Hit South-East Asia*

**(Session C3 continued)**

Meena Sonea Hewett, Brandeis University, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in India: An Obstacle to Development*

**C4: New England Women's Studies Association Meeting****SESSION D****12:00 – 1:00 PM****D1: Enforcing Social Constructions****Moderator: Bandana Purkayastha, University of Connecticut**

Chandra Waring, University of Connecticut, *The Inaccessibility of a Biracial Identity*

Megan Cayea, Nassau Community College

Diana Milillo, Nassau Community College

Christina Monaco, Nassau Community College

*The Double-Edged Sword of Masculinity: Stereotypes and Perceptions of Heterosexual and Gay Men*

**D2: Birth Politics: A Student's Quest for Knowledge****Moderator: Barbara Gurr, University of Connecticut**

Alexandra Cain, University of Connecticut

Kimberly Plue, University of Connecticut

**D3: New England Women's Studies Association Meeting, continued****D4: Las Mujeres por la Dignidad Rebelde: Women Social Actors in Mexico**

Joseph Foran Jr., University of Connecticut

**VENDORS**

Vendors will be available **both** days of the conference with a variety of products for purchase and information to share.

Please be sure to stop by their tables located in the **Common Area**. Their support is invaluable in keeping our conference affordable.

## LUNCH

**1:00 – 2:15 PM**  
**Main Dining Area**

Please join us in the main dining area for lunch  
 and a vocal performance by

### Sangeeta Ratna

**Vocalists: Ms. Vranda Aithal & Ms. Shanthi Rao**  
**On Violin: Mr. Deepak Varma**  
 (members of the South Asian Tree – TSAT)

Introductions: Bandana Purkayastha,  
 University of Connecticut Sociology,  
 Asian American Studies and Women's Studies

**Don't forget to browse the vendor tables!!**

## SESSION E

**2:15 – 3:30 PM**

**E1: Teaching/Learning/Community: A Writing Workshop**  
 Susan Naomi Bernstein, La Guardia Community College - CUNY  
 Kathleen Healey, Asnuntuck Community College

**E2: The New Politics of Empowerment: Race, Sex, and Leadership in the U.S.**  
 Frances Jones-Sneed, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, *Black Women and American Politics*  
 Marsha V. Marotta, Westfield State College  
 Erika E. Pilver, Westfield State College

**E3: Regulating Bodies**  
**Moderator: TBA**

Jaclyn Vanase, University of Connecticut, *A Look at "Girl on Girl" Porn*  
 Nikki McGary, University of Connecticut, *Mandatory Parental Involvement Laws: Teens and the Politics of Reproduction*

**E4: Feminist Discourses****Moderator: TBA**

Maura Kelly, University of Connecticut, *Adoption, Distortion, and Dismissal of Feminist Discourse in “Stitch ‘n Bitch” Knitting Groups and the “New Knitting” Community*

Shweta Majumdar, University of Connecticut, *“Women tell their stories not only in words but in a multitude of art styles....”*

Hillary Traugh, University of Connecticut, *The Implications of Black Feminism on Wages for Housework*

**E5: Artists’ Talk: Empowerment in and Through Feminist Art**

Beth Barbeau, University of Connecticut, *Am I a Dirty Word? 2007 Digital Photographic Prints*

Pat Carter, Georgia State University, *Fabricating Women’s History: Constructions by Pat Carter*

**\*\* Please note: This visual display will be located in the Atrium**

**CLOSING KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**3:45 – 4:45 PM  
Main Dining Area**

**Cutting Through the Buckskin Ceiling**

**Cecelia FireThunder  
Former President of the Oglala Lakota Nation  
&  
Director of Cangleska**

Introductory remarks by Barbara Gurr  
University of Connecticut

**CLOSING RECEPTION**

**4:45 – 5:30 PM  
Main Dining Area**

Please join us for a light buffet.  
Thanks to all presenters, moderators, vendors, participants  
& volunteers for making this conference a success!

## **SPEAKERS & PERFORMERS**

### **Aya De Leon**

Black/Puerto Rican writer, performer, hip hop theater artist, poetic activist, and community healer Aya de Leon has received acclaim in the Village Voice, Washington Post, American Theater Magazine, the Oakland Tribune, and San Francisco Chronicle. A graduate of Harvard, de Leon has taught spoken word and poetry at Stanford University, and has been a guest artist in residence at New York Theater Workshop. She is a Cave Canem poetry fellow, and a slam poetry champion. In 2003 she presented her work at the Ford Foundation in New York and The Mark Taper Forum in LA.

### **Nancy Wyman**

The first woman elected State Comptroller of Connecticut, Ms. Wyman has been an advocate for health issues across the state, including development and oversight of Connecticut's HUSKY plan, which makes health insurance available to the working poor. A mother and grandmother and past president of the Women's Campaign School at Yale University, Ms. Wyman is the recipient of myriad awards, including recognition of her leadership from the Connecticut Federation of Business & Professional Women, the Connecticut State Medical Society, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and the Council of Small Towns.

### **Cecilia FireThunder**

First tribally elected female President of the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Nation; one of the original founders of the *National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome* and of *Cangleska*, which provides comprehensive domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy and related services to citizens of Oglala Sioux Tribe. Ms. FireThunder, who has worked with indigenous women throughout the Americas, has also been active in the recovery of the Lakota language and in local education and youth empowerment.

## ABSTRACTS

### Session A

**A1 Foley, Jessica:** This paper is part of a larger project that considers community-based youth work as an overlooked site of women's activism and political engagement. The story of the Cambridge Youth Project, which grew out of a collaboration between the Cambridge YWCA and the Civic Unity Committee, provides insight to black and white women's different conceptions of the potential of youth work in mid-century America.

**Gregory, Catherine:** Women are often excluded from development. They are left out of both the conversation about how development should occur, and the process itself. So what does it look like when development takes place within a deliberatively democratic context such as worker cooperatives? Worker cooperatives are one method for effectively combating poverty and the oppression of women, but some barriers exist which prevent these from being truly democratic workplaces for women.

**Zaidi, Yasmin:** SANGAT (S. Asian Network for Gender Activists and Trainers) evolved from 'doing' transnational feminism in a context of political tension, and increasing religious fundamentalisms: challenges that require innovative strategies. This paper shares the sometimes rocky, always exhilarating experience of sustaining "borderless feminism," by diverse groups of feminists-academics, writers and poets, dancers, activists, students, young professionals - at diverse moments in time.

**A2 Anjam, Saima; Hanson, Alexandra:** Since its inception in 1998, HBO series *Sex and the City* has reached a diverse, international audience. However several years after the season finale, critics, academics, and fans alike lack consensus about the show's ultimate message to women. This presentation will address the show's representation of women through five separate themes: Dating, relationships and sex, jobs and professionalism, appearance and fashion, money and class and friendship, as well as how these representations relate to feminism.

**A3 Bassett, Jill:** My Field Experience objective is to develop a Fashion Show with a feminist approach. The goal for this creative project is to present women as subjects rather than objects. The models will be recognized for their accomplishments, personalities and positive self-esteem while a slide show presentation reflects the models' individuality regarding size, shape, age and diversity. All the proceeds from this Fashion Show, scheduled for April 18, 7 pm at SCSU will be donated to the American Cancer Society for Breast Cancer Research.

**Bubriski, Anne:** This field experience focused on creating social change movements within Women's Studies classrooms. Under the guidance of a Women's Studies professor, we wrote an article discussing the critical need for activism to become a substantial focus in institutions of higher learning. We argue that social change cannot occur under the current push for service learning and charity work. Social change occurs when people organize and practice social activism in their institutions and communities.

**Nguyen, Khoi:** *Gender on Our Minds* is a recently established sibling publication to *Woman in Mind*, an interdisciplinary publication founded by the SCSU Kappa Chapter of Iota Iota Iota, the National Women's Studies Honor Society dedicated to making women's voices heard through a variety of writings and art submitted by students, staff and guests. *Gender on Our Minds* is an interdisciplinary publication dedicated to awareness from the perspective of gender studies. *Gender on Our Minds* provides a space for marginalized groups to discuss topics and issues such as GLBTIQ identities, academic and queer pedagogy, arts, cultures, histories, politics and theories.

**Stephenson, Katherine:** 1) As we as feminists work to raise awareness and support, it is critical that we provide a forum for women's voices to be heard. The SCSU production of the *Vagina Monologues* seeks to offer this platform for knowledge, healing, compassion and a call to action; 2) Our young people are our future and our teen girls face significant challenges each day. We must offer them role models, encourage their quest for knowledge, and teach them that their possibilities are endless. Fat chicks are remarkable.

## **Session B**

**B1 Bird, Tess:** How can feminist consciousness inform creative writing without inhibiting the intrigue and literary enjoyment of a story? Through a series of scenes and images, conversations and words, this fictional project takes two core themes, self-betrayal and the dark-feminine, and seeks to navigate ways in which one might discuss feminism within creative writing. Dealing with concerns involving representation, identity, and point of view, this project works to negotiate tensions between literature and feminism.

**Dedebas, Eda:** *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez deals with the semi-fictional biography of four Dominican Mirabal sisters. The novel, however, is recounted from four different perspectives. My paper focuses on the idea that as each sister asserts her subjectivity and activism through her own style of narrative, the author engages into her own activism by deterring her authority and juxtaposing all these different authorial subjectivities.

**Nielson, Lisa:** Music was an important component of courtly life during the early Abbasid era (750-945CE). Singing slave girls and free male musicians formed the core of professional musicianship, despite the fact that music was often controversial and considered an ignoble, unmanly profession. Some male musicians adopted feminine dress and demeanor, earning the pejorative the "effeminates." In this presentation, I discuss how women and men used music to transgress traditional gender boundaries in early Islamic society.

**B2 Kaplan, Clair:** Millions of women, domestically and globally, are unable to insist upon protected sex, and are at high risk of HIV/AIDS. Microbicides, topical agents that kill HIV and other STIs could offer an urgently needed alternative and put risk reduction tools directly into women's hands. This session will provide an overview of microbicide

research and development and highlight the political and scientific challenges, and help advocates demand that our governments invest in this research.

**McHenry, Kristen Abatsis:** I examine the Komen and Avon Foundation who represent a mainstream effort to mobilize women globally around the issue of breast cancer. I explore the conflicting interests of pursuing a cure and corporate sponsors such as Estee Lauder who help maintain traditional femininity and inequality. Transnational Feminist theory is a promising line of inquiry for thinking through the links between women's bodies, breast cancer, and global capitalism.

**B3 Roof, Rachael; Rozza, Dave; Shannon, Deric ; Theaker, Willie; Willis, Abbey:** Food Not Bombs is an international decentralized network of affiliated collectives that recover food wasted in capitalist production and distribution. We then cook vegetarian meals and serve them to anyone who wants to eat in visible public spaces, attempting to blur the line between the giver and preparer of food and all of us who eat together. We provide a radical alternative to "charity" and put food in hungry bellies. WE ARE THE PEOPLE WE ARE TRYING TO SERVE!

**B4 DiGrazia, Jennifer; Hoey, Robert; Stassinis, Elizabeth:** We will discuss teaching Feminism in our linked course "The Writer and the Detective" (English Comp. II and CRJU 121 Theories of Criminality). This course was an experiment in integrating Feminism, Marxism, and Criminology using extensive writing and drafting assignments from "In Cold Blood" to Macbeth.

### **Session C**

**C1 Bathin, Drucie:** Women have the ability to lead, but often societies have not accepted them as leaders. Historical context can change this. Recently, many women in Burma are taking up leadership roles instead of men because men no longer dare to face the dangers. I will draw on my experiences to examine women and leadership in contemporary Burma.

**Eaton, Nicole:** The 1979 Summer Institute in Women's History at Sarah Lawrence was an important feminist educational experiment. The Institute was convened for the purpose of training women community organizers with various educational level and heterogeneous backgrounds in the study of women's history through consciousness-raising. The women of the Institute shared a common purpose by recognizing the empowering possibilities inherent in knowing the history of women, a belief shared by a large number of second wave feminists.

**Rudra, Urjasi:** The dependent visa programs such as the H-4 visa, create extreme dependency and disempowerment in the lives of immigrant women in the United States. The H-4 visa program represents a presumably gender-neutral immigration policy, which in reality perpetuates subtle and blatant forms of violence against women and gender inequality. This paper explores the background and impact of this immigration policy and

proposes to build advocacy for granting work authorization to H-4 visa holders.

**C2 Gurr, Barbara; Lavin, Melissa:** Oft examined in U.S. literature surrounding pregnancy and childbirth is the dualistic and dialectic identification of what are often referred to as “childbirth models”. While traditional and naturalistic options remain accessible to limited segments of the population, a Fordist style medical model is the standard expectation of both birthing mothers and their health care practitioners. The following discussion will center around the medicalized childbirth model with an emphasis on the feelings of alienation that it engenders in pregnant and birthing women and their associates. More specifically, we interrogate high cesarean section rates as a prevalent outcome of the interventionist pregnancy and birth model and the contribution of this surgery to women’s lack of agency and feelings of inadequacy.

**C3 Anand, Mansi:** The issue of gender inequality today is widely recognized as a development concern. The concept of gender-related human development index (GDI), introduced by UNDP in Human Development Index (HDI) in 1995, is a reflection of this recognition which integrates gender concerns in human development. However, disaster recovery programs are always seen in isolation from development processes and often tend to overlook gender concerns in post-disaster situations. Disasters impact men and women differently. Women are more vulnerable to disasters due to their restrictive societal roles and lack of access to and control over resources. While this is recognized by development actors, the disaster response is largely directed without keeping the gender perspective in mind. Relief and rehabilitation programs are operated under pressures of time, and so social processes with which to understand the impact of disasters on various groups and their needs is easily neglected. This paper attempts to discuss the impact of natural disasters on women with a special focus on the 2004 Tsunami that hit Southeast Asian countries.

**Hewett, Meena Sonea:** Commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children is widely condemned by States and the private sector alike. Yet it continues to be a growing problem in both developing and developed countries due to abuse occurring largely in the private sphere. The success of a multi dimensional approach to prevent CSE of children will require continuous monitoring and evaluation, by independent agencies and research institutions, of current prevention programs with further recommendations for best practices.

**Ready, Kelley:** Panel Description - Women face distinct forms of vulnerability that reflect the power inequalities that inhibit their participation in development. This panel will look at two areas of women’s vulnerability in South Asia, the sexual exploitation of children and natural disasters. The first paper will examine the failure of current efforts and explore the need for more prevention programs. The latter paper will focus on the affect on women of the disaster recovery programs after the 2004 Tsunami.

## **Session D**

**D1 Cayea, Megan; Milillo, Diana; Monaco, Christina:** Many people make implicit judgments against men in our society, as well as women, which can have negative or damaging effects as a group. In our research, we surveyed participants' perceptions of heterosexual and gay men when they were presented in a traditionally masculine or less masculine (i.e., relational and warm) way. Results show that subsequent judgments can be just as limiting for men's gender role conformity.

**Waring, Chandra:** This paper examines how individuals of both African American and European American parentage challenge the "black"/"white" binary that is so salient in American society. Consequently, nearly all social institutions have participated in punishing biracial persons, in addition to constructing them as "black" when preventing their very existence has not been completely successful. Further, I will use Marx and Durkheim to explain why a biracial identity is inaccessible.

**D2 Cain, Alexandra; Plue, Kimberly:** It is so important for women to make informed health decisions regarding their bodies. Perhaps the most monumental health decision a woman can make in her life is choosing her birth plan. The pressures of a medicalized society may impede other, more natural options, so it is especially important to make decisions based on all available options. The quest for this knowledge does not have to begin once a woman is pregnant, but can begin long before. Explore how students were enlightened and inspired by the women's studies classroom, and how everything they ever thought about birth was transformed by that experience.

**D4 Foran, Joseph Jr.:** I spent the Fall 2007 semester studying abroad with the Mexico Solidarity Network. Drawing from meetings with a Zapatista women's artisan cooperative and with other organizations throughout the country, I will discuss the impact the Zapatista movement has had on women's organizing in Mexico, and how its principles might be applied to a U.S. context.

## **Session E**

**E1 Bernstein, Susan Naomi; Healey, Kathleen:** Participants will reflect on our goals and strengths as feminists/teachers with connections to communities beyond the classroom. bell hooks' work on transgressing hegemonic and hierarchical boundaries between university/community and scholar/teacher will guide our efforts. The workshop begins with brief presentations by Susan and Kathleen on their work integrating academics beyond traditional classroom settings. We then move into imaginative writing and discussion to explore possibilities for re-visioning academic work beyond the traditional borders of the university.

**E2 Jones-Sneed, Frances:** The paper gives an historical overview of the political relationship of black women with American politics from the rise of Mary McLeod Bethune and her association with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt to contemporary times. It questions the context and meaning of

such relationships and how they have assisted or retarded the politics of African Americans.

**E3 Vanase, Jaclyn:** This workshop analyzes the cultural phenomenon of heterosexual men lusting after pornographic representations of lesbians. It addresses the factors that make this fetish erotic and how the phenomenon affects real life lesbians. It also discusses how “girl on girl action” differs from pornography made by and for lesbians. Participants will be challenged to think how pornographic representations of lesbians can harm or empower women.

**McGary, Nikki:** With a particular focus on mandatory parental consent/notification laws for pregnant women under eighteen, this presentation explores the complex intersections among reproductive rights, the politics of reproduction, and sexual citizenship. In 2005, Proposition 73 was on the ballot for California’s special election, which would require that all parents of a pregnant teen seeking an abortion be notified within forty-eight hours of the procedure. Currently, 35 states require parental consent or notification for pregnant teens seeking an abortion. This research project spoke with teens in the Bay Area to hear their opinions about Prop 73 in order to shed some light on the realities of mandated parental involvement and the more broad issues of reproductive rights.

**E4 Kelly, Maura:** This paper presents preliminary findings on an ethnographic study of a “Stitch ‘n Bitch” knitting group and an analysis of the media and communication technology associated with knitting and knitting groups (i.e. books, magazines, websites, blogs, listservs, and podcasts). The “new knitting” movement, exemplified by Stitch ‘n Bitch groups, represents a new take on knitting, one that is young, hip, fun, and sexy. While Stitch ‘n Bitch groups were originally conceptualized as a feminist project (Stoller 20003), the women and men that participate in Stitch ‘n Bitch groups and the larger new knitting web-based community take a variety of positions relative to feminist discourse. I find that members of the Stitch ‘n Bitch group I observed and the discourse of new knitting (as observed in traditional and web based media) in various ways adopt, distort, and dismiss feminist discourse. I suggest that Stitch ‘n Bitch groups provide a unique site for examining the appropriation of feminist discourse; it also provides insight into the tensions between feminist practices, beliefs, and identity.

**Majumdar, Shweta:** Madhubani art is a folk art traditionally practiced by the women living on the border of Nepal and India. This form of art has been passed on through 3000 years from mother to daughter through patterns and dyes sometimes unknown to the men and for a long time little known to the outside world. This paper explores uniqueness of the art form and the impact that commercialization/globalization has had on it and on the women painters of Madhubani.

**Traugh, Hillary:** The paper intends to uncover the contradictions and compatibilities across Wages for Housework (WFH) and Black Feminist thought. WFH, a subset of the 1970s Marxist Feminist movement,

redeveloped Marxist theory to position women's exploitation within, rather than auxiliary to, the class struggle. Through deconstructing WFH and Black Feminist texts, this paper will de-center WFH's deterministic analysis and strategy for women's liberation.

**E5 Barbeau, Beth:** Feminism has become a dirty word in the minds of many contemporary Americans, including many educated, liberal, progressive women and men. I do not believe the claims from popular culture that feminism is dead or has out-grown its usefulness. I've been told that saying I'm a feminist makes people take my arguments less seriously. Despite the stereotypes and misconceptions about the word "feminist," I have become the woman I am today because of feminism, and have learned about myself and others by engaging issues through the lens of feminist critique. I have claimed the word "feminist" as part of my identity, and draw a lot of confidence and power from feminisms' past victories and struggles. How can feminism be unnecessary when it has given me, and many others, the courage to stand up for what I believe in? And I know that I am not the only person out there who still claims the word "feminist" as their own and finds power through this identity. This project grew out of my desire to find these people. I've gathered their images together to show the many people who claim some form of "feminist" identity. Each participant has self-identified as a feminist and then gone on to define it for themselves. But while it is important to claim the word "feminist," it is equally important that we acknowledge the many other identities that intersect with and inform our own personal feminisms.

**Carter, Pat:** Pat Carter is a fiber artist who constructs what are known as contemporary, studio or art quilts. Work in the genre employs some traditional quilting patterns and methods but introduces specific political and social themes as well as new techniques and materials. In this series all the pieces relate to the theme of American women's history, reflecting Carter's background as an American women's historian. The fabric constructions pay homage to women suffragists, blues singers, artists, teachers, and filmmakers, among others. The series began in 1992 with the creation of "Mothers of the Blues" (now in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center Collection) and has continued to be influenced by the courses and research that Carter uses in her teaching. Carter first learned quilting from her grandmother at the age of nine but did not quilt regularly until she took it up as an undergraduate to make money for school. At that time she made traditional quilts on commission. She sold in Cincinnati and New York in galleries dedicated to American folk art. Growing tired of traditional quilting she gave up the art until 1992 when an interview by independent writer, Michele Palmer, inspired her to reconsider quilting as a means for more original expressions about women's history. Her work is inspired by artists including: Faith Ringgold, Miriam Schapiro, Terri Hancock Mangat, and Susan Shie. Her work is held in public and private collections throughout the US.



**We'd like to express our appreciation to the  
co-sponsors of this conference:**

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**We hope you enjoy  
the conference and your visit to the  
UConn Storrs campus!**





## ***The Eighteenth Annual Women's Studies Conference***



### CALL FOR PAPERS

18<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Connecticut State University Women's Studies Conference  
**“Girls’ Culture & Girls’ Studies: Surviving, Reviving, Celebrating Girlhood”**

**October 17 & 18, 2008**

What does it mean to be a girl? Who defines girlhood in an age when puberty and sexualization are happening at younger ages? How do girls assert their own identity in an increasingly mediated and consumerist culture which targets girls as a prime audience? Why do U.S. girls who are told that they can do anything feel like they have to do everything, and perfectly? What challenges do girls across races, classes, religions, nations, and cultures face in an ever more globalized world? What is the relationship between girls and feminism? What effect can feminism have on constructions of boyhood and masculinity and how in turn can this effect girls? In the 18<sup>th</sup> annual SCSU Women's Studies conference, we will take a close look at girls' culture and girls' studies, among the most vibrant areas in women's studies.

We invite individuals, groups, scholars, activists, artists, girls and all, to submit proposals for panel presentations, roundtable discussions, or artistic performances that address topics including the following:

Girls and Pop Culture  
 Media and Girls' Culture  
 Politics of Girls Studies  
 Women's Studies & Girls' Studies

Race & Class in Girls' Studies  
 Coming of Age Globally  
 Body Image and Girls  
 Girls & Sexuality  
 Human Trafficking & Girls  
 Indigenous Women and Girls  
 Chick Lit  
 Girls & Sports  
 Girls & Resistance  
 Race, Ethnicity, and Class in Girls Studies  
 Violence against Girls & Women  
 Girl Power and Politics  
 Girls' Studies in Academe  
 Reviving/Surviving/Resisting Ophelia  
 Girls across/between Worlds

Construction of Girlhood  
 Girls & Cutting/Self-Mutilation  
 Girls & Leadership  
 Girls & Child Labor  
 Girls & Performance  
 Gender Research & Girls  
 Girls & Disabilities  
 Girls & Ink.  
 Girls & Religion  
 Human Rights of Girls  
 Globalization and Girlhood  
 Construction of “Tween” Agers/Girls  
 Girls & Gangs  
 Transnational Adoption of Girls  
 Girl Power & Feminism/Anti-Feminism  
 American Girls and Beyond  
 Girls and Grassroots Activism  
 Growing up Incarcerated  
 Representations of Girls

We also invite your ideas and suggestions. Conference sessions will juxtapose cultural, generational, and geopolitical perspectives in order to construct feminist renditions of girls' cultures, histories, and representations. Expect fun through meals, performance, and poetry slam, with girls and their allies speaking of their struggles and power.

Send submissions electronically by **June 12, 2008** to [womenstudies@southernct.edu](mailto:womenstudies@southernct.edu). Please include name, affiliation, e-mail, standard mailing address, and phone number. Proposals should be no longer than one page, with a second page for identification information.

**17th Annual**  
**Light the Lodge**  
**POW WOW**

**April 5, 2008**

**11:00am - 5:00pm**

**Grand Entry @ 12:00 noon**

**Location:**

**Gampel Pavilion**

**University of Connecticut  
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**One Night Only!**

**Aya de Leon**  
**Spoken Word Artist**

***Hip Hop, Creativity & The Body***

**Friday, February 29, 2008**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center**

**FREE ADMISSION!**

**Please be sure to join us for an evening of  
outstanding entertainment**

**NOTES**

# NOTES

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## NOTES

# ANNOUNCING

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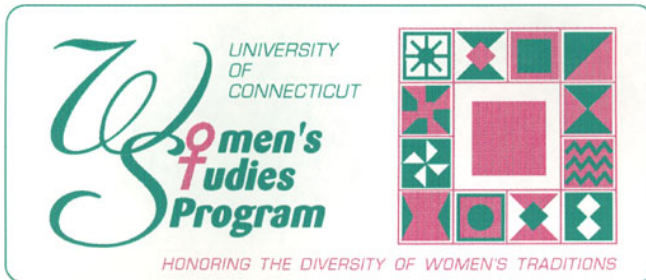
University of Connecticut  
Spring 2009

# Transnational Ecofeminism

Please check our website this summer for more information  
[www.womens.studies.uconn.edu](http://www.womens.studies.uconn.edu)

or contact us in the Fall for more information  
[wsinfo@uconn.edu](mailto:wsinfo@uconn.edu)

*CELEBRATING OUR COMMON THREADS*



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