Dear Alumni, Friends, and Allies:

One year ago we began our transition back to in-person learning in the classroom while balancing our imperative to keep our fellow Tar Heels safe. Throughout the 2021-2022 academic year, faculty and students employed various instructional modes, from remote to in the classroom – often teaching in both formats simultaneously! I would like to acknowledge the extra effort that students, staff and faculty put into making this past year a success.

Throughout this time of change the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies has continued its commitment to world-class undergraduate education, innovative research, graduate training and service to the local, regional and national community. Some notable achievements by our faculty include the tenth edition of the textbook *The Psychology of Women and Gender: Half the Human Experience* co-edited by Nicole Else-Quest and Janet Shibley Hyde (Sage Publications 2022) and a gathering of international artists convened by Susan Harbage Page in Rospigliosi, Prato, Italy in October 2021 where participants presented personal life stories dealing with gender roles and stereotypes.

I am also immensely proud of our students. This past year 27 students earned a BA in Women's and Gender Studies while 34 earned a minor and 5 earned a minor in Sexuality Studies. Three graduate students also completed the Graduate Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies. Our graduates are on to amazing work – they will be enrolling in MA, MSW, and PhD programs, working in community outreach and advocacy, and teaching in programs locally and across the country.

We are excited to announce two recent staff and one new faculty member. Student Services Manager Patrick Evans joined us in October 2021 and Department Manager Debra Powers began in June 2022. This fall we welcome Assistant Professor Jillian Hinderliter who will be conducting research and teaching in Jewish women's history and health activism. You can read more about Jillian and her work in the next few pages. I am also pleased to announce that Dr. Karen Booth will be the Director of the Program in Sexuality Studies.

Finally, in this past year we launched a newly re-designed website – please make sure to visit us online to learn more about the great work of our students and faculty and to explore ways you can become involved.

With gratitude,

Ariana E. Vigil
Professor and Chair
My name is Meleena Gil; I am a rising third-year doctoral student in the department of English and Comparative Literature with research interests in contemporary Latinx literature, queer theory, and the environmental humanities. For the last year, I served as the administrative assistant for the Sexuality Studies Program.

Together, Dr. Lau and I launched the SXST social media pages and updated the listserv; we organized the monthly multidisciplinary graduate Queer Theory Writers’ Group meetings and the lynchpin of the academic year: Queer Minicon. The one-day conference featured panels on visual culture & political resistance and spirituality & queer temporalities with a keynote address by poet and scholar Dr. Eddy Francisco Alvarez Jr. I was impressed by the incredible scholarship by our queer and trans community. The event showed me, above all, that our student body produces engaging and critical research in topical areas-- areas that in our current political climate require our dedicated, nuanced attention. I feel affirmed and energized to see how UNC students are prepared to face and think through (as the theme of the event denotes) crises and adversity.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Lau for giving me the opportunity to grow in this position. Dr. Lau has been a most supportive mentor, colleague, and friend. I wish him fortune and wellness as he continues to furnish a luminous academic career.
Jillian M. Hinderliter joins the Women’s and Gender Studies Department at UNC-Chapel Hill as an Assistant Professor and the Moses M. and Hannah L. Malkin Fellow in Jewish History and Culture. Her research and teaching interests include twentieth century American women’s and gender history, Jewish Studies, the history of medicine and health care in the United States, public history, and oral history. Before coming to UNC-Chapel Hill, Dr. Hinderliter was an adjunct instructor in Southern Studies and a staff member in the African American Studies Program at the University of South Carolina.

A first-generation college student, Dr. Hinderliter earned her PhD in History at the University of South Carolina in 2021. She also holds a master’s degree in public history from Northeastern University and a graduate certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies from the University of South Carolina. Her research has been supported by the Bilinski Foundation, the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture at the College of Charleston, the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of South Carolina, and others.

Before moving to South Carolina to pursue her doctorate, Dr. Hinderliter worked for several museums and libraries including the Paul Revere House (Boston), the Rufus Porter Folk Art Museum (Bridgton, Maine), and Trinity College Library (Hartford). She primarily served as a historic site interpreter and museum educator specializing in children and family programming.

In her dissertation “Patients’ Rights, Patients’ Politics: Jewish Activists of the U.S. Women’s Health Movement, 1969-1990,” Dr. Hinderliter argued that American Jewish women substantially shaped the feminist critique of modern medicine and concepts of patients’ rights in the twentieth century. She traced how Jewish women developed feminist strategies to address issues like birth control safety, breast cancer care and research, and mental health care while also theorizing patients’ rights broadly. Dr. Hinderliter’s current research and book project expands upon this work to analyze how American Jewish women helped found and sustain feminist health activism at national and local levels alike. Throughout her work, Dr. Hinderliter contends that the women’s health movement did not have to be an expressly “Jewish” movement to be shaped by Jewish religious, cultural, and political traditions, histories of marginalization, and Jewish women’s experiences as Jews in American society.

In her work in progress, Dr. Hinderliter strives to decenter narratives of the women’s health movement which tend to focus on cities like Boston, Los Angeles, and New York. She works to trace how feminist thought and rhetoric impacted community health initiatives across the country and the ways in which feminist health politics shaped the initiatives of Jewish and secular organizations. Dr. Hinderliter looks to Jewish women’s activism in Georgia and South Carolina to study what regional manifestations of the women’s health movement can tell us about the intersection of religion, ethnicity, feminism, and health as it presented in smaller cities and rural communities. She believes this book will show how secular and religious Jewish women alike were navigating ever evolving conversations about identity, the body, and political action in the 1970s and 1980s. Dr. Hinderliter understands this work as complementing and complicating existing literature on Black and Chicana women’s health organizing in these decades.

In 2020, American Jewish History published her article “Muckraking Wonders: Jewish Journalist-Activists of the U.S. Women’s Health Movement, 1969-1990.” Dr. Hinderliter is also a contributor to the Jewish Women’s Archive’s Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women and the Jewish Women, Amplified blog. Additionally, she has worked on several public history projects related to twentieth century women’s history, oral history, and social movements. Dr. Hinderliter is thrilled to be joining the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.
I'm a Psychology/Philosophy double major with a Sexuality Studies minor, and this Summer I received a SURF grant and am being advised by Dr. Vigil in writing a research paper. I'm examining transgender representation in queercore zines over time to ask how queercore interacts with politics of trans liberation and what underground and self-published media can reveal about how marginalized people and groups interact with each other, create spaces for themselves, and theorize their own identities. Queercore is a queer punk subcultural and social multimedia movement that arose in the mid-1980s and expresses itself through radical DIY zines, music, films, and more. While music is often an effective look into the subculture's growth and progression, zines provide more in-depth and multifaceted discussions of the queercore scene and the issues and individuals within it. Zines – small-circulation, self-published pieces of media – are a primary resource that I believe are frequently overlooked in queer, trans, and cultural studies, as they provide a window into underground understandings of individuals and identities that larger and mass-produced publications, by their nature, cannot.

Photo taken at SAIC (School of the Art Institute of Chicago); I visited their Artists’ Book collection!

I've visited the Gerber/Hart Museum and Archives and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as Duke's Rubenstein Library, looked through thousands of items in online archives, and read over 125 zines (over 4,000 pages) so far!

My piece is titled “Mapping Immigrant Narratives Across Asian American Cultures”. The piece aims to express the shared and overlooked history of anti-AAPI hate, specifically focusing on women within the community. The piece grew out of a course on women in contemporary art, titled WGST 230: Women in Contemporary Art, with Professor Harbage Page, that I took in Spring 2022. By including the names of various East and South Asian American victims of hate crimes throughout the past few decades, in the larger context of a history of immigration, I hope to draw attention to the historical nuances that impact AAPI experiences today. I was inspired by the experiences and narratives of AAPI women in my community at UNC. Throughout the past two years, I've been learning a lot about AAPI experiences from the news and from other UNC students. It’s inspired me to educate myself on the AAPI community’s history in the United States, and how it influences the community’s current challenges. For the piece, I primarily used fabrics, thread, tinsel, and fabric markers from the Scrap Exchange in Durham. I also used a saree owned by my mother as the base on which I attached my artwork. By sourcing materials locally and from family members, I hoped to ground the piece in shared community experiences.
My time at Carolina was characterized by my dedication to service, and my interests and life experiences led me to study Medical Anthropology, Women's and Gender Studies, and Social and Economic Justice. The most notable project I completed was a two year project involving my MacDonald Community Fellowship and honors thesis in medical anthropology on the childbirth experiences of Japanese immigrant and expatriate women in American hospitals. The MacDonald Fellowship is a funded service project designed to allow students to partner with community organizations to enact positive change. My project addressed health inequalities that Japanese mothers faced during pregnancy and birth as a result of language and cultural barriers. My thesis allowed me to analyze their experiences through an anthropological and feminist lens so that I was able to better serve as a community doula and create a digital pamphlet with useful English phrases, explanations of local resources, and birth experiences of Japanese moms. Through these projects, I was able to recognize how childbirth is a physiological and social process which simultaneously shapes and is shaped by core societal values, making it inherently political. My experience has instilled in me the importance of holistic care to empower satisfying birth experiences, and I will begin working on an MPH in Health Behavior through UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health after my gap-year in Japan. Through this program, I wish to further develop my community-oriented research skills by diversifying my methods in quantitative and qualitative research, as well as by gaining new skills in community engagement, allowing me to work with Japanese consulates to ensure holistic healthcare support for Japanese families in the US, work with American healthcare staff to address the diverse needs of individuals, and develop and support cross-cultural community projects which focus on building connections and pooling resources to ensure members are receiving equitable care. I hope to continue supporting my Japanese community through programming and advocacy work by establishing a nonprofit organization to meet the prenatal, birth, and postnatal needs of the Japanese moms, as well as a specialized family/prenatal clinic to support the Triangle Japanese community as a whole.

Lilla Watson's quote captures my approach: “If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” The service I wish to do is not one that comes from a sense of patronizing obligation, but from a deep-seated need to understand another’s pain and view it as a different manifestation of the same oppression I am subject to. An obligation to do good for others allows me to pave a path that aligns with my values of relationship building and service, and brings me deep joy and fulfillment in the change I wish for this world.
Elizabeth Morton

I completed a capstone research project for WGST 695: Principles of Feminist Inquiry under the direction of Dr. Michele Berger. For my project entitled “Queer Student Experiences with Reproductive Health Care at UNC Campus Health,” I surveyed 47 undergraduate students who identify as queer or non-heterosexual and have sought or received reproductive health care at UNC Campus Health. Specifically, I explored students’ perceptions of providers’ approachability and LGBTQ competency, effects of gender-neutral language and LGBTQ-inclusive signs, and factors that would make students more comfortable with reproductive health care at Campus Health. My findings suggested that several factors would make queer students more comfortable, including gender-neutral language, signs promoting LGBTQ equality, and various provider behaviors (e.g., lack of assumptions, empathetic care, and neutral reaction to sexual orientation disclosure). I submitted a research paper for the capstone course and presented a research poster at the Celebration of Undergraduate Research. This was my first time conducting original research in the social sciences, and I enjoyed hearing from individual students and structuring my project around their voices. I also learned about feminist ethics and now understand the importance of acknowledging my role in the research process and challenging traditional binaries and hierarchies in knowledge production. My future goal is to become a physician, and my research with Women’s and Gender Studies has inspired me to continue pursuing feminist research about improving marginalized groups’ experiences in health care.

Montia Daniels

I graduated in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in Media and Journalism and Women’s and Gender Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I was awarded with Highest Honors from the Hussman School of Media and Journalism for my honors thesis “Zines Are Freedom: Power, Resistance, and Representation in Black Queer Women and Non-Binary Folks’ Zines.” I began this thesis in WGST 695: Principles of Feminist Inquiry. Professor Bloesch and my peers helped strengthen my paper and encouraged me to ask new questions in the pursuit of this project. Throughout my time at UNC-Chapel Hill, I have been extensively involved in research that has stemmed from my Women’s and Gender Studies courses.

During spring 2020, I became a McNair Scholar which requires scholars to pursue a research project in the summer between their junior and senior year. I created that research project in RELI/WGST 424: Gender Theory and the Study of Religion. In this course, I began a project titled “God Loves Women, and I Do Too: Black Queer North Carolinian Women’s and Non-binary Folks Engagement with Spirituality and Religion.” I later was awarded the Plambeck Award by the Southern Oral History Program and a total of $6,000 from the Southern Oral History Program, Southern Futures, and the American Studies Program to complete this project. I presented my paper on this project at the 2022 Queer MiniCon. I will began to pursue my Ph.D. at the Harriett Tubman School of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from the University of Maryland at College Park with a McNair Fellowship this fall.

Professors Sarah Bloesch, Michele Berger, and Tanya Shields made an incredibly positive and profound impact on my studies and personal growth in the women’s and gender studies department. The Women’s and Gender studies department taught me that my own experiences and perspectives are valuable knowledge worth building upon. That is a lesson I will always carry.
2022 Commencement
Congratulations Class of 2022!
Estrada's research in “Ser Hermana Mayor: Sister, Mother, and Child” explores the complex relationship between eldest daughterhood, Latinx identity, machismo, and familism. Through a series of interviews with self-identified Latinx eldest daughters from various countries, Estrada researched the impact of Latinx culture on the daughters' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in their families. It was found that while outsiders may view the role of eldest daughter as burdensome, the eldest daughters themselves viewed their role as an honor and as a duty fulfilled out of love and commitment to their families.

Hinasahar Muneeruddin

As a Muslim woman of color, my research interests, pedagogical approaches, and feminist identity have always been intimately intertwined. As such, my research is grounded in a commitment that centers the voices of Muslim women, trans, and (gender)queer folk and is dedicated to the decolonial outlook that research can be a tool to empower marginalized communities. In my dissertation, I deploy ethnographic methods to highlight the ways Muslim women, queer, and trans folk negotiate their self-expressions despite facing exclusion from both mainstream Muslim communities and the larger Islamophobic socio-political context in the U.S. While my dissertation resides in Religious Studies, it demands engagement from a broader theoretical approach, such as gender & queer theory, critical race theory, and performance and affect theory. During my time at UNC, I had the opportunity to further align my interests with an opportunity to serve as a teaching fellow for RELI/WGST 482: Sex, Gender, and Religion in South Asia, and as a teaching assistant for several courses, including WGST 101: Introduction to Women's Studies and WGST 249: Intersectionality: Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Justice. These valuable experiences in pedagogy and mentorship in WGST were contributing factors in winning the American Dissertation Fellowship from the American Association of University Women (AAUW). My involvement in WGST also enabled me to cultivate an inclusive and supportive community of mentors and peers that helped me grow exponentially as a scholar, teacher, and activist. This fall, I will be an Instructor in the Religion Department at Phillips Exeter Academy, where I will be teaching courses that bring together some of the core scholarly interests and pedagogical experiences I have garnered from my time at UNC and from WGST, in particular.
I recently earned my PhD in Italian Studies with a certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies. My time at UNC allowed me to combine my interests in these two fields through research and teaching. My dissertation, “Naples, Bodies of Disability, and Radical Creativity” explored literary representations of the Neapolitan metropolis as a body at the intersection of disability, gender, and class. The courses I took in the Women’s and Gender Studies Department helped me develop the theoretical lens for this project. In addition to the Italian language, literature, and cinema courses I taught at UNC, I was also a TA for WGST 101: Introduction to Women’s Studies and a GRC for the Women’s and Gender Studies senior capstone seminar. These two experiences were invaluable as they gave me opportunities to observe Women’s and Gender Studies professors and learn from their example and mentorship. I am excited to share that I am now a Visiting Assistant Professor of Italian and Italian Studies at Scripps College, a private liberal arts women’s college in California. At Scripps I look forward to using feminist thought to continue to inform both my research and my teaching.

Course Highlights

This fall, Sarah Bloesch is teaching a new Honors First Year Seminar, WGST 89H: Sexuality and Salvation. Trained in religious studies, Professor Bloesch is excited to work with new Carolina students on these complex and important topics near and dear to her own research. This course has been designated research intensive, which means students also have the opportunity to develop and pursue their own specific interests related to these themes over the course of the semester.

Course Description:

In Christianity and Islam, bodies populate the afterlife. What those bodies look like, how they act, what they feel, and who they engage with are subjects of contentious and long-standing popular and scholarly debates. The various answers that have been offered in these debates deeply affect Christian and Muslim responses to the body, sexuality, race, and gender in this life. This course examines how theories about sex, gender, and identity are constructed within two religious traditions’ histories, ideas, and discussions. In each tradition, we will look at attempts to dictate a wide variety of sexual norms and at the creativity followers have employed in interpreting such regulations. We will examine the many ways that Muslims and Christians have used sexual practices, language, and images to enhance their devotion and pose questions about how to live out religion. This means exploring and analyzing how the afterlife affects earthly life, including family structures, health care debates, legal choices, questions of feminist agency, and imagery of war.

Christianity and Islam are the two largest religions in the world, and each possesses an incredible internal diversity of practices and beliefs. This course complicates the still-pervasive double narrative that 1. Christianity and Islam are monolithic religions and 2. Islam and Christianity maintain opposite worldviews and ideologies. Students engage the differences and similarities of these influential religious forces through the dual focus of the course’s title. The first term “sexuality,” includes topics such as family relationships, sexual encounters, gender expressions, and reproductive choices. Sexuality contours embodied experiences of self and society. The second term “salvation” considers how different visions of the afterlife—of otherworldly reward, punishment, and expectation and the possibility of communing with the divine—have concrete effects in our individual and communal lives. The intersections where Christianity and Islam have overlapping ideas about sexuality and salvation and where they diverge, with each other and with themselves, often surprise students.
In 1901, the University of North Carolina opened and dedicated a new building, the Mary Ann Smith Dormitory. It was the first building on campus named for a woman, just three years after the University granted its first degree to a woman. Today, it is known as the Smith Building and remains one of only nine buildings on campus named solely for a woman (thirteen other buildings are named jointly for a man and a woman). Fittingly, Smith houses, among others, the Department of Women's and Gender Studies.

However, despite her status as the first women to have a building named after her, Mary Ann Smith remains an unknown and unremarkable figure in North Carolina and UNC history. In fact, in nearly all records she is known as “Mary Ann (Smith) Morehead, lunatic.” However, her story is one of a wealthy independent woman who spent the last twenty years of her life in an asylum while men controlled her vast estate.

Who Was Mary Ann Smith Morehead, lunatic?

Mary Ann Smith was born in Raleigh, NC in 1823 to Richard and Penelope Smith. Richard Smith owned 11 slaves in 1830 and 1840, and 8 in 1850. Richard died in 1852 and Mary continued to live with her mother in Raleigh.

On April 30, 1861, Mary, age 37, married James T. Morehead, a wealthy widowed lawyer and politician from Greensboro, NC. This was not a happy marriage. By the time Smith wrote her first will in October of 1861, just six months after her marriage, she stated “for certain reasons Mr Morehead and myself are separat-ed and it is not agreeable to me to bear his name and I prefer to do all my acts, and especially that of making my will, in my own maiden name.”

Two years later, she filed an unsuccessful petition for divorce in Wake County, claiming that her marriage to Morehead was invalid because he was impotent. In response to her claims that multiple doctors had informed her that Morehead was impotent, the court said “Informed by whom! … Informed by that old mover and seducer. By whose instigation all crimes are committed, who gave the information to our First mother in Eden, the Father of lies himself. The allegation is but another mode of [illegible] a belief or opinion.”

Penelope Smith, Mary’s mother, passed away in October of 1870. On February 7, 1872, about a year and a half after, Richard S. Pullen, a family friend of the Smiths, and executor of Richard and Penelope’s wills, stated before the court in Wake County that “he believe[d] her to be an insane person and in the opinion of the undersigned [was] a fit subject for admission into some insane asylum.” Women in the 19th century were often confined to mental hospitals because they were not behaving in ways that the men in their lives believed were proper or for other reasons that would be seen as controversial today, including depression, grief, and exhaustion.

The court agreed, and Smith was sent to the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane in Philadelphia, the leading mental hospital in the country at the time.

Little is currently known about her life in the Hospital though, aside from the fact that it cost $390 for 13 weeks of board and medical care and that in the summer of 1879, she had been “unusually well” although “mentally, as usual.”

Mary Ann Smith died in Philadelphia on January 4, 1891 and was buried in Raleigh, NC. While she was a privileged, wealthy, white woman from a slaveholding family, Mary Ann Smith's gender still held her back from achieving the same status or freedoms in her life as men of her social rank. Her legacy has been reduced down to “daughter of prominent Raleigh merchant” and “lunatic.”

The Will of Mary Ann Smith

In October of 1861, Mary Ann Smith wrote her first will. In it she left funds to be used for a chaired professorship in the Chemistry Department as well as scholarship funds for students. She left very detailed instructions for how the money was to be invested, what to do with extra money, and how the students who were to receive a free education should be chosen.
However, while some of the money was used to fund a chemistry chair and scholarships for chemistry students, the University used part of the money to build a desperately needed new dorm, something that was mentioned nowhere in Smith's will but would become her major legacy on campus.

Over the next thirty years, the Smith building would alternate between being a girls’ and boys’ dormitory, depending on the needs of the campus. During the mid-20th century, it was mostly occupied by young women. An article in the Daily Tar Heel from 1955 provides a glimpse into what life was like in the dorm. The girls of Smith wanted to ensure that they kept a good reputation, and wrote a letter to the editor of the Daily Tar Heel protesting “yellow journalism” that had painted the Smith girls as “Fiendish, Misguided, Relentless Children.” Instead, they explained that Smith dormitory was the first dorm to have 100% participation in the Campus Chest drive, had placed in various campus competitions such as Valkyrie Sing and the Tennis Ball Parade, had hosted a successful faculty Christmas party, and were helping two needy families in the area.

The Smith Building

In 1967, the Board of Trustees made the decision that in the fall of 1968, Smith Dormitory was to be closed and turned into 42 offices. By 1970, the Smith Building was occupied by the Statistics Department, specifically their graduate students. There was discussion of moving the Human Sexuality and Counseling Services into the second floor of the building in 1975, but after students protested that it was inappropriate to place such a service among mathematics offices, that plan was abandoned.

The University renovated the Smith Building again in 1979 in order to restructure the building to create space for the Curriculum in Operations Research on the second floor and more office space for statistics graduate students. Once the departments of Statistics and Operations research merged in 2003, the Statistics faculty also moved in the Smith and the graduate students were moved out into Howell Hall.

After Statistics and Operations Research moved out of the Smith Building in 2007, Women’s Studies moved in. Today, Women’s and Gender Studies is on the second floor, Linguistics is on the first floor, and the Research Labs in Archaeology has graduate student offices and the zooarchaeology lab in the basement.

Today at UNC- Chapel Hill, most people do not know who Mary Ann Smith was. This in a way reflects the status of women in 19th century America, often overlooked, forgotten, and with few legal rights. Despite her incredible wealth and business knowledge she showed in her will, or perhaps due to it, Smith was pushed into an asylum while male acquaintances and family members took charge of her estate. Her incredibly detailed wishes for her bequest to the University were ignored when the male president of UNC and the male Board of Visitors decided that the money was better used to construct a dormitory. The building itself appears to have been neglected multiple times in its history, reflected in the multiple renovations needed in the thirty years of its existence. Students were moved in and out of the building multiple times through its history, often against their wishes. In a way, it is then fitting that the dorm named after Smith spent many years housing female students and now is home to Women and Gender Studies.

Written by Colleen Betti, PhD Candidate in Anthropology
Faculty Bios

Michele Tracy Berger was recently promoted to the rank of Full Professor. Her research interests continue to concentrate on African American women’s and girls’ health.

The 2021-2022 cycle brought the first publications (a book chapter and co-authored article) to draw on her multi-year collaborative research on yoga interventions in public schools. These two publications reflect the range of her feminist epistemological and methodological approaches to yoga research. In “Situating Girls of Color: K-12 Yoga Research: Reflections and Results from Studying an After School Yoga Program for At-Risk Youth,” she situates herself as a woman of color scholar and yoga practitioner, reflecting on the tensions, challenges, and opportunities while working in the emerging area of yoga research in K-12 public schools. She also presents preliminary findings of a study involving 45 girls of color who participated in a six-week yoga and meditation intervention in an after-school program targeting academically and behaviorally marginalized middle school students. This chapter appears in Practicing Yoga as Resistance: Voices of Color in Search of Freedom (Routledge 2021), a groundbreaking volume that brings together academics (women’s and gender studies, performance studies, embodiment studies), yoga practitioners and activists to engage with yoga practices and histories in the West through an intersectional, feminist lens. In early 2021, her co-authored article “A Non-randomized Trial of Kundalini Yoga for Emotion Regulation within an After-school Program for Adolescents” appeared in the Journal of Child and Family Studies, a leading, interdisciplinary journal on children and adolescents. It reports on the results of a six-week, once a week yoga class protocol to four different after-school programs in 2016-2017.

The end of 2021 also brought publication of the third edition of Transforming Scholarship: Why Women’s and Gender Studies Students are Changing Themselves and the World to print (Routledge 2021).

Sarah Bloesch is a Teaching Assistant Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies. Her courses include “Gender and Film,” “Gender and Spirituality,” “Gender and Popular Culture,” and an Honor’s FY Seminar, “Sexuality and Salvation.” She also quite enjoys teaching each of the department’s required courses. Sarah trained in religious studies, and her research revolves around contemporary Christianity and in the United States and cultural theory. Specifically, she is intrigued by how different groups use ideas about salvation and the afterlife to interpret, produce, and reinforce racially gendered, sexual, and national identities of themselves and others. Investigating the interactions of religious and secular power dynamics, she incorporates various and disparate resources: theorists such as Hortense Spillers and Judith Butler, seventh-century Byzantine monk Maximus the Confessor (d. 662 CE), early twentieth-century novelist Pauline Hopkins (d. 1930), and physical spaces such as monuments and prisons. She has explored these themes in her published articles in the journals Culture and Religion and Theology and Sexuality. Sarah has also co-edited Cultural Approaches to Studying Religion: An Introduction to Theories and Methods (2018) along with an accompanying primary source reader. It is the first textbook in religious studies that focuses on the methodological contributions of ten theorists who have shaped the field in the last fifty years yet are systematically omitted from classroom engagement because of gender, race, and sexuality. A second edition of the textbook will be available in 2023. Related to her research and teaching interests, Sarah is co-chair of the Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Unit at the national level of the American Academy of Religion.
Karen Booth is an Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies. In her work, she applies methods and theories from cultural studies, political sociology, and critical science studies to feminist analysis of the politics of HIV and reproductive justice. Recently, she has written about debates over HIV testing and treatment in relation to pregnant women in the U.S. and globally and the contradictory ways in which gay-identified news media and activists represented and responded to feminist concerns about reproductive justice, especially abortion, before and during the HIV/AIDS crisis. She has also published research on both international and US domestic battles over research, clinical, ethical, and journalistic interventions in women’s reproductive and sexual health. She is currently collaborating on an analysis of social media and the feminist “identity work” of college students. Her teaching reflects these research and advocacy interests. Her favorite course is the “International Politics of Sexual and Reproductive Health,” in which students and she examine the differences and the sometimes surprising similarities across debates over eugenics in mid-twentieth century North Carolina, female circumcision, abortion, and sexually transmitted infections in colonial and post-colonial Kenya, HIV/AIDS treatment and vasectomies in Mexico today, and the commercial surrogacy industry in India. She also loves teaching classes on “Introduction to Sexuality Studies” and “Comparative Queer Politics,” and courses on feminist theory and methods. She recently taught a new advanced undergraduate course in feminist theory in the Fall of 2021. She is the faculty advisor for Feminist Students United, serves on the Board of the Sexuality Studies Program and the University-wide Commission on the Status of Women, and is the secretary/treasurer of the UNC-CH chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Nicole M. Else-Quest is a feminist psychologist and an Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies. A first-generation college student, Dr. Else-Quest earned her Ph.D. in developmental psychology at the University of Wisconsin—Madison in 2006, specializing in women’s health and gender development. In addition to her training in psychological science, she also trained as a childbirth doula to work with adolescent mothers and incarcerated mothers.

Dr. Else-Quest uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to understand psychological gender differences—in particular, how large are those differences and how do they develop? Many of her projects challenge widely believed but problematic gender stereotypes and provide new insights about gender that extend our knowledge about diverse groups. For example, her meta-analytic and longitudinal research projects have examined psychological gender differences and similarities in childhood temperament (Else-Quest et al., 2006), attitudes, affect, and achievement in math (Else-Quest et al., 2010; Else-Quest et al., 2013), and self-conscious emotional experience (Else-Quest et al., 2012).

Building on that work and going beyond analysis of gender, Dr. Else-Quest has sought to expand feminist psychology’s methodological toolkit to incorporate intersectional and transnational feminist approaches. She has written extensively on implementing intersectionality within psychological research (e.g., Else-Quest et al., in press) and adapting quantitative (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016, 2020) as well as qualitative methods (Abrams et al., 2020) to do so. Another set of papers (Else-Quest & Grabe, 2012; Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012; Else-Quest & Hamilton, 2018) focuses on the quantitative assessment and analysis of macro-level gender equity and equality as a context for girls’ development.

Current projects in Dr. Else-Quest’s lab are focused on developing and implementing interventions to improve girls’ and women’s participation and persistence in STEM education from elementary school through doctoral training. These interdisciplinary and collaborative projects are funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. Undergraduate and graduate students play an active and crucial role on these projects within her lab,
Dr. Else-Quest is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association via Division 35 (Society for the Psychology of Women) and a member of Division 44 (Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity). She is Associate Editor of Stigma and Health and faculty advisor for UNC’s chapter of Alpha Alpha Alpha, the national honors society for first generation college students.

Awarded a Senior Faculty Research Lave (Fall 22), Harbage Page's work on the Evros River Border Crossing: Border Biopolitics and Embodied Cartography project, will make a critical transnational contribution to Border Studies and Gender Studies. She will conduct field work the along the border between Turkey and Greece this summer. This new research will be the foundation for new creative activity including videos, paintings, and performances.

Highlights of Susan Harbage Page's recent research include the following: a solo exhibition and catalogue at the Gregg Museum of Art, Raleigh, Borderlands: Evidence from the Rio Grande (2019); videos produced for Meredith Monk's opera Atlas with UNC-Opera presented at the Crossing Boundaries Process Series and published here as a video premiere due to Covid (2021); publication of the refereed article My Gold-Leafed Passport, Geopolitics Journal (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021); six museums have collected her work since 2019 including the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Di Roma, Italia; Museum of Art, University of Oregon; Davidson College Art Galleries, NC; Weather-spoon Museum of Art, NC; Gibbes Museum of Art, SC.

One of the most rewarding activities for Harbage Page this year was serving on the final selection committee for the Fulbright Fellowships for Italian Citizens. It was a pleasure to see the high level of scholarship and research being done by young Italian Scholars and an important opportunity to give back to an organization which honored her with a Fulbright Grant in the early stages of her career.

Harbage Page is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill where she teaches a curriculum that combines hands-on artmaking process with feminist thought and social justice activism. She lives and works in Chapel Hill, NC and Spello, Italy.
Jillian M. Hinderliter joins the Women’s and Gender Studies Department at UNC-Chapel Hill as an Assistant Professor and the Moses M. and Hannah L. Malkin Fellow in Jewish History and Culture in July 2022. Her research and teaching interests include twentieth century American women’s and gender history, Jewish Studies, the history of medicine and health care in the United States, public history, and oral history. Prior to joining the faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill, Dr. Hinderliter was an adjunct instructor in Southern Studies and a staff member in the African American Studies Program at the University of South Carolina.

A first-generation college student, Dr. Hinderliter earned her PhD in History at the University of South Carolina in 2021. She also holds a master’s degree in public history from Northeastern University and a graduate certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies from the University of South Carolina. Before pursuing her doctorate, Dr. Hinderliter worked for several museums and libraries including the Paul Revere House (Boston), the Rufus Porter Folk Art Museum (Bridgton, Maine), and Trinity College Library (Hartford).

In her dissertation “Patients’ Rights, Patients’ Politics: Jewish Activists of the U.S. Women’s Health Movement, 1969-1990,” Dr. Hinderliter argued that American Jewish women substantially shaped the feminist critique of modern medicine and concepts of patients’ rights in the twentieth century. Dr. Hinderliter’s current research and book project expands upon this work to analyze how American Jewish women helped found and sustain feminist health activism at national and local levels alike. Throughout her work, Dr. Hinderliter contends that the women’s health movement did not have to be an expressly “Jewish” movement to be shaped by Jewish religious, cultural, and political traditions, histories of marginalization, and Jewish women’s experiences as Jews in American society.

In 2020, American Jewish History published her article “Muckraking Wonders: Jewish Journalist-Activists of the U.S. Women’s Health Movement, 1969-1990.” Dr. Hinderliter is also a contributor to the Jewish Women’s Archive’s Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women and the Jewish Women, Amplified blog. Additionally, she has worked on several public history projects related to twentieth century women’s history, oral history, and social movements. Dr. Hinderliter is thrilled to be joining the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

Tanya Shields is the Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies, a Carlyle Sitterson Freshman Teaching Awardee, and Director of Undergraduate Studies. She is also Director of Carolina Seminars, which supports faculty curiosity and collaboration, and a past fellow of the Carolina Women’s Center Faculty Fellowship program, the Institute of Arts and Humanities Faculty Fellowship seminar and a fellow of their Academic Leadership program. She is currently the Faculty Liaison for Women AdvaNce Leadership, which is a mentoring program for mid-career women faculty interested in leadership. This has been a trying year for most of us with the persistence of the COVID pandemic, policy changes, and concerning legal decisions. All these things mean that the quest for racial, class, and gender justice are more relevant than ever and we have a lot of work to do. Despite this reality, Tanya has had instances of joy and renewal.

Tanya was privileged to have a summer residency at the National Humanities Center in the Research Triangle in June. It was a wonderful month meeting new colleagues and focusing on her work. In July, she was invited to participate in the SoulWork Institute at Northwestern University. Developed by Dr. Cristal Truscott, SoulWork is a theatrical method based on African American performance traditions. Professor Truscott, a theatre innovator, led over twenty participants in a week guided by the themes of ritual, repetition, and rehearsal some of which were drawn from her book, Bodies and Bones: Feminist Rehearsal and Imagining Caribbean Belonging (2014).
The book examines the ways in which rehearsing historical events and archetypal characters shapes belonging to the region using feminist rehearsal as a methodology. The space was fundamentally life-changing with each participant using the full capacity of their bodies to transform. It was beautiful. The recognition of her work by the SoulWork Institute was gratifying and echoes an earlier invitation from York University in Canada. There she was also able to showcase the vital potentiality of rehearsal as a method during the “Decolonization, Social Movements and Performance in the Caribbean and Canada Conference.”

Currently, she is working on two special issues—one for the journal Women, Gender and Families of Color, which uses the twenty-fifth anniversary of Cheryl Dunye’s film Watermelon Woman as a springboard to discuss Black queer subjectivity and its representations across geographies and disciplines, co-edited with Belinda Deneen Wallace. The second special issue is a Caribbean Quarterly festschrift with Isis Semaj-Hall honoring artist, activist, professor, and mentor Merle Collins.

Ariana Vigil is a Professor whose teaching and research focus on U.S. Latinx literature and culture. In particular, she examines how gender, race, sexuality, and class are deployed in various national and transnational contexts. She is the author of three books: War Echoes: Gender and Militarization in U.S. Latina/o Cultural Production, (Rutgers University Press, 2014), Understanding Francisco Goldman, (University of South Carolina Press, 2018) and Public Negotiations: Gender and Journalism in Contemporary US Latina/o Literature (Ohio State University Press, 2019). She is currently working on two co-edited articles—one on Latinx war narratives from the early nineteenth century through the early 21st century and a second an annotated bibliography of work by and about the Chicana poet, writer and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa. She is also beginning work on a new book that examines questions of loss alongside considerations of climate change and ecological destruction in contemporary Latinx fiction and literature.

In Spring 2023, she looks forward to the sabbatical provided by the Bowman and Gordan Gray teaching award, which will allow me to focus on my second monograph, “Gendered Labor: Race, Place and Power on Female Owned Plantations,” a comparative study of women who owned plantations in the Caribbean and U.S. South. She is excited to share this work with colleagues and students at Sam Houston University and Davidson College as well as with community members through the Carolina Public Humanities program. In addition to these talks, she has published on this topic in a number of venues including the journals Souls and Cultural Dynamics. Recent publications include “Writing and the Responsibility to Memory: The Role of White Female Planters in Contemporary Caribbean Novels” (2020) in Caribbean Literature in Transition, vol. 3, “Hell and Grace: Palimpsestic Belonging in The True History of Paradise and Crossing the Mangrove (2018) and “Magnolia Longing: The Plantation Tour as Palimpsest” (2017).