The best part of my job here is the students. In Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies we are so fortunate to have such wise, passionate, inquiring, and committed students, and I get to spend my days with them. I think of this especially as I reflect on this year’s senior seminar students. We had a small group this year – four students and myself, but it was group of kindred spirits. Each one is exceptionally insightful, questioning, self-reflective, spiritually aware, and a synthetic thinker. Each challenged me and each other to think more deeply. We had a wonderful time. We spent long hours discussing Susan Griffin’s *Woman and Nature* and Riane Eisler’s *Sacred Pleasure*, as well as the questions raised by their research and by their lives. And we laughed a lot. These class sessions were the highlight of my week, and I will miss them.

Each of the seminar students has provided a description of her senior seminar research project (inside). Reading them you will understand why these students are so fascinating, why every hour with them was precious, and why I love my job. I know I am speaking for all of the faculty in WGSS in saying that it is an honor and a privilege to teach all of these amazing students, so as another year draws to a close, we wish to celebrate them. Thank you for another creative and inspiring year together.

-Beth Bartlett

*Senior Seminar Students*
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JANE MADDY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

Thanks to the generosity of the Jane Maddy family, we are able for the first time to offer scholarships to Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors. We are delighted to be able to award two $500 book awards for this coming academic year to Chaela Hins and Kate Mensing.

Chaela is double majoring in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Biology. Her main interests in WGSS have been in women’s health issues, reproductive justice, and women-centered birthing practices. Chaela has interned with H.O.T.D.I.S.H. Militia and volunteers at the Women’s Health Center. This summer she plans on shadowing a midwife, and hopes to study and practice midwifery after graduation.

Kate is a Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies major, with a minor in Art. Her main interests in WGSS have been in peace and justice issues, issues of poverty and classism, and ecofeminism. She is currently the co-chair of UMD MPIRG, and is active in V-Day, QASU, and Trans*formation on campus. She also is an active member of the Loaves and Fishes community in Duluth. She is an avid bicyclist and gardener, and a creative artist.

JOSIE WISE: NATIONAL STUDENT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR WINNER!

We are pleased and proud that our wonderful student office worker, Josie Wise, was selected to be this year’s recipient of UMD’s National Student Employee of the Year Award. Josie began working for Women’s Studies three years ago, and her work with our department has been invaluable. She has kept the office running through changes in staff. She has maintained our website, and is the one who has gotten this newsletter out three times a year for the past three years. We have been so lucky to have Josie working with us. Sadly for us, she is graduating in May. Josie has earned a B.S in Environmental Science, but if we could we would give her an honorary degree in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She has helped us do our work smoothly, and been so welcoming, gracious, and generous in all that she does.

We will miss you Josie, and wish you the very best!
With the help of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department and the College of Liberal Arts, I was able to attend the 9th Annual National Young Feminist Leadership Conference that took place in Washington D.C. between March 23-25th. Having only been to queer conferences at the Minnesota and Midwest levels, I was not quite sure what to expect at a national, let alone specifically feminist, conference. I certainly didn’t think that I would meet Kathy Spillar, the Executive Director of Ms. Magazine and co-founder of the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF); Eleanor Smeal, co-founder and President of the FMF, Publisher of Ms. Magazine, and former President of the National Organization for Women; and Tina Tchen, Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama and the Executive Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls. Instead of reading about, I was seeing these amazing women speak in front of several hundred feminists. With my new friend Molly and myself in the second row, it was an incredible experience and one that I am so lucky to have had.

Workshops that were offered varied from panels on women in the criminal justice system, to small group discussions on trans* inclusivity in the feminist movement (both of which I attended). LGBTQ marriage equality, femicide, statuses of women worldwide, what is being done at the White House, and state specific reproductive rights are just a few of the countless feminist issues we discussed all the time (I’m serious. Even on our lunch breaks). The coordinators of the conference did a wonderful job at providing us with the best resources available to learn as much as we could in 3 days. I am very excited to give a presentation on my whole experience at the conference on Wednesday, May 8th at 2:00 PM in room 268 in the Kirby Student Center at UMD. I was so fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn so much with awe-inspiring women and men beside me. I try to apply it everyday in my activism, education, and conversations because I want people to know that THIS IS WHAT A FEMINIST LOOKS LIKE.

-Abigail Scheiderer

Abbie is a junior at UMD, majoring in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She is the recipient of the UMD Commission on Women Student of the Year Award for 2013, she serves on the UMD Sexual Assault Task Force, and is co-founder of the student organization, TRANSFORMATION, a group that works with trans* identified students through the legal name change process as well as leads trans* allyship trainings on campus and in the Duluth community.
**SENIOR SEMINAR PROJECTS**

**Hannah Maertz**
I am fascinated by the medicalization of the human experience, especially that of women in our patriarchal society. Many strong and dynamic women in my life have or do suffer from various mental anguishes. They have been stigmatized because of attempts at explanations assigned to them through various diagnoses. I am also aware that on a macro level, women outnumber men in most categorizations of mental "illness". My research thus focuses on why this may be and what is being done to help these women. I want to explain how I believe patriarchal beliefs are interwoven in many psychological and psychiatric attitudes towards mental health in addition to how these have affected my own and other's experiences.

**Kate Mensing**
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies classes nurtured in me a strong love for hearing diverse stories and experiences. I have learned that my feminism is a way of life that includes caring deeply and genuinely about the experiences of others, maintaining a non-violent approach to one’s own body and all surrounding bodies, and seeking constantly a deeper understanding of the world we inhabit together and how we can live in egalitarian peace with each other. My senior project explores women’s experiences in this world and looks to tie together women from the past and present while offering solutions for healthier bodies and minds. I am looking at various parts of a woman’s reproductive cycle by presenting some herbs that have traditionally helped with those experiences, and then poems, stories, and pictures that represent the way women in my campus and greater Duluth community have lived them. I am making a “zine,” through which I am able to share my own and others’ stories, educate a broad range of my community, and create a fun collaboration of art, prose, and science. One great thing about WGSS is that it allows to shine those individual parts of us that have preferences and talents, allowing us to address the same issue in different ways. In creating a zine, I am including my art minor and personal love for plants and people. I get to talk to many different women and collect tons of knowledge about traditional herbal medicine. In the end, I will have a collection of many women’s truths and will hopefully guide other women in their own future experiences, whether they be the same or different than those that I have written.
**Senior Seminar Projects**

**Chaela Hins**

In my project, through an examination of the history of the Inquisition and implementation of patriarchy through the Christian-backed government, I am attempting to attribute the current suppression of, and extremely low utilization of midwives in America, a largely Christian nation, to the ideas about women and women healers passed on during its colonization by Europe. I focus on the connection between the combined institutions of government, patriarchy, and religion during Medieval times in Europe, and into the subsequent colonization of America. I look specifically at ideas the Church (and by extension, the state) imparted onto the people about women as witches--specifically midwives--during the Christian witch-hunts, and calls attention to the deliberate, systematic extermination of women, midwives, and lay healers in an attempt to gain total control over the religious arena where some women still practiced goddess-worship through Paganism, and the healthcare field where women healers flourished.

**Kate Monson**

When given the chance to explore a topic in women’s lives and feminism of my choosing, I immediately thought of poetry. I thought of poetry and fear—the two dancing together in my early education—and the poems which whispered to me in the dark before I understood why the light was off, or felt safe enough to explore the darkness on my own. I remembered writing for hours, pouring out my experiences, and being too afraid to share them. Where the girl of fifteen stayed hidden and afraid, I felt curious and ready to explore the bubbling up of knowledge in my own poetry.

One of the greatest gifts given to me by my Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies major has been books I cannot bring myself to sell, books I long to drink tea with, books who are my friends. The most revolutionary to my thinking were written by Susan Griffin, bell hooks, Adrienne Rich, Sandra Steingraber, Starhawk, Ursula Le Guin, and Angela Davis. These women wear many hats: historian, ecologist, novelist, essayist, activist, spiritual leader, feminist, mother, wife, daughter—to name a few—and poet, these women, whose words I have been guided and inspired by, are all poets. Poetry is alive, breathing, normalizing and validating women’s experiences within a realm of silence. Poetry matters. My senior seminar project is an adventure to be in the world differently, actively respecting and listening to emotions and the stories taking root in them. It is an act of reflection following where my questions lead, poems as my lantern.
On March 4th, acclaimed ecologist Sandra Steingraber gave the Women’s History Month Keynote Address to over 200 students, faculty, staff and community members. Sandra Steingraber was generous in sharing her time and her knowledge with us. Much of her talk focused on fracking – hydraulic fracturing of the earth, in order to mine natural gas from ancient shale, far below the surface of the earth. The shale is made from ancient sea creatures. As these creatures died, they became bubbles of methane gas 400 million years ago. In order to access these bubbles of gas, two to eight million gallons of water are pumped into the ground at 100,000 pounds per square inch along with silica sand, mined from the bluffs of Winona. The silica keeps the cache open. Half of that sandy brine is trapped forever beneath the earth, the rest shoots up, poisoned with salts and heavy metals. It can never again be of use to any living thing on this earth. Much of this is being done in the Marcellus Shale that underlies much of Appalachia and upstate New York, in the Finger Lakes region and the Adirondacks, and Dr. Steingraber has been working to preserve these areas from fracking. Since her time at UMD, Dr. Steingraber has been arrested and tried and is currently serving a 15-day sentence for an action of civil disobedience in protection of the earth.

This semester, George Hoagland received a UMD Strategic Initiative Grant to redesign WGSS 3400: Women and Film. The grant, available through the UMD Chancellor’s Office, is part of a larger plan to re-imagine classroom activities so that they more clearly reflect the university’s core values of learning, discovery, engagement, inclusiveness, sustainability, integrity, and excellence. This grant means that George has received financial support to purchase new materials and plan new activities for this very popular class. Using a ‘flipped classroom’ model, the new class will use the larger Duluth community as an integral part of the classroom experience. In flipped classes, students spend class time working outside the traditional classroom, and then bring their discoveries into the classroom for discussion and analysis. For WGSS 3400, students will be filming in the community, as well as getting to know the folks at the community organization with which they will partner. This strategy of getting students into the community is an attempt to bridge the oft-perceived gap between university life and community life, and will help students to see their college experience as inextricably connected to the community in which they live.

The redesigned course will feature a civic engagement element whereby students partner with a community organization to create a short film. Additionally, students will use equipment provided by the new Participatory Media Lab that is housed in the College of Liberal Arts as part of the course requirements. Students will learn how to plan, shoot, and edit a short film, but that’s not all! As community-engaged learners, students will be working with their community partner to plan and execute their film production so that the film supports the partner’s mission. When the film is finished, the community partner will use it as part of its outreach, educational, or service goals. For more information about the class, please contact George Hoagland at hoagland@d.umn.edu.
CONGRATULATIONS!

To Kate Mensing, WGSS Major, for being awarded one of two Darland All-American Scholarships for the 2013-14 academic year. The Scholarships are awarded based on the students scholastic record, character, citizenship, leadership on campus, and potential to serve as a leader in the future.

Kate is most deserving of the Darland All-American Scholarship. Clearly she is an outstanding student, as her academic record shows. But more than this, she is using her intelligence, her curiosity, her creativity, and her knowledge to make a difference in the world. She lives a life of great integrity and with humility acts to make the world a better place. Personally, I have experienced Kate as being unusually kind, caring, sensitive, and compassionate, as well as incredibly generous. She has a positive and uplifting outlook on life, a wonderful sense of humor, and a tender heart. Buddhist scholar China Galland speaks of those who walk the path of the bodhisattva as those who act with “fierce compassion.” This is how I would describe Kate — one who acts to alleviate the sufferings of others and bring about justice with great compassion, but also with enormous determination. That she has and will continue to contribute these gifts to the future of our country and to the world I have no doubt.—Beth Bartlett

Congratulations Kate!

COMMISSION ON WOMEN ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

The Commission on Women Annual Spring Luncheon is the culminating event of the academic year for the commission. It is an event that recognizes, acknowledges, and honors the contributions women make at UMD. This year three awards were given out to three highly deserving women on campus.

The Linda Larson Commission on Women Faculty Woman of the Year went to: Emily Gaarder

The Linda Larson Commission on Women Staff Woman of the Year went to: Susan Meyers

The Linda Larson Commission on Women Student Woman of the Year went to: Abigail Scheiderer

The Linda Larson Commission on Women Woman of the Year Award was created in 2002 to honor women at UMD who exemplify going above and beyond to benefit women at UMD. Following in the legacy of Linda Larson, recipients of this award are making a difference in the lives of women at UMD and in the greater Duluth community. Their contributions to women have long-lasting impact for favorable climate change.

All three of this year’s winners are strongly connected to the Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Department. Abbie Scheiderer is a WGSS major and activist (featured on page 3 of this newsletter), Sue Meyers is a Women Studies alumnus, and Emily Gaarder is active on the WGSS Advisory Board and just completed a two year term as chair of the Board. Congratulations to three great women!
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING UMD’S DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES

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