

# GWS NEWS

University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign | In The Age of Pandemic

## AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Just some of the awards and achievements of our GWS faculty. p2.

## DISRUPTIVE SITUATIONS

Drawing on their research expertise, GWS faculty Ghassan Moussawi and Karen Flynn respond to our historical moment. pp3-5.

## NEW FACULTY

In Fall 2020, we welcome new assistant professors Emma Velez and Damian Vergara Bracamontes, and our inaugural Chancellor's postdoctoral fellow Sawyer Kemp. Meet them in our Q&A. pp6-11.

## FOREVER JACQUE

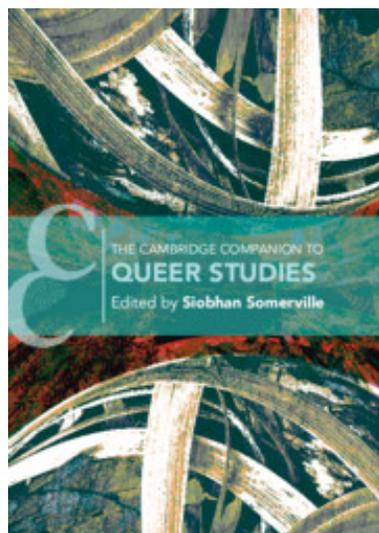
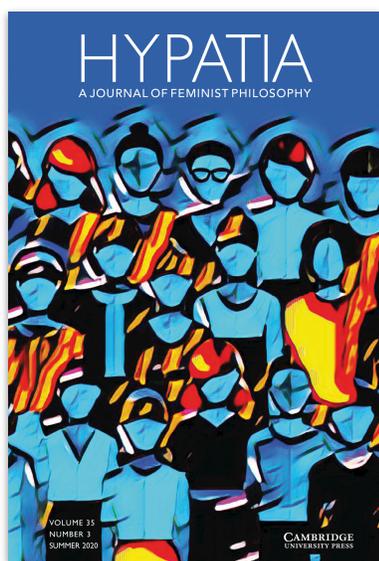
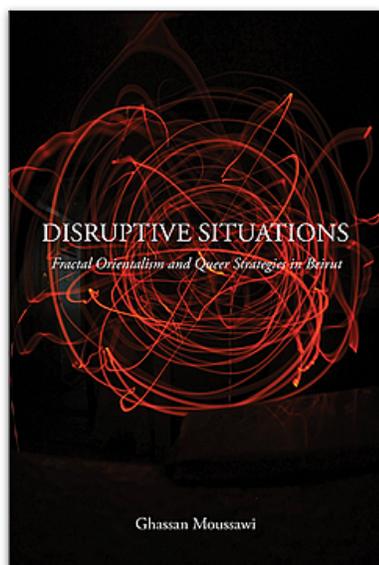
We wish a heartfelt congratulations to GWS academic advisor Dr. Jacque Kahn on the occasion of her retirement! pp10-11.



## WELCOME TO FALL 2020!

This semester will require our collective generosity and imagination as we find new ways to think and learn together – and to care for and connect with each other – amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. GWS faculty and staff have been working this summer to adjust our fall courses and student mentoring to online formats. As we grapple with the nuances of power, violence, and vulnerability during this time, we draw strength and inspiration from the theoretical tools and practices of collective resistance offered through the field of Gender and Women's Studies. As always, we look forward to the vibrant energy our students bring to the shared project of a feminist education.

Even as we face tremendous challenges, we hope this newsletter can be one way to reconnect, share, and celebrate together. And our department has lots to celebrate this year! Although a newsletter can never really substitute for the in-person feelings of our annual fall party, perhaps as you read you'll still be able to imagine yourself packed into the GWS house with delicious food, good music, laughter, and community.



## AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

**Toby Beauchamp** was named Conrad Humanities Scholar, a five-year appointment awarded by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He continues as a Center for Advanced Study Resident Associate for 2020-2021, and with his colleague A. Naomi Paik in Asian American Studies, to co-direct the CAS initiative on the theme of ABOLITION. He also published "Beyond the 'Pine Pig': Reimagining Protection through the US National Park Ranger," in *Radical History Review* 137 (2020).

**Ruth Nicole Brown** has moved from the University of Illinois to a new position as the inaugural Chair of the Department of African American and African Studies at Michigan State University. We'll miss her!

**C.L. Cole** published with Chamee Yang, "Smart Stadium as a Laboratory of Innovation: Technology, Sport, and Datafied Normalization of the Fans," in *Communication & Sport* (online, August 2020).

**Karen Flynn** was named the Aaron and Laurel Clark Professorial Scholar, a three-year appointment awarded by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. She was also awarded an Insight Development Grant from the Social Sciences Research Council of Canada as co-researcher on The Canadian Midwives of Colour History Project, as well as a Public Voices Fellowship from the University of Illinois.

**Ghassan Moussawi** published *Disruptive Situations: Fractal Orientalism and Queer Strategies in Beirut* (Temple UP 2020), which "employs the lens of queer lives in the Arab World to understand everyday life disruptions, conflicts, and violence." His article "Queer Exceptionalism and Exclusion: Cosmopolitanism and Inequalities in 'Gay Friendly' Beirut," received an honorable mention from the American Sociological Association's Global and Transnational Section for their 2020 Best Scholarly Article award. Published in 2018 in *The Sociological Review*, "this article examines how LGBTQ individuals in Beirut articulate discourses of progress, modernity, and exceptionalism in light of the regional geopolitical situation."

**Chantal Nadeau** is publishing *Les trouées [Full of Holes]*, a creative non-fiction work that explores trauma, violence, and sex. (Hamac, Montréal, December 2020).

**Mimi Thi Nguyen** is publishing "Poster Child," about her graphic design, in an upcoming issue of *Women & Performance* (Vol. 30, Is. 1).

**Siobhan Somerville** edited the *Cambridge Companion to Queer Studies*, published in July 2020 by Cambridge University Press. The volume includes original essays by a wide range of scholars in queer literary and cultural studies, along with a critical chronology of the field by GWS graduate minor **Erin Grogan**.

**Emma Velez** is co-editor of a special issue of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* (Vol. 35, Is. 3) called "Toward Decolonial Feminisms: Tracing the Lineages of Decolonial Thinking Through Latin American/Latinx Feminist Philosophy."

# DISRUPTIVE SITUATIONS

*Q&A with Professors*

*Karen Flynn and Ghassan Moussawi*

**Professor Karen Flynn was recently named the Aaron and Laurel Clark Professorial Scholar, a three-year appointment awarded by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in recognition of her prominence in the field, the high caliber of her scholarship and teaching, and her leadership experience. She was also awarded an Insight Development Grant from the Social Sciences Research Council of Canada as co-researcher on The Canadian Midwives of Colour History Project, as well as a Public Voices Fellowship at the University of Illinois. We asked Professor Flynn for some insights into our contemporary healthcare crisis in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic.**

**How do you see the relevance of your scholarship with Black nurses unfolding right now?**

I have taken a keen interest in who has emerged as the experts in discussions of COVID-19. Again, the same pattern emerges where white men are experts on all matters relating to COVID. When people of colour appear as subjects, it is primarily as victims of COVID-19. The voices of medical health professionals of colour are virtually absent. Where are the nurses of colour who are on the front lines? What about nurses' aides/assistants, those on the lowest echelon of the medical hierarchy but who are continually lauded as "essential" in our efforts to save lives and contain the virus? I recently did a presentation for the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine, where I discussed Black health care workers working during COVID. A few of the health care workers echoed concerns similar to the nurses I interviewed almost two decades ago such as higher patient load. One health care worker

mentioned Black nurses being restricted to COVID only patients. Sadly, at the onset of the COVID crisis, three of the healthcare workers who died were personal support workers (PSW's) who are not necessarily considered nurses' aides but do similar work.

**How does your new work on Black travel resonate in the present as well?**

I immediately began paying attention to how Black English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in South Korea were dealing with COVID 19 in the classroom but also in the larger Korean society. Fortunately, for me, I have access to information via Brothas and Sistas (BSSK), the Facebook group that I study. I wondered whether there would be some backlash against EFL teachers, how COVID affected contractual agreements, and of course, teaching during COVID. There seems to be a consensus among the EFL teachers that South Korea has done a better job than the U.S. but there were concerns about increased xenophobia against foreigners.

**What can you tell us about The Canadian Midwives of Colour Project, which received a grant from SSRCC?**

My co-applicant, Karline Wilson-Mitchell, in conjunction with a multidisciplinary team of faculty and students will aim to document and analyze the history of racialized midwives in Canada and the communities they served beginning with Black midwives in Ontario and Nova Scotia between 1800 and 1970. There is a lacuna in the historical scholarship and our objective is to fill that gap. We will use The SHRCC Development to initiate and complete a pilot study involving the following activities: identify community partners and collaborators, and contact archives, and conduct preliminary research. We will also create a multimedia communication platform to disseminate our research to the public, the midwifery community, educators, and learners.

**On the occasion of the publication of *Disruptive Situations: Fractal Orientalism and Queer Strategies in Beirut* (Temple UP 2020), we asked Professor Ghassan Moussawi to help us think through our historical present.**



Marcel finds himself in a disruptive situation.

**How does your new book help us to think about what is happening right now, at multiple registers and scales, in the United States and in Lebanon?**

In my book, I invite readers to question and reconsider what counts as normative and non-normative life and living conditions. We often assume that stability is the norm and that disruptions are aberrations. However, my book challenges this assumption by asking what it means to live amidst constant everyday life disruptions that keep on taking new forms, and how people negotiate such conditions. It draws on the experiences of LGBT individuals in Beirut and how they negotiate normalized everyday life disruptions and violence. *Disruptive Situations* comes at a time when we are all experiencing a sense of loss, grief, and disorientation, and my hope is that the book might shed light on how people survive constant

and imminent disruptions, caused by wars, civil unrest, corruption, and everyday violence.

Since March 2020, in the US, we have witnessed how the global pandemic has and continues to affect peoples' lives differently. What came as a shock to many is the sudden interruption of everyday life as we know it. We think of the times we are living in as exceptional, however, how do we account for people's lives in places (countries, cities, regions) where everyday life violence, disruptions, and uncertainties about the present and future are not exceptional, but are normalized? We don't have to go to non-US settings to ask these questions, as many communities, especially BIPOC people in the US, have and continue to live amidst constant disruptions and violence, such as systemic anti-Black violence and police brutality, violence against indigenous populations, undocumented migrants, and trans people, to name a few.

To question what "a normative life" entails, means that we cannot assume that COVID affected people's lives similarly. The most precarious people are the ones who have most been affected by the pandemic. For example, some people lost their jobs, others have had to quit their education to take care of sick family members, and there has been and continues to be a higher death rate among communities of color, especially Black, indigenous, Latinx, and undocumented persons and communities in the US. While some might say, we are living in "a new normal;" the definition of "new" and "normal" keep changing to the extent that the term "new normal" fails to account for the moment we are living in. The majority of people living in the U.S. today have not encountered such sudden shifts and disruptions in their everyday lives. For queer people and communities of color, however, pandemic and government neglect are familiar; the AIDS pandemic of the 1980s wiped out an entire generation while the Reagan and Bush administrations looked the other way.

The book helps us understand how everyday life disruptions and violence become normalized, and also asks us to consider the links between disruptions and violence on multiple scales, from the everyday to the geopolitical and global levels. While language sometimes fails to account for these conditions of normalized violence and disruptions, affect does not.

### What can queer tactics teach us about how to live in "disruptive situations"?

Using the concept of "al-wad" or "the situation," which my interlocutors use to name a queer condition of life, does not only illustrate the realities and lived experiences of violence but also, reveals the kinds of queer tactics or strategies that become necessary under such disruptive conditions. Rather than using queer as an umbrella term to identify LGBTQ people, I use it to describe a "queer situation" that of constant disruption that has no beginning or end and to think about what queer tactics or strategies people use to negotiate and live through queer situations. These queer tactics also gesture toward an expansive understanding of queerness—one that does not necessarily link to LGBT identities but to practices of negotiating everyday life.

By examining everyday life queer tactics, rather than document or look for the possibilities of LGBT life, I investigate people's "queer strategies" in navigating anxieties, violence, and disruptions of everyday life, with a focus on how people access space and move around the city. I also ask what everyday life queer tactics can tell us about local and regional politics. Queer tactics or strategies are not just a theorization, nor are they simply rational; rather, they are embodied and affective experiences. They are enactments of political strategies that are not always calculated but essential in navigating the difficulties of daily life.

While queer strategies or tactics in my book refer to the experiences of some LGBT people in Beirut, these strategies are not enacted only by LGBT people. Rather, they are a lens to show how people manage everyday-life anxieties and disruptions. For example, negotiating queer subjectivities, much like managing constant disruptions in Beirut, occurs in complex, nonlinear, and often contradictory ways. I ask the following questions: How can queer strategies disrupt yet help people navigate everyday-life disruptions? Since queer visibility is often linked to assumptions about modern LGBT subjects, how does that affect our understanding of queer subjectivities that do not rely on mainstream strategies of coming out and visibility? What does a political economy of queer life look like? How does embracing seeming contradictions and resisting

reconciliation narratives help us better understand the uses of queer strategies?

Rather than focusing on culture, I turn to geopolitics and political economy, and the everyday lived experiences of disruptions. I unravel how political economy and geopolitics are embedded in everyday life experiences of gender, race, immigrant status, sexualities, and disruptions.

### Where will your research go from here? What is your new work focused on?

I am working on several projects that are linked. My first main project centers on transnational immobilities and queer modes of movements and mobility, by focusing on the experiences of non-linear time and temporality. The second project is on "bad feelings," especially trauma, embarrassment and shame, as they come across during fieldwork and how they take a life of their own. I try to highlight the productive ways in which acknowledging such bad feelings can orient us to larger questions and subjects of inquiry that we tend to ignore or take for granted. Therefore, I am advancing what I call "queer flexible methodologies," that call for rethinking how we approach research and our subjects of inquiry.



# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY AND POSTDOC FELLOW

*Q&A with Professors Damian Vergara  
Bracamontes, Emma Velez, and Sawyer Kemp*

We are thrilled to welcome three new members of the department: Assistant Professor Damian Vergara Bracamontes, Assistant Professor Emma Velez, and Dr. Sawyer Kemp, the inaugural Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Trans Studies. We asked each of them to give us an image or an object that helps to explain their research, and to describe their teaching philosophy.

## DAMIAN VERGARA BRACAMONTES ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



Artist: Celeste de Luna

**This image** captures the looming presence of Immigration Enforcement that shapes the daily life of Latinx migrants living near the San Diego-Tijuana, Baja California Mexico border. In addition to being home to the largest port of entry in the world, San Diego is also enclosed by interior immigration checkpoints on every highway. Such a landscape required an ingenuity on the part of undocumented migrants to navigate the space daily that I wanted to capture in my work. When I started reading

## The Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Trans Studies in Gender and Women's Studies

Gender and Women's Studies is truly thrilled to have secured a new, standing postdoctoral fellowship in transgender studies, the first of its kind in the country. This recurring position reflects our department's commitment to research, teaching, and public engagement in trans studies, and it responds to growing student demand for trans studies work at Illinois. The fellowship enables GWS to provide significant support for emerging scholars in this dynamic interdisciplinary field. In turn, our department and our campus will benefit from each postdoctoral fellow's research expertise and course offerings. This fellowship is a one-year appointment eligible for renewal for a second year; postdoctoral scholars will give a public presentation on their research project and teach one undergraduate course each year.

transgender studies scholarship in undergrad that so aptly described the ways transgender folks are subject to exposure in certain spaces like airports, it compelled me to think about the ways undocumented migrants similarly are exposed in numerous spaces. Sites like highways, schools, and hospitals, and other social institutions have functioned as spaces of vulnerability for queer, trans, and undocumented migrants alike. This led me to devise a research agenda grounded in the experiences of queer, trans, and undocumented Latinx migrants and the social life of the law.

**My teaching philosophy** is rooted in a feminist politics of “thinking with” my students, local communities, and academic fields. I strive to design courses that are collaborative, dynamic, and have a public component to encourage students to engage their local communities both of their hometowns and campus.

This fall I will be teaching the “History of Sexuality,” and the course is largely designed with an emphasis on public history. The course includes a range material from exhibitions, oral history initiatives, documentaries, and guest speakers that seek to reach broader audiences on issues for LGBTQ communities. The course will also provide students an opportunity to engage their own local history by conducting archival research and oral history interviews in the collaborative setting of a history lab.

In the spring I am especially excited to offer my course “Policing Latinx (Im)migrant Communities.” In this crucial moment of mobilization to abolish the police and Immigration Customs and Enforcement, this course provides the context of how contemporary policing strategies emerged out of key historical episodes and include a wide range of actors and institutions beyond the police. Drawing from interdisciplinary fields and methodologies, students and I will also explore activists’ strategies against policing and community-based alternatives as well as engage local organizations doing this critical work.

**Professor Damian Vergara Bracamontes** earned a Ph.D. in American Studies and a graduate certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Yale University. Prof. Vergara Bracamontes's areas of research expertise include Latinx studies, critical prison studies, and queer of color critique. The recipient of a Public Scholar Award at Yale, he has put his research to work beyond the university by teaching “Know Your Rights” trainings and serving as an expert witness in an asylum case. This year, Prof. Vergara Bracamontes will teach GWS 387: History of Sexuality in the U.S. (Fall 2020) and GWS 395: Policing Latinx (Im)migrant Communities (Spring 2021).

## Donate to GWS

Gender and Women's Studies relies on the generous support of alumni and friends to provide the best possible learning and research environment for our students and faculty members. Donor support allows us to advance faculty and student research in a number of crucial ways:

- Offer scholarships to academically strong undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to those with financial need
- Recruit and retain the best faculty members
- Provide learning and professional development opportunities for our students

Every gift makes a difference, no matter its size! And when you donate, you will receive some of our buttons as a special thank you!

[gws.illinois.edu/giving](https://gws.illinois.edu/giving)



EMMA VELEZ  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



Photo of three velas santas/saints candles. Candle on the left depicts a rendering of Audre Lorde with a halo and text that reads: "Praise the Lorde!" Candle in the middle depicts a traditional rendering of La Virgen de Guadalupe. Candle on the right depicts a rendering of Gloria Anzaldúa with a halo and text that reads: "Glory! Glory! Anzaldúa!" In the background of the image are two clay figurines dressed in yellow and a succulent from Emma's beloved collection of plantitas.

**These velas santas** are near and dear to my heart. Not only do these three formidable santas – Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, and La Virgen de Guadalupe – watch my back in my office while I'm working, they encapsulate three important influences in my scholarship: Latinx Feminisms, Black Feminisms, and my roots as a Chicana Okie.

In my work, I utilize an interdisciplinary archive to stage a dialogue across disciplines and traditions in order to consider decolonial feminist contributions to questions of identity, cross-cultural communication, and political marginalization particularly as they intersect with issues of race, gender, and sexuality. I'm also committed to theorizing from what Emma Pérez has termed the "decolonial imaginary." As both a critical

## Student Awards

Gender and Women's Studies recognizes students every year for outstanding research and other contributions. **Apply or nominate** someone today: [gws.illinois.edu](http://gws.illinois.edu)

The **Mary Ramier Grant** is set up to inspire undergraduate women to develop as successful leaders, activists, and professionals. Awards will support activism, creative projects, research, and travel related to Gender and Women's Studies.

The **Marianne A. Ferber Award** was created to honor Marianne A. Ferber's thirty-eight years of excellence at the University of Illinois in scholarship, research, and teaching on the behalf of women. It is awarded annually to a graduate student with the most outstanding dissertation proposal related to Gender and Women's Studies.

The **Barbara and Donald Smalley Graduate Research Fellowship** supports graduate students working on their dissertation. This fellowship is awarded to a graduate minor in Gender and Women's Studies for a dissertation proposal promising to make an important and original contribution to the field of Gender and Women's Studies.

The **Scharre Thompson Undergraduate Scholarship in Gender and Women's Studies** is a one-time annual award providing support.

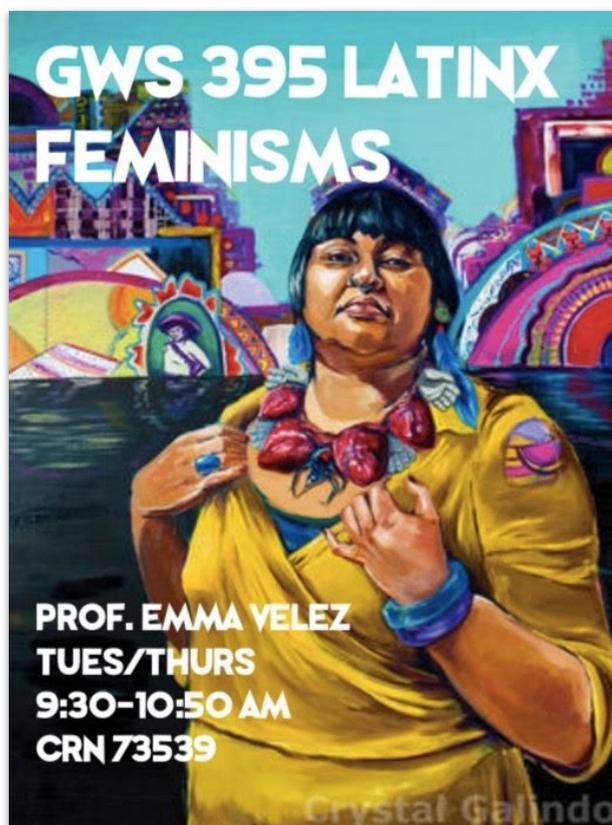
apparatus and resistant space-time, the decolonial imaginary works to subvert colonial mythologies (e.g. "the State," "universality," "modernity"). For example, in my own work I examine the ambiguities and contradictions sustained by figures like La Virgen de Guadalupe (La Llorona and La Malinche are two other figures I have considered). Born out of the aftermath of the conquest, La Virgen's historia is deeply intertwined with colonialism and the continued legacy of coloniality in the Americas. Yet, despite this colonial history, La Virgen has been resignified by Chicax and Mexicanx feminists toward resistant and decolonial ends (check out Pepe Romero's *Fancy Lupe* for one contemporary example!).

I would also suggest that these velas santas depicting Lorde and Anzaldúa are workings of a decolonial imaginary and provide a direct challenge to traditional understandings of who is worthy of veneration.

**My teaching philosophy** is guided by three key pillars: curiosity, empowerment, and putting theory to work. I am an interdisciplinary scholar (my Ph.D. is in Philosophy and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) and I bring this training to bear in the classroom. I think that in order to analyze the complex ways that gender, race, and power structure our worlds we first have to stoke our curiosity. Being curious enables us to ask and dig into hard questions, like the ones my students will consider this fall in my Latinx Feminisms course: What is the relationship between race, gender, sexuality, and colonization? When it comes to Latinidad, who has been included and who has been excluded? How do decolonial feminisms arising from Latinx contexts challenge and disrupt Western paradigms of identity, epistemology, and power? I am also committed to empowering my students by helping them cultivate the feeling that they have a stake in these conversations and in the structure of their own learning. For example, I often let students vote on exam formats and demonstrate their knowledge through creative projects. This has led to some incredible work (self-portraits, poems, graphic design!) and has also

empowered my students to apply the theoretical lessons from our courses in creative, insightful, and inspiring ways. This semester my students will be working on a final podcast project that will utilize the concepts, insights, and discussions from our class in order to analyze work by contemporary Latinx feminist artists and activists. I can't wait to check out what everyone comes up with!

**Professor Emma Velez** earned a dual-title Ph.D. in Philosophy and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from The Pennsylvania State University. Prof. Velez specializes in the areas of Latinx feminism, feminist philosophy, decolonial feminisms, and U.S. women of color feminisms. She has co-edited two special issues of journals focusing on decolonial feminisms, including the latest issue of *Hypatia*, "Toward Decolonial Feminisms: Tracing the Lineages of Decolonial Thinking through Latin American/Latinx Feminist Philosophy." This year, Prof. Velez will teach GWS 395: Latinx Feminisms (Fall 2020) and GWS 498: Senior Seminar (Spring 2021).



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**SAWYER KEMP**  
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

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Pants, people.

**Have you heard about pants?** These are pants.

In 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century drama, a pair of pants can function as a complete and totalizing disguise that prevents your own family, your best friend, and your true love from recognizing you.

When female characters put on pants, the pants seem to become a tool of magical and absolute transition, and indeed, many theatres have begun to advertise

Shakespeare's cross-dressing plays by stressing their relevance to contemporary trans and gender-nonconforming social justice issues. Theatres benefit from contemporary sociopolitical themes that help heighten the stakes of the play, but have not examined the history of transphobic stage tropes and the systematic forms of exclusion that have historically kept trans people from participating fully in Shakespeare theatre.

My past research has explored the performative role of "accessibility" in theatre institutions and described the potential for greater transgender inclusion in Shakespeare performance through tangible community investment. My next project seeks to shift the ways we as scholars look for trans and proto-trans identities in early and pre-modern periods. I investigate transhistorical gender nonconformism through the lens of contemporary trans theory/activist concerns like homelessness, violent law enforcement, medical care & dysphoria. This models a new methodology for early modern gender studies—which I argue has largely overemphasized the role of transvestism (and magical pants) in early modern analyses—but also explores the material and social conditions of historical gender nonconforming bodies.

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**FOREVER JACQUE**

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*In July 2020, our academic advisor Dr. Jacque Kahn retired after over two decades of serving our students in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies. Here, one of our students and a former chair reflect on her greatness.*

I had the amazing opportunity and pleasure of having Jacque as an advisor over the past three years and also working with her on various projects for the GWS department as a GWS student employee this past school year. I know that I can confidently speak for many GWS students, past and present, that Jacque's presence as an advisor makes the university feel like home. Jacque has personally always been such a huge support system for me over the past three years and she has always encouraged me to go after anything I wanted while also knowing when I needed to be reminded to step back and relax a bit. With her selfless attitude, Jacque has always made me and several other students not only feel heard within the department and on campus but also valued. There was never anything I couldn't talk to Jacque about and she has always been there for me whenever I needed her.

**Taylor Ann Mazique**

History and Gender and Women's Studies Student, Student Public Outreach Employee for Gender and Women's Studies, & Social Media Intern for History

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From the time I met her in my first Shakespeare graduate seminar here in fall 1988 –32 years ago– up to the lunch we had in January 2020, Jacque's many talents have been visible. She is super smart, effortlessly well-organized, warmly generous and supportive, terrific at building alliances (her dissertation topic) — and oh so modest. In that seminar, I required too much written work and ended up cancelling a final

I am elated to be teaching an Early Modern Trans Studies course next spring because it is truly an actively developing field. I am excited to invite undergraduate students to join an ongoing conversation about the long history of gender nonconformism and to work together to help shape a queer archive.

In my classes, I like to give students a range of methods for engaging with material and applying their research skills. Past assignments have asked students to prepare dramaturgy protocols for a play, to record podcast episodes that recap key historical context, and to adapt theory texts in critical game design workshops.

**Dr. Sawyer Kemp** earned a Ph.D. in English Language and Literature, with a designated emphasis in Studies in Performance and Practice, from the University of California at Davis. With a focus on early modern studies, their research expertise includes trans and queer theory, contemporary performance, and history of drama. As a Mellon Public Scholar at UC Davis, Dr. Kemp worked closely with a local gender health resource center to develop an all-trans, socially-engaged theatre production. Dr. Kemp will teach GWS 395: Trans Approaches to Early Modern Studies (Spring 2021).



FOREVER JACQUE KAHN!

## Contribute to the Spring 2021 newsletter!

Send us your achievements, your interviews with GWS professors or fellow GWS students, or your thoughts on feminist lessons to: [gws-email@illinois.edu](mailto:gws-email@illinois.edu)

short paper; Jacque, the only student with a family to care for, had already completed it. In 1996, Amanda Anderson (her dissertation director) and I, both with half-time appointments in Women's Studies, gave Jacque a tough mock-interview for the job of Assistant Director of Women's Studies – that she aced. Thank goodness she got the job. She has been indispensable to the program and crucial to its success ever since. (I hope she has forgiven us.)

Her appointment came at a key moment for Women's Studies. In 1988, after 17 years of fierce advocacy, the program still operated by the seat of its pants with little money and few office staff or faculty lines (only 3 part-time faculty with .80 FTEs). But by 1996, the program was growing and flourishing with about 3FTEs (all part-time), regular courses on the books, growing enrollments, and big successful conferences to brag on. However the office and program structures had not kept up with growth. Then Jacque arrived and *voilà!* She superbly organized the office—with a light touch. She formed alliances within the program and across campus. In an early initiative, she enlisted the minors to compile a handbook for WS students, the first of her many successful initiatives to mentor and empower generations of students.

Jacque has provided stability, expertise, and warmth for the last 24 years as the program (and her job description) have repeatedly changed and grown. [Because of her], the office was always humming with stimulating activity, always welcoming. And Jacque threw great parties. [...] I'm sad that we can't bring her treats—and champagne—today.

**Carol Thomas Neely**, Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies