

GWS NEWS

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

NEWS & ACHIEVEMENTS

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

PARTING WORDS

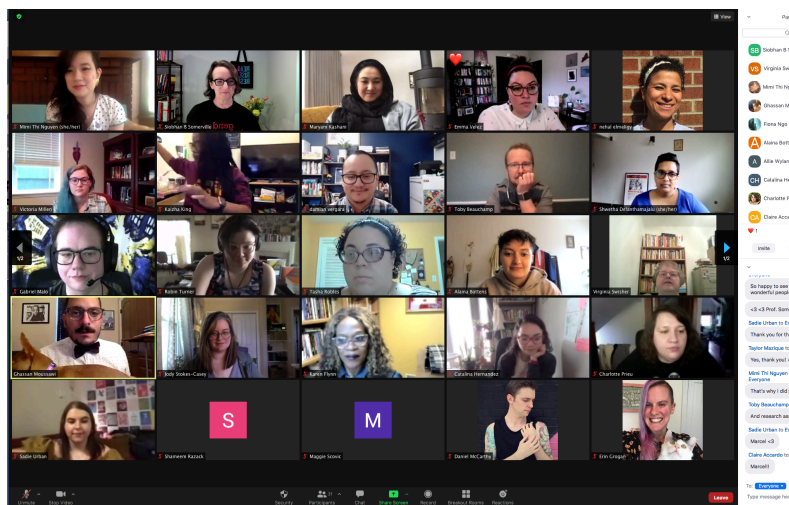
Departing GWS undergraduate and graduate majors and minors reflect on their time with GWS, and what they will take away. pp3-5.

PROFILE: TAYLOR MAZIQUE

In Spring 2021, we say goodbye to GWS/History double major and GWS undergrad worker Taylor Mazique. Academic Program Coordinator Tasha Robles profiles their journey, and their next steps. pp6-8.

PLUS, AWARD WINNERS & MORE

Check out who won our department awards, and learn more about how you can contribute to GWS!



Words from the Chair Fall '21

As we enter our fourth COVID-impacted semester, Gender and Women's Studies is as committed as ever to understanding and challenging the discrepancy between the world and what ought to be. Though climate disasters, global pandemics, state-sanctioned killings, and aspirational fascisms anchor our planetary situation, GWS faculty, staff, and students continue to draw upon the shared project of a feminist education to comprehend and to critique the histories of capital and colony (among other things) that brought us to this moment.

At the same time, we draw on that same feminist education to imagine and to practice mutual aid, resistance, and solidarity – even beauty. Invoking black feminist theory as a commitment to beauty, marked by an ethics of risk and disclosure, Jennifer Nash cites Ivone Gebara, who writes, "If justice is fundamentally about creating right relationships, beauty is in many ways the incarnation and measure of the integrity of those relationships. It is a kind of aesthetic love, an invitation to nurture the creativity and integrity of every created thing. It is an invitation to salvation." In this spirit, Gender and Women's Studies invites each of us this academic year to consider how we might create as much beauty and justice as we can. Only everyone can save us now.

Prof. Mimi Thi Nguyen, Chair

WELCOME TO TASHA ROBLES!

We're excited to announce that **Tasha Robles** joined Gender and Women's Studies as our new Academic Program Coordinator in November 2020! As Academic Program Coordinator, she serves as academic advisor for students; helps coordinate courses and curriculum; participates in planning public programs and communication; and provides a range of other administrative support for the department. **Tasha Robles** brings to GWS a strong background in both student affairs and academic affairs. Most recently she has worked as Senior Academic Advisor in the Department of Spanish and has many years of experience advising a wide range of students from diverse demographic and academic backgrounds. Widely respected as a leader among academic advisors on our campus and nationally, she has chaired the campus-wide Illinois Academic Advising Committee and has also presented her work at gatherings of national organizations, such as NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. With undergraduate degrees in Spanish and Political Science, a minor in Latino/Latina Studies, and a master's degree in higher education, she has a strong multi- and interdisciplinary background and a record of advocacy for students of diverse backgrounds. Her extensive knowledge of University of Illinois administrative and academic systems will be an enormous benefit to Gender and Women's Studies. **Welcome, Tasha!**

NEWS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Blair Ebony Smith joins us as an Assistant Professor in Art Education and Gender and Women's Studies. Earning her PhD. in Cultural Foundations of Education at Syracuse University, Smith is an artist-scholar committed to cultural production and Black girl organizing. We are thrilled to be in her presence!

Professor **Teresa Ann Barnes** won the Provost's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the College of LAS Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, as well as an LAS Impact Award as part of a team of center directors in the Illinois Global Institute.

Nehal Elmeligy, Sociology PhD student and graduate minor in GWS, published her first peer-reviewed academic article in the *Journal of Resistance Studies* entitled "[Making a Scene: Young Women's Feminist Social Nonmovement in Cairo](#)" (November 2020).

Professor **Karen Flynn** was awarded an HRI Humanities Without Walls Seed Grant, which will support the development of a collaborative team proposal for a project called, "Remembering Black Life in Color: Care, Memory, Community and COVID-19." She also published "[Black Canadians and Pandemics](#)" and "[Black Women, Medical Racism, and Covid-19](#)," on *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*, an online publication of the History Departments at Ohio State University and Miami University. She also organized a January 2021 panel called "Care(ful) Disruption: Indigenous and Black Women's Studies Standpoints on Care as a Strategy of Resistance and Continuance," at Vancouver Island University, which was supported by multiple departments and universities, including our own.

Megan Gargiulo, a Spanish and Portuguese PhD student and graduate minor in GWS, received a 2021-2022 Humanities Research Institute graduate student fellowship, for the theme "Symptoms of Crisis." Their dissertation project is called, "Race, Gender, and Recogimiento: Discursive Representations of Space, Sexuality, and Productivity in Late Colonial Mexico."

Erin Grogan, English PhD students and graduate minor in GWS, received a 2021-2022 Humanities Research Institute graduate student fellowship, for the theme "Symptoms of Crisis." Their dissertation project is called, "Cruising Dystopia: Queer Futurity and Toxic Temporalities in the Anthropocene." Grogan was also chosen to participate in the Mellon-funded Humanities Without Walls Summer Bridge Program, also based in the HRI.

Postdoctoral fellow **Sawyer Kemp** had a publication come out last fall, "Transgender Shakespeare Performance: A Holistic Dramaturgy," in *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, with another forthcoming this summer, "Two Othellos: Transitioning Anti-Blackness," in *Shakespeare Bulletin*. Dr. Kemp is also a 2021-2022 recipient of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Short-Term Residency at Arizona State University. They were appointed as well to the editorial board of *Shakespeare Bulletin*.

Professor **Vicki Mahaffey** co-edited a collection called *Irish Modernism*, with Maud Ellman and Sian White for Edinburgh University Press, and authored for the collection a chapter called "Irish Christian Comedy." She also co-authored

an essay with Wendy Truran, "Feeling Ulysses," that appeared in *Ulysses: Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Philip Kitcher.

Professor **Ghassan Moussawi** published, "[Bad Feelings: Trauma, Non-Linear Time, and Accidental Encounters in 'the Field,'](#)" in *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, and co-authored with Salvador Vidal-Ortiz "[A Queer Sociology: On Power, Race, and Decentering Whiteness,](#)" in *Sociological Forum*. Prof. Moussawi also won multiple awards from the professional association, the American Sociological Association, including the 2021 Distinguished Book Award and the Sociology of Sexuality Early Career Award from the Section on Sexualities. In addition, he received the Clark McPhail Collaborative Research Grant from the Department of Sociology with Miguel Avalos (PhD Student in Sociology, Queer Studies Minor), for an article they are co-authoring called, "The COVID-19 Pandemic and Emerging Mobility Regimes at the US/Mexico Border." Finally, he also won the 2020-2021 GWS Outstanding Faculty Award, decided upon by students.

Professor **Mimi Thi Nguyen** was [interviewed](#) by Lauren O'Neill-Butler for November Mag, in a series of conversations with practitioners across art, architecture, philosophy, and critical theory, and published an [interview about transnational feminist studies with Iranian American feminist scholar Minoo Moallem](#) for Jadaliyya. The statement she wrote on behalf of the Departments of Gender and Women's Studies and Asian American Studies about [the murders of six Asian women in Atlanta](#) was also published in *Society and Space*.

Professor **Emma Velez** won an LAS Impact Award for going above and beyond for her students during this difficult academic year. She also survived her first year as an assistant professor in our department in the midst of a pandemic, which is a lot.

Professors **Karen Flynn** and **Ghassan Moussawi** received funding from the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Provost to create new GWS programming for students, including a regular study space and social gatherings.

Local Features: GWS 275 The Politics of Fashion appeared in an LAS Fall 2020 video featuring student testimonials about "[reasons for optimism during a difficult semester](#)"; GWS 202 Sexualities was profiled as "[preparing students for life](#)" in *The Daily Illini* in March 2021; and Professor **Ghassan Moussawi** was interviewed about "[when danger becomes the norm](#)" for LAS Experts in March 2021.

PARTING WORDS

From the Class of '21

Academic Program Coordinator Tasha Robles asked our graduating GWS undergraduate and graduate majors and minors to contribute some parting words. Congratulations to all of you, we were so lucky to be a part of your journey!

Aisha S., Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

Learning about critical topics like race, gender, and sexuality through a historical lens.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

The professors are awesome! These have always been my most enjoyable and informative classes!

Sarah W., Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

My GWS minor has equipped me with a great deal of critical thinking skills. The program has pushed me to consider complex issues from different perspectives and think creatively to find solutions.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

I will remember my GWS 201 class. The discussions were insightful and a community was formed amongst the students.

Taylor M., Major

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

Being a GWS major has significantly benefitted my understanding of how our world functions, as well as how systems and institutions affect how people move through the world differently.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

I will always remember the people in GWS and the sense of constant community. I know that I have made connections and formed relationships that will last a lifetime.

Kaizha K., Major

How has being a GWS major or minor benefitted you?

Being a GWS major has not only opened my eyes to so many things, but also made me question everything I have ever learned and made me a better student, and a better person. The GWS major I have gained will forever impact my life and future career.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

The professors who have genuinely made me feel like a valuable person and student, who have inspired me to want to better the world.

Maggie S., Major

How has being a GWS major or minor benefitted you?

Being a GWS major has allowed me to see the world completely differently. I truly think this program has not only made me a well-rounded thinker and analyst, but also a better, more compassionate human.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

I think being in this moment, on Zoom, is something unforgettable in itself, but I will especially never forget how much more

comfortable and meaningful my GWS professors, TAs, and classmates have made this experience for me.

Samantha I., Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefitted you?

It's made me more socially conscious and passionate about feminist issues that I can carry with me in everyday life.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

Professor Moussawi. He was an absolute pleasure to have in class every week. He made learning very enjoyable and I only wish I could have had him in in-person classes.

Charlotte J., Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefitted you?

I have learned so much about seeing the world from different perspectives. The things I learned will be beneficial to my work in the future.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

The amazing faculty and students.

Kristin S., Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefitted you?

I've gotten to see lots of different perspectives on the same ideas and it's allowed me to be more sympathetic.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

The people I've met.

Nicole C.

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

It has helped me to see the world from a broader lens.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

My peers who always had insightful comments and were always very kind.

Jody S.C., Grad Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

The professors in GWS, particularly Mimi and Toby, brought a level of criticality and rigor that are unparalleled to many of the other courses I experienced at UIUC. The readings and contextualization of research offered in their classes made me a better scholar and practitioner. I often refer back to the themes and readings from their classes to understand systems and structures that influence my thinking, teaching, and writing. Plus, they're generous and amazing people that I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to get to know.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

Generally, I will remember always being impressed with the insight of my classmates and my constant appreciation for how badass the department is as scholars and as people.

Alania B., Major

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

I've gained so much from my GWS major that it's hard to sum it all up! I've learned to think critically, learned to challenge myself with really difficult material/readings, and I've

become an amazing writer!! Not to mention, I have met so many amazing people in my time at GWS that I know I will stay in close contact with long after I graduate!

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

Writing my thesis and working closely with Professor Toby Beauchamp! I always felt extremely engaged and challenged in his classes, and have really enjoyed working with him. Also, the end of the year GWS parties in the GWS house (and other GWS events were always my favorite)!

Allison N., Minor

How has being a GWS major or minor benefited you?

My GWS minor has completely changed my undergraduate experience for the good. It has encouraged me to go into social work and has really shaped what I have learn and what I will continue to learn. Even though it is my minor, GWS has defined my college experience.

What will you remember most vividly about your time in GWS?

Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown was a big part of my GWS experience. Honestly the smartest and coolest professor I've ever had. I will forever remember the lessons she taught and the way she made me feel in the classroom.



GWS 498 Senior Seminar with Prof. Emma Velez!

MEET TAYLOR MAZIQUE

Profile by Academic Program Coordinator

Tasha Robles

Taylor Mazique is a Spring 2021 graduating senior who has worked for GWS over the last two years. She was introduced to the Gender and Women's Studies "accidentally." She talked about how unaware she was about the existence of Gender and Women's Studies as a discipline that she can focus on. It wasn't until she was at a college tour for another university when she began learning about the major of Gender and Women's Studies. Taylor was speaking about what she wanted to study and her research interests when someone overheard and mentioned that she should major in Gender and Women's Studies. Her reaction to that was, "Oh, I was just going to kind of make that happen in a different department, but I didn't realize it was a thing." That made her go back and do additional research on the schools that she was applying to so that she can research their respective Gender and Women's Studies programs. In doing so, she was able to come into Illinois as a History major, but already knowing that she was going to declare a second major in GWS.

Taylor's favorite class was GWS 495, a special topics class titled Black Girlhood Studies, taught by Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown (who unfortunately no longer teaches at U of I). Taylor is very passionate and interested in studying Black Girlhood Studies, which made this special topics class a great fit. In taking this class she expressed:

It was really just ...a positive, reaffirming experience for me because I never really got an opportunity to actually study Black Girlhood Studies because there aren't really courses on it in our department, on it or anything like that, and Dr. Brown is really the main person at Illinois who did that. So it was really just really fun and cool to have a course where you didn't have to make it about Black girls or didn't just have to spend my readings kind of like daydreaming about like, "Oh, what if instead of talking about the adults we talked about the

2020-2021 AWARD WINNERS

Marianne A. Ferber
Graduate Scholarship

Miren Antón

Mary Ramier Grant

Bhavana Khanna

Jean Alice Scharre
Thompson Scholarship

Alaina Bottens

Thompson Special
Mention

Maggie Scovic

Smalley Graduate
Research Fellowship

Jinyi Gu

Outstanding Student

Pasha Trotter

Outstanding Teaching
Assistant

Shwetha Delanthamajalu

Outstanding Faculty

Ghassan Moussawi

children?" ... It was just a course where every single reading that we did and every single discussion that we had challenged so much of me like intellectually and also personally, so many different perspectives were brought up, like non-American Black girls and that experience and those perspectives. There are so many different ways where Black girls resist their oppression, like as simple as dancing, and how they do their hair and nails... It was kind of a really affirming experience for me to kind of let me know that yes, this is definitely everything that I want to do. I don't want to do anything else but this.

One of the more challenging courses for Taylor was GWS 350 Feminist and Gender Theory. Taylor stated that it was challenging because of that way that some of the theories were written. She explained that while the class was challenging, there were so many different theories that were written about things she did not consider quite as often, like theories that were tied to capitalism, class, and economics and how that related to race, gender and sexuality. While considering these complexities was challenging, Taylor stated that she did take what she learned with her and it changed her approach towards her other classes by giving her an additional lens to consider when discussing topics in class and how she approached the world because she now had another tool that could be used to connect the dots. The class allowed her to realize that she also wanted to do community engagement as part of her career through an organization for Black girls. She is determined to do research that is relatable and understandable to community members and non-academic people.

Taylor attributes her leadership growth to the connections that she was able to make with departmental faculty and their interest in what she wanted to do and how they supported her. When asked about what advice she would give to other students who want to get involved with the department, Taylor said to stay open minded. She accredits her own willingness and open mindedness as the vehicle that led her to the positions that she held in both her respective departments. She also encourages students to be vocal about

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



their wanting to get involved with the department. Taylor went on to explain how expressing that she wanted to be involved (even if there was not a position currently available) helped plant the seed in people's minds so that when something became available, she was someone that was approached because people remembered her from those initial conversations.

Taylor also encouraged students to have confidence in their intellect. She stated that the work that GWS students are challenged to do is transformative work and that work may not be received well by others, but that is good because, "... we are really pushing the line; we're challenging people to really rethink what they think is professional; what they think is right; what they think is wrong; what they think is good knowledge or the correct way to produce knowledge." Taylor will miss everything about GWS but especially the people and the feeling. When she has spoken with current students and past alumni, everyone has shared the same sentiments about GWS and its uniqueness as a department. She says that the GWS space is one that promotes and lives its values. In the fall, Taylor will be going to the University of Illinois at Chicago where she will join their History program as a PhD student. She will continue to focus on Black Girlhood Studies and hopes to be able to open a nonprofit or other organization for Black girls in her hometown.

Contribute to the Spring 2022 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

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

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.

The **Outstanding Student Award** recognizes an outstanding GWS major or minor.

GENDER & WOMEN'S STUDIES GRAD GALLERY



Nicole Capesius



Taylor Mazique



Samantha Izaguirre



Allison Nichols



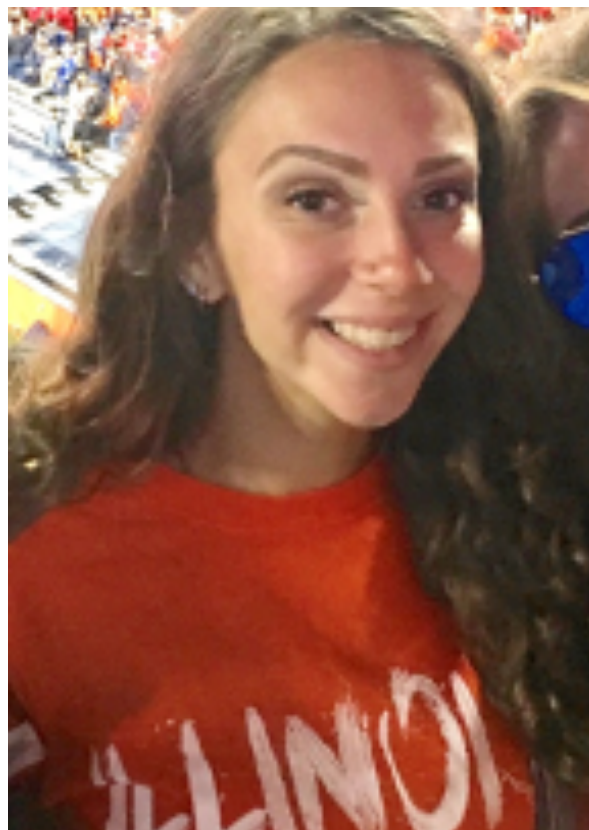
Sarah Wheeler



Maggie Scovic



Kristin Stellhorn



Charlotte Joselit



Alaina Bottens



Kaizha King



Aisha Shekara



Jody Stokes-Casey



Congratulations to all our amazing GWS graduating students! We couldn't have a party, so we gave you swag. <3