

# 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. pp2-4.

## WELCOMES

We welcome Professor Mahruq Khan and Dr. Ava Kim to the Department, p2.

## PARTING WORDS

Departing GWS undergraduates Mackenzie Drummond and Eleanor Humphreys reflect on their time with GWS, and what they will take away. p5.

## BUTTON HISTORY

Chair Mimi Thi Nguyen recounts the history of GWS buttons, p7.

## PLUS, AWARD WINNERS & MORE

Check out department award winners, and find out how you can contribute to GWS!



## Words from the Chair Fall '22

In June, the United States Supreme Court struck down the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that established a legal right nationwide for pregnant people to end their pregnancies up until fetal viability outside the womb. Already before this ruling, many states had pursued legal obstacles to abortion access, and many people were unable to exercise their legal right to abortion because access was too expensive, too distant, or too onerous. The burden has fallen, and will continue to fall, disproportionately on people with fewer resources and more vulnerabilities: poor people, BIPOC people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and youth. At the same time, many states have also sought to forcibly detransition trans youth, denying them access to gender-affirming healthcare and public participation, and to ban books about racism, BIPOC people, or LGBTQ+ folks from libraries and schools. The cumulative effects of these multiple campaigns is to deny us a right to exist at all.

More than ever, a feminist education to comprehend and to critique the history of present—and how to move beyond it—is crucial. As ever, the faculty, staff, and students give me strength in this moment, and as abolitionist feminist Mariame Kaba reminds us, “Hope is a discipline.”

Prof. Mimi Thi Nguyen, Chair

## WELCOME TO MAHRUQ KHAN AND AVA KIM!

In Fall 2022, **Mahruq Khan** joined Gender and Women's Studies as a Teaching Associate Professor, and **Ava L.J. Kim** joined us as the 2022-2023 Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Associate in Trans Studies.

Professor Khan is a sociologist, working at the intersections of gender, religion, and race. In particular, her work has centered on LGBTQ+ Muslims; feminism in Islam; anti-Muslim racism; and anti-immigrant sentiment, with a focus on new religious immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. She has published articles, book chapters, and reviews in outlets such as the *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Praeger Press, Brill, SUNY Press, McFarland and Co., *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, and *Feminist Collections*.

Ava Kim completed her PhD. in English at the University of Pennsylvania. Her work can be found in the journal *American Studies*, and exhibition catalog, *About Face: Stonewall, Revolt, and New Queer Art*, and she is a co-founder and co-coordinator of the Trans Literacy Project. Ava's dissertation, "Trans / Nation: Gender and Democracy in an Age of Transition" analyzes two seemingly disparate uses of "transition": first, to describe a person's shift from one gender to another, and second, to narrate a nation's political change through key terms like "democratization" and "development." She will begin an appointment as Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at the University of California, Davis, in July 2023. **Welcome, Mahruq and Ava!**

## NEWS & ACHIEVEMENTS

**Teresa Barnes** received the Lynn Martin Professorial Scholar Award which honors exceptional women teachers in the College of LAS. While also serving as Director for the Center of African Studies, Barnes gave a keynote address, "Fighting COVID and marginalization on the African Continent," for the Illinois Consortium of International Studies Programs, at Heartland College, in October 2021.

While on sabbatical, **Toby Beauchamp** published "Walking the Line: Borderlands and the Politics of Hiking," in *Qualitative Inquiry* 28, no.2 (Feb 2022). He also won the 2022 LAS Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

**Karen Flynn** was awarded an Academic Writing Fellowship through the Rockefeller Foundation for the Bellagio Center, as well as an Ebony Excellence Faculty of the Year Award from the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center. She gave several invited talks about Black nursing histories for the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the UK Association for the History of Nursing (UKAHN), the University of Windsor, the Ontario Nurses Association, the University of Missouri, and the Hamilton Anti-Racism Center. She is co-PI (with Gwyneth Milbrath) for "Remembering Black Life in Color: Care, Memory, Community and COVID-19," which won a Presidential Initiative for Expanding the Humanities, and "Unearthing and Celebrating Black Nurses in Chicago" (also with Gwyneth Milbrath), from the Donnelly Foundation. She was guest editor and composed an introduction for a special issue on "Race and Nursing," for the *UK Association for the History of Nursing Bulletin* (UKAHN) 9, no. 1 (2021), and co-authored with Lana Ray and Notisha Massaquoi, "Definitions of healing: Indigenous and Black women in Canada," for *Gender and History* Vol. 33, Is. 3 (2021).

**Maryam Kashani** was 2021-2022 Associate Research Scholar and Lecturer in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and The Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration at Yale University. She gave talks at Krannert Art Museum, Yale University, and the Arab American Cultural Center at the University of Illinois, Chicago. She is currently completing two documentaries about the life work of Black and Muslim musician-composer, Wadada Leo Smith (b. 1941, Mississippi). Drawing from concert footage, archival materials, recording sessions, interviews, landscapes, portraits, and interviews, she explores Black creative music and the ongoing legacies and unfinished projects of abolition democracy and Black liberation. Her project takes its title, *Ten Freedom Summers*, from an album and series of concerts performed by Smith and his ensembles. She is also co-convenor of the second cohort of Interseminars called *Improvise and Intervene* through the Humanities Research Institute, funded by the Mellon Foundation.

**Vicki Mahaffey** gave multiple talks and keynotes about James Joyces' literary works at Boston University and the Huntington Library. She is also co-editor with Maud Ellmann and Siân White of *The Edinburgh Companion to Irish Modernism*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021) and with Joseph Valente and Kezia Whiting of *Joycean Possibilities* (Anthem Press, 2022). She also published six more chapters and journal articles in this year alone.

**Ghassan Moussawi** won the Distinguished Book Award from the Sociology of Sexualities section of the American Sociological Association and the National Women's Studies Association's Gloria E. Anzaldúa Book Prize. He also won the Sexual Behavior, Politics and Community Division's 2022 Outstanding Article Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems and the Sociology of Sexualities Early Career Award, from the American Sociological Association. He gave talks on his book about "disruptive situations" for the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, at the University of Chicago, the American Geographical Association, Temple University, Sociologists for Women in Society, and Lafayette College. He also co-authored with Jyoti Puri "Bad Feelings: Reflections on Research, Disciplines, and Critical Methodologies," in *Silences, Neglected Feelings, and Blind-spots in Research Practices*, edited by Kathy David and Janice Irvine.

In addition to serving as Chair of Gender and Women's Studies, **Mimi Thi Nguyen** gave invited talks for Tufts University, Colby College, Brown University, Boise State University, New York University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Smithsonian Museum of American History. She published "Getting Over Ourselves" with *The Journal of Asian American Studies*; the foreword to *Fitting In, Sticking Out: Queer (In)visibilities and the Perils of Inclusion*, edited Scott Branson; the essay "Zine" for *Keywords in Comics Studies*, edited by Ramzi Fawaz, Shelley Streeby, and Deborah Whaley; and "Experience" for *Keywords in Gender and Sexuality Studies*, edited by Aren Aizura, Karma Chavez, Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Mishuana Goeman, Amber Musser, Shona Jackson, and Aimee Bahng. She also co-founded an editorial collective to put together *The Critical BTS Reader*, forthcoming from Duke University Press.

**Blair Ebony Smith** was invited to give talks on Black girlhood at Colgate University's Center for Women's Studies and at Syracuse University with the Democratizing Knowledge Collective. She also co-edited a special issue with Ruth Nicole Brown called, "Complex Textures: Visual Art, Play & Aesthetics of Black Girlhood" for *Visual Arts Research*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2021). Among other art-based exhibitions, she presented *Do it Again...And Just Do It Again Until You Can't Do It No' Mo'* at The Luminary in St. Louis, Missouri, a two-channel audio, time-based media installation exploring Black girl care practices through manipulation and looping of sample field recordings of Studio Art Days with Black girls at the Krannert Art Museum. She is also co-PI (with Dr. Jennifer Bergmark) on multiple grants, including the University of Illinois Call to Action to Address Racism & Social Injustice Research Program.

**Emma Velez** gave multiple invited talks on decolonial feminisms for conferences including Critical Philosophy of

Race after 10 Years: Conference at Pennsylvania State University and at the central division meeting for the American Philosophical Association. She also gave the Sophia Endowed Lecture for George Washington University's Philosophy Department.

**Damian Vergara Bracamontes** gave talks on migrant detention for Dartmouth University and the University of Illinois. He published "Migrant Insubordination: Politicizing Detention through Queer Migrant Kinship," in the *Ethnic Studies Review* (2022) and "The Latinx Migrant Dictionary" in *Routed Magazine* (October 2021). He also spoke with the Campus Union for Transgender Equality and Support, Illinois-Coalition Assisting Undocumented Students' Education, and the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Affairs, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**SPECIAL MENTION:** Our inaugural 2020-2022 Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Associate **Sawyer Kemp** is now an Assistant Professor in English at Queen's College, City University of New York. Their current research project uses a transhistorical approach to imagine how contemporary social justice issues like homelessness, state violence, and dysphoria could inform and situate historical investigations of early and premodern gender nonconforming figures.



Bookmarks by Kadin Henningsen for GWS.

## SELECT STUDENT NEWS & ACHIEVEMENTS

**Miguel A. Avalos** (Sociology) published "Border Regimes and Temporal Sequestration: An Autoethnography of Waiting." *The Sociological Review* 70, no. 1 (January 2022): 124–39.



**Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza** received his PhD in Anthropology, and took up a position as an Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies in the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at California Polytechnic University, Humboldt. He published "'I Think I'll Be More Slutty': The Promise of Queer Pilipinx American Desire on Mobile Digital Apps in Los Angeles and Manila," in *Q&A: Voices from Queer Asian North America*, eds. Martin F. Manlansan IV, Alice Y. Hom, and Kale B. Fajardo (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021) pp. 237-247.

**Nehal Elmeligy** (Sociology) became a PhD candidate and published two articles in November 2021, "Airing Egypt's Dirty Laundry: BuSSy's Storytelling as Feminist Social Change" in *Gender and Society*, Volume 36, Issue 1, and "On Chaos, Disruption, and Women in Public Space: Cairo's Street Situation and the Murder of the 'Maadi Girl' and the Single 'Al Salam Doctor'" in the *Civil Society Review*, Issue 5, published by the Centre for Social Sciences Research & Action in Lebanon. They have also received four awards, including Jean M. Due and Marianne Ferber International Research Fund Award from Illinois International, the Evelyn Accad and Paul Vielle International Award from Women and Gender in Global Perspective, and a Research Travel Grant from the Department of Sociology.

**Victoria Fields** (PhD student in Communication), **Breanna Escamilla** (PhD student in Anthropology), and **Rayven Morrow** (PhD student in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership) participated in the 2022 Summer Bridge Program.

**Megan Gargiulo** earned her PhD. in Spanish Literatures and Cultures and published "Debility and Domination in *Recogimientos de mujeres* in Late Colonial Mexico" in *Dieciocho*, Vol. 44, Is. 2.

**Kadin Henningsen** (PhD candidate in English) was recently awarded a number of fellowships for next year including a Humanities Research Institute Graduate Fellowship, Houghton Library Visiting Fellowship at Harvard University, and the William Reese Fellowship in American Bibliography at The Library Company.

**Abigail Histed** graduated with honors in psychology, received the James S. Spoor scholarship, and will be working as a lab manager in a clinical neuroscience lab at the University of Michigan! She also is a second author on a paper published in *Hormones and Behavior* entitled "Impact of bisphenol-A and synthetic estradiol on brain, behavior, gonads, and sex hormones in a sexually labile coral reef fish" *Hormones and Behavior* (2021).

**Gabriel Malo** (PhD student in Communication and Media) won the 2022 LAS Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching for Graduate Teaching Assistants, nominated for his work in GWS 100.

**Daniel McCarthy** graduated in May 2022 with a Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Performance and Literature, and graduate minors in both Gender and Women's Studies and Queer Studies. In AY 2021-2022, Daniel was a Teaching Assistant for GWS 275 and GWS 202, and they are on the list of instructors ranked Excellent by their students at the University of Illinois. Their forthcoming essay, "Queering Abuelita: Reconciling Loss through the Speculative," has been accepted for publication by *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research* and will be published this fall.

**Lisa Nevarez** was on the Fall '21 Dean's List, and received the OMSA Scholastic Award for Academic Success. She was also inducted in and received certificates for the National Society of Leadership Success and Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society.

**Robin Turner** (French and Italian) was incredibly busy! She organized the 2022 GWS Graduate Student Colloquium with fellow GWS graduate students **Breanna Escamilla**, **Merri Wilson**, and **Margie Giacalone** and co-chaired the 14<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Illinois Languages and Linguistics Society with Joshua Dees. Turner also co-organized with fellow GWS graduate students **Soraya Cipolla**, **Charlotte Prieu**, and **Elena Broscritto** a panel for social justice and linguistic practices in Italophone and Francophone contexts. In AY 2021-2022, she also received the Student Leadership Award from the Department of Linguistics; Outstanding Asian & Asian American Graduate Student Leader Award from the Asian American Cultural Center; and the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award from GWS.



Prof. Emma Velez with Spring 2022's Senior Seminar!

# Meet Mackenzie Drummond & Eleanor Humphreys

*Profile by GWS Intern Claire Accardo*

I sat down with Spring 2022 graduating seniors Mackenzie Drummond and Eleanor Humphreys to discuss their time in the GWS department over the years. Mac double majored in History and GWS, and Eleanor double majored in Psychology and GWS with a minor in Sociology. Eleanor initially came into college undeclared, allowing her the time and space to reflect on who she was and what she wanted out of her education. She realized that people are generally uninformed about topics surrounding sexuality and found GWS to be a relevant field to explore those topics. Eleanor found GWS 202 to be especially informative and eye opening and a large part of why she decided to join the department. She hopes that if any undeclared students are reading this, they consider GWS for the content and people, since it has changed the lens through which she sees the world. Mac originally took GWS 100 as a Gen Ed requirement and quickly discovered her love for the department. She also described GWS 202 with Prof. Moussawi as another class that inspired her to declare a GWS major because of Prof. Moussawi's passion for GWS topics and the caring environment he created.

Both seniors felt as though they have really grown and evolved as a result of being a GWS major. Mac learned the importance of listening and recognizing her own role and place in the world and how it came to be that way. She became aware of how important it is to ensure she does not take up space where it is not needed, as it is vital to uplift the voices of those that need to be uplifted. Being a GWS major has allowed Eleanor to take away a new understanding of the world and has caused her to look at everything she encounters through an intersectional perspective. GWS also aided Eleanor in discovering her passion for sexual health and reproductive justice.

Mac and Eleanor advise taking a 100 or 200 level GWS class on a topic you're interested in if you're looking to get involved in the department. Mac stressed the benefits of building relationships with your professors, as

they can be great resources and confidants. She also feels it is important to prioritize conversations around race, gender, class, and sexuality considering these topics are often cast aside in society. Eleanor hopes current and future GWS students seek out new experiences that support their learning and build upon the topics they learn in class. She talked about the need to bridge the gap between GWS theory and practice and found she was able to do this through her social justice work in Amnesty International UIUC and the Women's Resource Center as an intern and FYCARE facilitator.

Both Mac and Eleanor are really going to miss the openness, comfortability, and vulnerableness of the GWS department. Mac mentioned how GWS students and faculty encouraged growth and learning in a safe space and how the professors have always been really understanding. Mac specifically brought up Prof. Velez and how she appreciated her desire for her students to not only do well, but be well. Eleanor feels incredibly lucky to have been a part of a department that cares so deeply for its students' well-being and makes it a priority. She is really going to miss the community GWS has fostered.



Screenprint by Kadin Henningsen (Meanwhile Letterpress) in our hallway.

## 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](https://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 in the amount of \$2,000.

The **Outstanding Student Award** recognizes an outstanding GWS major or minor, while the **Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award** recognizes a graduate TA.

## Contribute to the next 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)**

## 2021-2022 AWARD WINNERS

### Marianne A. Ferber Graduate Scholarship

Nehal Elmeligy

### Mary Ramier Grant

Ellie Pearlman

Alina Yamin

Isabelle Zhao

### Jean Alice Scharre Thompson Scholarship

Emily Morrisette

Michael Ross Jacobson

### Smalley Graduate Research Fellowship

2022 Catalina Hernandez

2023 Jessenya Hernandez

### Outstanding Student

Alina Yamin

### Outstanding Teaching Assistant

Robin Turner

### Outstanding Faculty

Emma Velez

## History of our Buttons

*GWS Intern Claire Accardo asked Professor and Chair Mimi Thi Nguyen about the history of the GWS buttons.*

As a teenaged punk, I loudly proclaimed my allegiances through my clothes. Filthy t-shirts and black jeans were embellished with patches and buttons that bore anarchist and feminist arguments condensed into declarative phrases, like, "Abortion On Demand!" or "Fight War, Not Wars." Not much has changed, it turns out. When I became Associate Chair in 2012, I wanted to connect students with feminist theories and methods "outside" the classroom, and I could not think of a more cheap and accessible means of communicating this than the button. I asked the department to buy a button maker, and taught myself how to use basic graphic design software – the first buttons were incredibly dull, all they said was "GWS"— and eventually, our buttons became a staple on student backpacks, jackets, and t-shirts. Throughout the years, I have solicited colleagues and students for suggestions and followed a lot of graffiti and meme accounts to regularly refresh our designs, from "Listen to Black Women" to "Otro Mundo Es Posible" (the name of Professor Emma Velez's Latinx Feminisms course podcast). We also regularly lend out our button maker to the other interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies units on the block, and to the Black girl collective SOLHOT (Saving Our Lives, Hear Our Truths, started by our former colleague Professor Ruth Nicole Brown).

What I love about this seemingly slight object is that you can make an argument with your everyday decisions— to wear the button or not— about how you want to move through the world. I teach an article in GWS 282 Feminist and Queer Activisms about buttons in queer movements as an agit-prop medium for negotiating respectability and militancy. In it, Corinne Giselle observes that, "because a button badge is a ubiquitous accessory, and only a small thing, you might be willing to wear that out in public." But this is also no small thing; Giselle continues, "Outside of a march, wearing an LGBTQIA+ button badge can become an act of protest all on its own."



## 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, including offering scholarships to academically strong undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to those with financial need; recruiting and retaining the best faculty members; and providing learning and professional development opportunities for our students.

This last year, for instance, we have used your donations to support the 2022 GWS Graduate Student Symposium (called Formations) as well as multiple other graduate student-organized events; grant research funds to our graduate teaching assistants; and provide financial aid for students attending academic conferences for their first presentations.

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)