This semester, two board members, Dr. Nicole Defenbaugh, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, and Dr. Leilani Kupo, Director of Women’s Resource Center, will be leaving Bloomsburg University for positions in other institutions. In this issue, Deanna Kellett interviews Dr. Defenbaugh on her experiences as a member of the Gender Studies Minor (GSM) Board. In another interview, Deanna Kellett seeks the views of Dr. Stephen Whitworth, Associate Professor of English, about the representations in literature and evolution in society of gender over the years.

Deanna Kellett also will be leaving the GSM this semester. She will graduate from Bloomsburg University with a double major in Mass Communications and Spanish. The GSM Gazette alone attests to the excellence of the work she has done for the GSM. We will miss her frequent e-mail messages, keeping us all on our toes.

In spring 2013, Keara Hozella, majoring in English and minoring in Gender Studies, will begin working at the GSM Office as Work-Study Student.

The GSM students continue doing excellent work, one of which is a project by Eowna Harrison, titled “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like.” Students taking the core and elective courses of the GSM are submitting essays for the Annual GSM Essay Competition, the winner of which will be awarded a prize at the Spring 2013 GSM Graduation Reception.

In spring 2011, seven students graduated with the minor. Currently, seventeen students are enrolled in the minor.

Enriched by the collection of films about women and gender of Dr. David Randall, Associate Professor of English, and sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, the GSM Foreign Film Series continues to attract the students and faculty of Bloomsburg University and members of the Bloomsburg community.

On April 11, 2013, sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, Department of English, and Gender Studies Minor, award-winning writer Anna Monardo will visit classes, hold a question and answer session, and give a lecture for the campus and surrounding communities.

Dr. Ferdâ Asya
Associate Professor of English
Director of Gender Studies Minor
Dr. Nicole Defenbaugh is Associate Professor of Communication Studies and one of the board members of the Gender Studies Minor (GSM). She will be leaving the university at the end of this semester. Dr. Defenbaugh began teaching at Bloomsburg University in 2007. In 2008, she was invited to join the GSM Board by Dr. Julie Vandivere, the Board Director at the time. Earlier this semester, I spoke with Dr. Defenbaugh about her experience with the Gender Studies Minor.

**Question (Q): While you were a member, the title of the minor had been changed from Gender and Women’s Studies to Gender Studies. What are your views about this change?**

**Answer (A):** I remember being a part of that discussion, and I think it was a good change, because on some level people would assume that having the word women in the title, it is only women who are involved, but by saying gender we are addressing men, women, masculinity, femininity, etc. I think there were other reasons such as the courses that just have the word gender in the title, like “Gender Issues in Communication,” which I teach, and so I think it was for multiple reasons for which the change was made and I think it was a good change.

**Q: In the last two years, GSM began to have some new activities such as the GSM Essay Competition and GSM Foreign Film Series. Do you think these activities have been beneficial to the minor?**

**A:** Yes, I actually was on the committee for the essay contest and I read the essays, and they were amazing. I think what it does is it allows students an opportunity to get recognition for their work outside the classroom because they are doing a lot with the minor and I don’t think that the university has an opportunity to know what they are doing and to really recognize them. So, having this essay contest is a way of saying, “Hey, you’re really doing something that’s important and adding to the minor, and we’d like to recognize you for that, and we’d like to let everybody know what wonderful work you’re doing.” I don’t think everyone would really know what’s going on unless we have the opportunity to show, and the students have been doing amazing work. Their essays were fabulous, and so I think that it’s good to recognize them for that.

I think the film series is also really good because, again, it’s an opportunity to involve the community as a whole campus and get them excited and interested in issues of gender and have discussions about them too. When we have our name out there, there’s more awareness of the minor on campus, and the activities we do show that the students are involved in the community. It shows that we do more than just the course work, and it also shows that there’s more to the minor than just taking classes. The thing I really want to say is that issues of gender really do go beyond the classroom and really do affect our everyday lives, and the essay contest and film series, and hopefully more things on campus, will make people realize that this minor is more than just a study of gender in the classroom.

**Q: What are your best experiences with the minor?**

**A:** I really liked being a part of that essay contest and reading the essays. It was an opportunity to really feel like I was part of something that’s really
amazing and these students really are phenomenal, they are very skilled and very skilled writers. I like attending the end of the year functions to recognize our graduates. I mean, I know that seems kind of silly, but we [the Communication Studies Department] don’t even have that because we have so many majors. So, this is an opportunity to congratulate them and say, “Way to go! Good for you!” and find out who is leaving. We usually sit around and talk about it: “What are you going to do? Where are you going to go?” and I really like that too. I think that people aren’t aware of what we do to assure equality and to bring about awareness of issues of gender. I’m proud of those moments too that aren’t always known and aren’t always talked about, but within the minor. I think it’s the little things that really make a difference.

**Q: How has being a board member of the GSM enhanced your career at Bloomsburg University?**

**A:** Being on the board is nice for a number of reasons. It’s good because it’s an opportunity to find out what other faculty are doing in other parts of the university. So, being on the board, I met people from the English Department and Leilani Kupo, who is involved in the Women’s Resource Center or people in other areas. And you recognize that this is gender; issues of gender really do infiltrate every aspect of the classroom and so it’s been nice to meet members from different departments. I like that aspect of it too. And I think being on the board has helped me to network with the university, so I’m able to get my name out there and let people know that I’m interested in these issues and making a difference and meeting other people from other parts of the university, who are doing the same things just in different ways because they teach in a different department.

In terms of enhancing my career, I mean a lot of the work that I do and my publications are gender related, and I’m on a National Gender Board, the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender Board, and also in the journal, *Women & Language.* So, being on the board has helped me because again I get to continue keeping up in terms of my involvement with the university, but I would say outside the university too.

**Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?**

**A:** I would like to say in closing that, for students, it is really important to be involved in and to consider a minor in Gender Studies. The reason is that aspects of gender and gender issues effect all of us on a daily basis whether we recognize it or not. They effect our daily experiences, and this is something we can talk about in our classroom. By doing the minor in Gender Studies, students are able to take the knowledge and theory, and terms and concepts they learn and apply them to other areas. So, you can apply it to media, you can apply it to your organizations and your work experiences, and so I really want to encourage students to consider a minor in gender studies and it is also an issue in diversity. Companies and organizations are looking for people who have diversity in gender background, so I kind of want to put a plug there for students to consider it. For faculty, becoming a part of the board is a way to make a difference on this campus, because being on the board enables you to have a say and a voice in some of the issues on campus and to make a difference and to make a change. It is important to encourage faculty to be mentors even if they’re not on the board and to encourage students to express themselves and their ideas regarding issues of gender in whatever way that they see fit.
This Is What a Feminist Looks Like
A Project Aimed at Reclaiming Feminist Identity

Dr. Leilani Kupo, Women's Resource Center Director, and Eowna Harrison, senior Sociology major and Gender Studies minor, discovered that it was sometimes hard for people to identify as feminists. Some shared that there are negative associations with the term, while others felt they did not fit in feminism as defined by societal norms. After understanding that feminism can have many different meanings and it can be expressed in many different ways, it was decided that this term could be explored in a project. As a way to raise awareness and consciousness about feminist identity, the Women’s Resource Center decided to sponsor the project, “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like.” This project is about understanding that there is not only one type of feminist. The focus of the project is to provide individuals, who identify as feminists, the opportunity to share their personal take on feminism.

“This Is What a Feminist Looks Like” is a photo essay that involves self-identified feminists. Each participant was instructed to write a description of what being a feminist meant to him or her, and then asked to pose for a photograph. This photograph will be included in the photo essay that will be displayed on campus.

The coordinating members of this project hope to build on this foundation and eventually create a video, tentatively titled “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like.”

The photo essay portion of the project is complete. The photographs have been taken and the essays have been written. The coordinating members are currently editing the statements and hoping to have the final project displayed after Thanksgiving.

Those who are interested to be involved in this project should keep a look out for the promotion of the upcoming video next semester, and contact Eowna Harrison by e-mail at ech86127@huskies.bloomu.edu for more information.

Reported by Deanna Kellett from the Project Description by Eowna Harrison.

Gender Studies Minor (GSM) Annual Essay Competition

The Fall 2012 Semester deadline for the GSM Essay Competition was November 8, 2012. The spring 2013 deadline will be announced at the beginning of the Spring 2013 Semester. The winner of the competition will be awarded a prize at the Spring 2013 GSM Graduation Reception.
Awards-Winning Author to Visit Campus in Spring

Anna Monardo, award-winning author of The Courtyard of Dreams and Falling in Love with Natassia, will be visiting Bloomsburg University on Thursday, April 11, 2013.

Monardo will hold a question and answer session at 3:30 p.m. in Room 004, Warren Student Services Center. She will also give a lecture, titled “Fiction and Ethnic and Cultural Diversity,” at 7:30 p.m. in Schweiker Room, Andrus Library.

Prior to Monardo’s visit, there will be a reading and discussion session on her novel, The Courtyard of Dreams, on Tuesday, April 2, 2013 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Room 209, Bakeless Center.

To register for the reading and discussion session and receive a free copy of the novel, please contact Dr. Ferdâ Asya (fasya@bloomu.edu) by Thursday, February 21, 2013.

Sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, Department of English, and Gender Studies Minor, Monardo's question and answer session, lecture, and the reading and discussion session on her novel are free and open to the public.

Spring 2012 Graduation Reception

In the Spring 2012 Semester, Gina Cimmino, Olivia DeFranco, Michele DeLuca, Megan Drumheller, Kristin Kelly, Kayleigh Warg, and Eva Yuen graduated with a minor in Gender Studies. On April 25, during the reception honoring the graduates, the GSM faculty and students spent some time socializing, discussing future plans and job opportunities, and airing views about the issues currently surrounding the minor.

Front (left to right): Deanna Kellett, Dr. Nogin Chung, Dr. Ferdâ Asya, Eva Yuen, Michele DeLuca, Olivia DeFranco, Meghan Drumheller, Kayleigh Warg

Back (left to right): Kimberly Stauder, Dr. Nicole Defenbaugh, Dr. Julie Vandivere, Dr. Faith Warner, Eowna Young Harrison, Samantha Petite
Dr. Stephen Whitworth Discusses Literature and Gender

Late last month, I sat down with Dr. Stephen Whitworth, Associate Professor of English, to ask his views on gender roles and stereotyping in literature and society over time. Dr. Whitworth teaches courses in Renaissance and early modern literature.

Question (Q): How does literature reflect the evolution of gender stereotyping and gender roles over time?

Answer (A): Well, that’s a complicated question. I believe literature and culture are mutually constitutive; in other words, representations that we find in literature, things like gender, actually create a reality in the world in which we live. They also reflect that reality in which we live. So, culture creates the things that we find in literature, but the representations that we find in literature also represent what we want to find in the real world. So, it both creates the real world and is created and reflective of the real world. In a sense, culture creates literature, and literature also produces things within culture. And that is true of gender. The representations of gender that we find in literature are representations of a particular historical period’s aspirations, dreams, and anxieties about gender, but they’re also productive of those things. They produce the very things they are supposed to reflect.

Q: Do you think that society is more or less accepting of different gender roles and other gender issues over time?

A: I think there is a misconception that, as time progresses, we become more and more open-minded. That is fiction. People believe in that fiction because they want to believe that things get better, but the fact is often they get worse. In the Renaissance, for instance, people were much more open-minded about gender roles than they were in the twentieth century. Now in the twenty-first century, I can’t say yet, but in the twentieth century at least, people were much more close-minded about gender roles than they were in the Renaissance. In fact, the word homosexual didn’t even exist in the Renaissance. People were defined by what position they assumed during the sexual act.

Q: Do you think society’s views about gender have a cycle; that society becomes accepting, then less accepting, and so on?

A: Yes. I do. I don’t believe that it’s linear. I believe it goes in cycles.

Q: Do you think that women are as confident as men in arts, literature, or any sphere of life today compared to earlier periods in history? For instance, Mary Ann Evans used the pseudonym George Eliot or in Shakespeare’s time, women were not allowed to perform on the stage, so men assumed the roles of both men and women. Also, in As You Like It, Rosalind had to dress as a man in order to be taken seriously. What is your take on this?

A: I would say in general, yes. I would say so. That in the twenty-first century at least, women do have an easier time being writers, being performers, than they did in any other time period. It’s not to say every time period, it’s just to say some time periods.
Q: In books like *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, there are very strong female characters. Hermione and Katniss are very independent, strong, self-sufficient characters. They do not focus on finding men; their focus is elsewhere. In another popular series, *Twilight*, the main character Bella is very weak. The whole story is about her desire for Edward and how she reacts when Edward leaves. Do you think this reflects the conventional attitude to gender in today’s society? Or do you believe it is simply each author’s writing style?

A: I believe that both types of women do exist. I believe that some women, unfortunately, still define themselves in terms of their partner’s desires, their partner’s wishes, their partner’s control, and I believe some women define themselves in terms of their own desires, and I think that’s a very positive thing. The latter is. So, I would be someone who would consider *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter* to be infinitely, infinitely superior to *Twilight*.

Q: Furthermore, what do you think about the fact that three of the most popular series today are all written by women? Does this say something about our society?

A: I think it does say that there are more opportunities open to women in publishing, for instance, than there used to be. They don’t have to hide behind men’s names the way they did in the Victorian Era, for instance. Women in the Renaissance did publish things under their own name. Some of them didn’t, but it was possible for them to do so. It was also possible during the Medieval Period. So as I said earlier, it does go in cycles. I think in certain periods of time, in the late Medieval period, women had a lot more freedom and a lot more power than people typically give them credit for having had. I think, yes, the fact that some of the most successful contemporary books are written by women certainly says that women’s status has improved.

Q: Anything else to add?

A: It’s important to add that one thing that unfortunately often gets folded into gender studies is sexuality studies. People often want to say that gender studies should include queer theory or gay and lesbian studies. I think it’s important that those things remain separate. The reason it’s important is that sexuation is something that is very, very complex and it involves a great deal of specificity and when you confuse sexuation with gender, you are confusing categories in a way that can be quite socially dangerous.

Interview conducted by Deanna Kellett

---

**Fall 2012 Gender Studies Minor Foreign Film Series**

This semester, the Gender Studies Minor is screening six foreign films on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m. in 2303 McCormick Hall. *Sarah’s Key* (France, 2010), *The Whistleblower* (Canada-Germany, 2010), *Entre Nous* (France, 1983), *Bread and Tulips* (Italy, 2000), and *Blue* (France, 1993) were screened earlier in the semester. The final film of the series will be shown on November 29. The film, titled *A Dangerous Method* (United Kingdom-Germany, 2011), and directed by David Cronenberg, stars Michael Fassbender, Keira Knightly, and Viggo Mortensen. The shows are free and open to the public.
Dr. Nicole Defenbaugh’s piece, "Absent Aunt-ing: Connections to/with Grief, Loss, & Forgiveness from a Dying Aunt," was recently published in the online section of the journal, *Women & Language*. Her piece can be accessed at http://www.womenandlanguage.org/category/alternative-scholarship/.

Dr. Amarilis Hidalgo de Jesús' article "La temática hebrea en la literatura puertorriqueña del siglo XX" ("Hebrew Themes in 20th Century Puerto Rican Literature") has been published in the refereed journal, *Cuaderno Internacional de Estudios Humanísticos y Literatura: CIEHL. Volumen monográfico Literatura Puertorriqueña Contemporánea: 70, 80 Y 90.*

Dr. Nicole Defenbaugh has recently presented a paper and participated in a roundtable at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language & Gender (OSCLG) Conference in Tacoma, WA.

---

**Faculty Accomplishments**

---

**Gender Studies Minor**

Contact Information
Gender Studies Minor
Bakeless Center for the Humanities 111
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
400 East Second Street
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
Phone: 570-389-5254
E-mail: womstudy@bloomu.edu

Information about the requirements, faculty, and courses of the GSM can be obtained from the Gender Studies Minor website:
http://www.bloomu.edu/gs

GSM Director: Dr. Ferdâ Asya
Work-Study Student: Deanna Kellett

I’ve worked for the GSM since the fall of 2011. I’m sad to be saying goodbye to BU, the GSM, and especially Dr. Asya. It’s been an amazing experience.

---

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania is committed to affirmative action by way of providing equal educational and employment opportunities for all persons without regard to race, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.