



**2019
HONORS
SYMPOSIUM**

M | WOMEN'S STUDIES

2019 Honors Thesis Symposium

Department of Women's Studies

Program

1:30 pm | Welcome

Sara McClelland

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Psychology

1:35 pm | Thesis Presentations

Question and Answer

2:15 pm | Thesis Presentations

Question and Answer

2:50 pm | Thesis Presentations

Question and Answer

3:30 pm | End

About the Honors Program

The Women's Studies and Gender & Health Honors Program allows students the opportunity to complete a comprehensive, original independent project as a culmination of their undergraduate studies. Composed under the guidance of a Women's Studies faculty advisor, the thesis is researched and written during students' junior and senior years. Theses can take a number of forms, including activism projects, research projects, or creative/performance pieces, but all include a significant piece of scholarly writing that reflects the student's engagement with Women's Studies or Gender & Health. This year, nine students completed honors theses.

About the Department of Women's Studies

Founded in 1973, the University of Michigan Women's Studies Department is an interdisciplinary academic unit within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. The Department is a diverse intellectual community dedicated to excellence through feminist research, teaching, and activism. It seeks to build interdisciplinary collaborations among faculty and students that bridge gender, racial, ethnic, economic, and national divides; create new knowledge about women, gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability; challenge unequal distributions of power; and improve the lives of all individuals and communities.

2019 Women's Studies and Gender & Health Honors Students

Mari Alvarez

TRANSforming Healthcare: An Examination of Cisnormativity in Patient Provider Interactions

Advisors: Andrea Bolivar and Rosario Ceballo

Health clinics operate under a cisgender until proven guilty basis. This phenomenon is referred to as cisnormativity, where being cisgender is the societal norm and transness must be marked in order to be acknowledged. Cisnormativity enables primary healthcare practices that marginalize transgender patients. This thesis aims to document how cisnormativity shows up in primary healthcare and impacts transgender patients' experiences. Within 7 interviews, I asked transgender people to recount their experiences within healthcare and describe how those experiences influenced the way they seek care. I then analyzed these interviews using a trans analytic to reveal how cisnormativity shaped those experiences: through avoidance, sense of agency, erasure and objectification. The ultimate goal of this work was to acknowledge the inherent knowledge of trans folk's lived experiences in proposing interventions—interventions that truly disrupt root causes of trans health inequities by centering those most impacted.

Kate Austin

Riot Grrrl: Zines and the Exploration of Third-Wave Feminist Thought

Advisor: Petra Kuppers

Derived out of the necessity for a queer, female community to create music, art, and literature, like-minded young women from the Pacific Northwest founded a network that changed the structure of punk culture and feminism, known as Riot Grrrl. In this project, I reflect on my relationship with zine culture and analyze girl zines found in archives at New York University and The University of Michigan. My project delves into specific works, such as Bamboo Girl, and investigates the images, texts and graphics through the lens of queer and POC feminist theorists such as Audre Lorde and Mitsuye Yamada. Ultimately, I contribute to the destabilization of the notion that girls participating third-wave feminism lacked the integrity and awareness of previous feminist movements. I conclude that Riot Grrrl zines offer a complex approach to modern feminist theory discourse, and to the understanding of girls' political capacity.

Kalei Glozier

The Influence of Outness: Social and Sexual Experiences of Gay Men at the University of Michigan

Advisor: Elizabeth Armstrong

Gay men have faced a long history of stereotypes surrounding hyper-sexualization and stigma of “gay culture”. However, the social factors that may contribute to these stereotypes and the potential effects on sexual experience has not been fully analyzed. The pressure of “fitting in” to gay stereotypes may influence the choices and experiences of young gay men. This study surveyed 64 undergraduates that identified as gay men at the University of Michigan. One of the main findings was that outness, defined as the degree in which one is open about their sexuality, was strongly correlated with various types of social and sexual experiences. The party scene, defined as nightclubs and parties where alcohol and other drugs are typically involved, had a major influence on their sexual experience, a common finding in other populations but, relatively, new when considering gay college men. The study also found evidence that there is an overall dissatisfaction with the culture of hooking up. These findings provide a better understanding of potential issues within the community of gay men in college settings and implications to provide change and support.

Allie Mangus

Appropriate Punishments for Perpetrators of Sexual Assault

Advisor: Abigail Stewart

The present study examined which punishments college students believed were appropriate for perpetrators of sexual assault. Individual differences like feminist identity, trust in the criminal justice system, and system blame were analyzed to see how they impacted which punishments students believed were appropriate. College students (N=193) completed an online survey that provided them with a scenario involving sexual assault and asked them to indicate which punishments they believed were appropriate for the perpetrator (e.g., no punishment, jail time, mandated counseling). Findings indicated that students who identified as feminists had lower trust in the criminal justice system and wanted more severe punishments for perpetrators. In contrast, non-feminists trusted the criminal justice system and endorsed less severe punishments for perpetrators. This information is important for universities to consider when trying to develop sexual misconduct policies and implement them as they involve students who perpetrate sexual assault.

Carly Marten

ኤፍ ጆ ኤም (“ef ji em”): A Case Study of Circumcision Narratives of Women in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Advisors: Timothy R. B. Johnson and Savithry Namboodiripad

This thesis presents a case study of circumcision narratives of women in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Collected in the summer of 2018, the sample consisted of five women who were asked to recall their circumcision experiences. Participants were asked about demographic information, languages and spaces of use, education and conversations about circumcision, and opinions on public policy. Interviews were interpreted by an Ethiopian OB/GYN who was a speaker of Amharic and English. From the data, I developed what I call the hourglass model of circumcision narratives that enabled me to examine how participants shared the single commonality of a nonconsensual and painful circumcision but demonstrate a diversity of reflections prior to and following the procedure. Socio-structural inputs I consider in my analysis are space, public policy, and participants’ communities. This thesis aims to answer the following questions: (1) how do women in Addis Ababa talk about their circumcision experiences, and (2) how are their narratives informed by socio-structural discourses?

Vidhya Nadarajan

Who Was Left Out?: The Sex and Gender Disparity in Pain

Advisor: Nesha Haniff

This thesis examines the lack or paucity of interventions which address the alleviation of pain in women. The work reflects the sex and gender bias in pain research and practice as it affects women’s health. I focused on three facets of gender bias: gender role ideology, gender blindness, and male bias. Additionally, I examined three important areas in medicine – individual behaviors, research, and medical education/training. Thirteen interventions were evaluated based on three elements: 1) the ability to address all facets of gender bias, 2) whether they targeted all three platforms of medicine, and 3) how they defined sex and gender. Comprehensive interventions addressed all facets of gender bias; targeted all platforms in medicine; and distinguished between sex and gender. Only three interventions were found to address all facets of gender bias, two targeted all platforms, and four included sex and gender as separate concepts. The results demonstrate the scarcity of interventions that successfully address all the components contributing to the pain disparity in clinical settings, therefore eliciting the need for a more comprehensive integration of these concepts. Through compiling the successful components of the studies, I propose a multimodal intervention that addresses all facets of gender bias and targets all platforms.

Miloni Shah

What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up? Cultural Expectations and Career Choices of South Asian American College-Aged Women

Advisor: Donna Nagata

South Asian American women in the United States are caught at the crossroads of navigating through their two national identities as well as their gender in terms of making career decisions. This study explores: (a) how internalization of the model minority, ethnic identity, and cultural values relate to the career decisions of South Asian American college women, specifically in terms of career alignment with their family and ethnic community and (b) how gendered expectations within their family and community shape their decisions. South Asian American women (N=129) ages 18 to 24 completed an anonymous survey. Results indicated that alignment between personal and family career expectations was positively correlated with internalization of the model minority and negatively correlated with conflicted cultural values. Career decision satisfaction was significantly related to an alignment between personal and family career expectations and discrepancy with extended family expectations. Respondents also reported that their career decisions were influenced by family and community expectations. Many felt a presence of gender stereotypes from their South Asian community. This research uncovers the unique experiences of South Asian American women in their career decision making process and opens up a larger dialogue for consideration within the South Asian American community.

Hanna Simmons

Novel Influences on National HPV Vaccination Programs: State Legitimacy and Political Freedom in Rwanda and Romania

Advisor: Anna Kirkland

Human papillomavirus is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the world and can lead to a variety of serious symptoms, including cancer. Besides abstinence, the only viable mean of prevention is vaccination, which is highly effective and protects against nine high-risk strains. To prevent the spread of HPV, many countries have begun national introduction programs that offer the vaccine to young girls and boys at no cost. However, even when traditional barriers to access are removed, coverage rates remain low in many areas. Public health decision models have been used in both the development and evaluation of these programs but it remains unclear what factors are important in achieving high coverage rates for HPV vaccination. This thesis analyzes national immunization programs in Romania and Rwanda which produce high and low coverage rates that are not explained by current literature. Through critical analysis of the program structure and social/cultural factors, it is clear that previously overlooked factors may be extremely influential in fostering mass acceptance of the HPV vaccine. In the future, this information should be used to inform the design of healthcare interventions with respect to local communities and women's autonomy in healthcare decision-making.

Shriya Suresh

What Do Women Want in Postpartum Specialty Maternal Care? A Case Study

Advisor: Joanne Bailey

The United States suffers from one of the highest rates of maternal mortality of the developed world, with the burden of maternal morbidity being much greater. Unmet postpartum maternal health needs have reflected this burden. The Michigan Healthy Healing After Delivery (Healthy Healing) clinic at the University of Michigan focuses on postpartum maternal health care, specifically for women who have experienced severe perineal tears during their deliveries. This study aims to understand which interventions employed by Healthy Healing are perceived to be most beneficial by both patients and providers. New and returning patients seen at Healthy Healing completed an anonymous questionnaire and clinic staff participated in a semi-structured interview. Results found that patients were highly satisfied with the care they received at Healthy Healing and valued aspects of individualized care. Specifically, speaking with professionals, creating individualized treatment plans, and having the appointment scheduled within three weeks of delivery were the most important interventions employed by Healthy Healing. Provider interviews highlighted a similar emphasis on individualized care. This study revealed the importance of individualized care in the postpartum period and calls for the development of techniques to make this care more accessible in general postpartum healthcare spaces.

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