

Women's and Gender Studies

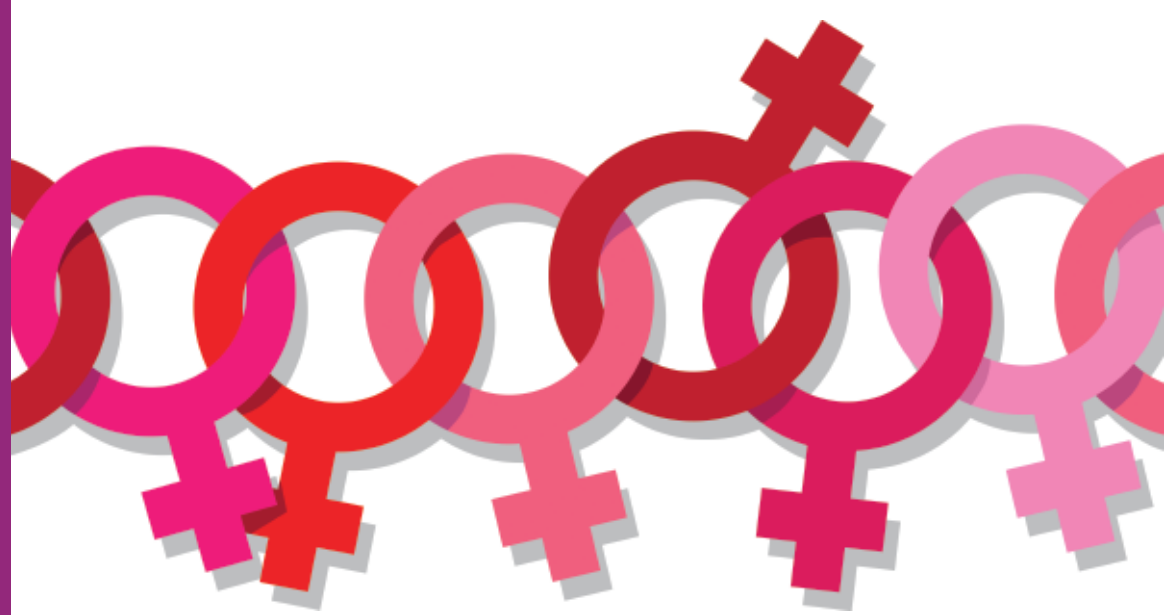
One of the few community colleges in the nation offering Women's and Gender Studies, Oakton boasts an innovative and comprehensive course of study. Here you'll find dynamic classes taught by first-rate faculty who deeply care about social justice and engaged student learning. Women's and Gender Studies courses are open to all Oakton students. Whether you're taking classes to meet general education requirements, transferring to a four-year college or university offering a WGS degree, or simply exploring this vital field for personal enrichment, you also can pursue an optional 15-hour concentration. In addition to today's biennial conference that draws students, scholars, and performers from around the Midwest and across the nation, WGS at Oakton also offers a full range of exciting workshops, presentations, performances and other activities for students and the community. Highlights include the annual juried Women's Art Exhibition in the fall and our Women's History Month events.

For more information, contact Program Coordinator Kathleen Carot at kcarot@oakton.edu.

The Women's and Gender Student Steering Committee

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IN CHALLENGING TIMES: WOMEN, ACTIVISM, AND LEADERSHIP

Women's and Gender Studies Conference

Friday, March 24, 2017

9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Des Plaines

www.oakton.edu/WGSconference



1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

IN CHALLENGING TIMES: WOMEN, ACTIVISM, AND LEADERSHIP

Join friends and colleagues of many disciplines, backgrounds, and institutions to explore the topic *In Challenging Times: Women, Activism, and Leadership*. This one-day conference presents scholarly and creative work by feminist activists, writers, scientists, visual and performing artists and scholars that examines the challenges confronting feminism and the women's and gender studies discipline in the current political and cultural climate. Through an intersectional lens, we will share cutting-edge feminist pedagogy, art, and activism that can provide community, inspiration, and hope during these complex times. Highlights of the day include a keynote address by activist, writer, and scholar, Barbara Ransby, as well as a plenary panel of distinguished local activists and a special appearance by Indian classical dance troupes Tribhang and iRadha.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

8:30 - 9 a.m.	Registration (coffee and bagels)	Performing Arts Center lobby
9 - 9:15 a.m.	Conference Welcome and Opening Remarks	Performing Arts Center
9:15 - 10:45 a.m.	KEYNOTE: BARBARA RANSBY We Will Not Go Back to Betty Friedan's Feminism: The Challenge of Intersectional Politics for the Resurgent Feminist Movement of the 21st Century	Performing Arts Center
10:45 - 11 a.m.	Break	
11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	SESSION I (select one) Performance by Indian Classical Dance Troupes Tribhang and iRadha or Now More Than Ever: Women Leaders and Activists Plenary panel	Performing Arts Center or TenHoeve Center
12 - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch	Cafeteria
1:15 - 2:30 p.m.	SESSION II (select one of four breakout sessions)	TenHoeve Center
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45 - 4 p.m.	SESSION III (select one of three breakout sessions)	TenHoeve Center
4 - 5 p.m.	Reception and Poster Session	TenHoeve Center



Keynote: **Barbara Ransby**

We Will Not Go Back to Betty Friedan's Feminism: The Challenge of Intersectional Politics for the Resurgent Feminist Movement of the 21st Century

Today there is a growing momentum of feminist-led activism that is refusing to go back to a monolithic definition of the category of "woman," and refusing to define liberation as one-dimensional or simple. In her address, Barbara Ransby assesses the current state of the feminist movement and discusses ways we can continue to shift it in a more progressive—and inclusive—direction.

Barbara Ransby is an historian, writer and longtime activist. She is a Distinguished Professor of African American Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, and History at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where she directs the campus-wide Social Justice Initiative. She previously served as Director of the Gender and Women's Studies Program and Interim Vice Provost for Planning and Programs (2011 -2012) at UIC. Ransby is author of the highly acclaimed biography, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. The book received eight national awards and recognitions including Lillian Smith Book Award, Southern Regional Council; Joan Kelly Memorial Prize, American Historical Association; Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Prize, Association of Black Women Historians; Liberty Legacy Foundation Award (co-winner), Organization of American Historians; James A. Rawley Prize, Organization of American Historians; Honorable Mention, 2004 Berkshire Conference First Book Prize, Berkshire Conference of Women Historians; Honor Book, Black Caucus of the American Library Association; Outstanding Book Award, Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights in North America.

Her most recent book is *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson* (Yale University Press, January 2013). Ransby has also published in numerous scholarly and popular publications and lectures widely. In terms of her activism, Ransby was an initiator of the *African American Women in Defense of Ourselves* campaign in 1991, a co-convener of The Black Radical Congress in 1998, and a founder of Ella's Daughters, a network of women working in Ella Baker's tradition. She has published and lectured widely at conferences, community forums and on over 50 college campuses, including: University of Michigan, Stanford, Syracuse University, Cornell, UNC Chapel Hill, Yale, University of Chicago, Harvard, University of Iowa, Williams College and UC Santa Cruz. Her articles have appeared in popular as well as scholarly venues, including: *The Miami Herald*, the *Detroit Free Press*, *In These Times* and *The Progressive*. Barbara is a part of the national advisory board of *Imagining America* and serves on the editorial boards of the London-based journal, *Race and Class*; the Justice, Power and Politics Series at University of North Carolina Press; and the Scholar's Advisory Committee of *Ms.* magazine. In the summer of 2012 she became the second Editor in Chief of *SOULS*, a critical journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society published quarterly. In 2016, she was elected President of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA).

I Am Strength:**Lecture and Performance with Tribhang and iRadha**

Performing Arts Center

Set in a contemporary setting, 'I am Strength' portrays the struggle of a woman who is tired, broken, beaten, and ready to surrender. Then her inner voice tells her not to give up so easily. She seeks courage and strength from the examples of Helen Keller and Malala and realizes that she has the power to achieve all that she wants, she has the power to make this world a better place.

Concept and choreography: Kiran Chouhan

Poetry: Medha Bhargaw, Carolyn Devonshire, Shaan, Shiwali Varshney

Music: Pandit Birju Maharaj

Waqf Ne Tanha Kar Dala: Mitali Singh

Saiyan Mose Bol: Aarti Ankalikar and Pt. Ajay Pohankar

Sad piano: Michael Ortega

Sitar: Amita Dalal composed by Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt

Ensemble artists: Kiran Chouhan, Medha Bhargaw, Shiwali VarshneyPuja Saha, Laxmi Parthasarthi

Tribhang is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness around relevant global women's issues through performing arts. All profits from performances are donated to other non-profit organizations. For 2016-2017, Tribhang focuses on gender inequality, not just in the U.S. but across the world. Although challenges from gender-based infanticide to unequal pay are prevalent, one thing that shines through is the strength and resilience of women. We celebrate their courage from Afghan women rapping to escape from child marriage, women in India donning pink sarees to combat violence or working women everywhere forcing millions of cracks in the glass ceiling and running for the highest political offices. Tribhang partners with iRadha, to present "I am Strength" depicting the struggles and strength of today's women. For more information visit our website www.Tribhang.com.

iRadha is a music and dance academy dedicated to promoting Indian artistic heritage. iRadha brings the grace and storytelling of Kathak dance to modern-day themes and issues. iRadha Academy holds classes in lyrical Bollywood, classical dance, and drama.

Kiran Chouhan is a gandha-bandh (main) disciple of the legendary kathak maestro Padma Vibhushan Pandit Birju Maharaj. As an artistic director of iRadha, Chouhan epitomizes the beauty and grace of the Lucknow Gharana (Lucknow School of Kathak Dance), amalgamated by intricate footwork and delicate abhinaya (Emoting). A leading exponent of the art form in the U.S., she also has performed in Europe, Russia, and Asia.

Now More Than Ever: Women, Activism, and Leadership

Room 1604

This plenary panel focuses on women leaders working on the front lines of activism and social justice. Our panel brings diverse perspectives about the challenges they face in their respective fields, as well as the unique opportunities they encounter to foster community and bring about meaningful change.

Moderator: Mary Hope Griffin

Veronica I. Arreola is a nationally recognized expert on women in higher education and is the program director for the University of Illinois-Chicago's (UIC) new Latinos in Science office, LAS GANAS, funded through a Hispanic Serving Institution STEM grant. Previously she was the director of the UIC Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program. Under her leadership, WISE received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. She has worked with local and national organizations such as the Chicago Abortion Fund, Planned Parenthood, and Mujeres Latinas en Accion and currently serves on the board of directors for Bitch Media. Arreola published articles in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Bitch Media*, and the *Women's Review of Books*. She is a frequent speaker in venues such as a 2015 BlogHer, the 2014 White House Summit on Working Families, and Chicago Regional Forum. Media appearances include *Ms. Magazine*, an Emmy-award-winning feature on WGN-TV, and NBC Nightly News. Arreola is a regular guest on Vocalo's "The Morning Amp" Council of Feminist Thought. She holds a bachelor's degree in biological sciences and a master's in public administration, both with concentrations in gender and women's studies.

Cicely L. Fleming is a dedicated community activist and founder of the Organization for Positive Action and Leadership (OPAL), a group committed to promoting equity in government in Evanston, where she is currently running for alderperson of the 9th Ward. Fleming holds a mayoral appointment on Evanston's Mental Health Board, is a former PTA president, volunteers with various social service agencies, and is a founding member of the Midwest Network for Governing for Racial Equity. With a master's degree in public administration, she is interested in policy development and analysis particularly as it affects community development; African-American voter engagement and mobilization; and racial equity in government policy. Cicely lives in Evanston with her husband and three children.

Doria Johnson is a Ph.D. candidate in U.S. history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Johnson's scholarly work links to her familial history. Her great-great grandfather, Anthony Crawford, was lynched in Abbeville, South Carolina in 1916. Seeking justice for her relative, Johnson pressed the U.S. Senate to apologize for their slowness to enact federal legislation against lynching. Resolution 39 passed in June 2005. Johnson received a master's in Afro-American studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and a bachelor's at Roosevelt University. Johnson has won several fellowships including the Bill Lucy Social Justice Fellow; Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, the Andrew W. Mellon Dissertation Fellow, summer, the Advanced Opportunity Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Chicago Black Metropolis Research Consortium Dissertation Research Fellowship. She has just been named a 2016 Nelson Mandela International Dialogue and Yale University Public History Institute Fellow.

Hind Makki is an interfaith educator who holds a degree in international relations from Brown University. She develops and delivers training on civic integration through interfaith action, anti-racism education, and youth empowerment. She travels throughout the U.S. and Western Europe, leading workshops for civic leaders, interfaith activists, and university students. She is currently a religious advisor to the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program. Makki is a former Fellow of the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute, is the founder and curator of *Side Entrance*, a crowd-sourced website that documents women's prayer experiences in mosques around the world. For her work on *Side Entrance*, she won the "Best Female Blogger" Brass Crescent, an award that honors the best of the Muslim blogosphere. She has appeared on ABC 7 Chicago, Al Jazeera English, Chicago Public Radio, and National Public Radio, and in her work is published in numerous journals and newspapers.

Tara Mallen is the Artistic Director of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE), Chicago's only professional theater company dedicated to the work of women and to advancing the lives of women through theater. An actor, director, and producer, Mallen was most recently on stage in RTE's production of *Grizzly Mama*. Last winter she performed in the world premiere of Lynn Nottage's *Sweat at Arena Stage*. Before that, she was in RTE's Jeff Nominated, world premiere productions of *Look, We Are Breathing* and *Rasheeda Speaking*. Tara appeared in the Steppenwolf Theatre Company production of *How Long Will I Cry - Stories of Youth Violence*. She was part of the ensemble in Rivendell's World Premiere, Jeff nominated production of *The Walls* and played Jolene Palmer in Rivendell's award-winning production of *Self Defense, or the Death of Some Salesmen*—both productions part of Steppenwolf Theatre Company's Visiting Theater Initiative. She received a Jeff award for "Supporting Actress" for her portrayal of Gwenyth in *Wrens*. Screen credits include Steven Soderbergh's film *Contagion*, the Starz series *Boss*, the NBC pilot of *Chicago Fire*, the and the new Netflix series *Sense8* directed by Lana and Andy Wachowski.

"Can't I Just Pee?!": The Bathroom Problem and the Challenges of Inclusion for Transgender, GenderQueer, and Intersex Students on Campus

Room 1604

Presenters: Syd Denila, Damian Maranto, Omar Medina, Jaklyn Schmitz, Nick Shropshire, Lindsey Hewitt (moderator)

This roundtable discusses transgender, genderqueer, and intersex student inclusion, and exclusion, on Oakton's campus. Five Oakton students will share their experiences of gender-policing and safety concerns in single-sex restrooms, as well as how the "bathroom problem" intersects with broader concerns about campus climate toward gender/sex diversity. In addition to discussing the importance of gender-inclusive restrooms, students will share their experiences of misrecognition and exclusion in the classroom, such as being misgendered or referred to with the wrong pronouns both by professors and classmates. By giving voice to their personal experiences and reflections, they hope to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion, visibility, and safety.

Testimonio: Using Personal/Political Narratives as Resistance and Resilience

Room 1606

Presenter: Amanda Loos

As communities of WGS students, scholars, educators, and activists, when we tell our stories, we are not "distracting" ourselves and each other from the academic work of the classroom or the political work of organizing. We are rather giving *testimonio*, as Aurora Levins Morales theorizes, bearing witness to the social and political realities of injustice, trauma, resilience, community, and change. For educators and students—especially students of color and other communities marginalized by interlocking systems of oppression, engaging with each other in writing, telling, and sharing of personal/political narratives can be profoundly transformative. Storytelling as a pedagogical tool can build community in the classroom and deepen our academic, professional, and personal successes and model

the kinds of deep listening, problem solving, and coalition-building so necessary for sustainable activism. Facilitated as a Talking Circle, this interactive workshop will be grounded in the intersectional feminist writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, M. Jacqui Alexander, AnaLouise Keating, and Levins Morales. We will work together to model ways in which storytelling can be effectively activated in our various labors, as we confront, resist, and recover from white supremacist heteropatriarchy.

Recent Feminist Research in Cultural Criticism

Room 1608

Panelists present recent research that examines issues related to fanfiction, film, and other media.

Moderator: Greg Hamill

State of the Arts: The Bechdel Test on Stage and Screen

Presenters: Lauren Cole, Satiah Duval, Jayme Novara (Moderator)

The Bechdel Test has come to be a great feminist yardstick for measuring a film's strength of female characters. However, Hollywood hasn't quite caught up. The film and theater productions that are offered to audiences continue to uphold white, male-centered storylines. Unfortunately, these historic and archaic representations are also the standard curriculum for film and theater courses providing few moments of discussion and reflection about female characters, storylines, interaction, and role models. This lack of concern for female characters creates a standard for the treatment of women and shows little to women looking for role models. If female students are not able to see women in strong roles on the stage or screen, they are not encouraged to desire these roles in life.

Examining Heteronormativity in Media and the Reaction of Fan Culture through Queer Theory

Presenter: Rachel Kaplan

Queer theory has provided insights into how identities are constantly shifting, yet mainstream media has not fully embraced this insight. Television, movies and books continue to perpetuate a heteronormative view of the world, so fans have taken to alternative sources to explore alternate views. Fanfiction creates a space where identities can change over time and individuals can fully express themselves. It also highlights an opportunity to better understand modern media consumption and the interaction between the media and its fans by using the lens of queer theory.

The Challenges of Teaching in "Post-Truth" Times

Room 1625

Presenters: Madhuri Deshmukh, Holly Graff, Paul Gulezian, Kristin McCartney, Eva de la Riva, Karishma Kamath (moderator)

The events and discourses of 2016 present educators with new challenges and a renewed call for social and ethical engagement with the world. Many of our students have faced racial, cultural and sexual attacks in this new climate. Our undocumented students now live in a state of fear and instability. We owe it to them to address issues and perspectives that will shape and influence their lives over the next few years. In this roundtable workshop, six Oakton faculty discuss steps they have taken to meet these challenges and share best practices.

Finding Our Voices: Examining the Challenges Faced by First- and Second-Generation Immigrant Communities in the United States

Room 1604

Presenters: Jirah Capungan, Sophia Marchionne, Brigid Martinez, Sunayna Punjabi, Kristin McCartney (moderator)

In this roundtable, four Oakton students consider the distinctive challenges presented to first- and second-generation immigrant communities in the United States. Specific areas of interest include the prospect of marriage, the value of same-race marriage, the effects and fears of interracial, and intersex marriage, or choosing not to marry. They address the silence surrounding child marriages and forced, or arranged marriages and the fear of speaking about these experiences. They will also discuss how activism, blogging, artistic expression and leadership can create positive impacts and build community.

Creative Activists: How Ordinary People Create Extraordinary Results

Room 1606

Presenter: Rae Luskin

Creative activists are ordinary people using their imagination, creative thinking, and unique expression to stand up, speak out, and take action about things that matter like violence against women, health care, and prison reform. This presentation delivers inspiring stories of how women have made changes in the way they do business that improved the lives of their employees, transformed their personal challenges into platforms and programs that advance social justice and human rights, and built strong, thriving communities. Join this interactive and experiential breakout session to discover ways to bring beauty, healing, and hope to women and families here and around the globe.

Gender, Identity, and Activism: Recent Research from Intersectional Perspectives

Room 1608

Panelists explore a range of issues related to feminism and intersectional identities.

Moderator: Anika Jones

To Disclose or Not to Disclose: The Navigation of Gender and Disability on College Campuses

Presenter: Laura Kruczinski

Colleges and universities need to anticipate the needs of students with documented disabilities if these students are to receive the best chance of attaining a post-secondary degree. Though legal progress against discrimination continues, de facto practices still exist to create challenges for this demographic especially at the intersection of gender. This presentation explores the perceived and enacted stigma of students with documented disabilities on college campuses and how this impacts the navigation of social spaces by female-identifying students with disabilities, especially as it relates to the disclosure process. Existing multidisciplinary literature is synthesized with classical sociological theory and related to an in-progress mixed methodology study regarding stigma and disability at a Midwestern university.

What It's Like to Be a Latina

Presenter: Vianey Mojica-Parra

Negative tropes about Latinas are especially prevalent on social media. Latinas are stereotyped and criticized when they log onto Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Their feeds contain degrading images of Latinas being called "slut" or "whore." They see posts about "the crazy Latina girlfriend" and are reminded of how others stereotype them. But their battles begin at home with the conflict between living in American culture versus the moral standards held in their home cultures. Latinas face challenges regarding ethnicity, whether being shamed as a Mexican "immigrant" or by being told that they are not "Mexican enough" for being too light-skinned, or for being stereotyped as "overly sexualized." To survive and thrive in this negative landscape, Latinas should not be afraid to embrace their individual strengths and find their voices. Only then can they become true leaders in their communities.

The Cynical Mystique: A Student Activist Project

Presenters: Kylie Adrian, Jill Cutro, Colin Winkelman

It is no mystery that the word "feminism" has been given a negative connotation, so an experiment was developed to explore the reasoning and thought processes behind "anti-feminist" attitudes. Volunteers were asked the following questions: "How do you define feminism?," "Do you consider yourself a feminist?," and "Why or why not did you answer?" With interviews and photography, this project dares to creatively bridge the gap between people identifying as feminist and those who actively disagree with feminism. The student panel presenting the project hopes they can help inspire other students to explore new ways to contribute to the activist community.

Posters that explore current issues in feminist thought through image and word are presented. View the submissions and join in conversations about the work. Conclude the day by enjoying a delicious high tea.