



WOMEN'S  
STUDIES  
SECTION

# WOMEN'S STUDIES SECTION NEWSLETTER

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Spring 1999

*Issued by the Women's Studies Section, Association of College and Research Libraries  
a division of the American Library Association*

## Women's Studies Section Annual Program

Monday, June 28  
9-11:30 a.m.

### ***Inquiring and Learning Between the Lines: Interdisciplinary Research and the Academic Library***

Academic programs and research are increasingly interdisciplinary, yet many academic libraries continue to be organized in the traditional disciplinary model. The program will offer alternatives and opportunities to enhance research in areas cramped within disciplinary boundaries. Topics include:

***Interdisciplinary trends in higher education and Women's Studies***

Barbara Ryan, Ph.D., Widener University

***Interdisciplinary reference issues***

Susan Searing, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

***Interdisciplinary issues in collection development***

Nancy Kushigian, University of California at Davis

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**Women 's Studies Section Newsletter**

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The *WSS Newsletter* is available to all section members at no additional cost.

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The *WSS Newsletter* welcomes contributions from readers. Send articles, items of interest, and news to the editor or to the appropriate column editor, preferably in electronic format.

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**WSS Officers 1998/99:**

Kristin Gerhard, Chair  
Marlene Manoff, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect  
Sara Brownmiller, Secretary  
Mary Faith Pankin, Member-at-large  
G. Margaret Porter, Member-at-large

**Visit WSS on the Web:**

[www.lib.siu.edu/dcallaha/wsshp.html](http://www.lib.siu.edu/dcallaha/wsshp.html)

**Notes from the Chair**

The Women's Studies Section has arrived at another milestone this spring with the advent of WSS-L, a discussion list for librarians with women's studies responsibilities as well as for Section business. We have started out slowly, as news of the list spreads by word-of-mouth (and font-of-screen), but expect the conversation to pick up with the distribution of this newsletter. I would surely like to see some discussion of the issues faced by women's studies librarians-how are we coping with split-assignments, or educating colleagues on the needs of women's studies programs? What kind of funding are we getting for women's studies materials? What topics in women's studies librarianship are just calling out for research? Each of us has something to contribute and something to learn. I hope that the online discussion will allow us to form a cohesive community larger than just those who can attend Annual and Midwinter conferences. The conversations we have online may illuminate some of the ways we can work together across physical distances (sisterhood is electronic?), as ACRL allows us to experiment with virtual committee membership over the next few years.

For those of you who will be attending ALA Annual in New Orleans, the WSS program promises to be a challenging one. Traditional library collections and services have been modeled to support the established, traditional disciplines, but interdisciplinary research and teaching are growing in all kinds of academic institutions. This is a topic that affects reference and collection development librarians in every academic library: Which materials and questions are in my area? Which are officially in yours? What does it mean when they intersect or converge? At the WSS program in June, Dr. Barbara Ryan will address interdisciplinary trends in higher education and women's studies, while Sue Searing will discuss interdisciplinary reference issues and Nancy Kushigian will discuss interdisciplinary issues in collection development. Please join the conversations their presentations will spark, in person or through WSS-L.

*Kristin H. Gerhard  
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email kgerhard@iastate.edu*

**WSS-L List**

To subscribe:

- \* Send a message to [listproc@alal.ala.org](mailto:listproc@alal.ala.org).
- \* Leave the subject line blank
- \* In the body of the message type **subscribe WSS-L [your name]**

## *Women's Studies Section Committee Reports*

### *Collection Development*

The WSS Collection Development Committee is currently working to build a web-site called "WSS: Resources for Women's Studies Collection Development, Assessment, and Instruction." The web-site is designed to help women's studies librarians keep current with useful tools in several areas. We hope to build on the success of the WSSLinks web-site, which originated in the committee and continues to be organized by former committee chair, Marlene Manoff, and several other librarians around the country.

"WSS: Resources" addresses the following aspects of collection development: identifying publishers to watch for relevant materials; award-winning and notable titles; review sources; pertinent electronic databases; and tools for locating grey literature or publications concentrating on special populations. Committee members are developing segments of the web-site. Currently the URL is <http://aztec.lib.utk.edu/~shrode/wss98.htm> (the address is subject to change). The site is still in development but we want to spread the word about it.

One area of the web-site is devoted to instruction and links to resources which can provide guidance to subject librarians as they organize class sessions and create web-based research guides. Links in this section lead to well-developed, stable research guides on the web, information about LC subject headings useful in women's studies research, and a bibliography of articles on approaches to instruction. We plan to expand this to include guides to web page design and development. Committee members will take advantage of good resources already available on WSSLinks. The current web project has close ties to WSSLinks, and the two will ultimately be best when used together to take full advantage of the contributors' thorough coverage of women's studies resources.

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### *Publication Committee*

The Publication Committee had an extremely useful discussion at the ALA Mid-Winter meeting in Philadelphia. The committee agreed that their role is to promote and support the publications (in all forms) of the section.

To accomplish this lofty goal the committee will:

- \* Revise and reissue the WSS publications manual
- \* Inventory past section-sponsored publications and disseminate a bibliography of those publications
- \* Compile and disseminate a list of possible research topics

Additional discussion centered on the various web-sites associated with WSS and the importance of a common look for these sites. The advisability of providing a standard template for web-based publications was discussed as were the pros and cons of centralizing WSS Web pages on the ACRL server. Updates on all these topics will be given at the annual conference in New Orleans.

*Mary Rosenbloom  
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### *Communications Committee*

The Communications Committee (CC) has been active this year in:

- \* developing an activities/responsibilities list and calendar for the CC
- \* creating a dropped member letter and survey
- \* adding a committee membership volunteer form to accompany the WSS brochure
- \* distributing copies of the newsletter to library schools
- \* improving the mentorship possibilities for newly active WSS Committee members
- \* being liaison with the WSS webmistress on WSS home page development

This, in addition to our traditional activities such as publishing the WSS Newsletter and brochure, organizing social hours at ALA, and being liaison with other 'women & libraries' centered groups both inside and out of ALA, provided a full agenda.

*Robin Paynter  
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### **Women's Studies Social Hour**

June 27, 1999 at 5:45 p.m.  
Place will be announced

### **CLS Dinner**

June 25, 1999 at 7:00 p.m.  
Dickie Brennan's \$36.50  
Please RSVP to [dunnm@hartwick.edu](mailto:dunnm@hartwick.edu)

### **Webography: Literary E-Texts by Women**

A major stumbling block to including more writings by women in the classroom is that many non-canonical works are long out of print. Electronic text collections provide a way for librarians to address this problem by sharing the riches of special collections with a wider audience. Although numerous full-text literary sites exist, few follow the bibliographic and technical standards necessary to ensure reliable texts that can be accessed by future generations. The following are a few notable sites that follow the standards of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). If you do not have SGML software, you can view the texts with HTML.

“Victorian Women Writers Project.” Library Electronic Text Resource Center, Indiana University.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/>

This excellent resource contains novels, poetry, short stories, political essays, pamphlets, religious tracts, and children’s books by 19th-century British women. Nonfiction texts cover everything from suffrage to marriage to vivisection. Many of the works include images of the frontispiece or title page of the original text and a portrait of the author. The site is arranged by author name for easy navigation, with notations next to each title about the file size and number of images.

“The Brown University Women Writers Project.”  
Brown University.

[http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/wwp/wwp\\_home.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/wwp/wwp_home.html)

Brown has been a pioneer in electronic text initiatives, with a mission “to recover and disseminate the range of writings in English by women” before 1830. The Project works to bring more women’s writing into the classroom by creating e-texts, collaborating with Oxford University Press to publish WWP texts, and selling print copies of “drafts-in-process” from their textbase. In mid-1999, the entire textbase will be available for commercial license. The web-site currently has two collections available on an experimental (and possibly temporary) basis: “Renaissance Women Online” (a large collection of primary works from 1500-1670 with accompanying material) and “Restoration to Romanticism” (a newer project with several texts from 1670-1830). Back issues of the *WWP Newsletter* provide information about creating e-texts and using them in the humanities classroom.

“British Women Romantic Poets, 1789-1832.” Shields Library, University of California, Davis.

<http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/English/BWRP>

The Davis site is a clear, well-designed archive of poetry written by British and Irish women during the Romantic Period. Initially, texts will be taken from the Kohler Collection of British Poetry in the UC Davis Special Collections Department. Since not all of the poems were commercially published, the Kohler Collection is the only known repository for some of them. The collection currently contains 29 works by 25 poets, and the HTML versions include scanned images of illustrations and title pages.

“Digital Schomburg: African American Women Writers of the 19th Century.” New York Public Library.

[http://digital.nypl.org/schomburg/writers\\_aa19/](http://digital.nypl.org/schomburg/writers_aa19/)

Drawing upon rare volumes from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, this collection contains 52 books and pamphlets published before 1920 by African American women writers. The works may be sorted by author or title, or by categories of fiction, poetry, biography and autobiography, or essays. All the texts are fully searchable both individually and as a collection.

“Emory Women Writers Resource Project.” Lewis H. Beck Center, Woodruff Library, Emory University.

<http://chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp/index.html>

Emory’s collection of texts written in English by women during the 17th and 18th centuries is a unique teaching tool for English department students to learn e-text editing. Graduate students prepare the texts and provide editorial materials such as introductions, notes, images, and timelines. The HTML and SGML tagging is done by the staff of the Beck Center for Electronic Collections. Although the number of texts is at present few, this site provides a glimpse into the development of e-texts as a collaborative effort among faculty, graduate students, and librarians.

For more sites, see “A Celebration of Women Writers”:

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mmbt/www/women/writers.html>

For information about the Text Encoding Initiative, see their homepage:

<http://www-tei.uic.edu/orgs/tei/>

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## Working & Parenting

### Studies

In March 1999 a study was published in *Developmental Psychology* by University of Massachusetts-Amherst faculty member Elizabeth Harvey on the subject of working parents. Harvey's study focused on the effects of early employment by parents on their children and engendered national attention for its conclusion that having parents who work does not significantly affect children in the short or long term. Editorials and newspaper stories either proclaimed the good news for working mothers or, more commonly, criticized the study for a lack of common sense, faulty methodology, or a hidden agenda. Tied as it is to other hot topics such as day care, welfare reform, and family leave, this issue is of interest to a wide range of people, from psychologists to politicians, to working mothers and fathers, and, as such, will probably be of interest to reference and collection development librarians.

### New Publications

The following are two recent publications that offer substantive information about and for working parents. Betty Holcomb is an editor at *Working Mother* magazine and Francine M. Deutsch is a psychology professor at Mount Holyoke College.

*Not Guilty! The Good News about Working Mothers*  
By Betty Holcomb  
Scribner 1998

Holcomb reviews research, popular opinion, and periodical literature (both general and academic) on mothers who work outside of the home. She concludes that, while negative depictions of working mothers may be escalating in the popular press, substantial research shows that problems emerge not from the fact that mothers work, but from the fact that working mothers often do not receive the support they need from employers, government policy, and spouses.

*Halving it All: How Equally Shared Parenting Works*  
By Francine M. Deutsch  
Harvard University Press 1999

Deutsch examines the concept of equalization of parenting responsibilities in two-parent homes. Deutsch extensively surveyed and interviewed parents who could be classified as sharing responsibilities equally as well as those who fell short of that ideal. What emerges is a working concept not only of what equally-shared parenting means, but of how it can be, in practical terms, achieved. This work is focused not on ideas of the "the good mother" or "the good father," but rather on discovering a more flexible ideal, "the good parent."

### Web Resources

In addition to periodical and monographic literature, a multitude of web resources exist with information on this and related issues. Here are a few of the more content-rich web resources:

**AFL-CIO: Working Women**  
<http://www.aflcio.org/women/>  
statistics, charts, and excerpts from reports

**Families & Work Institute**  
<http://www.familiesandwork.org/index.html>  
publications, research studies, press releases

**Labor Project for Working Families**  
<http://laborproject.berkeley.edu/>  
news, fact sheets, links to web resources

**National Partnership for Women and Families**  
<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/>  
articles, reports, press releases, newsletter

**U.S. Dept. of Labor: Women's Bureau**  
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/welcome.html>  
library of resources, statistics, reports, directory of programs/services, links to web resources

**Working Mother Magazine**  
<http://www.workingmother.com>  
articles, links, reports, chat sessions

## Interdisciplinary Study Book Note

As you contemplate the interdisciplinary perspective suggested in our program, you may find the following resource useful.

*Interdisciplinary Information Seeking  
in Women's Studies*  
By Lynn Westbrook  
McFarland & Company 1999

In this study Westbrook has conducted in-depth interviews with 33 women's studies faculty in order to study how scholars in an interdisciplinary field like women's studies conduct research. She identifies common patterns of information-seeking behavior among the interviewees and focuses particular attention on the impact of electronic communication in the field.

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🕒 **WSS Meeting Schedule for the New Orleans, Louisiana Conference**

Saturday June 27, 1999	9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	All Committee Meeting
	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Executive Committee Meeting
	4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	General Membership Meeting
	5:45 p.m. -	Social Hour
Sunday June 28, 1999	9:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.	Inquiring and Learning Between the Lines: Interdisciplinary Research and the Academic Library (Program)

Locations will be posted on WSS-L

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