

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE **2026**

March 5th, 2026

| Time | Event | Location |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|
| 12:30pm | Arrival lunch | Seton Faculty Lounge, 407/409 |
| 12:45pm | Welcome: Tegan Zimmerman, Chair AMI and Tatjana Takševa, WGST/Chair, Department of English, SMU | |
| 1:00pm | Keynote Speech: Dr. Gugu Hlongwane, Associate Professor of English, SMU | |
| 1:40pm | Break | |
| 1:45pm | Panel 1: Negotiating New Legacies of Patriarchy, Power, Capital | Seton 407/409 |
| 2:45pm | Break | |
| 2:50pm | Panel 2: Negotiating New Legacies of Violences, Borders, Cultures | Seton 407/409 |
| 4:00pm | Break | |
| 4:05pm | Keynote Speech: Sam le Nobel, AMI Fellow, MSVU | Seton Faculty Lounge 407/409 |
| 4:20pm | Closing Remarks and Wrap-up | |

Keynote: Dr. Gugu Hlongwane, Associate Professor of English, SMU

'You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock': Checks and Balances in South African Feminisms

Panel 1: Negotiating New Legacies of Patriarchy, Power, Capital

| Presenter | Title |
|--------------------|---|
| Shelly Schoen-Rene | Toward a Transnational Feminist Definition of Financial Well-Being in the Philippines |
| G Saleski | Submission for Security: Tradwives & the Contemporary Patriarchal Bargain |
| Jarah Bureau | Teaching Men Feminism in a Global Context: Positionality, Western Ideology, and Power in Male-Focused Gender Education |
| Kate Henderson | On the Nuance of Lived Experience: Transnational Feminisms and the Contradictions of Empire in <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> |

Panel 2: Negotiating New Legacies of Violences, Borders, Cultures

| Presenter | Title |
|---------------|---|
| Cade Beck | Insider or Outsider?: An Auto-Ethnographic Excavation of the United States/Canada Border |
| Sam le Nobel | MADRE: Doing Transnational Feminism |
| Emily Head | Multinational Mining Companies as Transnational Gendered Organizations |
| Rayan Charara | Dancing Against Erasure: Arab Social and Folk Dance as Transnational Feminist Activism and Cultural Survival in the Wake of Intensified Israeli Colonial Violence |

Keynote: Sam le Nobel, AMI Fellow, MSVU

Solidarity Through Friendship?: Transnational Feminist Relationship-Building

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

Toward a Transnational Feminist Definition of Financial Well-Being in the Philippines **By: Shelly Schoen-Rene**

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OCED) has presented a working definition of financial well-being as "a state in which individuals are able to smoothly manage their financial needs and obligations, can cope with negative shocks, can pursue aspirations, goals and capture opportunities, and feel satisfied and confident about their financial lives, keeping in mind country specific circumstances" (OCED 2024). This includes empowerment "through access to suitable and quality financial products and services" which include insurance, savings, and credit. OCED aims to achieve this well-being through the promotion of financial literacy education that emphasizes individual financial control. This incorporates a focus on gender inclusion (access to products) as a form of empowerment, yet this neoliberal project has been very clear that their goal is to "'tap in" to the productive (i.e. profitable) potential of women's bodily capacities" (Roberts, 2015).

Drawing from work by Carty and Mohanty, Adrienne Roberts, and Laura Cordisco Tsai, this research critically examines the potential effects of this brand of financial well-being on women in the Philippines. Community surveys have shown that women manage the finances in more than 40 percent of households while men provide the majority of the income (Tsai, 2017). Domestic violence is more common in these households than in those that share financial management responsibilities (Tsai, 2017). There are also strong cultural tendencies toward collective rather than individual interests. These complex household dynamics must be taken into consideration before upsetting this delicate balance and assuming this education will be a net positive for women.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

Submission for Security: Tradwives & the Contemporary Patriarchal Bargain **By: G Saleski**

Tradwives, an online, transnational network of antifeminist women, mobilize critiques of Western liberal feminism while reinforcing patriarchal systems that sustain women's subordination in the Global North. Promoting a Westernized ideal of the 1950s American housewife, the tradwife movement encourages women to abandon liberal feminist narratives of "girlbossing" in favour of domesticity and martial submission (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025b). Spanning across nations through digital platforms, tradwives frame antifeminism as resistance to neoliberalism, arguing that liberal feminism has failed to empower women by leaving economic inequality intact and perpetuating the devaluation of domestic labour and motherhood in the Global North (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025b). While Western mainstream media frequently depicts tradwives as unified far-right extremists, this framing of the movement is inaccurate and obscures the conditions that make this antifeminist movement appealing to women as well as the grievances to which it responds (Proctor, 2022).

Using Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of the patriarchal bargain, this paper argues that tradwives are engaged in a contemporary patriarchal bargain in which women strategically accept gendered subordination in exchange for promises of stability, recognition, and protection amid neoliberal economic precarity. Disenfranchised by the unfulfilled promise of women's economic liberation, tradwives respond to hostile labour markets and inadequate state support for women and children by negotiating for security within the family, a reliable safety net which provides a space to bargain for agency. In situating their agency within hierarchical marital relations, tradwives construct submission to their husbands as a pathway to economic security and protection, despite the heightened vulnerability this dependence produces (Stotzer & Nelson, 2025a). By analyzing the tradwife movement as a transnational, gendered response to neoliberalism, this paper complicates dominant narratives about women's engagement with antifeminist and far-right movements and contributes to transnational feminist debates on agency, resistance, and the limits of Western liberal feminist paradigms.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

Teaching Men Feminism in a Global Context: Positionality, Western Ideology, and Power in Male-Focused Gender Education

By: Jarah Bureau

The expansion of feminist ideologies and gender equality in male-focussed education and activist organizations, such as the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), warrants increased reflection. While it is encouraging that men are engaging in feminist perspectives, Western-oriented frameworks focus on a universalized feminism that persistently governs academic and activist spaces and shapes male-centred global feminist scholarship without addressing foundational issues of inequality –global systems of exploitation (patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, and nation-state borders). This paper will highlight the importance of transnational feminism that focus on “gender justice” by examining the intersection of global power structures and outline implications of Western-feminist discourses that ignore women’s diverse experiences and “complex interactions among social identities experienced by individuals, such as race/ethnicity, nationality and language, sexual orientation, religion, gender, disability, colorism, and age” and how these omissions can inadvertently replicate global power imbalances by focusing on individual growth over structural change. NOMAS, while an established organization dedicated to helping men engage in anti-patriarchal and feminist thought, emerged during second-wave feminism. Its pedagogical framework and psychological paradigm mirror the political imperatives and theoretical assumptions of “Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic (WEIRD)-based research.” This paper will examine diverse educator positions and how social, political, and geographical location can influence feminist pedagogy, dictating whose experiences we value. Using NOMAS as a case study, a quantitative analysis of its resources and materials will be conducted to examine current feminist teachings in men's educational initiatives that ignore vital transnational feminist scholarship. It will illustrate how hegemonic feminism continues to honour men’s individual change while ignoring how its doctrines inhibit sustained engagement with broader structural and geopolitical challenges to gender equality. It will further demonstrate how emphasizing identity over structure, personal over geopolitical, can position men as passive learners rather than active collaborators in the feminist movement. Drawing on transnational feminist concepts and works from Collins et al. (2019), Tambe & Thayer (2021), Brah & Clini (2017), Bastami & Eddouada (2025), and Enns et al. (2020), this paper will reveal the importance of including transnational feminist scholarship in men’s education, including more reflexive teaching practices acknowledging positionality, intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and diverse feminist knowledge, to balance individual responsibility with structural change and foster solidarity to challenge systemic oppression.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

On the Nuance of Lived Experience: Transnational Feminisms and the Contradictions of Empire in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

By: Kate Henderson

“They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks” (Rhys, 1966). The division of ranks by social signifiers structures the process of identity construction within the world of complex, socially situated knowledge. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), written by Jean Rhys, is a narrative that explores the complex and nuanced impact of race, gender, and colonization on the identities of individuals caught in the imperial borderlands of the Caribbean islands in the mid-18th century. Jones’ definition of transnational neo-Victorian studies defines the framework as “a methodological imperative to understand the global present and the imperialism of the nineteenth century, together, in the *longue durée*” (2018). Approaches to literary theory within transnational feminist frameworks focus on how “groups are indeed influenced by the international flow of capital expressed in the forms of cultural displacement, expatriation, migration, and appropriation, and transnational feminist analyses are ...at all times cognizant of these realities as they manifest in identity formations” (Richards, 2000). This research conducts a close reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* using decolonial frameworks defined by Richards and McClintock, which focus on the construction of identity as a product of imperial control and a method of reproducing the epistemology of empire through internal identity. To demonstrate the complex intersecting identities of class, race, and gender negotiated in the borderlands of empire and how these intersections compound into unique forms of oppression. The lived experiences represented by the characters in *Wide Sargasso Sea* will act as examples for the contradictions between minority world definitions of a progressive imperial project and the lived experiences of displacement and harm in the majority world.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

Insider or Outsider?: An Auto-Ethnographic Excavation of the United States/Canada Border

By: Cade Beck

At face value, Canada and the United States may appear to be two sides of the same coin—or even, the same side of the same coin. Yet, as geopolitical tensions rise, so too do the borders between the two settler-colonial nations. In this presentation, I ask (and attempt to answer) questions driven by an intersectional, transnational, feminist critique-of-self. Above all, I ask: What does it mean for me, a white, financially comfortable, educated, queer, Jewish femme from the United States currently residing in Canada as a student, to be navigating the multitude of borders (Anzaldúa, 1991) between the United States and Canada now, amid ongoing and rising international and geopolitical tensions? In short, am I an “insider” or an “outsider”?

At its core a love-letter to the complexity of human experience, this presentation is rooted in adrienne maree brown's concept of Emergent Strategy, a relationality-rooted praxis of social change that offers “ways for humans to practice complexity and grow the future through relatively simple interactions” (brown, 2017, p. 20). A foray into auto-ethnography inspired by Hannah McGregor's (2022) work, I utilize Sandra Harding's concept of “strong reflexivity” (Hirsh, Olson, and Harding, 1995) to excavate the intersectional layers of my border experience by highlighting the instability of positionality, power, privilege, safety, and culture.

I will not produce a “comfortable, transcendent (sic) end-point” (Pillow, 2003, p. 193 quoted in Lennon, 2017, p. 535). Rather, I emphasize my embodied experience of the ephemerality of being while inhabiting multiple (theoretically) mutually exclusive identities simultaneously across borders. As such, the outcome of my research is the somewhat tautological answer: “it's complicated.” This anti-climactic conclusion and immodest centering of self in my research is not by mistake (although it may be controversial); indeed, I believe the integration of praxis, the scholastic, and the fluid unknowability of *being*—as traversed in rigorous positionality deconstruction—is the crux of feminist work.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

MADRE: Doing Transnational Feminism

By: Sam le Nobel

Transnational feminism aims to challenge dominant power structures rooted in patriarchy, colonialism, neo-liberalism, and globalization by fore-fronting the lived experiences and knowledges of diverse women who live within, between, and at the margins of nation-states around the world (Enns et al., 2021; Brah & Clini, 2017). But how? How does transnational feminist theory get put into practice? What does transnational feminism look like?

This research investigates MADRE, a feminist nonprofit, social movement organization using a transnational feminist lens (Batliwala, 2015). It closely examines three distinct MADRE projects in Nicaragua (1990s), Sudan (2000s/2010s), and Palestine (2020s), aiming to understand how MADRE challenges patriarchal, colonial, and neo-liberal hegemonies, as well as how they may inadvertently reinforce them. Not only will this expand how the Minority World may conceptualize transnational feminism in action, but it will also contribute to academic and activist knowledges by revealing both benefits and challenges faced by a contemporary transnational feminist social movement.

Situated in a transnational feminist framework, this research adopts a critical feminist discourse analysis as its methodology. This approach enables a close examination of the practices and strategies employed by MADRE (i.e. their praxis) and compare their impact to MADRE's ideological values and objectives (i.e. their theory) over the course of four decades. This will reveal strengths and weaknesses associated with the organization's doing of feminism. As core elements of transnational feminism, critical reflexivity, intersectionality, and different forms of agency and autonomy are centrally considered in the analysis of MADRE (Collins, Machizawa, & Rice, 2019).

While acknowledging multiplicities and imperfections inherent in trailblazing social justice initiatives across borders and cultures, this paper will argue that MADRE displays strong alignment between their theory and praxis and as a result, is a robust example of transnational feminism in action. This research provides both academic and activist spaces with a motivational and optimistic exemplar. Most significantly, this research amplifies the importance and effectiveness of transnational, inclusive, diverse, intersectional feminist solidarity.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

Multinational Mining Companies as Transnational Gendered Organizations

By: Emily Head

Transnational feminism challenges globalization as a neutral process of interconnectedness, framing it instead as a racialized, gendered, capitalist project that reorganizes labour and inequality across borders. Drawing on Chandra Talpade Mohanty's critique of neoliberal globalization, this paper examines multinational mining corporations as gendered institutions of extractive capitalism, showing how organizational structures produce and normalize gendered and racialized labour hierarchies. Mohanty's emphasis on linking local experiences of gendered oppression to the macropolitics of global capitalism provides a framework for understanding how women's labour, particularly racialized, migrant, and Global South labour, is incorporated into extractive production as precarious and disposable, while remaining central to accumulation (Mohanty, 2003; Mohanty & Torres, 1991).

Bringing Mohanty's transnational feminist political economy into dialogue with Joan Acker's theory of gendered organizations allows this paper to extend Acker's framework through a transnational lens. Acker argues that organizations are constituted through gendered divisions of labour, gendered organizational logics, and the abstraction of the ideal worker (Acker, 1990; Acker, 2011). The paper uses Rio Tinto and BHP as illustrative cases because their corporate structures make visible how gendered organizational processes travel across jurisdictions, decouple policy from practice, and unevenly distribute labour risk across transnational operations. These firms combine centralized corporate governance and global legitimacy claims with dispersed extraction sites shaped by subcontracting, fly-in fly-out labour regimes, and uneven regulation. In this organizational architecture, authority, policy formation, and reputational management concentrate at headquarters, while labour risk, precarity, and gendered harm are externalized to remote sites of extraction. This is reinforced by transnational business feminism, where corporate gender equality initiatives prioritize inclusion within market logics while obscuring structural inequalities in extractive labour regimes (Fodor, 2018).

By synthesizing transnational feminism, feminist political economy, and feminist organizational theory, this paper advances a transnational organizational framework for understanding multinational mining corporations as transnational gendered institutions whose organization produces and sustains inequality.

Women's and Gender Studies

Graduate Student Conference:

Transnational Feminism

FULL ABSTRACTS:

Dancing Against Erasure: Arab Social and Folk Dance as Transnational Feminist Activism and Cultural Survival in the Wake of Intensified Israeli Colonial Violence

By: Rayan Charara

This paper asks how Arab-led social and folk-dance spaces transformed into sites of feminist activism and cultural survival amid the recent escalation of Israeli colonial violence and the global contestation of Palestinian life and culture. More specifically, I ask: how do Arab dancers in diaspora and SWANA region use their classes and linked online presence to resist cultural erasure and appropriation and what solidarities and forms of care become possible through these embodied racialized sisterhood practices across borders? Situated within transnational feminist frameworks this paper draws on Abu-Lughod's call to "Write against culture" to avoid treating "Arab culture" as a single art-narrative frame, and on Brah's account of transnational power geometries to read erasure and representation as processes that travel through war, diaspora, media, power and racialized visibility.

Methodologically, I combine Arab diasporic feminist reflexivity with narrative inquiry combined with a qualitative interpretive analysis of a multi-sited set of Arab-led dance spaces and their public materials (e.g, class descriptions, captions, videos) and participant narratives.

I argue that, in the past 3 years, Arab dance spaces shift from entertainment toward activism in three ways.

First, dancers reframe diverse Arab dance forms (including social and folk dance such as: raqs sharqi -known as belly dance-, Egyptian Baladi, Iraqi/khaliji, and multiple dabke dances) as embodied archives, foregrounding dance sensibilities, regional aesthetics such as dress, and context-rich narration that re-center Arabic culture lineages and refuse westernized, Orientalist, hyper-sexualized, and "whitened" framings.

Second, dancers explicitly link dance histories to occupation, colonial violence, and heritage politics, turning pedagogy and performance into advocacy and awareness positioning Palestine as central.

Third, they cultivate gendered spaces of care where joy, grief, and solidarity coexist for survival especially where women's dancing has been historically surveilled and morally regulated- without depoliticizing pleasure.

The project offers a transnational feminist reading by showing how feminized cultural forms function as political infrastructure through which cultural authority is contested, cultural and epistemic erasure is resisted, and Palestinian/Arab rights discourse is amplified across region and diaspora.