

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

LA/W/S

DR. ELLEN CASEY DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT WOMEN'S STUDIES REUNION

INTRO BY DR. SHARON MEAGHER WITH EXCERPTS FROM DR. CASEY'S SPEECH

Thanks to all of our graduates, faculty, and current students who turned out for the reunion. It was great to see all of you who returned to campus, and to see you networking with faculty (including many faces new to you) as well as our current students. A real highlight was the honoring of Dr. Ellen Casey, who is retiring this year after 40 years of service to the University of Scranton.

Ellen was instrumental to the founding of the women's studies program at the University, and taught courses on women authors well before such a program was established. She has been a role model and mentor to most all new faculty members, and her advice and support has been particularly important to those faculty members in the women's studies program. As director of the honors program, Dr. Casey has also shepherded many feminist honors projects through the program, and several of those students have won distinguished

external awards such as Truman Scholarships and Fulbrights. Fortunately for us, Ellen will remain in Scranton for at least the next few years, teaching part-time. We are grateful for all the she has done for us.

Ellen also presented a keynote address that took us through the history of her experiences as one of the first women faculty members at the University of Scranton, the move to co-education in the 1970s, up to the establishment of a new academic department that houses Women's Studies and Latin American Studies.

Here are a few excerpts from Dr. Casey's speech on the history of her experiences as one of the first women faculty members at the University of Scranton:

... "Into that world of 1969 the first women were hired as full-time classroom faculty—

one in theology, one in education, and me in English. I don't know how or why the other two women were hired, but I do know that I wrote a letter when Stephen, my husband, got an interview in the theology department and it landed on the desk of Dr. Stephen Ryan, the chair of English, just after the faculty member who taught 19th century British literature quit (hoping, I gather, that he would be begged to stay). Steve decided to interview me before he placed any ads (one could do that in that other world) and decided I would do. And, as he told me, he thought it would be good for the men on campus to learn that there were intelligent women--and he wasn't just talking about the students.

So we three were hired, but in 1970 Terry McGlinchey left theology, and in 1971 Sister Alice Louise Davis left education. That left me.

While I felt highly visible, and

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WHAT IS LA/W/S?

LA/W/S is the newest academic department at the University of Scranton, The Department of Latin American Studies and Women's Studies. The new department houses the University's two largest multi-/inter-disciplinary programs, Latin American Studies and Women's Studies. Each program runs independently but with a common administrative structure. As a department, it is now possible for us to develop two new majors—one in women's studies and one in Latin American Studies. Both major proposals will undergo curricular review this year and should be offered in Fall 2010. Be on the look out for more exciting developments this year...

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES REFLECTION ON SENIOR STUDENTS

WRITTEN BY KAITLYN O'CONNOR

Last May, eleven seniors graduated with a Latin American Concentration. I interviewed four of them about their experiences with the Concentration.

Kate Dinota, an International Studies and Spanish major, said, "I enjoyed being a part of the Concentration because, aside from creating classes that were of great interest, the faculty did a great job of organizing events such as movies and salsa dancing. I think the department has done a great job of engaging the students in the Concentration."

Daisy Vélez-Gúzman, a Psychology major, also agreed that the professors in the concentration "are always willing to help or just talk" and added that in the future she would like to see a class from the Counseling department offered on a topic related to Latin America.

Regarding her own future after graduation, senior Raquel Tomé, an International Language-Business major, stated that the Concentration was likely to help since, "I would like to obtain a job where I can

utilize my language skills and become an asset to a company because of my knowledge about Latin America."

Emma Fryer, who is also an International Studies and Spanish major, has studied abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico, and in Antigua, Guatemala. She said that LASC and her international travel opportunities had given her "a good foundation in Spanish and had also fed my desire to become better at speaking Spanish. I was able to communicate efficiently with the locals and make some friends, which made my experience abroad all the more meaningful."

The Concentration has helped these students become more aware of the past and present issues in Latin America in such aspects as religion, politics, culture, and language. As we start anew this year, we must say goodbye to last year's seniors with the knowledge that new generations of students will join the Concentration and someday join the ranks of its alumni/ae.

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES AND WOMEN'S STUDIES FEATURE FILM COURSES AND SERIES

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES FILM SERIES

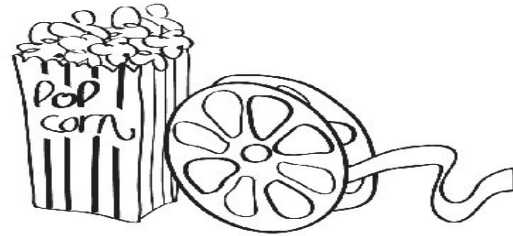
WRITTEN BY KAITLYN O'CONNOR

Each semester, Latin American Studies, as part of its Instructional Film Series, sponsors four movies.

On February 17th, "El Silencio de Neto" was shown. This 1994 full-length movie was the first of its kind filmed in Guatemala. Set in 1954, it tells the story of a young, upper-class boy who comes of age during this turbulent revolutionary period in his country's history, and highlights how the United States supported the efforts to overthrow President Jacobo Arbenz. Using flashbacks as a vehicle to portray Neto's personal struggles, the movie also focuses on the advice he frequently received from his uncle Ernesto.

The movie "Men with Guns" was featured in March. Filmed in 1997, it tells the story of a medical doctor in search for truth about what had actually happened in the political history of this unnamed Central American nation. Dr. Fuentes's journey forces him to confront the deaths of some of his own medical students who were killed while performing community service in the mountains by "men with guns." He continuously asks, "Why?" After befriending a small boy and a former soldier, Dr. Fuentes ends his quest by going into the mountains and finding the refugee camp that he had heard about.

"The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada" was shown at the



end of March. Tommy Lee Jones portrays "Pete Perkins," who had befriended an illegal Mexican day laborer, Melquiades Estrada. After a border patrol agent kills Estrada, Perkins becomes desperate to catch the agent and make him walk in Estrada's shoes. Perkins forces the patrol agent to accompany him through the hills and desert of northern Mexico with Estrada's cadaver, all the way back to Estrada's hometown.

The final movie of the semester, "Under the Same Moon," was shown on April 21st. This touching movie tells the story of a young boy, Carlitos, who searches for his mother in the United States after his grandmother (and caretaker) passes away in Mexico. Trying to earn money to send back to her son in Mexico, Carlito's mother had already decided to return to Mexico because she could not bare the separation. The movie contains a mixture of sadness, joy, and humor, and demonstrates a mother's and son's devotion to one another.

WOMEN'S STUDIES CONCENTRATION TO FEATURE WOMEN AND FILM COURSES

WRITTEN BY SARAH SUWAK

Dr. Susan Méndez and Dr. Marzia Caporale will offer courses on women and film during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Dr. Caporale, assistant professor of French and Italian in the Department of World Languages and Cultures and Women's Studies Faculty Associate offers her course entitled, "Francophone Women on Film and behind the Camera," in Fall 2009 through the World Languages and Cultures department. The course will explore Francophone African Cinema, with film selections from Morocco, Tunisia, and other French speaking countries. The films are often subtitled in English with French and Arabic speaking parts.

Films included in the course will be the American film *Pretty Woman* compared to *Raja*, a Moroccan version of the same story. Also included will be Tunisian

films *Silences of the Palace* and *Honey and Ashes*, along with Togo film *Femmes aux yeux ouverts*. The course does not require foreign language background, but there is a supplementary class session in French for French majors seeking elective credit.

Dr. Caporale's academic specialty is on African Francophone culture and she hopes this course will serve as an introductory course to lay the foundation of knowledge about African culture, Francophone post-colonial identity, and the perception of women's sexuality, personal freedom, and ideology in cultures overlooked in the traditional canon of academic study. Dr. Caporale said that, "When it comes to women's issues, African countries offer such an array of topics, from more obvious ones such as

female genital mutilation, to female to female oppression that people don't know about. Mother-in-laws, new traditions conflicting with old, new transitions to modern view of womanhood, these all fascinate me and the films, I hope, represent those female struggles."

Dr. Susan Méndez, assistant professor in the Department of English and Theater and Women's Studies Faculty Associate, plans to offer her Women and Film course in the Spring of 2010. Her course looks more broadly at the representation of women on film, with both male and female director's, and the depiction of women's sexuality, gender roles, and oppression within cultures.

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DR. ELLEN CASEY'S SPEECH CONTINUED...

and was often the only woman in a room, I was more often than not taken for an incompetent secretary. The only phones for faculty were in the hall, and we took turns answering them and taking messages. No one outside the University imagined this set-up (even in the 1970s most professionals had phones on their desks), so if I told a caller I didn't know where a colleague was I was usually greeted with an indignant 'What do you mean you don't know???'

I have suggested that the world was different then, and that was true for what women were expected to wear—skirts! In one notorious case in NYC, a woman wearing a pantsuit was barred from a high-class restaurant. She responded by removing her pants and walking in in her mini-dress. The restaurant soon changed its rules. On campus there was a dress code for the clerical staff—no pants. (No one dared suggest that the rule applied to me.) The women got tired of the rule and decided to have a 'pants day' on which *all* women on campus would wear pants. They recruited me to join. Despite some sputtering administrators ('Do you know what those women are doing!!!') no one in authority actually *did* anything, and after that women on campus wore what they pleased. ...

I was greeted with 'Dr. Casey?!?!?' by a book salesman who first saw the sign on the door and then me. BUT this was the same man who reacted with 'Father Casey?!' when he saw my husband in the theology department.

I was called 'Mrs.' by my chair who called everyone else 'Dr.' or 'Prof.' or 'Rev. Dr.' But after a private conversation with him didn't work, I stopped the next department meeting to object in public. He never did it again.

...

I came in one morning to find an obscene comment on my office door. BUT I reported the situation to maintenance, who scrubbed off every word within an hour. It was also a maintenance man who made up for my chair by including me in the 'Doc' that he used to address every faculty member.

More seriously, the University was extraordinarily good at providing accommodations. I was 7 months pregnant when I was inter-

viewed and hired, and the agreement was that I could teach part time that fall, part or full time the following spring as I wished, and begin full time the next fall. The U also agreed to arrange my husband and my schedules so that we were not teaching at the same time and could care for our children. The one time that didn't happen (we were given nice but identical schedules), the woman registrar said the schedules couldn't be changed. Informed of this, Fr. Joseph Rock, the Academic Vice President, gave orders; they were changed.

Father Rock could be (and was) amazingly paternalistic, but it was also he who insisted that motherhood was 'a high and holy calling' and that therefore accommodations must be made, whether for a married pregnant graduate assistant whom the chair wanted gone, for the school nurse who was suddenly divorced and a single mother, or for my husband and me and our children. And he did this at a time when many schools had anti-nepotism rules, so that spouses would not both be hired, and if two faculty members married each other the woman would be fired. At a Modern Language Assn. session on work and family, I listened to many women tell their tales of woe. I told them about the arrangements the U had made, and they wanted to know how this Edenic place had come to be.

I have said more than once that the two largest changes at the University were the closing of Linden Street to create the commons and therefore a real campus and the admission of women students to CAS. (You should know that both the Evening College which was founded in 1923 and the Graduate School which was founded in 1950 both admitted women and men students from their inception. You should also know that while the University was the last of the Jesuit Colleges and Universities to become coeducational, Scranton Prep, which admitted girls in 1972, was the first of the Jesuit Prep school to become coeducational.) ...

Those first full-time women undergraduates were strong and competent. They were often the only woman in a class, had to endure stares and comments when they walked into the cafeteria, and had to suffer sexist comments from some faculty. From that first class I remember especially Karen Penning-

ton, who was both black and female, and handled her double minority status with extraordinary grace. ...

The Women's Studies Concentration did not begin until 1992, but this doesn't mean there were no Women's Studies courses. The first two that I taught were an interdisciplinary theology/English course, 'Male and Female,' that Stephen and I taught in Intersession 1973 (in our living room), and 'Women in Literature,' that I originally taught in spring, 1974. ...

In 1982 I wrote an op-ed piece on the 10th anniversary of coeducation, and I ended with a series of questions that bothered me. In 1992, when I wrote an article in the *Scranton Journal* for the 20th anniversary, I found that the same questions bothered me. And now, on the 36/37th anniversary I'm still bothered (though a little less), so I'll repeat them:

- Why do women students worry about how and if they will be able to juggle career, marriage, and children, while men students presume that they will have all three and that any necessary juggling will be done by their wives?
- Why do some men see a woman's appearance as her most important quality? And why are there women who agree with them?
- Why does anyone argue that women are less capable of abstract thought than men? Why are women students and faculty members reluctant to be called feminists?
- Why are women still called *girls*?

These questions *are* less pressing than they were in 1982 and 1992. There is more equality in both the private and public spheres. We *can* no longer imagine the University or politics or business or medicine without women. Men and women *are* sharing more equally in the domestic work of housekeeping and childcare.

But equality is always a work in process. I urge you to work for it, and I salute you for the work you are already doing to bring it to fruition."

WOMEN AND FILM CONTINUED...

Through the Jane Kopas Women's Center, Dr. Méndez offered a feminist film series in the Spring semester, three possible films for featuring three possible films for her course, *The Magdalene Sisters*, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, and *Artemisia*. These films were shown with brief introduction to the historical background and culture in which the films take place, and followed with a question/ answer session and feedback from students on the films' role in the course.

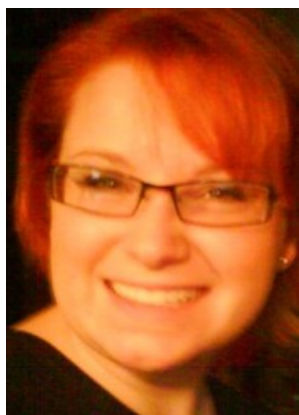
The Magdalene Sisters follows three women's experiences in the Magdalene laundries in Ireland, while *Rabbit Proof Fence* explores the Australian history of kidnapping and interbreeding aboriginal children in the hopes to eliminate their race, while *Artemisia* follows the life of Artemisia Gentileschi, a female baroque painter who was raped by her mentor.

Dr. Méndez spoke with me regarding her women and film course, and, much like Dr. Caporale's sentiments, argued that these courses are being offered as an alternative way to explore the female role in historical and cultural contexts. While literature and history can tell the stories of women, film brings it back to life. One aspect common to both Dr. Méndez and Dr. Caporale's course objectives is to explore how film, directors, and Hollywood alters the perception of female roles and gender status in societies globally.

Any questions about the women and film courses can be directed to Dr. Susan Méndez or Dr. Marzia Caporale at Mendezs2@scranton.edu and caporalem2@scranton.edu.

U OF S WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENT WINS FULBRIGHT TO GERMANY

WRITTEN BY DR. SHARON MEAGHER



Megan LoBue, a women's studies student who just graduated in May, recently learned that she won a Fulbright Scholarship to Germany. Megan will teach English as a second language while there. While at the University of Scranton, Megan combined her interest in women's studies and German language, literature, and cultural studies in her classwork and independent research with Dr. Jamie Trnka. Megan was awarded the President's Fellowship for Summer Research to conduct research entitled, "Intersections of Feminist and Postcolonial Discourses in Ingeborg Bachmann's 'Todesarten-Projekt,' research aimed to evaluate the "Ways of Death" utilizing feminist and postcolonial theories to advance more nuanced readings of post-war German women's literature. This research demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of women's studies, as the research explored women's writing, German history, and postcolonial theory, as well as feminist Bachmann and postcolonial scholars. She also worked at the Jane Kopas Women's Center, where she implemented the highly successful project for volunteers: "Words Are Maps: Women's History and the City of Scranton," designed to bring in new students who may be more reserved or intimidated by more hands-on Women's Center volunteer work. She facilitated weekly discussions of the history of feminism and current events ("feminist coffee talk"). Discussions aimed to introduce young women and men to the history of feminist movement and to sustain conversations about women's issues at venues throughout the city. A gifted student and a committed activist who found ways to connect the two, Megan is most deserving of the prestigious award of a Fulbright Scholarship, and we wish her well. Congratulations, Megan!

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES AND WOMEN'S STUDIES HOST SALSA EVENT

WRITTEN BY WRITTEN BY KAITLYN O'CONNOR

In addition to the film series, LA/W/S sponsored a number of other events, including a salsa concert and dance in early April. Approximately fifty students from different majors, classes, and even countries, attended this popular event. The band, "Jesse Bermúdez and His AMLA Friends," based in Philadelphia, performed for two hours. At first members of the audience were hesitant to dance. However, after encouragement from the musicians, a few brave members of the audience "broke the ice" and then nearly everyone left their seats and danced. Instrumentation included guitars, drums, trumpet, keyboard, bongos and maracas.



INTERESTED IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES, WOMEN'S STUDIES, OR LA/W/S?
CONTACT SHARON MEAGHER AT MEAGHERS1@SCRANTON.EDU FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON HOW TO ENROLL IN THE CONCENTRATIONS OR DEPARTMENT!

Edited by Ashley Michini and Sarah Suwak.