

SEWSA



Southeastern
Women's Studies
Association

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

Letter from the
President

CFP SEWSA 2021

Community Survey

Fall Member
Spotlight

Queer Studies SIG of
AERA 2021 Awards
Nominations

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

This year is the 50th anniversary of WGSS programming and the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th amendment in the U.S. I can think of no better reminder than these historic milestones that we are capable of meeting the challenges of 2020. White nationalist, anti-trans, anti-immigrant, and anti-choice forces are increasing in intensity. So too, however, are the numbers of citizens engaged in antiracist politics and feminist organizing. While the public health crisis has laid bare the brutality of a socioeconomic system built on racism and hate, the decades of work on the part of social justice advocates is paying off, proving that, as Angela Davis recently put it, the work matters.

In a climate characterized by brutality and precarity, but also by resistance and revolt, I'm proud to be part of the Southeastern Women's Studies Association and the community of scholar-activists it joins together each year for the annual meeting. In response to current realities and in reflection on the legacy of those who came before, the SEWSA Board launched a community survey to start a discussion about the needs of our constituents and how to chart a course toward a more just future. If you haven't already, we ask that you complete the community survey and share it with other scholars and activists on your contact list. (More info on following page) We have also committed to developing year round programming and stronger community partnerships.

To this end, we joined with the AERA Peace Education SIG this summer to offer a workshop, Scholarship + Activism: An Op-Ed Workshop, are co-sponsoring the upcoming Gender Studies in Georgia Virtual Conference hosted by Georgia State University's Institute for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (October 22-23), and are currently planning co-sponsored events to support undergraduate research, celebrate and promote scholarship from around the region, and provide professional development opportunities for scholar-activists. Stay tuned for more info!

The Gender Studies in Georgia Virtual Conference (October 22-23) will bring into conversation programs from around the state and deliver some exciting special events highlighting current regional and national dialogues. NWSA Presidents Premilla Nadasen (outgoing) and Karsonya Wise Whitehead (incoming) will offer welcoming addresses on Thursday and Friday, respectively. Thursday's Plenary will spotlight the new open source textbook *Persistence is Resistance: Celebrating 50 years of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies*, edited by Julie Shayne. Panelists will include Julie Shayne, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, and Judy Howard. Friday's Plenary will feature voting rights experts Martha S. Jones, Michelle Duster, and Carol Anderson. And, drum roll please, the Keynote speaker on Thursday afternoon will be Stacey Abrams. Both days will conclude with receptions open to our entire community. We hope you will join our SEWSA Connections reception room on Thursday evening to discuss how SEWSA can partner with programs in other states to develop sustainable statewide connections among programs and organizations. We look forward to this exciting event organized by Stephanie Y. Evans and the team at Georgia State, with support from SEWSA. The event is free and open to the public but requires registration. For more information, visit wgss.gsu.edu/conference/, and register at <https://hopin.to/events/gender-studies-in-georgia-virtual-conference>.

We are also excited to move forward online with our annual conference this spring! SEWSA 2021 – Precarious Times: Embodying Disobedience, Crafting Affinities – speaks to the political and existential stakes of the current crisis while drawing insight and inspiration from the past in order to chart a course toward different, more just futures. (CFP below.) We welcome all submissions related to the field of Women's, Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies and encourage, though do not require, engagement with the conference theme. Please note that all presenters accepted and listed on the 2020 program are invited to roll over the acceptance of their original papers to the 2021 conference. We ask that you confirm your acceptance for the 2021 conference by November 1. Unfortunately, we cannot accept edited titles or change of topics, but we do welcome new submissions! Submissions of new abstracts for the 2021 conference are due November 15.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events and again in March! As always, please feel welcome to reach out to me or anyone on the SEWSA Board with your ideas or for support. We are always looking for fresh ideas and opportunities to connect and grow together.

In solidarity,
Stacy Keltner, President of SEWSA



Call for papers

SEWSA 2021

MARCH 11-14

VIRTUAL
CONFERENCE

Precarious Times

**EMBODYING DISOBEDIENCE,
CRAFTING AFFINITES**

The 2021 meeting of The Southeastern Women's Studies Association honors the theme and vision of the 2020 conference hosted by the University of South Florida, which sadly had to be canceled due to the novel coronavirus. The 2020 theme, "Embodying Disobedience, Crafting Affinities," resonates with us now more than ever as the political and existential shifts of 2020 have radically exposed the differential distribution of life chances. "Precarious Times: Embodying Disobedience, Crafting Affinities" figures embodiment and diverse lived experiences as the lifeblood of resistant politics and the livelihood of building alliances across our many differences in a present moment best characterized by its precarity. The theme foregrounds the strengths of women's, gender, and sexuality studies - with its emphasis on interdisciplinary research, critical methodologies, and social justice programming, teaching, and advocacy - to challenge inequities, create new strategies and forms of revolt, and reimagine the future.

In the current historical moment we are witnessing unprecedented interest in and attention to antiracist politics, feminist thought and organizing, and activism alongside increasing white nationalist, anti-trans, anti-immigrant, and anti-choice rhetoric, policy, and legislation. In such a climate, SEWSA 2021 takes the opportunity to draw insight and inspiration from the past and chart a course toward different, more just futures.

The theme takes special inspiration from the work of feminists of color and their allies — including early abolitionists like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, civil rights activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clark, Claudette Colvin, and Rosa Parks, groups such as the Combahee River Collective, writers and teachers like Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Mitsuye Yamada, Cherrie Moraga, and Gloria Anzaldúa, The Movement for Black Lives, founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, the #sayhername campaign, the reproductive justice movement, and the work of researchers and theorists such as bell hooks, Angela Davis, Kimberle Crenshaw, Lila Abu-Lughod, Emma Perez, Saidiya Hartman, Gayatri Spivak, Dean Spade, Jasbir Puar, Fred Moten, C. Riley Snorton, and the late Saba Mahmood, among others in a lineage of thought preparing us to confront the present moment.

SEWSA 2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The work of these scholar-activists is a source of critical insight into the workings of what the Combahee River Collective called interlocking systems of oppression and a reminder that disobeying unjust state logics and challenging administrative and other forms of violence is literally a matter of life and death, more so for some populations than for others. For this reason, so too do these trailblazing and cutting-edge activists and scholars prompt us to recall the imperatives of self-reflexivity, critical positionality, and situated knowledges in confronting inequality and injustice from a variety of intersectional and transnational perspectives.

In these ways and others, our theme invites a wide range of interdisciplinary critical engagements with the body politics of disobedience. How, for instance, do different forms and modes of racialized and gendered embodiment inform strategies of disobedience to state regulation, the criminalization and dispossession of multiply-marginalized populations, and the ongoing upward redistribution of wealth and resources? At the same time, the theme invites consideration of how to better craft stronger and more capacious affinities between counterhegemonic projects, for example, between The Movement for Black Lives, disability justice activism, struggles for indigenous decolonization, trans and intersex rights, prison abolition, and intersectional feminist, queer, and anti-racist research and activism.

"Precarious Times: Embodying Disobedience, Crafting Affinities," then, seeks to emphasize the continuing import of multi-issue politics in efforts to move beyond commodified notions of allyship towards relations of radical solidarity and mutual interdependence.

We invite proposals that envision and examine diverse ways of embodying disobedience and crafting affinities across a wide range of theories, practices, and contexts. All disciplines, methodologies, styles of presentation, and areas of focus are welcome from students, scholars, activists, and artists of all ranks negotiating research, activism, teaching, art, administration, and organizing in these precarious times. Accepted submissions for the 2020 conference are automatically accepted for the 2021 conference and must be confirmed by November 1. New proposals for the 2021 conference must be submitted by November 15.

[CLICK HERE](#) to rollover your 2020 acceptance!

[CLICK HERE](#) to submit a new proposal for the 2021 conference!



Community Survey

Take the survey here!

In early August we launched the SEWSA Community Survey to capture the voices of our current, former, and prospective members, supporters, and partners. The SEWSA Board would like to know how we can further support our constituents through programming, partnerships, resources, and initiatives. We are asking our members, past and present, as well as scholars and activists across the region to complete our survey this fall and to join us in a remote Town Hall meeting before the 2021 conference, which will take place virtually in March.

Over the past two years, the SEWSA Board has been engaged in exciting discussions about the future of SEWSA. This past spring, we had planned to launch a year-long discussion of SEWSA's name, concept, and mission at our 2020 conference at The University of South Florida. The arrival of the novel coronavirus not only derailed those plans, but threw into stark relief the pressing need to discuss the priorities and vision of our community, how we can better support scholars and activists across the region, and SEWSA's role in local and global struggles for social justice.

Since the mid-1970s, SEWSA has sought to address the specific needs of the South through its focus on the Southeastern United States. However, like Minnie Bruce Pratt so eloquently articulated in Oxford, Mississippi at our 2019 meeting, "the South" has never obeyed the limits of state and regional borders. Trajectories of "the South" can be traced throughout the U.S., the Americas, and the world. SEWSA has always attended to the complexity of what counts as the South and questioned the regional parameters of its own concept. For SEWSA, the South is contested territory, and SEWSA has long served "Southerners" beyond the U.S regional border, from the West Coast to South Asia, with a space to think critically about and reimagine a just South. In the coming months, we invite our constituents to think and talk about what "the South" means for our organization and communities and how it should be signified in SEWSA's name and mission.

The term "women" included in SEWSA's title is likewise contested by its members, many of whom have led and continue to lead campaigns to change the names of their institutional programs and organizations to replace or supplement the term "women" with more inclusive and appropriate terminology like gender, sexuality, queer, and feminist and to further qualify the intersections of these terms with race, class, nation, and ability. We also welcome our constituents to think and talk about the fluidity of social identities and how they should be represented in our organizations' name and mission. SEWSA was founded over 40 years ago as an independent organization serving faculty, scholars, activists, and artists across the Southeast. It is out of the deepest respect for SEWSA's founding mothers, as well as those first scholar-activists who founded the first Women's Studies program 50 years ago this year in San Diego, that we initiate this conversation in solidarity with our founding vision of a socially just world committed to and open to change.

We thank you in advance for taking the time to contribute to this discussion and encourage you to share the survey link with other scholars, students, activists, artists, and partners engaged in the struggle for social justice. The survey will remain open through January 2021. As a thank you, and in the support of Charis Books, the oldest feminist bookstore in the U.S., all completed surveys will be entered for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to Charis Books.

Fall Member Spotlight

Who I Am

Travis Wagner (they/them) and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the University of South Carolina's School of Information Science. I am also an adjunct instructor in USC's Department of Women's and Gender Studies where I received a Graduate Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies



Why I appreciate SEWSA

It is a home for the type of cross-disciplinary work that I do while also resolutely and emphatically focusing on a feminist, pro-people of color, and queer framework. In particular, my fondest memories of the conference come not from any presentation I have given per se, but from the dialogue between presentations and the discussions of infusing a particular queer theoretical framework into my research or engaging in a decolonized pedagogical praxis. I also like that there is a decided focus on advocacy building work and activism within the American Southeast.

About My Work

My dissertation work looks at the practice of gender description and gendered presumption within catalogers who describe and catalog visual information. My focus is on how one's phenomenological orientation to gender as a discursive structure might lead them to make normative presumptions of gender for individuals within archival records whose gender might fall under the necessarily broad umbrella of gender nonconforming. I am also the co-founder of the Queer Cola Oral History and Digital Archive Project, which focuses on community-led archiving of LGBTQIA+ experiences in South Carolina. I also help co-create the Archiving SC Women community archive.

My SEWSA Experience

I had the pleasure of presenting on this archive, along with others involved at the 2017 SEWSA conference in Atlanta, GA.

**Queer Studies Special Interest Group of AERA
Call for 2021 Awards Nominations**

The Queer Studies Special Interest Group (SIG) of AERA invites nominations for the following three awards for the 2021 awards cycle. Each year, the SIG accepts public nominations for the following awards:

**Dissertation of the Year Award
Article of the Year Award
Body of Work Award**

In inviting nominations for the 2021 awards cycle, we highlight and affirm the Queer Studies SIG's recent public statements on their commitments to racial justice and anti-racism.

Submission: For the SEWSA community, the nominator is Shenée Simon (SEWSA Director of Membership & Development). Required materials vary by award and are detailed below. Award nomination (including self-nomination) materials should be sent in PDF format to the Chair of the Awards Committee, Ryan Schey (ryanschey@auburn.edu). Upon receiving materials, he will confirm receipt with the sender.

Deadline: Complete nominations for the 2021 awards cycle must be received no later than December 1, 2020. Nominators and recipients will be notified by email in early spring 2021. Form of Recognition: Recipients are encouraged to attend the Queer Studies SIG business meeting to be recognized publicly for their award. Due to the virtual nature of the 2021 AERA annual meeting, recipients will receive a plaque and check after the on-line award ceremony.

Award Descriptions: Information about each award and the logistics of the submission and award process are detailed below.

Questions should be directed to the Chair of the Awards Committee, Ryan Schey (ryanschey@auburn.edu).

Please contact Shenée Simon at sewsamembership@gmail.com for full call details or visit our Facebook Page.