September was a very hectic month for many of us. We, as faculty, have more and more responsibilities and the same is happening to our student body. As a community we seem overextended. These increasing demands make it difficult for us to stay current but in this digital age being knowledgeable about current events is a must.

As a former journalist and now Director of Women’s Studies, I believe understanding the background of a situation or policy is imperative. The same should apply for my students, though in reality many do not watch, read or listen to any news. I think this is a dangerous pattern. Regardless of journalistic style or political preference, we are a global community and need to see the world as it is (interconnected).

Listening to speaker Irin Carmon talk about her career in journalism and how as a feminist she also covered the Fashion beat, I wondered how many in the audience could really follow the names of the politicians she mentioned or the news she discussed. We don’t have to be journalists to be informed. Her speech for the Women and Leadership forum—sponsored by Global Perspectives and others on September 17—reminded me of something I usually do in my classes: draw attention to media literacy.

Read. Sources like Hairpin, Wirecutter, Splitsider, Awl, Colorlines, and Salon are a start. But don’t stop there—go to topics and areas you don’t usually follow. When I teach “Gender and Community Activism” I have students research the opposing side of an issue by completing an interview. In this one-on-one interview, they initially only want to repeat the same phrases and arguments they know well, but halfway into the exercise something happens; they start to understand why it is important to know how the other side feels, talks about, and fights for their position. Understanding the opinion of others gives you an edge in conversations, blogging, and postings.

When the tough question is asked or the opposite point of view is aired and you are informed, there will be no silence, no blank entry because you will be ready. Don’t be shocked—act and respond. Perhaps understanding a cause have to know those who don’t. That is the only way you can become a progressive individual and protect all people from oppression.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Tabatha DiDomenico, Interdisciplinary Studies Major and Women’s Studies Minor. As part of her service-learning work with Women’s Studies, she created a chapter of the International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN) in East Central Florida. Article Page 3

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Ilenia Colón Mendoza, Assistant Professor of Art History. In September Professor Mendoza gave a lecture at the UCF Gallery on “The Caribbean-ness of Caribbean Art” for the show she curated entitled “Caribbean Expressions: Art, Life and Culture.” Article Page 4

ADVISOR’S CORNER: Women’s Studies advisor, Ms. Donna Mercado has the information you need to be ready for spring registration. Learn more about advising in our program by reading her column on Page 2.
UCF Women’s Studies Mentoring Programs Fall Into Place

by Emily Vrotsos
YWLP/YMLP Coordinator

Big Sisters in YWLP met their Little Sisters and Big Brothers in YMLP met their Little Brothers over the course of the last two weeks. Each pair is matched based on compatibility including family backgrounds, academic and extracurricular interests, and personality traits as stated on personality questionnaires submitted at the start of every new mentoring semester. A Little Sister who shows low self-esteem might be paired with a Big Sister who exudes self-love, and a Little Brother who shares his love for music might then be paired with a Big Brother who also embraces his creative side in music, art, or writing.

It’s very exciting to see college and middle school students who were matched on paper form a relationship of trust and mutual respect only moments after exchanging first names. Big Brothers and Big Sisters shared that they were nervous but excited before getting to meet their Littles and looking forward to mentoring them. That tune broadened to include more middle school students. Both YWLP and YMLP members were dazzled by the intellect, enthusiasm, and real-world understanding that these barely-teens possess, and felt that they had learned just as much about leadership from the Littles as they had hoped to teach them.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor with YWLP or YMLP, you may visit our office in Colbourn Hall – Suite 118. All applications for Spring 2014 should be submitted no later than Thursday, January 9th.

Spring 2014 WST Course Offerings

WST 3015 Intro to WST
TR 12:00-1:15

WST 3371 Wm & Leadership
WWW

WST 3561 Third Wave
WWW

WST 4415 Global Feminisms
TR 13:30-1:45

WST 5601 Theories in GS
WWW

See our full list of offerings spring 2013 at: http://womensstudies.cah.ucf.edu/courses.php

ADVISOR’S CORNER

by Donna Mercado
Women’s Studies Program Advisor

ALERT STUDENTS! Spring 2014 enrollment appointments will be posted on your MyUCF account on October 7th!

Please don’t forget to schedule an appointment with me to plan your spring schedule so when your registration appointment comes up you are ready to add classes, avoiding confusion on what you will need to take. During this advising session, I will also go over your degree audit to make sure all of your Women’s Studies courses are in place, as well as to discuss graduation requirements.

I offer virtual via our Facebook page, in office face to face, e-mail (note: include PID and full name), and telephone advising sessions.

Please call our main number at 407-823-1173 to schedule your advising appointment. Email me at Donna.Mercado@ucf.edu.
Tabatha Didomenico is a standout Women’s Studies minor not only for her stellar academic work but for her prolific activism related to women’s maternity care in the United States. She is set to graduate in Spring 2014 with a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies focusing on Computational Sciences and Communications with minors in both Information Technology and Women’s Studies. As part of her service-learning work with Women’s Studies, she created a chapter of the International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN) in East Central Florida. She is also involved with Improving Birth, which hosts an annual rally to educate the public about women’s reproductive rights around birth and maternity care. Tabatha sat down and answered some questions about her work in Women’s Studies and as a feminist activist in the Central Florida community.
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What led you to Women’s Studies?
My son’s traumatic birth showed me directly how the current medical model of maternity care in the U.S. robs women of experiencing their own power and contributes to poor outcomes for mothers and babies. I realized that the crisis in maternity care in our country is a feminist issue often overlooked because of the perpetuation of the culture of fear around childbirth and a myth that we have the best health care system in the world.

Briefly discuss the social issues that you are most engaged with and why.
Reproductive rights and women/girls in STEM are my areas of focus. Technology has long been a love of mine but one that was not fostered growing up. Reproductive rights don’t stop at the abortion debate. Women are fully capable of weighing decisions around their maternal care and choices in delivery. Far more women give birth than have abortions, but often the conversation regarding reproductive rights starts and stops with abortion and contraception.

Of all the Women’s Studies courses you have taken, which would you consider your “favorite”? Though I enjoyed them all, inside of the department my favorite was absolutely Virtual Girls. Much of my girlhood was spent fascinated with computers and the newly commercialized Internet. Virtual Girls was a fabulous exploration of identity formation for girls growing up completely connected. The stakes have changed a great deal from when I ran IRC chatrooms in the mid 90’s; it was much more anonymous than today’s Internet. Current technology allows for no juvenile missteps to go unnoticed by an always ready audience emboldened by the physical distance that their Internet connection provides. Encouraging girls to use the Internet as a self-development tool while understanding how the Internet fails them is critical.

How do you define feminism?
My feminism is inclusive and keeps focus on the ultimate goal of equality for all people; I strongly think it is possible for people holding opposing positions to both be feminists.

UCF WST Student Activist brings attention to increased medicalization of birth

“Women are fully capable of weighing decisions around their maternal care and choices in delivery. Far more women give birth than have abortions, but often the conversation regarding reproductive rights starts and stops with abortion and contraception.”

Can you think of an “aha” moment or that “click” you experienced in Women’s Studies or on your feminist journey?
One thing that I struggled with tremendously was my legitimacy as a feminist. Some of the choices I have made in my life would seem to exclude me from the narrow definition of feminism I originally held in my mind. During Third Wave Theories, this idea of legitimacy was addressed and my concerns were shared then dissolved by other feminists. I realized that I best serve feminism by proclaiming the title Feminist proudly and publicly; doing so will help reshape distorted perceptions of what a feminist was supposed to be.
Faculty Spotlight:
Ilenia Colón Mendoza

Name: Ilenia Colón Mendoza, Assistant Professor of Art History

Department: School of Visual Arts and Design

Years at UCF: 3

WST Related Courses: “Women in Art,” every fall, covering art made by women from the Middle Ages to the present

Recent Project: Curated the UCF Gallery “Caribbean Expressions: Art, Life and Culture”


Spring Courses: 20th Century Art, Visual Arts Administration, and Baroque Art.

How did you first become interested in art?
I first noticed I like art and art history when I was in the fourth grade. I opened my social studies book and became fascinated with the Nike of Samothrace, a sculpture from Hellenistic Greece and wanted to learn everything about this work. My life long dream of seeing it in person came true when I visited the Louvre at age 19. I double majored in art history and archaeology in undergraduate and decided to focus on art history for my Master’s and Ph.D.

How did you find yourself at UCF?
UCF is my dream job. I had worked at IUPUI, the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis for three years. I had applied to a job at UCF the previous year before moving to a new position in Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and when this job became available I applied a second time and was thrilled with the offer.

How did you end up doing research on women and art or Latina art?
My secondary areas are Latin American Art and Women in Art. My master’s thesis is on a Puerto Rican artist by the name of Ramón Fraade and his iconic image of the peasant. Women in art have interested me since I first took the class I now teach as a sophomore. I have researched such subjects as “Representations of Women in Hellenistic Sculpture,” “Egyptian Dress in the New Kingdom,” “The Collapsing Woman in Pre-Raphaelite Art.” I was later able to focus on Latina art and specifically the works of Cuban Marta María Pérez Bravo and Mexican Frida Kahlo.

What are you working on now?
I have been able to combine my interests in women and my major area of specialty, Spanish Baroque sculpture. I am at present researching images of female saints in sixteenth century Spanish sculpture and also how female saints spoke of images. This research is in its early stages as I am focusing on a book I have under contract for publication with Ashgate press on the Gregorio Fernández’s Supine Christ.

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Faculty Spotlight
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

What, if any, other roles do you play (beyond teaching) on the UCF campus?

I am the faculty mentor for the Arts at UCF and the Art History Club. When I arrived at UCF I created an Art History Symposium for students to present their research which is held every April. I have also supervised Honors in the Major Thesis such as Adee Benartzy’s “The Pastel Medium: Communicating Sexuality and Promiscuity in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris” and Emily William’s “Threads of Identity: Marisol’s Exploration of Self,” both of which deal with women and gender.

Is there a quirky or fun fact about you that you are willing to share?

My favorite Halloween costume is dressing up like Frida.

What is the most interesting part of your job?

The most interesting part of my job is getting to interact with students on a daily basis. I love teaching but I also love learning. Every day is a new learning experience and my students form an important part of that; hearing their opinion and what matters to them makes what I do truly exciting.

Advice to share with Women’s Studies students?

It’s important for students in this discipline to be aware of the resources that are available to them in order to succeed in their field. I would advise that they get involved and make an effort to meet faculty and students that have similar interests in gender studies, women’s issues and feminism so they take advantage of all the wonderful opportunities within UCF and the community at large.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

by Ashley Frederick
Women’s Studies Program Student Assistant

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, this started in 1987 to connect battered women’s advocates across the nation who were working to end violence against women and their children. Part of the goal of the month-long focus is to start a national dialogue about this taboo subject. Despite increased awareness there is still a stigma attached to women who stay with an abuser, especially those that keep children in that environment.

Domestic Violence Awareness month organizers aim to educate people to identify the signs of domestic violence and to provide resources on where to go for help if someone they know is in a domestic violence relationship. Domestic violence can happen to anyone, at any age, in any socioeconomic setting, any religion, sexual orientation and relationship. It can happen to people who are living together, married, or dating.

And it happens in our UCF community and the larger Central Florida area.

In recent years, the number of domestic violence related incidents has been on the rise and as Bianca Prieto, a reporter for the Orlando Sentinel, notes, many times these acts of violence spill out of the home and into the workplace, affecting the entire community. Domestic violence is not an individual problem. It is an issue that impacts everyone.

Stop the Violence

More Info

Bystander Resources


UCF Victim Services: http://victimservices.ucf.edu/

Hotlines

Victim Services Hotline (407)-823-1200

Safe House of Seminole 1-800-330-3933

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

Zebra Coalition Hotline: 877.90

As part of the month-long campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence, UCF Victim Services will be hosting their annual event Light Up the Night on Monday, October 7 from 6-8pm in the Pegasus Ballroom. Survivors and advocates will share personal stories and we will honor Knights our community has lost to intimate partner violence through our “An Empty Place at the Table” ceremony. Please contact Sarah Laake for further information.
OCTOBER EVENTS

October 1

LGBTQ+ History Month Kick-Off
Time: 12pm-1:30pm
Location: Student Union Cape Florida 316
Pride Coalition Presents the kick-off event to UCF’s annual LGBTQ+ History Month. This year’s theme is ‘Beyond Stonewall: Many Voices, One Month.’ Come and join us for student performers, speakers, and get information about other events throughout October.

October 3

United Way/ Harbor House Dollar Store & Fashion Show
Time: 3:00-4:00pm
Location: CNH 118 (hallway)
Follow the sound of music to the sale tables, and look for our volunteers in our fashion show showing off some of the items for sale. Buy, dance, or give your money to Harbor House! All items $1.00! We need volunteers to model and help with sales. Accessory donations are accepted until October 1 at CNH 118, VAB Art Office and CNH 523.

October 5

Orlando Pride
Planned Parenthood of Greater Orlando will be tabling and marching at Orlando Pride! If you would like to join, send us an email at anna.eskamani@ppgo.org

October 7

Registrations Appointments become available on MyUcf
Light Up the Night
Time: 6-8pm
Location: Pegasus Ballroom, Student Union
Victim Services presents our annual intimate partner violence awareness event. Survivors and advocates will share personal stories, and we will honor Knights our community has lost to intimate partner violence through our “An Empty Place at the Table” ceremony.

Hispanic Women’s Success Roundtable
Time: 6:30-8:30pm
Location: Cape Florida Ballroom (316A), Student Union
First lady of Puerto Rico Luce Sortuno, television personality from “The Real World” Rachel Campos-Duffy, current Hispanic Chamber chair Diana Bolivar, and Dr. Grazie Christie will speak about what it means to be a successful Hispanic woman.

October 15

Florida Undergraduate Research Conference 2014 Submissions Open
Submissions for this year’s FURC2014 Conference open online. This year the conference will be held at FIU. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Allen Varela at 305-348-4100 or alvare@fiu.edu

October 16

Forum on Intimate Partner Abuse
Time: 1-2pm
Location: Cape Florida Ballroom, Student Union
The panel will include representatives from our local certified centers for intimate partner abuse

October 18

Planned Parenthood of Greater Orlando, “An Evening in Paris”
Time: 7-9 pm
Location: The Mezz, An Evening in Paris is Planned Parenthood of Greater Orlando’s largest fundraiser of the year. Celebrate the organization that you love, in the City of Love! RSVP at https://ppgo.org/annualevent/