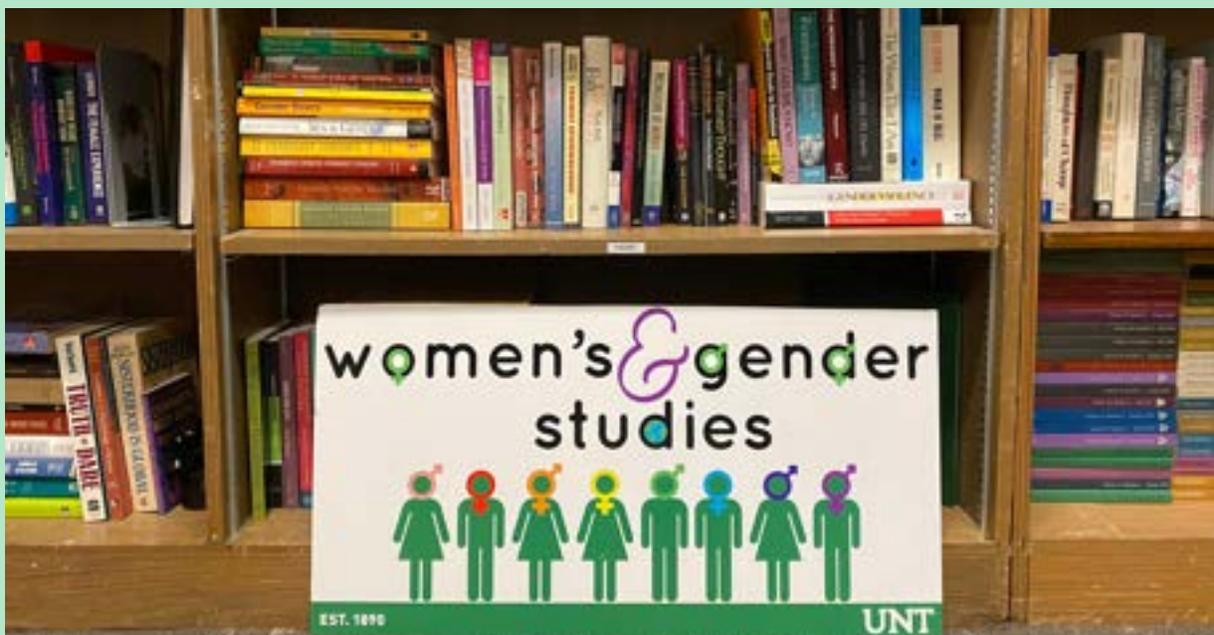




# WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES



FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER



## A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM

December, 2023

Dear WGST Community,

It is hard to believe that another semester is over. As I think back to the Happy Hour we held at Harvest House after the first week of classes, up through the recent Winter Warmer event in our backyard I am so grateful to be building community with each of you. It's been a stabilizing semester for our program. Our newest faculty member, Dr. Katherine Ritter is wrapping up her first semester at UNT, and our long-standing faculty member Dr. Özlem Altioğ has returned from FDL and is back in the classroom with our students. Dr. Elisha Oliver continued to adjunct for us this semester, teaching a course she designed called, Chicana Feminism to Xicanisma.

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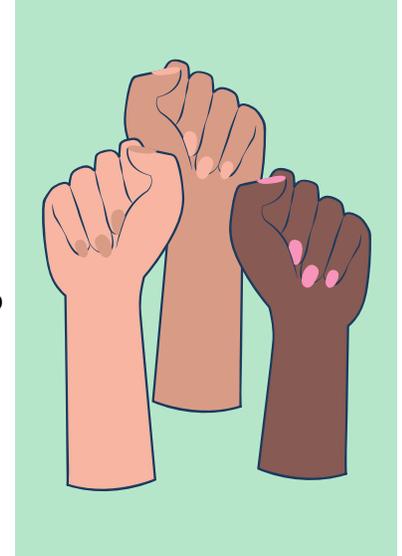
# A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)



Dr. Megan Morrissey,  
Program Director

This semester we are proud to graduate Whitney Kwentoh who earned their Master's degree this December and who is now turning their attention to new professional opportunities, and perhaps, additional graduate work. This fall we also sent another group of graduate students (Sar Fenske, Aubrey Escoto, and Maddie Rodriguez) to the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference where they presented work they developed in some of their WGST classes the semester before. Dr. Özlem Altıok accompanied them and represented our program at the graduate student fair hosted by the association.

In addition to adding some new and exciting courses to our list of electives, we have also affiliated the following faculty members this semester: Dr. ToniAnn Treviño (History), Dr. Sasha Sanders (Communication Studies), Dr. Kiet Huynh (Psychology), Dr. Arunima Datta (History), and Dr. Adriane Bezusko (English). They have been added to a growing list of folx across campus who our Advisory Board and our students can call upon to share their expertise and to collaborate on program projects in the future. Please visit our website for a full list of [WGST](#) and [LGTBQ](#) Faculty affiliates.



(Continued on page 3)



# A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

After working hard to update our bylaws and some of our program processes, this fall semester was the first time that we were implementing some of these changes. We've formed a curriculum committee that has begun work on re-imagining our LGBTQ Studies minor and the processes by and through which we build our curriculum. I've continued holding weekly Coffee Hours with any affiliates and have gotten to meet some really inspiring colleagues across campus. I'm looking forward to continuing these events and projects in the spring and am excited about the ways these efforts will grow our program and our relationships across campus. Throughout the semester we worked with the Media Library, Pride Alliance, and Multicultural Center to host three Fem Flicks screenings, showcasing the lived experiences of a variety of communities and identity groups, participated in our usual collaboration with the Pride Alliance to host Lavender Graduation where we celebrate our WGST graduates, and Dr. Altiook's classes have continued to participate in community engaged scholarship with ODIS (Opening Doors International). I am excited to watch our students move beyond classroom spaces and to share their knowledge and experience with diverse audiences



Finally, as this fall semester concludes I am happy to share that I have signed on to continue serving as the Director of the Women's and Gender Studies program for another four years. I am hopeful and excited about the community we will continue growing during this time, and the work we will be able to do together. Have a restful winter break!

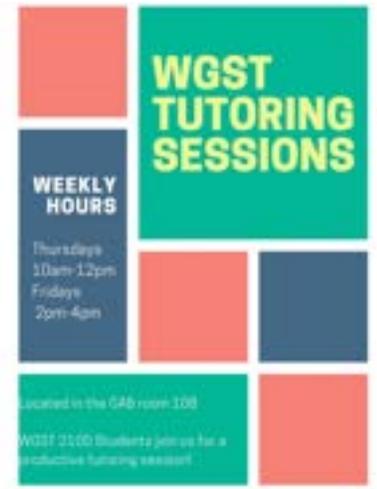
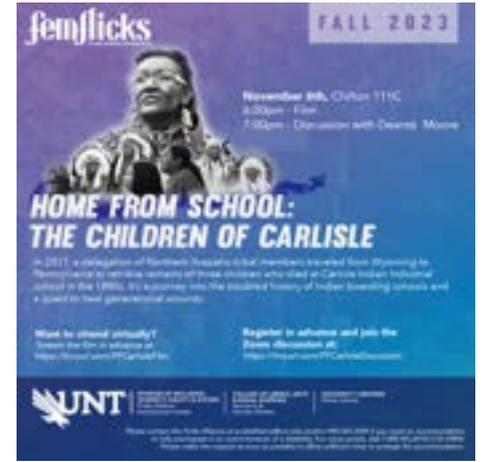
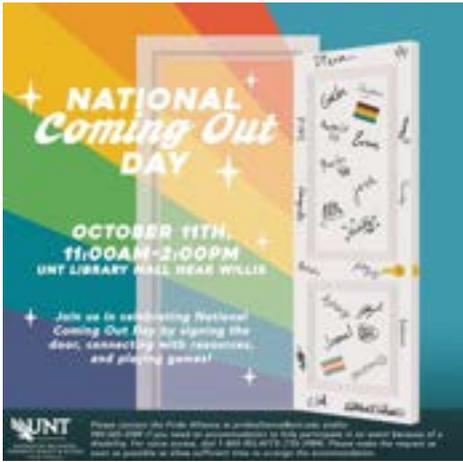
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan Morrissey'.

Dr. Megan Morrissey

WGST & LGBTQ Studies Programs, Director



# WGST EVENT SNAPSHOTS



# NATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION 2023



*Dr. Özlem Atiok and Sar Fenske at the WGST recruitment table pictured next to TWU's Multicultural, Women's and Gender Studies table.*

In October, WGST was excited and honored to attend the 2023 National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference in Baltimore, Maryland. Three of our WGST MA students made their debut into the world of academic conferencing accompanied by our principal lecturer, Dr. Özlem Atiok. Sar Fenske, Aubrey Escoto, and Maddie Rodriguez presented their research on a well-attended panel titled, "Non-Binary Existence and Gender Abolition." Sar Fenske presented "(Trans)forming Crip: A Neuroqueer Autoethnography." Maddie Rodriguez presented "(Trans)gressive Gender and Kink." Aubrey Escoto presented "Reconsidering Queer/Trans Academia: My Queer Autoethnographic Exploration of a Queer, Latine, Autistic Scholar." Our principal lecturer, Dr. Özlem Atiok and Sar Fenske ran a recruitment table advertising our WGST and LGBTQ Studies Programs to the national audience of faculty, staff, and students attending the conference. Witnessing the overwhelming joy our students both brought and received at NWSA was the highlight of the event!



*Dr. Özlem Atiok, Aubrey Escoto, Sar Fenske, and Maddie Rodriguez at lunch*



*Dr. Özlem Atiok and Sar Fenske at the WGST recruitment table*

# CONNECTING COURSEWORK TO COMMUNITY AND CAREERS



Dr. Özlem Atiok and Dr. Alicia Re Cruz



Dr. Özlem Atiok, Dr. Alicia Re Cruz, and participating students

Organized by Dr. Özlem Atiok's Gender & Globalization (WGST 5350/4350) and her Practicum in International Studies (INST 5700) students, in collaboration with students from Dr. Alicia Re Cruz's ANTH Migrants and Refugees class, this event highlighted the services Opening Doors International Services (ODIS) offers. The Career Center hosted the event. Additionally, it showcased collaborative work between the students, ODIS and other organizations. This was a great opportunity for folks to learn more about these organizations and the meaning and significance of community-engaged learning.



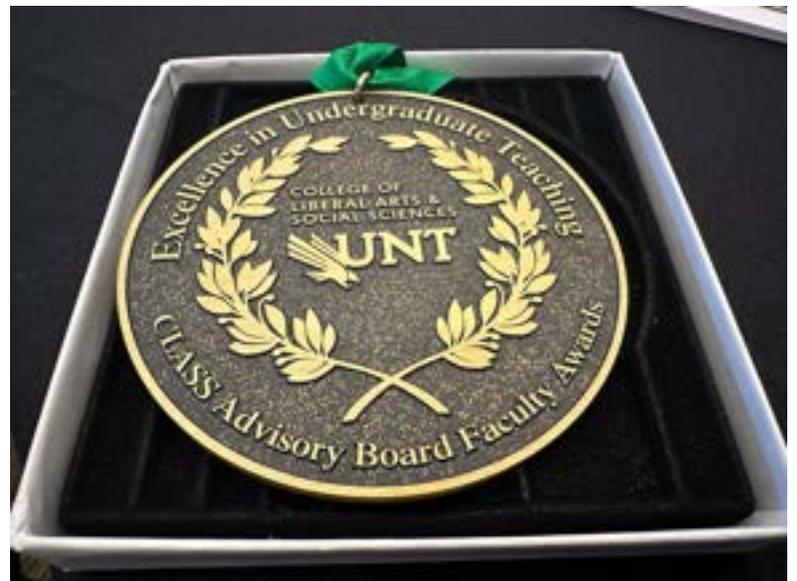
# EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD

The CLASS Advisory Board Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching has been established to recognize annually a full-time CLASS faculty member of any rank for a record of undergraduate teaching excellence at the University of North Texas over at least a five-year period.



Our very own, Dr. Megan Morrissey, was presented the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching award and recognized for her tremendous contributions in the Communication Studies department. The CLASS Advisory Board Awards Ceremony was held in Fall 2023.

The WGST & LGBTQ studies programs are so immensely proud to call Dr. Morrissey our Director and can't wait to see the excellence she continues to bring to UNT.



# SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVE AWARD

In 2016, the SWS Council approved the Social Action Committee's (SAC) proposal to support more direct social action of SWS members. The Social Actions Initiative Awards (SAIA) provide a way for the SAC to directly support and encourage the social activism of SWS members. Awards are given out twice per year on a competitive basis until funds run out. The social actions represented by this initiative are central to advancing the mission of SWS. Current SWS members can apply for funding up to \$1,000 to support broadly defined social action initiatives (e.g., advocacy, public education, organizing, movement-building) that also support the mission of SWS. Special thanks go to the Social Actions Initiative Award Subcommittee: Evonnia Woods and Heather Hlavka (Co-Chairs of the Social Action Committee), Pedrom Nasiri, J'Mauri Jackson, and Sara Tyberg.

Dr. Altıok is the recipient of the 2023 Sociologists for Women in Society Social Action Initiative Award (SAIA). With the SAIA award, the funds will be used to sponsor thirteen university students directly impacted by the earthquake that hit southeastern Turkey (for the coming academic year). The SAIA award funds will be used to sponsor university students directly impacted by the earthquake that hit southeastern Turkey. The scholarships will be distributed in collaboration with the Turkish Association of University Women during the 2023-2024 academic year.



Dr. Altıok studies social movements, public policy, and the entanglements of politics, religion, and gender across borders. A long-time member of Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), she is active in the International Committee, and has served as an SWS delegate to the UN Commission on the Status of Women meetings. She is also a member of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). Visit Dr. Altıok's [faculty page](#) on the WGST website for more information about her work.





# WHO WE ARE



940-565-2098

P.O. BOX 305097, DENTON, TX 76203

WMST@UNT.EDU



Dr. Megan Morrissey,  
Program Director



Dr. Özlem Altıok,  
Principal Lecturer



Dr. Katherine Ritter,  
Continuing Lecturer



Dr. Elisha Oliver,  
Adjunct



Rebecca Bearden, MA  
Program Coordinator



Courtney Bellamy,  
Graduate Assistant



Ghazaleh Ebnenasir,  
Teaching Assistant



Maddie Rodriguez,  
Teaching Assistant



Marija Ivanic,  
Undergraduate  
Program Ambassador



Mars Smietana,  
Undergraduate  
Program Ambassador



Claire Colgrove,  
Student Office  
Assistant

**Advisory Board Members:** Dr. Rachel Moran (History), Dr. Suzanne Enck (Communication Studies), Dr. Joanna Davis-McElligatt (English), Dr. Özlem Altıok (International Studies & WGST), Dr. Jara Carrington (Anthropology), Dr. Megan Morrissey (Communication Studies)

## ABOUT US



The Women's and Gender Studies program at UNT promotes teaching, research, and outreach with a critical focus aimed at interrogating gender-related stereotypes, especially as our identities intersect with sexuality, race, and ethnicity in a global context. Our program's interdisciplinary scholarship supports and sustains campus-wide discussions in areas including, but not limited to: global contexts, feminist approaches, women's social movements, feminist activism, and explorations of the connections among gender, class, ethnicity and race in social and cultural constructs. The LGBTQ program is dedicated to UNT's mission of advancing educational excellence and by preparing students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens of the world. The minor provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary examination of the diversity of global gender and sexual identities, communities, practices, and politics. Courses explore Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer + identified (LGBTQ+) individuals; their families and communities; their cultures and subcultures; their histories; institutions; languages; and literatures; their economics and politics; modes of representation; and their complex relations to the culture and experience of a heterosexual majority.