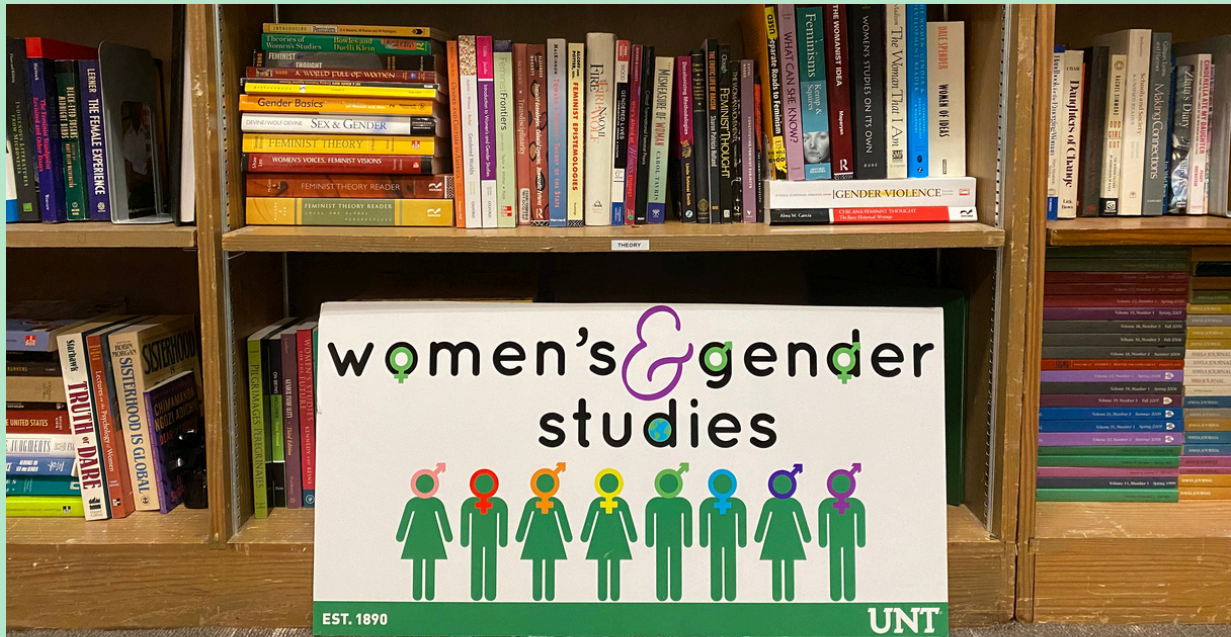




# WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES



SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER



## A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM

May 2024

Dear WGST Community,

I hope the end of the spring semester meant many joyful celebrations and opportunities for reflection for each of you. I always find the final weeks of a semester to be some of the best as we are provided the chance to recognize one another's efforts and see how far we've come in the preceding months. This semester has been one of many wonderful successes as well as much loss. Significantly, we learned that Dr. Sandra Spencer, former director for the Women's and Gender Studies program passed away this month (something you can read more about in these pages). Unfortunately, this was accompanied by much personal hardship.

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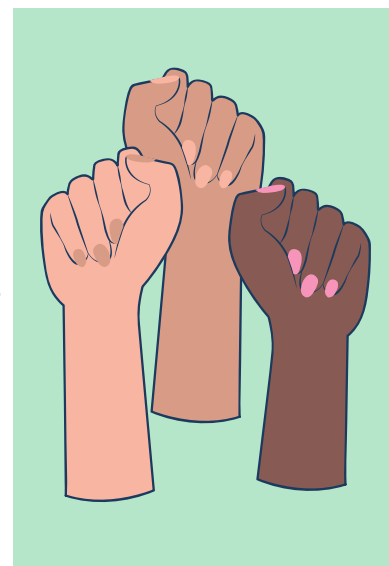
# A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)



Dr. Megan Morrissey,  
Program Director

My spouse, the former administrative coordinator for our program, Jennifer Aglio lost her two and half year battle with uterine cancer on March 22. My semester began with addressing a medical emergency brought on by her illness and through which we struggled for two more months until it was time for her to go. Due to these circumstances, I wasn't able to hold coffee hours as I had hoped, cancelled meetings, and had to lean heavily on the other folks in our program to keep the ship afloat. I am very grateful for Rebecca, our administrative coordinator for all of the scheduling and rescheduling she's done for me this semester; for Özlem, Katherine, and Elisha for making sure our students were supported during this time; for Claire who continued to meet me and anyone else arriving in our suite with a friendly face; and to our graduate students who regularly expressed their care and concern.

I share some of this with you in the pages of our newsletter because throughout this experience I have been humbled and privileged to benefit from relationships and community support. Our program's interdisciplinary nature affords us unique opportunities to meet new people, create spaces to explore intellectual curiosity across disciplines, and cultivate networks of care throughout campus. These relationships allow our students to thrive, our faculty and affiliates to grow, and can prop each of us up when things are challenging.



(Continued on page 3)



# A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

This community of students, faculty, and affiliates embraces and practices an ethic of care I witness on a daily basis. It looks like faculty showing up to support students who are presenting their research (perhaps for the first time) at a research symposium. It looks like students being vulnerable with each other and their instructors in classroom discussions about race, class, gender, sexuality, and/or mental health. It looks like escorting students to conferences, providing time and labor to perform valuable service to program, and staffing the WGST library to make it available for students to use. These things build and foster our professional and personal relationships incrementally, until we have the robust supports that we can truly depend on in times of need or crisis.



I hope that the summer break affords each of us a chance to recharge, but also to spend time with the people in our lives who nurture us. I look forward to returning in the fall with some renewed energy and the opportunity to continue growing and learning with each of you.

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

Dr. Megan Morrissey

WGST & LGBTQ Studies Programs, Director





# WGST EVENT SNAPSHOTS



Maddie Rodriguez presenting "Geographic Areas of Vice in Dallas: Historic to Present Erasures"



Dr. Katherine Ritter, Dr. Özlem Altıok, Dr. Megan Morrissey, and Dr. Elisha Oliver with award-receiving students



Ghazaleh Ebneenassir presenting "Women's Cycling and Their Right to Public Spaces: Stories from Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia"





# WGST 2024 RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



Katherine Crowe, Maria Mazvimavi, Aubrey Escoto, Ghazaleh Ebneasir and Dr. Özlem Altıok

In April of 2024, we held our second research conference lead by Dr. Katherine Ritter and Dr. Özlem Altıok. Students presented the exciting research projects they have developed across WGST courses. This year's symposium included a poster session as well as panel presentations. The showcase of some of the exciting and critical work offered opportunity for students to talk with affiliate faculty and with each other about the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship and ideas. We appreciate all in attendance who listened, learned, and engaged in dynamic conversations with our students about their work. We look forward to continuing this tradition in the future.

**Women's and Gender Studies  
Award Ceremony &  
Research Symposium**

**Thursday, April 18, 2024**  
Jade Ballroom, Union 333

Join us for student awards and research presentations!

8:30am - Breakfast & Participant Check-In  
9am - Award Ceremony  
10am - Panel: Feminist Artifacts  
11am - Panel: Genealogies & Gender Politics  
12pm - Poster Session

Register to attend using the QR code.  
Student participants must RSVP by April 12th.

UNT COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Women's & Gender Studies

## 2024 Women's and Gender Studies Student Research Symposium at UNT, Denton Presentation Session List

### Panel 1: 10:00am – 10:50am

#### Feminist Artifacts

- Maddie Rodriguez – “Geographic Areas of Vice in Dallas: Historic to Present Erasures”  
Ash Palmer – “Baby's First Book of Feminists”  
Ryann Ragsdale – “Feminist Intentions”  
Kennadi Morrow – “What is an everyday Feminist?”  
Jacqueline Sanchez – *Untitled presentation*

### Panel 2: 11:00am – 11:50am

#### Genealogies and Politics of Gender

- Ghazaleh Ebneasir – “Women's Cycling and Their Right to Public Spaces: Stories from Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia”  
Aubrey Escoto – “Ensuring Space for Queer/Trans/Gender Nonconforming People in Sustainable Development”  
Maria Mazvimavi – “Colonialism's Role in Restricting Women's Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa and North America”  
Katherine Crowe – “Resisting Colonial Epistemologies and Discourses in Writing Instruction”  
Catherine Chinchilla – “What are the root causes of gender-based violence (GBV) and how do we end it?”

### Poster Session: 12:00pm – 12:45pm

- Luis Perez – “The Deterioration of Human Security and the Rise of the Argentinian Far Right”  
Mar Lamberson – “Metacognition: A Radical Feminist Perspective in a Cognitive Psychology Context”  
Christian Meshesha – “Sexual Violence in Ethiopia and The Democratic Republic of Congo - A Tactic of War”  
Alexis Guess – “The Missing Green Dot: Uncovering UNT's History of Campus Sexual Assault”  
Berkeley Robinson – “How is Gender Tied to Louisiana Creole Lifeways as Represented Through Music?”  
Jacqueline Rogel – *Untitled poster presentation*



# 2024 DR. MARILYN MORRIS AWARD



*Dr. Megan Morrissey and Dr. Katherine Ritter*

The Dr. Marilyn Morris Award is awarded annually to a faculty member who has made outstanding contributions to the LGBTQ Studies Program at UNT. Award recipients represent the vanguard in creating innovative pedagogical and research strategies, fostering gender and sexuality as an analytical lens, and creating safe spaces for our students in the classroom. The award is named after its first recipient, Dr. Marilyn Morris, founder of the LGBT Studies Program in 2009, and a pioneer in scholarship on sexuality as interdisciplinary inquiry at UNT. It is an honor to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of these exceptional faculty members.

It is our honor to acknowledge Dr. Megan Morrissey as the 2024 Dr. Marilyn Morris Award for Outstanding Academic Contributions in LGBTQ Studies.



*The Dr. Marilyn Morris Award  
(Pictured in 2019)*





# 2024 SALUTE TO FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Each year, the Faculty Senate provides recognition to faculty and students through various awards and programs. This year, one of our faculty, Dr. Özlem Altıok, and one of our affiliated faculty, Dr. Kathryn Beebe, were recognized and received awards at this ceremony.



*Dr. Özlem Altıok*

Our very own, Dr. Özlem Altıok accepted the J.H. Shelton Excellence in Teaching Award. This annual award, named for UNT alumnus Joe Houston Shelton, recognizes one full-time faculty member for a record of outstanding teaching at the University of North Texas for at least a five-year period. The award recipient will receive a \$1500 payment and the selection is based on evidence that substantiates and documents teaching excellence over at least a 5 year period.

Dr. Kathryn Beebe, Department of History, accepted the President's Council Teaching Award. This award was established to recognize annually two full-time faculty members for a record of teaching excellence at the University of North Texas over at least a five-year period. The nomination and judging period is in the fall each year, with recipients being recognized for their achievements at the "Salute to Faculty Excellence Dinner and Ceremony" in the spring. Each recipient will receive a \$3,000 award from the university. The selection is based on evidence that substantiates and documents teaching excellence over at least a five-year period of time while at UNT.



*Dr. Kathryn Beebe*



# SPRING 2024 GRADUATING STUDENTS



*Dr. Özlem Altıok, Sar Fenske, Dr. Megan Morrissey, and Maddie Rodriguez*

## SAR FENSKE

Of the work that Sar has done in the program, Sar is most proud of their paper, "(Trans)forming Crip: A Neuroqueer Autoethnography," which they presented at last year's symposium and as part of a panel with Maddie and Aubrey at the NWSA conference in 2023. After graduation, Sar intends to work on editing/revising papers from their time in the graduate program, and Sar hopes to eventually pursue a Masters in Social Work and/or a doctorate some day. But for now, they intend to rest and continue assisting students in their job as an academic advisor at Texas Women's University.

## MADDIE RODRIQUEZ

Maddie Rodriguez is the first Latina in their family to earn a Master's degree. During their time in the program, Maddie was accepted for a "Graduate Student Travel Award Grant" and presented their research on semi-public erotic cultures in 2023 at the National Women's Studies Association. In the future they intend to pursue a PhD program and teach in prison education programs.



*Dr. Elisha Oliver, Dr. Özlem Altıok, Dr. Katherine Ritter, Maddie Rodriguez, and Dr. Megan Morrissey*



# STUDENT RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS



Sar Fenske's name tag and conference program

In March 2024, Sar Fenske attended the annual WGS South Conference. This year's theme was Care Feminisms, Crip Futures. Sar presented a presentation titled “(Dis)abling Nurses - Student Caucus Seminar Presentation.” Below is a brief description of their presentation:

“My paper is on the relationship between disability, the medical-industrial complex, and nursing, specifically examining the posthumously published “A Letter to My Abuser” by Tristin Kate Smith, a registered nurse who died by suicide. I utilize Aimee Carillo-Rowe's feminist politics of relation and Mia Mingus' transformative justice, and I grapple with notions of discomfort and coalition, especially in the relation between nurses and healthcare service users. I wrote the paper as part of my final project for Dr. Morrissey's Rhetorics of Worldmaking course in the Fall while also writing a speculative fiction short story.”



Maddie Rodriguez

In June 2024, Maddie Rodriguez and Courtney Bellamy will be attending the 2024 Queer History Conference where they will be co-presenting a presentation titled “Geographic Areas of Vice in Dallas: Historical to Present Erasures” as a part of the Bars as Sites of Queer Spaces panel. This presentation is focused on legislative erasure of queer sex cultures in Texas.



Courtney Bellamy



# COMMEMORATING DR. SANDRA SPENCER



*Photograph of Dr. Sandra Spencer at the 2015 Faculty Excellence Awards*

“Our former colleague, Dr. Sandra Spencer, passed away last Monday, May 6, 2024, at the age of 81. Sandi was beloved by her coworkers and students; you might remember her happy demeanor, her infectious laugh, and her willingness to help. She earned her Ph.D. in 1996 from UNT and would go on to work in the English department and the Program in Women’s and Gender Studies until her retirement as principal lecturer in 2016. Sandi specialized in Victorian Literature with secondary interests in Romantic Literature and Women’s Studies, and she directed the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at UNT. She was an avid traveler and enjoyed leading students in study abroad programs to England, Scotland, and the Middle East.” – Dr. Nicole Smith, Chair of English and WGST Affiliated Faculty.

Sandi was instrumental in forming the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at UNT. She became the director of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at UNT in 2001 and served in this role until 2016.

A memorial service was held at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Richardson on May 16, 2024 at 3:00 PM. In lieu of flowers, donations were made to the Alzheimer’s Association.







# 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



Ghazaleh Ebnenasir,  
Teaching Assistant



Maddie Rodriguez,  
Teaching Assistant



Marija Ivanic,  
Undergraduate  
Program Ambassador



Mars Smietana,  
Undergraduate  
Program Ambassador



Claire Colgrove,  
Graduate Student  
Office Assistant

**Advisory Board Members:** Dr. Katherine Ritter (WGST), 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.