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## UAHuntsville Women's Studies News, Fall 2009

University of Alabama in Huntsville

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# UAHuntsville

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

## WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWS

Fall, 2009

Volume 20, Number 1

### You may like to know that...

- This issue begins the 20th year of the Women's Studies newsletter!
- The Women's Studies newsletter is mailed to over 1,000 people in the community each semester.
- The Women's Studies Program hosts an average of five major public events every year.

### Inside this issue:

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## Internationally Renowned Simone de Beauvoir Scholar to Speak at UAHuntsville in November

The UAHuntsville Women's Studies Program, Philosophy Department, and Humanities Center, will present Dr. Margaret A. Simons for a series of lectures and class visits, **November 9-13**. Simons is an internationally renowned scholar on the work of Simone de Beauvoir. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Beauvoir's classic text in feminist philosophy, *The Second Sex*.

On **Tuesday, November 10, at 7:30 p.m.** in Morton Hall 200, Simons will show a video of Beauvoir, including both interviews and



Simons will offer two public events: a film screening and discussion, **November 10, 7:30 p.m.**, and a lecture, **November 13, 7 p.m.**, both in UAHuntsville's Morton Hall 200.

scenes from her novels and plays, and lead a discussion afterward. She will meet with students and faculty throughout the week, and then give a lecture detailing her

career and her attempts to relate Beauvoir's life to her work on **Friday, November 13, at 7 p.m.** in Morton Hall 200.

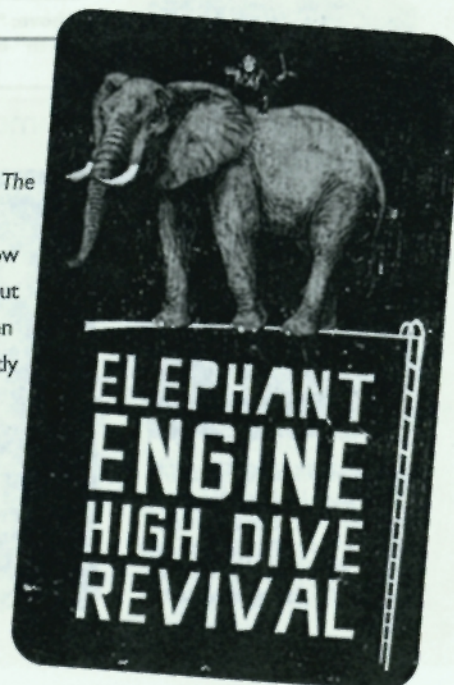
Simons was, at the time of her retirement, the William and Margaret Going Professor of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and is now Professor Emeritus. She was among the first philosophers to regard Beauvoir's work as philosophically significant and independent from her more famous companion, Jean-Paul Sartre. Simons worked tirelessly on Beauvoir's life and work, publishing important books and essays on both Beauvoir's biography and her  
(continued on page 3)

## National Poetry Group to Lecture and Perform October 23

Elephant Engine High Dive Revival, a nationally recognized troupe of performance poets, will be at UAHuntsville on **Friday, October 23**, for a lecture at **3:30 p.m.** and a performance at **7 p.m.** Both events will be held in the University Center Exhibit Hall. The topic of their talk is "The Business of Art"—what it means to be a professional poet, touring and publishing poetry. This is their third year touring this show, and some

performers have appeared on *The Tonight Show* and on the HBO series "Def Poetry." Their show is not exactly a poetry slam (but they are slam poets and spoken word professionals), not exactly comedy (though there is humor), and probably not like anything you've ever seen before. It's been described as a "rock concert, improv show, dance party, and poetry

(continued on page 3)



## WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWS

### Harris Paper Contest Awards Academic and Creative Writing



Pictured left to right, Jennifer Staton, Kate Blake, and Gloria Powell.

The Women's Studies Program will sponsor the tenth annual Kathryn L. Harris Women's Studies Paper Competition, which awards cash prizes for essays written for a graduate or undergraduate course at UAHuntsville that deal substantially with women or women's issues. The contest accepts submissions in three categories: upper-division academic, lower-division academic, and creative (both divisions).

Last year's winners in the lower division academic category were, first, **Gloria Powell**, "Anything

You Can Do I Can Do Better: The Wife of Bath Uses Scripture" (British Literature, Dr. Angela Balla); and, second, **Sarah Fisher**, "A Man's Drink: Clytemnestra's Revenge in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*" (Honors World Literature, Dr. Stephen Szilagyi).

Winners in the upper division academic category were, first, **Gloria Powell**, "Why Listen to the Women Talk in *Othello*?" (*Othello*, Dr. Jeff Nelson); and second, **Jennifer Staton**, "Civil Enslavement: Early Modern English Views of Gaelic Irish and Sub-

Saharan African Women" (Comparative Slavery, Dr. Christine Sears). An honorable mention went to **Kate Blake**, "Cultural Baggage: The Influence of Greek and Roman Cultural Attitudes toward Women in the Epistles of St. Paul" (Women in Antiquity, Dr. Lillian Joyce).

Essays for this year's contest may be submitted to Erin Reid in the Department of Sociology (344 Morton Hall) by March 1, 2010. For more information, visit [www.uah.edu/womensstudies/essay\\_college.htm](http://www.uah.edu/womensstudies/essay_college.htm).



Top: Veronica Ferreira and Dr. Nancy Finley, Women's Studies Director; Bottom: Erin Reid and K. Jill Johnson; Right: "Immaculate Misconception" by Shannon Rodes.

### Hindman Award Honors High School Students for Outstanding Artwork



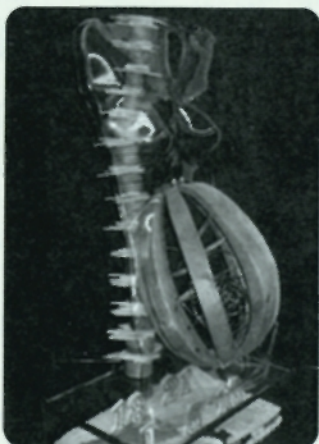
Above: "Women of the Earth" by Leslie Whitfield

The 2009 UAHuntsville Ruth Hindman Women's Studies Award was presented to **Leslie Whitfield** of Athens High School, for her sculpture, "Women of the Earth." The Department of Art and Art History selected the winner for artistic merit and significant insight concerning women and gender. Leslie used "rock, wires and green and gold leaves...to visualize the contribu-

tion of women throughout history, in the modern world, and in my life." **Alexa Turner**, also of Athens High School, received an honorable mention for her mixed-media piece, "Screwed."

The award was presented at the College of Liberal Arts Tournament Day, which fosters academic and creative excellence among area high school students.

### Women's Studies Students, Faculty, and Staff Receive Honors and Awards



The Women's Studies Program awarded **Veronica Ferreira**, a History/Sociology major and Women's Studies minor, the 2009 Kathryn L. Harris scholarship, as well as the Women's Studies Outstanding Undergraduate Achievement Award.

The 2009 Women's Studies Outstanding Emerging Woman Artist Award, associated with the UAHuntsville Annual Juried Student

Art Exhibition, went to **Shannon Rodes** for her sculpture, "Immaculate Misconception."

**K. Jill Johnson**, Associate Professor of Art and a member of the Women's Studies Program Advisory Committee, received a 2009 UAHuntsville Foundation Teaching Award, and **Erin Reid**, Women's Studies and Sociology staff assistant, received a 2009 UAHuntsville Foundation Staff Award.

## History Speaker to Address Gender and Treason During the Civil War

Dr. Stephanie McCurry, Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, will share her latest work in two public lectures. On **Monday, November 2**, she will discuss "Gender and Treason during the Civil War" at **7 p.m.** in Roberts Recital Hall. On **Tuesday, November 3**, she will present "Arming Slaves in the Confederacy" for the Honors Forum at **11:10 a.m.** in Frank Franz Hall Multipurpose Room.

McCurry's *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South*

*Carolina Low Country* changed the way historians think about gender and politics. Her book was instrumental in focusing scholars' attention away from Southern planters and onto Southern yeomen, or smaller farmers. This excellent, ground-breaking work won numerous awards, including the John Hope Franklin Prize of the American Studies Association and the Charles Sydnor Award of the Southern Historical Association.

In the spring, Harvard will publish her newest work, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the*

*Civil War South*, which looks at popular politics in the Confederate States of America, concentrating on the disenfranchised and the transformation of the southern body politic before military defeat and Reconstruction.

Both lectures are free and open to the public. Support is provided by the UAHuntsville Department of History, Honors Program, Women's Studies Program, and the Humanities Center. For more information, contact Dr. Christine Sears in the Department of History at (256) 824-2573.



McCurry will lecture on November 2 at 7p.m. and November 3 at 11:10 a.m.

## "Elephant Engine" (cont.)

reading all rolled into one." Members of the group include Anis Mojgani (a two-time Individual National Poetry Slam Champion), Derrick Brown (opening artist for The White Stripes and the Cold War Kids), Shappy Seasholtz (another National Poetry Slam Champion), and Shira Erlichman (Pushcart Prize nominee and one-woman band). Both events are free and open to the public. These

events are co-sponsored by the UAHuntsville Department of English and the Office of Student Affairs. UAHuntsville Women's Studies, Theatre Arts, and the Huntsville Literary Association provide additional support. The Humanities Center and Poetry Out Loud are sponsoring the lecture. For further information, call the Department of English at (256) 824-6320 or see [uah.edu/english](http://uah.edu/english).

## "Beauvoir" (cont.)

philosophy, and she interviewed Beauvoir several times. Simons is currently overseeing the publication of a seven-volume series of Beauvoir's works in English. Both events are free and open to the public. For more information, contact William Wilkerson in the Department of Philosophy at (256) 824-2339 or via email at [wilkerw@uah.edu](mailto:wilkerw@uah.edu).

## SPRING PREVIEW: Women's Studies Events, Spring 2010

■ Women's Studies will host **"CHARGED UP! FOR A CHANGE"** a creative community organizing EXPO highlighting unique methods of making a difference. This community fair and series of panel discussions will present out-of-the-ordinary ways people bring about social change, including divisions such as "ART! for a change," "ATHLETICS! for a change," "COOKING! for a

change," "ENGINEERING! for a change," and featuring activists who create change by doing what they love. People interested in setting up booths representing their interests and volunteer opportunities should contact Dr. Nancy Finley at (256) 824-2298.

■ Sena Jeter Naslund, author of *Ahab's Wife* and *Four Spirits*, will return as Eminent Scholar in the Humanities and will teach fiction

writing and give a variety of talks. Her new novel, *Adam and Eve*, is due out in 2010. ■ Robin Lip-pincott, author of *In the Mean-time* and *Mr. Dalloway* will give two readings with Naslund, January 20-21. ■ The Huntsville Feminist Chorus will present their spring concert in Roberts Recital Hall on Saturday, March 27. ■ For more details on spring events, go to [www.uah.edu/womensstudies](http://www.uah.edu/womensstudies).

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## WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWS



AAUW • NASPA

## National Conference Inspires Women Student Leaders

The Huntsville branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) annually sponsors local students to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). This year they sent five students from UAHuntsville to attend the conference at the University of Maryland, College Park, June 4-6. NCCWSL 2009

embraced the theme "Leadership for Today and Tomorrow" and included more than 50 workshops and presentations on topics such as advocacy, leadership skill-

building, financial management, and health and wellness. The conference offered community service projects, networking opportunities, keynote speakers from the fields of international human rights, and a location convenient to visiting the nation's capitol.

Sara Martin, a 2009 graduate, particularly enjoyed the presentation by keynote speaker Kirk W. Johnson. She said, "He was fantastic! He handled issues of religion, racism, and sexism gracefully, and he was so humble. For once, listening to someone successful and young didn't make me feel panicked about my life. He made me feel uplifted and capable. I felt like, wow! You can take a passion that you really have and make a difference in the world."

Sara Jo Taylor, senior, said her favorite workshop was "Wommon Words: The Semantics of Being Female," which explored embedded messages about gender communicated by leaders. Additionally Sara Jo said that recipients of the NCCWSL Women of Distinction Awards were "truly amazing and inspiring." The awards paid tribute to women leaders who have made extraordinary contributions in their professions or in their communities.

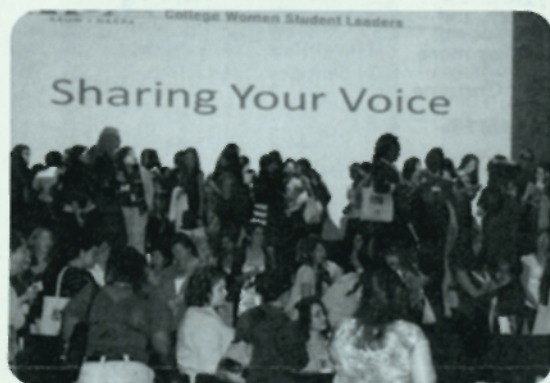
Veronica Ferreira, senior, also enjoyed the awards and especially appreciated the opportunity to meet the women leaders. She said, "My favorite thing was meeting Tammy Duckworth. She is a major in the National Guard who refused to retire after she lost both of her legs. She's the first female to be in charge of a combat unit. Now she is an Obama appointee who works with Intergovernmental Affairs for the Department of Veterans Affairs. She's awesome! I thanked her for taking care of veterans, because my husband is a veteran, and she told me to thank my husband."

The students also made a point to attend workshops where they learned about ideas, information, and resources they may bring back to their campuses. Several of the

students are helping to pursue an AAUW Campus Action Project grant that promotes service and activism projects in schools and the community.

The student leaders from UAHuntsville were: Melissa Cavins, Psychology major, Theatre Cognate minor, senior; Veronica Ferreira, History/Sociology major, Women's

Studies minor, senior; Sara Martin, Psychology major, Sociology minor, 2009 grad; Sara Jo Taylor, Chemical Engineering major, senior; Brenda Taylor-Moody, Psychology major, Studio Art minor, senior. The student leaders also serve on the AAUW's Alabama State Student Advisory Council. Additional funding for the NCCWSL trip was made possible by local AAUW member contributions, student fundraising, and the Women's Studies Program.



**Right-top:** Brenda Taylor-Moody at the Washington Monument; **Right-bottom:** Veronica Ferreira met Major Tammy Duckworth; **Left-top:** The event drew women student leaders from all over the country; **Left-bottom:** Melissa Cavins, Sara Martin, and Veronica Ferreira at the Lincoln Memorial; **Background:** inscription at the National WWII Memorial.

## Women's Studies Featured Faculty: Dr. Leslie Kaiura

Originally from Cairo, Ga., Leslie Kaiura joined the foreign languages faculty at UAHuntsville in 2007. Kaiura graduated with an M.A. in Spanish from Auburn University in 2003 and completed her Ph.D. at the University of Virginia in 2007, focusing on 19th and early 20th-century Spanish literature. Kaiura happily returned to Alabama to teach at UAHuntsville and immediately felt right at home.

Several semesters into her doctoral studies, feminism and women's issues became the focal point of her research. After reading texts by early Spanish feminist Emilia Pardo Bazán in which the abuse of women figured prominently, Kaiura began to wonder how prevalent the themes of do-

mestic and other forms of violence against women might be in 19th century Spanish literature. Professors warned she would not find enough material, as domestic violence was a "private matter" that would not have been written about in novels and newspapers. Undaunted, Kaiura traveled to Madrid to conduct research in Spain's National Library and found a wealth of novels, short stories, newspaper articles, and historical sources that served as the basis for her dissertation, "Battered Angels: Domestic Violence in Spanish Literature, 1850-1925."

Currently, Kaiura is pursuing two research projects related to her dissertation. One is a comparison of a popular Spanish novel from

1923 and a film from 2001, both of which tell the stories of women whose efforts to escape abusive relationships end in tragedy. The second project, which will complement her work on female authors, focuses on male authors' depictions of domestic violence and rape.

Kaiura enjoys bringing her research into the classroom. She has designed a unit for her conversation course around the themes of gender and domestic violence and typically includes related texts in her literature and culture courses. She is looking forward to increasing her involvement with Women's Studies as the new sponsor for POWER, the Women's Studies student club.



Dr. Leslie Kaiura poses with Don Quixote.

## Dr. Sonja Brown-Givens First Female African-American Dept. Chair

Sonja Brown-Givens made history this year as the first female African-American professor to serve as a department chair at UAHuntsville. She chairs the Departments of Communication Arts and Foreign Languages and Literatures.

She came to UAHuntsville in 2001, after earning her Ph.D. in speech communication from The University of Georgia. Her research interests include African-

American identity recognition and communication, and cognitive processes and social decision-making. She teaches courses in communication, mass media, public speaking, race, gender and culture, and frequently contributes to Introduction to Women's Studies.

Brown-Givens and Dr. Ronald L. Jackson, II co-authored the widely popular book *Black Pioneers in Communication Research*. She has

several manuscripts and book chapters in preparation including *Surviving from the Margins: African-American Graduate Students Communicating About Race and Identity*, *Still Searching for my Mother's Garden*, and *Experiences of Female African-American Professors in Predominately White Institutions*. She is active in community service and public speaking and has received numerous awards.



Dr. Sonja Brown-Givens has taught at UAHuntsville since 2001.

## Women's Studies Course Offerings Spring 2010

ARH 103 01	Non-Western Traditions	TR	12:45-2:05	Joyce	PHL 202 03	Introduction to Ethics	TR	11:10-12:30	Rochowiak
ARH 309 01	Contemporary Art & Issues	MW	3:55-5:15	Stewart	PHL 202 04	Introduction to Ethics	TR	12:45-2:05	STAFF
ARH 309 02	Contemporary Art & Issues	TR	9:35-10:55	Stewart	PHL 202 05	Introduction to Ethics	TR	2:20-3:40	Heikes
EH 331 01	Amer. Lit. Civil War to WWI	MWF	11:30-12:25	Bollinger	PY/SOC 375 01	Social Psychology	MW	2:20-3:40	Carpenter
EH 418 01	Rep. Texts: Women Writers	TR	3:55-5:15	Early	SOC 200 01	Intro. to Anthropology	MW	3:55-5:15	Sitaraman
HY 498 01	Women & Gender in Latin Am.	TR	3:55-5:15	Mendiola	SOC 315 01	Cultural Change	T	3:55-6:50	Sitaraman
PHL 202 01	Introduction to Ethics	MWF	9:10-10:05	Martine	SOC 435 01	Soc. of Social Movements	MWF	11:30-12:25	Berbrier
PHL 202 02	Honors: Introduction to Ethics	MW	12:45-2:05	Wilkerson	WS 200 01	Intro. to Women's Studies	TR	12:45-2:05	Finley

Course offering schedules are not final. For changes, see the official UAHuntsville schedule of classes at [www.uah.edu/cgi-bin/schedule.pl](http://www.uah.edu/cgi-bin/schedule.pl)

## Become a Friend of Women's Studies!

**Friends of Women's Studies (FWS)** is an organization of people who support the **UAHuntsville Women's Studies Program**. The goals of FWS include:

- Supporting community involvement in Women's Studies events
- Sponsoring cultural activities and events that honor and empower women
- Supporting women scholars, artists, and performers
- Fostering discussion of issues affecting women's lives

### Annual Contribution (October 1 – September 30)

- ☐ \$10-24 Individual     
 ☐ \$25-49 Family     
 ☐ \$50-99 Matron     
 ☐ \$100-249 Sponsor  
☐ \$250-\$499 Sustaining     
 ☐ \$500 Lifetime Contributor     
 ☐ \$1000 Benefactor  
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