

# January 2021 Newsletter



## Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

### Graduate Student Spotlight: Stevie Leigh



Stevie is a first-year MA student in WGSS. She earned her BA in Strategic Communication from Drury University with Writing and WGS minors. Stevie's interests lie at the intersection of sexuality and fan studies. She plans to study how fandom affiliation influences sexual identity development among female-identifying and LGBTQ+ individuals.

#### **How did you hear about the WGSS MA program?**

I minored in Women & Gender Studies in undergrad, but the program was very limited. I knew that I wanted to learn more about the discipline and find a way to build a career in academia based on my interests and passions. I applied to several WGSS graduate programs, both MA and PhD. UC was the best fit for me because I offered the academic and professional opportunities I was looking for *and* the commitment to building interpersonal relationships among students and faculty that I valued so much in my undergraduate education.

#### **What has been your experience being a GA?**

I have a full-time graduate assistantship in an outside department, serving as the GA for the Audre Lorde Social Justice House, where I'm able to combine my previous experience working in residence life with my personal and professional goals of promoting social justice to financially support my studies.

#### **What are your favorite theorists?**

At this point in my exposure to feminist theory, I would say I appreciate and resonate most with Marilyn Frye, Sandra Harding, and Linda Williams.

#### **What excites you about the field of WGSS?**

What excites me most about WGSS is its interdisciplinary nature and potential. Not only do my peers and I benefit from a progressive, creative, and collaborative environment within the discipline, but overlapping issues and ideas allow us to apply what we learn in WGSS to topics and situations outside the discipline. This allows us to approach our personal interests and obligations from a justice-based perspective.

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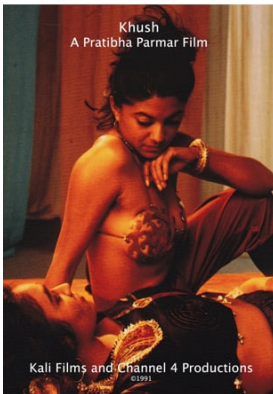


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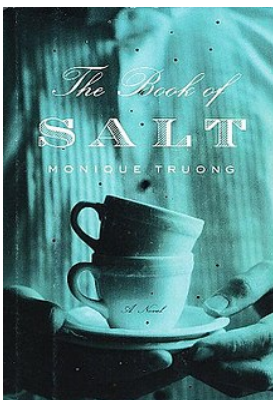
Dr. Chandra Frank is a feminist researcher who works on the intersections of archives, waterways, gender, sexuality, and race. Her curatorial practice explores the politics of care, experimental forms of narration, and the colonial grammar embedded within display and exhibition arrangements. Chandra holds a PhD from the Department of Media, Communications, and Cultural Studies with an emphasis on queer and feminist studies, from Goldsmiths, University of London. She has published in peer-reviewed journals and exhibition catalogues, including *Feminist Review*, the Small Axe VLOSA catalogue, *The Place is Here* publication, the collection *Tongues* and *Foam Magazine 2021 Talent* issue. She recently co-edited a special issue on Archives for *Feminist Review*. Her curated exhibitions include *Re(as)sisting Narratives* (Amsterdam/Cape Town), *Fugitive Desires* (London), and *Proclamation 73* (Durban) (co-curated with Zara Julius). She frequently is invited to deliver lectures and keynotes at international academic and art institutions. Her areas of teaching include queer and feminist theory, popular culture, visual cultures and critical race studies. Currently, Chandra is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Charles Phelps Taft Research Center at the University of Cincinnati.



*Khush*. Directed by Pratibha Parmar 1991.

### **What are you looking forward to most about teaching Gender, Sexuality, and Culture for Spring 2021?**

I am looking forward to exploring the connections between queer diaspora, sexuality, kinship, and cultural production this semester. We will be delving into multiple geographic contexts and we'll be focusing on selected case studies in this course. I am thrilled to journey with students and collectively examine the work of scholars, artists and activists to gain a deeper understanding of the queer diaspora. I am sure exploring what it means to "queer" migration and in which ways migration can be read as queer will lead to generative discussions. Reading the work of scholars such as Karma R. Chávez, Jin Haritaworn, Gayatri Gopinath, Eithne Luibhéid, Fatima El-Tayeb, and Rinaldo Walcott will help us unpack the multiple routes and roots underlying queer diaspora. I look forward to exploring art, film and literature with students, and engage with artists such as Ajamu X, filmmaker Pratibha Parmar, and author Monique Truong to explore issues around pleasure, intimacy, sexuality, and empire.



### **What is your most recent publication?**

I recently co-edited a special issue on archives for *Feminist Review*; the issue brings together articles on Pauli Murray, June Givanni's Pan-African cinema archive, queer and crip engagements with archives as well as a roundtable on experimental approaches to the archive. For the same journal, I've published an article on a transnational encounter between the Dutch Black lesbian collective Sister Outsider and Audre Lorde in the 1980s to reflect on the role of archives in transnational research. As an independent curator, I also have the pleasure to regularly write about contemporary arts; most recently I wrote about the British South Asian artist Rehana Zaman, Caribbean Dutch artist Lisandro Suriel, and I conducted an interview with DJ Lynnée Denise that just appeared in the latest *Journal of Popular Music Studies* issue.

### **What current projects are you working on?**

I am currently working on my first book manuscript, which looks at the everyday experiences of the transnational feminist and queer Black, Migrant and Refugee Movement in the Netherlands during the 1980s. The methodology for the book is based on Dutch colonial waterway infrastructures, and looks at how water functions as a form of domination, border, and control and how, at the same time, it offers a metaphor to look at queer and feminist diasporic subjectivities. I am also working on a short film collaboration with video artist Meena Murugesan, which I will present in the spring of 2021. The film will explore how we can use multi-sensory methodologies to tell stories about diaspora, kinship, queerness, and waterways. I will also include some of my personal family archives, so I am quite excited about it.