

Women's and Gender Studies

2026 Newsletter



Dean Nawal Ammar in *The Sister Chapel* installation on display at RUMOCA at Westby Hall.

Founded in 1974, the Women's & Gender Studies Program at Rowan University is one of the oldest in the nation, offering interdisciplinary academic programs including a minor and two certificates of undergraduate studies. Through academic programs and public events, the Women's & Gender Studies Program endeavors to call campus and community-wide attention to issues of gender, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Rowan's Women's & Gender Studies Program seeks to interrogate social and cultural norms, historical processes, and power structures through an intersectional, comparative, and global approach to constellations of identity such as gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and ability.

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Kate Harman

Associate Teaching Professor of Communication Studies
Ric Edelman College of Communication, Humanities & Social Sciences

Why did you decide to get involved in Women's & Gender Studies at Rowan University?

I actually took a few WGS courses at Rowan when I was a student. At the time, I remember being disappointed that I didn't have enough room in my schedule to complete the full minor, so I'm incredibly happy to be a part of the program now as a faculty member. I can also say that my time in WGS courses at Rowan helped lead me to the pursuit of a Master's in Women's and Gender Studies at Towson University. If I had never done that, I wouldn't be back at Rowan teaching!

What is your favorite WGS course you've taught at Rowan and why?

I always say that my favorite course is largely dependent on the students in the class and can change from semester to semester. While I know that sounds like a diplomatic non-answer, it really is true. You can teach the same lesson to different sections in back-to-back classes and it can be a completely different experience, even if it is the same material. The engagement and excited buy-in of the students is really what makes a course. However, the two WGS courses I teach most often are *Images of Gender in Popular Culture* and *Women and Nonbinary Identities in Sports Communication*.

In what gender topics are you most interested?

Undoubtedly, I have always been especially interested in how gender and sexuality operate within sport. This can be in a variety of scales and levels, including depictions and understandings of athletes, coaches, fans, leagues or the examination of structures, institutions, and systems within sport. Sports have historically been viewed as non-serious or "less than," especially compared to more prestigious disciplines, but the reality is that sport can often be at the forefront of society, social justice, and movements for change. I also think making sport more accessible (and less gatekeep-y) will lead to more inclusion, an issue particularly important considering the discrimination trans and nonbinary individuals can face in sport.

Why is WGS such a critical component of the university?

It isn't just a critical part of the university but a critical part of all aspects of society. I think WGS courses help you critically think, learn about other lived experiences and perspectives, and aid you in expanding your worldview! Everyone and anyone can benefit from those types of classes and that type of learning.

What do you hope to see as the future of WGS at Rowan?

Expansion! WGS and its courses serve such a crucial role at this university and I wish more students took the opportunity to enroll in a WGS class. Hopefully in the years to come WGS will be integrated into more curriculum and programs all across campus, giving more students access to these important concepts.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Edward Kazarian

Associate Teaching Professor of Philosophy

Ric Edelman College of Communication, Humanities & Social Sciences

Why did you decide to get involved in Women's & Gender Studies at Rowan University?

I've worked on topics related to sexuality and gender since graduate school, including teaching a course on the philosophy of human sexuality back in the late 1990s. My scholarship has been engaged with key figures in the queer theory tradition like Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, as well as with psychoanalytic thought. At Rowan, I've taught *Philosophy and Gender* for years. And more recently, Dr. Whitney Cox and I began team teaching a course in queer theory, which in turn became a certificate program in the fall of 2024. I also coordinate a lecture series, *Theorizing at Rowan*, that has hosted a number of speakers engaging with topics related feminist and queer theory, and gender and sexuality more broadly. A lot of those talks have been co-sponsored by WGS, so since I was already doing all of this, joining the WGS Council seemed like a pretty natural fit.

What is your favorite WGS course you've taught at Rowan and why?

I love teaching *Philosophy and Gender*, and I'm very excited to be doing it in person again this fall. But without a doubt the *Topics in Queer Theory* seminar I offered this spring on biopower was probably the most exciting and rewarding class I've ever taught at Rowan. It was an absolute joy to teach a group of students who were really motivated, and the material had so many connections with what's happening in the world right now that it gave us a chance to really think together about how to navigate where we are and where we're going.

In what gender topics are you most interested?

For me, what variously gets understood as sex, gender, and sexuality is a domain where we find our embodied lives entangled with a really wide range of cultural and social structures and systems, with a pretty wide range of possible results at both individual and social levels. I'm especially interested in the history of how we've understood these relationships, how and why they've been so consistently crucial to the ways we've organized our individual and collective lives, and especially in ways of doing so that push against or try to evade the normalizing demands that are often placed on them.

Why is WGS such a critical component of the university?

Sex/gender systems are about as basic and universal a kind of social structure as there is, and it is simply impossible to understand what's going on with human collective life without taking them into account. But we have historically been pretty bad at doing this in a way that isn't governed by a whole series of cis-hetero-patriarchal assumptions. WGS, as a project, is crucial both because it supports our giving this absolutely crucial part of human social life its due, and because it reflects a commitment to critically examine some of the ways we've historically dealt with it.

What do you hope to see as the future of WGS at Rowan?

I hope to see it continue to grow and thrive. We've been doing this for more than 50 years, and I'd like to think we're only just getting started.

EVENTS

I Shall Keep Singing: Gender in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson October 15, 2025

I SHALL KEEP SINGING: GENDER IN THE POETRY OF EMILY DICKINSON

Wednesday
October 15, 2025
2:00-3:15pm
Boyd Recital Hall
Rowan University

**Join us for a discussion
of the role gender
played in the poetic life
of Emily Dickinson and a
reading of some of her poems.**



With presentations by
Dr. Catherine Wilcoxson, Department of English
Dr. Melissa Tuckman, Department of English

Sponsored by
Department of English
Women's & Gender Studies Program
Ric Edelman College of Communication, Humanities & Social Sciences

Free & Open to the Public

 **Rowan University**
RIC EDELMAN COLLEGE OF
COMMUNICATION, HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

In October, WGS co-sponsored *I Shall Keep Singing*, a discussion of the role gender played in the poetic life of Emily Dickinson. This event was held in conjunction with the Department of Music's *Emily Dickinson in Art Song* recital of Dickinson poems set to music and performed by professional artists from Lyric Fest alongside Rowan students.

Dr. Cathy Wilcoxson and Dr. Melissa Tuckman, both of the Department of English, gave presentations about, respectively, the American literary context of Dickinson's poetry and the ambiguous use of gender and sexuality in both Dickinson's poetry and persona. Students Allison Passalacqua and Emile Wong each gave interpretive readings of several Dickinson poems

The event closed with a question-and-answer session that demonstrated the extent to which Emily Dickinson's mastery as a poet still carries the power of provoking thought, curiosity and reflection within the Rowan community.

EVENTS

National Girls and Women in Sports Day (NGWSD) February 2026



Rowan University's National Girls & Women in Sports Celebration

This celebration inspires girls and women to play and be active, to realize their full power. The confidence, strength and character gained through sports participation are the very tools girls and women need to become strong leaders in sports and life.

Kopenhaver Suite
Bozorth Hall, room 114

Friday, February 6, 2:00 pm Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony Watch Party

The 2026 Winter Olympics begin February 6 and run until the 22nd, taking place in Northeast Italy. Come watch the Opening Ceremonies unfold.



Esby Gym

Saturday, February 7 1:00 pm The Profs face off against Ramapo in the NJAC matchup



King Auditorium, Bozorth Hall

Monday, February 16 6:00 pm Pizza with the Pros

Network, ask questions, and learn about working in the sports industry from a professional with experience.



FEBRUARY 2026 EVENTS

National Girls and Women in Sports Day (NGWSD) is an annual campus-wide initiative at Rowan, which this year featured a 2026 Olympics Opening Ceremony Watch Party in conjunction with the Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication and a women's basketball game against Ramapo. Several women who work in the sports industry also appeared at the Center for Sports Communication and Social Impact Pizza with the Pros series, including Lyric Hamilton, the first African American woman to oversee operations for a National Hockey League, and Devan Kaney, the sideline reporter for the Philadelphia Eagles radio broadcasts.

EVENTS

Five Voices, One Day - March 9, 2026

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

FIVE VOICES, ONE DAY

About the Conference

In observance of International Women's Day, five speakers approach issues related to women from diverse perspectives. The goal of this event is to create a space for critical dialogue and an exchange of ideas about the challenges women face and potential pathways forward.

**MAR 2026
03-09
12-3PM
HOLLYBUSH MANSION**

 **Rowan University**
RIC EDELMAN COLLEGE OF
COMMUNICATION, HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES



Kathy Javian
Associate Teaching Professor -
Political Science



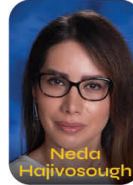
Lauren Banko-Ortiz
Associate Teaching Professor -
Political Science



Stuti Jha
Associate Professor -
Political Science



Elaine Zundl
Assistant Teaching Professor -
Political Science



Neda Hajivosough
Visiting Professor -
International Studies

Sponsored by

Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, Political Science & Economics, Rowan Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights, Women's and Gender Studies, Hollybush Center, and Ric Edelman College Dean's Office

In observance of International Women's Day, WGS co-sponsored ***Five Voices, One Day***, a conference held at the Hollybush Mansion. The event featured five faculty speakers divided into two panels. The international panel examined women's struggles and leadership across the globe. Stuti Jha (Associate Professor, Political Science) presented on the far-reaching consequences of son preference in India and its impact on women's lives; Kathy Javian (Associate Teaching Professor, Political Science) addressed the state of women's political representation internationally, drawing on comparative data to assess how far women have come—and how far there is still to go—in achieving parity in elected office; and Neda Hajivosough (Visiting Professor, International Studies) spoke about women leading sustainable change through Iranian peace initiatives and global feminist solidarity, exploring how women have organized in pursuit of justice. The domestic panel turned the lens to the United States. Lauren Banko-Ortiz (Associate Teaching Professor, Political Science) asked what sports can teach us about the glass ceiling, using sports as a labor market laboratory for studying bias and discrimination, and Elaine Zundl (Assistant Teaching Professor, Political Science) examined the intersections of gender, work, and the social safety net in the United States.

The Hollybush room filled with students who brought energy and curiosity to the discussions, peppering the speakers with questions and engaging deeply with the issues raised across both panels. The event was sponsored by the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, Political Science & Economics, the Rowan Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights, WGS, the Hollybush Center, and the Ric Edelman College Dean's Office.

EVENTS

RUMOCA Ribbon Cutting - March 12, 2026

YOU'RE INVITED! RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR ROWAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Please join our special guests and the Rowan University of Museum of Contemporary Art in partnership with Women's and Gender Studies to celebrate the debut of our new name and the reopening of RUMOCA at Westby Hall, home to the historic collaborative installation, *The Sister Chapel*. Student docents will be on hand to help interpret *The Sister Chapel* as well as highlights and new acquisitions from the museum's permanent collection of art.

About RUMOCA

The Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art (RUMOCA) serves as a vibrant cultural destination for South Jersey, the Rowan community, and the surrounding region. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive, accessible, and just environment that promotes dialogue and collaboration among artists, students, faculty, the public, and other cultural institutions. Through interdisciplinary exhibitions, artist talks, public programming, and a world-class permanent collection, RUMOCA presents diverse forms of contemporary art by professional artists whose work is thought-provoking, relevant, and timely.

The Museum operates two venues: RUMOCA at 301 High Street presents curated exhibitions by professional contemporary artists, accompanied by robust educational programming. Located at the intersection of Rowan University's campus and the heart of Glassboro, the gallery functions as an active arts resource for both students and the broader public. RUMOCA at Westby Hall features curated selections from the museum's collection and is anchored by a permanent installation of *The Sister Chapel*, a historic feminist collaboration.

About the Museum Collection

The Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art collection consists of more than 450 objects with particular emphasis on the works of American women artists who were active in the pivotal period of the 1970s and 1980s. The collection features a number of nationally and internationally recognized artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Audrey Flack, Nancy Holt, Alice Neel, Sylvia Sleigh, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, and Betty Woodman. A central component of the museum's permanent collection is *The Sister Chapel* (1974–78), a historic collaborative installation created by thirteen contributors at the height of the women's art movement.

The museum's permanent collection was established in 2008 by Andrew D. Hottle, Professor of Art History at Rowan University. Through his efforts, the Sylvia Sleigh Collection was donated in 2011 and formed the foundation of the permanent collection. Consisting of over 100 paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs by women artists, it was amassed by Sylvia Sleigh (1916–2010), a pioneering feminist painter. She acquired the works as a way to support women and honor their achievements, regardless of whether they were critically acclaimed or financially successful. Sleigh's philosophy of emphasizing quality over commercial success has served as a guiding principle for the museum's ongoing acquisitions. The collection has continued to grow through generous donations from artists and collectors.

In honor of Women's History Month, WGS and the College of the Arts co-sponsored a ribbon-cutting event celebrating the renamed **Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art (RUMOCA)** and the reopening of RUMOCA at Westby Hall. Paired with RUMOCA at 301 High Street, which will continue to present curated exhibitions of professional contemporary artists, the reopening of the Westby Hall space brings RUMOCA's two locations together under one identity. RUMOCA at Westby Hall is home to the *The Sister Chapel*, a historic collaborative installation created at the height of the women's art movement by thirteen female artists to depict a "hall of fame" of women's achievements presented from the female perspective.

In addition to *The Sister Chapel*, RUMOCA at Westby Hall features curated displays of the museum's permanent collection. Established by Dr. Andrew Hottle, Professor of Art History, the collection consists of more than 450 pieces of art with particular emphasis on the works of American women artists who were active in the pivotal period of the 1970s and 1980s. With an emphasis on quality over commercial success, the collection honors the achievements of women artists, regardless of whether they were critically acclaimed or financially successful.



Thursday, March 12, 3:30 PM
RUMOCA at Westby Hall, Room 110
237 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, NJ 08028

STUDENTS



Sara Farris, Class of 2026

History Major with Minors in WGS, International Studies, and Italian Studies and CUGS in Queer Theory
WGS Senior of Distinction, 2026

WGS helped shape my understanding of the complex social hierarchies that exist within our society and how they have come to be. With that said, the WGS experience helped me become a better historian, and I will definitely use these learning experiences in the future. My favorite/most memorable WGS courses would have to be either *Queer Theory* or *Women and Nonbinary Identities in Sports*. Both of these classes provided me with new perspectives on both society and gender. After I graduate, my future plans are to get a master's in a field relating to human rights / international development and management.



Denise Gonzalez, Class of 2028

Psychology Major with Minor in WGS

My experience in the WGS program has helped me grow as both a student and as a person. Every course I have taken while completing my minor has shown me a variety of experiences and perspectives spanning across time and occurring all over the world. Engaging with these lessons along with my professors and peers has greatly helped in developing my empathy and open-mindedness, as well as my strength and drive to continue creating change for myself and others while keeping in mind that our world is beautifully diverse. The spaces in which we interact with one another and seek solutions must acknowledge this and strive for equity and inclusion, and the learning experience I have shared with this incredible community has encompassed this idea and given me the skills to bring this into other spaces. I recently participated in the New Jersey Women's and Gender Studies Consortium Undergraduate Research Colloquium, where I presented my research project rooted in queer theory and was able to see other students' presentations. Connecting with other scholars while sharing deeply educational and impactful conversation was an amazing experience, and I look forward to participating in more opportunities like this.

STUDENTS



Veronica Kelly, Class of 2026

History Major with Minors in WGS and Psychology

Minoring in WGS at Rowan has enhanced my ability to think critically, analyze complex societal issues, and understand global power structures throughout history to present day. WGS has broadened my perspective of the world around me and allowed space to recognize my personal biases and learn from them. I have also made so many amazing friends just by being in a WGS course! This program helped me gain professional experience by working closely with my peers, communicating through controversial topics, and improving my research and writing skills.



Kaylie Lopez, Class of 2026

General Studies Major with Minors in WGS and Psychology and
CUGS in Women, Gender, and Society

I am so grateful for my time as a WGS student at Rowan University. The WGS program truly shaped my experience at Rowan. From the very first class, the WGS courses drove my passion for education. I was always most excited to attend WGS lectures, and they fueled my drive through my education experience. The WGS courses and professors educate us students on the crucial history missing from our mainstream curriculum, offering women's history, trans history, and queer history through an intersectional lens. My time as a WGS student will support me in my future career path as a human service professional working with a queer nonprofit organization.

STUDENTS



Kayleigh Naprawa, Class of 2026

Political Science Major with Minors in WGS and Sociology
Martinson Honors College

My journey in the WGS minor began during my first semester in an Honors introductory course, which fundamentally reshaped my understanding of the societal influence of gender. As a first-generation college student and the daughter of a single mother, the curriculum resonated deeply with my lived experiences of gender norms, eventually inspiring me to apply for and receive the Thelma Rebecca Dyer Caswell and Helen Criden Cohen Scholarship. This academic foundation became the catalyst for my research career. Through the course *Women in American Politics*, I began working with the John H. Martinson Honors College on the Honors with Distinction track. My resulting study, “Words as Weapons: A Critical Feminist Examination of Online Gendered Harassment, Violent Language, and Alt-Right Rhetoric,” allowed me to synthesize my passions for WGS, political science, and public policy. I employed a multi-method approach to analyze how online gender-based harassment affects American women politicians, presenting my findings at the Northeast Regional Honors Council annual conference and producing a 40-page research paper. The WGS minor has been more than an academic pursuit; it has been the lens through which I view my professional future. My research and academic background have prepared me for a career dedicated to advocacy and civil rights. Whether serving as President of the Pre-Law Society or working as a legislative intern, I carry the critical frameworks of WGS with me as I aspire to become a civil rights lawyer and continue breaking barriers within the legal field.



Mia Sinclair, Class of 2026

Psychology Major with Minors in WGS and Human Resource Management

My introduction to WGS was through a class called *Intro to Women and Gender Studies* with Dr. Yvonne Hammond, which I initially took as an elective. As someone who has always felt passionate about women’s issues, I was really excited to see this course being offered at Rowan. In that class, I became aware of the WGS minor, and I immediately knew that I wanted to sign up for it. Throughout my time in WGS, I have learned so much about not just society, but my own identity as well. In fact, my experience in WGS has made me feel so much more comfortable in my own skin, and it has also allowed me to confidently call myself a feminist. The things that I learned through WGS courses led me to become much more passionate about social issues, which made me take an interest in social policy. Due to my interests in both social issues and mental health, I will be starting my MSW at the University of Pennsylvania this fall, with the hopes of eventually being able to make a difference for the voices that typically go unheard. I am forever grateful not only for my experience in WGS, but for the professors who shaped this experience, particularly Dr. Whitney Cox, Dr. Colleen Montgomery, and Professor Kate Harman.



Matthew Bourne Reed, Class of 2023

My minor in WGS is one of the most impactful experiences I had in college. Having graduated and started a career in engineering, I use the skills that I learned in WGS throughout my career and life in general. In my job, when discussing the best way to move forward on a project, I am able to comfortably voice any disagreements with my coworkers and bosses, a direct result of the many thoughtful discussions that we had in all the WGS classes. And since engineering is still a male-dominated industry, I have been able to push back against some of my coworkers' internal biases to help make our office culture more inclusive. As a citizen of the modern day, I have used my WGS skills to navigate a media landscape where misinformation can spread more easily than truth. In the WGS program I learned how to approach issues with the skepticism and scrutiny required to understand nuances and challenge hegemonic narratives. The research skills I was taught and used frequently throughout my WGS minor are the same skills I use today. Lastly, in my personal life I continue to challenge my own beliefs and biases to better connect with the people around me. I loved my time in the WGS program and am grateful to everyone who was part of my WGS experience.



Katherine Trauger, Class of 2021

After graduating from Rowan in 2021 with dual BAs in History and Political Science and a minor in WGS, I began my MSc in Russian and East European Studies at the University of Oxford on a full scholarship as an Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre Scholar. Leaving Rowan and the WGS program, I was especially interested in gender dynamics in authoritarian states. At Oxford, I wrote my dissertation on the relationship between U.S. military assistance, foreign aid, and gender development in Uzbekistan during the Global War on Terror. After graduating from Oxford, I completed an MA in International Relations at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) as a Public Service Fellow. While at SAIS, I interned at the U.S. Department of State and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

I am now a Policy Analyst at the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization in Washington, D.C., where I work on U.S. defense and national security policy. Notably, my WGS training gave me a framework for interrogating assumptions—about power, institutions, and what gets left out of dominant narratives. That habit of rigorous, source-critical thinking translates directly into my work, where unexamined assumptions can lead to serious analytical failures.

WGS REQUIREMENTS

Women's and Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines gender roles in the complex contexts of culture and society, raising important questions about social, political, economic, and cultural institutions. Women's and Gender Studies courses provide an opportunity for intensive study and in-depth analysis. Many Women's and Gender Studies courses fit the global/multicultural designation. Interested students can contact Dr. Melissa R. Klapper, Coordinator of Women's and Gender Studies, at klapper@rowan.edu for more information.

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

Each student enrolled in the Women's and Gender Studies minor is required to complete 18 credit hours of Women's and Gender Studies courses. Courses should optimally be taken in a sequence from general introductory courses to more specialized, upper division courses. Each student is required to take:

The core course, *Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* OR *Honors Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* (INTR 01.130); and

Fifteen (15) additional credits of approved WGS courses (ranked First and Second Tier), of which nine (9) credits must be from the First Tier and up to six (6) credits must be from the Second Tier.

Sample First Tier course:

CMS 04320 *Communicating Gender*

HIST 05424 *Women in Modern American History*

REL 10335 *Sex and the Bible*

Sample Second Tier courses:

ENG 02205 *Adolescent Literature*

PSY 05310 *Psychology of Human Sexuality*

RTF 01403 *Deconstructing Disney*

CUGS REQUIREMENTS

Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Women, Gender, and Media

INTR 01130 *Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* OR *Honors Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* and three electives drawn from the course list below:

ARHS 03340 *Survey of Women Artists*

CMS 04310 *Images of Gender in Popular Culture*

CMS 04320 *Communicating Gender*

ENGL 02210 *Gender, Sexuality, and Literature*

RTF 03272 *Images of Women in Film*

Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Women, Gender, and Society

INTR 01130 *Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* OR *Honors Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* and three electives drawn from the course list below:

ANTH 02322 *Sex and Sex Roles in a Cross Cultural Perspective*

LAWJ 05346 *Women, Crime, and Criminal Justice*

HIST 05423 *Women in Early American History*

HIST 05424 *Women in Modern American History*

PHIL 09328 *Philosophy and Gender*

POSC 07311 *Women in American Politics*

PSY 01200 *Psychology of Women and Cultural Experience*

SOC 08370 *Sociology of Women*

To learn more about Women's and Gender Studies at Rowan, visit our website at go.rowan.edu/wgs