



Speaking Queerly

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SPEAKING QUEERLY

WGS ON WEDNESDAY

EVENT FEATURES

SCHOLARSHIPS &
AWARDS

STAFF & FACULTY
ACTIVITY

On February 12th, 2025, 90+ people from our community celebrated queer voices through poetry and community. The evening began with invited speakers who were featured in *The Mockingbird*, followed by those who signed up "open-mic-style". All had truly beautiful and powerful messages. Early Bird provided their delicious tea and coffee to warm our bellies, while our hearts were warmed with words. Audience feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with calls to plan similar events in the Fall.



Attendees



MC's Emily
& Lacy

Please mark your calendars for our Speaking Queerly II event scheduled for October 1st from 6-9pm in the East Tennessee Room!

"It was truly the perfect time to come together, to create a sacred space to listen and support our community. I certainly felt grateful to be in that room."



*Inspiring,
Courageous,
Talented
Readers*





SPRING 2025 SPEAKERS

WOMEN'S, GENDER, & SEXUALITY STUDIES



CERRONE FOSTER, PH.D.

FEBRUARY 5TH

STUDENTS SEARCHING FOR A C.U.R.E: TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS IN WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH

Inequities in women's cardiovascular disease research occur across the aging spectrum impacting disease outcomes. Participants will learn how sex differences, menopause, and hormones impact cardiovascular disease, and preventative measures to improve outcomes. Participants will also learn how ETSU can train students in undergraduate research using a course-based model to increase students' career readiness, sense of belonging, and building of rich relationships.



DR. TRENA M. PAULUS

FEBRUARY 26TH

"HARDER, FASTER, BETTER, STRONGER": QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE AGE OF AI

Generative artificial intelligence tools (AI) are changing the landscape of qualitative research. Algorithmic bias, threats to data privacy, and concerns about the accuracy of AI-assist tools are a few of the methodological challenges researchers are facing. In this talk I will share a reflexivity framework for considering the consequences of using AI for qualitative research studies.



SENTA SCARBOROUGH

MARCH 5TH

CENTERING THE NARRATIVE: THE SCIENCE OF STORYTELLING AND ORIGIN STORIES

Origin stories, they're the making of legends, civilizations and superheroes. The tales of beginnings are fueled by the science of storytelling making them a super power of their own. They can change our perspectives, inspire us, entertain us and move us to action. This guided discussion will focus on how you can excavate your own origin stories to promote and elevate your own work.



ROYA FARZANEH, D.M.A

APRIL 2ND

VOICES UNVEILED: IRANIAN WOMEN IN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Roya Farzaneh explores the complex challenges faced by women musicians in Iran. Examining the historical impact of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and contemporary societal constraints, the presentation highlights the remarkable resilience of Iranian women pursuing musical careers.

WGSS 2020: WOMEN IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

(New Compass Core Course)

While the *Women in Global Perspective* course is not new, being a Compass Core Course is and Pat Buck (professor) is always bringing fresh and innovative ways to engage with the material. This semester, Pat had the students present on Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in the multicultural center, open to the faculty, staff, and students of ETSU.

Here is what Pat has to say about the course and impact of this assignment and course: **"We start with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and use that as a framework for studying many of the same topics that show up in our WGSS intro class; gender socialization, family, reproduction, sexuality, work, politics and leadership. We also look at the global economy and issue of development and sustainability. One of the course themes is that women are not passive--They have agency to create change, they work in many ways to influence their private lives and public status. That's why one of the main assignments in the course is to research NGO's which serve and advocate for women."**

All presentations for this course are available on our website. The students got to use Microsoft sway, a operating system provided by ETSU through Microsoft. Dr. Williams stated, "It made the presentations very impactful".



"I thought it was really cool to be able to see just how many NGO's there were internationally that were aimed at helping women in countless ways. The one I chose, called Equality Now, was amazing and I loved learning about how they had done some very important and powerful things and made differences in the lives of women and girls around the world."
- WGSS 2020 Student



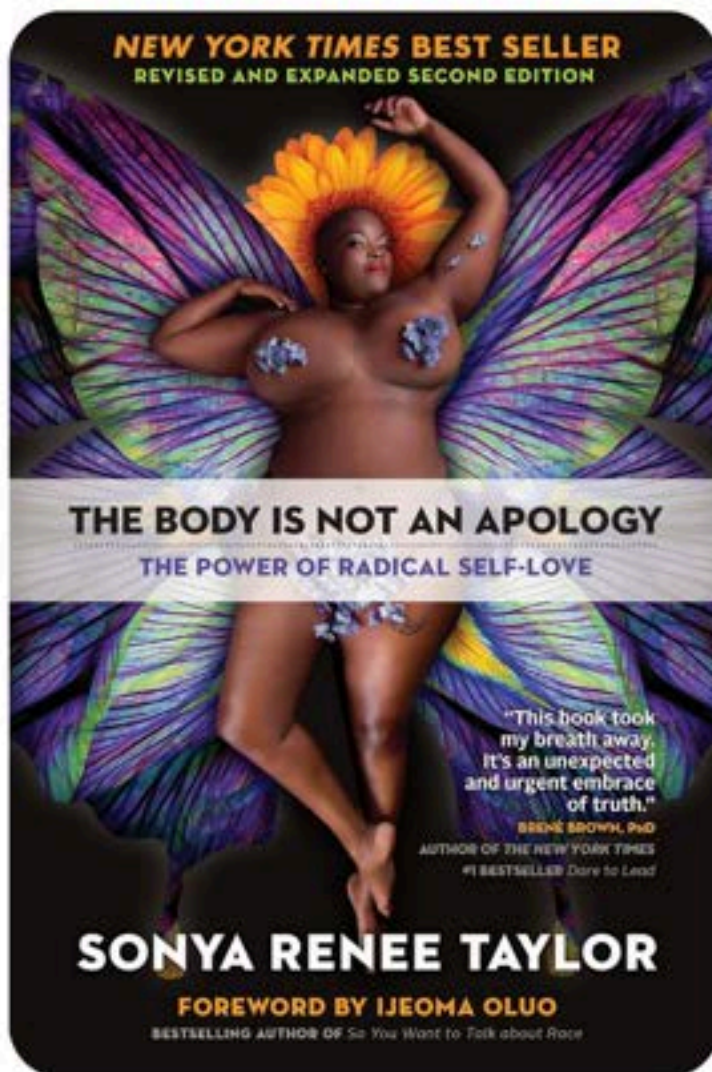
Pat would like to mention a special thank you to our very own Devorah Daught (executive aid) and Dr. Stacey Williams for publicizing the event. Heidi Marsh (Director, WGRC) for setting everything up, and Bethany Dye of the Multicultural Center for hosting. Community collaboration is a core value in WGSS and is ever present in all of our work.

BOOK DISCUSSION

THE BODY IS NOT AN APOLOGY

In Spring 2025, we decided to have a book discussion about *The Body is Not an Apology* by Sonya Renee Taylor, in honor of Women's History Month. Dr. Williams has wanted to focus on embodiment, and this book helps readers understand the world around them, as well as the political nature of bodies. Taylor provides readers with tools and insights to navigate a world that often marginalizes those who do not fit conventional beauty standards, emphasizing the importance of challenging systems that perpetuate inequality and fostering a global movement toward compassion and justice.

WGSS partnered with WGRC and the Multicultural Center to make the book discussion more accessible to those who wanted to join. WGRC & Multicultural Center provided free books to those who wanted to participate. This is the second embodiment event that WGRC & WGSS have partnered on, the first being the "PCOS Stories" Panel.



"Although we had folks in the group who had never met each other before, by coming together around this issue that we have all been impacted by in some way, we almost immediately formed a supportive space where each was able to share vulnerable thoughts and experiences, form connections, and feel less isolated in the struggles of our lives. I was able to leave with insights gathered from each group member who had shared a unique perspective or put words to a common experience we had been unaware of or unable to define." - Attendee

Period Product Donation and Giveaway!



In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, WGSS, WGRC, and The Pride Center were awarded a donation of surplus menstrual hygiene products. The organizing team at the NE TN disaster relief center housed at Bristol Motor Speedway reached out to ETSU through the Student Government Association to gauge willingness of campus departments and organizations to help distribute the overwhelming donation of menstrual products received. Through a partnership with the Department of Sustainability and the Logistics team at Goodwill of Tennesse, five pallets of products were procured from the Bristol Motor Speedway to be distributed by WGSS, the WGRC, the Pride Center, and RISE: Healthy for Life on campus and in the larger Johnson City community. WGSS received a Donation of 5,552 menstrual pads, all counted and inventoried by Sierra Tenney, one of our FWS students. We make it part of our mission to supply the bathrooms in our building as well as host events dedicated to product distribution to students. We love contributing this positive impact on campus.

"Through tabling, we were able to help students who needed one or two [pads] to get them through the day, but we also received the opportunity to provide months' worth of products." - Sierra Tenney

New Scholarship!

Susan M. Rigney Endowed Scholarship



Susan M. Rigney, a former Alumni of ETSU's Counseling program funded a scholarship for WGSS. She recounts her time as a student, saying the campus felt beautiful and welcoming. She has continued to keep up with ETSU after graduation and has been impressed with ETSU's commitment to address student needs and interest.

Funding

An Initial gift of \$26,000 from Susan Rigney Shall establish the Endowment, \$25,000 endowed and \$1,000 to go into the operating fund of the endowment.

Scholarship Criteria

1. The applicants must be a declared minor in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program.
2. Current ETSU students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
3. Documented financial need may be considered in the selection of the recipient
4. Applicants must be full time students.

"I want the WGSS students to know that they have an opportunity for financial support, I want to encourage the students at ETSU to feel that there are alumni who are paying attention to their successes and cheering them on to reach their full potential. My hope is that one day I will read about a student from the WGSS program who is achieving their dream. That will make it all worth while."

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Congratulations to the 2025 Recipients!



Karen L. Cajka Memorial Scholarship Recipient **Sydney Partin**

My name is Sydney Partin. I am currently majoring in the Social Work program here at East Tennessee State University, with a double minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Criminal Justice. Outside the classroom, I am actively involved in the Student Social Work Association and will serve as Vice President for the upcoming academic year.

Barbara Murphy Brooks WGSS Scholarship Recipient **Irianna Blair**

I'm Irianna Blair and I'm a freshman here at ETSU. I'm Majoring in Clinical Psychology with a Minor in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies. I am also a 2025 graduate of Dr. White Wright's Emerging Leaders Academy. In my free time I love reading, spending time with the people closest to me, and giving back to the community.



Barbara Murphy Brooks WGSS Scholarship Recipient **Allison Monroe**

My name is Allison Monroe, and I am a senior majoring in Clinical Psychology with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I work as an undergraduate assistant in the Sexuality, Trauma, and Reproductive Health (STARH) Lab, and I am the current secretary of Tri-Iota. Outside of academics, I enjoy playing racquetball, pickleball, and tennis. I also love to read, particularly any story with a heartbreaking plotline, thrillers, and memoirs!



Susan M. Rigney WGSS Scholarship Recipient **Aurora Curtis**

Hello, my name is Aurora and I am an English major with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I am studying to become a writer for film and television, and hope to one day work as creative director for a project of my own. In my free time I love to work on my DnD campaign, play games with my friends, and spoil my cat Nimbsy.



Feminist Activist Awards



Dee Meadows

Graduate Feminist Activist Award Recipient

Dee Meadows, is a doctoral candidate at ETSU. As a psychologist, she is passionate about expanding access to mental health services in underserved communities. As an African American woman, building community has always been a sacred and healing space for those around her. Recently, she has dedicated much of her time at ETSU to creating the Clinicians of Color Collective.

"I hope this group continues to unite students of color at ETSU and amplify diverse voices on campus." -Dee



Rebecca Pearson

Undergraduate Feminist Activist Award Recipient

Rebecca Pearson is a passionate reproductive health advocate and nursing student at ETSU, committed to advancing reproductive justice in Appalachia. As co-founder of the ETSU Elevates period education project and President of the Appalachian Reproductive Health Alliance, she has distributed over 10,000+ reproductive health products and led major community outreach initiatives. A national member of EC4EC and board member of RISE: Healthy for Life, Rebecca designs inclusive sex education programs and champions emergency contraceptive access on and off campus. Her work has been recognized locally and globally, including a presentation at the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Summit.

Looking Ahead

Notable Women Award Recipients Fall 2025!



Christine D. Lewis, PhD, LPC (MS), NCC, NCSC

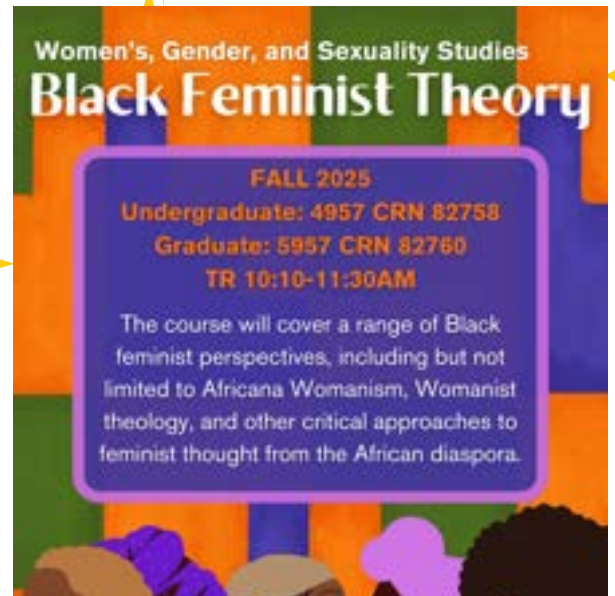
November 19th
from 5-7pm
(with food and
socializing
starting at 4:30)
in the East TN
Rm



Cara Harker, MFA



October 1st 2025!



Black Feminist Theory Grad & Undergrad Class

Contact wgss@etsu.edu for more information

WGSS OFFICE TEAM



**Dr. Stacey
Williams**
Director
WGSS



Devorah Daught
Executive Aide
WGSS



Mattie Raza
Graduate
Assistant
WGSS



Emma Ledford
Tuition Scholar
WGSS



Sierra Tenney
Student Worker
WGSS



Lex Trueblood
Student Worker
WGSS



Charlie Abernathy
Student Worker
WGSS



Aroura Chadwell
Student Worker
WGSS

WGSS FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Publications:

Reyes, A., **White, M.**, and Lindo, N. (2024). Integrating Spirituality in Counseling with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer Clients. Counseling and Values.

Tolley, R (2025)[forthcoming] [Review of the book Unpalatable: stories of pain and pleasure in Southern cookbooks by Tippen, Carrie] Choice. Vol. 62.

Tolly, R (June 2025) [Review of the book People, power, and change: organizing for democratic renewal by Ganz, Marshall] Choice Vol. 62, Issue 10.

Tolley, R (Mar 2025) [forthcoming] [Review of the book The virtues of underwear, by Edwards, Nina] Choice Vol. 62, Issue 7.

Templeton, J., Dixon, W. E., **Williams, S. L.**, Morelen, D., Driggers-Jones, L. P., & Robertson, C. (2024). The mediating role of social support on the link between adverse childhood experiences and adult mental health. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 252, 106148. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2024.106148>

Williams, S. L., Van Leuven, E. G., Wilkins, B., & Mann, A. (2024). A moderated mediation model of minority stress in Appalachian transgender and nonbinary individuals. Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000756>

Presentations:

Leroy-Frazier, J. (June 2024). "‘Everything Bore the Weight of Everything Else:’ Reconstructing Southern Literature in Yaa Gyasi’s Homegoing"-- accepted for presentation at the Society for the Study of Southern Literature biennial conference, Gulfport, MS.

Leroy-Frazier, J. (March 2024). "Ecofeminism and Appalachian Literature: Local, Regional, Global" (pre-arranged panel, co-presented with Dr. Deedee Abbott, Georgia State University, and Mandi Aubrey, East Tennessee State University); individual paper presentation: "the need and strength of roots:’ Ecofeminist Ethics in Wilma Dykeman’s The Far Family"--Appalachian Studies Association annual conference, Western Carolina University.

LeRoy-Frazier, J. (2024) ‘the need and strength of roots:’ Ecofeminist Ethics in Wilma Dykeman’s The Far Family [Conference presentation]. Appalachian Studies Association Annual Conference, Western Carolina University.

LeRoy-Frazier, J., Adeusi, T., Chukwuma, J. (2024) Narratives of Belonging and Community: Local, Regional, and Transnational Identities [Conference presentation]. The Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture, University of Louisville.

Presentations (continued):

McKinney, R., Pinto, S., **White, M. E.**, & Akers, W. P. (October, 2024). From competencies to guidelines: Upcoming changes from SAIGE taskforces. Presentation delivered at the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities conference, Golden, CO.

Pusateri, C., Rogers, D., Brooks-Taylor, T., Brown J.B., & Langenbrunner, M. (12-14 April, 2023). "Service Learning through Historical Context: Building on Wisdom and Community Needs," [workshop presentation], Gulf-South Summit on Service Learning & Community Engagement, Athens, GA.

Rogers, D., Pusateri, C., Brooks-Taylor, T., Brown J.B., & Langenbrunner, M. (12-14 April, 2023). "The Critical Role of Service Learning in Academia," [workshop presentation], Gulf-South Summit on Service Learning & Community Engagement, Athens, GA.

Tolly, R (March, 2025) "Library workers and imposter syndrome," [keynote speaker] Southeast Collaborative Online Conference, State Library of North Carolina

Tolly, R (April, 2025) "Stitching through storms: Quilts of resilience and recovery" Tennessee Arts Commission, Tennessee Folklife Institute, Buffalo Valley, TN

White, M. E. (October, 2024). Trans self-disclosure in CES: Navigating safety and support across roles. Presentation delivered at the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities conference, Golden, CO.

Williams, S. L. (April, 2025). Expanding minority stress models to address the mental health needs of sexual and gender minorities in South Central Appalachia. Invited talk for the Connecting Across Disciplines conference at University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Williams, S. L., Van Leuven, E., Wilkins, B., & Mann, A. K. (March, 2025). Can Support and Community Connection Mitigate Psychological Effects of Minority Stress in Trans and Nonbinary Appalachians? Paper presented at the UNC Asheville Queer Studies Conference. Asheville, NC.

Williams, S. L. (March, 2025). Division 35 Book Series: Incoming Editor Discusses 2023 Book and Submission Process. Psychology of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Book Blitz at the annual conference of the Association for Women in Psychology. Santa Fe, NM.

Henry, S., Hampton, G., Mohammed, S., & Williams, S. L. (March, 2025). PCOS and Positive Growth: Qualitative and Quantitative Findings in Cisgender Women and Gender Diverse Individuals. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Women in Psychology. Santa Fe, NM.

Williams, S. L., & Henry, S. (March, 2025). Growing a Liberatory and Gender Inclusive Research Program on the Psychology of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Women in Psychology. Santa Fe, NM.

Williams, S. L. (Feburary, 2025). Meeting the Moment: Addressing Minority Stress to Protect Gender Minority Mental Health in South Central Appalachia. Continuing Education 3-hour APA Continuing Education Workshop for the Intermountain Psychological Association, Johnson City, TN.

Grants, Courses, & Other Activities:

Jill LeRoy-Frazier:

CDST 5/4017 Ecofeminism (Spring 2024)

MALS 5200 Travelers, Expats, Migrants, Diaspora, and Transnational Identity (Fall 2023)

MALS 5900 Nigerian Women Writing Diaspora (Spring 2023)

MALS 5300 Intersectionality and Social Justice (Fall 2022)

ETSU Presidential Grant-in-Aid, to attend the Leitner Center for Law and Justice Summer Human Rights Institute at Fordham Law School, New York City, \$5000, AY 2022-23.

Rebecca Tolley:

July 2024, second year to teach trauma informed library leadership at Harvard Graduate School of Education's Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians.

Mickey White:

White, M. E. (Producer). (2024, August 23). Mastering the dynamics of kink-aware counseling (No. 280) [Audio Podcast]. The Thoughtful Counselor. Concept Professional Training.

White, M. (Producer). (2024, May 24). Generations of resilience: Counseling LGBTQ+ older adults (No. 273) [Audio Podcast]. The Thoughtful Counselor.

White, M. (2024). Summer Research Assignment (Funded) Clemmer College Internal Research Advisory Council (ETSU); primary investigator. Project: Grant Development for Community-Engaged LGBTQ+ Support & Training Support for Rural Mental Health Trainees

Stacey Williams:

Awarded Distinguished Publication Award from the Association for Women in Psychology

Appointed incoming editor of the book series for Division 35 (Psychology of Women) of the American Psychological Association