

Friends of the

PEMBROKE CENTER

Newsletter

SPRING 2024 / BROWN UNIVERSITY



Pembroke Center Postdoctoral Fellow Courses: Connecting Feminist Research and Teaching

▲ Sareh Afshar and Emily Mitamura, 2023-24 Postdoctoral Fellows, participating in the Pembroke Seminar.

PERHAPS THE MOST well-known component of a Pembroke Center Postdoctoral Fellow's work is their participation in the annual research seminar. Led by a prominent Brown faculty member (or pair of faculty members) who designs the year's topic, the Pembroke Seminar convenes scholars with a diversity of experience from a range of academic fields.

The Seminar's research community includes faculty, visiting scholars, undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. The postdoctoral fellows participate in the weekly seminar discussions, sharing their own research in engaging with others, creating an interdisciplinary and intergenerational, feminist intellectual space that is the hallmark of the Seminar experience.

This intergenerational feminist work extends from the Pembroke Seminar into the undergraduate classroom. Each year brings three to four scholars with different emphases and disciplines to campus for the Seminar, and in doing so brings their scholarship to Gender and Sexuality Studies (GNSS) undergraduate students. Every postdoctoral fellow develops their own undergraduate course, whose topic complements the Seminar theme. The topic of the 2023-24 Seminar, led by Professor Patricia Ybarra (Theatre Arts and Performance Studies), was activist and liberation movements of the late twentieth century. As Emily Mitamura, Shauna M. Stark '76, P'10 Postdoctoral Fellow, says, the Seminar "brings us together in sustained conversation to look back at formative readings, art, and anti-colonial feminist movements to consider how they shape and might better our present." She notes that, "while these kinds of questions were already central to my work, the space to think them through with others in the Seminar as well as to talk through my

Continued on page 4

Congratulations, Graduates!

We are delighted to offer our congratulations to the Brown class of 2024, including our wonderful Gender and Sexuality Studies (GNSS) concentrators and doctoral students in our graduate certificate program.

UNDERGRADUATE CONCENTRATORS

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Alden Hathaway Forbes
Sofia Jaramillo-Vaughan Gerlein
Renny Jiang
Monique Nadine Jonath

Madison Ashley Lease
Alexandra Lucy Lehman
Kara Rose McAndrew
Priya Mosher
Ruby Mae Whitfield O'Keeffe
Vera Solstice Rosenfield O'Neill
Malcolm Antonio Shanks

Ara Sura
Venus Talley
Kellie Willhite

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE STUDENT

Sara Colantuono, Italian Studies

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Editor of differences:
A Journal of Feminist
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Helis Sikk
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Administrative Coordinator



From the Director *Debbie Weinstein '93*

Academic year 2023-24 has been wonderfully busy, and writing this letter gives me a moment to reflect on all that happened while I served as Interim Director.

A big piece of news is that during the next academic year, the entire Pembroke Center will come together under one roof, in Pembroke Hall. When the Center was founded in 1981, its home was in Alumnae Hall. That was still the case when I held a Pembroke postdoctoral fellowship in 2002-03 and participated in the seminar led by Professor Anne Fausto-Sterling (Nancy Duke Lewis Professor Emerita of Biology and Gender Studies). Following the renovation of Pembroke Hall in 2008, some of the Center's offices and programs moved to Pembroke Hall, while others remained in Alumnae Hall. A recounting of office arrangements may sound like a back-of-the-house matter, but it illustrates the impressive growth of the Center since its founding over 40 years ago and also hints at some of the challenges of operating a lively academic center while spread across two buildings. Space can shape intellectual community, and I am thrilled that the Pembroke Center will be reunited in one building.

It is particularly resonant that the entire Center will be housed in Pembroke Hall, which was dedicated in 1897 as the first building for the Women's College in Brown University. The move will also give the Center more space to develop and grow the many facets of our research and teaching mission. This transition will require much work, and you can look forward to hearing more the move to Pembroke Hall in the year ahead.

Reflecting back on this year, what I find remarkable is the sustained level of programming happening at the Center. We successfully collaborated with other units – academic and administrative – on so much. From the School of Public Health, the Brown Arts Institute, the Sarah Doyle Center, the Program

in Science, Technology, and Society (STS), and the Office of the President to our ongoing partnership with the University Library, the Pembroke Center is consistently sought out as a strong partner for campus collaboration.

Having a long history with the Pembroke Center, my return as Interim Director has reminded me of its wonderful, continuing strengths. The Pembroke Seminar, under Professor Patricia Ybarra's leadership, was a dynamic space for presenting research and discussing scholarship. This year's postdoctoral fellows have brought a vigor and excitement to our GNSS course offerings as well as to the Pembroke Seminar, as you'll read elsewhere in this newsletter. I'm delighted with the roundtable discussion they organized as part of the Seminar. Our postdocs invited Mimi Thi Nguyen (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Golnar Nikpour (Dartmouth), and Alexander Weheliye (Brown) to the Seminar to engage with the theme of "Endurability: On Promises, Prisons, and Present(s)." Meanwhile, *differences* is flourishing, having launched a new online forum and hosted a highly successful colloquium on the "Limits of Legibility: Questions of Blackness and Sexuality."

It has been rewarding to see how programs that were in their infancy when I left the Center have blossomed. The graduate certificate program, which I among others advocated for, has emerged as a vital program at the Center. Similarly, the staffing of the Pembroke Center Archives has grown – in fact, more than doubled – since I was last here, and the depth and breadth of the collections they are bringing in is astonishing.

It's been an honor to lead the Pembroke Center through such an active and exciting year, and I look forward to attending the lectures and programs lined up for 2024-25. In the meantime, I remain grateful to have had this opportunity. ■

A Note from Your Co-Chairs

Sophie Waskow Rifkin '07
Chair, Pembroke Center Advisory Council

Emily Coe-Sullivan '99
Vice-Chair, Pembroke Center Advisory Council

As our terms as chair and vice-chair of the Pembroke Center's Advisory Council come to a close, we are grateful for the engaged and committed Council members and Friends who continue to further the mission of the Pembroke Center. Over the last two years, the Friends helped make possible the University's acquisition of Mumia Abu-Jamal's papers; organized and hosted programming featuring speakers such as Rhode Island State Senator Tiara Mack '16 and former Brown School of Public Health Deputy Dean Dr. Megan L. Ranney '10 MPH, '08 RES; and are on track to raise a total of nearly \$325,000 to support postdoctoral fellowships, student prizes, public programs, and more.

As a Council, we strengthened and streamlined committee work and explored the mission of the Pembroke Center as it relates to the Friends and how best to describe the many facets of the Center's work. A highlight continues to be the end-of-year student presentations in which grant and prize winners present their work to an audience of family members and Advisory Council members.

We look forward to continuing to serve on the Advisory Council and hope that you will join us in renewing your support of the Pembroke Center today. Enjoy the summer ahead!

Postdoctoral Fellow Courses *cont. from page 1*

own projects with them has shifted the shape of my developing book project in important ways.” Extending this intellectual project, Mitamura and the other 2023-24 Postdoctoral Fellows created courses emphasizing such themes as Black trans studies, the “global knowledge project” of Asian/Asian American feminist thinkers, and women’s liberation movements in the Middle East.

For small academic programs and concentrations such as GNSS, this broad range of postdoctoral course topics is particularly critical. “Postdoc courses expand the interdisciplinary scope of the GNSS curriculum and provide students opportunities to study how topics like race and environmental history, theories and practices of archiving, and the geopolitical formation of the transpacific are fundamentally shaped by questions of gender and sexuality,” says the Center’s Associate Director Wendy Allison Lee. The results of this are evident in the work undergraduate concentrators produce. As Senior Lecturer Denise Davis remarks, “Some of the best capstone and thesis projects I’ve read have been inspired by the seminars these junior faculty teach.”

The value of these courses is also confirmed by the students who take them. Arlyn Patino ’26, a GNSS concentrator and pre-med student, enrolled in Amira Lundy-Harris’s GNSS course “Black Trans Studies” last fall. Lundy-Harris, the 2023-24 Nancy L. Buc ’65 ’95 LLD hon Postdoctoral Fellow, led students in exploring the intellectual heritage of Black trans studies. In doing so, the class examined, among other topics, the racialized history of medicine. Understanding the early U.S. medical profession’s contribution to slavery and the plantation system reframed how Patino understands her future profession. As she says, “This new outlook on the effects of the medical plantation on current practices in medicine, especially in the field of gynecology, cemented my desire to explore these histories and reevaluate the knowledge I want to enter a career in medicine with.” Patino credits her conversations with Dr. Lundy-Harris for opening the door for her to consider a dual MD/PhD, allowing further exploration of the racialized history of medicine.

Transformative experiences such as Patino’s are a frequent occurrence for students in postdoc-taught GNSS classes. Georgia Chan ’23 comments, “I took [2021-22 Shauna M. Stark ’76, P’10 Postdoctoral Fellow] Erica Kanesaka’s ‘Transpacific Femininities’ in the fall of my junior year at Brown. As a GNSS concentrator I had taken a number of gender studies courses before, but none with an Asian/American studies focus like Dr. Kanesaka’s. She did a wonderful mixture of lecturing and discussion facilitation, and taught content from a variety of media spanning various topics within the themes of the course. She was exceptionally passionate and thoughtful about the course content, taking care to share recommendations and have external conversations on theory or adjacent readings.”

Teaching in the GNSS program at Brown is a beneficial career experience for the fellows. Coming early in their careers, this opportunity for scholars to create their own course from scratch is a valuable learning tool. Megan Finch, the 2022-23 Nancy L. Buc ’65 ’95 LLD hon Postdoctoral Fellow, notes that, “Teaching my course helped me to think through the stakes of my arguments about black women’s contemporary fiction in terms of pedagogy.



▲ Postdoctoral Fellow Emily Mitamura teaches class outside during the spring solar eclipse.

Experimenting with the intentional production of community through praxis-focused readings of texts by writers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Toni Morrison, and Octavia Butler helped me to develop the ‘why’ of teaching and research in tandem.” Melanie Abeygunawardana ’16, the 2022-23 Shauna M. Stark ’76, P’10 Postdoctoral Fellow (and recipient of the 2016 Ruth Simmons Prize) returned to the Brown classroom as an alumna with a new perspective on undergraduate education. She states, “It was amazing to see how my research interests in feeling and race translated to and through their perspectives as undergraduates who hail from very diverse backgrounds. It’s so useful to see what concepts and theories resonate with them.”

Experiences like Finch’s and Abeygunawardana’s illustrate the Pembroke Center’s commitment to teaching and research as interconnected enterprises. They also speak to the richness of the yearly Pembroke Seminar. In 2024-25, the Seminar will be led by Macarena Gómez-Barris, Chair and Timothy C. Forbes and Anne S. Harrison University Professor of Modern Culture and Media. Gómez-Barris’s seminar, titled “Unwriting the Anthropocene: A Call to Experiment,” will examine and theorize human impact on and interaction with our environment, asking questions such as “What forms of human and inhuman life find sustenance as ways to inhabit the planetary outside of predictive timelines of extinction?” and “How do the elements of environmental writing underscore the means by which to enliven forms of care, repair, and belonging towards a post-extractive world?” As with every Seminar, this theme drew applicants from a range of fields, from anthropology, art history, history, and Latin American studies to performance studies. In the 2024-25 academic year, students can look forward to postdoctoral fellow-taught courses on such topics as visual art and black feminist theory, the art of survival, and gender and environmental humanities. ■

Pembroke Seminar and Fellows Announced for 2024-25

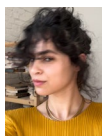
The 2024-25 Pembroke Seminar will be led by Macarena Gómez-Barris, Timothy C. Forbes and Anne S. Harrison University Professor of Modern Culture and Media and Chair of Modern Culture and Media. The seminar's theme: "Unwriting the Anthropocene: A Call to Experiment" drew an exciting range of applicants. The Fellows listed here will meet weekly in Pembroke Hall to, as Gómez-Barris describes it, "experiment with form to think about writing and poetics as a mode of embodied observation and experience," addressing questions such as "What are the ways to trace the presences and absences of the colonial Anthropocene? Is it possible to experiment with form to move deeper into, and towards the other side of, catastrophe? What are the scales of intimacy, affinity and imaginary that engage not only disaster but also the pleasure of our environments?"

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS



Patricia Ekpo '15
Nancy L. Buc '65 LLD'94 hon
Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. 2024 (expected), American Studies,
Yale University

Dissertation: "Antiblackness as Spatial Production: Postminimalism, Site-Specificity, and Land Art, 1970s-Present"



Sarah Richter
Pembroke Center Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. 2024, Performance Studies,
New York University

Dissertation: "Sheltering Anarchy: Feminist Performances Outside the Household"



María Gloria Robalino
Carol G. Lederer Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. 2024 (expected), Comparative Literature,
Stanford University

Dissertation: "Heightened Worlds: Vertiginous Imaginaries in the Pacific Ring of Fire, 1550-1670"



Eda Tarak
Shauna M. Stark '76, P'10 Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. 2024 (expected), Anthropology,
University of California, Santa Cruz

Dissertation: "The Ocean is not Empty: Trade as an Ecological System Shown Through Mediterranean Shipping"

FACULTY FELLOWS



Macarena Gómez-Barris
Timothy C. Forbes and Anne S. Harrison
University Professor of Modern Culture
and Media and Chair of Modern Culture
and Media



Xan Chacko
Director of Undergraduate Studies and
Lecturer in Science, Technology, and Society



Jeremy Lehnen
Senior Lecturer of Language Studies, Associate
Director of the Center for Language Studies,
and Director of the Brazil Initiative



Eleni Sikelianos
Professor of Literary Arts

GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Istifaa Ahmed
American
Studies



Isaac Essex
American
Studies



Ana González
San Martín
Archaeology
and the
Ancient World



JD Stokely
Theatre
Arts and
Performance
Studies

UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS



Rachel
Kamphaus
English/Classics



Jo Ouyang
Brown-RISD,
Ethnic
Studies/
Painting

THE PAPERS OF PAULA J. GIDDINGS OPEN FOR RESEARCH

This spring marked the opening of the Paula J. Giddings papers for research. Notable American writer, editor, and chronicler of African American women’s history, Giddings is a former editor and journalist, critically acclaimed author, and Professor Emerita of Africana Studies at Smith College. She is the author of the renowned biography *Ida: A Sword among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign against Lynching* (2008). Giddings was initially identified as a possible contributor by then-graduate student and curatorial proctor N’Kosi Oates Ph.D. ’22. With the support of Nancy L. Buc ’65 LLD’94 hon Pembroke Center Archivist Mary Murphy, Oates led the acquisition process and Giddings’s papers opened in March.



▲ An undated photo of Giddings with Hillary Clinton, from the Giddings papers.

SPRING INSTRUCTIONAL SESSIONS KEEP ARCHIVES STAFF BUSY

Murphy and Assistant Archivist Amanda Knox led instructional sessions with 132 undergraduate students this spring. These sessions focus on the curatorial process and helping students understand how to use the archives. Associate Professor at the School of Public Health Madina Agénor comments, “The class session with the Pembroke archivists is one to which my students and I look forward every year! It’s critical for public health students not only to be aware of the health injustices that marginalized groups have experienced, but also to learn about the myriad ways in which they have resisted systems of oppression and promoted the health and well-being of their communities through collective resistance and care over time.”



Panelists Rebecca Epstein ’92, Kiana T. Murphy, Logan Green, and Diane Graves ’89.

Adultification Bias: The Erasure of Black Girlhood

Friends from the Washington, D.C. area gathered on April 15, 2024 to engage in a discussion focusing on the Center on Gender Justice & Opportunity at Georgetown Law’s 2017 study, *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls’ Childhood*. This groundbreaking study revealed that adults view Black girls as less innocent and more adult-like than their white peers. Logan Green, Inaugural Youth Storyteller for the Center on Gender Justice & Opportunity, captivated audience members with her spoken-word piece “Reclaiming Girlhood,” which earned her a victory at the 2021 National Speech and Debate competition as Logan became the first Black girl from Mississippi to achieve this honor.

Dawn Risa Crumel, Esq. ’89 moderates the panel discussion.

Other speakers included Rebecca Epstein ’92, Executive Director, Center on Gender Justice & Opportunity; Diane Graves ’89, Professor and Assistant PsyD Program Director, Institute for the Psychological Sciences at Divine Mercy University; Kiana T. Murphy, Assistant Professor of American Studies, Brown University; and Dawn Risa Crumel, Esq. ’89, Managing Counsel, Vanderbilt University Medical Center. This event furthered efforts to raise public awareness about how to overcome this pervasive form of bias and restore the childhood freedoms of Black girls.

Commencement Forum on Banned Books

“Banned Books: Culture Wars and the Freedom to Read” drew a crowd of alumnae/i, family of graduating students, and community members to hear from panelists David Levithan ’94, young adult fiction author and Editorial Director at Scholastic; Jacinda Townsend, novelist and Assistant Professor of Literary Arts, Brown University; and Beatrice Pulliam, Director, Technology & Information Services, Providence Public Library, and President, Rhode Island Library Association. Kelly Clifton, Head of Library Community Engagement, Brown University Library moderated discussion of the current coordinated surge in efforts to censor books in schools and public libraries. Panelists focused on how book bans during the two most recent school years disproportionately affect books about the experiences of LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people, and they shared with audience members strategies at the local and national levels for mobilizing against threats to the freedom to read.



Panelists Jacinda Townsend, Kelly Clifton, David Levithan ’94, and Beatrice Pulliam.

Thank You to Outgoing Advisory Council Chairs

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to Co-Chairs Sophie Waskow Rifkin and Emily Coe-Sullivan for your stewardship, your attentiveness to committee work, and your effective leadership on the full range of issues the Council has considered during your time as Co-Chairs.

Grant Recipients

Faculty Seed Grant Recipients

These grants were awarded during the 2023-24 academic year for 2024-25 projects.

Madina Agénor
*Behavioral and Social Sciences,
School of Public Health*

Project | “Reproductive Entanglements:
Black Women Fighting for
Bodily Autonomy”

Leon Hilton
Theatre Arts & Performance Studies

Project | “Queer Durations: A Symposium”

Joshua Babcock
Anthropology
Project | “Decolonizing Images”

Adam C. Levine
*Center for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Studies,
The Warren Alpert Medical School*
Project | “The Women, Peace and
Security Agenda in the Middle East”

Student Research Grant Recipients

Barbara Anton Community Research Grant

Addison Kerwin '24
Science, Technology, and Society

Project | “Alternatives to the Industrial
Agriculture Model: Diverse Perspectives
from Farmers in Rhode Island”

Enid Wilson Undergraduate Fellowship

Sophia J. Block '24
Sociology, International and Public Affairs

Project | “The Intersection of Disability
and Race Politics: Parental Perceptions
of Youth Criminalization”

Helen Terry MacLeod Research Grant

Alexandra Lehman '24
*Gender and Sexuality Studies,
International and Public Affairs*

Project | “The Body as Battleground:
Trajectories of Sexual and Gender-Based
Violence, Reproductive Freedom, and
Proto-Nationalism in Post-War Bosnia
and Herzegovina”

Linda Pei Undergraduate Research Grant

Chloe Chen '24
Sociology, Visual Art
Project | “Cultural Epistemologies of Pain:
The Regulation of Legible and Legitimate
Sexual Violence Survivorship”

Pembroke Center Research Development Grant for Graduate Students

Augusta De Oliveira
Graduate Student, History
Project | “Lesbian Life in
Twentieth-Century Brazil”

Steinhaus/Zisson Pembroke Center Research Grant for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Betsy S. Archelus
Graduate Student, History
Project | “Black Feminism
in South Korea, 1945-87”

Caroline Cunfer
Graduate Student, American Studies
Project | “Asexuality and the Production
of Compulsory Sexuality”

Ashley Everson
Graduate Student, Africana Studies
Project | “Black Women and
Internationalism in the Tennessee
Valley, 1931-1950”

Eric Jones
Graduate Student, Africana Studies
Project | “Coke Production and
Environmental Injustice in
Clairton, Pennsylvania”

differences in the Spotlight

Congratulations to Dionte Harris (UT Knoxville), whose essay “The Smear: Vibrational Flesh and the Calculus of Black Queer Becoming in Barry Jenkins’s *Moonlight*” was awarded the 2023 Crompton-Noll Prize for Best LGBTQ Studies Article by the ASA and MLA GL/Q caucuses. The essay, which appeared in *differences* 33.1, considers how touch can enact a calculus of power that makes violence intimate and permanent in queer black life.



Elizabeth Wilson, Joan Copjec, Lee Edelman,
David Marriott, and Selamawit D. Terrefe.

In March, the journal hosted a colloquium titled “Limits of Legibility: Questions of Blackness and Sexuality.” Panelists Joan Copjec (Brown); Lee Edelman (Tufts); David Marriott (Emory); and Selamawit D. Terrefe (Tulane) focused on sexual difference and blackness less as cultural identities than as structural positions at the unrepresentable limit of meaning making. It was moderated by Elizabeth A. Wilson (Emory).

We are also celebrating the success of the journal’s new online forum, launched in late December. Designed to complement the journal, the online platform keeps important conversations alive, circulates new and topical ideas, and offers scholars a venue for nascent and experimental work. The site has been visited over 3,400 times, with 2,500 unique visitors from 64 countries.

Recently featured work on the forum includes Sara-Maria Sorentino’s essay “[With What Must Slavery Begin?](#),” an introduction to a book in progress on capitalism and slavery, and “[Thinking Sex with Jonathan Goldberg](#),” a collection of commentaries assessing the influence of Goldberg’s work in queer theory and the literary study of sexuality. ■



Jonathan Goldberg.
Image courtesy of
Michael Moon.

PEMBROKE CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



“In order to run for office, you need to have a supportive partner. In my parents’ case, my father managed the household while she was working. My mother always said, ‘You can have it all but you can’t have it all at the same time, and you need help.’”

— Donna Zaccaro '83

The Pembroke Center Oral History Project

In this interview with the Pembroke Archives’ Oral History Project, Advisory Council member Donna Zaccaro '83 discusses her life on the campaign trail with her mother, Geraldine Ferraro – the first woman Vice Presidential nominee on a major party ticket, her path to becoming a documentarian and the presidency of Donald Trump.



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I'd like to make a gift to the Friends of the Pembroke Center!

Gifts to the Friends of the Pembroke Center support the research, teaching, archives and alumnae/i programs sponsored by the Pembroke Center.



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Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women

differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies

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