

# WOMEN'S STUDIES

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Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

375 Church Street North Adams MA 01247

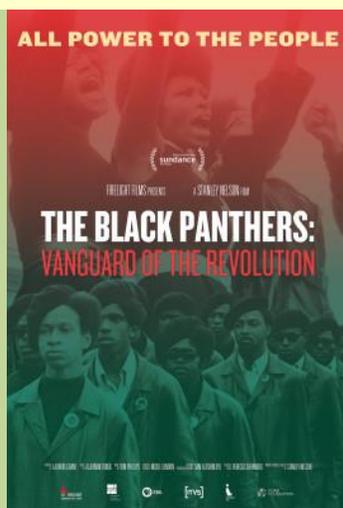
## Spring Forward for Social Justice!

Women's Studies and feminism more broadly have created the cultural and intellectual space to ask: What does a just society look like? How do we find the courage, voice, and the clarity of purpose to move toward that vision? This spring, as social movements continue and spark around the world, we are exploring that question through events at the **Women's Center** and in **WMST classes** such as

- ANTH - Gender Roles and Culture
- WMST - Intro to Women's Studies
- ENGL - U.S. Latin@ Literatures
- ENGL - Writing Women
- IDST - Leading Women
- IDST - Conversations on Race

And the **Social Justice Film Series** – see page 2 for more details on these stirring films!

## Upcoming Events ▶



First up in the Social Justice Film Series!  
**Feb 25th, 7PM**  
218 Murdock Hall

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Mansplaining and Cisplaining - Dirk Correia	2
Social Justice Film Series	2
Notes from the Field - Valerie Mercado '15	3
Minor in WMST	3
Women's Center News / Black Lives Matter Art	4



▶ **THIS Wed Feb 17, 3:30PM – Danielle Georges**  
Boston Poet Laureate on “Beautiful Fluid Identities”  
*121 Center for Science and Innovation*

**7PM – Danielle Georges Poetry Reading**  
*Gallery 51*

▶ **Mon Feb 29, 7PM – Global Film Series: *Ida***  
*Sullivan Lounge*

▶ **Mon Mar 7, 7PM – Sociology Society Jeopardy!**  
*Sullivan Lounge*

▶ **Tues Mar 29, 7pm – writer Katherine Hill**  
*Gallery 51*

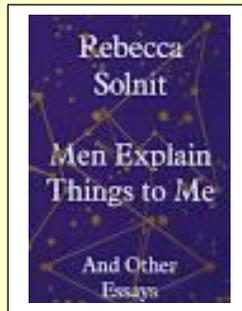
▶ **Mon April 11, 7PM – Jennifer Miller**  
*Sullivan Lounge*  
Inspiring political performance artist returns to MCLA

Contact Karen Cardozo to contribute announcements or articles to future Newsletters!

## Explaining 'splaining

By Dirk Correia

Mansplaining is a term coined in early 2008, but it's been documented since at least 1903 (Lily Rothman). It occurs when a cis man describes something to a woman that only she could experience (such as male politicians weighing in on abortion).



Being designated female at birth, and brought up female for fourteen years, I know what it is like to be a woman in society. I am viewed as female in my family home, in my place of work, and often at MCLA. Thus I experience mansplaining on the daily because I appear traditionally feminine. I have a high voice, so people have a hard time seeing me as male if they do not know me. I am in this strange space in between the binary, so when Rebecca Solnit comments on "both genders" (3), I'm not sure where I stand. I experience a correlation to mansplaining. Cisgender people think that they can explain my own identity to me. Maybe #cisplaining will be trending next.

It all derives from privilege. Cis men are raised in an environment of privilege; they do not usually experience systematic sexism that destroys lots of women's confidence. They feel free to express their opinions and knowledge without fear of being wrong. I try my best to be aware of my own privilege. Being white and middle class, life is easier for me because of the all-encompassing systematic nastiness that is engrained in our society. There is an unspoken superiority among lots of men that they do not actively think about, but it leads to mansplaining and interrupting. Although such behavior may not be malevolent, "even instances of discrimination that may seem 'petty and even ridiculous' to others hurt the people against whom the discrimination occurs" (Lily Rothman).

Another way this kind of thing relates to my life is with my disability. I have a nerve problem in my left foot called peripheral neuropathy that can make it very difficult and painful to walk up or down stairs, longer distances, or just to stand for very long. So I walk with a cane to help me out. When they meet me, people who are able bodied who have had some sort of injury in the past often tell me that they understand what it's like to have a physical disability. I hear things every day, from "oh I broke my leg once, I completely understand," to "I remember when I was on crutches, I totally feel your pain." In actuality, they do not.

Having a physical disability is mentally and physically exhausting, and unlike with a broken leg, there's not a tried and true plan for me to get better. The 'advice' that I get ranges from the ever so helpful 'have you tried yoga?' to the ingenious 'you should drink more water.'

This just goes to show that, although mansplaining is perhaps most common, all kinds of 'splaining arise whenever anyone who doesn't recognize their own privilege or know what they are really talking about can, and will, insert themselves into the conversation.

**Thursday Feb 25, 7PM - Murdock 218**

***Vanguard of the Revolution*** explores the Black Panther Party's significance to American culture, and its cultural and political awakening for black people in vibrant chronicle, featuring rare footage of the times.



**Tues Mar 8, 12:30PM - Bowman 119**

***American Revolutionary*** plunges us into Grace Lee Boggs's lifetime through U.S. social movements from labor to civil rights, feminism, the Asian American and environmental justice movements. Constantly shifting tactics, Boggs emerges with a clear approach: revolution is not aggression or mere protest, but the ability to transform oneself to transform the world.

**Thurs Mar 10, 7PM - Murdock 218**

UC professor Angela Davis' social activism in the 1960s implicates her in a botched kidnapping that ends with four people dead and her name on the FBI's most-wanted list. ***Free Angela*** offers a powerful account of a woman who challenges a society afraid of all that she represents. Filled with intrigue, suspense and conspiracies, the film inspires diverse audiences.

## Notes from the Field

**By Valerie Mercado 2015**

During my last semester at MCLA I was an intern for the Elizabeth Freeman Center in North Adams. After graduating in May 2015 I landed a job as Assistant Manager with Peebles in downtown North Adams. After 3 months I heard there was an opening at the Elizabeth Freeman Center in Pittsfield, MA. I was so excited! I went in for my interview and got hired on the spot, starting work the same day. I worked as a receptionist for two weeks before I was also offered a Hotline/Counselor position at their shelter. Now I work in both positions, which has been awesome.

I love what I do because I get to help women and men who have experienced domestic violence, whether getting them to the right counselor, counseling them myself, or even helping them while they stay in shelter. I'm the first person they communicate with and I'm there for them in their moment of need. When I see someone come in feeling destroyed because of their situation but then watch them leave with a smile or tell me "thank you," it's the best feeling.

As an example, one day a woman was in crisis because her husband had beaten her pretty badly and threatened to kill her. I was her counselor advocate. She came in crying and didn't know what to do. My first step was to let her talk about it while I listened. Then I suggested she call her job and explain the situation because her husband had threatened her to take her job away. I talked to her about getting an emergency restraining order to protect herself further, and set her up with a phone to call the police station.



When she came back from getting it she hugged me and said that was the most freedom and power she had ever felt in her life.

This just filled my heart with joy and made my entire day because that this is why I'm doing this: I want to help people.

The WMST minor was valuable in so many ways; for example, I learned that men also go through domestic violence (if not as commonly as women). In my culture men are raised as "Machismo," which means the men rule the household: it never occurred to me that a woman could beat a man. I learned about identities in different cultural contexts; this has been a major help because we get women and men from different backgrounds, so that has helped me understand them better and find common ground.

The WMST minor also gave me an understanding of all that women have accomplished throughout history. When I counsel women I use some of those examples to boost their self-esteem and show them that they can be strong too.

Overall I am so glad to have minored in WMST and I feel very fortunate to be working at the Elizabeth Freeman Center.

## WMST – Design Your Minor, Your Way!

There is only one required course: *Introduction to Women's Studies* (IDST 299/WMST 201), which also meets a *Self and Society* requirement for the Core Curriculum. The remaining 15CR are met through electives of your choosing, with courses drawn from at least two different departments (it is an interdisciplinary program, after all!), with 9CR at or above the 300 level. New or special topics courses not listed as WMST electives may also count for the minor, with approval of the WMST Coordinator.

A WMST minor signals expertise in cross-cultural, family, and gender/sexuality issues that many organizations and companies value. And because the WMST minor is interdisciplinary, it can help you look at issues in your major (and in life) with a broader perspective—which is valuable and rewarding.

**Contact WMST Minor Coordinator Karen Cardozo (x 5516) with any questions.**

## WOMEN'S CENTER EVENTS

### Open to Entire MCLA Community

February 23 (7-8:30pm, Campus Center 324a&b)  
*Mentor in Violence Prevention Workshop*

February 25 (11-5pm, Marketplace)  
*Claim what you love about yourself*

March Cellphone Drive for Elizabeth Freeman Center  
*Donate used or broken phones*

March 3 (7pm Sullivan Lounge)  
*Feminism in Art Showcase*

March 8 (11-2pm Marketplace)  
*International Women's Day Celebration*

March 10 (11-2pm Marketplace)  
*Women's Health* (including transwomen's health)

March 24 (5-8PM, Sullivan Lounge)  
*\$mart \$tart Workshop*

April 2 (Berkshire Community College)  
*LGBTQIA+ Live Out Loud Community Conference*

April 12 (11-1pm, Marketplace)  
*Equal Pay Day*

April 20 (11-2pm, Quad and Venable Gym)  
*Wellness Fair with Health Services*

April 28 (7pm, Quad w/ Venable Gym rain location)  
*Take Back the Night*

**Questions? Ideas For Future Events?**

Contact Amanda Beckwith

Coordinator of the Women's Center

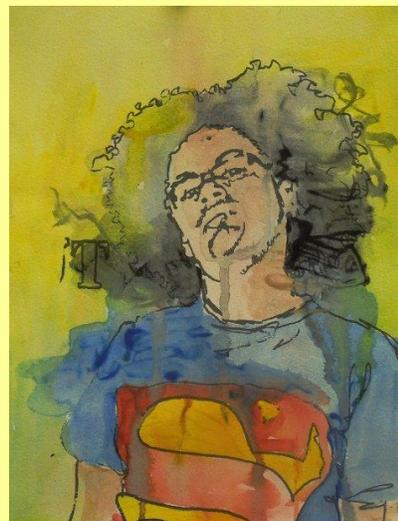
### Women's Center Wednesdays – 3PM

Snacks and Discussion on a Theme  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Amsler Campus Center!

- 2/24 **Amazing Grace and Poetry**  
BSU / Slam Poetry Club
- 3/2 **Being a Change Agent**  
With Professor Kerri Nicoll
- 3/9 **Women in History**
- 3/23 **Finding Your Voice**  
With Professor Amber Engelson
- 3/30 **Queer Literature**  
Professor Jill Gilbreth
- 4/6 **Global Feminisms**  
With Professor Jenna Sciuto
- 4/13 **Equal Pay Day / Shattering Glass Ceiling**
- 4/20 **The Latino/Hispanic LGBT movement**  
With Professor Mariana Bolivar
- 4/27 **Take Back the Night**

### DON'T MISS BLACK LIVES MATTER!

A Juried Art Show curated by Professors  
Frances Jones-Sneed and Melanie Mowinski



Through February 28<sup>th</sup> at Gallery 51