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Voices Raised, Issue 48

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UD Hijabi Monologues 'Through stories, we are human'



See the back cover for a tribute to our graduates Amanda Dee and Tessa Terrell.

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Top left image for 'Hijabi Monologues UD'
promotion by Andrew Yedlick.
Center image of 'Hijabi Monologues UD'
students by Colin Joern.



This March, the UD community will have the opportunity to listen to the experiences too often overlooked on campus and across the nation: American-Muslim women. Eleven women—some American-Muslims, some not, but all wearing the hijab—will each present a monologue based on the true story of a Muslim-American hijabi, slang for a woman who wears the hijab. Perhaps audience members will enter the performance space seeking greater understanding of another religion and culture. Perhaps they will arrive with preconceived biases of American-Muslim women. Whatever the impetus for their

attendance, hopefully by the end of the performance, they discover a deeper awareness of American-Muslim life.

"I hope they come out learning. [I] hope it challenges whatever ideas they had when they came in," third-year law student Rabiah Gul said. "I hope they [leave] the room thinking, 'Now I know that I don't know [what I thought I knew].'"

'The Hijabi Monologues,' a nod to Eve Ensler's 'Vagina Monologues,' was created in 2006 by three graduate students at the University of Chicago.

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WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH
2016

Image from 2016 Women's History Month poster design winner Carolyn Capka '16.

International Women's Day

Monday, March 14 - KU Lobby, 11AM-2PM

Pick up a free button and information about International Women's Day by stopping by the KU Lobby. International Women's Day is a global day (officially recognized on March 8) celebrating the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future.



The Art of Yoga: An Intersection of Writing and Body Movement

Tuesday, March 29 - ArtStreet Studio C, 5:30-6:30PM

Explore the interconnectedness between mind, body, and spirit through the intersection of yoga and poetry. This experience will be led by Sierra Leone of Oral Funk Poetry Productions and instructor Jennifer Turpin, RYT. No previous yoga experience/writing expertise necessary, but bring a towel or yoga mat if you have one. Space is limited, so please RSVP at goo.gl/forms/YxPCpbszcc.



I Want My Jacket Back

Thursday, April 7 - Black Box Theatre, Fitz Hall, 8PM

An original solo performance by Dr. Jenn Freitag, this work fights to end gender-based violence through a combination of interactive lecture, performance, and workshop to catalyze dialogue. With original songs, stories, humor, and poetry, Freitag will create an evening for all to reflect on the social construction of gender, gender-based violence prevention, and healing after sexual assault.



For the full WHM calendar, please visit udayton.edu/womenscenter/calendar.

Women's lives when children aren't in the mix

Last fall, over a dozen UD faculty and staff women volunteered to meet with author Kate Kaufmann, who is doing research on how not having children impacts some women's lives. Several of these women generously agreed to share their perspectives with the UD community:

Q: Why did you volunteer to discuss this topic?

A: It took me a long time to come to peace with not having children, and I want others to know that peace as well.

A: My choice to not have kids is very intentional...I was unaware how emotional this topic is for women who are unable to have children of their own that do want them.

Q: At what age do you think people start considering it unusual not to be a mother?

A: Once you reach 30 and don't have a child, I think people start to 'worry.'

A: Probably at age 40...People start wondering about your life, making all kinds of assumptions.

A: I never experienced the feeling of those around me questioning why I was not a mother...If I have to guess an age, I would think around age 35.

Q: Kate Kaufmann's research is on how not having children affects women's lives.

What "effects" came to mind when you agreed to meet with her and other UD women?

A: Not having children led me to focus on other things. Where friends were absorbed in parenting, I was able to focus on art, jobs, and family in other ways. My nurturing and caring came into full play in taking care of my parents. Very similar, just reverse outcomes.

A: One effect for me was knowing my parents would have loved having grandkids.

A: Fear of old age without children to care for me.

Q: Some have expressed to us that they wish to show their support for women who aren't mothers.

What would you tell them they can say/do, if anything, after this discussion?

A: Respect that not having kids does not mean I have way more free time or less responsibility. Not having children allow my husband and I to volunteer for overnight shifts with Dayton Red Cross where we respond to residential fires and other disasters meeting certain criteria that displace families from their residences. We both work and volunteer in activities that involve children. We just do not have responsibility for raising them as parents.

A: Be polite. Unless one is a very close friend or has a professional reason to do so, it is better not to ask childless women why they don't have children.

A: While I never had that strong calling to be a parent, maybe I would have been if things had worked out differently for me. But please don't assume I don't like children, or am not as caring as others. Or that I'm so selfish with my time and that's the reason I don't have kids.

Hijabi (cont. from cover)

The monologues are based off the authors' lives or the lives of other Muslim-American women they know.

"I think it's clear that people have stereotypes about what it means to be an American-Muslim, and the stories in 'The Hijabi Monologues' speak to very unique experiences," Gul said. "It's meant to break down stereotypes."

Some of the monologues embrace elements of humor and comedy, many include moments of the bias American-Muslim women often have to contend with, and all emphasize universal human experiences.

As the group describes itself on its Facebook page, "The Hijabi Monologues project is about creating a theater space for the experiences of Muslim women; a space to breathe as they are; a space that does not claim to tell every story and speak for every voice. Through sharing stories, strangers touch and connect. Through stories, we are challenged. Through stories, we are human."

And it is this recognition of "humanness" and acceptance of those who are different from us Gul believes needs attention in the University of Dayton campus community. When Gul first arrived at UD, she explained,

"I didn't feel quite comfortable ... [I] faced a lot of micro-aggressions as being an obvious Muslim woman ... I totally think that campus is Islamophobic. I definitely think that there is a lot of ignorance."

Faced with this ignorance, Gul turned to a faculty member she is close to and proposed bringing 'The Hijabi Monologues' to UD. Gul previously performed in 'The Hijabi Monologues'



Performers of 'Hijabi Monologues University of Dayton' by Colin Joern.

during her undergraduate career at John Jay University as part of an initiative to foster a better understanding of Islam in light of the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. She thought a similar performance could help cultivate understanding and acceptance for Muslims at UD, as well.

Amy Anderson, the executive director of the Center for International Programs, immediately resonated with Gul's idea and helped her to connect with Brian LaDuca, the director of ArtStreet.

"Unfortunately, the theater typically does not give a lot of scripts for the power of the female voice, let alone the Muslim-American female voice," LaDuca said. "And the balancing of allowing both Muslim-American voices to be on paper but allowing women in general to be the vehicle of those voices: I was like, 'This just makes too much sense for us.'"

LaDuca suggested that the monologues would be perfect for the White Box Theatre Festival, the second such festival to be held at UD. The performance will be held in the White Box Gallery installation in ArtStreet, which at the time of the

performance, will be themed, 'REFLECTION: Citizens of the World.'

Last semester, students interested in directing for and acting in 'The Hijabi Monologues University of Dayton' participated in a day-long workshop with Sahar Ullah, the primary writer and licenser for 'The Hijabi Monologues' to learn more about the power of storytelling.

"It was really powerful," Megan Woolf said.

"Even though we planned it last year, this is the time for it."

Woolf is on the executive board of Studio Theatre, the student-run theater group on campus producing 'The Hijabi Monologues University of Dayton.' Woolf will also perform a monologue herself.

Although the planning for 'The Hijabi Monologues University of Dayton' began nearly two years ago, the performance is perhaps all the more appropriate and necessary in light of today's political climate. Islamophobia has continued to rise in the United States, spurred by comments such as Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump suggesting the creation of a registry of all Muslims in American—and ban Islam.

"Even though we planned it last year, this is the time for it," Woolf said.

After much planning, Gul and Woolf are excited to see and participate in the culmination of their hard work. However, Gul has a few reservations.

"Honestly, I am worried in terms of how it's going to be received on campus," Gul said. "Will we get a great turnout?"

"I would love for people to just understand that no matter what somebody looks like or what kind of background they come from, what beliefs they have—no matter their identities—everybody has human experiences," Woolf said. "So you

should be open to and connect with all people. Always give people a chance because more likely than not, there'll be some kind of connection."

—Rachel Cain, English, International Studies '16

'The Hijabi Monologues University of Dayton' will run from 8-10 p.m. on March 8 and 9 in the White Box Gallery at Art-Street. For more information about 'The Hijabi Monologues,' visit hijabimonologues.com or follow @HijabiMonologue on Twitter. #HMUDayton #HijabiMonologues



WOMEN OF COLOR AND DIVERSITY
Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity by Shabana Mir

Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam by Asra Q. Nomani

Additional books and materials on this subject are available in the WC Resource Library on the 2nd floor of Alumni Hall.

CONGRATULATIONS

The 2016 Miryam Award for enhancing the climate for women on the UD campus beyond their required duties goes to...



Molly Schaller, Ph.D.

School of Education & Health Sciences,
Counselor Education & Human Services

Irene Dickey

School of Business Administration,
Management & Marketing



All are welcome to attend the presentation of the Miryam Award Monday, March 21 at 4:30 p.m., in Marianist Hall Chapel.

VOICES FROM WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES

Moving on: Reflections on leaving the WGS directorship

As some of you may know, this is my final semester as Women's and Gender Studies program director; I'll be moving on to become chair of the philosophy department.

When I took the reins of the WGS program in August 2008, I was not yet a mother, so the program was my only "baby." My daughter recently turned five, and it's likely that she will eventually matriculate at UD. So I'm thinking about what kind of WGS program—and what kind of campus community—I hope she will find here.

I hope that, by then, the WGS program will have grown from a small-but-flourishing program into a large and flourishing program, perhaps even with its own faculty lines. For this to happen, more students will have to begin taking WGS courses earlier in their college careers. Having had our introductory course, WGS 250, approved for the Common Academic Program should help.

There's more to drawing students to WGS than checking curricular boxes, however. Many students are still dissuaded by negative stereotypes of feminism—whether they hold those views themselves, or they know that many of their peers hold them, the effect is that they shy away from what they see as a feminist stronghold. So beyond urging students in their early years at UD to check out our course offerings, anything we can each do to normalize and legitimize feminism in students' eyes will help the WGS program to grow!

In 2012, we cooperated with the Women's Center on a poster campaign in which people on campus—students, faculty, and staff—completed the statement "I am a feminist because . . ." The statement on my own poster, with a photo of me holding my then-infant daughter, continued: "... because I want a world where every girl grows up safe, strong, and free." Such a world is still my heart's desire, and I look forward to seeing how the WGS program will help make it a reality in the years to come.

—Dr. Rebecca Whisnant



DON'T MISS MAX:

In the fall of 1969, as the anti-war movement and the women's liberation movement flourished around her, Max Dashú left behind a full college scholarship to begin research as an independent scholar on global women's history, mother-right, patriarchy, and the origins of domination. Women's Studies did not yet exist, women's history was literally treated as a joke, and the academic climate was hostile to raising questions about women's status and the suppression of female power.

Over 45 years later, her collection of 15,000 slides and 20,000 digital images is among the most impressive and comprehensive women's history archives in the world.

*Max Dashú will present
"Women's Power in Global Perspective" on Monday,
March 7 at 7 p.m. in Sears Recital Hall.*

Eight scarves are connecting 87 University of Dayton women. Each woman will spend a day with the scarf and reflect on her experience before sharing the scarf with another woman, who will then have a chance to do the same. Daria Graham, director of Student Leadership Programs, based her idea for this project on the novel and movie, "The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants." Some of the participants' reflections are shared here:

Sisterhood of the Traveling Scarf



"I wanted to be a part of this adventure."

"My experience is broad and ever changing, but tends to include the experience of being a college student, a woman and simply a human maneuvering this tumultuous and dynamic world."

"When I was younger...I saw scarves as a means of warmth. As I moved into middle school and high school, they became an accessory."

"...it made me feel good to wear that pretty scarf. I walked around campus with a new kind of confidence."

Many women, many stories, one scarf.

"I often wonder, though, about how we think about success, the much discussed work/life balance, and the omnipresent debate surrounding the pursuit of 'having it all.' What is the 'all' that we want?"

"I've come to realize that female friendships are the bomb. They are the bee's knees, the cat's pajamas and any other superlative that could possibly signify the best thing."

Visit udwomenscenter.wordpress.com to follow the journey.

The Women's Center will lose two valued staff members to graduation this May, and we wanted them to know how much they will be missed:

AMANDA DEE

we learned from you that professionalism isn't age-related, and the strongest and most beautiful women are true to themselves.

we will miss your no-nonsense humor and wit, as well as your sense of style!

we hope that in the future you will never have to "fit in" or lower your journalistic standards.

TESSA TERRELL

we learned from you the importance of having a fulfilled life outside of work while keeping your heels, head and standards high.

we will miss your sunny-side-up outlook on life and your no-stress mentality.

we hope that your future students will inspire you as much as you inspired us, and that you will be surrounded by others who appreciate and love you!

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Moving on: Saying goodbye and good luck to Dr. Rebecca Whisnant

As Dr. Rebecca Whisnant prepares to turn over Women's and Gender Studies to a new director, I think about how UD has benefitted from her eight years in that role. Bringing notable feminist scholars, activists, and artists, such as Gail Dines, Michael Kimmel, Max Dashú, Anita Sarkeesian, and Nancy Macko, to campus first comes to mind. Shining a spotlight on the scholarship of UD women faculty and the women-focused scholarship of women—and a few male colleagues—comes next. She has also stood up and spoken out against the climate and culture that make women and other non-dominant groups less safe and less able to

thrive—on campus and off.

Alongside these contributions as WGS director, Dr. Whisnant has remained a powerful scholar and teacher, where her obvious passion for "...introduc[ing] students to the explanatory power and liberatory potential of feminist thought" shines through. Though she's moving into an even more challenging leadership role, I hope feminist scholarship and teaching remain significant in Rebecca's work at UD; it would be a tremendous loss to us all if it didn't.

—Lisa Rismiller