Program

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Elizabeth Marchant, Chair

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Amaya McGinnis
Patricia Montgomery Fernández

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Assistant Professor, Gender Studies

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Advisor: Professor Purnima Mankekar

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Advisor: Professor Juliet Williams

Recognition of Candidates for the Bachelor of Arts

Virtual Tassel Turning and Concluding Remarks
Elizabeth Marchant, Chair
THANK YOU

Elizabeth Marchant
Outgoing Chair, UCLA Department of Gender Studies

Thank you for your big smile and positivity, your kindness, and never-ending hard work, dedication, and vision, making Gender Studies bigger, better and striving for excellence in every area. Thank you in so many ways that go far beyond what we can list. Our fearless leader and champion on all fronts for six years of the last ten as Chair, and seven years as Grad Chair before that! There are not enough thank yous to truly capture the strength and vitality that you have brought to the Department of Gender Studies.

Besos y abrazos, and warm wishes, from GS staff, and the Gender Studies community at UCLA.

PS: Your guidance will be called upon many times over moving forward, so you might want to change your number. We love you!
Min Joo Lee

Bio: Watching Korean television dramas is my go-to pastime. I decided to turn my hobby into a research topic in order to critically examine the televisual media texts and the pleasures that viewers derive by consuming the television dramas. My dissertation, entitled Transnational Intimacies: Korean Television Dramas, Romance, Erotics, and Race, focuses on the transnational popularity of Korean television dramas and how they motivate viewers from all over the world to erotically fantasize about Korean men. These viewers travel to Korea to form intimate relations with Korean men in a phenomenon known as Hallyu tourism. Through critical examination of these transnational viewers and the Hallyu tourists’ erotic desires, I examine how erotics is linked to race and gender. More broadly, my research interests include feminist theories on transnationalism and media. After graduation, I will be starting a Visiting Lecturer position in the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies at Wellesley College.

Acknowledgments: I received various forms of help from countless people during the six years that I have been at UCLA. First and foremost, I want to thank my dissertation committee chair, Professor Purnima Mankekar. Through her mentorship, I learned how to conduct research and teach with passion. I also want to thank my dissertation committee members, Professors Lieba Faier, Elizabeth Marchant, and John Caldwell, who provided helpful suggestions throughout my dissertation writing process. I thank the UCLA Department of Gender Studies Staff, Jenna Miller-Von Ah, Richard Medrano, Van Do-Nguyen, and Samantha Hogan. My friends and peers within and beyond the UCLA Department of Gender Studies were also there for me to celebrate achievements of various sizes, and I thank them for being there for me. I especially thank Sarah Montoya, my one and only cohort, and Stephanie Chang. My parents and relatives provided me with an immense amount of emotional support on my journey to acquiring a Ph.D. Their advice for me to dream big but also to take care of myself during my journey to achieve my dreams has been immensely helpful.
Sa Whitley

Bio: Sa Whitley is a black feminist ethnographer and queer theorist from Silver Spring, Maryland. They received their MA in African American Studies and their PhD in Gender Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. Previously, they earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Princeton University and worked as an Associate Book Publicist at W. W. Norton & Company. In Baltimore, Whitley was a Visiting Grad Scholar in the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University and worked as a Part-Time Faculty Member in the Humanistic Studies Department at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). For the 2020-21 Academic Year, they are delighted to join the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University as a Postdoctoral Research Associate and participate in the center’s year-long research seminar on “Narrating Debt.” Their dissertation, “The Collective Come-Up: Black Queer Placemaking in Subprime Baltimore,” explores the ways that black queer artists and collectives organize against gentrification and build intentional community in the long afterlife of the foreclosure crisis. They are a co-author of the paper, “The Power of Debt: Identity and Collective Action in the Age of Finance,” published by the Institute on Democracy and Inequality in 2019. Their research has been supported by the UC Consortium for Black Studies and the Center for the Study of Women

Acknowledgments: I would like to acknowledge so many extraordinary people and communities that have supported me during the Gender Studies PhD program. My dissertation committee members – Juliet A. Williams, Sherene H. Razack, Robin D. G. Kelley, Hannah Appel, and Uri McMillan – have been tremendously inspiring and supportive. Thank you all for your stirring provocations and the groundbreaking work that you do. Juliet, my exceptional dissertation advisor, has been an anchor and a friend. Thank you for your mentorship, intellectual rigor, and generosity. I am profoundly moved by all of the Gender Studies faculty – in seminars, at events and workshops, in archives, at protests, and in cafes. I thank you all for your affective and intellectual labor and your respective examples of feminist pedagogy. I have also have warm appreciation for the Gender Studies staff – Samantha Hogan, Richard Medrano, Van Do-Nguyen, and Jenna Miller—Von Ah— who go above and beyond. Each of you make the ship sail smoother in your own remarkable and ardently dedicated ways. To the brilliant Gender Studies PhD students – past and present – your dedication to that work, your support at conferences (on panels & the dancefloor), and the feminist and queer lifeways that you embody/practice fiercely inform my relationship to the academy and community building. Special thanks to Lina Chhun, Savannah Klner, Bianca Beauchemin, Shondrea Thornton, Sarah Montoya, Dalal Alfares, Angela Robinson, Marika Cifor, Naaz Diwan, and Freda Fair. My writing group with Mary Robbins and Rahel S. Woldegaber was not merely or principally productive. We made a virtual feminist home-space that was truly magical and affirming each morning. I have infinite gratitude to you both for sharing your brilliance, hours, recipes, laughter, and love with me throughout the pandemic. Across campus, I want to extend gratitude to other sweet, gifted, and grounding PhD students: Natalie Bradford, Aditi Anand Halbe, Rose Simons, Kendy Rivera, and Leigh Anna Hidalgo. In Baltimore, thank you to my fierce comrades, who have been meaningful collaborators and the best of friends to think and dream with. I am sincerely appreciative for financial support from the UC Consortium for Black Studies and the Center for the Study of Women and for radical intellectual community with the Black Feminist Initiative Working Group, the Undercommons Freedom School, UAW 2865, the College Academic Mentors (CAMs), the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, and my students at the Maryland Institute College of Art. I would also like to thank the UCLA custodial workers of Rolfe Hall and AFSCME 3299 for their labor and their inspiring labor organizing, and I am delighted to acknowledge my health care providers and community healing spaces. I have the widest river and the highest mountain of appreciation for my empowering and loving family including Linda & Raymond Whitley, my brothers, Derek, Ray-Ray, and Jon. Other life-long friends have offered incredible affirmation and inspiration: Asmara Carbado, Mae Miller, Lan Pham, Malcolm Shank, Akan Udoh, Jessica Sadler, Steven Roy, Chesska O’Neal, Safa Batniji, Nichole Garcia, and B. Cole. Thank you all
Candidates for the Bachelor of Arts

Nikka Ariela Aghaee
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Film, Television & Digital Media
Summa Cum Laude

Breanna J. Aguilar
Double Major: Gender Studies and Chicana/o Studies
Minor: Education

Juana Alcala
Major: Gender Studies
MEChA de UCLA
Olga Ruiz Alvarado

Major: ChicanX Studies
Minor: Gender Studies and Education Studies

I would like to thank my parents, siblings, and friends for supporting me throughout these last 4 years they were definitely tough but thanks to your support I made it!

Mercedes Banwart

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Anthropology

Nyla Aileen Baxter-Williamson

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Global Studies
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, Pi Chapter, All People’s Afrikan Graduation
**Sarah Bebb**
Major: Gender Studies  
Minor: Film, Television & Digital Media  
Cum Laude

**Kimberly Marie Bonifacio**
Major: Political Science  
Minor: Gender Studies and Global Studies  
Samahang Pilipino, Undergraduate Student Association Council at UCLA, Internal Vice President  
To my friends and family, We did it! This is all for you! I could not have gone through all of this without your love, care, and support! Maraming salamat po! Mahal na mahal ko po kayong lahat!

**Ayan Broomfield**
Major: Gender Studies  
Cum Laude  
Student Athlete, Honor Roll, NCAA National Champion  
Thank you to my parents and sister who continued to support and push me on a daily basis.
Jazz Broughton

Double Major: Gender Studies and International Development Studies
Minor: Global Studies
Cum Laude
Bruin Guardian Scholars, Afrikan Student Union, Academic Supports Program
To all those who’ve come before us and all those who will come after. It takes a village to raise a child. Thank you to all who’ve been a part of mine!

Kristina Sierra Carmickle

Major: Gender Studies
Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society Member since 2017
Thank you to all of my friends and family who supported me. I love you all!
Angelica Castaneda

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: LGBTQ Studies
Thank You Mom and Dad for all your love and support. Without you this would have not been possible. Los quiero mucho!

Janice Chang

Major: Psychobiology
Minor: Gender Studies
Dean’s Honor List, Undergraduate Research Scholars Program Scholarship Recipient
Thank you to my professors for broadening my perspectives and my parents for their support!
Madison Marjorie Clark
Major: Gender Studies
Queer Alliance
I want to thank my professors for challenging me, my family and friends for supporting me, and my headlights for getting me safely to campus all but once.

Keyana Colvin
Major: Gender Studies

Dayana Cruz
Major: Gender Studies

Rebeca Da Costa
Major: Psychology
Minor: Gender Studies
Honors
Katelyn Darrow

Double Major: Gender Studies and Anthropology
Minor: Film, Television & Digital Media

Patricia Montgomery Fernández

Double Major: English
Minor: Gender Studies
Summa Cum Laude

Ivanna Gamboa

Double Major: Gender Studies and Sociology

I’m deeply thankful for my friends and family for being my motivation and supporting me through my education. I wouldn’t be here without them. This one is for you Mom and Dad, you taught me to never settle for less and to always strive for greatness. Also a special thank you to my brother and sister, you both mean the world to me. Lastly, thank you to my boyfriend Vince for being there and always challenging me. Love you guys!!
Madeline Garcia
Double Major: Gender Studies and Nordic Studies

Genesis Gil
Major: Gender Studies
Gracias a mi familia por todo el apoyo. Los amo. Esto es para ustedes.

Claudia M. Gonzalez
Major: Sociology
Minor: Gender Studies
MAPS

Gabriela Gonzalez
Major: Political Science
Minor: Gender Studies
Este logro fue posible con todo el amor y el apoyo de mi familia y amigos que estuvieron a mi lado durante mis cuatro años aquí en UCLA <33
Alahna Horne
Major: Sociology
Minor: Gender Studies
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.
Thank you mom and dad for all of your love and sacrifices.

Rae Jones
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: French

Diane Gayane Karapetian
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Film, Television & Digital Media Studies
Magna Cum Laude, College of Letters and Science Honors
Melica Khorassani

Major: Gender Studies
USAC Office of the Transfer Student Representative 2019-2020: Chief of Staff
Transfer Mentor 2019-2020 Cohort USAC Office of the Transfer Student Representative
2018-2019: Coordinator of Student Outreach
Thank you for letting me be a part of such an amazing and bright community of intelligent, open-minded, and loving people

Alicefaye Kincade

Major: Gender Studies
Victoria García Lecuona

Double Major: Gender Studies and International Development Studies
International Institute Departmental Honors

Katherine Lozano
Major: International Development Studies
Minor: Gender Studies

Trisha Makhija

Double Major: Gender Studies and Labor and Workplace Studies
College of Letters and Science Honors, Latin Honors, Alpha Gamma Delta - Transfer Director Event Manager at ASUCLA Event Services. Researcher with Earners and Learners Labor Dept

Thank you for choosing me to be apart of the Gender Studies Department at UCLA. Gender Studies has taught me how to think. I am forever grateful to be a Bruin.
Amaya McGinnis

Major: Gender Studies
Gender Studies Travel Prize for Undergraduate Students – National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) Annual Conference
I want to thank my family and all of the awesome professors I’ve had here. Thank you for helping me on this journey.
Jessica Melara

Major: Gender Studies

Stacey Mendoza

Major: Physiological Science
Minor: Gender Studies
Flying Samaritans, Pi Beta Phi, AAP, National Honor Society of Collegiate Scholars, Volunteer services at Ronald Regan Hospital, The Liver Project
I want to thank my family, friends, and all the UCLA faculty for always believing in me! Thank you for all your support

Marilyn Mijares

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Film, Television & Digital Media
**Lucia Monte**
Major: Anthropology  
Minor: Gender Studies  
Summa Cum Laude

**Marina Movellan**
Major: Gender Studies  
Minor: Cognitive Science  
UCLA Radio

*Thank you familia! I love you so much!*

**Isabella Mullen**
Double Major: Gender Studies and Political Science  
Cum Laude

*Thank you to my parents, grandparents, and sisters!!!!*

**Evy Nevin**
Double Major: Gender Studies and Political Science  
College of Letters and Science Honors

*Thank you to everyone who has shaped me into the woman I am today.*
Katherine Gabriela Orellana

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Education Studies

Thank you to my family for your support and thank you UCLA for the amazing years, I'll miss you!

Amber Emily Ow

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: History
Latin Honors, Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society - UCLA Chapter Social Chair
UCLA Transfer Mentor

Thank you to my family for your support and thank you UCLA for the amazing years, I'll miss you!
Maggie Peña-Villalon
Double Major: Gender Studies and ChicanX Studies
Para mi mami y papi. Gracias por todo

Gloria Adiela Perez-Castillo
Major: Labor and Workplace Studies
Minor: Gender Studies
Cum Laude

Thyra-Le’sha Peters
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Global Studies

Allison Phung
Major: Gender Studies

Alex Piña
Major: Global Studies
Minor: Gender Studies
Soli Rachwal

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Environmental Systems and Society

Pamela Gwen Ramos
“Mango”

Major: Gender Studies
Minor: LGBTQ Studies and Labor and Workplace Studies

College of Letters and Science Honors, Gender Studies Departmental Honors, Dean’s Honor List, Bess F. Raab Scholarship, Gender Studies Community Engagement Award, Center for the Study of Women: Constance Coiner Prize, UCLA Radio, SLAP, Anakbayan UCLA, UCLA Rise Center, GRIT UCLA, Gender Studies Department Research and Student Assistant, Disability Media Lab, and Environmentalists of Color Collective

my degree goes to my Kapampangan lineage and ancestors, my blood and chosen family, and every kind and loving soul who believed in my power, dreams, and joy.
Samar Saif
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Sociology and LGBTQ Studies
Magna Cum Laude, Gender Studies Departmental Honors, College Honors

Shirin Sami
Major: Gender Studies

Emmanuel Romero
Major: Psychology
Minor: Gender Studies

Alejandra Angelica Santana
Major: Gender Studies and ChicanX Studies
Dean’s Honor List

Thank you to my family who have supported me no matter what. And thank you to my transfer family! Community college does not invalidate us!
Yuval Schnitkes

Double Major: Gender Studies and Political Science
Summa Cum Laude

Thank you to all my professors for the support, skills, and assistance. I would like to particularly thank Professor Basarudin for her incredible and unique classes and for her continued investment in the success of her students. Professor Basarudin—you have provided me with skills and knowledge that I will carry with me throughout my life. Additionally, thank you to Samantha for her patience and understanding. Your direction and guidance have been the glue that held the Gender Studies department together and made sure we all graduate.

Camille Eun-Hae Serrano

Major: Gender Studies
Summa Cum Laude, Departmental Honors, College Honors, LA County Youth Activist Award, UCLA Research Grant, UCLA Lambda Transfer Scholarship, UCLA Transfer Achievement Scholarship (2018) National Residence Hall Honorary, National Women’s Studies Association, Samahang Pilipino Advancing Community Empowerment, Queer Alliance

Thank you Professor Guzman for inspiring me to see presence in absence. Shout out to Grandma, Mama Girlie, Aunt Cindy and my Mom for inspiring my research. Thank you Chloe, Cam, Bahar, Heaven, and Emily for loving me. Stay queer everyone.
Amely Gabrielle Sijo

Double Major: Gender Studies and Psychology
UCLA Residential Life, UCLA Athletics, UCLA TIES for Families, The Sister Complex, AAP
A huge thank you to my family for everything - I wouldn’t be here without your endless love and support. Thank you to the friends who have become my family and to the staff I’ve worked with who have become mentors I will always look up too. My UCLA experience will be truly unforgettable. I am forever grateful to be a Bruin.

Sydney Spratte

Major: Gender Studies
Magna Cum Laude
Thank you mom, dad, Steve and granmommie. I couldn’t have done it without you.
Kaleef Starks
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: LGBTQ Studies
Thank you all so much!

Azisa Michele Todd
Major: Gender Studies
Director of BlaQue
Hey look! Mom I made it!
Nhung Ton Nu Huyen

Major: Gender Studies

UCLA College Honors Program, Dean's Honor List, Latin Honors
UCLA Center for Community College Partnership - Peer Mentor, Vietnamese Community Health - Volunteer of the Month, Global Medical Missions Alliance - Active member, UCLA Care Extender Internship Program, UCLA Depression Grand Challenges - Lead Facilitator/Certified STAND, UCLA Neuropsychiatric Early Childhood Partial Hospitalization Program - Intern

Thank you Gender Studies for providing me a welcoming and genuine environment to learn and to grow into my better self. With the equipped knowledge and levels of familiarity with adversities of diverse groups of historically underrepresented people, I am confident that I am going to become a genuine physician who heals others not merely with medicine, but also with an open mind and sincere heart.

Heaven Viviana Torres

Major: Gender Studies
Cum Laude

I couldn’t have done this without the loving support of my family and friends. Shake and Bake!
Ahn Van Nguyen Tran  
Major: Gender Studies

Sonia Michelle Trejo  
Major: Gender Studies

Alanna Trimino  
Major: Gender Studies

Tiffany Michelle Uribe  
Major: Gender Studies  
Minor: Global Studies  
Cum Laude, College of Social Sciences Honors  
She’s the First @ UCLA, MEChA Calmecac, UCLA Residential Life, UCLA Center of the Study of Women  
Thank you to my parents, Lupe and George, my brother, Brandon, my boyfriend Sumeet, and my friends and family for supporting me so well for 4 years.

Katherine Van Orden  
Major: Gender Studies  
Cum Laude
Bailey Matthew Velasco
Double Major: Gender Studies and Sociology

Jasmine Ivonne Wilson
Major: Gender Studies
Minor: Chicano/a Studies
College of Social Sciences Honors
Samantha - GODDESS and ANGEL - could not have done this without you!
Amelia Wyckoff
Major: Gender Studies
Cum Laude

Helen Zhong
Double Major: Gender Studies and Sociology
Gender Studies Prize for Research Excellence
Student Awards

Jazz Broughton
2020 Community Engagement Prize

Brooke Helmick
2020 Community Engagement Prize
I trip and break, a lot, but I pick up the pieces and put myself back together.

I always feel a sense of loss while watching sunsets.

HELEN ZHONG
2020 Prize for Research Excellence
Departmental Honors

Samar Saif and Pamela "Mango" Gwen Ramos,
Advisor: Professor Sharon Traweek
Title: “Desi Muslim Kapampangan-Pilipinx Biomimicry Queer Femme Transmutations: Mirrored Fatality’s Cocoon Webs”

This collaborative thesis examines their individual auto-ethnographic work, literature reviews, media analyses, quantitative data, qualitative interviews, feedback surveys, song lyrics, and site reflections on performances. Mirrored Fatality’s “Cocoon Webs” equip Queer, Transfeminist, and Performance Studies theory as praxis, producing a liberatory organizing framework for marginalized communities to expand and reproduce. Through combining ancestral ritual, punk, and disrupting normative ideas of performer and audience; Mirrored Fatality creates Malatino’s “mobilizing political affect”. By allowing for not only the release of the performers but also offering moments of rage for the community, Mirrored Fatality mobilizes those who are present to not only acknowledge but share their own rage and anger. This process is a form of direct action because it is a means of mobilizing a collective response to oppression. By tapping into rage as queer and trans brown bodies, there is a “transformation” that takes place by allowing for the collective to witness our rage and also express their own. Through Mirrored Fatality performances, one is able to transmute their anger through not only witnessing brown queer and trans bodies release theirs but also through the ability of audience participation.

Samar and Mango have been awarded High Honors.

Camille Serrano
Advisor: Professor Joshua Guzman
Title: “Beyond The Lived Experience: Examining The Institution Of Motherhood And Its Impact On The Psychic Life Of Queer, Second Generation Asian Pacific Islander Women”

In 2009, MTV created the television series Teen Mom to showcase the contemporary maternal experience of teenage mothers. Embedded in this television show, likewise to many contemporary media forms, is the negotiation of ideal maternal images, practices, and behaviors. The visual of a maternal figure providing emotional support, a shelter to house her loved ones, and adopting domestic leadership has entered the cultural iconography of the American media landscape of how motherhood is performed. These practices are added to the collective imagination of audiences and are manifested in the everyday behaviors of mothers. As a performative act, motherhood takes form in both heteronormative and queer contexts. Much research focuses on critiquing the contemporary maternal experience as a depiction of the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mother myth through a binary perspective. This project seeks to transcend this binaristic mode of thinking and provide a content analysis of the performance of motherhood in television shows Pose and Lost Girl, through an intersectional perspective.

Camille has been awarded High Honors.
Meelissa Tapia-Cortez
Advisor: Professor Judy Han
Title: "Constructing Criminality: Undocumented Women, Transformative Justice, Interpersonal Violence, and the State"

In this country, Undocumented Latinas are violated and systemically obstructed from leading quality lives. State violence tactics pursue and criminalize the women for their status as “illegal”, systemically target them financially, socially, and politically, and thus vulnerabilize them to disproportionate rates of interpersonal violence in the hands of partners, co-habitants, family members, and employers. The few current avenues of legal protection available to women like in this situation, such as the U-Visa, exclusively exist within the realm of criminal persecution, thus working to consolidate the power of the state which created the conditions for the women’s vulnerability in the first place. This project utilizes intersecting disciplines, such as law, immigration, necropolitics, criminal (in)justice studies, and anti-carceral feminisms to analyze the predicament particularly affecting Undocumented Latinas in Los Angeles, and prioritizes the experiences and opinions of women within the demographic of interest, along with professionals working in legal clinics and non-profits, to envision a future in which justice does not lie on the hands of the state.

Meelissa has been awarded with High Honors.

Azisa Todd
Advisor: Professor Juliann Anesi
Title: “The Logic of Eugenics: Policing the Black Disabled Body”

The history of eugenics has primarily focused on Nazi Germany and the mass genocide of Jewish communities, as well as the sterilization of Black and Brown women. The implementation of eugenics across the globe held both racial and gendered undertones, that those deemed “unfit” should be subjected to some form of genetic altering to limit the chances of reproduction. In the development of creating subdivisions of populations who would be considered unfit by the law for active participation in society, institutions of oppression are formulated to carry out eugenics in praxis. Todd’s project speaks directly to what is happening today around the uncheck sanctioned police violence toward Black disabled people and marginal communities. Azisa traces the logic of eugenics and its influence in policing and dealing with mental disabilities in the Black community.

Azisa has been awarded High Honors.
UCLA Department of Gender Studies

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Samantha Hogan, Student Affairs Officer

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