Welcome to the 2019-2020 academic year WGS students, affiliated faculty, and friends! As the long and indescribably hot days of summer give way to cooler temperatures and changing leaves, so too does the WGS program shift into a new season of events and opportunities for engagement.

For the 2018-19 Year of Women, which commemorated the centenary of (white) women’s admission to the College of Charleston, WGS developed the “Intersections” series to highlight the ways in which WGS is at the intersections of disciplines and also focuses on the importance of intersectionality in our curriculum, community partnerships, scholarship, and campus/community activism. This academic year we will continue “Intersections” in another centennial commemoration: the 19th amendment. Our focus will be “WGS Intersections: Beyond Suffrage.” The first event was held on August 26th to celebrate Women’s Equality Day during which we shared facts about women’s suffrage and current-day political participation on our instagram account (@cofcwgs). Spring 2020 will feature more “Beyond Suffrage” conversations - details coming soon! Our second “Intersections” event will be in November with guests from the Florida-based Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Student Farmworker Alliance (in partnership with the Sustainability Literacy Institute), and with a focus on the intersections of food justice, gender, and migrant/immigrant rights.

The WGS program is bursting at the seams! We’ve hit a critical milestone, with just over 100 students as declared majors or minors, and we have well over 60 affiliated faculty who contribute to our curriculum through innovative courses and to our intellectual community through leading edge scholarship. You can read more about both in this newsletter. Our recent graduates are enrolled in graduate programs or gainfully employed in Charleston or in other states such as MA, PA, HI and in a wide range of sectors. Current WGS students and recipients of scholarships housed within WGS – Ketner Emerging Leaders, Skirt. Magazine, Alison Piepmeier Endowed Scholarship – are engaged in transformative scholarship, activism and advocacy throughout our communities. Read more about them here and more regularly on our program blog.

We will spend most of the fall term gearing up for the 7th annual Yes! I’m a Feminist celebration, which will be November 1st in the beautiful Cistern Yard. Join us under the oaks for sweets and bubbly and also for an indispensable reminder that there are many, many feminists among us. Holding space for each other creates hope, challenges fear, and reminds us that we are in community together during these dark and difficult times.

In solidarity with each of you,  - Kris
The WGS second annual celebration of student-scholars, "Feminism in Motion," was held on April 1, 2019. Just like last year’s event, this year was a rousing success!

We were thrilled to showcase the incredible work of thirty-two student scholars to an audience of hundreds of students, faculty, and community members. From posters and art installations to mini “pechakucha” 5-minute presentations, our students wowed the crowd with their studies, activism projects, and creative endeavors.

Student work covered a wide variety of gender-related topics including ecofeminism, abortion history in South Carolina, women in STEM, sexual assault activism, and more inclusive and accessible bathrooms on the College’s campus.

We were so impressed with our students’ phenomenal work this year. But what did we expect? CofC students truly are amazing!

JOIN US NEXT SPRING! 
SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 13, 2020

WGS alum Cora Webb offers insights in her table’s “Feminist Café” roundtable discussion with discussion moderator, Tanner Crunelle (top left).

WGS minor Pablo Palacios presents “Behind the Scenes of Qualitative Social Research” (top right).

WGS student Kristen Graham presents her project, “Diversity, Equity, and Student Success” to a packed house, including President Osborne (bottom left).

WGS award recipients Sam McCarthy, Caroline Palsi, Tessa Torgovitsky, and Zoë Murrie with Director Kris De Welde, President Osborne, and Dean Jerry Hale (below).

WGS major Tessa Torgovitsky adds her definition of “love” to her classmate Caroline Palsi’s interactive art piece (bottom right).
POETRY: "VENOM" BY REAGAN WILLIAMS

Due to the environment, the migration of your people produced fair skin. While some were left dancing & singing on the soils of Africa, unknowing the wonders would return.

Sick venom spewing from their mouths like savages ready to capture, rape, enslave, burn, pillage, extort, manipulate & infect their own ancient home... they had forgotten where they came from.

Poor infected child you are no better than your sister. Wishing that the sweet lullabies of your African mother had produced a rhythm of peace in your heart strong enough to fight the virus of bigotry.

You may have left subjected to hundreds of years of evolutions plastic surgery, wiping the glaze of melanin from your skin. Men beating the only bodies capable to birth new life into this dimension. Streams of consciousness flowing & shifting down new avenues of mass destruction.

Mother Nature with her skillful hands may have created different features; branded shoulders, slimed noses, raised cheekbones & squinted eyes. But it was the stain of virus known as racism that had the audacity to rank Gods' artistic show of versatility.

The masculine figure & feminine nature of God cries for its babies, the way I cried when I realized I had been feed the infection myself. Somehow awakening from a complacent slumber, the world I thought I knew was turned upside down... what have we done?

Then the curls in my hair became beautiful, the hue of my skin became worthy, the love in my heart spilled out of heteronormative boundaries flowing more freely than ever imaginable.

The temple, the earth body, my vessel containing my being became my own. Now decorated not for the pleasure of men but for my own admiration.

Still I find myself connected to the IV, flowing visions of Utopia. A healthy planet spinning in the vast galaxy holding humanity to her chest rehabilitating our spirits into its natural state of compassion, vulnerability & love.

Take your odyssey to new levels of understanding. Wipe the venom from your chin. Close your mouth when the sickness comes pounding in your head.

LISTEN to your queer sisters of color, your two-spirit Native American brother, to your LatinX, hijab sporting immigrant neighbors, until it softens the sickness into a distant memory of complacent slumber.

May these voices turn you into radical healers ready to doctor the world. Bandage old wounds, forge new policy, compose new culture, conceive a fair tomorrow & sire in you, empathy...

Invest in the cure. Thank you, Peace.

Within my first semester here I found myself advocating in the classroom. That same message of inclusion I believe has reached nearly every department on this campus. By sophomore year I was on the executive board of GSEC, doing inclusivity trainings and other workshops. I have been trained in Restorative Justice, studied abroad in my motherland (Africa) and co-founded an organization called Mental Health in Melanin. Everything I've done at the college, worth doing, is in hopes of shifting a mindset of prejudice and complacency to one of equitable inclusion and compassion.
FIND YOUR SAFE SPACE
by Molly Hampton, WGS minor
(originally printed July 2019 in Skirt. Magazine)

The Political Science and Women’s and Gender Studies course, Feminist Utopias was taught for the first time in Spring 2019 by Professor Claire Curtis, whose areas of scholarly expertise include feminist utopia and feminist legal theory. The course was informed by Dr. Curtis’ participation in a feminist pedagogy reading group organized by WGS for affiliated faculty interested in deepening their practice of liberatory and feminist teaching-learning approaches. Molly Hampton, a student in Feminist Utopias, wrote a version of the article below for her final paper in the course. She then adapted it for the monthly “Forward!” column in Skirt. Magazine, curated by WGS Director, Kris De Welde.

What if I told you there was something revolutionary in its solidarity stirring up in spaces as ordinary as bathrooms stall?

...The class tackled various issues of reproductive rights, violence and nonviolence, mother-daughter relationships, human faith and sexual expression through the lens of creating a utopian space: a radically better world where all individual’s feel validated and protected, making it, inherently, a space where feminist ideals flourish. However, like any upper level college class, a final project lingered at the end of the term. As I tend to do with looming deadlines, I put off thinking about what I was going to submit, until I went down the hall to the bathroom in the middle of a class period. Here, on the third floor of one of the College’s busiest student buildings, in the first bathroom stall on the left, the idea for my final project hit me.

The class discussion that day centered on the concept of “pocket utopias”: a physical space that works to craft a utopia within the confines of a larger dystopian world. It constructs this space through its resistance and refusal to submit itself to the harm projected by the “dystopian” state that is constantly trying to swallow it. Questions floated around the classroom of what a pocket utopia would look like in the setting of our current political climate, which appears by the day to feel like an ever-enclosing dystopia. As I stood in the stall, I noticed all the graffiti around me. Written in light black pen on the on door, right above a poster providing the location of a Sexual Assault Awareness Committee meeting read “Be who you wanna be. Don’t let others control your life! Remember you are loved.” ... I wondered: in a world that thrives off of human disconnection and isolation derived, in part, from constructed concepts of power, how is this rallying graffiti crafting a pocket utopia that refuses to submit to those ideals?

I began snapping photos of more graffiti, notes and flyers I saw posted in several campus buildings. Most centered on mental health, self-care, campus experiences, confidence reminders, sexual assault survivor support, reproductive hygiene and Trump era resistance. I read paragraph length graffiti seeking advice on how to cope with the trauma of sexual assault, short poll-like questions calling for opinions on forms of birth control, and pink post-it notes on mirrors reminding fellow stall-users to take part in self-care that day.

...Students use the bathroom walls as a safe space to seek advice, provide words of wisdom, and share experiences by creating a utopian sense of solidarity and resistance.

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...Students use the bathroom walls as a safe space to seek advice, provide words of wisdom, and share experiences by creating a utopian sense of solidarity and resistance. Turns sour in its exchange, a testimony to what we desire in the creation of our utopian space. Ultimately, I found that bathroom walls are being used as a platform for expression, experience, and solidarity in the form of protection from what students might face around campus, the classroom, or greater community-making it a feminist pocket utopia in its simplest definition.

...Students, strangely enough, are able to achieve one of the main goals of higher education in engaging with bathroom stall graffiti: finding their own voice in an increasingly loud world.

As I began this project, I frankly thought it would be like any other assignment. I would spend endless nights in the library, get it in on time, then honestly never think of it again. But as I worked through how the graffiti provided a pocket utopia, ... this project... went from being a very strange sounding thought, to a concrete passion.

“Long Live Bathroom Graffiti.”

READ MOLLY’S FULL ARTICLE ONLINE AT SKIRT. MAGAZINE:
www.skirt.com/find-your-safe-space
Dr. Vivian Appler is an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Dance and an affiliated faculty member of Women’s & Gender Studies. She teaches courses in theatre history, devised theatre, and script analysis. Her research interests include science and performance, practice-as-research, puppetry and mask, and activist theatre. For the WGS program, Dr. Appler teaches courses such as THTR 315: “Feminist Theatre.” Her writing has been published in Theatre Journal, Theatre Survey, The Journal of American Drama and Theatre, and the forthcoming Routledge Guide to Jacques Lecoq.

What projects are you working on currently?

Currently, I am working on a devised theatre piece called, “That which We Call A Rose,” a play with puppets and music about planetary topographies. I received a research grant from NASA’s SC Space Consortium in the Spring to create a piece or theatre that uses planetary nomenclature as a lens through which we can examine methods of Space exploration of the present and the past in order to improve equity and access in the future. This STEAM project extends science, arts, and humanities questions about outer space to audiences that are diverse in age, ethnicity, race, gender, and ability. Audiences will then share in the intimate experience of theatrical performance as they are asked to contemplate our human relationship with other worlds. Over the summer, the ensemble and I traveled to the Women’s Theatre Festival in Raleigh, NC, to share a work-in-progress version of the show. We learned a lot and now we are going back to the drawing board to revise and refine the piece before we open in the Spring. This summer, I was granted additional funding through the SC Arts Commission to procure busing for K-12 students across Charleston County so that they might attend the Spring show without financial burden. For more information about “That which We Call A Rose,” visit the website, http://blogs.cofc.edu/that-which-we-call-a-rose

I am also developing a monograph about intersections of performance, suffrage, and science around the turn of the twentieth century. My focus in the monograph is also astronomy; most of my performance scholarship engages with the scientific discipline of astronomy because astronomy, physics, and engineering persistently lag behind other professional scientific areas in terms of inclusive practices, especially when it comes to gender and race. I spent several weeks over the summer at the University of South Carolina’s Rare Books Archive on a research trip funded by the Karen Alane Robinson Children’s Literature Fellowship. While there were a handful of women practicing astronomy at universities with observatories, very few were able to practice in professional spheres. As a result, many women performed their astronomical expertise in alternative venues such as public lectures, slide shows, and children’s literature.

What aspects of the courses you’ve taught recently did you find the most exciting?

I regularly teach “Feminist Theatre,” a course operated in cooperation with the Department of Theatre and Dance. I love teaching this course for so many reasons, but perhaps my favorite aspect of the course is that it is very practical. Students create two performances that intervene into social issues from a feminist perspective. They must collaborate, find consensus within their groups, and apply what they are learning about feminist theory and aesthetics to activist performances of their own design. At first, students are often daunted by the thought of working without a script. However, they are always surprised and often pleased to find that theatre creation is possible in contexts outside the proscenium arch. I hope that they leave my class empowered to create more activist and explicitly feminist performances in the future.

If you could teach your dream class, what would it be called, and what would it cover?

If I could teach a dream course, it would be about women performing science over the course of history. Such a course would combine archival research with the creative process. Ideally, it would be taught in collaboration with someone from the sciences. (Fingers crossed that such a course is in development…)

What’s something your students and colleagues don’t know about you?

My training is in physical theatre, so I know how to walk on stilts and twirl fire!
## FALL 2019 WGS EVENTS CALENDAR

### AUGUST
- Aug 26 — WGS Intersections: Beyond Suffrage — Women’s Equality Day — SWAG Grab & Social Media Campaign
- Aug 29 — All Faculty Meeting & Welcome Back Social

### SEPTEMBER
- September 4 — The Lemonade Reader book reception
- Sept 7-14 — Charleston Pride Week (WGS Pride programming with GSEC & PRISM)
- Sept II — T.E.A. (Teaching to Engage and Activate) with WGS: “In the Zone: LGBTQ+ Inclusivity in the Classroom” (with MSPS & SafeZone)

### OCTOBER
- Oct. 9 — Why WGS? Majors and Minors Info & Recruitment Session
- Oct. 16 — International Pronouns Day - CofC Celebration & Awareness Events w/ We Are Family & GSEC
- Oct. 17 — Spirit Day with WGS and We Are Family & GSEC

### NOVEMBER
- Nov 1 — Yes! I’m a Feminist 2019
- Nov 6 — T.E.A. (Teaching to Engage and Activate) with WGS: “Green Zone” Workshop (with Veteran and Military Student Services)
- Nov (TBA) — WGS Intersections — Coalition of Immokalee Workers Campus Visit & Public Lecture (with SLI & CCE)

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**Save the Date**

**Yes!**

**I’m a Feminist.**

The Cistern, College of Charleston

**Friday, November 1st**

Women’s and Gender Studies depends on gifts from alumni, friends, corporations and foundations to meet our strategic goals. Support the program online at giving.cofc.edu/WGS
CAB SPOTLIGHT: AMANDA BUNTING COMEN

Amanda Bunting Comen has been a member of the WGS Community Advisory Board (CAB) since 2012, serving as the CAB chair from 2015-2017. She was also an integral part of the original development for the Alison Piepmeier Endowed Scholarship, awarded yearly. Amanda’s business acumen, social media mastery, and strong feminist principles make her a valued and trusted member of the CAB and the greater Charleston community.

What is the best part about being a member of the WGS Community Advisory Board (CAB)?
Giving back to the program that shaped and paved the way for me and the beginning of my career. I am constantly amazed and astounded at what the students and professors are accomplishing each year in their studies and at The College. I have fun planning and attending the Yes! I’m a Feminist annual event, too!

Tell us a little about what you’re doing besides supporting WGS through your service on the CAB?
I have just recently been appointed to the City of Charleston’s Commission on Women.

Given your work with Ellevate (network for professional women in Charleston), what do you see as one of the biggest challenges for women in business?
Balancing responsibilities. Women in business are often also mothers, wives, caretakers - the list could go on. Personal and professional demands can put pressure on women and it becomes very difficult. Some are good at balancing the two and others often struggle. A good support system and mentor is key.

In January 2019, Amanda began her work on Social ABCs, which was born to help businesses and non profits with their social media management and strategy, public relations, event planning, and other marketing needs to focus more on their business. For more info, visit: http://socialabcs.com
**WGS BOOKLIST: WHAT ARE WE READING?**

**The Lemonade Reader**  
Edited by Kintra D. Brooks and Kameelah L. Martin (Director of African American Studies!)  
"The Lemonade Reader is an interdisciplinary collection that explores the nuances of Beyoncé’s 2016 visual album, *Lemonade*. The essays and editorials present fresh, cutting-edge scholarship fueled by contemporary thoughts on film, material culture, religion, and black feminism. *The Lemonade Reader* gathers a newer generation of black feminist scholars to engage in intellectual discourse and confront the emotional labor around the Lemonade phenomena. It is the premiere source for examining Lemonade, a text that will continue to have a lasting impact on black women’s studies and popular culture."

JOIN US for a book reception & discussion on September 4 (see calendar on p.6-7)  
recommended by Dr. Kris De Welde

**Black is the Body: Stories from My Grandmother’s Time, My Mother’s Time, and Mine by Emily Bernard**  
"An extraordinary, exquisitely written memoir (of sorts) that looks at race--in a fearless, penetrating, honest, true way--in twelve telltale, connected, deeply personal essays that explore, up-close, the complexities and paradoxes, the haunting memories and ambushing realities of growing up black in the South with a family name inherited from a white man, of getting a PhD from Yale, of marrying a white man from the North, of adopting two babies from Ethiopia, of teaching at a white college and living in America's New England today."

recommended by Dr. Kristi Brian

**Hope, Never Fear: A Personal Portrait of the Obamas by Callie Shell**  
"Award-winning photographer (and WGS CAB chair) Callie Shell presents an intimate portrait of Barack and Michelle Obama and the guiding principles that defined their time in the White House. Over 100 compelling photographs from behind the scenes, including many previously unpublished, are paired with insightful quotes from Michelle and Barack that reveal their warmth, compassion, and unending commitment to service. This is an affecting, deeply personal insight into an extraordinary couple who energized and empowered millions of people around the world."

recommended by Dr. Kris De Welde

**The Feminist Utopia Project: 57 Visions for a Wildly Better Future, Edited by Alexandra Brodsky and Rachel Kauder Nalebuff**  
"More than fifty powerful feminist voices imagine the world we could build together. Both visionary and touching, this exciting collection includes pieces from Lori Adelman on sex, Melissa Harris Perry on the promised land, Jill Soloway describes a hilarious woman-only commune, and Janet Mock envisions a world so safe that true happiness is attainable."

recommended by Raegan Whiteside

*Book descriptions from Amazon*
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

WGS student-scholars are involved in exciting new initiatives, projects, and opportunities. This issue of WGS Connect highlights a handful of students whose recent or upcoming work is informed by the WGS program’s investment in equity, activism, and scholarship.

Alumni Success

- WGS major Rachael Dickey ('18) has begun the accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at MUSC, which will allow her to practice as a Registered Nurse upon completion.

- Cora Webb ('18, WGS and Public Health) is the new Program Director for We Are Family.

- WGS minor Jensen Cowan ('19) is the Director of Engagement and Campus Coordinator for Post-Landfill Action Network out of D.C.

- WGS major Tessa Torgovitsky is the new Development Lead with the Carolina Youth Action Project.

- Bradley Burris ('19, WGS & POLI) is the new Victim Outreach Coordinator with People Against Rape.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MESHAUNA DWIGHT

Current Alison Piepmeier Endowed Scholarship Recipient

What does being the Alison Piepmeier scholarship recipient mean to you?
I was happy to learn about the endeavors and achievements of Alison Piepmeier, and it is an honor to pick up her torch in solidarity for social justice.

What aspects of WGS are you most passionate about?
I decided to declare Women's and Gender Studies as one of my majors because to me, WGS embodies effort towards social justice. Social justice in every area is what I am passionate about because I believe that all corners of the globe should be beautiful places for everyone no matter what their differences are, and societies should work towards being as close to a meritocracy as possible.

Are you currently engaged in any activism in the local community?
I am mostly involved with this small, up-and-coming organization called Educating Girls on the Go, or EGO. It was started by Nathalia Mateus, a former residential assistant at a group home in North Charleston, called Jenkins Institute for Children. Having first-hand experience with the foster care system opened her eyes to how broken it is and she wanted to become an advocate. We have been speaking with policy-makers, community leaders, and other organizations based in and outside of South Carolina for three years now in an effort to reform South Carolina’s foster care system. We now plan to get involved with the Department of Children’s Advocacy, which has only just been established in the beginning of July. This new organization will provide oversight for South Carolina’s Department of Social Services to make sure that all youth in foster care are actually receiving the many services that they have a right to while in DSS custody. The staggering amount of foster care youth that age out of the system only to become homeless were often never even made aware of the resources that they are entitled to.

Congratulations to Meshauna! You make WGS proud!
NEW SPECIAL TOPICS WGS COURSES FALL 2019

WGST 321: QUEER & FEMINIST KINSHIP

This course will question what it means to queer family. Using classic feminist and anthropological studies of kinship and family as a launching point, we will consider how LGBTQ+ identities, transnational and transracial adoption, families with incarcerated members, and parenting outside of heteronormative marriage all present various social forces that dramatically transform notions of family. We will focus not only on how LGBTQ+ people have had to fight for their right to parent, but also what it means to grow up with LGBTQ+ parents or depart from families of origin because of heteronormative, transphobic, or homophobic rejection. The mainstream gay and lesbian embrace of marriage will be contrasted with less conventional forms of queer belonging. The course will consider the nurturance of Two-Spirit people within Native/Indigenous families and consider various anti-colonial and international contexts where various notions of family, gender and belonging constrain or expand expressions of non-binary gender identity and diverse sexualities. The course will explore what futures exist for queer kinship within and beyond the state and what this means for the anthropological study of kinship.

Taught by Dr. Kristi Brian. Meets with ANTH 319.

WGST 324: INTRO TO WOMEN’S HEALTH IN THE CARIBBEAN

This Special Topics Women’s health course provides a comparative look at contemporary issues impacting women’s health in the Caribbean and beyond. During this course we will explore the following questions: How do domestic policies and politics impact women’s health in the region? What influence do social and cultural norms play in women’s health? What is our role in informing ourselves and others about women’s health issues?

Taught by Ms. Ashley Wendt. Meets with LACS 310.

WGST 322: GLOBAL FEMINISMS

This course will examine the lives of women and girls in a diverse global context. We will learn about how the global women’s movement and transnational feminist networks are responding to injustices and inequalities around the world. Students will be challenged to think critically about the impact of social norms, structural constraints, institutional arrangements, and public policies on the lived experiences of individuals around the world, as they are shaped by an individual’s gender, race, nationality, and social class position. Topics include reproductive rights, global economic inequality, gender violence, political participation and social movements, and sex trafficking and sex work. At least one third of the content will be related to Latin America, but case studies and readings will draw on many regions.

Taught by Dr. Julia McReynolds-Perez. Meets with SOCY 369.

Beth Sundstrom also published “‘Nobody Ever Asks Me:’ A Reproductive Justice Approach to Rural Health Disparities,” with Andrea DeMaria and Ellie Smith in Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy.

Cara Delay, Professor of History and WGS affiliated faculty, recently published "Beyond a Legacy of Coercion: Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) and Social Justice" with (you guessed it!) Beth Sundstrom, Andrea DeMaria, and Stephanie Meier in Women’s Reproductive Health.


Cara Delay also received the 2019 Distinguished Research Award, which honors one roster faculty colleague each year who has distinguished themselves by a career of significant research.

Vivian Appler, Assistant Professor of Theatre and Dance and WGS affiliated faculty, recently published two articles. The first, "'Shuffled together under the Name of A Farce': Finding Nature in Aphra Behn’s The Emperor of the Moon" is in the 2018 issue of Theatre History Studies (Vol. 37). "Titan's 'Goodbye Kiss': Legacy Rockets and the Conquest of Space" is in GPS: Global Performance Studies, Issue 2.2.

Rachel McKinnon, Associate Professor of Philosophy and WGS affiliated faculty, recently appeared on the CBS This Morning podcast to discuss her World Champion title in cycling and gender equity in sport.

WGS Administrative Assistant Percy Haas received the 2019 Temporary Staff Employee of the Year award for his work with the program. He has also been approved to work 30 hours a week at the office, so stop by and say hello!
Stay up to date with the WGS program, community events, opportunities, and so much more!

WGS Connect plugs you in to the latest happenings & gives you the inside scoop on all things WGS!

VISIT THE WGS PROGRAM BLOG: WGS CONNECT!

BLOGS.COFC.EDU/WGSCONNECT

FOLLOW THE NEW WGS INSTAGRAM PAGE! @COFCWGS

This issue of WGS Connect was designed & edited by Percy Haas. Special thanks to Vivian Appler, Reagan Williams, Molly Hampton, Meshauna Dwight, and Amanda Bunting Comen for their contributions.