SSP Project

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“WSRC Arts Program”
*SSP Mentor:* Lisa Lynch, Director of the Arts and External Relations - WSRC
*Student:* Sarah Kinsler, Spring ‘08

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“Mothers with Disabilities”
*SSP Mentor:* Mary Mason, Resident Scholar
*Student:* Talia Stechler, Spring ‘08

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“Impact of Multifunctional Platform on Women and Girls in Burkina Faso” and “Gender and Development Course Packet”
*SSP Mentor:* Professor Brenda Gael McSweeney, Resident Scholar
*Student:* Charlie, Tshali Kabanga, Spring ‘09

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“Mothering and Mental Illness”
*SSP Mentor:* June Mendelson, Affiliated Scholar
*Student:* Rebecca Simon, Spring ‘10

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“Don’t Bite Your Tongue: How to Foster Rewarding Relationships With Your Adult Children”
*SSP Mentor:* Dr. Ruth Nemzoff, Affiliated Scholar
*Student:* Leah Levy, Spring ‘10

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“Studying Wal-Mart”
*SSP Mentor:* Ellen Rosen, Resident Scholar
*Student:* Deborah Beth Medows, Spring ‘08

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“Sources of Creativity’ Research”
*SSP Mentor:* Rosie Rosenzweig, Resident Scholar
*Student:* Mia Goldwasser, Spring ‘10

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“Illuminating the Experiences of Emerging Adult Women”
*SSP Mentor:* Amy Rutstein-Riley, Visiting Scholar
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“SPSSI Leadership 1/22/2008 A Content Analysis”
*SSP Mentor:* Dr. Rhoda Unger, Resident Scholar
*Student:* Alexandra Main, Spring ‘08
About the Student-Scholar Partnership Program

“The SSP Program is an excellent opportunity for our talented undergraduates to develop serious, productive, and engaging relationships with scholars and university faculty. These partnerships span so many diverse areas of intellectual inquiry and professional development - it’s stunning to me to see how many different projects are available to our students. This program is truly a credit to the students, scholars, and faculty who participate.” - Provost Marty Krauss, June 2006

Overview

The Student-Scholar Partnership (SSP) was launched in the spring of 1997 as a project of the Women’s Studies Program at Brandeis University. Today, the program continues as a component of the Women’s Studies Research Center (WSRC). The goal of the Student-Scholar Partnership is to match undergraduate students with WSRC Scholars and Women’s and Gender Studies faculty to work collaboratively on research or artistic projects. The emphasis of the program is to enable students and scholars/faculty to work collectively on projects that focus on women’s issues in many different fields. Each partnership meets on an ongoing basis throughout the semester and students have the option of continuing to work on their project more than one year. Students provide research assistance including library and online research, archival work, data analysis, interviewing, preparation for art exhibitions, assistance with book publishing and production, and webpage development. Two unique aspects of the program include an emphasis on mentoring and students contributions to the projects. The program supports the important work that the scholars/faculty are conducting on women’s lives and provides Brandeis undergraduates with an exceptional opportunity to work closely with established professionals in their fields of interest.

“The students were willing and capable beyond my expectations and this was very good for all of us. I could not have accomplished the work without them, and they knew and appreciated this. They were duly proud of the result and pleased with their parts in it.”

- Scholar

“Thank you for this opportunity. I met an incredible scholar and had many interesting academic opportunities. This project has really affected my life - both in my lifestyle choices and in what I hope to accomplish academically.”

- Student

The SSP was supported this year by a generous gift from Carol Goldberg and Michelle Kessler, members of the National Board of the Women’s Studies Research Center.

For more information on the Student-Scholar Partnership Program, please contact the Program Coordinator, Kristen Mullin, via e-mail: mullin@brandeis.edu.
Scope of Project:

To expose the student to oral histories with women scientists associated with a leading US laboratory in molecular biology, a lab long directed (1968-1995) by a scientist (James D. Watson) with notorious problems re: the place of women in science. The topic builds upon the student's current courses and personal interest in molecular biology, as well as her interest in the impact of gender on scientific and biomedical careers. The project is a follow up on a presentation delivered by the WSRC scholar (PGA) at the Annual Meeting of the History of Science Society in Washington DC on November 3, 2007 on "Women scientists of the Phage Group: Independent investigators, spousal collaborators and associates of alpha-male scientists". The Phage Group was a major founding group of molecular biology in the US and used CSHL as one of its main bases, usually during summer courses and symposia, in the period between 1945-1970.

The purpose of the student's work was to conduct a comparative study of oral histories with women associated with CSHL (Table 1) so as to complement the archival research included in the Scholar's 2007 conference paper. The student watched several oral and video histories and the scholar and student worked together on a comparative matrix analyzing 10 women scientists, in a variety of career stages, collaborative choices, and familial situations.
“Muslim Community Health Organizations: A Gendered Approach”

SSP Mentor: Wendy Cadge, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Student: Aylin Mentesh ’09

Wendy Cadge writes:

Aylin helped me this semester with a literature review relevant to my project about Muslim community based healthcare organizations in the United States. She helped me to identify a body of literature about Catholic and Jewish healthcare organizations in the United States, built a database of these articles, and then wrote an excellent literature review about the development of the Catholic institutions. She identified the reasons Catholic hospitals were started, developed, merged, etc. and is also continuing to look for the quantitative data necessary to fully make this argument. This material serves as background for the article I will write with colleague Lance Laird about contemporary Muslim health organizations and how the development of healthcare organizations has varied by religious tradition in the United States. In addition to this substantive work, Aylin and I have discussed summer internship plans, thesis ideas, study abroad possibilities, and the different kinds of graduate school options she is considering in our weekly meetings. It has been a pleasure to get to know her better through this experience, and I hope we can continue these conversations in future semesters as she continues to think through and make decisions about career plans and ideas. Her support and assistance has been professional, detailed, and extremely helpful to my research.

Aylin Mentesh writes:

The Student-Scholar Program has been one of the most fulfilling experiences I have had at Brandeis so far. In working with Professor Cadge I gained hands on research experience in a very supportive environment. Weekly meetings with Professor Cadge enabled me to fully engage in a mentorship program. From sharing my findings weekly to strategizing on how to find different sources of information, working one-on-one with Professor Cadge taught me everything that goes into a literature review and much more. In addition to writing a literature review on Catholic Hospitals, working with Professor Cadge inspired me to reevaluate future academic and career goals. In getting to know Professor Cadge through the SSP program, she has remained a constant support system throughout the semester when everything else got a bit crazy. This experience was invaluable and something I will bring with me to future academics. For anyone who is interested in academia, writing a senior thesis, or getting to know a professor better, I highly recommend applying to the SSP program.
Lauren and Susan have been working together on various projects since October of 2007, and their partnership has been a wonderful learning experience for both participants. Susan is currently working on two projects, both of which are extremely personal for her. The first and most established one is her work with women in the trades. She is the author of a non-fiction book entitled *We’ll Call You If We Need You*, which compiles the stories of many of the first women to enter the trades. In addition to being an author, Susan is also an artist and her work related to this topic will be on display in the WSRC this coming fall. In this process, Lauren has been helpful in conceptualizing the use of the space as well as being a source of opinions and ideas as to how to go about recruiting support from both the University and the greater community. Also, Lauren helped work on the grant which made the exhibit a possibility.

Susan is also working on a project which will chronicle women’s experience with chronic illness, specifically with Lupus. She is in the very beginning stages of this project and is working on making contacts and is in the first stage of the interview process. She also has a collection of photographs tied to the project which recently were exhibited at Lesley College. In this process, Lauren is doing the transcription of interviews and is giving her feedback on what she finds to be pertinent and interesting in those interviews. She is instrumental in helping to piece together the different narratives in to a more coherent whole. Lauren also helped to form a template for the stories of chronic illness in the form of an installation. Over the summer, Lauren and Susan will continue to work together as Susan does interviews and Lauren transcribes them and helps her to further interpret them.

Under the Student Scholar Partnership program, I worked closely with Mrs. Fran Forman. My project: *Marketing for fine art and editorial illustration* not only introduced me to a new form of contemporary art but also helped me enhance my research skills. The project was driven by the aim to market Mrs. Forman’s artwork of digital illustrations to galleries, buyers and print media. My role in doing so was to first find and make a list of galleries and magazines that might be interested in Mrs. Forman’s work. I did research online, following one website to another, tracking down art galleries in the New England area as well as in cities across the country. I also resorted to art related magazines and publications in finding those which may potentially be interested in including pieces from Mrs. Forman’s collection. Although it was very time consuming, I found myself reading each magazine and website simply because I was intrigued and curious to learn more about contemporary art. I compiled all the information I found into a database which when finished, will be very helpful in contacting each source. The second part of the project will consist of communicating with these sources and presenting Mrs. Forman’s work to the gallery directors and art directors of publications. Overall, by working on this project, I came to appreciate fine art photography and photo illustration and learned a great deal about it. It is very new and unique.
This research project is focused on understanding the different life paths that lead educated white and African-American women to their decision to be a homemaker or combine a career with family life. The research has been in progress since 2000-2001. Data consist of transcribed interviews with over fifty women that were conducted between 2001 and 2005. The main SSP task for the spring of 2008 is to re-establish contact with them, send them a report on the findings of the study, and request a time that they could be interviewed by phone to update their record.

**Becky Sniderman (Student Partner):**

As the Student Partner, my main work has been to re-contact women who were interviewed and update their contact information. Professor Giele and I send them a brief description of the results of the study and offer also to send them Professor Giele’s current paper which will appear in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* in the summer of 2008. We eventually hope to gather new information about each woman’s current work and home status. At the moment I am helping Professor Giele organize and update the files for the research project so that they can eventually be archived at the Harvard-MIT Data Center. This entails creating numerous spreadsheets with Microsoft Word and Excel, a process that has helped me hone my skills in organizing and gathering information. I am also contacting interviewees via email and telephone to update their information, start the process of getting back in touch with them, and lay the foundation for follow-up interviews.

I found out about the program when I attended the Sociology meeting for majors in the fall of 2007 and was introduced to Professor Giele by Judy Hanley, the department administrator. Professor Giele vibrantly described her project to me, which immediately sparked my interest, and told me that she was looking for a student scholar to help her with her research. I applied for the program in the beginning of Spring 2008 and began working with Professor Giele soon after my application was completed. We met briefly a few times before I began officially working and came up with the scope of my responsibilities as an assistant. Along with re-contacting the interviewees, there was also a hope that we might have time to gather some new data on the participants, possibly de-identify some of the transcripts, and do some more precise qualitative analysis with a program such as Atlas-ti. Due to my previous experience with creating and updating a website, Professor Giele thought I might be able to help her update her page on the Sociology Department and Heller School websites. Through this work I hoped to refine my research skills through the process of interviewing and working with participants and also to improve my writing and editing skills.

A major challenge of the work process has been the considerable number of women whom I have been unable to contact through email or by telephone. Several women to whom I have spoken have not remembered being part of the study and thus have been a bit resistant to reestablishing contact. In addition, much of the contact information is outdated, and thus email addresses no longer work and many telephone numbers are no longer in service. Some women seem to have moved, and it is difficult to find their information without clues to where they have gone. Also, many websites that provide such information now charge for that service.

While the process of contacting and calling the participants of the study has been the most difficult process of my work with Professor Giele, it has also been the most rewarding. I have called over 50 women multiple times, often leaving messages with family
members and machines with little luck of response. This experience has forced me to develop my professional persona over the telephone and to properly and efficiently convey information to people I have never spoken to before. When I have successfully contacted women within the study, many have been extremely responsive and have voiced gratitude for my efforts in contacting them. Most women are excited to receive updates about the research and to receive a copy of the current paper. The women I have successfully contacted have also agreed to be contacted in the future so we can learn more about how their lives have changed since the research was gathered.

Janet Giele (SSP Mentor):
This year Becky has enabled me to get back to a task that I have let go far too long – reestablishing contact with the more than fifty women who were interviewed for my research over the past seven years. I just wish we had more hours in the week to do even more.

Becky is a marvelous partner – bright, efficient, committed, and thoughtful about the questions that are central to this project. She loves sociology and research, as do I; she loves music and is a chorister (which I am also). I really identify with her and take pride in having the good fortune of her help. I feel extremely lucky to have found her, and I look forward to watching her own future career unfold.

Thanks to WSRC for SSP!

Becky Sniderman (Student Partner):
I am very grateful to be working on such a wonderful project with Professor Giele. We meet weekly to discuss upcoming plans for work. In these meetings Professor Giele and I often have interesting conversations spanning topics from schoolwork to music. I consider Professor Giele one of my mentors both academically and personally and am truly honored to be assisting her with her research. As a sociology major I am very interested in the topic of Professor Giele’s project as well as the process of interviewing and contacting research subjects. This experience has developed my skills in sociological research, organization, interpersonal interactions, and gathering data. I thoroughly enjoy working for Professor Giele and am glad that I was introduced to such an experience through the Women’s Studies Research Center Student-Scholar Partnership.

Janet Giele (SSP Mentor):
I consider the Student-Scholar Partnership to be one of the best “perks” of being a Brandeis Professor affiliated with Women’s and Gender Studies. Every year since 2001, I have benefitted from this boon, and I have been able to accomplish much more than I ever could have done without such help.

This year it has been a sheer joy to work with such a wonderful student as Becky. She already has the makings of a good writer and original researcher, yet she is willing to do the humble tasks of keeping good records and making the necessary phone calls and e-mail contacts that my project currently requires.

Our weekly meetings also help me keep on track with my research. Now that I am retired from teaching, I see that many of my peers fall away from the kinds of continuing research and writing that I want to keep on doing. Having an enterprising, young research assistant is a great spur to that continuing endeavor.

Potential Contribution of the Research
We both feel that a woman’s life course is shaped by all that has gone before, in addition to her own particular identity, circumstances, and motivation. Journalists and public intellectuals have been debating whether some women are “dropping out” of the labor force because of the attractions of motherhood or the persistence of sex discrimination. While both of these factors do exist, Professor Giele’s research suggests that it is women’s own background and values that shape their life paths. The life patterns of the career women were similar for white and black women, but African-American homemakers were pioneers in staying at home whereas white homemakers were following tradition. Career women of both races used their sense of being outstanding to conquer disadvantage – the black women to defy racial discrimination, the white women to rise from humbler origins or to overcome a
disability. Thus, research on educated homemaker and career women shows how the different life patterns of each woman leads her to a particular niche in society, the home, and the workplace. Each woman has found a way of integrating her family background, education, and experience with, societal expectations as well as her own hopes, dreams, and goals in life.
Today's healthcare workplaces consist of a diverse intermingling of backgrounds, roles, and hierarchal statuses. When employees with differing skills, levels of education, cultural backgrounds, and gender interact, conflicts often emerge. Dr. Goldstein’s research focuses on the culture and interpersonal dynamics of these interdisciplinary teams of clinicians, which include physicians, nurses, nurses’ aides, and social workers, among other professions. She believes that improving how members of these teams collaborate and communicate with each other will lead to desired outcomes for hospitals, clinicians, and patients alike: hospitals will incur less job turnover and more economic gain; clinicians of all varieties will reap increased job satisfaction—that is, will feel happy, comfortable, and valued in their work environment; and patients, overall, will receive better treatment.

Together, Dr. Goldstein and I have been reviewing the existing literature on conflict-resolution and team collaboration in order to investigate what interventions have proved successful in producing these desired outcomes and to determine what specific methods these interventions employed. The final goal of the project is for Dr. Goldstein to develop her own training program to be carried out at a variety of healthcare workplaces in the Boston area.

My contribution as an SSP has involved extensive literature review through academic journal databases. I have identified relevant studies and organized them into a framework that Dr. Goldstein can then utilize to compare their processes and relevant outcomes.

Additionally, I have identified and gathered the contact information of local hospitals and clinics in preparation for contacting their executive officers about participating in this research.

While the project thus far remains in its planning stages, I believe that Dr. Goldstein is well on her way to producing and carrying out a well-researched and thoughtfully designed training program for a diverse group of clinicians. This project should enrich the current body of research on conflict-resolution and interdisciplinary collaboration with its aim to examine interpersonal dynamics among healthcare staff as influencing all aspects of healthcare.
The sheer amount of work that goes into an investigative journalism project is staggering. During my experience as a research assistant at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism I have become acquainted with the consuming, laborious, and ultimately rewarding process of researching and developing an in-depth journalistic story. The insight I have gained into the world of journalism has given me a new respect and admiration for the field. The stories require dedication, perseverance, and gumshoe work. I feel that my specific research on stories that are international in scope and that examine issues of gender and justice is a kind of public service. The articles, broadcasts, and public discussions that will result will contribute to society by informing people about important matters that, otherwise, they would never hear about. It is inspiring to know that I am participating in inquiry for the public good: exposing injustices and, I hope, making a difference in individuals’ lives.

As a research assistant, my duties have varied: fact-checking, culling relevant sources, distilling articles, and drafting memos. I am constantly honing my research and writing skills through finding, reading, and summarizing articles and legal records. I have spent numerous hours reading and citing every source germane to a specific aspect of a developing story.

The stress put on getting every aspect of the research right has been particularly noteworthy. Part of my work has involved documenting every factual discrepancy among sources, no matter how large or small. My mentor has explained to me the obligation to be as accurate as possible in my research for several reasons. First, research provides the story with credence and support; it forms the backbone of any story. Additionally, the written word is powerful and the articles produced by Schuster Institute staff are taken seriously. Lives can be affected by the stories and therefore it is crucial to get the facts right.

An informed citizenry is necessary for the healthy functioning of a democratic society, and it is satisfying to conduct research that plays a role in alerting the public. At a time when many media outlets are putting less and less money into investigative journalism, the Institute is even more relevant and my work even more useful. Knowing that my research, guided by my mentor, E.J. Graff, and aggregated with those of fellow researchers, will help bring out the truth, impacting individual lives, provides a wonderful feeling of utility, duty, and accomplishment.
We are research assistants for the Justice Brandeis Innocence Project at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism. The Innocence Project is part of a national Innocence Network of organizations that strive to obtain legal exonerations for people who are in prison for crimes they did not commit. While most other Innocence Projects achieve this goal through DNA testing, we are one of handful of projects, and the only one in the Northeast, to correct wrongful convictions without DNA, using journalistic skills and tactics to thoroughly investigate every aspect of a murder conviction we believe was wrong. Working with our director Florence Graves we review trial transcripts, evaluate the quality of the police investigation by exposing its flaws and irrationalities, demonstrate the abhorrent legal assistance our client received and interview key witnesses to develop a clear picture of what really happened. Our investigation has been so effective in turning up problems in this case that an investigator appointed by the state public defender’s service has determined that our client deserves a new appeal and a new attorney.

The ultimate tragedy of wrongful convictions is the terrible devastation they cause to life. Speaking with our client and his family, we have come to see how frustrating and terrifying it is to be convicted of a crime when you are innocent. Families are torn apart, reputations and futures ruined, and meanwhile, the true criminals remain at large. This is not only research that will help one person; our findings will become part of a larger corpus of exposition of the many flaws of the criminal justice system, provoking widespread reform and preventing future wrongful convictions.
Over the course of this academic year, I have been working almost entirely on essays in age studies, a field allied to critical and humanistic gerontology, but more interdisciplinary and able to focus on representations of all "stages" of life and of aging, and on the audiences these different discourses and visualizations are addressed to (including children). Within cultural studies, age studies offers a parallel to gender, race, disability, and queer studies. A useful discussion of age studies can be found in my book Aged by Culture (2004), which pushes the theory of the social construction of age harder than many other discussions do.

The essays listed below are being published separately in books or journals. They deal with, inter alia, narratives of aging, menopause discourse, women’s health, and media representations, the economics of the midlife, suicide in later life; cosmetic surgery. Most of the essays, after revision, will appear in my next book, which is now being read by the University of Chicago Press. The tentative title is The Hidden Coercions of Ageism (From the Feminist Country of Later Life).

The U of Chicago Press also published Aged by Culture. It was nominated for a Pulitzer and a National Book Award by the press’s editors; it was chosen a Notable Book of the Year by the Christian Science Monitor and received an Honorable Mention for the Book Awards given by the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights.

My aim in this book is to reveal ageism where other people see only “aging” or nothing at all. The motto of the book might be, “Defy ageism, not aging” and one goal of the book is to make the differences between the two concepts clear in a range of contexts. Here is a list of the essays, plus others I am working now. Some of them were written before summer 2007, but those on the list were revised during the current year, many with the help of my Scholar Partners.

A few of the essays, as I mentioned, will not appear in the book. I take notice here of only one of them. I was asked to write a chapter for a volume of theorized memoirs, in which First-Generation Critics Reflect on Age, Aging and the Making of Critical Gerontology. Since I am known as an age critic (my two previous books were in midlife studies) rather than a gerontologist, this invitation was an honor.


• Three narratives—from childhood, adulthood, and old age (one from the U.S., one from Nicaragua, one from France), show how important progress narrative is in personal life-storytelling, and how difficult to construct and maintain.

• “The Mystery of Carolyn Heilbrun’s Suicide: Women, Ageism, and the Duty to Die,” Exit Freely (working title), edited by Nan Bauer-Maglin and Donna Perry. New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2008 or 2009. Showing the ageist elements in Carolyn Heilbrun’s suicide reveals threats to the well-being of older professional women in the
increasingly ageist culture of the United States, culminating in the threat to all elderly people from the "duty-to-die."

- "Hormone Nostalgia: Menopause Discourse After the Debacle," Women, Wellness, and the Media, edited by Margaret Wiley. Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. After the hormone debacle of 2002, there should have been a reduction in menopause decline discourse, more warnings about similar public-health disasters in the making, and an improvement in the status of midlife women. Why didn’t much of that happen?


- A theorized memoir about the making of my three books on life-course topics, with special attention to the change from midlife studies to age studies.


New Projects:
- "Cosmetic Surgery: Death, Disfigurement, Pain, and the Ick Factor."
- "The Economics of the Midlife." Future chapter of the book.

My Student Partners
I have had two partners this year, because my fall partner, Dawn Schwartz, went to India for the spring semester and I then engaged Stephanie Spiro. The articles and essays listed at the end under "New Projects" have benefited from the help of one or the other or both of them.

Dawn Schwartz (fall 2007) helped at the start of my cosmetic-surgery research, finding data on the ages at which women most frequently undergo surgery (and when they stop or tail off); and she found some material on legal suits against surgeons. For the menopause article she researched to find if there was any Internet use of the terms "hormone debacle" and "medicalization" in reference to menopause (thereby learning about the history of media responses to the debacle, and the power of the media to control discourse). For the article on suicide in later life, she found essays on links between retirement and depression, and data on the ages at which people are leaving the workforce and research on why they leave. She also found data on the peak age at which women currently commit suicide, which turns out to be at midlife, in their forties and fifties, and not in later life. She also looked on Google etc. to find references to "Baby Boomers" changing the "face of aging" or that "population aging" is the central demographic fact of our time in the United States.

Stephanie Spiro (spring 2008) applied to be my Partner by writing a paragraph about Age Studies that already proved she had an anthropological perspective on American age culture. "The way American society treats aging—as a dreaded decline—stigmatizes people in older generations and can create hostile relations between generations. Age also interacts with gender to create standards for the ways in which men and women respectively should act.
dress, work, and relate in older age. . . The subject of aging is seldom spoken of by younger generations, although I think it is a topic which all should address in dialogue."

Stephanie helped particularly with research on suicide in later life, and even though she is not in economics, she found further data on midlife economics. Using the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, Stephanie found comparisons between the median earnings of men and women at different age groups and how the differences in earnings changed over time, finding that the differences between the earnings of men and women were more dramatic for middle-aged and older Americans. This informed her understanding of how age and gender intersect to affect women’s and men’s lives differently.

Stephanie found more negative views of plastic surgery to contribute to my own findings. She edited the cosmetic surgery article: I encourage the interns to work with me at the final revision stage, partly as a way of sharpening their critical thinking and partly to accustom them to thinking of themselves as potential intellectual peers.

Stephanie is also helping with the revision of the essay on Hurricane Katrina and the elderly. She was able to find articles on the outcomes of the court cases involving nursing homes and the mistreatment of the elderly, including testimonies of elderly people who have temporarily relocated outside of New Orleans. Reading these articles exposed Stephanie to the ageism and lack of attention focused on the elderly during this national crisis, a reality that had not been emphasized in any detail previously. She has gone on on to contact researchers who are studying the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the elderly to inquire about the status of their research. She is researching the preparedness, or lack thereof, of government agencies and NGOs in the wake of the Katrina debacle (the revision of the Katrina essay on the vulnerability of people over 50).

Both partners were prompt and responsible in complying with my requests, and showed welcome initiative in contacting primary sources. They all demonstrated astute research skills as they provided me with material to support my varied current projects. They both quickly understood what I was looking for in my research and uncovered hard-to-find data. In different ways, both shared with me their goals, their current classroom work, and political issues of mutual interest.
“Gender Differences in Self-priming on Interdependent Conceptualizations of the Self”

SSP Mentor: Angela Gutchess
Student: Sharon Shenhav

In this SSP funded project, the student and scholar worked together to create a Psychology study that focused on gender differences of how males and females conceptualize themselves, as well as if and to what extent certain aspects of their self-conceptualizations can be accessed and altered with specific priming techniques. Although self-conceptualizations are commonly separated by the dichotomy of independent vs. interdependent, this project looked at the two branches of the interdependent self, relational and collective. Interdependence is defined as the viewing of every individual as having a place within a larger social whole. It is forming and maintaining relationships with others as fulfillment of one’s place in the larger society (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Gender seems to play a role in how people view themselves in this area, as females are more likely to define themselves relationally, for example as a best friend or a daughter, and males are more likely to define themselves collectively, for example as a member of a group (Gardner, Gabriel, & Hochschild, 2002).

This project has created a manipulation to examine whether or not males and females can change the way they access knowledge about their relationships and of themselves as part of society, depending on the type of priming they receive. If females are exposed to a situation in which collective themes and values are placed in the forefront, will they start to think of themselves more collectively than relationally, and vice versa. If males are exposed to a situation in which relational themes and values are placed in the forefront, will they then subsequently define themselves more relationally than collectively? This is the question that this study has set out to explore, and both the student and the scholar are playing their part in designing and carrying out this experiment as an attempt to answer these questions.

The student was given primary responsibility for this project. In collaboration with her supervisor, she designed and carried out the study described above. She read the literature that existed on this topic to get more of an idea about what has been done before, and of how this study should take form as extending from previous studies, as well as addressing the question proposed above in the best possible way. She wrote up an Institutional Review Board proposal to get approval for carrying out the study. Additionally, she designed the measures that would be used in the experiment, and is currently piloting the study materials. If promising results are obtained through piloting, we can be more certain that the relational and collective concepts we are setting out to examine are the same concepts that will ultimately be measured. Further, she will be responsible for recruiting and running initial participants, as well as analyzing the preliminary data in conjunction with the scholar.

By carrying out this study, the student and scholar hope to further the knowledge on this topic in both the Psychology field and beyond. Because each person is part of the larger society they exist within, interdependent relations are something that cannot be ignored. It is important to see if gender is the sole determinant of how one thinks about him or herself, or if the environment one is placed in can have just as big, or even more of an influence, on how one conceptualizes him or herself. With male and female worlds increasingly converging, in both personal and professional spheres, it is important to explore whether people can alter their self-concepts in response to different priming situations, or if they are programmed somehow by their gender to relate to others in a certain fixed way.
We began working together in the fall of 2006, at which point our project was titled “A non-traditional introduction to Philosophy.” In the 70’s Hilde wrote an unpublished manuscript that was an introduction to Philosophy from what she then considered to be a woman’s perspective. Our project was to update, renew and revitalize that initial effort. We began by doing some empirical research to see how, if at all, modern day philosophy had changed in the last 20-30 years. Lauren collected syllabi, talked to professors and students, did research on recent developments in philosophy (especially feminist) and critiqued some of Hilde’s earlier writing. We discovered that standard introductory level courses have experienced little change: the material is generally drawn from the history of philosophy or oriented toward specific philosophical problems drawn from traditional major subdivisions of philosophy. While this sometimes included works by one or two women, there was rarely anything feminist – perhaps a section on rape or abortion (what are generally considered “women’s issues”), but generally nothing more. Works by women are not always feminist.

So why write a “new” introduction? Unlike in many other fields where premises and assumptions are challenged regularly (science, for example, is perpetually replacing and revamping old theories), in philosophy it’s generally assumed that the fundamental questions have already been raised by the Greek philosophers. Other fields don’t tend to review or focus heavily on their history; whereas, we tend to think of philosophy as a process of building or adding on to the framework initiated by the Greeks. What Hilde argues is that this structure is deeply and vitally flawed. It always was and always has been sexist, and because it’s sexist, it’s wrong. The goal of our project is ultimately to correct the way we approach philosophy at an introductory level.

Our work was interrupted in the Spring of 2007 as Lauren went abroad for a semester. During that time, Hilde continued work on her manuscript, revising her writing on the basis of the research we had gathered; she retitled the project “Reconceiving Philosophy: A Feminist Introduction.” As we resumed work together in the Fall of 2007, our meetings became less focused on the empirical footwork and turned towards broader discussions of philosophical issues. Hilde looked towards Lauren as an illustration of somebody who is young, thinking about philosophical issues, but with a contemporary perspective. Together, we engaged in an active dialogue to tease out new ideas and amend old ones. We covered a wide range of issues such as Lauren’s plans to attend law school, international and political affairs, feminist art, the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo (which related to Lauren’s Senior Honors Thesis), Lauren’s experience as a young woman studying philosophy, and Hilde’s memories as a young Jewish-German in the U.S.. Our discussions are illustrative of the character of philosophy – it’s not confined to a single subject and is not primarily a matter of empirical research; instead, it’s an exploration of ideas that are prevalent everywhere. Because of the nature of our meetings, we’ve chosen to utilize a Platonic-style dialogue to exemplify the character of our work together.

Lauren: So Hilde, why write a new introductory text?

Hilde: I think traditionally when people write introductory texts, they ask themselves how they can boil the standard material down into an accessible form. What bothers me about traditional texts is that they raise issues that are of little relevance to the people who are studying them; they don’t take into account what might be significant to the receiver of the text. I think we can, and should, raise issues that would be meaningful to a contemporary audience and start from there.
Lauren: Certainly my most engaging and enlightening Philosophy classes were those in which we talked about issues that I could relate to, rather than focusing exclusively on the abstract. I loved Intro to Ethics, for example, because we talked about issues that affect me and I was able to see how Philosophy could be applied to the real world. I’m curious how this approach to philosophy fits into the feminist perspective.

Hilde: First of all, a feminist perspective is not something that appeals exclusively to women. What it does mean is really starting from scratch and rejecting a lot of the fundamental things that are taken for granted. The basic ideas of western philosophy have permeated all thinking and these ideas are inherently polarized and hierarchical – masculinist, if you will. But, we don’t have to think about the world that way; what’s more, it’s done a lot of damage. So, we have to rethink philosophy in such a way as to avoid those errors and set up our foundational thought differently and I’m coming at it from a feminist perspective.

Lauren: The idea of philosophy as masculinist is really interesting; the male experience is at the base of most philosophical thought. Male is seen as the human prototype. It’s similar to the race issue, where the point of reference is white.

Hilde: Exactly. If people start talking in terms of blackness, white people get upset because they think they’re being left out of the story; paradoxically, when talking in terms of whiteness, they don’t see blacks as being left out because they think of white as the universal. I think this whole issue with Barack Obama and Rev. Jeremiah Wright is pretty interesting. No one went after Nixon for listening to Billy Graham. With Obama, people are outraged because they see a race issue. The same thing is true for women too. If they object to a male way of seeing things, they’re being hysterical, but men conventionally overrule women’s perceptions as being irrelevant and peculiar.

Lauren: Right, well we talked a while ago about how there is such a double standard with and misogynistic attitude towards Hilary Clinton, especially in the media.

Hilde: Objectifying others (men or women) is not the only way that we can interact in the world. It doesn’t matter whether it’s men or women who are being repressed; no one should be. That’s a philosophical issue. What makes philosophy important is how it is related to ordinary life. In a way the analytic philosophers tried to make that point, but instead of actually relating to ordinary life they’d invent trivial illustrations like the perennial example of forgetting to return a book to the library. It’s so important, though, that the situations be contemporary. We’re all confronted with moral questions and issues – our conversations are a living, working example of this.

Lauren: You’re right. Relating everyday issues like modern politics to larger philosophical matters makes it much easier to grasp the concepts. A lot of people are intimidated by philosophy because they think it’s “so abstract” and inaccessible.

Hilde: The point I want to make is that it’s not really abstract at all. Philosophy helps you think coherently and to see where an argument is going: “if you say x and that entails y, then by saying x you commit yourself to y. Are you prepared to do that?” Maybe that kind of thinking is out of fashion now, but that’s still the heart of philosophy.

Lauren: It’s so funny that you say that. I remember that when I joined the Brandeis Debate Team the older members warned me that my friends would end up hating me – or, rather, hating arguing with me. Non-philosophers, most people really, don’t think entirely logically and don’t take kindly to having the flaws in their argumentation being pointed out. They don’t usually want to commit themselves to Y. Philosophers, on the other hand, get it – they enjoy the argument! I think a lot of people assume that if you disagree you don’t like each other, when really it’s ok to just talk about it. I guess that’s what you and I do.
Hilde: What we’re really illustrating here is the connection between very fundamental philosophical stuff and every day life; it’s relevant to literature, to art, to basic social interactions, to everything. And that’s really the goal of my project, to make clear that Philosophy isn’t an obscure subject. It’s something that matters to everything we – men and women – do.
Hina Bukhari started working with me on my book project Humanitarian Identity and the Political Sublime: Intervention of a Postcolonial Feminist in the fall of 2007. We started with one of the chapters from my forthcoming book “The Psychic versus Social in Brennan and Kincaid,” reading which she decided to join me. The chapter is from the second section of the book called Repression due to Colonization and delineates what is the root cause of Colonization; what is the major block to achieve “humanitarian identity.” It draws on Teresa Brennan’s theory of “foundational fantasy” and portrays how colonization takes place critiquing Lacanian theory of “psychical fantasy of woman.” As her realization grew deeper about “colonization” reading various theorists like Brennan and Amartya Sen, I moved to the last phase of my book working on the other significant author Salman Rushdie. She studied with me Rushdie’s novel Shalimer the Clown and helped me with her almost scientific enquiry and opinion on Rushdie. Let me offer here a quote from her essay on Rushdie,

There is a formal fatwa (an ‘Islamic’ ruling) to kill Salman Rushdie in various parts of the Muslim world because of his anti-religious writings. However, in my eyes Rushdie’s malice towards religious figures as described in Shalimar the Clown is warranted. During his youth, Rushdie spent time in the then religiously diverse and peaceful Kashmir and through his lifetime he saw it transform into a battleground of political conflict in the name of religion…. Even the (inter-religious) marriage ceremony of the two <Shalimar & Boonyi> shows such assimilation- one day of the wedding is dedicated to Muslim ceremonies and one day to Hindu ceremonies. Rushdie feels the peace found amongst different religious groups has been destroyed due to those who misappropriate the religion and act as violent forces in the name of it. He plays no direct attack on Muslims themselves.

Beside Rushdie, the outcome of our partnership also resulted in the submission of her article, “Trans-religious Feminist Thought,” in one of the Newspapers. The most brilliant remark she made during our partnership is that she now knows that through “Philosophy” one can approach any subject/issue in the world. She also defined it as “Global Philosophy.” In addition, she wrote a brief review of my work Jouissance as Ananda and you can see her report below.

Hina’s Comments: The relationship between Dr. Ashmita Khasnabish and I was, to say the least, mutually enlightening. Working as her assistant I conducted research by which she and I both learnt more about various topics in history, religion, mysticism, and culture. Our discussions that were based on her writings and on my researched findings led me to discover new ideologies and philosophies – especially in the areas of Hindu and European Feminist thought. What I learned from her pushed me to question and delve deeper into my own belief systems. After reading the chapter “Women in the East, women in the West,” from her book Jouissance as Ananda I began seeing the parallels in the struggles of Hindu and Muslim Feminists. I recently wrote a piece in which I discuss current issues both Hindu and Muslim women face in South Asian countries as a result of patriarchal misuse of religion. In the writing I take a closer look at both traditional Hindu and Islamic texts and show how the two religions, in their true nature, actually focus on the elevation of women’s status, not their degradation. I have found that there is a common thread that connects the various religions and feminist theories Dr. Ashmita and I have had the pleasure to work with: the hope to find a universal form of egalitarianism and peace.
The Arts Program at the Women's Studies Research Center is home to the Kniznick Gallery, the only exhibition space in New England devoted to the display of women's art and/or art about gender. Exhibition themes and arts events are linked to the scholarly research being conducted at the WSRC, and the art on display is a vehicle through which the Center seeks to promote dialogue about important issues and address the ever-changing challenges related to women and gender.

From Oct. 2 - Dec. 14, 2007, the WSRC presented *Tiger by the Tail! Women Artists of India Transforming Culture*, a group exhibition organized by the WSRC and travelling through October 2009. Based on the research of WSRC Resident Scholar Elinor W. Gadon, the exhibition features the provocative work of 17 established artists who create painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, video, and installation art. Much of the work responds to ongoing patriarchal aggression and communal violence. This exhibition of contemporary Indian art challenges social oppression and gender discrimination, and provides new models for the empowerment of women. The title of the exhibit, *Tiger by the Tail!* refers to Indian women who claim their agency and speak out, shining a spotlight on some of the most important issues for women in contemporary society, not just for India, but for global humanity. Exhibited artists include: Navjot Altaf, Arpana Caur, Kanchan Chander, Sheba Chhachhi, Anju Dodiya, Anita Dube, Shilpa Gupta, Rummana Hussain, Sonia Khurana, Nalini Malani, Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, Gogi Saroj Pal, Shukla Sawant, Mithu Sen, Nilima Sheikh, Arpita Singh and Vasudha Thozhur.

Related exhibition programming included a 2 day international symposium on October 2 & 3. Symposium presenters included exhibition curators Wendy Tarlow Kaplan, Roobina Karode, and Elinor W. Gadon; Brandeis faculty members; exhibiting artists; museum professionals; and an art critic. Discussion topics included: *Transgression & Subversion in the Arts: Strategies for Creating Revolution; Body Politics and Forging of Identity; The Ethical Issues of Violence, Power & Citizenship; Indian Art in the Contemporary Art World; and Artists as Political Activists*. Each session sparked creative, intellectual dialogue and debate, and feedback from participants and attendees has been positive and exciting.

Sarah M. Kinsler, the Arts Program SSP, worked on transcribing the recorded sessions. Once completed, the transcription will appear on the WSRC website and most likely websites of other venues to which the exhibition is traveling (Rutgers University: Jan. 15 – July 31, 2008; University of Pennsylvania: Aug. 23 – Oct. 27, 2008; American University: Jan. 24 – Mar. 29, 2009; University of Miami: June 27 – Oct. 11, 2009). In this way, audiences will continue to benefit from the scholarship prior to and initiated by the exhibition. While transcribing, Sarah learned about the topics discussed in the International Symposium.

Sarah writes of the experience:

As the Arts Program SSP, I have had a unique opportunity: to experience the *Tiger by the Tail!* Symposium by proxy, watching and listening to video footage of the symposium over and over (and over and over and over) again. Though the transcription process itself could be frustratingly slow and tedious at times, I have become familiar with the symposium in ways I imagine few others have. In closely watching these tapes, I have come to know the voices of the curators, participants and the artists themselves without having met them. My attempts at
accuracy have led me to track down leads in the exhibition materials and on the internet, from which I've gained bits and pieces of knowledge about the artists, Indian folklore, and historical events of which I had never heard before. Though the transcription itself has been the ostensible focus of my work, the discussions I've watched and transcribed, the art I hear described and see on the screen as I type, the discoveries I've made while verifying the words I hear (or I think I hear) have been, for me, the real focus.
There are many people in society who doubt the parenting abilities of mothers with disabilities. My initial research shows that there is a societal stigma against mothers with disabilities' capabilities of nurturing, disciplining, and meeting the physical needs of their children. My mentor, Mary Mason's project analyzes the experiences and attitudes of mothers with disabilities who successfully raised children. Mary’s interviews highlight the co-dependent, dynamic relationships between these mothers and their children. To date, I have read through some research and four interviews on mothers with disabilities. I was intrigued how their children’s personalities and characteristics developed as a result of their mother’s disabilities. Each interview presented a unique relationship; however, in general, the mothers and their children recognized that their disability may have created additional challenges in their relationship. Despite these challenges, the mothers felt their disabilities had a positive impact on their child's independence and sensitivity.

Often at the end of the interview, the mothers discussed feelings of guilt that were underlying their relationship with their daughters. Even though these mothers were extremely resilient and creative in their parenting techniques, there were certain physical tasks they could not do. For example, one mother felt guilty because she could not braid her daughter’s hair. Another mother felt guilty for asking her children to help carry in the groceries. At the same time, children expressed feeling guilty for not always wanting to help their mothers and for feeling burdened by extra responsibilities. Even though feelings of guilt and frustration are rooted in mundane, physical needs, they can have a serious impact on the relationship between mother and child, especially as the child grows older.

The mothers honestly acknowledged the hardships and negative emotions that their children felt due to their disabilities. However, in these interviews, the mothers also reflected on the positive influence that their disability had on the development of their children, in contrast to children of their able bodied counterparts. Their children were more mature, independent, and sensitive to others. One mother discussed how her daughter became more sensitive to others by coming with her to teach children with disabilities to swim. Her daughter became comfortable around these children and treated them like real people when she interacted with them. Another mother needed Personal Care Assistants to physically help her get dressed, which left her daughter to manage on her own. While this may have triggered some resentment, her daughter became more independent and mature at a young age. Another daughter displayed her maturity in her discussions with her friends about her mom’s disability when they came over to the house. Overall, most mothers were cognizant of how their disability provoked a greater sensitivity towards people with disabilities, and more responsible and capable children in comparison to other children their age.

The impact of this dynamic relationship not only positively influenced the relationship between mother and child and the child’s development, it also helped them to educate others about people with disabilities, formally and informally. Some of the mothers in the interviews mentioned how their children at a young age engaged their classmates in conversation about having a mother with a disability. For instance, in a school workshop on disability one child shared her occasional feelings of anger for having a mother with a disability. Another child said she sometimes resented having to carry things for her mother. On the other hand, the children expressed admiration for their mothers' capabilities as a parent. The mothers created educational opportunities for their children to raised awareness
about people with disabilities. Two mothers worked with able bodied children professionally and were well-respected by their students: they were also able to educate them about people with disabilities.

A common misconception in our culture is that “a mother is supposed to be the person that makes everything wonderful”. Therefore, many mothers with disabilities are discouraged from having children. The women in these interviews defied these negative attitudes towards mothers with disabilities with their innovations to meet physical needs, problems of discipline, and with raising respectful and understanding children. From my work thus far, combining research with personal interviews, it is clear that many people including women with disabilities, mothers with disabilities, and children of parents with disabilities will benefit from and be inspired by these stories.
SSP Mentor: Professor Brenda Gael McSweeney, RS/WSRC  
Student: Charlie, Tshali Kabanga, 1st year student, MA SID, Heller School

From Charlie, Tshali Kabanga, MA candidate, Sustainable International Development Program, Heller School for Social Policy and Management

The interaction between the SSP Mentor and the Student (SSP), which will result in the “exchange of ideas and the sharing of the experiences” is the main goal of the Student-Scholar Partnership Program at the Brandeis University Women’s Studies Research Center. I had the opportunity of benefiting from the SSP during two semesters working as Teaching and Research Assistant for Professor Brenda Gael McSweeney. This paper will relate about the two projects we have worked on: the “Impact of Multifunctional Platform on Women and Girls in Burkina Faso” and the “Gender and Development Course Packet”.

The project on the “Impact of Multifunctional Platform on Women and Girls in Burkina Faso” is research carried out by Professor Brenda Gael McSweeney and Madame Scolastique Kompaoré. The introduction of a Multi-Functional Platform technology had the objectives of lightning women's and girls' workloads, giving them more time for attending schools and participating in literacy programs as well as for other income-generating activities. This machine can have many functions such as pumping water, grinding grain, producing light and so on. The technology was introduced in Burkina Faso in early 2000. The project with the SSP was to evaluate both expected and unexpected impact of the technology on women and girls. First, we did a literature review on the impact of the Multi-Functional Platform in other countries in West Africa. Then we briefly compared it to other similar technologies in the developing countries. We designed three types of questionnaires. The first one was addressed to women in general in areas where the Multi-Functional Platform was installed. The objective was to collect information about the use of the machine, the services it offered, the frequency of its use and the changes that have occurred in people’s lives in terms of more free time and linkages to income-generating activities and girls’ education. The second questionnaire was addressed to officials to get their points of view about the technology in their communities. The third questionnaire was for school officials like teachers and head masters to track the impact of the technology on the girl's performance in school. All questionnaires were designed in French. These were used during Dr. McSweeney’s December 2007 mission to Burkina Faso.

The second project was the preparation of the Gender and Development Course Packet for Fall 2008 (Heller School). The main tasks were to find the articles and books related to the course topics. These articles and books pages were then compiled into the Course Packet for use by graduate students in the coming Academic Year.

Working with an experienced person involved in the field of women's studies for more than thirty years was beyond my expectation for learning about this field. The difference of our own cultures and countries made that exchange even richer.

From Brenda Gael McSweeney, Resident Scholar, WSRC:

Tshali Kabanga Charlie contributed enormously during the Academic Year ‘07 – ‘08 as my SSPP Research and Teaching Assistant.
Research Assistant Role:

Charlie made crucial contributions in the preparation of the background literature review and in questionnaire design essential for my fruitful mission to Burkina Faso (to the capital Ouagadougou and villages across the country) in December 2007. The success of the mission owes much to Charlie’s dedicated and talented work.

Her literature search, primarily from sources in French, focused on the impact of the introduction of a ‘Multi-Functional Platform’ development package in rural areas in West Africa.

Then Charlie, working very independently, produced three separate questionnaires for use in interactions with villagers, women and men; with village administrators; and with officials in the capital.

Teaching Assistant Role:

This will be the first year that I plan to make available a “Course Packet” for my graduate Seminar on Gender and International Development at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management (to complement the online ‘Latte’ Seminar Website that I built). Here Charlie focused on my existing course materials from books, journal articles and clippings from the Web, and designed a ‘look’ for the Course Packet.

Charlie’s conscientious and thoughtful work has made it possible to reach the pre-production stage of this Course Packet, that students will in the future be able to purchase to facilitate their learning.

Charlie also contributed wonderfully in giving additional feedback to students on their written assignments.

Tshali Kabanga Charlie’s Excellent Accomplishments and SSPP:

Tshali Kabanga Charlie’s magnificent performance and productivity are testimony also to the great value of WSRC’s Student-Scholar Partnership Program, one of the most highly appreciated aspects of life at the WSRC.
For the past seven years I have been actively participating in, volunteering for, and working for the National Jewish Council for Disabilities (“NJCD”). The NJCD focuses on mainstreaming people with disabilities into the Jewish community, and into the community at large. In my work for the NJCD over the years, I have had the extraordinary opportunity to get to know many people with disabilities, ranging from Asbergers to Down-syndrome to Cerebral Palsy to Epilepsy and more. I have also been fortunate to get to know many of their families. From the time I have spent with them I have learned that we can and must include people with disabilities and mental illness in society at large. We must include them in the education system, and we must assure them a role in our system of employment. We must give them proper health care, and financial aid (even welfare if necessary). Most of all, we must count them as citizens in every other way.

Unfortunately, this is not in fact what happens. All too often people with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses (schizophrenia, OCD, bi-polar disorder, etc.), are typically excluded from mainstream society and are often subject to mockery. Moreover, they receive inadequate health care. Their physicians are often uneducated regarding the source, nature, and treatment of disabilities. People with disabilities who lack an experienced caregiver must therefore learn to be self-advocates. Unfortunately, all too often they lack the mental or intellectual capacity -- or are not ready to recognize what they need to advocate for. (In fact may people deny their disability.) Those expected to provide medical care for people with disabilities do not, and the people themselves either cannot or will not protest and protect their rights. This dilemma led me to turn my attention to lay (non-medical) caretakers for people with disabilities. I realize that taking care of someone when all odds are against you is quite difficult. I have spoken to many such caretakers, and read many biographies and blogs by caretakers of people with mental illness. I have learned that they have a fight which we must join. We must help. It is our job in society to help. We should start by educating the people who are closest to mental illness -- those people who suffer from it directly, as well as the people who care for them directly. If we accept people with mental illness into society for who they are rather than rejecting them for the illness they have, we will have no reason to deny them their current state of mind. We will then be able to deliver proper help and care to those who need it.

My research mainly focused on caretaking for people suffering from schizophrenia. In order to fully understand the situation I first learned about the illness itself, and how people who face schizophrenia relate to their illness. The core symptoms of schizophrenia include: massive disruptions in thought, perception, emotions, and motor behavior. These disruptions must occur for a significant amount of time in a 1 month period . They must occur with problems with speech or emotional response. Must follow a specific sequence for at least 6 months. The patient becomes disinterested in many aspects of life – even those which had been favorites in the past. If not treated schizophrenia can take over the mind and effect every aspect of the patients life. Many patients with Schizophrenia deny the fact that they are sick, and refuse treatment. This denial and refusal – sometimes even after the doctor’s diagnosis, makes the role of the caretaker even more difficult. The caretaker must learn how to relate to their patient and encourage them to accept treatment. Treatment includes medication, in addition to therapy.
By the time this semester began, Dr. Ruth Nemzoff had, not only completed her book Don’t Bite Your Tongue: How to Foster Rewarding Relationships With Your Adult Children, but had also put in the copy edits. Thus, she and I spent the time before the final galleys arrived working on marketing. The scope of the project included the obvious – marketing ideas for a book. As I have learned, this entails everything from the tedium of organizing lists of contacts to the creativity of targeting one’s market, and figuring out how one will reach that audience. Thus, each session was filled with a combination of tasks that utilized my organizational, editorial, and technological skills and increased my knowledge of how one networks, the process of publishing, and how much more there is to writing a book then merely writing the book. Work on my own included researching relevant internet sites, which might be useful in the marketing of the book.

The life of a scholar includes more than simply writing a book. Dr. Ruth Nemzoff also had to write book reviews, and speeches, and organize her annual event for Mothers Day at the WSRC. I participated in the process of all of this writing, and was responsible for inviting organizations of students and appropriate campus departments to attend the Mother’s Day event.

Without this SSP opportunity, I would have not have a read a book on parenting at this stage in my life. I can already say that her book has affected my personal relationship with my parents because I have become more attuned to their points of view. As we would work together on the described items, we would discuss strategies for job searches and business ethics. Dr. Nemzoff hopes that her book will help parents and adult children communicate better, since they can be each other’s social safety net. Our work together will help this increase awareness of the importance of good intergenerational relationships, as our project has focused on dissemination of ideas. I am grateful to have had this opportunity to work with Dr. Nemzoff on what I expect to be an influential book of our time.
During these past two semester, we have examined the role of Wal-Mart as a transnational company. Wal-Mart is currently the largest corporation in the world, with stores spanning the globe. In this project, we explored the ways in which Wal-Mart has socially impacted individuals across cultures.

The project was the brainchild of Dr. Ellen Israel Rosen from the Student-Scholar Partnership Program at Brandeis University. She is currently researching and writing a book that explores the intersection between race, gender and social class in conjunction with Wal-Mart’s international proliferation. As part of this project, she guided through the different topics that she plans to explore in her book, and together they discussed the social impacts of Wal-Mart’s actions. Deborah Beth read mounds of articles on Wal-Mart, sorted these articles into separate piles according to the respective countries and issues, and found pertinent articles through the Brandeis library’s Internet databases.

Each country dealt with different societal issues pertaining to Wal-Mart. Some common themes were violations against women and the environment. However, here are examples of issues that are specific to certain countries which we have come across through our research. In the United States, Wal-Mart workers are prohibited from unionizing and many of Wal-Mart’s “associates” are on welfare and cannot even afford to pay for basic health care for themselves and their families. In China, migrant female workers who work in dehumanizing conditions have an appallingly high rate of suicide, and unions are little more than a front for the Communist government. In Mexico, a Wal-Mart was built near the ruins of ancient pyramids that are a national landmark. In India, vendors are worried that their multi-generational “mom and pop” stores can no longer be self-sustaining due to the influx of cheap goods from Wal-Mart.

It is crucial to be cognizant of the human rights violations inflicted by Wal-Mart, because in a globalized world, our actions impact one another very personally. By conducting this research project, we hope that we have brought awareness to the ramifications of Wal-Mart’s corporate irresponsibility.
For almost eight years, I have been investigating the state of consciousness of women artists during the act of creation. The subjects include musicians, writers, poets, filmmakers, installation artists, performance artists, photographers, visual artists, as well as academic and popular writers. In-depth interviews with the artists provide explanations of the various influences on each artist with explanatory footnotes as well as pictures of the art being discussed. The interviews take time, the transcription and editing takes time, and the investigation of all the references in the interview takes time. Currently, a little over half the data is in presentable form. More of the interviews need to be written and researched before the data can be made usable.

Even at this stage, however, general themes can be detected. This year my student partner, a 4.00 average sophomore student, is beginning to cull the themes and commonalities towards a general essay using only the data accumulated so far.

Some work has also been done researching various experts such as, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the psychologist who invented the term “Flow,” and who summarized several characteristics of the “flow.” The artists involved in the research were asked to confirm his findings with their own experience.

One theme arose around artists who have experienced motherhood as a daughter and as a mother. These artists were asked about the influence of mothering on their process and their output. The preliminary findings of these artists were presented in Toronto at York University’s annual Association for Research in Mothering (ARM) conference last October. These findings were striking. The themes of loss, nurturing, and legacy were quite prevalent. A term called MotherArt© was coined and a definition was begun. The student and scholar are currently in the process of writing a long journal article for the winter 2009 ARM journal whose theme is Mental Health.

The paper will be called “MotherArt©: Self-Therapy or Transformation?” The artists’ work will be presented as an ongoing process that begins with their experiences of loss and recovery; the work in each case transforms the artist to present larger themes of social action. For example, Mary Hamill’s poignant artistic presentation “Constructs of Frailty” about her mother’s illness and death, was followed by a burst of artistic endeavor around the homeless and then a medical mission in Vietnam. Her work was exhibited at the WSRC, the Brandeis Rose Art Museum and the MFA. This original theory will be contrasted with the field of Art Therapy and its mission, which attempts to help patients overcome trauma in a therapeutic setting. This theory is only one aspect of this ongoing project, but one that addresses the age-old question of the value of art in healing.

Another issue addressed in this work questions the accuracy of the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. The Scholar investigator here is someone who is also writer and poet, and has experienced the creative process firsthand. Csikszentmihalyi is a psychologist measuring and describing the artistic process as an observer, not a participant. Sometimes the artists in this study agree with his findings, and sometimes not. More work needs to be done on this aspect.

Additionally, some esoteric theological descriptions of creativity can be found in Buddhist and Jewish mystical literature. This is another deeper investigation that attracts this investigator.
An anthology on the subject with two entries has been begun; a shorter, perhaps more popular, book is also on the horizon.

Mia Goldwasser, the student on the project, will only be available for the fall semester. This period of time is essential to meet the Winter 2008 deadline for the fall ARM journal. We have just enough time to write up the findings, summarize the literature, and present it to various scholars in the WSRC who have already volunteered their expertise for the drafts of the paper in the fall.

This creativity work has implications for the feminist experience of creating art and even more potential to make contributions to the larger field of creativity research.
Amy and I started working together in January of 2007. Our project, as I understood it, involved an extension of Amy’s dissertation research on the health and illness experiences of emerging adult women. Our first step was to conduct a comprehensive literature search. This was a wonderful and necessary first step in many ways: Amy was able to “catch up” on newer, relevant literature in her field since the publication of her dissertation in 2005; I was exposed to the scope of the project and the issues at hand, and found myself reading articles on everything from anorexia and mental health to sexual concerns to doctor-patient relationships; and, perhaps most importantly, Amy and I were able to grasp that our work would really fill a gap in and be important to both the scholarly, academic world, and to emerging adult women themselves.

During this phase, I searched a wide range of databases for relevant articles, read them and wrote summaries of them, and discussed them with Amy. We decided which ones were most helpful for our project, complied them, and I wrote a literature review highlighting some of the major themes.

After we searched the literature about young women, we went to the women themselves. Working from the literature review, Amy’s interview protocol from her dissertation, and our own ideas, Amy and I created a set of questions and/or topics to discuss in a small focus group with 4-6 young women. This focus group took place at the end of October, and Amy and I served as co-interviewers. In constructing and analyzing the transcript, I realized that a few themes kept coming up in the discussion: feelings about self and body, concerns about (a lack of) self care knowledge, concerns about the quality of a health care experience, and concerns about the patient-provider relationship.

These issues formed the basis for our next step: to reach the general population with our findings. Amy secured a book contract, and as she worked on adapting her dissertation into book format, I drafted an article, geared toward popular press, illuminating common concerns and questions that emerging adult women have about health and health care experiences, and some possible resources for answers. Currently, I’ve been working on locating magazines, websites, blogs, and other places to publish this article.

This project has been especially interesting to me because, as an emerging adult woman myself, I am learning so much from my specific work (as well as from the experience itself). My hope is that, once the article is published and Amy’s book comes out, other emerging adult women can find comfort and validation in their shared experiences, and be exposed to ways to improve those experiences.

Through the SSP, I have had the opportunity to be a researcher, a writer, and a collaborator. Amy has been a mentor and a friend, and really took an interest in both my work with her and who am I outside of the SSP. It has been so nice to form a connection with her. I would recommend the SSP to any prospective employees.

Following is the current version of my article (though still in draft form):
“I don’t know where to start, I wouldn’t know where to look… it feels like we’re in this transition period, where do we go to get health care anyway?”

When you think about your experience with the health care system, what comes to mind? Are you boggled by the possibilities and procedures, as is the young woman quoted above? Do you have a family physician you’ve been seeing regularly for years, who knows you well? Or do you only visit a doctor when you’re sick or have a problem, like Lisa*, age 20, who says “I haven’t been to a general practitioner for a checkup since I was 17.” Do you ever feel anxious or nervous about your appointments? Have you ever felt uncomfortable or unsatisfied before, during, or after your visit?

For many young women, health care encounters can be a source of stress. Whether it be concerns about an illness or body issue, not knowing how to express your opinion or what questions to ask, or simply the memory of a previous unpleasant experience with a doctor, issues such as these surrounding health care encounters often prevent young women, a population at a critical time health-wise, from making the most of their visit.

Previous scholarly research has focused on the reasons why adolescents and young women might need to visit a doctor— we’re at high risk for substance abuse, we’re becoming sexually active, we have concerns about our emotional health— but has not touched upon how to proceed once we enter the exam room. We conducted a pilot study focused on young adult women and how they perceive and/or experience health and illness, in particular their role as participants in the health care system, revealed four significant matters, discussed here in order to give the concerns of young women a voice. Research is still ongoing, but preliminary findings have suggested the following, which young women should consider when visiting a doctor:

1. Feelings about self and body

Some young women are nervous to visit the doctor because they feel guilty or are ashamed of their health practices, such as their diet or how much they exercise. They feel worried that doctors will judge them based on their lifestyles and/or appearances. Jennifer, 21, says that “something people have anxiety about is exercise. There’s this like, should quality about it…and eating, especially being in college with food everywhere.” Jennifer and Rachel, 20, agree that it’s also important for doctors to understand the whole person, and not just focus on the body. Rachel says doctors should “care about what’s going on in my life besides my body” and Jennifer reminds us that the body “doesn’t function independently of everything else, and how you’re feeling mentally and emotionally...could be affecting your body too.”

2. Self-care Knowledge

At a time when many young women are transitioning from a pediatrician to an adult physician, being an active agent for your health care can seem a daunting task. Lisa admits that “I really just wish my mom still made doctors appointments [for me], cause I am clearly not responsible enough to do it myself!” While this may seem to be the case, there are a number of factors that may make it difficult for young women to seek health care, as Amy, 21, points out about college students, “How do you find a doctor and establish a relationship with them? I’m not going to have roots anywhere for a number of years, and a big part of having a successful relationship with a doctor is trust and familiarity.” Many young women also feel clueless as to how to get pertinent health information, how to establish healthy lifestyle habits, and even what questions to ask during their visit, as Jennifer says, “I feel like if I don’t ask specific questions, they won’t get answered. Sometimes I don’t know what questions to ask.”

* All names have been changed to protect the privacy of participants
3. Quality of experience

Access to care and quality of care are important things to consider in a health care encounter. Some women feel rushed in their visit with their doctor, or as if their agenda isn’t being addressed and their needs aren’t being met. There is also the issue of the way you relate to your doctor—do you like a chit-chatty bedside manner, or do you prefer the doctor to “just get to the point?” Rachel finds it easy to relate to her doctor because “she’s always asking about the family, and how my sister is, and what I’m doing…she makes it a pleasant experience.” On the other hand, Lisa likes her doctors not to “be my friend. Be nice, but the best doctors I’ve ever had are the firm, ‘I’m gonna be your doctor right now’ [type].” It is important to match your personal preference with your doctor’s style; relational approaches can make a big difference in the quality of your experience.

4. Patient-Provider Relationship

This is perhaps the most important thing to work on in order to have beneficial health care encounters, because it encompasses aspects of the above three points. Trust and communication are also key components of a healthy patient-physician relationship, and these develop over time. It is important for a patient to have faith in their doctor’s competence, and for the patient to be comfortable and willing to establish an open relationship. For many women, seeing a female provider facilitates this. Gender is an important issue for many patients; it can be as important as skill level. Jennifer, who started seeing a male pediatrician when she was young, wasn’t aware that her growing discomfort was normal, or that something could be done about it, as she says, “that’s something that I never knew growing up, cause it’s my pediatrician, and I didn’t always feel comfortable…I noticed it, his hand is down my pants, but you know, nothing was ever said to me, like, ‘if you’re uncomfortable let me know.’” It’s okay to ask for a doctor of a certain gender, as Ashley, 21, says, “This is not an area of my body that I want everyone seeing…if somebody’s gotta look, I’d rather it be a female.”

It is important to remember that you are not alone in concerns or questions you have about your health and/or your health care, but it is your responsibility to do something about it. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your health care encounters:

1. Do your research!

Information is power. Just as you would research your options before buying a car, look at different providers before choosing one, as Lisa says, “I don’t really ever just trust doctors…I have to pick and choose.” Don’t be afraid to compare doctors, or the treatments they suggest. You can also be informed about the reason for your visit, whether it is an illness or just a checkup. Prepare for the visit by writing down questions and concerns.

2. Be confident!

Share your expertise about yourself. You know your body best—what it is feeling, how it is reacting. Use your voice, and don’t be afraid to express your opinions, feelings, concerns, or areas of discomfort. Ask questions if you don’t understand something, and talk to your doctor about health issues that matter to you. Rachel asked her doctor to explain to her mother reasons for getting the Gardasil vaccine, and Rachel was happy to find that her doctor “took my mom aside, and took the time to explain to my mom exactly what she had told me, instead of saying, well I’ll write it down and you give it to her.”

3. Work on the relationship!

Feeling safe to share concerns takes effort and constant work on your relationship with your doctor, but it is very important in order to have a productive health care encounter. As Amy says, “If you say, I prefer you didn’t do X, and they say, well unfortunately we have to do X, then at least you have a
better understanding of why you have to go through it. But most likely they’ll change and you’ll have a better experience.” Ask for a follow-up visit, or to see a new doctor if someone isn’t working for you. Team up with your doctor, and be an active participant on that team for a better relationship.

Here are some resources to help you make the most of your healthcare encounters and relationships:

- Your college or university health center or health services can be very useful, and their website may provide information or links geared to your specific concerns. Check out Barnard College’s website for an example:
  http://www.barnard.edu/health/healthlinks.htm

- You might also want to look at Brandeis University’s site:
  4collegewomen.org

- Our Bodies Our Blog is run by the people who brought you the legendary book, Our Bodies Ourselves. Read their posts for information on current issues relating to women’s health, check out their Health Resource Center, and scan their list of blogs along the right side of the site for more info.
  http://ourbodiesourblog.org/

- Harvard Medical School publishes a monthly eight-page newsletter titled, “Women’s Health Watch.” Subscribe for up to date information on the issues that affect you and your health.
  http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/Harvard_Womens_Health_Watch.html
The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) is a Division of the American Psychological Association (APA) whose primary purpose is to use psychological research as a foundation for understanding social issues. SPSSI’s statement of purpose stresses several goals affirming the use of science in the public interest. Since its founding, however, there have been challenges from both within and without on the issue of whether or not the simultaneous pursuit of empirical knowledge and socio-political advocacy are incompatible activities (Capshew, 1999; Cherry, 2001; Harris, Unger, & Stagner, 1986; Steinitz & Mishler, 2001; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1992).

An individual’s ideology about science and advocacy probably influences his or her views about appropriate organizational policies as well as preferred methodology (c.f., Danziger, 2000). Examination of SPSSI’s early history provides evidence for such a relationship. Many of its politically active founding members envisioned a socially and politically activist organization (Benjamin, 2006; Finison, 1976; 1977; 1978). However, World War II brought SPSSI into the mainstream and many of its early leaders used their empirical skills to support the U. S. war effort. After the war many of these leaders became part of research groups that emphasized experimental control and quantitative methodology (Capshew, 1999). SPSSI also became less overtly activist after World War II.

There were later bursts of political activism. These are usually associated with particular leaders at the time. For example, SPSSI’s activism in behalf of school desegregation seems to have been largely due to the efforts of Kenneth Clark, Otto Klineberg, Stuart Cook, and Thomas Pettigrew [Jackson, 2006]. SPSSI’s defense of civil liberties during the McCarthy era is associated with the work of Marie Jahoda, Brewster Smith, and Stuart Cook (Harris, 1980). Another period of social activism occurred during the late 1960s and early 1970s when SPSSI leaders edited issues of the Journal of Social Issues on the Vietnam War and the women’s movement (c.f., Perlman, 1986).

It is an open question whether the proportion of politically and empirically focused leaders of SPSSI has changed in the last twenty-five years. After a period of relative quiet, SPSSI leaders have again engaged in activist stances on political issues. They have spoken out on affirmative action (Crosby & Clayton, 2001); welfare reform (Zuckerman, 2001); on the psychological consequences of the war against terror (Kimmel & Stout, 2006); and, most recently, on the U.S. government’s support of torture (Costanzo, Gerrity, & Lykes, 2007).

This brief survey of SPSSI history indicates that professional activism cannot be separated from current political events. It probably also cannot be separated from leaders’ personal and social identities. Researchers have found connections between various social markers and SPSSI involvement. For example, Capshew (1986) found that a disproportionate number of SPSSI’s presidents during its first fifty years were Jewish. This pattern was also present among members of SPSSI Council who were not elected as its president (Unger, 1986). There is also some evidence that SPSSI leaders are likely to possess other forms of social or personal marginality that may be used by them to maintain a positive “outsider” perspective while simultaneously functioning as an “insider” (Unger, 2000).

Because SPSSI’s policies have shifted widely over time, historians have had difficulty deciding whether it is a liberal or a radical organization (Harris, 1986). We believe some of these shifts may be a result of the differential composition of its leadership at various times. This project is an attempt to determine whether there are relationships between various markers of identity, collegial network, and ideology about empiricism and social activism and if so, whether changes in the composition of leadership may have influenced SPSSI policy. Since organizational and real-world politics are intimately connected, comparisons will also
be made between early and later cohorts of leaders on their ideological stance regarding empiricism and activism.

One key area in which composition of SPSSI has changed over time is the role of women leaders within the organization. In the first three decades of SPSSI’s establishment, there were only four women presidents. However, in succeeding generations of leadership, the percentage of women presidents was equal to or greater than that of men. It was in the 1960s that this change occurred, pointing to the women’s liberation movement as a key factor in this shift. This project will seek to find if there are other factors that led to this shift.

This project will attempt to answer the following questions: Are there differences between the personal identity, research approach (empiricist or activist), and networking of women presidents of SPSSI between generations of leadership? Although most SPSSI leaders accept the validity of both ways of dealing with social problems, can one distinguish between those leaders who primarily identify with an empirical or an activist approach to their solution? If so, how can we explain these differences in views? Over time, have changes occurred in the proportion of SPSSI leaders who identify primarily with one or the other of these viewpoints? What, if any, relationship is there between personal and social identity and epistemological position on how to deal with social problems?

Many SPSSI leaders are part of collegial networks that include other SPSSI leaders. Capshew (1986), for example, found ample evidence for a “Michigan connection” between SPSSI presidents. Ideology may be influenced by one’s mentors and peers as well as personal and social identity. Women leaders, particularly in the earlier generations of leadership, were often connected to SPSSI through a spouse. However, as women gained more footing in academia in later generations, there seems to be less of a need for this kind of networking.

The final question in this study is the role of collegial networks in the recruitment of SPSSI leaders and their influence upon attitudes about appropriate ways to solve social problems.

The population for this study is all women SPSSI leaders—defined as individuals elected as president and/or members of council from 1936 to the present time. However, the project will focus primarily on those individuals who have been leaders during the past twenty-five years. These leaders will be compared to those from SPSSI’s first fifty years about whom much more is known (see Capshew, 1986; 1999, Unger, 1986).

The study will use data from a number of different sources. The primary source is a questionnaire Dr. Unger sent via email to all SPSSI leaders who had a viable email address between 2000 and 2002 (see appendix). She received responses from 90 individuals who included most recent leaders as well as some more senior individuals. These 90 questionnaires contain information on leaders’ undergraduate and graduate education and collegial networks, areas of primary professional concern, reasons for joining SPSSI, comments on what SPSSI has meant to them, and information about personal and family background (including sex, race/ethnicity, religion, immigrant status of self and parents, and parental occupation. It is also possible to extract information about the age at which they were first elected to SPSSI leadership and, of course, the years during which they were actively involved as elected leaders.

It is difficult to calculate the response rate for the questionnaire because all SPSSI presidents have been members of council and a number of leaders have served multiple terms in office. However, the respondents include all but two SPSSI presidents elected since 1965 who were still alive at the time of the questionnaire. It also included three senior leaders who were elected between 1958 and 1964. The response rate of council members was not quite as impressive. Nevertheless, only nine of the sixty nine council members did not respond.

My role in the project has been in the formulation of the research questions through background research, entering the data from the questionnaires into Excel files to organize it for analyzing, and I am participating in writing up the study in the form of a manuscript to be submitted for publication in Psychology of Women Quarterly. This process should take about six months. The final project will be completed by SPSSI’s 75th anniversary (2011) It seems like an appropriate contribution to both the organization and for those interested in the history and sociology of science. Eventually, hopefully the data on individual leaders and SPSSI policy will be combined to create a book on the role of empiricism and social activism.
in psychologists’ contributions to public policy, but this project will obviously take longer to complete.

This project will also contribute to our understanding of the role of women in academic psychology as well as in social activism through research. By understanding what factors allow women to become successful in a field that has the opportunity to make a difference in the world is valuable not only because it provides knowledge of the role of women in history and in psychology, but it will inspire women everywhere to use their skills to make a difference in the best way that they can.