THE WSRC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:
Student/Scholar Partners (SSP)

imparting wisdom through intellect, exploration, and discovery

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“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 then 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 is supported by a generous gift from Carol Goldberg, a member of the National Board for the Women's Studies Research Center and Scholars Program at Brandeis University, and Dr. Ruth Nemzoff and Dr. Harry A. Berman. For more information on the Student-Scholar Partnership Program, please contact the Program Coordinator, Kristen Mullin, via e-mail: mullin@brandeis.edu.
During our year-long Student-Scholar Partnership, we investigated the role of collaborative couples in science and the importance of gender roles within the production of scientific knowledge. Our particular focus was on Joshua and Esther Lederberg, who made important discoveries as a couple including replica plating, the phage lambda, transduction and sex compatibility in the early 1950s. Although they worked together until 1968, it was Joshua Lederberg who received half of the 1958 Nobel Prize in Physiology, along with his co-laureates, Edward L. Tatum and George W. Beadle, who each received a quarter of the prize. We wanted to explore the role of gender as a possible explanation for Esther receiving less recognition throughout her scientific career.

Before we looked into the specifics of the Lederberg’s case, we wanted to get a general background of how science as an institution allocates scientific credit and how gender affects women’s experience in science. Primarily, we analyzed the oral histories of eight contemporary women scientists who had worked in the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, including prominent scientists Elizabeth Blackburn and Joan Steitz. We also examined several oral histories of MIT scientist Nancy Hopkins, who was a major figure in public debates on women in science. Finally, we read several studies about the decreasing number of women in high academic positions, such as principal investigator and faculty, as well as nepotism and sexism in peer review.

After this introduction, we began to research the Lederbergs in earnest. Our goal was to determine the role that gender played in the recognition of Esther Lederberg’s scientific career, and how her career was influenced by collaborating with husband Joshua Lederberg. To start with, we compiled a list of both Esther and Joshua Lederberg’s publications, looking at the order of author names and the number of times each publication was cited. We tried to place the Lederberg’s situation within the 1950s, taking into account the domesticity and strict gender roles that arose post-WWII. As part of this, we researched other collaborative couples working at the same time period for comparative purposes, such as Carl and Gerty Cori, who were biochemists and joint Nobel Laureates in 1947, and Jillian and Robert Robinson.

Throughout our partnership, we laid out the groundwork to writing a successful paper on the Lederbergs as a couple. During our weekly meetings, we discussed and analyzed the work we had done throughout the week. It has been valuable for us to be able to talk through our research with Dr. Abir-Am, who is highly experienced in the history of science. It is exciting to have contributed to the research for this paper that will be presented this summer in Hungary at the 23rd International Congress of History of Science and Technology. We hope that not only will our research help bring to light Esther Lederberg’s significant contributions to science, but also will help raise consciousness about how and why, in an institution long influenced in its customs by the fact that the majority of its practitioners were men, the contributions of women scientists such as Esther were overlooked, undervalued, and subsumed under male collaborators.
In September, 2008, Laura Hand and Mary Berg set out to edit, modernize and annotate a text by Peruvian journalist Clorinda Matto de Turner, *Viaje de recreo* [Travelling for Pleasure: A Journey Through Spain, France, England, Italy and Switzerland] which was first published in 1909. When we finish preparing the text, notes and introduction, the edition will be published by Stockcero of Buenos Aires, which specializes in Latin American texts for US and UK academic markets.

Clorinda Matto (1852-1909) was born in Cusco, Peru where she grew up speaking Quechua and feeling attuned to Peruvian indigenous customs and problems. She began writing essays and plays while in grade school, and continued to write throughout her life, with particular interest in equal rights and opportunities for women and indigenous citizens. She was the first woman in the Americas to be the editor of a major big city newspaper. She was a prolific writer of essays and editorials, author of three influential (and in their time shocking) novels and a dozen collections of stories and essays. In 1908, Matto was sent by the Women's Council of Buenos Aires to study European higher education for women. She lectured, wrote reports about schools and training programs, and kept a journal, which she completed and published upon her return to Buenos Aires (where she had lived since 1895, when she had to leave Peru). Her *Viaje de recreo* is an account of her experiences in Europe, and her reactions (both positive and negative) to the places and people she encountered. It is a critical chronicle of the European capitals as they were in 1908, viewed through the lens of a feminist outsider.

Laura: My duties for the project were mainly to go through the entire text and check for grammar problems, syntax errors, and words and structures that needed to be modernized from the original Spanish. I also made notes of information that should be explained in a footnote in the final edited edition. Later, I began to research and write footnotes for the text based on the comments Mary and I had made earlier. Mary and I reread and edited the text several times to catch all of the smaller problems as well. In between working on the Matto de Turner text, Mary also asked me for input about her other work, including translating projects of Spanish short stories.

The Student-Scholar Partnership has been a very new and interesting experience for me this year. I have improved my Spanish reading skills and have been able to witness and participate in the reworking of an older text into an edition that will hopefully be more widely read and appreciated. I have also greatly enjoyed talking with and working with Mary, who is an extremely intelligent, well-read, and fascinating person. The SSP has been a unique opportunity to enter the research world and to work on a project that will be shared with and enjoyed by a broad audience.
Mary: It has been a great pleasure to work on this text with Laura, who is the book’s ideal reader, fluent in Spanish but unfamiliar with many of the contexts of the text. It has been extremely helpful to have her input on what needs footnoting, and how much information to include. With our four eyes on the text, we are gradually correcting the scanning errors and modernizing some of the spellings. We have more notes to add, a bibliography and an introduction to finish, and then we hope to send the book to the publisher this summer.
Neda and Ann began working together in November, 2008, rather late in the fall semester. Our project focused on the research Ann was undertaking on Catherine Filene Shouse and both were drawn to the remarkable long life of this woman and the intriguing question of how she was able to accomplish so much in the public sphere at a time that provided relatively few opportunities for women in education, the work force or politics.

Neda’s first task was to provide some context for the book “Careers for Women”, edited by young Catherine Filene and published in 1920 and reprinted in 1932. The book describes over sixty professional careers for college-educated women, each chapter detailing the nature of the work, the education or training required, the salary, the opportunities and obstacles to advancement. The range of careers described is quite broad and Neda was asked to research women’s participation in some of those careers during the period 1915-1930, in order to address the question of how unique the opportunities were for women and how unusual Filene’s vision was for women’s participation in them. Neda found these questions difficult to answer because statistics about women’s participation in the work force were unavailable. She tried to focus on larger or more prominent professions like teaching and law but she and Ann found the results not very revealing or reliable.

In January Ann began to work intensively on the Catherine Filene Shouse collection at the Schlesinger Library, a vast storehouse of personal and public papers, clippings, letters, travel diaries and photographs from Shouse’s estate. Ann initially hoped that Neda might be able to help her go through the voluminous records but quickly realized that it was work she could not delegate, at least not in the first review. However, the archival research revealed a number of “mysteries” due to gaps or hints not fully documented about Filene’s personal life, her marriages and children. Neda was able to do research online and often find facts and accounts not available in the archives. Two examples will illustrate:

• Catherine Filene’s first marriage to Alvin Dodd in 1921 was a lavish affair at her parents’ home in Weston, MA, and was widely covered in the press. No such record exists in the archives of her second marriage to Jouett Shouse in 1932, after both she and her new husband went through quite public divorces. Neda was able to find a description of the very private ceremony through her online research.

• Catherine Filene Dodd bore a daughter in 1923 and soon thereafter brought an orphan boy about the same age as her daughter into her home and raised him for many years as her son. His name was William Filene Shouse but all reference to him in the archives seems to disappear after the mid to late 1940’s, when he returned from the war. Neda has been trying to locate any public records about William Shouse, including criminal records, after that period as well as researching potential sources in Fairfax County VA that might shed some light on his whereabouts or fate.
Biographical research can often take twists and turns as the subject’s life is revealed through interviews, archives and public records. Having a partner to pursue leads and provide contextual material is an invaluable asset, especially when dealing with as long and complex a life as that of Catherine Filene Shouse.
I was not sure what to expect when I started to work on Susan Eisenberg’s On Equal Terms Project, seeing as her art installation spotlighting women in the trades field was something I knew relatively little about from my own personal experiences or formal education. However, I was dedicated to help her tell the stories of women who had defied traditional gender norms and who worked in the world of trades despite the daily discrimination and constant struggle in order to be seen as legitimate electricians, plumbers, carpenters and the like.

During the show’s time at Brandeis University, displayed in the Women’s Research Center, Susan and I worked together to arrange each piece of art in ways that would invite viewers to explore this hushed injustice to women as well as allow audiences to properly view the personal experiences of these talented workers. Papier-mâché enlarged tools hung from the ceiling, blueprints covered with handwritten stories, a bathroom shack displaying graphic images and comments, and pictures of tradeswomen ranging from young to old filled the gallery and drew visitors to examine Susan’s messages of hurt, hard work, durability and success.

We hoped that the exhibit would bring tradeswomen together, as well as provoke inquiry and education about women working in unfavorable conditions. Susan held poetry readings, conferences, and even invited vocational schools to view the exhibit as a means to speak her mind about her individual encounters as a female electrician along with the thousands of other women who shared, and currently, experience similar injustices.

One of Susan’s goals was to have the show travel across the country in locations such as New York and Seattle. During our time together she has successfully displayed the exhibit at Suffolk University and has had numerous offers throughout the nation that would be honored to exhibit the On Equal Terms show. In each new city tradeswomen have the opportunity to come together and relate to what Susan has presented to the public as a solidarity of hardship and strength that these women share.

It has been an honor to help Susan achieve her goals and execute her visions in order to educate the larger public and provide a strong voice for those in weak positions with meaningful perspectives.
It was a lucky day when I got accepted to the SSP Program as a research assistant to Dr. Nance Goldstein. Almost two semesters later, I look back at my work as an extremely engaging and fulfilling journey. The project I am part of, along with Dr. Goldstein, seeks to study the possibility of creating a climate of safety in the healthcare workplace. It is, therefore, also essential that we understand and advocate methods that render clinicians more competent in dealing with conflict while improving the quality of patient care. I began my work for the project by researching useful articles and findings in the academic and medical databases available through the Brandeis library. This ultimately was a gateway into the arena of workplace conflict in the American health industry. Armed with the knowledge of associated studies in the field, we moved on to designing surveys and interviews that would measure what the top ranking Massachusetts hospitals have achieved in terms of leadership development programs for their clinicians. Programs which might have the potential to boost greater workplace satisfaction, workforce retention, and positively enhance interactions between clinicians and nurses. The study also seeks to discover if there is a positive correlation between better workplace conditions for both clinicians and nurses and greater patient turnover and customer satisfaction. We are currently in the process of contacting CEO's of some of the most noted Massachusetts hospitals in order to administer our survey and gather the necessary data.

When reading through the descriptions of all the possible SSP programs I could apply to, this one stood out because of its immense relevance to the economy. The health industry and its dynamics are constantly in the limelight in America. I was fascinated to find a study that focused on investment in the human resources of an industry as a means to more favorable economic outcomes. On a more personal level, I wish to imbibe a lot more from this study. As an international student from India and one particularly interested in developmental economics, I am constantly trying to observe differences in the economic organization of America compared to developing countries, like India. This study gives me an unparalleled opportunity to understand a crucial industry that makes an immense difference to the living standards of any nation. By the end of this study, I hope to discover for myself how investment in leadership development programs and worker satisfaction can enhance the growth and output of a socio-economic sector. I have long held a desire to contribute to my country's development process in my own humble way. I hope to acquire all the knowledge and research skills that I can gain through programs like the SSP, take them back with me to my native country, and apply them to the fulfillment of that desire.

Working with the SSP program has been particularly fulfilling because I have found in Dr. Goldstein both a wonderful person and a dedicated mentor. She is patient, understanding and extremely bright. I have learned so much from her in terms of grass root research work, brainstorming, organization, and multi-tasking. One day, I decided to look up her profile on the Brandeis website and since then am in the process of figuring out how it is humanly possible to do all that she does and all at the same time. I consider it my proud privilege to have the opportunity to work so closely with someone as insightful and accomplished as her. The SSP Program is a wonderful opportunity for students like me to work with research scholars who are experts in their field and learn so much from them.
I recently got into a study abroad program and, therefore, will not be returning to Brandeis next year. One of the things that I will miss most, however, is being part of the SSP Program. It will be my honest endeavor to keep up with Dr. Goldstein who is like a really good friend now and who has given me so much in terms of broadening my intellectual horizons. I really hope the SSP program continues to flourish in the coming years and gives many more students like me the chance to grow intellectually and emotionally.
For our Student Scholars Partnership Program, I worked with Anne Gottlieb to raise awareness about an important world-premiere play that Anne co-wrote, produced and starred in. *The Wrestling Patient* is based on the real letters and journals of Etty Hillesum, a Dutch Jew, who, when the Nazis occupied her native Amsterdam, was confronted with a terrible choice—her integrity or her life. She looked to the emerging science of psychology in an attempt to make her decision, and ended up wrestling with the demons of her time by looking within herself. Anne wanted to draw in audiences by appealing specifically to Jewish and women’s groups, who she felt would be the most intrigued and inspired by the project. My job was to help with compiling a list of different organizations that might be interested, organizing their contact information, and making the calls necessary to spread the word.

It was a gratifying experience for me because I felt that Etty Hillesum’s story needed to be heard. The play documents a largely unexplored perspective. In fact, when Hillesum’s journals and letters were first published, *The New York Times* hailed her account as “unsurpassed in Holocaust literature.” Though Hillesum has been associated with Anne Frank, she was able, unlike Frank who was in hiding, to observe and document the occupation in greater detail.

Exposed to the atrocities of the times, Hillesum was forced to make excruciating moral choices. In 1942, she applied to work for the Jewish council, a German-controlled organization designed to maintain order, and ended up having to decide what Jews were to be sent from the Westerbork transit camp to death camps. To make the task bearable, she did what little she could to support her fellow Jews by helping them prepare for transport, and she wrote in her journal, capturing the horror inflicted on minds and bodies. She continued to work for the Jewish council until her family and she, herself, were sent to Auschwitz.

For me, learning about Hillesum’s strength and resilience was inspiring, giving me a better intellectual and emotional understanding of what she lived through and how she survived. Helping Anne promote this project gave me the satisfaction of raising audience awareness of Hillesum’s empowering message.
This semester I am working with E.J. Graff, assisting her with her research on incidences of sexual harassment of teenagers in the workforce. In 2007, E.J. wrote an article upon the subject for Good Housekeeping magazine, warning parents of the dangers their teens may face in their first jobs. Since January, we have been working to gather more up-to-date information for stories for a variety of sources, most notably PBS’ NOW and the Schuster Institute website.

To aid E.J. in her task, I have been researching cases of teen sexual harassment in the workplace and fact-checking the information I find meticulously. I have read through countless court documents and press releases extracting information for the upcoming interactive map on the Schuster website. I knew very little about the U.S. legal system before this semester, but through my research I have learned so much. I was ignorant as to how one could combat something like sexual harassment, and now I am aware of the resources that are available and the processes to choose from. I have really honed my research and editing skills while contributing to this cause. Under E.J.’s watch, I have extracted the important details from many, many cases of sexual harassment for her use in upcoming stories.

Before I began research on this project, I had never really thought about the sexual harassment of teens in the workplace. I was very fortunate to have a great experience with my first jobs as a teen; however, I can remember the nervousness and uncertainty I felt when just starting out. I know first hand that it is a vulnerable position for teenagers and through my research I have found that there are people who take advantage of teens in that position and that the companies they work for don’t always step in and help. It is my hope that this project brings awareness to people to help eradicate these problems. Parents need to know what questions to ask their teens and teens need to know their rights as well as that sexual harassment is never okay, even if it is their boss doing the harassing. Companies need to know that they must provide their employees with information and take steps to prevent these situations from occurring. I have read some truly horrifying accounts of harassment no teenager or anyone else should have to face, and I hope that the work we are doing will make a positive impact in the workplace.
I have been working at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism since November 2008, but was offered SSP this semester. Despite this new position and title, my responsibilities have not changed in any way. The only difference is that I now meet more often with my scholar, the famed investigative journalist, Florence Graves. Over the past few months, I have been working fairly consistently on the same project, teen sexual harassment in the workplace. The Schuster Institute recently partnered with PBSNow to create a segment on the issue of teen sexual harassment. Since then, I have worked endlessly on fact checking for our website materials. This means that I have been making sure that all of the information we plan on posting on our website is correct. I did this by looking up the cases on Pacer (the government’s website of court cases) and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission’s press releases. In addition to editing previously explored cases, I have started researching and creating spreadsheets for cases that we had not yet covered. Sometimes gaps in my information required that I contact lawyers involved in cases.

Despite only being a research assistant and fact checker, I feel like I have played a large and important role in publicizing the truth about justice teenage sexual harassment in the workplace. Not only did I assist in producing a segment that aired across America, but I also helped to bring light to an issue that many people did not know existed in such staggering numbers. Research and publications are useful ways to inform the vulnerable teen population that it is not ok or normal to be sexually harassed, but it is also not taboo or shameful. Most of my work occurs in an office and behind a computer, yet even though I am behind the scenes, my work is not. For these reasons and more, I am pleased to be a part of SSP and the Schuster Institute of Investigative Journalism.
This year I have been working steadily on readying a manuscript for the University of Chicago Press for a June 1 deadline. I needed to update research on some of the chapters of *What’s Age Got to Do With It?* write two chapters almost from scratch, write a new first chapter, and revise all the chapters in relation to the book as a whole.

We decided that Jake, an anthropology and classics major with good research skills, would mostly do research for the updates and the new chapters. He was able to switch topics or questions quickly, which was a great help as I needed to move fast. He found materials on such topics or focused questions as: Why were such a high proportion of Hurricane Katrina fatalities older Americans? How is the Inuit Ice Floe used as a metaphor for aging inequality in the American media? What kind of difficulties do older Americans have securing new employment when they have lost their jobs?

He read one chapter for structure and style and commented on it. Jake interspersed this more interesting work with completing bibliographical data for material I had already decided to use, and xeroxing articles I told him I needed.

In the spring, as the deadline approached, checking all the references for the finished chapters for bibliographic correctness. He quickly mastered the best way to do this.

We also discussed his thesis from time to time, mostly so he could sound out historical theory and structural ideas. Jacob found his thesis, though dealing with classical subjects, was firmly ensconced in the realm of political science. Even though I am not a political theorist, because I have written some political and other kinds of history, we were able to foment some new ideas and reinforce many of his ideas in this discipline to which he was unused.

We are grateful for all the time we got, but in the spring as my deadline approached I certainly wished it could be more and that the semester were longer!
Julie: This academic year, I had the opportunity to work with Trisha Gura on a project entitled Eating Disorders: Web 2.0. Drawing upon her experience in the fast-growing field of online journalism, Trisha mentored me throughout the process of writing a series of four blog posts. While Trisha primarily focuses on eating disorders in her writing, I chose a broader focus for the semester. In each blog post, I tackled a societal prejudice rooted in body differences (weightism, heightism, sexism, and racism.)

The content and message of each blog developed organically as I worked, moving from general, incipient ideas to a finished piece of writing. After discussing the topic and my preliminary direction with Trisha, I researched the subject online; both academic journal articles and pop culture references informed my perspective on each form of prejudice. As an additional source of material, I interviewed professionals and laypeople to ascertain their opinions. I structured the blog post around these sources, integrating them with my own ideas. Once I produced a written draft, Trisha and I worked collaboratively to shorten and revise the post. Ultimately, the finished pieces were published on national eating disorders blogs and on the Huffington Post, which reaches a million readers daily.

Working with Trisha has been a vastly informative experience. Through writing three of these pieces and beginning work on the fourth, I have learned the structural, topical, and stylistic strategies that are crucial to successful online blogging. I have also gained an innovative outlook on issues of body image and societal prejudice as a result of my writing and my conversations with Trisha. Although media outlets and advocacy groups frequently cover these issues, they often address them from a limited, uniform perspective (i.e. eating disorders are a phenomenon of teenage girls, only women suffer from sexism, etc.). In reality, however, problems of body image and bodily prejudice are complex and multi-faceted. Women are not the only gender to experience sexism, for example. Men suffer from a double standard created by the conflict of appearance anxieties and traditional notions of masculinity. In Trisha’s blogs, I was intrigued by the innovative perspectives she took on eating disorders and the unconventional parallels she drew. I tried to convey a similar complexity in each of my posts, taking an often-discussed topic and somehow examining it from a new angle, or taking an underreported phenomenon (heightism) and exposing it to public.

I hope that my posts have expanded the way in which my readership thinks about body image and prejudices. In order to work through our own insecurities and prejudices, we cannot rely on simplistic generalizations; it is paramount that we understand the intricacies of body image and discrimination in order to fully address these issues. The same holds for altering cultural representations of men and women – we cannot work to towards change if we lack a nuanced understanding of present realities. Hopefully, the blog entries I wrote have caused readers to reconsider their biases and perspectives, sparking a constructive dialogue with their families and friends.
I have very much enjoyed my experience working with Trisha. Through the lens of online journalism, I had the chance to explore body image, eating disorders, and body-based prejudices from a new angle. I would like to thank Trisha for sharing her scholarship and insights during the year, as well as for her genuine mentoring. My work this year continues to fascinate and inspire my interest in issues of body image, and I look forward to continuing my writing on these topics into the future.

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Trisha: I, too, have had a wonderful experience mentoring and working with Julie. She came to me in September 2008 most interested in the issue of how people discriminate based on height. She wanted to write on the topic but didn't know how or where to publish. Together, we spun her idea out into a four-part blog series on discrimination based on weight, height, gender and race. She went through the drill: interviewing, researching, and writing, always writing more, until she achieved pieces such as, “The Short End of the Stick,” about heightism; “Judging a Weighty Issue,” about the stigma of weight; and “Metrosexual in Style, Retrosexual in Looks,” about sexism as wielded upon males. To get a flavor for her work, here’s how she described the dilemma about body image that contemporary males face:

We’ve come a long way from the **Brawny man**, created in 1974 to sell paper towels. With his flannel shirt and crossed arms, he looks like a nonchalant lumberjack. He looks like a real man.

But times have changed since 1974 -- as has the **Brawny man**…Today’s idealized man, dare I say, appears less “brawny” and is more beautiful, like the typical glowing female we are accustomed to seeing in magazines. Guys are increasingly feeling the pressure to pay attention to their appearance, and the gap between male and female attentiveness seems to be fast closing. But is it?

…While men suffer the same scourges of body-envy that women do, they are up against a wall that women don’t have to face. As a society, we’ve grown to expect women to obsess about their bodies. In contrast, we expect flippancy from men. Guys just aren’t supposed to care about how they look; they should be **retrosexual**, the careless, opposite of a metrosexual. Apart from showering, shaving and applying deodorant, grooming rituals for "Average Joes" are frowned upon….

I dare say, Julie has found her voice and it has been a joy to witness her artistic, professional and personal growth. I believe this kind of empowerment exemplifies the mission of the WSRC. We are helping our girls to become enterprising, fearless and compassionate women.

I have since written three letters of recommendation for Julie for summer internships at Brandeis and elsewhere. She has received positive responses from all three. There is no doubt in my mind that she will excel, not only this summer, but overall in life and that that excellence in drive and character is founded on experiences such as that the SSP provides. I hope to continue working with Julie in as she continues to pave her way through her Brandeis experience. It is a satisfying experience for me to pass on the torch of feminism as it was handed to me by my those who have guided me.
Science and Spirituality: Two Perches into a Common Space

What we experience as ordinary reality is only a small part of the cosmos. We've evolved to deal with a very narrow set of conditions—those on this earth. Our evolutionary adaptation to our celestial niche imposes limitations on us. For example, our sense of smell is much weaker than that of many other mammals. Both science and spirituality are perches from which we are able to glimpse outside of our sensory confinement.

With increasing technological advancement, beginning with the telescope, we have greatly expanded our horizons, both the kind of information we can collect and our very sense of the space in which we exist. From the beautiful satellite pictures, we have seen our world from tens of thousands of miles away. This, along with growing knowledge of other planets near and far, has helped change our sense of where we are located—our psychophysical space. Up close, we have zeroed in on the smallest parts of our world by magnifying it up to two million times with the electron microscope. However, the more we discover, the more we find there is yet to discover.

In order to transcend our sensory confinement, we have to consciously engage with the boundary between what is known and what is unknown. The stereotype is that the scientist does this at the level of information, whereas spiritual seeker does this at the level of feeling. However, scientific inquiry, as opposed to procedure, is not devoid of feeling. A scientist’s experience of inquiry, especially the concentrated state that often occurs on the edge of discovery, can be a powerful feeling and can function as a strong motivator.

While science is a perch which extends our sensory receptors, spirituality is a perch which extends and enriches our inner experience, perhaps as it mirrors an external but not quantifiable reality. Through meditation, for example, we are able to experience levels of concentration that illuminate alternative realities only reached through subtle sensing of our inner world. In the same vein, the laws of quantum physics or the theory of special relativity describe a reality that is different from our commonsense experience, as explained by Newtonian physics.
Being on the edge of discovery, with one foot in the known and one foot in the unknown, from which ever perch one starts, it is possible to sense the mystery of the cosmos. One experiences beyond one’s physical confinement, perhaps even a subtle intimation of all that is. This space—of sensing into the mystery—is common to both science and spirituality.

Our weblog is dedicated to exploring this conjunction. With so many conflicts raging between seemingly opposing and apparently irreconcilable extremes, it is crucial to focus on what we share instead of what separates us. In illuminating the common space between science and spirituality, which are so often seen as polar opposites, our hope is that our blog will help make the world a more informed, as well as a more kind and a more gentle place.

The mission statement for our blog, *The Bridge: A Science and Spirituality Resource*, states that, “The Bridge is devoted to exploring the link between science and spirituality from a variety of different points of view. It considers both science and spirituality as approaches to comprehending the mystery of the cosmos and ourselves.” The articles that we have posted have explored, among other topics, cosmology, codependent arising, kabalism, emergence, as well as complexity theory. We have included material from many thinkers. The most well known authors are Einstein, Spinoza, and Carl Sagan. There are many other respected scholars who have written on the science and spirituality interface whose work is represented. Moreover, we have also included some of our own pieces.

We have worked together on this project for the past three years. It has been a full collaboration, with a flexible delegation of responsibilities. We both insist on excellence and remind each other should the other be tempted to take a short cut. It is a regular occurrence that we write together, something that we have both come to enjoy. It has been a rich and rewarding working relationship as well as friendship for both of us. It has also been a ton of fun!
Rachel:

When I applied for a student-scholar partnership, I had no idea my project would draw so many applications. But something about the combination of a novel, historical research, and relevance to women’s studies and philosophy and religion, drew enough applications that I was frankly overwhelmed with choices. Hilda’s application, however, stood out. She was obviously a first-rate student of history and I guessed that she either possessed or was poised to acquire research skills that would prove very helpful. *Kindness* is a novel set in both 1660s London and 2005 London; while I’ve been reading about the 17th Century setting for almost 2 years already, there remains much to do. I asked Hilda to help me address a few very fundamental questions, searching out facts that may seem mundane but without which I cannot proceed with the novel. I started off by speaking with her about my plans for the novel, giving her a draft of the first 180 pages to read, and sharing some images, maps, and websites that I found particularly compelling. I then asked her to work on the question of where—in what neighborhood of London—my characters could plausibly have set up residence. The criteria were rather unforgiving: the residence had to be within the old city walls of London, preferably within walking distance of the one extant 1650s synagogue… and yet it also had to be in an area that survived the Great Fire of London intact. Furthermore, in order for the 2005 storyline (documents unearthed in that same residence) to be plausible, it had to be a neighborhood in which a 17th century building might remain wholly or partially intact through 2005.

Hilda:

Working as Rachel’s research assistant meant steeping myself in historical details. As a conscientious writer, Rachel wanted the plot and characters in her new 17th century novel “Kindness” to be based upon historical accuracies. As a history major, I couldn’t have agreed with her more. Each week, Rachel and I would meet to discuss a set of questions she wanted me to research for her during that week. I would then head off to the library, where I spent many an hour alternately investigating and banging my head against the wall. Much of my research focused on discovering which London neighborhoods were plausible settings for the lives of the characters. With an aging Sephardic Rabbi and a Jewish family from Amsterdam as characters, finding a home for this family in Restoration England wasn’t exactly straightforward. My first assignment went something like this: “find a London neighborhood within walking distance of the 17th century synagogue on Creechurch lane, within the walls of the City of
London, but which wasn’t touched by the Great Fire of 1666. In this neighborhood, find out whether it would be plausible for rectory to have survived from the 17th century, with the original wooden staircase intact…”

I soon learned to consider non-traditional research methods in order to find the information I needed. I did rely heavily on academic literature and articles, but also drew on other kinds of sources in my searches. I spoke with Brandeis professors, who directed me to helpful databases and reading material, and contacted historical societies in Britain and the United States for more specific inquiries. I emailed estate agents for estimates on the latest country homes for sale, and Googled, Mapquested and Wikipedia-ed until I couldn’t see straight. Some of the most useful and interesting information I found came from contacts I made with historians and community leaders in England, people who were eager to share their history with me. I also encountered some not-so-helpful people—after sending one British academic a list of questions I received an email telling me to learn that I needed to learn to use a university library!

Throughout this process, I really enjoyed Rachel’s attitude towards her work; when I came back with information that was less-than-favorable, we would dialogue about ways in which to either adapt the story or research from a new angle. Working as Rachel’s research assistant taught me a lot of things; number one, I learned not to be discouraged when you can’t find what you’re looking for immediately. Historical research requires persistent digging and thick skin. Sometimes, the most academic research-route won’t provide you with the answers you need—I came to see such road blocks as opportunities to get creative! Before this project, my knowledge of 17th century England was limited—working with Rachel showed me that thinking outside the box can be helpful when researching a topic that you aren’t familiar with. I also learned that engaging with human contacts can be extremely useful and rewarding—Since beginning this project, I’ve gotten the opportunity to correspond with some very interesting and learned people living across the pond. It’s been exciting to watch my research skills improve, and to become aware of a network of people who are intrigued by the pursuit of obscure historical knowledge—I’ll admit, I was relieved to discover I’m not the only one!

Rachel:

Hilda did remarkably thorough work, contacting experts in a broad variety of fields and turning up unlikely details. She weathered a fair bit of frustration, when the initial possibilities for the location turned out to be implausible, and at least one British academic was rather impolite about her queries. But she persisted, was flexible when it turned out we had to broaden the area in which we were looking, and she produced both text and visual images that will help lead me to firm up a new, more plausible location, which will in turn lead the novel onto surer historical ground. I’m enormously grateful for the help she’s provided, and look forward to working with her further in the future.
Working with Ruth this semester has been a great learning experience for me, in terms of learning necessary skills needed to achieve my goals after leaving Brandeis. As I have tried to help Ruth become more acquainted with the Internet and the communities online, she has helped me learn how the world of marketing works, especially when it falls on one’s own shoulders. Promoting work does not always fall on the shoulders of a publicist or a sponsoring company. Rather, it’s always the creator who is most invested in the work and can promote it best. I learned the benefits of interfacing with people and that facilitating discussion, even with strangers, can lead to new developments, not only in terms of personal growth, but also in terms of professional connection. Most of all, Ruth has helped me overall with my communication skills, both in terms of dealing with authority figures, like professors and supervisors, and friends. There is always a benefit to communication, and she showed me the ways to achieve great things just through friendliness and just putting yourself “out there.”

My experience with Karen Chau this semester has mirrored some of the concepts in my book, Don’t Bite Your Tongue: How to Foster Rewarding Relationships with Your Adult Children. Karen has held my hand as I’ve stepped over the threshold into the Internet. She has shown me how to blog, has put my book and me on Facebook, Livejournal, Yahoo, LinkedIn, and BookTour. She created a YouTube message for me. In sum, Karen has been the “adult child” sharing her knowledge with an adult parent. Just as I say in Don’t Bite Your Tongue, the generations can help each other. This semester, Karen has shared her wisdom with me and I have grown from that experience.
The idea for black women retreat centers stems from studies centered on the health, economic, and societal challenges that black women face, and the need for a place to help women cope with these issues. Being a young black female, I was personally interested in this project once I learned it was part of the Women’s and Gender Studies Student Partnership Program. Considering my personal interests, this project is a great fit because it involves social justice, feminism, research and project planning.

Currently the project is still in its beginning stages. My duties are very research intensive but I still find the work very captivating. Every week professor Nsiah-Jefferson and I meet to discuss the scope of the project and ways to publicize and gain support for it. Lately our main focuses are the construction of a stress survey, compiling research on inter-sectionality, assembling personages for the formation of an advisory committee, and locating local black women’s organizations that can be a resource for the project. Unfortunately, an internship of 40 hours is not much time to make significant headway, but it is enough to at least get the project’s framework in tact.

Working on this project I am researching courageous black women who are leaders in the fields of health, social justice, womanist theory. I have been inspired by the stories of many, and would like to meet a specific few who are heads of businesses and organizations that match my own interests. I am also learning survey method skills through my review paramount surveys that have made a great impact on social policies. Through the drafting of letters to significant black female leaders in the support of this project, I am learning how to become more persuasive and specific in my writing. Most of all, having a mentoring relationship with Professor Nsiah-Jefferson has taught me invaluable lessons about the world of academia, feminist studies, and all that is included in the development of a self-created project.
This semester, I worked closely with Prof. Shula Reinhartz for the Student Scholar Partnership entitled “Memoirs in Need of Translation”. The project was focused on the translation of World War II documents, written and collected by Prof. Reinhartz's father, Max Rothschild. While the documents were written in both Dutch and German, I was put in charge of translating the Dutch writings only.

Many of the texts that had been preserved by Mr. Rothschild were official documents and certificates that had been officiated during the War. I, however, chose to focus my skills mostly on translating Mr. Rothschild's personal writings from after the War.

It was not long before I began to get a good sense of Mr. Rothschild's experiences after the War – a testament to his incredible writing skills. The writings detailed his move to America, the reclaiming of his Jewish identity in a country that opened its arms to people of Jewish descent, and his general desire to look forward to a bright future instead of being stuck in an undoubtedly traumatizing past. His attitude throughout the writings provided me with a great insight into the story of a survivor – a story of strength, endurance, faith, vulnerability, and wisdom. I decided to dedicate my time to this project because I strongly believe that every survivor’s story must be shared. Every story is different and sheds a unique – if often small – light on an experience that cannot fully be put into words. Still, Mr. Rothschild's writings do an excellent job of detailing the thinking of a survivor.

I have had quite some experience studying the Holocaust, as I not only come from a family of camp survivors, but I have studied Holocaust literature and visited most of the camps in Poland while I was in High School. Having some knowledge on the subject enhanced my sensibility towards the writings that I was translating, and it made for a project that not only enhanced my translating skills, but ultimately broadened my understanding of life after World War II. I feel privileged for having Prof. Reinhartz’s trust in translating these memoirs. Although this SSP was time consuming, this project was rewarding and I would strongly recommend working at the Women’s Research Center to any student interested in enhancing their knowledge on a broad range of poignant issues.
I have been working at the Women’s Studies Research Center with Ellen, sorting and organizing her files and papers as she writes a book about Wal-Mart. I am very grateful that the Student Scholar Partnership Program provided me with the opportunity to work with writer and scholar Ellen Israel Rosen. Doing whatever I can to aid Ellen in the completion of her book has been, and is, of the utmost importance to me.

Ms. Rosen is an expert on domestic and international labor movements, sweatshops, and the specific impact and inner workings of the multinational corporation, such as Wal-Mart, that the workforce faces within the global socioeconomic polity. She has previously written on the subject of globalization and the sweatshops worldwide in her book Making Sweatshops: The Globalization of the U.S. Apparel Industry. Ellen is now completing her book on the Wal-Mart’s labor practices, and the massive impact this mega corporation has had both within and outside of United State’s borders.

Hers is an essential critique on the injustices of Wal-Mart. She has outlined the strategy behind the company’s rise, global expansion, the position of women at Wal-Mart, tactics in terms of union busting, and the outsourcing of jobs to the Third World. Working with the material she is using for her book has given me a greater understanding of the underbelly of this corporation, and of the procedures it has used nationally, and internationally, in abusing human rights regulations.

It is the socioeconomic analyses such as Ellen Rosen’s that maintain the critical stances that are essential to a society founded in participatory democracy and freedom of speech and debate. I am extremely proud to say I have worked with Ms. Ellen Rosen in being a part of this process.
The Project

In the spring of 2008, while stuck in Boston traffic, Nancy noticed a small unimposing sign with the words, “evacuation route.” Traffic whizzed by on the cross street and on a whim she abandoned her itinerary (and traffic jam), turned left, and followed the sign. After driving ten minutes without finding a follow-up “evacuation route” sign, Nancy decided she didn’t want to risk getting lost (which she often did in Boston), so she made a u-turn, retraced her steps, and resumed her day.

It was the era of Bush-Cheney anxiety, conservative talk radio, and “the war on terror.” As Nancy made the U-turn, she thought about the government’s assertions that another attack on U.S. soil was inevitable. She thought about color-coded terrorist levels and the exploitation and politicization of fear. She thought about how the undermining of civil rights in the name of keeping Americans safe. She thought about talk radio’s fiery castigation of Iraq war critics. She thought about the 9-11 report, and about how the problems that plagued communication and rescue efforts in 9-11 had not been resolved by the time Hurricane Katrina hit four years later.

And, still she could not help but acknowledge that another attack in the U.S. was possible. As a maternal pragmatist, she wondered -- in a way she had not since 9-11--what would happen if an emergency required evacuation? How would she find her son and where would she take him? And – given the scarcity of street signs in the Boston area -- how would anyone know where to go!?

A project was born.

My Evacuation Route would be a low-budget, serio-comic, mixed-format, subjective video centered on a mother’s search for very specific, concrete information about where to go in the event a public disaster struck close to home. If this were a Hollywood pitch, it might be described as Charlie on the MTA meets the war-on-terror.

The proposed video would begin by accepting the administration’s claim that another attack is inevitable (which justifies the spending so much of the nation’s resources and attention). What is in place and why don’t we know about? And, in the event of the promised attack, what would we actually do?

The project’s structure would be simple. A mother asks the question of local government administrators about the plans, and we see where the answers lead.

The SSP Collaboration

I joined Nancy because I was interested to gain experience in documentary filmmaking. I am an anthropology student and plan to use video in my work. On a technical level, I was hoping
to learn about video editing.

The goal of our collaboration was to find out what kind of footage we could get, what interviews would help us explore the ideas, and whether there would be enough material to create an interesting and coherent video. Our preliminary tasks would entail research, shooting, logging and editing of material already shot.

Short and long term research would include: (1) talking to local officials (from school principal to fire department chief) about what was in place at the local level, regionally (i.e. Boston), and perhaps beyond. (2) Finding interview subjects who might provide insight and context, from experts and scholars (e.g. urban planners, theorists of public/private spaces, the “war on terror,” etc.), to artists and citizens (who had experiences with the evacuation routes, and/or Boston driving). (4) Internet information by and about the Department of Homeland Security, etc. Some of the research process would be videotaped.

I began by processing an interview that Nancy had previously completed with Catherine D’Ignazio, about her award-winning project called "It Takes 154000 Breathes to Evacuate Boston?" D’Ignazio had run the length of every evacuation route in the city, recording her breaths as she did so and posting them on a website. She spoke eloquently about issues of public space and political use of fear to control the public.

I also did some videotaping. Nancy and I drove the length of one Boston’s evacuation route (and half of another). She drove, I filmed. To our surprise (and for the video’s purpose -- our disappointment), it was fairly easy to follow the evacuation signs on these routes. We had difficulty when seeking the beginning of an evacuation route, which meant navigating the regular traffic of one-way streets and missing street signs. We also encountered occasional trouble along the way (e.g. when a road split and it was unclear which leg to follow), attributable more to Boston signage than evacuation route signs.

Theses drive raised some useful new questions. The routes we took may have been easy to follow but where were they taking us, and why? The answer to “where” isn’t, exactly, “nowhere” but we were interested to find that the signs simply ended at the Boston border. Then what? We imagined thousands of Boston drivers having made it out of Boston and into Dedham. What did Dedham have planned? At the end of one route we captured curious footage when the signage ceased and landed us at a roadside McDonald's with American flag waving in the grey rainy sky. The second significant question that became evident from our leisurely drive of the evacuation route: why are we taking this route? what were we fleeing? Could we have been heading toward the hypothetical disaster rather than away? Except for hurricanes hitting the coast, could any one route reliably send us in the right direction? If not, what is the purpose of the evacuation signs?

We also videotaped my a cappella group singing “Charlie on the MTA.” Nancy was thrilled to learn that the song was part of my group’s repertoire. Although written for a 1948 political campaign, about a man who gets trapped on the Boston subway system and “rode forever beneath the streets of Boston – he’s a man who never returned,” Nancy associates this song with modern-day Boston driving. We filmed a performance with the idea of possibly using it as a soundtrack.

One primary goal of our collaboration was to determine the feasibility of turning these ideas and questions into a video. A couple of conceptual challenges emerged over the months. First,
the original premise, based on Nancy’s experience of (almost) getting lost while following the evacuation route signs, didn’t happen in our reenactment; because the evacuation routes we followed didn’t present problems per se - that structuring device (and metaphor) wasn’t sufficient.

Curiously, the election of Barack Obama was an exogenous problem for the project. Was the video’s premise – rooted in the Bush administration’s exploitation of fear, and the contradictions between its propaganda and its policies (implemented or not) – still relevant? Our discussions required that we rethink the video material in light of the changed political context and the project’s original intent. How could we reshape the video to use the interesting research and footage we compiled?

The goals of a video project’s often evolve and change as material accumulates. One idea we are now exploring may seem a rather radical departure of the original, but some underlying themes carry through (in ways that may not be evident in this brief description). It is to make the evacuation route material one thread among others in a piece that focuses more on traveling in Boston, the local rationalizations for the minimal use of street signs, the notion of asking directions, and society’s perception of public space. Still relevant would be the original issue of relying on the government to help citizens navigate public space in an emergency. FIX SENTENCE: The other continuity from the original concept would be: represents the neglect of daily life for these big huge dramatic baseless ideas.

I developed experience with Final Cut – the popular editing format. In the near future, I hope to use video in my work as an anthropology student, including this summer when I’ll be working elsewhere.

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1 And had collected stories from others who had followed the evacuation route signs.
In this project I partnered with Rhoda Unger as she worked on several papers regarding women leaders in SPSSI, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. The purpose of the project is to examine the role of women in leadership positions in psychology, particularly through the lens of this specific organization. Few women have been leaders in psychological organizations, and their absence and the reasons behind it have been relatively ignored. SPSSI is of particular interest because it is an activist organization that often took progressive views on race and class inequalities, so it is interesting how the same focus was not brought to gender issues. The papers examine how election to leadership positions within SPSSI and the exclusion of women were not merely accidental occasions but had much to do with gendered cultural views, social networks, and professional norms surrounding the field of psychology as well as the structure of the workplace in general. The combined histories of the women are also part of a larger discussion of the effect on women’s professional careers.

My duties as a student were to help research the women leaders in the organization, to look at them in terms of their individual histories, and then to determine patterns of different historical circumstances based on a compilation of information. For example, I researched what leadership positions the women held, the periods of time they were in office, and any social connections of interest that might have played a part in their leadership roles. I also researched background information such as familial values of gender roles that could possibly account for the women’s different perspectives on the organizations and their own roles within SPSSI. Of special importance was discovery of any social connections the women psychologists had within the realm of psychology, such as mentors, former teachers, or marital connections. These networks were often ways for the women to be more intimately integrated into the field of psychology even while not being fully acknowledged or given superior positions, but still allowing them an avenue towards career advancement. The role undergraduate and graduate education played in the women’s careers was interesting to note as well, seeing that particular colleges gave rise to groups of women leaders and thinking about what those universities or professors had to offer. I also helped to group women together in different ways and to analyze the groupings for deeper understandings of how surrounding structural factors and environment contributed to the level of women’s involvement in SPSSI leadership.

During the course of the partnership we met every week or every other week and discussed the different women leaders, the reasons for their exclusion or advancement in career opportunities, and any new or changing information that shed light on the organization. I think this research is extremely important for several reasons: first I think that it removes the silence of a generation (or several) of capable, intelligent women leaders who have been ignored academically and professionally due to their structural location in a patriarchal field. I also think it is important to recognize how women’s absence in the organizational aspects of SPSSI and other organizations was not due to inability or lack of interest but to socio-structural norms that dictated who was given power in the professional world. However, women who did reach advanced careers and resisted gender norms are also explored and given a voice; even the many women who could not break out of institutional barriers were able to make significant contributions to psychology. These are commentary not just on SPSSI and the field of psychology, but also extend towards wider communities, professional careers, and the gendered power dynamic by
which society is organized. I have learned a lot from Rhoda and really enjoyed our interactions and discussions. I think this is a very worthwhile and valuable project and I’m honored to be able to contribute my small bit to it.