

# WGS NEWS

January 2021 | [www.uta.edu/womens-studies/](http://www.uta.edu/womens-studies/) | [womensstudies@uta.edu](mailto:womensstudies@uta.edu)

## Calendar

Jan 19: 1st Day of Classes  
February: Black History Month

March: **Women's History Month**  
8th International Women's Day  
10th [WGS & WFSN Speaker](#)  
24th Keynote Speaker

May 13-15: UTA Graduation

## Things to Do

[National Women's History Museum virtual exhibits](#)

TED:

["We Should All Be Feminists" with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#)

Stephanie Cole Lecture:

["Social Reformer Lucretia Mott"](#)

## Things to Read

### Caste

by Isabel Wilkerson

### *The Warmth of Other Suns*

by Isabel Wilkerson

### *Wonder Women of Science: How 12 Geniuses are Rocking Science, Technology, & the World*

by Tiera Fletcher & Ginger Rue, for grades 8-12

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON



## WOMS 2310 Intro to WGS Studies

**The Professors:** Dr. Donna Akers and Dr. Alex Hunnicutt teach the WOMS 2310 courses. Learn more about them and our program's introduction course below:



### Dr. Donna Akers

**What do you like about teaching the Intro course?** The most exciting thing about teaching the Intro course is providing students with a way to think and talk about the experiences that they have had as young women and the discrimination they have faced, even in

their youth, simply based on their gender, and their realization that all women face discrimination in today's patriarchal societies, including Western societies. Giving students the analytical tools to understand issues affecting women today is a very rewarding experience.

**Why should students take the course?** Students should take the course to understand the history of the fight for women's and gender rights, the issues that remain, and the hope for the future.

**What might students learn about in the course?** In this course, students examine topics such as work, family, reproduction, sexuality, politics, art, literature, and contemporary



**Dr. Davina Durgana**

**Virtual Speaker (FREE)**

**Wed., March 10 noon - 1 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams [Click here to join the meeting](#)

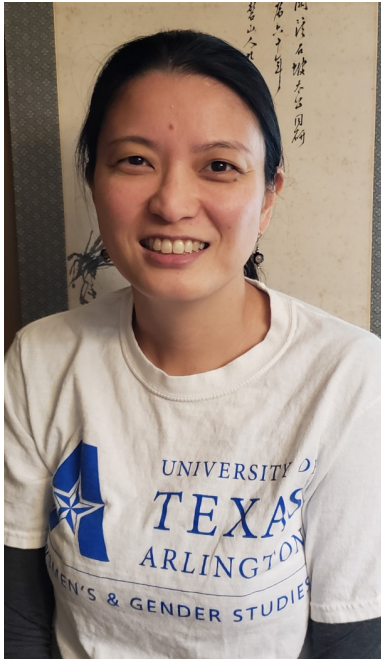
**“A Decade of Innovation: Statistics in the Fight Against Modern Slavery”**

Dr. Durgana is an award-winning international human rights statistician who has developed leading global models to assess risk and vulnerability to modern slavery. A faculty member at National Defense University and visiting faculty at Oxford University's Green Templeton College, Dr. Durgana is a report co-author and senior statistician on the Walk Free initiative's Global Slavery Index and Senior Multilateral Engagement Advisor for the Minder Foundation. She served as Assistant Professor of Sustainable Development at SIT Graduate Institute in D.C. and has multiple awards, both national and international, including a Forbes Top 30 Under 30 in Science for 2017 for her work on statistical modeling, human security theory, and human trafficking. In addition, she is an inaugural 2020-2022 Ambassador for the American Association for the Advancement of Science to motivate women and girls to pursue STEM careers.

media, placing women and gender at the center of inquiry. For perhaps the first time in the students' lives, they have a course that explores the issues of inequality, limited opportunities, economic devaluation, family life, and culture from a feminist perspective. In addition, through studying the history of patriarchy, students explore the development of ideologies that justify heterosexual male privilege as a relic of cultural teachings of the past, enabling them to understand the historical context of today's oppression. For example, this course explores the history of the Christian church and its interpretation of Eve: woman as the embodiment of sin, responsible for the downfall of mankind.

**How did you come to teach courses on WGS?** Beginning with the earliest memories that I have as a human being, I remember comparing myself to my brother and resenting his unearned privilege simply because he was a "boy" and I wasn't. To me, it never made sense that he could do as he pleased as a teenager, where I had strict curfews and supervision by my parents. I recall my anger at hearing that, because I was a girl, I had to aspire to being a wife and mother, and that I should think about being a nurse, instead of a doctor, a stewardess instead of a pilot. As a Native woman, I heard the teachings of the Choctaw people that valued and esteemed women as highly as men, but in the larger white society, women were clearly marginalized. These opposing teachings, and the cognitive dissonance they created, resulted in my activism in college, as my colleagues and I marched in the streets of Houston, demanding equal rights for women. In subsequent years, Second Wave feminism accomplished many policy changes, including the Equal Credit Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (prohibiting discrimination in employment), and Roe v. Wade. I have spent many years as a scholar interested in the fields of Native American/Indigenous Studies and Women's Studies, so teaching courses in WGS is a natural outgrowth of my academic and personal interests and research.

**What other courses do you teach and what research interests do you have?** As a feminist and Native woman, I have always been interested in the struggle for equality, justice, and progress, which has led to my research on Native Americans, settler colonialism, and women's history. I have written 3 books and many articles on the struggles of Native people against the aggressive colonial power of the United States. In addition, I have written about the ostracism, fear, and hatred of the 'other' by white Americans, leading to grotesque discrimination against women and people with disabilities. In an article entitled, "Killing Winged Celia: Race and Culture in Indian Territory," I tell the story of Winged Celia, an elderly, disabled woman who was killed by a community that tracked her down in the woods



**Naoko Witzel, WGS Advisory Board Member and Associate Professor in Linguistics and TESOL.**



**Molly Cummins, WGS Advisory Board Member & Department of Communication Lecturer.**

## Giveaway!

**FREE WGS t-shirts** to the first 5 people who email WGS asking for a t-shirt: [womensstudies@uta.edu](mailto:womensstudies@uta.edu)

and impaled her with a wooden stake, in the fear that she was a vampire.

**Fun Fact:** I have lived in Thailand and India, and love to travel and explore other cultures. I was raised in a small Choctaw community in Oklahoma and spoke Choctaw as a child with my extended family and our neighbors.



**Dr. Alex Hunnicutt**

**What do you like about teaching the Intro course?** I like helping students learn about the growth and development of women in society. I think that one of the most important steps in reducing inequity is to learn the past and present relations of women and men and how social construction occurs.

**Why should students take the course?** Students — women and men — benefit from this course by learning to recognize the meaning and application of some basic, key concepts that go to the heart of explaining why men and women do not receive equal treatment, recompense, or respect.

**What might students learn about in the course?** Among the dozens (hundreds?) of things a student would learn is why and how women and men are different. Is this biology and hormones, or is something else (social construction and learned behavior) at work? I also find it fascinating when we cover the concept of privilege and many students find it eye-opening to discover who experiences privilege.

**How did you come to teach courses on WGS?** I began in this department teaching the Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies.

**What other courses do you teach and what research interests do you have?** I also teach the LGBTQ+ Studies course in the WGS program, as well as several courses in the History Department. At present, I am focusing on LGBTQ+ culture between Stonewall and the beginning of the AIDS crisis of the 80s.

**Fun Fact:** My husband and I are in our 38th year together — legally married since 2014. And, I was a 2nd place winner on *Jeopardy!*

**What are students saying about the class?** “This class was amazing! I truly enjoyed everything about it.” “One of the great courses.” “Loved the readings.” Students also note that course info “tied in very well” with other classes in their schedules.