



Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Annual Conference Proposal Examples

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WGSS Conference Proposal Examples

Paper Submission Example #1: Permission was granted by Benjamin Smith to distribute this example from last year's conference.

Contact information: email address

Benjamin Smith

Junior

Communication Studies

Abstract: "Deconstructing Masculinity in Hazing"

In U.S American culture, hazing has been seen as rites of passage or a ritual that marks the transformation and transition to one status to another. It also is seen as a means of initiation within social groups. Gangs, sports teams, schools, military units, and fraternities and sororities, are all homo social groups that could potentially haze. Hazing can consist of harassment, abuse, humiliation, or can be psychologically terrorizing. In my research I will critical examine the role of masculinity within these homo social groups that haze. I will use Black Feminist Thought as my theory and critical lens. My goal is to add to the conversations about hazing and how traditionally performed masculinity is a vital component to why men participate in violent inaugurations. Throughout my research I will use various samples that connect to the larger topic of hazing in homo social groups. I plan on using the Cornell University lacrosse team, Baruch College, and Florida A&M University music band as samples for my research. Since 2005, 60 people have been killed due to hazing rituals. I argue that homo social groups that haze share the belief that men should be domineering, aggressive, violent, and seek validation from their peers. The purpose of my research is to uncover the hidden truth behind hazing and why some people find it acceptable in U.S American culture regardless of the amount of harm that it does to a person. It is important to critique and examine hazing and discover what it says about the culture we live in that deems some forms of violence acceptable and others unacceptable.

Technology Needs: Use this section to indicate any technology needs

Willingness to Chair a session? Indicate yes or no

Word count: Specify how long your proposal is in length (remember to keep your proposals 500 words or less).

Paper Submission Example #2: Permission was granted by Amber Manning-Ouellette to distribute this example from last year's conference.

Contact information: email address

WGSS Annual Conference
Abstract Paper Submission

How First Year College Women Understand their Sexual Experiences
Amber Manning-Ouellette
Doctoral Candidate, Educational Administration and Higher Education

Traditionally, hooking up research focuses on heterosexual casual sex relationships and the impact on students. Several studies provide an indication that negative emotions and consequences impact women longer than men (Esbaugh & Gute, 2008; Lambert, Kahn, Apple, 2003; Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, Backstrom, 2009; Nack, 2008). Due to the shifts in values and freedom, there is a need to explore the long-lasting positive and negative impacts of casual sex on college women (Morgan, & Zurbriggen, 2012). Studies neglect to consider how specifically, first-year college women narrate their experiences in sexual situations and the impacts of these decisions. There are many unforeseen consequences of casual sex behaviors and research frequently indicates that women endure the most negative effects (Armstrong, Hamilton, & England, 2010; Katz, Tirone, & van der Kloet, 2012). With the

reassurance of negative impacts from previous studies, I find a need to center women in my research and provide an open-ended approach to not only negative experiences, but positive as well.

The literature is clear on the damaging and long-lasting emotional consequences of hooking up on college women (Bogart et al., 2000; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Esbaugh & Gute, 2008; Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003; Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009). With a risk of sexual assault, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, mental health issues, and other outcomes, institutions must address these concerns for the safety of their students (Bogart, Cecil, Wagstaff, Pinkerton, & Abramson, 2000; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). If female students feel overwhelmed by issues and choices related to sex, they may have difficulty with academic persistence. With a national focus on institutional retention, the female and male experience is extremely important in determining how to better serve the student population.

Although university women experience both negative and positive impacts of the hook up culture, few women speak to the severity. To date, there are no regulations on sex education in higher education to help align the sexual health information students receive (Askew, 2000; Luker, 2006). With the variety of delivery methods on sex education prior to college, males and females may lack the information needed to make critical and potentially life changing decisions (Fine, 1988; Irvine, 2002; Luker, 2006; Nack, 2008). Higher education administrators, faculty, and staff need to better understand sexual decisions and experiences among college females to inform sex education regulations and improve sex education programming. In doing so, higher education professionals can ensure holistic growth amongst our students. If we can foster holistic growth, men and women can make more informed and healthy choices during their college experience, which increase their persistence and retention.

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Creative Submission Example #1: Permission was granted by Honna Veerkamp to distribute this example from last year's conference.

Contact information: email address

Honna Veerkamp

2014 WGSS Conference proposal for creative presentation and discussion

Fear Tactics: Fighting for Empowered Birth

Video Documentary, 15min, Produced by Honna Veerkamp, 2012

Link to view video: <http://youtu.be/Z357Jhu9MQU>

Abstract:

“A lot of women know better, and they listen to all the outside voices that tell them ‘no you can’t; it’s a bad idea; you’re wrong,’ and Karina chose not to listen to those voices.” –Sheila King, *Fear Tactics:*

Fighting for Empowered Birth

I was born in Oregon in 1973, and my parents wanted to have a homebirth although midwifery was illegal. I grew up knowing the abbreviated story of my birth—that my parents went to the hospital last minute and had a terrible experience; that my mom was strapped to the bed, my dad had to wait in the lobby, and I was slapped for good measure, even though I was already breathing. A few years ago, I asked my mom to tell me the longer version of my birth story, and I wrote about it, processing the infuriating details she shared with me about the abuse she faced at the hospital.

When I moved to Illinois in 2012, I was surprised to discover that midwifery, in most cases, is still illegal here and in many other states. Furthermore, birth at hospitals frequently involves interventions that many consider unnecessary and, in some cases, dangerous. I attended a rally in Carbondale on Labor Day 2012 that was part of a national organizing effort to improve birth options, and I saw a vibrant movement emerging in this region around empowered birth choices. I attended meetings and became acquainted with organizers of the Southern Illinois Birth Network and other individuals who conceived of birth choices as a human rights issue and who were working to raise awareness and improve birth options in this area.

Over the course of several months, I interviewed midwives, doulas, and mothers who had given birth at home, in birthing centers, and in hospitals. I also interviewed my parents, delving deeper into the story of my birth. *Fear Tactics: Fighting for Empowered Birth* is a personal documentary, which explores my own story and interweaves it with the remarkable story of Karina Coles, who had a home birth in Illinois at age fifteen. The video incorporates interviews with other mothers and birth professionals along with drawings, archival footage, and photographs to talk about larger issues around the ways birthing is restricted. More importantly, it documents individuals and communities that are fighting to reinstate the sovereignty of birth to those that are giving it.

I am a second-year MFA student in the College of Mass Communications and Media Arts at SIU, and I am pursuing a WGSS graduate certificate. I worked on this project as part of a course called Critical Documentary Practice with Dr. Angela Aguayo, and the film first screened in December 2012 at a public exhibition for our class. In March 2013 it screened at the Guyon Auditorium as part an event called “Holistic Birth Choices,” which I organized in conjunction with members of the Southern Illinois Birthing Network, Women Gender and Sexualities Studies, and University Women’s Professional Advancement. I have included a link to the video in the heading of this abstract.

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