

Denouncing anti-Asian Violence

Dr. Suh

The Departments of Anthropology, History, and Sociology and the Women's and Ethnic Studies Program at UCCS stand firm in denouncing the recent rise of anti-Asian harassment, hate, and violence. We also condemn willfully ignorant statements that draw upon stereotypes of Asians/Asian Americans and minimize the ongoing violence directed at them, [such as those made by Captain Jay Baker of the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office insinuating that the Atlanta mass shooting that killed eight people, six of whom were Asian women, were the actions of a sex addict simply having a "bad day."](#) As scholars dedicated to the study of race, inequality, and social justice, we want to be clear that acts of xenophobia and racism of any kind have no place in our classrooms, workplaces, or communities.

Anti-Asian discrimination has a long history in the United States deeply rooted in Orientalist and Yellow Peril rhetoric that has repeatedly contributed to the exploitation and exclusion of Asians/Asian Americans. [Racism directed at Asian/Asian American women has an even more troubled history.](#) The United States' first anti-immigration legislation, the Page Act of 1875, directly targeted and prohibited the entry of Chinese women. Furthermore, Asian and Asian American women have been consistently dehumanized, sexualized, and depicted as subservient objects of male fantasy and violence in American popular culture and public discourse.

We also condemn statements that suggest that recent anti-Asian violence in the United States is primarily a symptom of conflict between and among communities of color. To focus on these supposed "conflicts" dismisses the ways in which white supremacy has and continues to situate communities of color in dire and untenable positions. To focus on "conflicts" also denies [the very real connections that communities of color have forged throughout this country's history to fight against their racial oppression.](#)

As members of a multi-racial nation built on a foundation of racial domination, we are all obligated to take seriously how the history of anti-Asian discrimination and white supremacy drives these recent events. To that end, we urge people to actively engage in and disseminate resources that shed light on this history, such as [StopAAPIHate](#) and the [Treating Yellow Peril](#) syllabus. It is only through continued education and cross-coalition action that we can work to deconstruct and dismantle these systems.

WEST after UCCS

How does a Women's and Ethnic Studies degree apply in the "real world?" How does "intersectionality" translate on job applications? What to say when people push back for choosing women's and ethnic studies?

Dr. Julie Torres organized a fantastic zoom event with four recent WEST alumni: Keeley Griego ('18), Lindsey Dierenfield ('19), Aiden Olson ('20) and

Bethany Weaver ('20) to respond to these very questions. Here are a few highlights in their own words:

Keeley Griego (She/her/hers) I just really wanted to have a positive impact and know that what I was doing is important. I knew from the first "Intro to Social Justice" class that I took, that is exactly my purpose, that's where I'm supposed

to be...You can take this degree in so many different places, but I think whatever you do with the WEST degree, you're doing it from a place of where you want to understand people and be empathetic and have a positive impact in somebody's life, even if it's the smallest impact.

(Highlights continue on last page)

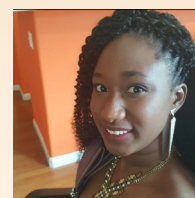
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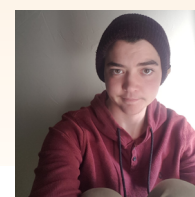
Newsletter Editors

DR. TRE WENTLING

IRINA AMOUZOU ('22)



XANDER BEEM ('21)



Congratulations Majors and Minors!!

Jessica Ameter

I'm plan to finish my Master's degree in Communication at UCCS and then go to law school. I want to attend Stetson Law and work mostly pro bono for nonprofits. Gender, Race, and Sexuality with Jen Kling. Jen is amazing and it's absolutely the best class experience I've ever had!



Tayla Kelly

"Racial Disparities in US Healthcare"

This study focuses on how racial essentialism in bioscience education promotes racial disparities in healthcare, specifically in maternal and infant health among African American women.

My focus a f t e r graduation is bridging my WEST education w i t h medicine.

I want to obtain my Doctorate in Medicine. WEST 2040: Global Black Women Writers with Dr. Stephany Rose! My best memory is connecting with an educator who looked like me. That was the first time I thought I can do the same, push myself harder, and achieve dreams yet to be dreamt because Dr. Rose is living proof!

Charlea Polk

I will be working with a Texas school Great Hearts Charter Academies as a third-grade teacher. I will soon enroll in a graduate school program in Texas as well. My favorite WEST class was Restorative Justice.

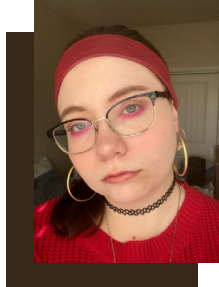


Krystal Hubbert

"Effects of Sexualization and Objectification of Women in the Media"

This study explores whether sexualization in media leads to self-sexualization and/or internalized objectification within individuals who identify as female.

I will be taking a gap year. I would love to find an internship/position working with victim's advocates or women's advocates. I hope to attend either law school or grad school for gender studies. My dream goal is to become a victim's advocate, help change the laws that cause damage to people's lives. Favorite within WEST? WEST4030: Bodies, Genders, and Sexualities with Dr. Wentling. The past three semesters (current one included) have cemented a feeling of community within me about WEST.



Kayla Owens (Winter 2020)

"Missionaries: Doing the Work"

This study explores the historical context in which women attempt to break the patriarchal hierarchy through a feminist lens by engaging in missionary work rooted in white supremacy that further marginalized lower class communities of color.

I currently work with children that have Autism, so I want to get my Board Certified Behavioral Analysis certification. I'm hoping to get into a program fall 2021.

My favorite class was WEST 2040: Black Women Global Writers because of the material it exposed me to, and it expanded my feminism and studies because Dr. Rose pushed me to be a better scholar which I am thankful for. I remember being in such awe because I never had a professor or educator that looked anything like me, and she did.

Kanani Kato (Winter 2020)

"The Intersections of the Polynesian Culture and Gender/Sexuality Practices"

This study explores the intersections of Polynesian culture with gender/sexual norms and practices in relation to the ideology that this culture is breaking down the constructs of gender and sexuality, while simultaneously enforcing them.

My post graduate plans include going to grad school. WEST 3100: Women of Color: Image and Voice with Dr. Rose. I wasn't a WEST major at the time I took this class, but it was the reason I changed my major to WEST.



Aja'Dae Trent

"Real Talk: Real Research" explores the untapped potential of storytelling as a method to obtaining anecdotal experiences of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

My post-graduate plan is to continue my education and commit to the development and execution of ethnographic research.

My favorite memory was before the pandemic I was taking the WEST 3090: Peep Show taught by Dr. Tre Wentling. The reoccurring theme that seemed to resonate in and out of class was how to turn the impossible into the possible.



Jodyanna Gallegos





Dr. Abby Ferber

Dr. Abby Ferber

In addition to my role as a Professor split between WEST and Sociology, I have the great honor of directing The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion. I have been busy planning two upcoming events and hope to see wide participation! In my many years with the Center, these top the list of unique opportunities we have been able to offer the UCCS community.

Monumental Crossroads: A Dialogue. Should all monuments to the Confederacy be taken down? A dialogue with Director/Producer Tim van den Hoff. Film available via UCCS library.

“Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native

Peoples” An online, participatory workshop presented by Native and non-Native facilitators. Experience the history of the colonization of this land through the words of Indigenous leaders, European/American leaders, and Western historians; participate through experiential exercises and small group discussions; share ideas for building relationships between Native and non-Native people based on truth, respect, justice, and our shared humanity. <https://friendspeaceteams.org/upcoming-events/>

Scholarships for UCCS students, faculty and staff on a first-come-first-serve basis. Register to: lsmith7@uccs.com



Dr. Stephen Suh

Dr. Stephen Suh

What is resilience? Despite the numerous challenges I've face throughout life, I've managed to accomplish many of my personal goals, even achieving my dream of becoming a university professor. So, I'm resilient, right? Simple!

Well, those who know me also know that I sincerely believe that simple answers are rarely the right ones. And the more I've reflected upon what it means to be resilient, the more I've concluded that I'm asking the wrong question. The more substantive question should be: why is resilience valued?

The simple answer is that resilient people are believed to possess qualities, such as grit, hard-work, and determination, that jive with the American sensibilities of

meritocracy and rugged individualism. Being resilient, then, conveys to others that one is unwilling to be constrained by external forces; that one holds the drive and agency to overcome hardship. What's often neglected in this broader celebration of resiliency is its narrative flipside—the belief that personal failings and pathology are what prevent resilience, not one's positionality or social location. As WEST students and scholars, I hope that we reject this myth, or any discourse that celebrates the success of one person at the expense of another. Instead, we must recognize and honor all aspects of people and their lives, as well as the social factors that make being resilient difficult yet worth aspiring to.



Dr. Julie Torres

Dr. Julie Torres

Life online has not been easy. Technical difficulties and Zoom/Teams fatigue aside, we have continued to log on, while so much of our lives are off. We have suffered various forms of loss – of human connection, daily life activities, and sadly, in many cases, of those we love.

Resilience—the ability to adapt or recover from difficult events—is a word heard often in times of crisis. While it is tempting to focus on resilience, I am reminded of a recent article by journalist Vinita Srivastava, who wrote that “asking whole communities to be resilient in the face of police violence, land theft, lack of healthcare and job security, can cover up many things, including ongoing state-sanctioned violence against Indigenous communities, and public health biases.”

Instead of uncritically celebrating resilience, we must uncover what this pandemic and life online has meant for

our UCCS community, especially for our students, faculty and staff who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color, as well as those who are struggling with mental health, hunger, and financial insecurity. Yes, we still have a lot to celebrate, especially as a graduation season approaches. To our seniors, I know how disappointing it can be to learn that the graduation you had dreamed of will not happen as you imagined. I was there one year ago, when I heard the news that after many years of working towards my Ph.D., I would not walk across that stage due to the pandemic. But I am proud of you and of all our students who continue to amaze me with their strength and innovative ideas. Let us celebrate (safely) and recognize our successes as a community, but let us also do the work towards healing and changing the structures that allow for inequalities to persist in our world.

Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

Do you love your online presence?

I think we tend to forget to take care of ourselves when it comes to a life-lived-online, as if the person on the screen is separate from the off-screen person. In this age, where our human interactions look like Ray Bradbury's "Parlor" in Fahrenheit 451, we must adjust our expectations of how we envisioned our future social lives and selves.

We have to think about how these lives-lived-online have transformed our subjectivities, have become a hell-of-mirrors that reflect who we believe we are. The consistent messages from social media has No Exit except an off button. If this is true, if other online people shape our online reflections, we must learn to love our selves online, take control of our

online identities, and not participate in the subjectivity-creation/denigration of online others.

This is not the first time in history that we have lost everything, including our homes, families, lives, and senses of normalcy—and it is far from the last. One thing we will never lose is our capacity for radical love. During this life-lived-online, I hope we can shift our focus and radically love ourselves and love each other online. In an online world full of hatred, racism, misogyny, threats, and violence, to love yourself and love people you don't know, people different from you, is an act of resistance and rebellion. Loving your offline self is hard enough, and we will have to work twice as hard to learn to love the person on the screen.



Dr. 'Ilaheva Tua'one

“I hope we can shift our focus and radically love ourselves and love each other online. In an online world full of hatred, racism, misogyny, threats, and violence, to love yourself and love people you don't know, people different from you, is an act of resistance and rebellion.”

Dr. Tre Wentling

A little more than one year ago, Chancellor Reddy emailed the announcement that remote teaching would commence after spring break. My three learning communities moved online one week before it. Class attendance became voluntary because I did not know how moving home, the loss of day care, waning employment, the responsibility of caring for others, and the reality of becoming ill would uniquely impact each person. Despite the uncertainty of it all, students showed-up to "Virtual 3Cs: Check-ins, Connections, and Chats." We laughed, cried, and cared for one another, virtually.

Learning online is...complex. Technological annoyances, plus infrastructural inequities, not to mention the all-out flattening of our living-work-school-recreational spaces, make-up just some of the reasons why. Today, students are no longer offered

the voluntary attendance option and cameras are factored into attendance and participation. Group discussion lead and facilitation assignments, as well as synchronous pair/group work, are still required and vital elements in my classes.

Students have stretched and certainly been stretched, found themselves in uncomfortable positions no doubt. We have adjusted as best as we know how; increased our command of Teams and Zoom. WEST Faculty have maintained our commitment to students and students have continued their dedication to the degree.

At this point, I believe we have moved from reaction to pro-action and that weathering

zoom-fatigue, persevering through the different wi-fi speeds and hotspots, plus finding the humor and humility in frozen faces, helps maintain perspective in our greater purpose. These are merely a few of the lessons learned as we have been changed by life online.



Dr. Tre Wentling



Linda Martin Smith

Linda Martin Smith, M.A.

Has life online changed for you? Are you digitally thriving and resilient?

The response to these questions for most of us is a resounding, YES!

When you reflect on 2020, do you find yourself feeling like you somehow missed a year thinking an event in your personal life or at work happened in 2020, but wait that was 2019?

In 2019, we were able to do the “simple” things in life, sit and stand next to each in our classrooms, offices, grocery store, etc. However, the pandemic changed our lives and we were “forced” to migrate online and become “tech savvy” using Microsoft Teams or Zoom to communicate and for social connection.

We thrive!

While online life can be challenging, it is also an opportunity to thrive in the digital world. Learning new ways to communicate and socialize online has evolved. Whether it’s a glitch during a meeting, class on Zoom, the emergence of TikTok and video online family moments, we are resilient.

We adjust!

Access to digital resources, like computers, internet service, etc., is not always available to many in our underserved communities. With so many children, students and families in need, I encourage you to reach out to local organizations or schools to see how you can make a difference in someone’s life.

We give back!

END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION

MONDAY, MAY 3, 2021 · 4:30 PM MST

Awards ceremony, games, prizes, and much more with your favorite WEST friends and faculty!

[JOIN THE ZOOM](#)



Molly Cotner

Molly Cotner, M.A.

I often think about how my experiences in education would have gone had I been in college during a global pandemic. How would I react? Would I have had the perseverance to keep going? Would I have thrived?

In all honesty, I am not sure the answer to any of these questions. Yet here we are in all this uncertainty, stress, and disruption and when I see our WEST students, I see this incredible flexibility, drive, strength, and determination that just captures and inspires me.

I see you! I see your dedication, I see

you get burned out and keep standing, I see you get overloaded with work (in the classroom and in your jobs) and you show up - every...single...time. I see your will to succeed, and I am just in awe of you as students and people!

As students, I think that you have so much to teach us as faculty about what it means to have this life online, to thrive digitally, and to be resilient. You are our teachers, and you are our mentors. Thank you for your fight, drive, and dedication to WEST!

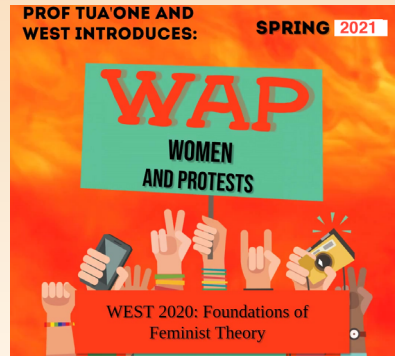
Audre Lorde, Relocation, and Dealing with Grief

Irina Amouzou

Dr. 'Ilahva Tua'one is one of the newest members of the Women's and Ethnic Studies faculty. Her journey to UCCS and spring semester class, WAP: Women and Protest, is a powerful story of resilience.

During the spring of 2020, Dr. Tua'one was finishing her dissertation and on the job market when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. She was also teaching at the University of Utah and transitioned to teaching WAP online. This was heartbreaking for her as she had already left her students many times during her job search. Students had to transition online and so did she. "Not all students own computers. Half of the students dropped out [of the class]." She emphasized how important empathy was in that situation. Just as she was struggling to transfer her class online, many students were struggling as well. It reminded her of her own struggles that she had endured during undergrad when she lost a family

member and experienced isolation herself. "I was just in a room, reading books, and dealing with my grief." School helped her have something to focus on and work through her grief and that was resilience for her.



Living in a different city, in a new phase of life, and working in a new job, she continues to extend empathy and teach WAP. The class is a lesson on resilience

as it focuses on women and the history of protest from a feminist lens starting from the 1790s to understand present day feminist discourse.

Dr. Tua'one sported an Audre Lorde graphic t-shirt, which she wears to teach class. She stood-up on camera so that I could give it a better look. In the Thrasher t-shirt font, it reflects the resilience in Audre Lorde, her students, and herself. That she chooses to wear the t-shirt for this class speaks volumes. Lorde was a writer, civil rights activist, and feminist - and an incredibly important part of queer, Black, and feminist histories.

"We got to a point where a song like WAP could cause both joy, happiness, and empowerment but also protest against it." WAP is offered in the WEST program and will be offered every spring. Dr. Tua'one hopes all students will consider adding WEST to their degree studies at UCCS.

Resilience Is Not An Objective

Irina Amouzou

When I sat down with Dr. Stephen Suh, a professor in Sociology and Women's and Ethnic Studies, I was excited to hear his thoughts on the past year, both personal and in general. Dr. Suh is an insightful thinker, nuanced in his opinions, and profound with his words. So, it came as no surprise when we began our interview on resilience that he questioned the very notion itself.

"Who is able to be resilient?" These words echoed and emerged as the theme that our conversation would take. Dr. Suh, questioning the idea of resilience, asks what it is and maintains that access to it is based on positionality. Instead of taking examples of resilience in his own life, such as teaching during a global pandemic while taking care of an infant born in the fall semester of 2020 and using this to praise himself, he leaned into the idea that his ability to be resilient was one of luck and positionality.

He defined resilience as "the ability to overcome hardships." While he believes that he is resilient, there is a danger of thinking of himself

as more resilient than others. As a WEST scholar, he must also think about the dangers of a resilience discourse. "The danger lies in thinking that some people are more resilient than others and using that to then rationalize whatever deficiencies or lack that other people possess."

He would argue that everyone is resilient but in the broader culture, certain groups are viewed as less resilient than others. We talked about how external factors impact marginalized groups and the ability to overcome or work with hardships. Dr. Suh pointed to his economic status in being able to have a career that could transfer online and having a supportive family network to go to when he needed help. These are not factors that everyone has in their lives, which can impact the perception of their resiliency.

"Thinking about resilience as a part of the broader discourse that we as Americans or we as any members of society use to separate the haves and have nots is really important."

We circled back to the idea of resiliency as something that can still be positive – as in recognizing growth through struggle. Yet, there is always the danger of individualizing resiliency and expecting people to get through hardships based purely on an individual's personal attributes.

Lastly, we touched on the topic of self-care. Dr. Suh stated that self-care is different for everybody. He runs into the trap of forgetting that he is more than an academic. The pandemic has helped him put into perspective all of the things that define him as a person.

Although he does not see himself as an advice giver, he wanted to end our conversation with the idea that even though he critiqued the idea of resilience, he understood the importance of overcoming negative external forces. Marginalized people still possess agency and recognizing their humanity is a hopeful outlook, especially when dealing with oppressive external forces.

WEST after UCCS (continued)

Aiden Olson (He/him/his) I really learned how to read and write really well with WEST because of how much we did, and that's been really beneficial with continuing my education.

Lindsey Dierenfield (She/her/hers): Do not choose WEST just because of your career opportunities, choose it because it's a true life opportunity. You're adopting a new perspective that you can use in every facet of your life...I swear, every day, something I learned in my WEST program pops up whether it's in my personal life or my job with my work relationships.

Bethany Weaver (She/They) Education is really valuable in and of itself, even without the job applicability of it...I love that I have that knowledge. That knowledge was really freeing and amazing for me and my own development as a person.



Alumni not featured on the panel also shared about WEST after UCCS.

Brezane Ruiz '20 (She/They) My WEST minor helped me cultivate the professional, community member, and activist person that I strive to be. WEST offered tools that help me navigate social justice issues through intersectionality and engage in everyday life through an antiracist, feminist, and queer perspective. WEST also provided me with the space to validate my own experiences and engage with communities through solidarity while recognizing difference.

Malia Jackson '20 was just accepted into the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology to study Forensic Psychology. Congratulations Malia!

- WEST FALL 2021 COURSES -

WEST 1010

Intro to Soc Justice Studies

WEST 3280

The Asian American Community

WEST 3300

Methodologies in WEST

WEST 3310

Sociology of the Family

WEST 3400 Advanced Theory

WEST 3470 Criminology

WEST 3620

Media & Consumption

WEST 3680

Islam & the West Lecture

WEST 3900 "Si Se Puede":

LatinX Social Movements

WEST 4040 Gender & Sexuality

WEST 4100 Native American

Perspectives on Museums

WEST 4530

Advanced Privilege Studies

WEST 4780 Global Migration

WEST 3580 [WeekendUniversity]

Immigrant Histories

UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Disability Studies

Develops understanding of the interdisciplinary field of disability studies.

Gender & Sexualities Studies

Examines gender and sexuality as social phenomenon, social processes, social constructs, formation of identities, roles, and performances.

Global Studies

Approaches the study of global social phenomena as a complex and dynamic product of multiple regional, ethnic, and institutional identities from a transnational perspective.

Latino/a Studies

Designed to highlight the diverse experiences of Latino/a communities in the U.S. and abroad.

Native American & Indigenous Studies

Investigates American Indian issues and concepts of Indigenous knowledge worldwide; emphasis on Indian Nations within the United States, First Nations in Canada, and Pacific Islanders.

west
women's + ethnic studies



Dr. Stephen Suh