

# Continuities, Ruptures, Resurgences: Still in Search of Our Mothers' Gardens



Southern Connecticut State University  
**24th Women's & Gender Studies Conference**  
April 19th and 20th, 2024



## Call for Proposal Submissions by January 18, 2024

Five decades after the publication of Alice Walker's womanist essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, her eponymous essay (originally published in 1972) continues to be a beckon call, a vision for those of us engaged in feminist studies and intersectional justice work:

**Guided by my heritage of a love of beauty and a respect for strength—in search of my mother's garden, I found my own.**

In the half-century since the publication of the essay, have we found our own? Although we have seen a significant body of feminist literary, theoretical, and artistic expressions, the search for our mothers' gardens—and our own—continues to be challenged and fraught with pushbacks, setbacks, ruptures, and starts here and there again. As academic fields like women's and gender studies, Black studies, Latinx, and LGBTQIA2S+ studies are targeted and attacked, humanities and higher education are at a crisis point. While we celebrate milestones and triumphs of what Steinem and others call "the feminist century" (with waves of turning 50: Women's & Gender Studies, Stonewall, Hip Hop), we also experience the violence of *Roe v. Wade* being undone. Indeed, the tension between celebrating our triumphs while remaining committed to the work that is necessary in the face of unprecedented challenges is that crux.

Fifty plus years later, we are still in search of our mothers' gardens, sites and sources of our nourishment. Urged by Walker's search and guided by Haudenosaunee and other Black, Indigenous, Latinx, women of color, and queer feminist visionaries ("for the next seven generations"), we ask ourselves questions for our collective futures:

- Why are we still in search of our mothers' gardens?
- How do we recognize/embrace our feminist legacy/legacies while staying vigilant/attentive to/around old and new challenges? What are some collective strategies?

- How do we continue to create/innovate despite the legal/social setbacks we have recently experienced?
- How and when does a body become a subject in the eyes of the law, the public, communities, institutions, corporations, nation states?
- What can we do to support communities struggling to align with the feminist agendas of peace, justice, and unity while honoring differences?
- How is the feminist body involved in community, conflict and the pursuit of peace and justice? How does feminism contribute to the pursuit of equity and equality? How has feminist storytelling narrated these struggles and contributed to/reshaped intellectual discourse?

The 2024 Women's & Gender Studies (WGS) Conference at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) offers a critical space and place for a two-day inquiry across differences and communities into the intersections of gender, race, communities, and institutions. Since 1991, the feminist collective at SCSU has been continuously hosting conferences that reach across communities and bring together activists, academics, artists, and feminist practitioners from diverse backgrounds for a two-day conference.



**Submissions are invited to address topics including but not limited to the following:**

#BlackLivesMatter	Disability Justice Matters	Privilege & Accountability
#ClimateStrikes	Digital Storytelling	Rematriation
#IdleNoMore #MMIWG2S	Economic Justice	Research & Social Change
#IndigenousLivesMatter	Environmental Justice & Ecofeminism	Restorative Justice
#MeToo	Food Justice: Take Back Our Kitchens	Social Media & Movements
#TransLivesMatter	Global Migrations & Peace/Justice Movements	Stonewall 50+: Legacies & Visions
#TransWomenOfColorLivesMatter		Survivor Justice
#YouthActivism	Grassroots Organizing/Writing Workshop/Teaching for/Queering & Indigenizing Peace & Justice	Trans* Bodies
AAPI Justice Matters		Transnational Activism & Organizing
Allyship & Resistance	Health Promotion & Access	Transnational Indigenous Feminisms
Art & Social Transformation/Socially Engaged Art	Identity & Community	Transnational Solidarity & Resistance
Banning/Censorship/Silencing	Indigenous Activisms	UN Sustainable Development Goals & Justice Movements
Bisexual Erasure	Indigenous Environmental Movements	Veterans of Conflict (veterans of all wars)
Bodies in the Age of Generative A.I.	Indigenous Sovereignty	Voice to Power, Power to Voice
Bodies in Transition	Intersectionality & Justice	Women's Suffrage Movements
Body in Motion	Just Media Representations	
Body Positivity	LGBTQIA2SP+ Rights Activism	
Body Sovereignty	Mass Incarceration	
Contemporary Gender Relations	Motherhood/Parenthood	
Contested/Contesting Public Art	Movements against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia	
Differently-Abled Bodies		



**Proposal Submissions – Due January 18, 2024**

Submit proposals (150-250 words) to [WGS@southernct.edu](mailto:WGS@southernct.edu), with attention to the Conference Committee. If you have any questions, please E-mail [WGS@southernct.edu](mailto:WGS@southernct.edu) or call the Women's & Gender Studies Office at (203) 392-6133. Include name, affiliation, E-mail, and phone number. Panel proposals are encouraged.

The Women's & Gender Studies Conference at SCSU is self-supporting; all presenters can pre-register at the discounted presenters' rate. More information, including the registration, is forthcoming. For more information about the SCSU WGS conference and its history, please visit: [www.southernct.edu/wgs](http://www.southernct.edu/wgs)



QR code provides link to the CFP webpage.

