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OUR MISSION:

The UCLA Center for the Study of Women works towards a world in which education and scholarship are tools for social justice feminism, improving the lives of people of all genders. Established in 1984, CSW is the first organized research unit in the University of California system to develop and coordinate research on women and gender-related issues.



CSW administers research grants for faculty and students; organizes research projects, conferences, seminars, and public lectures; and publishes policy briefs, working papers, and blogs that feature research updates, conference reports, faculty profiles, bibliographies, field reports, book reviews, and announcements.

With your generous donations, we can continue to provide research grants for faculty and students, and organize research projects, conferences, seminars, and public lectures that further CSW's mission.

A faculty leadership team, executes the center's mission.



Director Grace Kyungwon Hong,

a Professor in the Department of Gender Studies & the Department of Asian American Studies, serves as the head of the faculty leadership team. She is the author of *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (2015) and *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Cultures of Immigrant Labor* (2006). As Chair of CSW's Advisory Committee (2016–2019) and CSW Associate Director (2019–2020), Hong initiated one of its current research streams, [Sexual Violence and Intersectionality](#). She also supports the [Feminist Anti-Carceral Studies](#) stream, and participates in the UCLA Black Feminism Initiative.



Associate Director Jessica Cattelino

is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies & an affiliate in American Indian Studies. She is a scholar of indigenous sovereignty, the cultural politics of nature, and everyday American political processes and imaginations. She is the author of *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (2008), which examines the cultural, political, and economic stakes of tribal casinos for Florida Seminoles. Her next soon-to-be-published book, *Water Ties: An Everglades Ethnography*, tells human stories of ecological restoration and examines the cultural politics of water in the Florida Everglades. Cattelino is the Principal Investigator for CSW's research project and grant, [Gender and Everyday Water Use in Los Angeles Households](#).



Dr. Sarah Haley, Director of the UCLA Black Feminism Initiative

and Associate Professor of Gender Studies and African American Studies, has research and teaching investments in Black feminism, gender history, carceral studies, labor, and Black radicalism. She is the author of *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016), which examines the lives of imprisoned women in the US South from the 1870s to the 1930s and the role of carcerality in shaping cultural logics of race and gender under Jim Crow. She is currently working on a Black feminist history of the rise of the contemporary carceral state that interrogates the role of state intrusion and violation of black domestic space.

Dr. Lieba Faier is the CSW Advisory Committee Chair

and an Associate Professor in the Geography department, whose work brings ethnographic and feminist approaches to understanding the spatial and cultural dynamics of contemporary transnational processes, particularly as these pertain to people's lives in Japan, the Philippines, and the United States. Her first book, *Intimate Encounters: Filipina Women and the Remaking of Rural Japan* (University of California Press, 2009) is an ethnography of cultural encounters among Filipina migrants and their Japanese families and communities in rural Nagano. She is currently working on a book manuscript titled *The Banality of Good: Rights, Bureaucracy, and Human Trafficking to Japan* that focuses on ongoing efforts among NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations to fight the trafficking of migrant women to Japan.



Feminist Anti-Carceral Studies

Policing and incarceration are major issues for social justice feminism.

The United States has the highest rate of women's incarceration in the world. Only 4 percent of the world's female population lives in the US, but the US accounts for over 30 percent of the world's incarcerated women.¹ Between 1977 and 2004, the number of women in US prisons increased by an unprecedented 757 percent.² Discourses about gender expand the overall prison system. Legislators and prison authorities increasingly use "gender responsiveness," the notion that prisons can be designed to respond to the needs of women and children, to expand prison budgets and justify prison building.

Prisons are unhealthy for women and families. As a 2015 CSW co-sponsored report revealed, women suffering from mental illness in LA County jails are routinely denied treatment, medication, and reproductive hygiene products, and are disproportionately punished with solitary confinement.

As sites of captivity, prisons and jails are inherently violent; they also foster specific forms of gendered and racial violence including sexual harassment, rape, and retaliation. Even meager avenues for redress have been eroded since the 1990s through legislation such as the Prison Litigation Reform Act. LGBTQ communities are disproportionately impacted: nearly 60% of incarcerated girls identify as LGBTQ, while nearly one in six transgender Americans, and forty-seven percent of black transgender people, have been incarcerated.³ Prisons entrench gender conformity by institutionalizing gender segregation and depriving trans prisoners of necessary health resources.⁴



Feminist Anti-Carceral Studies

Women, especially women (and girls) of color, are routinely criminalized for survival. In 1975, Dessie Woods was prosecuted for defending herself against rape by a white man in rural Georgia. Today, we see the legacy of criminalizing survival and survivors in the cases of Marissa Alexander, Bresha Meadows, and many others. Nearly sixty percent of people in women's prison nation-wide, and as many as 94 percent of some women's prison populations, have a history of physical or sexual abuse before being incarcerated. Black women are almost three times more likely to die at the hands of a current or ex-partner than other women.⁵

Incarceration and policing undermine reproductive and economic justice, endangering women and children through estrangement and removal, police violence, and inadequate mental and reproductive health services for pregnant women in prison. Incarceration creates economic precarity by draining the resources of families (through the bail system, the exorbitant price of prison phone calls, income and job loss due to court dates and other criminal punishment procedural requirements, tickets, etc.), undermining employment prospects, and subverting the rights of workers.⁶

The carceral state also threatens feminist futures by consuming resources that would otherwise be devoted to social life: child care, the environment, education, housing, health care, and other institutions that produce material safety and dignity.

CSW's Feminist Anti-Carceral Studies initiative advances an abolitionist approach to gendered and racialized regimes of incarceration and policing. We pursue feminist, queer, and intersectional challenges to the carceral state. In the 2019–2020 academic year, we published a Policy Brief Series on this topic, *Confronting the Carceral State, Reimagining Justice*, available for download.



Sexual Violence and Intersectionality

The #MeToo movement has brought renewed visibility to issues related to sexual assault, harassment, and abuse of power, illuminating how even those women with significant amounts of social, political, and economic power experience gender-based harassment that, until now, has gone unreported for fear of social and professional repercussions. This celebrity advocacy builds on the work of feminist legal scholars who, in the 1980s and 1990s, drew attention to how sexual harassment contributed to gender inequality in workplaces. At the same time, there has long been a different tradition of analysis from Indigenous and women of color feminists who have noted that sexual violence is constitutive of white supremacist and settler colonial societies. This tradition is the context for black feminist activists, such as Tarana Burke, who coined “me too” as an expression of solidarity and support for women of color whose experiences of sexual abuse may have otherwise been elided. As the chorus of the #MeToo movement has grown louder, scholars and activists have begun calling for an expanded focus. Sexual harassment and abuse are endemic, but if the origins and effects of sexual violence are so differentiated by historical and material structures of race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and class, is there utility in subsuming all manifestations of sexual violence under one conceptual category?



CSW's research on sexual violence is closely tied to our Feminist Anti-Carceral Studies project. Our research will propose intersectional, abolitionist interventions in sexual assault policy at level of university campuses and beyond. How, we ask, can we move beyond punitive and carceral solutions that only perpetuate violence, and instead work towards justice?

In the 2018–2019 academic year, we published a Policy Brief Series on this topic, *Addressing Sexual Violence, Reshaping Institutions, Achieving Justice: Shelter, Intersectionality, and Sexual Harassment Policy*, available for download.



Gender and Water

Around the world, women play prominent roles as water is procured, adjudicated, struggled over, and distributed. For example, they sue over contaminated water in Flint, Michigan; protect indigenous lands and watersheds near Standing Rock, in present-day North Dakota, by protesting a planned pipeline; disproportionately hold responsibility for procuring household water across the globe; and lead longstanding efforts to “mainstream gender” in United Nations initiatives on water in developing countries. The slogan of the water protector movement at Standing Rock is Mni Wiconi, or “Water is Life” in Lakota: settler colonialism and the politics of indigeneity concern not only land, which are their focus, but also water.

Not only does water make up more than half the human body, but it also is the surrounding substance in which life develops in utero. In myth and symbols, in narratives, poems, and songs, water is gendered, most often by association with women. Across the academic disciplines and the arts, attention to water illuminates gender, and vice versa.

Two-thirds of the world population will live in conditions of water scarcity by 2025, and water is of paramount concern to the sustainability of life in Los Angeles. Researchers at the Center for the Study of Women are investigating the important but understudied role of gender—as it intersects with race and class—in residential water use in Los Angeles. The goal of creating culturally-acceptable pathways to reduce residential water use and increase use of greywater and other sustainable sources requires nuanced understanding of patterns in water’s everyday use and valuation. Many water use reduction efforts take place in households, where research has shown divisions of labor and decision-making are often gendered. Thus, a gender analysis of residential water is called for. We ask: In what ways is household water use gendered in Los Angeles? What are the gendered patterns in household water valuation, as diversified by class and race? How do gendered cultural systems interact with water management and ecosystem health? Findings are expected to yield recommendation for reductions in residential water use.

Gender and Water

CSW Senior Faculty Research Associate [Jessica Cattelino](#) (PI) and former CSW Director [Rachel Lee](#) (Co-PI) were awarded a grant from [UCLA's Sustainable LA Grand Challenge](#) program in order to tackle these questions. Her pioneering new research project, "Gender and Everyday Water Use in Los Angeles," is the first of its kind and asks new questions about how to conserve water for future generations. Along with ten other initiatives funded as part of the Sustainable LA Grand Challenge this year, this study helps researchers and policymakers envision and build a more sustainable future for Los Angeles in the face of climate change.

How does gender impact the way people in Los Angeles use water — and can understanding the connections between gender and water use help us find new ways to conserve?

The study examines how gender shapes the way that people use, value, and save water on an everyday basis. It is well known that women disproportionately procure and manage household water in developing nations. Despite the fact that household work and decision-making remain highly gendered in the United States, there is little scholarship on gender and residential water use here. Selecting four diverse Los Angeles neighborhoods, CSW researchers observed everyday gendered water practices, not only studying women but also documenting indoor and outdoor water practices for all adults over a two-year period.

By using a combination of anthropological methods—surveys, participant observation, etc.—and by explicitly using gender as an analytical lens, this study reveals new data about how gender intersects with race and class to inform the way that Angelenos use water and ways that we might conserve. CSW researchers will use the results of this study to advise legislators and policymakers on how to reduce water use, increase use of greywater, and encourage other sustainable indoor and outdoor residential practices.

Preliminary results of this research project have been published as a [Working Paper Series](#) available for download. The five working papers in this series address a variety of topics that center on the everyday lives of Angelenos: (1) the gendered divisions of labor in families' management of household water usage, (2) the ways in which Los Angeles' children are marshalled as advocates for water conservation, (3) the effect of generational knowledge and the immigrant experience on Angeleno families' water consumption, (4) the process of water diary-keeping that was essential to the study, and (5) the rhetoric of disaster that underlies Los Angeles' discourse around water. This work connects everyday life to the large-scale questions of water scarcity and management that face our world in the twenty-first century.

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BLACK FEMINISM INITIATIVE

The CSW Black Feminism Initiative (BFI) was established in Fall 2019 to honor and encourage Black feminist thought and visions for political transformation. BFI supports interdisciplinary research and social engagements that are grounded in Black feminist and Black queer frameworks of analysis, challenges state and interpersonal violence, considers intramural forms of relation, and engages everyday forms of refusal, Black feminist assembly, and collective organizing practice. BFI also highlights questions of social reproduction and reproductive justice, contemporary and historical regimes of captivity and carcerality, and Black feminist art and expressive culture.

BFI supports graduate research, a faculty-graduate workshop, and public programming. Current projects include: The Alisa Bierria and Mariame Kaba Graduate Research Fellowships, the Black Feminist Faculty-Graduate Workshop, and public talks and symposia.



Events form a crucial part of CSW's offerings.

Our events support graduate students and faculty by providing a platform for them to engage with each other and the public around important issues that impact women and people of all genders, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Events also provide an opportunity for us to share our research streams, as well as to honor the work of CSW's award recipients.

CSW organizes an annual graduate student conference, Thinking Gender, under different themes. Thinking Gender 2020, "Sexual Violence as Structural Violence: Feminist Visions of Transformative Justice," drew from our Sexual Violence and Intersectionality research stream, and featured renowned abolitionist activist Mariame Kaba as the keynote speaker. The year before, Thinking Gender 2019, "Feminists Confronting the Carceral State," engaged our Feminist Anti-Carceral Studies research. For [Thinking Gender 2021](#), we are re-envisioning the format to a virtual event featuring a public keynote address and closed workshops for graduate students. The theme, "Care, Mutual Aid, and Reproductive Labor in a Time of Crisis," is a response to the individual and collective stress and trauma so many of us have experienced in 2020.





In 2020, **CSW's annual Awards Celebration** was a virtual event for the first time. Usually a festive in-person reception, this event honors student and faculty award recipients. This year, CSW's Distinguished Leader in Feminism Award was bestowed on Alicia Garza, founder of Black Futures Lab and co-founder of #BlackLivesMatter, who also gave the keynote address, "The Purpose of Power: Building Movements in A Time of Pandemic."

CSW also hosts lectures featuring guest speakers from UCLA and the community; panel discussions, like our upcoming collaboration with the Los Angeles Public Defender's Office, UCLA Law's Criminal Justice Program, and two of CSW's formerly incarcerated policy brief authors on "**Gender, Race, and Age Behind Bars: Impacts of Long-term Sentencing**"; and working groups for graduate students, such as our Gender & Water Working Group and our Black Feminism Initiative Faculty-Graduate Working Group.



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If you would like to support CSW's groundbreaking social justice feminist work on issues pertaining to women, gender, and sexuality, **please contact CSW's Management Services Officer, Rosa Chung, at rosa@women.ucla.edu**. You can also donate by clicking [here](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

The CSW Team

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