

{CALL FOR PAPERS}

Identities and Self-Fashioning

Truman's 20th Annual Women's and Gender Studies (WGST) Conference

January 29 – 31, 2015

Sponsored by the Women and Gender Studies Program Committee

In what ways is the self a location for artful play, self-discovery, and self-actualization? Stephen Greenblatt, in his landmark work Renaissance Self-Fashioning, concludes that the shaping of human identity is "a manipulable, artful process" when he explores the ways in which courtiers responded to social expectations in the 16th century.

Self-fashioning can take many forms. For example, individuals can construct their identities through gender performance, body modification, and even the creation of personas and alter egos. The WGST Identities and Self-Fashioning conference invites proposals addressing the exploration of the ways in which identities are formed, discovered, manipulated, and reconstructed.

Possible topics may include but need not be limited to...

- an analysis of cultural artifacts (biographies, autobiographies, novels, plays, movies, television shows, musical performances, graphic novels, etc.) as they pertain to identities and self-fashioning. As examples: the portrayal of Sofia as a transgender character in *Orange Is the New Black*; the creation of Don Draper's persona on *Mad Men*; the many performance identities of Lady Gaga;
- performances of music, personal testimony, poetry and creative nonfiction by those who have actively constructed their identities;
- cultural criticism of mass media portrayals of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and/or pansexual (LGBTQQIAP) identities;
- a discussion of the relationship between individual and group identities;
- presentations of artwork (paintings, drawings, photographs, self-portraits, masks, sculpture, textiles, etc.) that depicts self-fashioning and/or demonstrates the fluid nature of identity;
- exploration of the ways in which people utilize body modification (tattoos, piercings, scarification, plastic surgery, etc.) to self-fashion;
- scientific approaches (biological, sociological, anthropological, etc.) to topics concerning identity. As a sample topic: gender dysphoria, formerly known as gender identity disorder.
- a consideration of the ways in which language contributes to the construction of the self. Some possible directions include the development of language after a cross-cultural encounter and the implementation of code switching.
- theoretical perspectives on the notion of selfhood, including the idea that the self does not exist.

Abstracts are due by November 14th, 2014 at 5:00 PM. Please submit abstracts in a PDF or Word document to wgstconference@truman.edu, along with your name, contact information, abstract title, and the dates and times that you will be unavailable to present. Updates about the conference will be posted at <http://wgstconference.truman.edu>.