

KATHLEEN B. CASEY, PH.D

Director, Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program
Professor of History
Furman University
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EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** **History, University of Rochester** **2010**
Dissertation, "Cross-dressers and Race-crossers: Intersections of Gender and Race in American Vaudeville 1900-1930"

Graduate Certification in Women and Gender Studies
- B.A.** **History, University of Rochester** **2003**
Graduated with Honors, Dean's List, Cum Laude

RESEARCH, TEACHING, & PROGRAMMING INTERESTS

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	American History of Women, Gender, & Sexuality
Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century America	Material Culture and Clothing
African-American History	History of Race in America

DIRECTOR, Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Program and Professor of History, Furman University, Aug 2023-Present

- Facilitated growth which tripled the numbers of WGSS majors and minors, 2023-2026
- Led initiative to create WGSS Program's first endowment, in honor of former colleague Dr. Savita Nair
- Applied for and was awarded \$15,000 grant from Furman Humanities Center to support a three-year lecture series, July 2023
- Organized a 14 person 3-year interdisciplinary speaker series, 2023-2026. This involved collaborating with WGSS Oversight Committee and 14 other departments, centers, and institutes at Furman

- Created “Friends of WGSS,” the first account for donors to make targeted gifts to support the WGSS Program, 2023. Led fundraising campaign on behalf of WGSS, totaling \$28,000, 2023-2026
- Successfully advocated for, hired, and trained first full-time WGSS Program Coordinator
- Led drive to win Early “Dins Day” Donor Challenge, earning more donors than any other program, department, institute, or athletics team on campus, April 2024 and 2025
- Worked with external donor to establish and distribute two \$2,500 inaugural WGSS student awards for outstanding majors and minors with financial need, 2024-Present
- Initiated communications and convene meetings, events, and a retreat for WGSS Oversight Committee composed of Furman faculty and staff, 2023-Present
- Initiated curricular reform which added “Identities, Equality, and Justice” general education component to two core WGSS classes
- Initiated curricular reform to change numbering of WGS 230 to WGS 101 to indicate the introductory level of the course more clearly to incoming first-year students
- Oversaw nearly 700% growth of followers on WGSSatFurman Instagram account, 2023-2026

COORDINATOR, GENDER, WOMEN, & SEXUALITY STUDIES PROGRAM, Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU), Aug 2021- 2023

- Doubled the number of majors and minors in one year through recruitment, 2022-2023
- Worked with administrators to triple the program’s budget, 2022-2023
- Worked with donor, VP of Advancement, Assistant Provost, Deans and department colleagues to implement \$2,500 inaugural GWSS award for an outstanding major with financial need
- Managed curricular reform and ensured consistent changes across LMS (Blackboard), WebAdvisor, course catalogue and marketing materials, 2021-2023
- Managed program website, including updating curricular revisions, language, and alumni photographs and stories, 2021-2023
- Collected data and wrote annual assessment report measuring changing trends in student competencies, 2021-2023
- Coordinated program meetings and collaborative course schedules among colleagues, 2021-2023
- Created and distributed advertising for WGSS courses and events across campus, 2021-2023

- Organized campus events for Women’s History Month / International Women’s Day (see university-wide service below)
- Collaborated with on-campus and community partners including the Robert Nusbaum Center, the Gender Equity Center, the LGBTQ Life Center, Samaritan House, etc., 2021-2023

PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED BOOKS

- *The Things She Carried: The Persistence of the Purse in America*, Oxford University Press, 2025

The Things She Carried is the first full length scholarly study of the role purses have played in American history and culture. It argues that purses have functioned as versatile toolkits which provided women with a private, female-controlled space in a world where they rarely occupied public space on equal terms with men. Covering 150 years, the book uses material artifacts, photographs, memoirs, diaries, newspaper articles, oral histories, advertisements and more to illustrate how generations of women (and men) effectively deployed purses in their efforts to move from the margins of society to the middle.

- *The Prettiest Girl on Stage is a Man: Race and Gender Benders in American Vaudeville*, University of Tennessee Press, 2015.

The Prettiest Girl on Stage examines popular representations of gender and race in American vaudeville, analyzing the lives and work of four popular performers and contextualizing their significance within contemporary cultural themes. The book explores the multiplicity of shifting gender and racial identities and contributes a more nuanced understanding of the interrelated nature of gender and race ideologies in American history. *The Prettiest Girl* has been positively reviewed by scholars in *The Journal of American History*, *The Journal of Southern History*, and *Pacific Historical Review*.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

- “Pickets, Protests, and Purses in the American Civil Rights Movement,” *Gender and History*, Wiley-Blackwell, October 2023, vol. 35, is. 3, 1070-1088.
- “Sex, Savagery, and the Woman Who Made Vaudeville Famous,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies*, University of Nebraska Press, Vol. 36, No. 1, March 2015.
- “‘The Jewish Girl with a Colored Voice:’ Sophie Tucker and the Sounds of Race and Gender in Modern America,” *Journal of American Culture*, Vol. 38, No. 1, March 2015.

INVITED ESSAYS AND CHAPTERS

- “This Sack So Full”: Enslaved Women’s Use of Sacks in Antebellum America,” chapter 3 in *The Cultural Construction of Hidden Spaces: Essays on Pockets, Pouches and Secret Drawers*, Brill 2024. Anna Jamieson, Naomi Segal, and James Brown, eds.
- “What We Mean When We Talk about Drag,” Reflection Essay, Tulane Working Group on Jewish Gender Performance and Drag, 2022

BOOK REVIEWS

- *Vaudeville and the Making of Modern Entertainment 1890-1925* (University of North Carolina Press, 2020), *Journal of American History*, forthcoming.
- *Clothing and Fashion in Southern History* (University Press of Mississippi, 2020) *Journal of Southern History*, May 2021.
- *Exporting Perilous Pauline: Pearl White and the Serial Film Craze*, for *Women and Social Movements*, Vol. 18, No. 1, March 2014.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & PANELS

- Participant and organizer, “Fashioning New Histories,” Organization of American Historians, Philadelphia, April 2026
- Participant, “Feminist Futurities in Academia: A Roundtable Discussion on Protecting the Next 50 Years of Women’s and Gender Studies Programs in the US South,” WGS-South, Wake Forest University, March 2026
- Participant and Moderator, Imagining Feminist Universities, “Sustaining Free Period Products at a Small Southern College,” WGS-South, Decatur, GA, March 2025
- Panel Discussant, “Caring for WGSS in the South: Perspectives from South Carolina,” WGS-South, University of South Carolina, Upstate, Spartanburg, SC, Mar 2024
- Presenter, “WGSS Programs at Small Institutions: Growing and Strengthening Programs with Limited Resources,” National Women’s Studies Association annual conference, Detroit, MI, Nov 2024
- “Managing the Modern Body: American Women’s Use of Purses, 1920-1940s,” Presenter, National Women’s Studies Association, annual conference, Baltimore, MD, Oct 2023
- “The Things She Carried: The Possibilities of Purses in Queer History,” Presenter, National Women’s Studies Association, annual conference, Minneapolis, MN, Nov 2022

- “‘I Have Got My Pocketbook By My Machine:’ Place, Space, and Women’s Pocketbooks at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory,” Presenter, American Historical Association, New Orleans, Jan 2022
- “Women’s Work, Clothing, and Contestations of Power in America and Africa,” Panel Organizer, American Historical Association, New Orleans, Jan 2022
- “Enslaved Women’s Pockets, Sacks, and their Pursuit of Autonomy,” Presenter, Institute of Modern Languages Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London, Dec 2021
- “The Power of the Purse: Resistance and Repression through Twentieth Century American Handbags,” Presenter, Berkshires Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities, Johns Hopkins University, May 2020 (cancelled due to Covid-19)
- “Gendered Objects: Identity, Agency, and Activism through Material Culture,” Panel Organizer, Berkshires Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities, Johns Hopkins University, May 2020 (cancelled due to Covid-19)
- “The Politics of Purses and Routines of Resistance,” Presenter, American Studies Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, Nov 2019
- “The Performative Role of the Purse in American Visual Culture, 1890-1920,” Presenter, Conference on the Global Status of Women and Girls, Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA, March 2018
- “The Performative Role of the Purse in American Visual Culture, 1890-1920,” Presenter, Berkshire Conference on Women, Genders, and Sexualities, Hofstra University, June 2017
- “The Perfect Crime: Purse-Snatchers, New Women, and the Power of the Purse,” Presenter, Popular Culture/American Culture Association National Conference, Seattle, March 2016
- “The Things She Carried,” 19th Century American Material Culture, Presenter/Participant, National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, Bard Graduate Center, NYC, July 2015
- “The Power of the Purse,” Presenter, Works in Progress Regional Interdisciplinary Conference of Feminist Scholarship, Virginia Wesleyan University, March 2015
- “The Promises and Perils of Teaching the History of Fun,” Presenter, American Historical Association, New York City, Jan 2015
- “Performing the Primitive in a Nerve-Wracked World,” Presenter, Western Association of Women’s Historians, California Polytechnic University, Pomona, California, May 2014
- “The Prettiest Woman on the Stage is a Man,” Presenter, Popular Culture Association/American Cultural Association, Washington D.C., March 2013
- “‘She is What She Aint:’ Lillyn Brown and the Meaning of Black Male Impersonation,” Presenter, The Berkshires Conference on Women, Genders, and Sexualities, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, June 2011

ACADEMIC HONORS, AWARDS and NOMINATIONS

- Recipient, Furman Humanities Center, WGSS Lecture Series, 2023-2026
- Recipient, Furman Humanities Center, Book Development Grant, 2024
- Recipient, Summer Faculty Development Grant, Queer History and the Possibilities of Purses, Virginia Wesleyan University, Summer 2022
- Nominee, Best Educator in Hampton Roads, Outwire757 Readers' Poll, 2019
- Nominee, Samuel Nelson Gray Distinguished Teaching Award, 2019
- Nominee, Frank and Jane P. Batten Distinguished Scholar Award, 2016, 2018
- Recipient, Mednick Memorial Fellowship, Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, 2016-2017
- Semi-Finalist, Nancy Weiss Malkiel Junior Faculty Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, 2016-2017
- Recipient, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, American Material Culture Summer Institute, Bard Graduate Center, Summer 2015
- Recipient, Summer Faculty Development Grant, "The Prettiest Girl on Stage is a Man," Virginia Wesleyan University, Summer 2014
- Recipient, Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning Grant, "Making Public History Matter," Virginia Wesleyan University, 2014-2015
- Recipient, Postdoctoral Fellowship, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, 2011-2012, Declined
- Recipient, Susan B. Anthony Dissertation Award for the most distinguished dissertation in women's and gender studies, 2010
- Recipient, Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2009-2010
- Finalist, Woodrow Wilson Women's Studies National Fellowship Competition, 2009
- Recipient, Writing Across the Disciplines Teaching Fellow, College Writing Program, 2005- 2009
- Recipient, Research grant from Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender Studies, 2006, 2008

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

PROFESSOR of WOMEN, GENDER, and SEXUALITY STUDIES; PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Furman University
August 2023 - Present

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY and GENDER, WOMEN, & SEXUALITY STUDIES,
Virginia Wesleyan University
August 2018 – May 2023

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR of HISTORY and GENDER, WOMEN, & SEXUALITY STUDIES
Virginia Wesleyan University
August 2012 – May 2018

DEAN'S VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Honors College, 2011-2012

POST-DOCTORAL TEACHING FELLOW
University of Rochester, College Writing Program, 2010-2011

Courses taught include:

- FYE 101: First-Year Experience Seminar
- WGSS 101: Introduction to Issues in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- HIST 101: The Pursuit of Pleasure: A History of Recreation in America (topics course)
- WGSS 220: Modern Sexuality in America
- HIST 231: US History of Women (WGSS elective)
- HIST 116: History of the United States (survey)
- HIST 234: African American History Since the Civil War
- HIST 248: Apparel in American History (WGSS elective)
- HIST 260: Introduction to Historical Thinking (historiography)
- HIST 337: Museums, Monuments, and Memorials
- HIST 338: Public History Internship
- HIST 349: Race and the American City
- HIST 349: Reinterpreting the Roaring Twenties

- HIST 392: Independent Research
- HIST 400: The Long Civil Rights Movement
- HIST 440: Big Brother in the Bedroom (writing intensive)
- HIST 460: Senior Thesis Seminar (writing intensive)
- WGSS 502: Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Internship
- WGSS 503: Independent Study

PEDAGOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- Participant, *Ms. Magazine*, Workshop, Writing for the Popular Press, NWSA, Minneapolis, Nov 2022
- Participant, Jewish Gender Performance and Drag Working Group, Tulane University's Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience, 2021-2022
- Participant, Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA) Workshop, USC Race and Equity Center, Aug 2021
- Seventeenth Annual “Reacting to the Past” Faculty Institute, Barnard College, NYC, June 2017
- Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy, Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research, Virginia Tech, Feb 2016
- Presenter/Participant, The Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College, June 2009

INVITED TALKS

- Invited speaker, University of Virginia, Maxine Platz Lynn Women’s Center, Women’s History Month, March 2026
- Invited speaker, University of South Carolina-Upstate, Women’s History Month, March 2026
- Invited speaker, Virginia Wesleyan University, Women’s History Month, March 2026
- Invited speaker, Portland State University, Nov 2025
- Invited speaker, Lewis and Clark College, Nov 2025
- Invited speaker, Coastal Carolina University, LGBTQ History Month, Oct 2025
- Invited speaker, Wofford College, LGBTQ History Month, Oct 2025

- Invited speaker, Women’s History Month, Clemson University, April 2024
- Invited speaker, Women’s History Month, Le Moyne College, April 2024
- Invited speaker, “Women and the Power of the Purse,” Women’s History Month, Assured Partners, March 2023
- Keynote speaker, “Women and the Power of the Purse,” Women’s History Month, Women United Leadership Luncheon, United Way, Norfolk, VA, March 2023
- Invited speaker, “Queer History and the Possibilities of Purses, LGBTQ History Month, Christopher Newport University, Oct 2022
- Invited speaker, “Racism in the Suffrage Movement,” Salon Talk Series, *Eleanor’s Norfolk*, intersectional feminist bookstore, Norfolk, VA, Dec 2022
- Invited presenter/consultant, “Exploring the Intersection of Gender and Race in Academia,” Equity in Academia Series, Children’s National Hospital, George Washington University, Jun 2022
- Invited speaker, Women’s History and Equality Commemoration, Norfolk, VA Naval Base, Aug 2021
- Invited speaker, “Race, Gender, and the Fight for Women's Suffrage, 1890-1920,” Virginia Beach Historical Society, Virginia Beach, VA, March 2018
- Invited presenter, “Apparel in American History,” four-part series, Institute for Lifelong Learning, Westminster-Canterbury Retirement Community, Virginia Beach, VA, Nov 2017
- Invited speaker, “The Things She Carried,” Center for Sacred Music, Virginia Wesleyan University, Feb 2017
- Invited speaker, “The Prettiest Girl on Stage is a Man,” Institute for Learning in Retirement, Virginia Wesleyan University, Norfolk, VA, Nov 2016
- Member, Planning Committee, “Entangled Identities: Legacies of 1619,” Event Series, Virginia Wesleyan University funded by a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2015-2016
- Invited speaker, "Sex, Savagery and the Woman Who Made Vaudeville Famous", Women, Professions, and Politics: A Historical Symposium in Memory of Lynn D. Gordon, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY, Oct 2012
- Invited speaker, “‘Making a Woman of Himself’: Julian Eltinge and the Art of Female Impersonation,” Humanities and Social Sciences Lecture Series, Schenectady Community College, March 2011

UNIVERSITY-WIDE SERVICE

- Organizer, 4-person interdisciplinary speaker series on “Resistance” Cultural Life Program, Furman University, 2025-2026
- Organizer, 4-person interdisciplinary speaker series on “Belonging,” Cultural Life Program, Furman University, 2024-2025
- Organizer, 7-person interdisciplinary speaker series on “The Body,” Cultural Life Program, Furman University, Sept 2023-April 2024
- Organizer and presenter, “Unpacking Barbie: A Conversation about the Summer’s Biggest Movie,” Cultural Life Program, Furman University, Sept 2023
- Presenter, “Queer Politics,” Cultural Life Program, Furman University, March 2024
- Organizer, Women’s History Month, “Using Mutual Aid, Intersectional Feminism to Build a Community-Based Business,” Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU), March 2023
- Presenter and co-organizer, “A Brief History of Abortion in America,” the Robert Nusbaum Center, American Association of University Women, and the GWSS Program, VWU, Sept 2022
- Organizer, Women’s History Month, Dr. Laura Puaca, “Betty Crocker and the Business of Blindness: Gender Disability, and Post World War II Consumer Culture,” VWU, March 2022
- Member, Faculty Standards and Welfare Committee, VWU, 2013-2015; 2020-2023
- Invited Speaker, Women’s History Month, “Pickets, Protests, and Purses in the Civil Rights Movement,” VWU, March 2021
- Member, Planning Committee, Africana Studies Program, VWU, 2019-2023
- Moderator, “Ask a Trans Person” Panel, Equality Virginia and VWU Spectrum, 2019
- Member, Women and Gender Studies Advisory Board, VWU, 2012-2021
- Batten Honors College Advisory Committee, VWU, 2018-2021
- Co-organizer, “Transgender Identity and Religion” Panel, VWU, 2018
- Member, Academic Affairs Reorganization Task Force, VWU, 2018–2019
- Member, Educational Programming Committee, VWU, 2016–2018
- Member and Steering Committee Representative, President’s Council for an Inclusive Community, VWU, 2014-2018
- Faculty Advisor, Spectrum (LGBTQ+ student organization), VWU, 2015-2023
- Reviewer, Mednick Memorial Grant Applications, VWU, 2018

- Co-organizer, campus-wide event, “Transgender Rights: Building Bridges Across Communities,” VWU, 2017
- Member, Internship Task Force Committee, VWU, 2016-2017
- Panelist, “An Equal Fight for Reproductive Freedom,” Women’s Resource Center, Virginia League for Planned Parenthood, and Black Lives Matter 757, VWU, 2016
- Organizer and Panelist, “Women and the Pill: Highlights of Student Research,” VWU, 2016
- Member, Institutional Review Board, VWU, 2015-2016
- Reviewer, Summer Faculty Development Grants, VWU, 2015-2017
- Organizer, campus-wide event, “Illegal Love: Tim Bostic on Politics, Religion and Marriage Equality,” VWU, 2014
- Member, Social Science Course Review Committee, VWU, 2013-2015
- Co-Organizer, Women’s Resource Center Undergraduate Research Symposium, VWU, 2013, 2014
- Organizer, campus-wide event, “Desegregation in Norfolk: A Student’s Perspective,” VWU, 2012
- Member, Women’s Forum, VWU, 2012-2023
- Member, Honors College Advisory Committee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Member, 2011-2012
- Member, Honors College Study Abroad Scholarship Committee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2011

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

- Director, Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program, Furman University, Aug 2023-Present
- Organizer, Inaugural Marian Strobel Endowed Lecture “Reclaiming Women’s Power” featuring Dr. Jacqueline Beatty, Women’s History Month, Furman University, 2026
- Search Committee Member, Open-Rank American Historian, History Department, 2025-2026
- Coordinator, Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies Program, Virginia Wesleyan University, 2021-2023
- Content Advisor, Senior Theses, History Department, VWU, 2012-2019
- Internship Coordinator, History Department, VWU, 2015-2018
- Content Observer, Pre-Service Social Studies Teachers, VWU, 2013-2018

- Co-founder, VWU Oral Histories of Hampton Roads Project, 2013-2016

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Organization of American Historians
- Berkshires Conference of Women Historians
- American Historical Association
- American Studies Association
- National Women's Studies Association

NATIONAL MEDIA

- “The Purse is More than a Fashion Statement,” *Ms. Magazine*, Aug 2025
- “Not Just a Fashion Statement: How Purses are Used as Political Tools,” *Literary Hub*, Aug 2025
- “10 Books to Read this Pride Month,” *Oxford University Press Blog*, June 2025
- “The Things She Carried,” review, *Forward Reviews* and *Library Journal*, May 2025
- “Teaching Sex to Empower, Not to Control: Sex ed in Sweden vs. South Carolina,” *Ms. Magazine*, July 2025
- “The First Self-Proclaimed Drag Queen Was a Formerly Enslaved Man,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, by Cari Shane, Jun 9, 2023
- “The Renaissance of Feminist Bookstores” by Kathleen Casey, *Ms. Magazine*, Jan 21, 2023
- “Teaching the Deep Roots of Abortion in America,” by Kathleen Casey, *Ms. Magazine*, Nov 30, 2022
- “What was fun?” by Rachel Sugar, *Vox*, Oct 26, 2020
- “Historic Virginia Lesbian Bar to be turned into dog park.” *The Washington Blade*, Nov 13, 2018
- “Pop History.” *Inside Higher Ed.com*, Jan 5, 2015

PODCAST INTERVIEWS

- Articles of Interest, forthcoming 2026
- Charis Circle, Sept 2025
- Curious by Nature, Aug 2025

- Newswise, Aug 2025
- New Books Network, Aug 2025

LOCAL MEDIA

- “The Things Dr. Kathleen Casey Carries,” Oct 2025, TOWN Magazine
- “Book highlights the fascinating history of the purse,” television appearance, *Fox Carolina*, Aug 2025
- Television Appearance, *Access Carolina*, Aug 2025
- “Women’s History Month: Exploring the ‘gendered origins’ of the hunger strike,” *Furman News*, March 21, 2024
- “How Furman created a rare collection of 800 ‘queer zines’ – and counting,” *The Post and Courier*, Feb 2024
- “Local news covers queer zines collection at Furman,” *Furman News*, Feb 2024
- “Barbie CLP explores diverse perspectives of cultural phenomenon,” *Furman News*, Sept 2023
- “A Century of Votes for Women,” co-authored with Dr. Leslie Caughell, *Coastal Virginia Magazine*, May 2020
- “It’s in the Bag,” *Marlin Magazine*, Fall 2016, 21
- “History Professor Receives Mednick Award,” VWU Website, Jun 2016
- “Who’s That Girl?” *Marlin Magazine*, 2015, 28-30
- “Publisher's Desk: New Book by Kathleen Casey,” VWU Website, Sept 2015
- “CNY Books and Authors,” *Syracuse.com*, Sept 2015
- “Marriage Equality for all a Reality,” *The Marlin Chronicle*, Nov 2014
- “Tim Bostic to Speak at Virginia Wesleyan,” VWU Website, Oct 2014
- “Keeping History Alive,” Faculty Feature, VWU Website, Nov 2013; *Marlin Magazine*, 2014