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Powerful Lesbian ACADEMICS

These are the researchers who changed the Ivory Tower and are now changing the world. By Rachel Pepper



WITH SEVERAL CURVE contributors and editors working inside academia by day (the author of this list is, in fact, the coordinator of LGBT studies at Yale), it seemed timely to profile some top lesbian professors as part of our ongoing “10 Powerful Lesbians” series. But as the nominations began to pour in from electronic mailing lists and academic queer peers, it became clear that a scholarly chord had been struck and that we couldn’t just stop at 10. So out of hundreds of nominations, how did we select our top 20? It wasn’t easy, but we started with some obvious tried-and-true pioneers (there are more than you’d think), and then included some outstanding professional women at the summit of their careers. To level the playing field, we also added in some rising young academic rockstars who make the halls of higher learning such exciting places to be. In their own way, each of these women possesses a certain special something that just makes them stand out from a powerhouse field of contenders. Through some combination of teaching, writing, research and leadership, all these women are changing the face of academia, a world that, until recently, has been run exclusively by straight white men.

Our top 20 (profiled here in alphabetical order) is an impressive list of scholars, all of whom are equally deserving of our accolades. We also know that without lesbian administrators and support staff, universities simply could not run. So our special commendations go out in honor and recognition of all the lesbian and bi-dyke administrative, technical, clerical and service workers who keep academia functioning and improving every day, from the inside out. No doubt we’ve missed countless women (if you’d like to see even more honorable mentions, go to curvemag.com) and we haven’t even begun to tackle all of you K-12 teachers (but it’s in the works), so please tell us who we missed this time around (by writing to assistanteditor@curvemag.com) and you may see them in our pages soon enough.

Special thanks to the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education and the Q Studies List Serv for their thoughtful suggestions.

1 Sara Ahmed Goldsmiths, University of London



Sara Ahmed writes that she works at “the intersection between feminist theory, critical race and postcolonial theory and queer studies.” In academic code talk, this is a fancy way of

saying she writes about everything that’s currently important. A professor of race and cultural studies in the department of media and communications at Goldsmiths, University of London, Ahmed is a prolific author. In addition to contributing to many books and periodicals, she has written and edited seven of her own books in the last 10 years. The most recent, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, which was published in 2006, explores “how orientations affect how bodies inhabit time and space,” and led one online reviewer to comment that “I never thought tables could be so interesting, but once you read this book, you will keep noticing them! And of course, the table becomes queer. ... This book makes furniture something to think about. Wow!” Ahmed is currently working on a book about happiness, and another on diversity and racism in higher education.

2 M.V. Lee Badgett University of Massachusetts, Amherst

The field of economics is usually thought of as a man’s domain, but the intersection of economics and sexual orientation is M.V. Lee Badgett’s comfort zone. Badgett



is the author of *Money, Myths and Change: The Economic Lives of Lesbians and Gay Men*, and is a professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She’s the research director of the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies, a national think tank focusing on policy issues related to sexual orientation. Often examining labor market discrimination resulting from factors like orientation, race, gender and family status, Badgett also explores the controversial concept of gay affluence, which she discredits. Another topic that she has been writing on is the economic effects of same-sex marriage. Knowing that some lesbian professors are watching out for our monetary interests—and indeed making this their life’s work—is something we can all feel good about.

3 Carolyn R. Bertozzi University of California, Berkeley

In academia, women in science are finally beginning to get their due. One such accomplished scientist is UC Berkeley’s Carolyn Bertozzi, whose honors and awards could fill this whole page. Currently, this researcher in cellular immunology is the T.Z. and Irmgard Chu Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, and a professor of molecular and cell biology at Berkeley. She’s also been the recipient of the Ernst Schering Prize and a MacArthur Foundation Award, popularly known as a “genius award,” and recently she received the 2007 GLBT Scientist of the Year Award, given annually by the National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals (NOGLSTP) for her “outstanding achievements in applying chemistry to help answer biological questions related to human health and disease.”



4 Judith Butler University of California, Berkeley

The queen of queer theory, Butler is probably the best-known lesbian academic working today. Her first book, *Gender Trouble*, published in 1990, set the tone for her many works to follow, and remains a classic in its field. Although many find Butler’s dense, poststructuralist writing hard to read, her work is critically important in philosophical and theoretical circles. Butler received her Ph.D. from Yale and returned to receive its prestigious Brudner Prize for excellence in 2004, joining the ranks of esteemed academics such as Lillian



Faderman and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Other notable books by Butler include *Undoing Gender* and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex.”*

Butler has become such a well-known cultural figure in academia that there have been entire zines written about her. A documentary film about her life, her work and her philosophy, *Judith Butler: Philosophical Encounters of the Third Kind*, was released in 2007.

5 Tammy Rae Carland California College of the Arts



How many lesbian academics can say they’ve run a record label specializing in dyke queercore musicians?

Credit Carland, of the now-defunct Mr. Lady Records, with this amazing first. Carland started the label with her then-girlfriend, musician Kaia Wilson, and it became home to such acts as the Butchies and Le Tigre. Carland’s career path and output will strike a chord with a new generation of lesbian artists. She’s been featured in *Ms.* magazine, and included in *Harmony Hammond’s Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History*; she has exhibited her artwork at the Los Angeles LACE gallery and her films have screened at the Frameline San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, among many other exhibitions and festivals. An experimental filmmaker, photographer and video artist, Carland has been an associate professor in the photography department at California College of the Arts since 2002.

6 Cathy Cohen University of Chicago

Cathy Cohen has long been an advocate for communities of color, both as a writer and as an academic. A former director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago, a founding board member of the Audre Lorde Project in New York, and a former board member of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Cohen has won many awards, including a Robert Wood Johnson Investigator’s Award and a Ford Foundation research award. From 1993 to 2000 Cohen was a professor at Yale. She was the third African American woman to receive tenure there and the first to receive it in the social sciences. She also founded Yale’s Center for the Study of Race, Inequality, and Politics. Cohen is the author of *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* and is never shy about proclaiming her dual identity as an African American woman and a lesbian. Cohen is currently a professor of political science at the University of Chicago.



7 Ann Cvetkovich University of Texas, Austin

A shining example of a lesbian academic in her prime, Ann Cvetkovich is an associate professor of English and women's and gender studies at the University of Texas, Austin, and the chair of the LGBTQ/Sexualities Research Cluster at the University of Texas. She is the author of two books, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture and Victorian Sensationalism* and *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Culture*, and has contributed to many other books and periodicals. With Ann Pellegrini, Cvetkovich edited "Public Sentiments," a special issue of *The Scholar and the Feminist Online*, and is the co-editor of the influential queer academic journal *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. She's currently working on two articles, one on the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and utopian communities, and another on Alison Bechdel's book *Fun Home*, and her new book project is on the topic of depression. Cvetkovich is also the long-term partner of Two Nice Girls' ex-front woman Gretchen Phillips, making these two a star-studded pair indeed. And rare proof that academia and pop culture can occasionally, and happily, coexist.



8 Jill Dolan University of Texas, Austin



A pioneer in the field of lesbian theater, Dolan has been the president of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and the former executive director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the Graduate Center of

the City University of New York; she has written several books, including the classic *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* and the recently published *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theatre*. Her latest book projects include writing a critical memoir entitled *From Flannel to Fleece: A Lesbian of a Certain Age*, and editing a collection of feminist plays. Dolan is also tackling more contemporary topics in her writing, including an essay on *The L Word*, and she even has a blog. The future of lesbian feminist theater has never looked brighter.

9 Lisa Duggan New York University

Lisa Duggan was repeatedly recommended by her peers; one colleague called her an "outstanding, groundbreaking, lesbian queer studies professor, historian, and activist," adding that "her works and sharp analyses of cultural politics, neoliberalism, and sexual dissent have all been incredibly influential in the field of LGBT studies." A professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University, and the director of its American Studies Program, Duggan has done extensive research in gender and LGBT studies, teaching courses that deconstruct whiteness in



the U.S. and examine critical and queer historiographies. Her books include *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence and American Modernity* and *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture*.

10 Anne Fausto-Sterling Brown University

One of the most outstanding lesbian scientists, Anne Fausto-Sterling may be most renowned for her work in the field of human gender development and sexuality. Her books, *Sexing the Body* and *Myths of Gender*, are classics, and articles she has written, including one in the quarterly *The Sciences* entitled "The Five Sexes," have inspired much debate on the topic of gender difference, and have renewed interest in the subject of people born intersex. Heavily referenced for her work on childhood gender development, and body and cultural differences, Fausto-Sterling has won numerous awards, including a National Science Foundation Grant, a Mellon Fellowship from the Wellesley Center for Research on Women, and a Women of Distinction Award from the City University of New York. A professor of biology and gender studies for more than 30 years, Fausto-Sterling married the playwright Paula Vogel in Truro, Mass., in 2004.



11 Gayatri Gopinath New York University

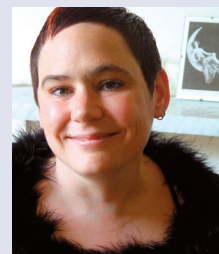


The face of academia is changing. Not only is it no longer solely the terrain of straight white men—the fact is women of color are responsible for some of the most exciting research to emerge from the academy today. No one stands

out more than Gayatri Gopinath, who is currently an associate professor in the department of social and cultural analysis at New York University. She is best known for her book, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, published by Duke University Press in 2005, which an online reviewer called "the most important book of queer South Asian identity politics in the 21st century." A specialist in postcolonial literatures, feminist and queer theory, and popular culture, especially pertaining to the Asian diaspora, Gopinath has written extensively about Deepa Mehta's lesbian-themed movie *Fire*, and how alternative sexualities are encoded in movies from queer Bollywood.

12 Clare Hemmings, Gender Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science

As stylish as she is accomplished, this young Brit has worked extensively on the significance of bisexuality in sexuality studies, a subject reflected in two of her books, *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity, and Desire*, and *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*. A forthcoming book, *Telling Feminist Stories*, explores another interest of hers, feminist historiography and epistemology. Hemmings is a senior lecturer in gender studies and gender theory at the London School of Economics, and was the co-chair of the U.K. and Ireland's Feminist and Women's Studies Association from 2002 to 2004.



13 Nan Hunter Brooklyn Law School



When you think of the quintessential lesbian professor, you could easily imagine someone just like Nan Hunter. Professorial yet approachable, impressively credentialed and ambitious, always tirelessly working for lesbian and gay legal rights, and yet looking like someone you'd love to chat with over tea, Hunter is an obvious choice for our top 20. A professor of law at Brooklyn Law School since 1990, Hunter also founded and became the first director of the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights and AIDS Project, an incredibly important civil rights organization for our community. She co-authored the influential casebook *Sexuality, Gender and the Law*, now in its second edition, as well as *The Power of Procedure*, which is used in many law school classrooms. Hunter has been widely published in the areas of state regulation of sexuality and gender, and health law and procedure, in addition to speaking publicly and writing on same-sex marriage. She served as deputy general counsel for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1993 to 1996 and received a 2000 Civil Rights Pioneer award from amFAR. Now if we could only get her appointed to the Supreme Court.

14 Esther Newton, Purchase College, State University of New York

A true pioneer in LGBT studies, long-esteemed researcher and writer Esther Newton has penned some of the most groundbreaking books on queer history. These include *Cherry Grove*, *Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town* and *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. She has won the Ruth Benedict Prize from the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists, among other honors, and is reportedly currently working on a memoir called *My Butch Career*. She is a professor of anthropology, women's studies and American culture at Purchase College. In addition to being widely recognized for her landmark academic work, she is, as one peer wrote, "absolutely adored" by her students.



15 Trinity Ordonia City College of San Francisco

Not many lesbian academics can claim that they are ordained ministers (in the Church of Natural Grace), cult survivors and teachers of self-healing through meditation and guided imagery. An instructor at several Bay Area colleges with accessible admission policies and affordable tuition, such as City College of San Francisco, Ordonia is a longtime activist for civil rights and queer rights, and has long-standing memberships in various organizations for Asian Pacific Islander women. She has contributed to many anthologies and exhibits about Asian Pacific Islander women, and is the author of *Coming Out Together: An Ethnohistory of the Asian and Pacific Islander Queer Women's and Transgendered People's Movement of San Francisco*. Ordonia is also the former associate director of the Lesbian Health Research Center at the University of California, San Francisco, and gives workshops for women who are survivors of trauma, including incest and rape.



16 Ann Pellegrini Tisch School for the Arts

It wasn't easy picking just one academic in the field of queer theology, but we knew we couldn't go wrong with Ann Pellegrini. This associate professor of performance studies and religious studies has a diverse CV overflowing with remarkable accomplishments, including books, articles and panel appearances at both queer events and mainstream religious conferences, on topics like radical gay sex, the plays of Paula Vogel, Jewish performativity, Madonna, homophobia and faith, and sexuality. Her most recent book is *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance*, and in 2006 she was awarded the Fulbright-Freud Visiting Scholar of Psychoanalysis grant. Past awards for Pellegrini have included the Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities, and the Arnold Grossman Award for Outstanding Faculty/Staff Services to the LGBT Community from New York University in 2005.



17 Tiina Rosenberg Lund University, Sweden

Tiina Rosenberg is not only accomplished in academia, writing extensively on the performing arts, queer theory and feminism, but she is also one of the



co-founders of the Feminist Initiative and of the Swedish feminist party. Her books include (these titles are in translation) *Desiring Pants*, *Queer Feminist Agenda*, *Gender Is Burning!*, *L-Word: Where Have All the Lesbians Gone?* and a collection of Judith Butler's texts in Swedish. Rosenberg is a professor of gender studies and the director of the Centre for Gender Studies at Lund University in Sweden, and proves without a doubt that our international sisters are more than pulling their weight in queering up the canon.

18 Ronni Sanlo University of California, Los Angeles



Ronni Sanlo may not be a household name in the lesbian community, but she's a great example of how one hard-working, inspired individual

can drastically change the educational climate for LGBT people. Sanlo is currently the director of the UCLA Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Campus Resource Center and the founder of the National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education, an important networking group for queer professionals in higher education. She currently serves on the national board of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education and is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*. The author of books dealing specifically with queer college students, including *Working with LGBT College Students: A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators* and *New Directions in Student Services: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Student Affairs*, Sanlo has done groundbreaking work for both queer college students and educators, ultimately benefiting the entire educational system.

19 Paula Vogel Brown University



Paula Vogel is an award-winning playwright. She won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for drama for *How I Learned to Drive*, which sensitively explores the relationship between a teenage girl and the uncle who molests her. Vogel also

won an Obie in 1992 for her play *The Baltimore Waltz*, which deals with AIDS, and received the 2004 Award for Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is currently the Adele Kellenberg Seaver Professor of Creative Writing at Brown University. She inspires the next generation through her teaching, and as an accomplished writer she shows them that openly queer playwrights can indeed make it on Broadway.

20 Karina Walters University of Washington

Karina Walters is now living among the Maori in New Zealand on a much-coveted, year-long Fulbright Senior Scholar Award. This came after she spent the last year in New Zealand as an Honorary Visiting Scholar, also working with the Maori. Her list of awards and accomplishments includes an Excellence in Science award from Women of Color Empowered, a Professor of the Year award from the Columbia University School of Social Work, and an Association for Women in Psychology 2002 Women of Color Psychologies Award. She is also a member of the Choctaw Nation. Her dissertation for her Ph.D. in social welfare was entitled *Urban American Indian Identity and Psychological Wellness*. Besides working with the Maori, she has researched, written and taught extensively on the cultural, historical and social factors affecting indigenous peoples, whose health problems include diabetes, HIV/AIDS, mental health and substance abuse. An advocate for American Indians and Native Alaskans, as well as Two-Spirit people, Walters shows that the work academics do is more than just pontification on dusty old topics—it can, and does, save lives.



HONORABLE MENTIONS

These women—top contenders all—also deserve a printed nod for their exemplary work both in and out of academia. All are still working, if not still teaching.

1. Sarah Bay-Cheng,
State University of
New York, Buffalo

2. Charlotte Bunch,
Rutgers University

3. Melinda Chen,
University of California,
Berkeley

4. Lillian Faderman,
California State
University, Fresno

5. Nikki Giovanni,
Virginia Polytechnic
Institute and State
University

**6. Jacqueline
Goldsby,** University
of Chicago

7. Nadine Hubbs,
University of Michigan

8. Catherine Lord,
University of
California, Irvine

9. Heather Love,
University of
Pennsylvania

10. Sharon Marcus,
Columbia University

**11. Joanne
Meyerowitz,**
Yale University

12. Adrienne Rich,
University of Illinois,
Urbana

**13. Eve Kosofsky
Sedgwick,** City
University of New York
Graduate Center

14. Amy Villarejo,
Harvard University

15. Kate Weston,
Harvard University

Funding Future Scholars



The Point Foundation awards scholarships each year to outstanding students from the LGBT community. The deserving winners not only get financial support, but also are assigned a mentor from their field of study. With 12 full-time staffers and a few part-timers, the Point Foundation has been awarding scholarships since 2001.

Ph.D. candidate Stacy Weibley is one of the latest to be awarded a scholarship. She is attending the Johns Hopkins University's School of Public Health on the Women's

Health Track. Her undergraduate work was completed at Colgate, her master's at American University. Her experience with the Point Foundation has been rewarding both financially and emotionally. The financial help was key. Though her previous academic work was completed with the help of merit scholarships, Weibley says, "It is difficult to find funding around the issues that I am studying now. I am doing my dissertation on internalized homophobia among lesbians and this is not something that is popular in public health; most of the students seek and receive government funding and, given the current administration, it is not something that I am likely to get funding for."

But more than that, the mentoring program has served her well. "I really needed a sense of family and community, and I needed the nurturing [Point provided]. I have a disconnect with my family in sad ways since I came out. The sense of family I have gained extends past the mentor relationship to the entire Point Foundation."

The program not only offers its scholars money and time, but puts them in touch with other scholars in the program—current and alumni—through events around the country.

"We think it's important that Point scholars stay in contact with each other. Our foundation is about scholars and we want to make sure that it stays like that and they are definitely connected," says Jennifer Kolmel, the communications and marketing manager at the Point Foundation.

Though the students will have to show they are active in the LGBT community—many started Gay Straight Alliances at their high schools and have a community service background—the disciplines they choose do not matter.

"It has always been our philosophy to have scholars in a wide range of interests and majors; we've even had a master of divinity student," says Kolmel.

Funding for the Point Foundation comes from a variety of places, from private donors to grants based on corporate partners that have named scholarships. They make a four-year commitment of \$25,000 per year. The named scholarships include Time Warner, HBO and MTVU.

Among the 2007 scholars are Amy Andre, Angela Clements, Lilia Espinoza, Kim Hackford-Peer, Kathryn Jerman, Tina Owen, Joelle Ruby Ryan and Emily Williams. For a full list of recipients and information on the Point Foundation, including how to donate or become a mentor, go to pointfoundation.org — Jenna V. Loceff