Congratulations to Assistant Professors Afsane Rezaei and Avery Edenfield, who were named inaugural Research Fellows at the Center for Intersectional Gender Studies and Research for 2020-2021.

The Research Fellows Program is designed to offer fellowships, grants, and co-sponsorships for faculty to pursue interdisciplinary, intersectional gender research, creative activities, and teaching. Along with financial support, Fellows will also receive mentoring throughout the year and be featured on the Center’s website and in a research showcase. The competitive research fellowship program, the first of its kind through the re-designed Center, is intended to promote intersectional gender research across the university.

Afsane Rezaei’s project addresses vernacular religious practices of Muslim Iranian women in the US, whose intersectional identities are formed in the diasporic context at the juncture of religion, ethnicity, class, and race. Bringing together theories and methods from folklore studies, diaspora studies, and anthropology of the Middle East and Islam, Rezaei explores how Iranian immigrant women negotiate Muslimness, Iranian-ness, and broader women’s issues in the context of the dominant discourses that implicate them, subverting certain overarching narratives while aligning with others. In addition, she also addresses how women’s shared space of religious performance and practice creates a context for the emergence of relational and intersectional modes of agency, and she argues for approaching agency beyond the dyadic individual/structure relation.

Avery Edenfield’s research centers on transgender ethics and communication. The project specifically considers medical literacy for the trans community, and highlights how the global pandemic of COVID-19 has significantly exacerbated healthcare inequalities for LGBT—and specifically trans—people around the world. In the wake of these difficulties, many trans individuals have turned to anonymous online communities for their source of directions on obtaining, administering, and monitoring hormone-replacement therapy. This project seeks to document these collaborations, as well as look for opportunities to advocate for better access to health care for trans individuals.

Congratulations to Professors Rezaei and Edenfield!

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