In 2015, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender lives have been in the mainstream cultural spotlight to an extent that is perhaps unprecedented. The fight for marriage equality (for better or worse) has been won. Caitlin Jenner built on (and whitewashed) the momentum of Laverne Cox and Janet Mock in making transgender a familiar household term in U.S. culture. Straight folks/allies feel informed on these topics and bring them up to their LGBTQ friends with glee, expecting us to meet their excitement with our own. Yet, as early as 1993, psychoanalytic feminist performance theorist Peggy Phelan raised concerns about the unintended complicity between progressive LGBTQ politics and conservative critics regarding an interest in greater visibility of non-heterosexual lives. In becoming more visible, as she (among others) has argued, queerness subjects itself to greater surveillance. Our lives are now radically available for conversation, yet there may be something coercive about these congratulatory conversations, something that assumes too much about how it feels to be in this particular spotlight, as if our role now is simply to agree that everything is better.

For this sponsored panel at SEWSA 2016, proposals are solicited for papers that examine the implications of these cultural shifts (and the political fronts they obscure) on the position of LGBTQ Studies within the field of Women’s and Gender Studies in the southeastern region of the United States. It is time to formulate fresh pedagogies, critical insights, and administrative philosophies to address the current moment of LGBTQ history and politics in the WGS classroom. Topics may address (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- How are LGBTQ concerns positioned within the institutional structure of our various colleges and universities? Who is responsible for that curriculum or those students? Is it housed in WGS (and, if so, does gender “closet” sexuality, as Cheshire Calhoun once proposed, or is the relationship harmonious, as contributors to the Feminist Studies W/G/S forum concluded in 2013)? Has the uptick in cultural conversation about LGBTQ politics resulted in a proliferation of events and classes, or in a retraction of institutional support (as in, “the work is done now”)?
- What can be done to consolidate the positive momentum created by mainstream cultural conversations without permitting that mainstream arena to set the terms of discussion? What does everyday life feel like in this period of important, yet limited change for LGBTQ students and faculty?
- What work remains to be done in exploring the intersection (or ampersand problem) of gender and sexuality?

Submit 200-word abstracts by November 20, 2015 to be considered for the LGBTQ Caucus panel. Papers not selected for the panel are automatically forwarded to the general conference selection committee for consideration.