PROGRAMME

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Inter-Disciplinary

Margaret Scaia

MN University of Calgary 2003
BSN University of British Columbia 1999
RN Selkirk College 1997


Monday, June 17, 2013
2:30PM
Human & Social Development Building, room A102f

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Mary Ellen Purkis, School of Nursing, UVic (Co-supervisor)
Dr. Lynne Marks, Department of History, UVic (Co-supervisor)
Dr. Annalee Lepp, Department of Women’s Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Sonya Grypma, School of Nursing, Trinity Western University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Michelle Wiebe, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic
Abstract

Changes in women’s relationship to caring labour, and changes in societal attitudes towards women as nurses during the period when they became union members and aspiring professionals, are revealed in thirty-seven oral history interviews with women who became nurses between 1958, a pivotal time in the development of the publicly funded health care system, and 1977, when the last residential school of nursing closed in Calgary. This study challenges the historiography that suggests that nursing programs of nursing in the 1960s and early 1970s were sites of unusual social regulation, and that nursing was a career choice that women made because of a lack of other more challenging or rewarding alternatives. This study also challenges assumptions that women in nursing were unaffected by the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s and instead passively accepted a position of gendered subservience at home and in the workplace. Instead, I argue that nurses skillfully balanced work and other social responsibilities, primarily domestic caregiving, and also were active, in unionization and professionalization in advance of other Canadian women workers. The ability of nurses to maintain a prominent position in health care, to advocate for the conditions needed to provide the best nursing care possible, while also fighting for improved working conditions and higher professional status is an impressive story of how women in these decades used gender, and class, as tools to enact social change. These efforts are all the more impressive when considered within the context of social opposition faced by nurses as they both resisted and conformed to expectations that their primary role was as wives and mothers. Nurses negotiated this challenging political terrain by framing their work in terms of its practical necessity and gendered suitability as women’s paid employment. In making these claims I position nursing and nursing education as a form of women’s labour that exemplifies employed women’s struggles to promote fairer wages, better working conditions, and access to the full benefits of economic and social citizenship for all women. This challenge to the prevailing assessment of nursing during this period establishes the main thesis of this dissertation.
Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships

2012  Nominated for the Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada Award
2012  University of Victoria Senior Instructor and Teaching Professor Scholarship Fund
2010-2011  Dorothy Kergin Endowment Fund
2010  Nominated for the Andy Farquharson Teaching Award, UVic School of Nursing
2009-2012  SSHRC 3-Year CGS D Scholarship
2009  Canadian Association for the History of Nursing (CAHN/ACHN) Margaret Allemang Scholarship
2008  BC History of Nursing Scholarship

Presentations


2011  AMS Nursing History Research Unit: “Storytelling and History: Encounters with Health.” Graduate History Student Workshop, Ottawa May 2011. SSHRC invited and funded workshop (article submitted for publication).


2010  Philosophy in the Nurse’s World: Politics of Nursing Practice – Banff, Alberta. Abstract Title: “Constructing Nursing Knowledge: Social, Political and Historical Dimensions.”
Publications

ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN REFEREED JOURNALS


2013 Scaia, M., & Young, L.E. (in press). “Writing History: Case Study of the University of Victoria School of Nursing” International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS
