



# WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

## The Graduate College announces a doctoral oral examination

Candidate: **Skylar Bre'z**  
For the degree of: Doctor of Philosophy  
Department: History

Title: **The Coalitions of National Women's History Month:  
Practicalities and Consequences**

Committee: Dr. Edwin Martini, Chair  
Dr. Mitch Kachun  
Dr. Susan Freeman

Time/Place: **Monday, March 8, 2021  
Noon to 2 p.m.  
Virtual meeting**

This study evaluates the practicalities and consequences of designating one month (March) out of the calendar year for the commemoration of women's history. In the 1970s and 1980s, national women's organizations such as the Women's Action Alliance (WAA) collaborated with the Smithsonian Institute and the Women's History Program at Sarah Lawrence College to build programs to increase awareness of women's history. Using an interdisciplinary approach grounded in feminist theory, media studies, and historical memory studies, this project contextualizes the commemoration through its connection to 1970s women's activism, explores its usefulness as a tool for building educational equity, and questions its contribution to the development of a collective historical narrative. The commemoration of Women's History Month sits in a critical space. Despite the benefits of annual public celebrations, women's history remains routinely undervalued. Celebration equates to empowerment. Yet, taught as an elective topic of History, given a public voice for only 31 days, power excludes its practice.