Sara McClelland is Assistant Professor of Women’s Studies and Psychology at the University of Michigan. She received her Ph.D in 2009 in Social/Personality Psychology from the Graduate Center, CUNY, where she was a Writing Across the Curriculum Fellow and a Fellow in the Women’s Studies Program.

In reflecting on her time at the Graduate Center, Professor McClelland sees the department’s attention to the historical and political nature of knowledge as central to her development as a scholar, activist, and citizen. At the Graduate Center, she says “you can be all of those things at once—those identities are intermingled with each other, and I’ve really come to appreciate that”. She recalls the first doctoral exam and the history log completed in the first year as important milestones, challenging her to think not only about the history of ideas but also the context within which ideas are developing.

In recent work, she has examined public policies concerning sex education, reproductive rights for minors, and the development of relational and sexual expectations in young adults. She recalls faculty being able to connect her with people deeply engaged in these issues, building a network of support for her research. From her own experience, it meant meeting with people from various think tanks, advocacy groups, lawyers, and other scholars in New York City. “It’s difficult to say exactly how it’s been influential, it’s like describing how to breathe”, she says about her time at the Graduate Center. To learn more about her current work, check out her lab website: http://progresslab.info/