

# Women's and Gender Studies

## *Interdisciplinary*

## Requirements

The major and concentration in Women's and Gender Studies offer students an opportunity to engage in two important and interrelated areas of study. Students will examine aspects of experiences that have traditionally been underrepresented (if not invisible) in academic studies--for example, the lives and works of women, the experiences of gays and lesbians. Students will also examine gender as a cultural phenomenon: as a system of ideas defining "masculinity" and "femininity" and delineating differences between "the sexes" as well as "normal" expressions of sexuality. In the process, students will encounter some fundamental methodologies of women's and gender studies, and work toward an increasingly rich understanding of gender as a social construction, one that intersects with class, race, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and sexual identity. In addition, students will explore the methods and concepts of women's and gender studies in a variety of academic disciplines, integrating, for instance, sociology, psychology, literature, the biological sciences, and art history.

From the debates between Wollstonecraft and Rousseau to the homosocial worlds of Walker's *The Color Purple* and Melville's *Moby-Dick*, from Barbara McClintock's work in genetics to the gendered symbolism of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, students will come to understand how questions of gender are deeply embedded in the liberal arts tradition.

### **The Major and Concentration**

The major and concentration encourage and enable students to take responsibility for their own learning. Toward this end, courses will invite students to participate in a range of collaborative work. This culminates in the Senior Colloquium, where students determine the content and intellectual direction of the course as a whole. Ultimately, students are encouraged to acquire a sophisticated insight into the consequences of the social construction of gender for both women and men, an insight that empowers them to engage and question the pervasive role of gender in their own lives and communities. Students construct their major by choosing courses from the offerings of both the Women's and Gender Studies Program and more than fifteen other departments and programs across the College.

### **First-Year and New Students**

WGS 111-Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies is a wide-ranging interdisciplinary course designed to help students develop a critical framework for thinking about questions relating to gender. Students will examine the historical development of gendered public and private spheres, the relation of biological sex to sociological gender, and the difference between sex roles and sexual stereotypes. They will attempt to understand how racism, heterosexism, and homophobia intersect with the cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity, and consider ways to promote more egalitarian gender

relations. Students are also encouraged to explore more specialized areas of gender studies in courses specifically designed for students at all levels, including first-year students. These include WGS 121, WGS 221, and WGS 232. Students completing WGS 111 can enroll in WGS 242 to explore gender studies in a more global context.

### **WGS Courses and Diversification Requirements**

Courses in the Women's and Gender Studies Program may count toward students' collegiate diversification requirements in either social sciences or humanities.

WGS 111 plus one other WGS course would count for either the social sciences requirement or the humanities requirement, based on the combination of courses. Pairings and their designations are as follows:

WGS 111 and WGS 121: Human Sexualities (Social Sciences)

WGS 111 and WGS 221: Gender and Film (Humanities)

WGS 111 and WGS 330: Feminist Theory (Social Sciences)

WGS 111 and WGS 331: Gender, Power and Knowledge: Research Practices (Social Sciences)

WGS 111 and WGS 232: Topics in Masculinity (Social Sciences)

WGS 111 and WGS 242: Transnational Feminisms (Social Sciences)

### **Requirements for the Major**

Credits: 6 units will be required for the major

#### **1. Introductory requirement: .5 unit**

WGS 111 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

#### **2. Mid-level requirements: 1 unit**

WGS 330 Feminist Theory

WGS 331 Gender, Power and Knowledge: Research Practices

#### **3. Diversity and globalization: 1 unit**

Students must take two courses that focus on the social and cultural issues of U.S. and/or world peripheral communities. Consult the director for a list of courses that may be applied to this requirement.

#### **4. Cluster: 2 units**

Majors will be required to declare in writing a cluster of related courses that will form the foundation of their major. These clusters might be largely disciplinary (Spanish area studies, English literature, psychology), or they might be interdisciplinary (sexuality, international studies, American studies, biosocial sexual study of gender). Upon supplying a justification and obtaining permission of the program director, students may count .5 unit of non-WGS courses toward this cluster requirement. Some examples of clusters chosen by majors include Women, Law, and Politics; Queer Theory; Women and Islam; Gender and the Environment; and Gender, Class, and the State.

## **5. Open electives: 1 unit.**

## **6. Senior Colloquium: .5 unit**

WGS 481 (Senior Colloquium) examines a topic central to feminist thought. It includes current feminist texts and incorporates multidisciplinary analyses of race, class, and sexuality, in addition to gender. The course culminates in a public presentation by colloquium members. Senior majors and concentrators will meet in the fall to design the colloquium, which will be offered spring semester.

## **7. Senior Exercise (see below)**

### **Senior Exercise**

The Senior Exercise for the major in women's and gender studies consists of:

1. Designing and planning the Senior Colloquium (WGS 481) in the fall.
2. Creating an annotated bibliography reflecting the specialization and cluster chosen by each student, due at the end of the fall semester. The annotated bibliography should be interdisciplinary and consist of the most relevant and current research applicable to the student's chosen interdisciplinary cluster. Accompanying the bibliography will be a five-page essay introducing the bibliography and discussing the state of the field as well as areas that warrant further research.
3. Passing the Senior Colloquium (WGS 481) in the spring.

### **Honors**

The major who wishes to participate in the Honors Program must have an overall GPA of 3.33, and 3.5 in the major. The candidate in honors will complete all requirements for the major as well as the Senior Exercise. He or she will take two semesters of independent study and will design and complete a research project. This project should integrate both feminist theory and methodologies, as well as the student's chosen disciplinary or interdisciplinary cluster. Each honors student will prepare an annotated bibliography on her or his chosen project during the fall term. After approval, the senior honors project will be undertaken in consultation with a project advisor.

We encourage students to think boldly and innovatively about the kinds of projects they undertake and about how those projects interact with and benefit their communities. Senior honors projects might include gender-focused sociological or historical studies undertaken locally; exhibitions, productions, or installations of gender-exploratory art, music, or theater; or political, social, and/or environmental service-oriented or activist work. Students will be closely mentored throughout their projects and, in the spring, will be evaluated by an external evaluator and by faculty in the program and in relevant disciplines. The evaluators will assess the strength of the students' overall work, as well as the strength of their self-designed, project-appropriate public presentations of that work.

### **Requirements for the Concentration**

Credits: 3 units of courses in women's and gender studies

1. Either WGS 330 (Feminist Theory) or WGS 331 (Gender, Power and Knowledge: Research Practices )
2. WGS 481 (Senior Colloquium). See description, above.
3. Electives: Four approved courses which must be spread over at least two divisions of the College. No more than 1 unit in a single department may count toward this requirement.

### **Transfer Credit Policy**

The Program in Women's and Gender Studies typically accepts transfer credits from other colleges and universities for courses that meet College requirements for transfer credit. We especially encourage students to take courses that are not regularly offered in our curriculum. We do not permit students to earn transfer credits through online evaluation or two-week special courses offered during winter breaks. All transfer credit must be approved by the program director.

## **Courses**

### **WGS 111 INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course will introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies, out of which some of the most innovative and challenging developments in recent scholarship are arising. It will provide students with critical frameworks for thinking about the social construction of gender at the personal and institutional levels. Emphasis will be placed on diverse women's significant contributions to knowledge and culture; to other areas of gender studies, including men's studies, family studies, and the study of sexuality; and to the intersections of various forms of oppression both within and outside of the U.S. The course will include both scholarly as well as personal texts, visual as well as written text. Offered every semester.

### **WGS 121 HUMAN SEXUALITIES**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course is designed to help students develop a critical framework for thinking and writing about issues related to sexual orientation. The course will take a broad view, examining sexuality from legal, psychological, biological, cultural, ethical, philosophical, and phenomenological frameworks. We will look at the emerging fields of the history of sexuality and queer theory, out of which some of the most innovative and challenging developments in modern cultural studies are arising. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

### **WGS 150 GENDER AND POPULAR CULTURE**

*Credit: 0.5 QR*

In this class we will examine how popular culture (e.g., media) represents gender through making observations, reading background theory, examining content analysis research, and conducting some of

our own research. We will examine the extent to which popular culture depicts gender-stereotyped behavior, the content of the gender stereotypes, the possible reasons why stereotypes are portrayed, and the likely effects of these stereotypes on the behavior of individuals and the structure of society. To the extent that it is possible, we will examine the intersection of stereotypes about gender with those associated with race/ethnicity, social class, age, and sexuality. This course satisfies the quantitative reasoning requirement because students will learn about descriptive statistics and put them to use by conducting their own content analysis (in a small group) and presenting and writing about the results of their research. There is also a service learning component to the course in that students will develop a media literacy lesson for high school students based on what they learn about their topic. The lesson could potentially be used by the DELTA Project of Mount Vernon in their efforts to prevent intimate partner violence and sexual violence (if applicable). This course satisfies a requirement in the Women's and Gender Studies major and concentration. This course is designed for first-year students. No prerequisite.

Instructor: Murnen

### **WGS 221 GENDER AND FILM**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course explores the representation and construction of gender in and through film. Adopting both an historical and theoretical approach, we will focus on how masculinity and femininity, in their various forms and combinations, are signified, how the gender of both the character and the spectator is implicated in the cinematic gaze, and how gender characterizations inform and reflect the larger culture/society surrounding the film. A wide variety of cinematic traditions will be discussed, and, although Hollywood films will form the base of the course, other national and regional cinemas will be explored, through both the screening of full-length films and numerous excerpts of others. No prerequisite. Note: This course requires attendance at weekly film showings in addition to regular class meetings; students will register for two class periods, one of which will be used for screening films. Offered every other year.

### **WGS 232 TOPICS IN MASCULINITY**

*Credit: 0.5*

Through focus on a specific topic, this course will explore how men's lives are shaped by and shape the gendered social order. Macro and micro perspectives will guide discussions focusing on how men behave in particular contexts and how they perceive themselves, other men, and women in diverse situations. Specific topics investigating the production of masculinities will take into account the interplay among the cultural, interpersonal, and individual layers of social life while considering how men's efforts are enabled or constrained by key socially relevant characteristics (primarily age, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation) through investigations, for instance, of particular sites (e.g., playgrounds, work space, home, schools, athletic venues, prisons). The topic for 2014-15 will be fraternities.

## **WGS 242 TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course examines the impact of globalization on feminist discourses that describe the cross-cultural experiences of women. Transnational feminist theories and methodologies destabilize Western feminisms, challenging notions of subjectivity and place and their connections to experiences of race, class, and gender. The course builds on four key concepts: development, democratization, cultural change, and colonialism. Because transnational feminisms are represented by the development of women's global movements, the course will consider examples of women's global networks and the ways in which they destabilized concepts like citizenship and rights. We will also examine how transnational feminisms have influenced women's productions in the fields of literature and art. Key questions include: How does the history of global feminisms affect local women's movements? What specific issues have galvanized women's movements across national and regional borders? How do feminism and critiques of colonialism and imperialism intersect? What role might feminist agendas play in addressing current global concerns? How do transnational feminisms build and sustain communities and connections to further their agendas? Prerequisite: WGS 111 or permission of instructor. Offered every other year.

## **WGS 330 FEMINIST THEORY**

*Credit: 0.5*

In this course, we will read both historical and contemporary feminist theory with the goal of understanding the multiplicity of feminist approaches to women's experiences, the representation of women, and women's relative positions in societies. Theoretical positions that will be represented include liberal feminism, cultural feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, socialist feminism, and poststructuralist feminism. In addition, we will explore the relationship of these theories to issues of race, class, sexual preference, and ethnicity through an examination of the theoretical writings of women of color and non-Western women. Prerequisite: Any WGS course, any approved departmental course, or permission of instructor. Offered every year.

## **WGS 331 GENDER, POWER, AND KNOWLEDGE: RESEARCH PRACTICES**

*Credit: 0.5*

This class will examine feminist critiques of dominant methodologies and theories of knowledge creation in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. It will focus on the following questions: How do we know something? Who gets to decide what counts as knowledge? Who is the knower? In answering these questions this class will explore how power is exercised in the production of knowledge, how the norms of objectivity and universalism perpetuate dominance and exclusion, why women and other minority groups are often seen as lacking epistemic authority, and what it means to have knowledge produced from a feminist standpoint. Participants in the class will learn a variety of methods and use these methods in a group research project. In addition, we will discuss various ethical issues that feminist researchers often encounter and what responsibilities feminist researchers have to the broader political community.

Prerequisite: Any WGS course, any approved departmental course, or permission of instructor. Offered every other year.

### **WGS 481 SENIOR COLLOQUIUM**

*Credit: 0.5*

The senior colloquium is organized around a theme determined by senior majors and concentrators in consultation with the instructor during the semester prior to the beginning of the course. Previous topics include "Women and Madness," "The Politics of the Bathroom," and "Gender and Tourism." Prerequisite: WMNS/WGS 330 or 331 or permission of instructor. Offered every spring.

### **WGS 493 INDIVIDUAL STUDY**

*Credit: 0.25-0.5*

Individual study enables students to examine an area not typically covered by courses regularly offered in the program. Typically, such students are juniors or seniors who have sufficient research and writing skills to work very independently. The course can be arranged with a faculty member in any department but must conform to the usual requirements for credit in the program: gender is a central focus, and the course draws on feminist theory and/or feminist methodologies. The amount of work should be similar to that in any other 400-level course. To enroll, a student should first contact a faculty member and, in consultation with that professor, develop a proposal. The proposal, which must be approved by the program director, should provide: a brief description of the course/project (including any previous classes that qualify the student), a preliminary bibliography or reading list, an assessment component (what will be graded and when), and major topical areas to be covered during the semester. The student and faculty member should plan to meet approximately one hour per week or the equivalent, at the discretion of the instructor. Proposals should be planned well in advance, preferably the semester before the proposed project.

### **WGS 497 SENIOR HONORS**

*Credit: 0.5*

The major who wishes to participate in the honors program must have an overall GPA of 3.33 and a GPA of 3.5 in the major. The candidate in honors will complete all requirements for the major, the Senior Exercise, and two semesters of independent study, and will design and complete a research project. This project should integrate both feminist theory and methodologies as well as the student's chosen disciplinary or interdisciplinary cluster. Each honors student will prepare an annotated bibliography on her or his chosen project midway through the fall semester. After approval, the senior honors project will be undertaken in consultation with a project advisor.

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service-oriented or activist work. Students will be closely mentored throughout their projects and, in the spring, will be evaluated by an external evaluator and by faculty in the program and in relevant disciplines. The evaluators will assess the strength of the students' overall work, as well as the strength of their self-designed, project-appropriate public presentations of that work.

### **WGS 498 SENIOR HONORS**

*Credit: 0.5*

See the course description for WGS 497.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSES THAT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS CONCENTRATION:**

ANTH 350: Human Sexuality and Culture  
ARHS 375: Topics in Renaissance and Baroque Art  
BIOL 103: Biology in Science Fiction  
BIOL 104: Biology of Female Sexuality  
CLAS 130: Classical Mythology  
ECON 378: Economics of Women and Work Seminar  
ENGL 210: Proper Ladies and Women Writers  
ENGL 214: Gender Benders  
ENGL 223: Writing Medieval Women  
ENGL 240: Early Eighteenth-Century Literature  
ENGL 254: Literary Women: Nineteenth-Century British Literature  
ENGL 265: Postcolonial Literature  
ENGL 280: American Literary Modernism  
ENGL 281: Fictions in Black  
ENGL 288: African-American Literature  
ENGL 313: Land, Body, Place in Literature and Film  
ENGL 316: Postcolonial Poetry  
ENGL 339: The Restoration on Stage and Screen  
ENGL 369: Canadian Literature and Culture  
ENGL 373: Literary Amazons: Nineteenth-Century U.S. Women Writers  
ENGL 378: Race in the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination  
ENGL 381: Another America: Narratives of the Hemisphere  
ENGL 386: Toni Morrison  
ENGL 388: Studies in Twentieth-Century African American Literature  
ENGL 414: Literature and Sexuality: Surrealism  
ENGL 419: Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction and Film Noir  
ENGL 453: Jane Austen  
ENGL 461: Virginia Woolf  
ENGL 469: Atwood and Ondaatje  
ENGL 488: Richard Wright and Toni Morrison



GERM 323: German Women Writers  
GERM 365: Politics and Gender in German Cinema after 1990  
HIST 208: U.S. Women's History  
HIST 232: Modern European Women's History  
HIST 236: Modern Germany: Gender, Race, and Class  
HIST 341: African Women in Film and Fiction  
HIST 370: Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East  
HIST 373: Women of the Atlantic World  
HIST 452: Women, Gender, and State in East Asia  
MUSC 303: Music and Gender  
PSCI 380: Gender and Politics  
PSYC 327: Cross-Cultural Psychology  
PSYC 346: Psychology of Women  
PSYC 425: Research Methods to Study Gender  
RLST 103: First-Year Seminar: Encountering Religion: Women and Religion  
RLST 328: Women in Christianity  
RLST 329: Christian Mysticism  
SOCY 225: Notions of Family  
SOCY 231: Issues of Gender and Power  
SOCY 232: Sexual Harassment: Normative Expectations and Legal Questions  
SOCY 241: Sociology of Gender  
SOCY 250: Systems of Stratification  
SOCY 421: Gender Stratification  
SOCY 422: Topics in Social Stratification  
SOCY 423: Women, Health, and Medicine  
SOCY 425: Gender and the Welfare State  
SOCY 463: Intersectional Theory  
SPAN 371: Gender, Identity, and Power in Women's Literature