

Women's and Gender Studies

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The women's and gender studies major is interdisciplinary, offering 66 courses in 15 programs and departments. Women's and gender studies courses enable students to understand changing social patterns and the effects of institutions and culture on behavior. Courses explore how gender shapes social roles and identities as well as the function of race, class, and sexuality in the experience of gender within and across cultures. The major prepares students for a variety of professional and graduate schools as well as positions in corporations, government agencies, and service industries.

Requirements for the Major

Section I: Core Courses

WGS 200/ Women, Culture and Society: WGS 200 is an entry level course that introduces students to the discipline of women's studies (this requirement may be waived for students who have taken two or more WGS courses before becoming a major).

Gender in Global Perspectives (either 200 or 300 level)—A requirement that may be fulfilled by courses that examine feminist issues and theories in a global context. Choose one from the following:

WGS 260, AAS 280/Africana Women in Historical Perspective

WGS 360, LIT 334/Literature by Latinas and Latin-American Women

WGS 375/Global Feminisms

WGS 376, LIT 316/Global Women Writers

WGS 380, HON 338/Gender and Democracy

WGS 381, ANT 311/Women and Migration

(*prerequisites:* SOC 101, ANT 110 or WGS 200)

WGS 325/Feminist Theories (*prerequisite:* at least one WGS course)

WGS 399/Field Study in Women's Studies (*prerequisite:* at least two WGS courses)

WGS 495/Senior Seminar (*prerequisite:* WGS 325)

Section II

Additional WGS courses: Five courses

Section III

Five courses of the 10 in the major must be at a level of 300 or above.

Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Standards

Every major program at the College has set standards for allowing students to remain in that program, to transfer within the College from one program to another, and to graduate from a program. The following are the standards for women's and gender studies.

Minimum grades are noted in parentheses:

- Retention in the program is based on the following performance standards in these "critical content courses": WGS 200/Women Culture and Society (C).
- Graduation requires a GPA of 2.0, in Women's and Gender Studies courses and overall.

Women's and Gender Studies Major Course Sequence

First Year

Academic Writing 102 (if required)
FSP/First Seminar
WGS 200/Woman, Culture, and Society
Two WGS Options (by advisement)
Liberal Learning courses

Second Year

Gender in Global Perspective—Choose One:
WGS 375/Global Feminisms
WGS 376/Global Women Writers
WGS 380/Gender and Democracy
WGS 260/Africana Women in Historical Perspective
WGS 360/Literature by Latinas and Latin-American Women
WGS 311/Women and Migration
Two WGS Options (by advisement)
Liberal Learning courses

Third Year

WGS 325/Feminist Theories
WGS Option (by advisement)
Liberal Learning courses
Electives

Fourth Year

WGS 399/Field Study
WGS 495/Senior Seminar
Liberal Learning courses
Electives

Requirements for the Minor

The minor consists of five courses as follows:
WGS 200/Women, Culture, and Society (may be waived at discretion of program director)
Four more WGS courses or courses from list of options below.

Women in Learning and Leadership

Women in Learning and Leadership (W.I.L.L.) is a curricular and co-curricular, certificate-bearing program designed to develop leadership skills and experience. W.I.L.L. provides active learning opportunities that empower women as leaders and fosters a deeper understanding of women's roles and contributions to society. Successful completion of W.I.L.L. results in a women's and gender studies minor.

Requirements for W.I.L.L.

WGS 200/Women, Culture, and Society (W.I.L.L. section): This is an introductory level course that introduces students to the discipline of women's studies. In the W.I.L.L. section there will be special emphasis on women and leadership.

Gender in Global Perspectives (either 200 or 300 level)—A requirement that may be fulfilled by courses that examine feminist issues and theories in a global context. Choose one from the following:

WGS 260, AAS 280/Africana Women in Historical Perspective

WGS 360, LIT 334/Literature by Latinas and Latin-American Women

WGS 375/Global Feminisms

WGS 376, LIT 316/Global Women Writers

WGS 380, HON 338/Gender and Democracy

WGS 381, ANT 311/Women and Migration

(prerequisites: SOC 101, ANT 110 or WGS 200)

WGS 325, WGST 350/Feminist Theories

(prerequisite: at least one WGS course)

WGS 399, WGST 497/Field Study in Women's Studies

(prerequisite: at least two WGS courses)

WGS 496/Women's Leadership and Social Change

(prerequisite: WGS 200 and WGS 325)

This is an activism course that will focus on a class project to be implemented and pursued throughout the semester.

COURSES

WGS 200/Women, Culture, and Society

1 course unit

(every semester)

Women, culture, and society serves as the preliminary course to the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies. It will provide students with an introduction to the literature and the historical evolution of the discipline, as well as an understanding of how scholars and students in the field analyze women, gender, and feminist theories. It will use an interdisciplinary approach to do this. This introductory course encourages students to rethink and reevaluate much of what they have experienced and learned and to gain the critical vocabulary and analytic skills to question the gendered world in which they live.

WGS 210/Women and Health: Power, Politics, and Change

1 course unit

(annually)

This course concerns the domain of women's bodies and the on-going struggle for sovereignty therein. Students will examine how in addition to pathophysiology, women's health is impacted by social constructs, specifically history, politics, economics, and research. As a result of this exploration, students will enhance their ability to care for themselves and for others, to use and understand power and empowerment of self and others, and to advocate and to be an activist for themselves and for others.

WGS 220/Gender and Popular Culture

1 course unit

(every semester)

This course offers a critical examination of the messages and "knowledge" that popular culture employs, disseminates, and constructs about men and women, masculinity and femininity. We will take our objects of study from a wide range of sources including advertisements, magazines, television, film, cyberspace, hip hop, and sports. Be ready to watch TV, go to the movies, and listen to music as a scholar of gender!

WGS 223/A Gendered History of Food

1 course unit

(same as HIS 396)

(annually)

An introduction to the history of food consumption and preparation in the Western world, and its place in defining gender roles; food as part of religious ceremony; development of table manners; the politics of breast-feeding; the changing of kitchen roles; and the history of eating disorders.

WGS 230/Gendered Technoculture: Feminism, Gender, and Technology **1 course unit**

(every semester)

What is the relationship between gender and technology? How is technology informed by gender? How is something as difficult to define as “technology” categorized as male and/or female in our minds? How do our perceptions of technology change by the user of said technology? Why do we imbue inanimate objects with gendered characteristics? How do new technologies alter or influence our ideas about gender and about what is “gender appropriate?” These are some of the questions we will explore in this course. Using feminist theories and methodologies, we will investigate the ways in which our technological world is gendered, and how to apply this theory to analyze and critique our high-tech world.

WGS 240/Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Studies **1 course unit**

(annually)

Providing an introduction to a quickly evolving field of study, this course explores gay and lesbian identity, culture, and politics from many disciplinary points of view. A single course might explore a wide range of subjects, such as Walt Whitman’s poetry, the history of lesbian bar culture, the politics of gay marriage, visibility on TV, and *Heather Has Two Mommies*.

WGS 250/Politics of Sexuality **1 course unit**

(every semester)

The political nature of personal life is a central critical concept of women’s and gender studies. Politics of Sexuality introduces students to implications of this concept through the study of contested topics concerning sexuality, such as gendered sexual socialization, sexual violence, family structures, poverty and welfare, sexual identities, transgenderism, commodification, risky sexual behaviors, AIDS, sexual exploitation, pornography, prostitution, and the traffic in women. Students learn how social norms, political currents, economic practices, and state policies construct their lived realities, governing choices they may have considered natural, private, and individual. They learn to articulate what is at stake in these issues from a variety of standpoints as preparation for making their own informed judgments.

WGS 260/Africana Women in Historical Perspective **1 course unit**

(same as AAS 280)

(every semester)

Africana Women in Historical Perspective is a global, cross-cultural survey of the lives and contributions of women of African ancestry. Emphasis will be placed upon shared elements of African culture that, when impacted by colonialism and/or the Atlantic slave trade, resulted in similar types of resistance to oppression, and analogous cultural expression among the women of four locales—Africa, South America and The Caribbean, North America, and Europe. Theoretical methodologies, historical narrative, literature, demographic data, material culture, representations of self, and representations by others will be explored to illuminate/explain the history, cultural artifacts, cultural retentions, and self-concept.

WGS 301/Women in America **1 course unit**

(same as HIS 385)

(annually)

This course will examine the history of women in the United States from the colonial era to the present. We will explore the diverse ways in which women have lived, worked, and contributed to the history of the U.S. While we will be looking at some of the “great women” of American history, the course will focus more on the aspects of the general experiences of women and their political, social, cultural, and familial relationships. The course examines the experiences and contributions of women to the development and growth of America, which necessitates an examination of their subordinate position in American politics, culture, and society. The exploration of women’s roles in the church, social movements, and social reproduction will enable students to describe and evaluate the institutions, movements, individuals, ideas, and values of the major eras of U.S. history.

WGS 305/Looking at Women: Representation, Feminisms, and Film **1 course unit**

(same as AAH 343 and COM 343)
(every semester)

This course will explore the enormous impact feminism has had on film theory, criticism, and production. Various feminist approaches to the study and production of “cinematic apparatus” will be explored including structuralism, issues of representation, spectatorship, questions of ethnicity, and hybrid sexualities. Screenings and the readings will cover a wide range of positions and strategies as we investigate Hollywood and independent films as well as new media forms.

WGS 310/Women in Eastern Europe: 1848–Present **1 course unit**

(same as HIS 324 and HON 337)
(occasionally)

This course will focus on women’s history in Eastern Europe in order to understand how the dual forces of nationalism and communism were largely constructed around gendered concerns such as reproduction, family structure, and access to power.

WGS 320/Men and Masculinities: Literary Perspectives **1 course unit**

(same as LIT 315/Men and Masculinities: Literary Perspectives)
(every semester)

This course focuses on representations of men and masculinity in literary texts, although we may also look at film, video, television, advertising, and music. Some of the issues we will be thinking about include: the construction of modern male identities, the diversity of men’s lives, the complex dynamics of men’s relationships, and questions of power and social justice within the contemporary gender order.

WGS 325/Feminist Theories **1 course unit**

(every semester)

Prerequisite: At least one WGS course

This course explores the diverse ways in which feminist theorists conceptualize women’s status in society, systems of inequality, and the category of “woman” itself. Students will gain an understanding of evolving ideas and debates in feminist theory, relate those to feminist practices, and develop their own theoretical abilities. The course will address the social construction of gender, the relation between feminist theory and activism, and how feminists have responded to issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality in current feminist thinking, as well as the classic feminist texts.

WGS 330/Gender and Public Policy **1 course unit**

(annually)

Prerequisite: Women, Culture, and Society or permission on instructor

This course seeks to clarify the relationship between state power and gender relations through an examination of major policy issues related to gender inequality, including: welfare policy, labor politics, reproductive rights, sexual violence, and domestic violence.

WGS 340/Gay and Lesbian History

1 course unit

(same as HIS 397)

(occasionally)

This course looks at the history of gay men and lesbians. It also considers the unique ways in which gays and lesbians have contributed to the history and culture of their region and national identity while maintaining a diverse subculture. The course explores the different historical and social roles of gays and lesbians and how they survived under oppressions that ranged from the denial of civic and civil rights to execution. At the completion of this course, students will have expanded the traditional historical narrative by recognizing the presence and agency of gays and lesbians.

WGS 341/Gay and Lesbian Literature

1 course unit

(same as LIT 313)

(occasionally)

Gay and Lesbian Literature primarily reflects on “literary” texts (novels, poems, and plays), considering the aesthetics, politics, and history of gay and lesbian literary production and consumption. With recent advances in cultural studies and queer studies, this course will also embrace works that are sometimes situated outside of traditional definitions of “literary” (children’s books, movies, and pulp fiction), with an examination of the course theme from a variety of literary methodologies, such as reader response criticism and discourse analysis.

WGS 360/Literature by Latinas and Latin-American Women

1 course unit

(same as LIT 334)

(annually)

A comparative study of Latina and Latin-American women’s literature in English. The course is open to a wide range of literary traditions, nations, time periods, and genres including those specific to non-Western and post-Colonial cultures. The focus varies by semester. It may include works by Isabel Allende, Julia Alvarez, Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, Laura Esquivel, Rosario Ferre, Cristina Garcia, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Elena Poniatowska, and others.

WGS 365/Womanist Thought

1 course unit

(same as AAS 375)

(annually)

Prerequisite: Africana Women in Historical Perspective, Global Feminisms, or by permission of the instructor

Womanist Thought is a course that traces the evolution of feminist consciousness among Africana women. Students will trace the thoughts, social and political activism, and ideologies generated by women of African ancestry from the early 19th century free black “feminist abolitionists” to contemporary times. “Womanist,” “Feminist,” “Critical Race Feminist,” and “Black Feminist” ideologies will be emphasized through course readings and assignments that explore the emergence and perpetuation of an Africana women’s feminist consciousness.

WGS 375/Global Feminisms

1 course unit

(every semester)

“Global feminisms” refers to the growing transnational network of movements and organizations working on behalf of women at many levels of civil and state society, from grassroots organizing to global governance, together with a growing body of writing and research on women’s status, gender oppression, and priorities for change around the world. This course’s purpose is to prepare students, as world citizens, to participate in this network by exposing them not only to issues and movements but also to the conceptual, methodological, and affective challenges of building solidarity across a vast range of differences—differences in identity, locale, worldview, focus, strategy, and standpoint in relation to global systems of power. This course may be repeated for credit, as topic changes.

WGS 376/Global Women Writers

1 course unit

(same as LIT 316)

(every semester)

This course will explore various literatures from around the world, encouraging students to examine the politics of gender, culture, and nation as well as the intersections of those systems of power. The explorations will cover a large range of topics, from arranged marriages to women in war in a variety of geographical areas around the world, particularly focusing on non-Western literatures. Common themes include feminist politics, post and neo/colonialisms, reproductive rights, translation, globalization, and activism.

WGS 380/Gender and Democracy

1 course unit

(same as HON 338)

(annually)

Scholars and policy makers alike have acknowledged the centrality of gender in debates about the meaning of democracy in our changing world. Men’s and women’s access to political power and economic opportunity, and the role of reproduction in citizenship, are among the manifold topics that highlight the complexity of what we call “democracy.” The course will take up these issues in several key locations.

WGS 381/Women and Migration

1 course unit

(same as ANT 311)

(occasionally)

Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, or Women, Culture, and Society

This course examines the role of women in migration both past and present. It takes a global approach, investigating the lives of women from many different societies. It also takes a comparative approach, exploring the similarities and differences of female international migrants from different cultural and class backgrounds.

WGS 391/Independent Study in Women’s and Gender Studies

variable course units

Independent study credit is available; see women’s and gender studies director for approval.

WGS 399/Feminism in the Workplace: Field Study in Women’s and Gender Studies

1 course unit

(every semester)

Prerequisite: At least two WGS courses

This internship course is a chance for students to consolidate and enrich their undergraduate learning while building the transition to life beyond college. A WGS education trains students to think critically and act strategically on issues of social inequity, particularly relating to gender and sexuality. Graduates enter a wide variety of careers. Feminism in the Workplace, therefore, focuses not on the nature and demands of particular worksites, but on work itself and organizational practices that arise from feminist theory and scholarship. The course is designed for students of junior or senior standing who are WGS majors or minors, as well as for W.I.L.L. students.

WGS 470/Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies **variable course units**
(annually)

This course focuses on a special topic in women’s and gender studies. This course may be repeated for credit, as topic changes.

WGS 495/Senior Seminar: Methods and Theory **1 course unit**
(annually)

Prerequisite: Feminist Theories

This course is the capstone course for the women’s and gender studies major. Students are expected to use the expertise gained from their previous WGS courses to research and write their senior theses. Drawing on the methodologies and theories learned in previously taken courses, students work in a small focused seminar that emphasizes not only their own work, but also critiquing the work of their peers. Students will produce a research paper (25+ pages) applying feminist theories and methodologies. In addition, they will share their work with other students, providing analysis and critiques of one another’s papers in progress.

WGS 496/Women’s Leadership and Social Change **1 course unit**
(annually)

Prerequisites: Women, Culture, and Society and Feminist Theories

In this W.I.L.L. capstone seminar course, students will experience the interfaces between empirical knowledge and social policies through selecting, organizing, and implementing a class activism project. This course is the culmination of the W.I.L.L. program in which students will expand and enhance their leadership skills using acquired strategies and tactics to influence social, political, or economic change.

Women’s and Gender Studies Course Options
(for course descriptions see department listings):

AAH	343/Looking at Women: Representation, Feminism, and Film (same as WGS 305)	1 course unit
AAH	370/Topic: Women Artists	1 course unit
AAS	280/Africana Women in Historical Perspective (same as WGS 260)	1 course unit
AAS	375/Womanist Thought (same as WGS 365)	1 course unit
ANT	311/Women and Migration (same as WGS 381)	1 course unit
COM	343/Looking at Women: Representation, Feminism, and Film (same as WGS 305)	1 course unit
ECO	325/Women, Gender, and Work	1 course unit
HIS	314/Medieval Women	1 course unit
HIS	316/Topic: Gender and Modern European History	1 course unit
HIS	324/Women in Eastern Europe: 1848–Present (same as WGS 310)	1 course unit
HIS	385/Women in America (same as WGS 301)	1 course unit

HIS	395/History of Western Sexuality	1 course unit
HIS	396/A Gendered History of Food (same as WGS 223)	1 course unit
HIS	397/Gay and Lesbian History (same as WGS 340)	1 course unit
HIS	455/Tutorial: History of the European Family	1 course unit
HIS	455/Tutorial: The Social History of African Women	1 course unit
HIS	455/Tutorial: Medieval Women Writers	1 course unit
HIS	455/Tutorial: Women in the Middle East	1 course unit
HON	210/Women in Art and Literature	1 course unit
HON	212/Sex, Class, and Race: America in the 20th Century	1 course unit
HON	214/20th-Century International Women's Literature	1 course unit
HON	335/Women, Law, and Society	1 course unit
HON	337/Women in Eastern Europe: 1848–Present (same as WGS 310)	1 course unit
HON	338/Gender and Democracy (same as WGS 380)	1 course unit
HON	362/Goodwives and Witches: Women in Colonial America	1 course unit
LIT	211/Women Writers	1 course unit
LIT	212/Cultural Representations of Gender	1 course unit
LIT	313/Gay and Lesbian Literature (same as WGS 341)	1 course unit
LIT	314/Gender in 20th Century American Literature	1 course unit
LIT	315/Men and Masculinities (same as WGS 320)	1 course unit
LIT	316/Global Women Writers (same as WGS 376)	1 course unit
LIT	334/Literature by Latinas and Latin-American Women (same as WGS 360)	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: The Witch in Literature	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: American Feminist Literature: The 1960s–1980s	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: Women's Autobiographies	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: Childbirth in Women's Literature	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: Language, Gender, and Culture	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: Study of Medieval and Renaissance Women Writers	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: Shakespeare and His Sisters	1 course unit
LIT	370/Studies: Black Women Writers	1 course unit
LIT	395/Topics in Women Writers	1 course unit
LIT	427/Major Writers Before 1900: Emily Dickinson	1 course unit
LIT	427/Major Writers Before 1900: Jane Austen	1 course unit
LIT	428/Major Writers After 1900: Toni Morrison	1 course unit
LIT	428/Major Writers After 1900: Julia Alvarez	1 course unit
LWJ	255/Legal Problems in the Domestic Setting	1 course unit
LWJ	256/Women in the Criminal Justice System	1 course unit
PHL	375/Equality, Ethics, and the Law	1 course unit
POL	215/Gender and Politics	1 course unit
POL	312/Politics of Minorities and Women	1 course unit
PSY	350/Psychology of Women	1 course unit
SOC	303/Women in World Perspective	1 course unit
SOC	334/Gender and American Society	1 course unit
SOC	335/Courtship, Marriage, and the Family	1 course unit
SPA	337/Women's Literature of Spain and Latin America (in Spanish)	1 course unit
SPA	338/Women's Literature of Spain and Latin America (in English)	1 course unit