

# Women's and Gender Studies

Interdisciplinary

## Faculty

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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 those aspects of experience 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 homosexual 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 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.

## First-Year and New Students

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies (WMNS 111) is a wide-ranging interdisciplinary course designed to help students develop a critical framework for thinking about questions relating to gender. Through a focus on a series of cultural artifacts, ranging from poems and films to legal cases and psychiatric disorders, 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.

Look for the ♦ symbol, which designates the courses appropriate for first-year students or upperclass students new to the curriculum of the major and concentration.

## Requirements for the Major

**Credits:** 6 units will be required for the major (3 required and 3 elective)

1. **Introductory requirement:** .5 unit  
WMNS 111 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
2. **Mid-level requirements:** 1 unit  
WMNS 330 Feminist Theory  
WMNS 331 Feminist Methodologies
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 concentration:** 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.
5. **Open electives:** 1 unit.
6. **Senior Colloquium:** .5 unit  
WMNS 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:

- (a) Designing and planning the Senior Colloquium (WMNS 481) in the fall.
- (b) 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 presentation will be a five-page essay evaluating how the student's cluster has contributed to planning the collective project designed in the Senior Colloquium.
- (c) Passing the Senior Colloquium (WMNS 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 midway through 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 WMNS 330 (Feminist Theory) or WMNS 331 (Feminist Methodologies)
2. WMNS 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.

## First-Semester Courses

### Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

WMNS 111 (.5 unit)  
Finke

This course is designed to help the student develop a critical framework for thinking about questions relating to gender, including such extremely important contemporary issues as sex discrimination and harassment, women's health, and developmental issues. In addition, the course will introduce students to the interdisciplinary fields

of women's and gender studies, out of which some of the most innovative and challenging developments in recent scholarship are arising. Emphasis will be placed on women's significant contributions to knowledge and culture, but we will also survey other areas of gender studies, including men's studies, family studies, and the study of sexuality. Central to the course will be an examination of personal narratives—memoirs, autobiographies, oral histories, ethnographies, photographs—and their relation to larger social issues. Enrollment limited.

### **Feminist Theory**

WMNS 330 (.5 unit)  
Erler

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: WMNS 111, any approved departmental course, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limited.

### **Feminist Methodologies**

WMNS 331 (.5 unit)  
Finke

This course is designed not necessarily to teach students what feminist methodologies are (as if this were an already settled issue) but rather to explore the question of feminist methodology. Are there any specifically feminist methodologies and, if so, what are they? This exploration will be practical (exploring research methods) as well as open-ended and exploratory (exploring methodological issues). The following three questions will structure the class: (1) Does feminist research begin with different

questions from traditional disciplinary research? (2) Does feminist research draw upon significantly different kinds of evidence from traditional disciplinary research? (3) How is that evidence gathered? What is the context within which feminist research is done? How does that context differ from discipline-based research?

### **Individual Study**

WMNS 493 (.5 unit)  
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and program director.

### **Senior Honors**

WMNS 497 (.5 unit)  
Finke

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.

Students are encouraged 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.

## **Second-Semester Courses**

### **Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies**

WMNS 111 (.5 unit)  
Smolak

See first-semester course description.

### **Lesbian and Gay Cultures**

WMNS 121  
Finke

This course will examine topics in the lesbian and gay cultures from theoretical, historical, literary, artistic, multicultural, and political perspectives. The class will focus primarily on American lesbian and gay history and culture, drawing upon legal, psychological, biological, cultural, ethical, and philosophical frameworks to explore the contemporary experience of gays and lesbians. No prerequisite. Enrollment limited.

### **Senior Seminar**

WMNS 481 (.5 unit)  
Finke

The seminar will be organized around a theme to be determined by students registered for the course in consultation with the instructor during the semester prior to the beginning of the course. Previous topics include "Gender and Pornography," "Feminist Humor," "Race and Gender," "Transgressing Gender," and "Gender and Politics." Prerequisite: WMNS 330 or 331 or permission of instructor. Enrollment limited.

### **Individual Study**

WMNS 494 (.5 unit)  
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and program director.

### **Senior Honors**

WMNS 498 (.5 unit)  
Finke

See first-semester description.

## Approved Courses

### First Semester

- ENGL 103.06 Monstrosity and  
Others
- ENGL 240 Early Eighteenth-  
Century Literature
- \*ENGL 288 Introduction to Afri-  
can-American Literature
- ENGL 339 The Restoration on Stage  
and Screen
- ENGL 382 The Jazz Age
- \*ENGL 388 African-American  
Literature, 1945-1980
- ENGL 433 Jane Austen
- HIST 208 U.S. Women's History
- \*LGLS 291 From Hard Time to Hard  
Times: The Law of Prisons and  
Welfare Reform
- \*RLST 325 Women and Islam
- \*SPAN 371 Gender, Identity, and  
Power in Women's Works from  
Latin America
- SOCY 232 Sexual Harassment
- \*SOCY 463 Intersection Theory

### Second Semester

- ECON 378 Economics of Women  
and Work
- ENGL 254 Literary Women: Nine-  
teenth-Century British Literature
- ENGL 270 American Fiction
- ENGL 372 The Gilded Age
- ENGL 469 Atwood and Ondaatje
- HIST 132 Modern Europe
- \*HIST 236 Gender, Race, and Class  
in Modern Germany
- \*HIST 452 Women, Gender, and  
State in China
- MUSC 303 Women and Music
- RLST 103 First-Year Seminar:  
Women and Religion
- RLST 328 Women in Christianity

\*Courses with asterisks satisfy the  
diversity and globalization require-  
ment for the major.