

Women's and Gender Studies

Interdisciplinary

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 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.

FACULTY

Jan Thomas, Director, Associate Professor of Sociology

Eliza Ablovatski, Assistant Professor of History

Sylvie Coulibaly, Assistant Professor of History

Melissa Dabakis, Professor of Art History

Kathryn Edwards, Professor of Biology

H. Abbie Erler, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Laurie Finke, Professor of Women's and Gender Studies

Sarah J. Heidt, Assistant Professor of English

Marla Kohlman, Associate Professor of Sociology

Deborah Laycock, Associate Professor of English

Victoria Malawey, Assistant Professor of Music

Janet McAdams, Robert P. Hubbard Professor in Poetry; Associate Professor of English

Kim McMullen, Professor of English

Ellen Mankoff, Instructor of English

Sarah Murnen, Professor of Psychology

Clara Román-Odio, Professor of Spanish

Marta Sierra, Assistant Professor of Spanish

Judy Smith, Professor of English

Linda Smolak, Samuel B. Cummings Jr. Professor of Psychology

Mary Suydam, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

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.

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.

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:

1. Designing and planning the Senior Colloquium (WMNS 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 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.
3. 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.

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES COURSES

WMNS 111. Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Credit: .5 unit

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.

Instructor: Staff

WMNS 121. Lesbian and Gay Cultures

Credit: .5 unit

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.

Instructor: Finke

WMNS 221. Gender and Film

Credit: .5 unit

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 exclusively for screening films.

Instructor: Finke

WMNS 330. Feminist Theory*Credit: .5 unit*

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 post-structuralist 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.

*Instructor: Staff***WMNS 331. Feminist Methodologies***Credit: .5 unit*

This course is designed not necessarily to teach students what feminist methodologies are (as if this were an already settled issue) but rather for us to explore together 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?

*Instructor: Staff***WMNS 481. Senior Colloquium***Credit: .5 unit*

This 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.

*Instructor: Finke***WMNS 493. Individual Study***Credit: .25 unit*

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and program director.

*Instructor: Staff***WMNS 497. Senior Honors***Credit: .5 unit*

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.

*Instructor: Staff***WMNS 498. Senior Honors***Credit: .5 unit*

See the course description for WMNS 497.

Instructor: Staff