

WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

315 William L. Harkness Hall, 203.432.0845
<http://wgss.yale.edu>
 M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair

Roderick Ferguson

Director of Graduate Studies

Joseph Fischel

Professors Roderick Ferguson, Margaret Homans, Regina Kunzel, Ana Ramos-Zayas, Dara Strolovitch, Laura Wexler

Associate Professor Joseph Fischel

Assistant Professors Eda Pepi, Evren Savci

Senior Lecturer Maria Trumpler

Lecturers Melanie Boyd, Andrew Dove, Graeme Reid

Affiliated Faculty Julia Adams (*Sociology*), Rene Almeling (*Sociology*), Carol Armstrong (*History of Art*), Daniel Botsman (*History*), Claire Bovern (*Linguistics*), Marijeta Bozovic (*Slavic Languages & Literatures*), Daphne Brooks (*African American Studies; American Studies; Theater & Performance Studies*), Jill Campbell (*English*), Kang-i Sun Chang (*East Asian Languages & Literatures*), Becky Conekin (*History*), Aimee Cox (*African American Studies; Anthropology*), Rohit De (*History*), Crystal Feimster (*African American Studies; American Studies*), Marta Figlerowicz (*English; Comparative Literature*), Moira Fradinger (*Comparative Literature*), Jacqueline Goldsby (*English; African American Studies*), Gregg Gonsalves (*School of Medicine; Law School*), Jennifer Klein (*History*), Greta LaFleur (*American Studies*), Kathryn Lofton (*American Studies; Religious Studies*), Mary Lui (*American Studies; History*), Alka Menon (*Sociology*), Joanne Meyerowitz (*American Studies; History*), Alice Miller (*Law School; Public Health*), Tavia Nyong'o (*African American Studies; American Studies; Theater & Performance Studies*), Sally Promey (*American Studies; Religious Studies*), Jill Richards (*English*), Naomi Rogers (*History of Science & Medicine*), Alicia Schmidt Camacho (*Ethnicity, Race, & Migration; American Studies*), George Syrimis (*Hellenic Studies*), Linn Tonstad (*Divinity School*), Michael Warner (*English*)

FIELDS OF STUDY

The Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) offers a combined Ph.D. in conjunction with five departments and programs: African American Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, English, and Sociology. Students pursuing the combined Ph.D. in WGSS will determine their research and doctoral foci in coordination with the directors of graduate studies in WGSS and the partnering department or program.

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies critically interrogates gender and sexuality as categories of inequality, difference, and identification. Gender (the social and historical meanings of distinctions across sexes) and sexuality (the domain of sexual practices, identities, discourses, and institutions) are studied as they intersect with class, race, nationality, religion, ability, and other zones of human and nonhuman experience.

There are no specified areas of study within the combined Ph.D. program, but students whose research interests overlap with WGSS faculty's are encouraged to apply. Current WGSS faculty concentrate on gender and sexuality as they articulate across transnational politics and security regimes; citizenship and statelessness; public law and sexual violence; public policy and political representation; kinship, reproduction, and reproductive technologies; policing, surveillance, and incarceration; social movements and protest; indigeneity, racialization, and racism; literature, language, and translation; Islam and neoliberalism; colonialism and postcolonialism.

Students may only apply for the Ph.D. in WGSS in conjunction with their application to one of the five partnering departments or programs (African American Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, English, and Sociology). The doctoral program in WGSS will begin reviewing external applications in fall 2021 for matriculation in fall 2022.

REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSFER INTO THE COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM

Students already pursuing a Ph.D. in one of the five partnering departments and programs listed above may apply for transfer into the combined Ph.D. in WGSS, starting in fall 2021.

Students must have already taken WGSS 600 and WGSS 900 or be enrolled in them during the term of application and submit a statement of interest describing why they wish to pursue the combined Ph.D. The statement of interest should outline a plan of completion for outstanding WGSS course requirements.

Only students in the first or second year of their degree study are eligible to apply, and preference will be given to second-year students. Students must submit their statement of interest by January 4. The WGSS graduate admissions committee will inform applicants of its decision by March 5.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

The WGSS combined Ph.D. student's course of study and research will be coordinated with the student's adviser, the director of graduate studies (DGS) of WGSS, and the DGS of the partnering department or program. Ideally, students should complete course work for WGSS and the partnering department or program by the end of their second year. Students are required to complete the following core courses: WGSS 600, Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; WGSS 700, Feminist and Queer Theories; WGSS 900, Colloquium and Working Group (half credit); and one WGSS-numbered elective. Students are strongly encouraged to take WGSS 800, Methods in Gender and Sexuality Studies.

In their third year, students will enroll in a term-long dissertation proposal workshop.

WGSS combined Ph.D. students will teach or serve as a teaching fellow in their third and fourth years in the program, unless their dissertation research plans require other arrangements. The courses will typically have undergraduate WGSS numbers.

Students will be admitted to candidacy when they have fulfilled all requirements of the relevant participating department or program and WGSS. The scheduling and structure of qualifying examinations will follow the protocols of the partnering department.

At least one member of the WGSS faculty or affiliated faculty will be a member of the dissertation proposal review committee; at least one faculty member of the student's dissertation committee will hold a primary, tenure, or tenure-track appointment in WGSS.

Students pursuing the combined Ph.D. with African American Studies In addition to fulfilling the course work—twelve courses over two years, including core WGSS and AFAM courses—and the teaching requirements for each program, students must also: (1) demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English by conducting substantial research in the chosen language as part of a course requirement; passing a translation test, offered each term by various language departments; or receiving a grade of B or higher in a Yale College intermediate- or advanced-level language course or in a Yale language-for-reading course; and (2) pass an oral examination at the end of their third year, jointly administered by four faculty selected by the student (with at least one faculty member in African American Studies and another in WGSS). The oral exam will test on four content areas selected by the student in the student's second year of study.

Students pursuing the combined Ph.D. with Anthropology In the beginning of their second year, students should consult with directors of graduate studies in WGSS and Anthropology to coordinate the written and oral components of the qualifying exams.

MASTER'S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the combined Ph.D.) Students will be awarded a combined M.A. degree in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and the partnering department or program upon successful completion of all course work with the exception of the WGSS dissertation proposal workshop. See also Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

WGSS 529a / GBLB 529a, Sexuality, Gender, Health, and Human Rights Ali Miller

This course explores the application of human rights perspectives and practices to issues in regard to sexuality and health. Through reading, interactive discussion, paper presentation, and occasional outside speakers, students learn the tools and implications of applying rights and law to a range of sexuality and health-related topics. The overall goal is twofold: to engage students in the world of global sexual health and rights policy making as a field of social justice and public health action; and to introduce them to conceptual tools that can inform advocacy and policy formation and evaluation. Class participation, short reaction papers, and a final paper are required.

WGSS 600b, Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Roderick Ferguson

Introduction to women's, gender, and sexuality studies as a field of knowledge and to the interdiscipline's structuring questions and tensions. The course genealogizes feminist and queer knowledge production, and the institutionalization of WGSS, by examining several of our key terms.

WGSS 612b / AMST 629b, Racial and Economic Justice in Transgender Health Greta LaFleur and Ronica Mukerjee

What kind of access and exposure do transgender people have to health care services, policing, mental health, education, and public spaces, and what kind of access *should* trans people have? How do we work to close the gap between what is available, and what should be? This course considers the diverse range of health care and other basic needs of transgender and nonbinary people in a number of different institutional settings and medical contexts—prisons to K-12 public schools, gender-affirming surgeries to fertility support—with a twinned focus on how institutions render trans people and their bodies illegible or even illegal, on the one hand, and what kind of knowledge, best practices, and interventions might be implemented to remove obstacles for trans and nonbinary people seeking the care that they need, on the other. At the heart of the course is the role of racial and economic justice—in health care, and in the world more broadly—in mitigating the health and health care disparities between transgender and non-transgender patients. Enrollment capped at twenty-five.

WGSS 629a / AMST 690a / SOCY 629a, Politics of Reproduction Rene Almeling

Reproduction as a process that is simultaneously biological and social, involving male and female bodies, family formation, and powerful social institutions such as medicine, law, and the marketplace. Sociological research on reproductive topics such as pregnancy, birth,

abortion, contraception, infertility, reproductive technology, and aging. Core sociological concepts used to examine how the politics of reproduction are shaped by the intersecting inequalities of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

WGSS 633b / AMST 747b / ANTH 594b, Affect and Materiality Kathryn Dudley

Recent scholarship associated with the “affective turn” and “new materialisms” raises important questions about how we, as existents entangled in imperiled ecologies, know and collectively navigate our multispecies worlds. Refusing to accept classic oppositions between mind/body, self/other, and human/nonhuman, this work has inspired anthropologically inclined scholars to rethink the ways we analyze and write about the experiential regimes of settler colonialism, racialized capitalism, and heteronormativity. Rather than reifying divergent approaches to “affect” and “materiality” as discrete fields of knowledge, this course tracks these concepts across domains of inquiry in which they have long been urgently paramount: black, indigenous, and queer studies. Our goal is to recognize and navigate the alliances, interruptions, and aporias that emerge among fellow travelers committed to the project of feeling and producing anti-imperialist histories, geographies, and ontologies.

WGSS 644a / PHIL 644a, Social Ontology Robin Dembroff

Study of conceptual and methodological foundations of social ontology, as well as particular topics within social ontology, such as the nature of gender and race.

WGSS 651a / ANTH 651a, Intersectionality and Women's Health Marcia Inhorn

This interdisciplinary seminar explores how the intersections of race, class, gender, and other axes of “difference” (age, sexual orientation, disability status, nation, religion) affect women's health, primarily in the contemporary United States. Recent feminist approaches to intersectionality and multiplicity of oppressions theory are introduced. In addition, the course demonstrates how anthropologists studying women's health issues have contributed to social and feminist theory at the intersections of race, class, and gender.

WGSS 661b, Queer Theology Linn Tonstad

This course provides an introduction to queer theology, its theoretical grounding in queer theory, and some of the controversies and possibilities that make up its current shape. Questions considered include whether Christianity can or should be queer; the implications of contemporary debates in queer theory over temporality, futurity, sociality, and spatiality for the shape and possibility of queer theology itself; how to use art and performance as theological sources; and the way queer theory's anti-essentialist stance shifts the stakes of debates over the theological and political status of LGBTQ+ persons. The course also considers the impact of HIV/AIDS on notions of community formation, risk, and finitude. Prerequisites: at least one term of theology at the graduate level (introduction to theology or systematic theology) or permission of the instructor; and preferably at least one course in gender studies.

WGSS 677b / PHIL 677b, Feminist Philosophy: Theories of Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation Robin Dembroff

This course surveys several feminist frameworks for thinking about sex, gender, and sexual orientation. We consider questions such as: Is there a tenable distinction between sex and gender? Between gender and sexual orientation? What does it mean to say that gender is a social construction, or that sexual orientation is innate? What is the place of politics in gender and sexual identities? How do these identities—and especially resistant or transgressive identities—impact the creation and revision of social categories?

WGSS 678a / AMST 626a / FILM 644a, Visuality, Embodiment, Performance: Seeing with Companions Laura Wexler

This co-taught interuniversity seminar offers in-depth engagements with recent works by leading feminist theorists and artists committed to anti-racist, anti-imperialist, activist ways of seeing, knowing, thinking, and doing. Forging a participatory, collaborative, critical practice of “seeing with companions,” it responds to provocations posed by the course materials to go beyond critique, to reconceive feminist and queer epistemologies and pedagogies, and to imagine different ways of being in the world. Readings include recent works by Ariella Azoulay, Judith Butler, Saidiya Hartman, and Diana Taylor, as well as visual artworks, performances, and films by Regina José Galindo, Arthur Jafa, Simone Leigh, Doris Salcedo, and Kara Walker, among others. Permission of instructors required.

WGSS 700b, Feminist and Queer Theories Evren Savci

This course is designed as a graduate introduction to feminist and queer thought. It is organized by a number of key terms and institutions around which feminist and queer thinking has clustered, such as the state, the law, religion, family and kinship, capitalism and labor, the body and language, knowledge and affect, globalization and imperialism, militarism and security. The “conversations” that happen around each term speak to the richness of feminist and queer theories, the multidimensionality of feminist and queer intellectual and political concerns, and the “need to think our way out of these crises,” to cite Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty. The aim is to leave students appreciating the hard labor of feminist and queer thought, and understanding the urgencies out of which such thinking emerges.

WGSS 712b / AMST 866b / HIST 775b, Readings in the History of Sexuality Joanne Meyerowitz

Selected topics in the history of sexuality. Emphasis on key theoretical works and recent historical literature.

WGSS 718a, Marxisms, Feminisms, and Social Reproduction Eda Pepi

This seminar focuses on the intersections and divergences of Marxist and feminist approaches to the welfare state at a time of newly intensifying anthropocenic and epidemiological crises. Historically, Marxists have had undeniably fraught analytical and political investments in both gender and the state. But socialist and Marxist feminists have relied on the thinking of Marx and Engels to develop the framework of “social reproduction” in order to expand the notion of socially necessary labor in ways that continue to shape political, economic, and cultural understandings of the welfare state. Then again, liberal feminists have too easily allied with racist state projects of neoliberal individual empowerment. The course engages critically both classical Marxist preoccupations with capitalist production as well as feminist approaches to social and biological reproduction in order to illuminate “the connection of the social and political structure with production” (MECW 5:37). In *The German Ideology* (1846), Marx and Engels identified production as contextualized

within social and state structures as the cornerstone of the materialist method. Students grapple with these gendered, sexualized, and racialized concepts, methods, and implicit understandings of the social and state structures within which production, labor, and reproduction unfold. We do so at a time when the global COVID-19 pandemic has demanded the resurgence of the state, halted production, transformed labor, and isolated most of the world's population within domestic domains. In this current moment, we undertake the difficult task of suggesting ways in which we might reconfigure collective labor, universal basic income, health care, and other state and nonstate forms necessary for sustenance and daily renewal as well as for birthing and rearing the next generation.

WGSS 724b / AMST 724b / PLSC 868b, Gender and Sexuality in American Politics and Policy Dara Strolovitch

This seminar familiarizes students with foundational work on and approaches to the study of gender and sexuality in American politics and public policy. It explores empirical work that addresses these topics, a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches to them, and the social scientific methods that have been used to examine them. It explores the history, findings, and controversies in research about gender and sexuality in American politics and political science, examining work within several subfields of American politics (e.g., political development; public law; political behavior; legislative studies; public policy; interest groups and social movements), important work from other disciplines, and research that does not fit neatly into traditional disciplinary categories, paying particular attention to the implications of this “messiness” for the study of gender, sexuality, and politics. We are attentive to the complicated histories of science and social science when it comes to the study of gender and sexuality and to the ways in which gender and sexuality intersect with other politically relevant categories, identities, and forms of marginalization, such as race, ethnicity, class, and ideological and partisan identification.

WGSS 741b / AFAM 777b / AMST 707b, Race, Colorblindness, and the Academic Disciplines Daniel HoSang

Examines the ways that academic disciplines in the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences have developed in relation to white supremacy and colonialism, and their imbrication in theories of racial hierarchy and conquest. Foregrounds the racial histories and colorblind defenses of race neutrality in fields as diverse as social psychology, the law, musicology, literary studies, sociology, and gender studies to reveal the contradictory role of the academy in constructing, naturalizing, and reproducing frameworks of racial domination. Considers the ways that insurgent scholars and formations have contested these traditions to discredit these traditions and deploy disciplinary methods and theorizations toward emancipatory ends. Engages work by Kimberlé Crenshaw, George Lipsitz, Toni Morrison, Roderick Ferguson, and others.

WGSS 767a or b / PSYC 777a or b, Research Topics in Gender and Psychology Marianne LaFrance

The “Gender Lab” meets weekly to consider research being done in the Psychology department that bears on some gender-related issue.

WGSS 769a / ENGL 742a, Fiction, Didacticism, and Political Critique: 1789–1818 Jill Campbell

A study of writings that seek a specific effect in their reader—whether didactic instruction and moral formation, or an instigation to take action toward political change—and their uneasy alliance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the literary genre of prose fiction. How do writings that seek to inform or reform the real person or the real world put fictional narratives to use? How is the genre of the novel shaped, explicitly or implicitly, by writing to a specific “end”? Texts include novels, tales for children, life-writing, poetry with a “cause,” polemical essays; possible authors include Olaudah Equiano, Edmund Burke, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen, Anna Barbauld, and Mary Shelley.

WGSS 782a / HIST 940a / HSHM 770a, Disability Histories: Research Seminar Naomi Rogers

This course introduces students to the major issues in current disability history as well as theoretical debates in disability studies. We discuss cultural, social, and political meanings of citizenship; efforts to define and classify disabled bodies; contested notions of bodily difference; and the ways disability has and continues to be used as a metaphor for socially defined inferiority like gender, race, or sexuality. By the fourth week students have identified the topic for their research papers and discussed them in class. The next month is devoted to research and writing. We then start meeting again to read and discuss a draft of each paper.

WGSS 900a or b, Colloquium and Working Group Joseph Fischel

The course is made up of two components: the WGSS Graduate Colloquium, in which graduate students present ongoing research (meets every two to three weeks); and the WGSS Working Group, in which faculty present pre-circulated works-in-progress for critical feedback from the WGSS community (meets every two to three weeks).