WOMEN’S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

315 William L. Harkness Hall, 203.432.0845
http://wgss.yale.edu
Certificate in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Chair
Margaret Homans

Director of Graduate Studies
Greta Lafleur

Professors Julia Adams (Sociology), Carol Armstrong (History of Art), Seyla Benhabib (Political Science), Jill Campbell (English), Hazel Carby (Emerita, African American Studies; American Studies), Kang-i Sun Chang (East Asian Languages & Literatures), Jacqueline Goldsby (English; African American Studies), Inderpal Grewal (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies; American Studies; Anthropology), Margaret Homans (English; Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Jennifer Klein (History), Marianne LaFrance (Psychology; Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Kathryn Lofton (American Studies; Religious Studies), Mary Lui (American Studies; History), Joanne Meyerowitz (History), Sally Promey (American Studies; Institute of Sacred Music; Religious Studies), Ana Ramos-Zayas (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration; Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies; American Studies), Naomi Rogers (History of Science & Medicine), Alicia Schmidt Camacho (American Studies), Michael Warner (English), Laura Wexler (American Studies; Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Associate Professors Rene Almeling (Sociology), Crystal Feimster (African American Studies; American Studies), Marta Figlerowicz (Comparative Literature), Joseph Fischel (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Moira Fradinger (Comparative Literature), Zareena Grewal (American Studies; Religious Studies), Greta Lafleur (American Studies), Angel David Nieves (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Assistant Professors Edi Pepi (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Dixa Ramirez (American Studies), Evren Savci (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Senior Lecturers Becky Conekin (MacMillan Center; History), Andrew Dowe (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Maria Trumpler (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Lecturers Melanie Boyd (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Igor De Souza (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies; English), Graeme Reid (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), George Syrimis (Hellenic Studies)

FIELDS OF STUDY

The Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies considers gender and sexuality as fundamental categories of social and cultural analysis and offers critical perspectives upon them as a basis from which to study the diversity of human experience. Gender (the social and historical meanings of the distinction between the sexes) and sexuality (the domain of sexual practices, identities, discourses, and institutions) are studied as they intersect with class, race, ethnicity, nationality, and other axes of human difference. The introduction of these perspectives into all fields of knowledge necessitates new research, criticism of existing research, and the formulation of new paradigms and organizing concepts.

The Certificate (previously known as the Qualification) in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is open to students already enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Yale. Interested students are strongly encouraged to register for the certificate by meeting with the director of graduate studies (DGS) during their first year. Students who wish to receive the certificate must (1) complete a graduate course on the theory of gender and sexuality; (2) complete two electives, including one course that must be drawn from the WGSS curriculum; (3) complete one term of WGSS 900, WGSS Certificate Workshop; (4) demonstrate the capacity to pursue independent, interdisciplinary research in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies by presenting a qualifying paper at a meeting of the WGSS Colloquium; and (5) fulfill a teaching requirement. Each of these requirements must be met in consultation with the DGS and the individual WGSS graduate adviser. Students who fulfill these expectations will receive a letter from the DGS, indicating that they have completed the work for the certificate.

Program information and the requirements for the certificate are available on the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies website, or by contacting 203.432.0845 or wgss@yale.edu.

COURSES

WGSS 529a / GLBL 529a, Sexuality, Gender, Health, and Human Rights Alice 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 625b, Sex and Global Politics  Graeme Reid
Examination of historical, cultural, and political aspects of sexual orientation, gender identity, and human rights in the context of globalization.

WGSS 633b / AMST 747b / ANTH 594b, Affect and Materiality  Kathryn Dudley
Recent scholarship in the fields of affect studies and the new materialisms raises important questions about the ethnographic encounter and the kind of knowledge it produces. Refusing to grant ontological status to classic oppositions between nature/culture, self/other, subject/object, and human/nonhuman, this work encourages anthropologically inclined ethnographers to rethink longstanding assumptions about the composition of the “social” and the “political” in an anthropocentric world that ignores the vulnerabilities and agential capacities of global ecosystems at its peril. Reading across ossifying disciplinary divides, this seminar examines the intellectual projects of writers such as Jane Bennett, Bruno Latour, Lauren Berlant, and Kathleen Stewart, among others. Our objective is to theorize the intersection between public and private feelings and human and nonhuman materiality in ways that bring the political and aesthetic implications of ethnographic research and writing to the fore.

WGSS 651b / ANTH 651b, 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 697a / AMST 687a / HIST 723a, Colonial Domesticity and Reproductive Relations  Lisa Lowe
This interdisciplinary seminar, in collaboration with the Center for Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration (RITM), is open to graduate students and pre- and postdoctoral fellows. In it, we examine the central importance of family, kinship, and domestic and reproductive labor to the cultural and social reproduction of racial colonialisms. Settler colonialism, colonial slavery, overseas empire, and globalization depend not only on the brute force of war, captivity, and occupation; they are also sustained and contested through culture, language, forms of family and household, education, and the social reproduction of race, gender, intimacy, and filiation. We trace a genealogy that considers the long history of colonial impositions of domesticity and family separations: from the violation and separation of enslaved women from their children, to compulsory boarding schools for Native Americans, racialized gendered divisions of care labor and reproductive surrogacy, transnational adoption, and migrant detention. This genealogy simultaneously includes less acknowledged yet longstanding alternative forms of kinship and relation, amalgams of domestic sociality, and nonbiological generation and affiliation. Readings include historical and anthropological studies of household and reproduction under various colonialisms (Ann Laura Stoler, Alys Weinbaum, Jennifer Morgan, Dorothy Roberts, Brenda Child, Kendra Field, Cathleen Cahill, Lisa Brooks, Amy Kaplan, Arissa Oh, Kalindi Vora, Rachel Buff), debates on social reproduction (Tithi Bhattacharya, Silvia Federici, Maria Mies, Ruha Benjamin, Laura Briggs, Alyosha Goldstein, Chandan Reddy, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Mary Romero), materials on alternative kinship and social relations (Saidiya Hartman, Kyla Schuller, Elizabeth Freeman, Fred Moten), and literary works (Mary Prince, Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, Patricia Powell, Patricia Park, Octavia Butler).

WGSS 730b / HIST 943b / HSHM 736b, Health Politics, Body Politics  Naomi Rogers
A reading seminar on struggles to control, pathologize, and normalize human bodies, with a particular focus on science, medicine, and the state, both in North America and in a broader global health context. Topics include disease, race, and politics; repression and regulation of birth control; the politics of adoption; domestic and global population control; feminist health movements; and the pathologizing and identity politics of disabled people.

WGSS 764b / AMST 765b / ANTH 594b, Personhood in the Americas  Ana Ramos-Zayas
Who and what counts as a person? How do we know? When and how is personhood attributed? To what extent does place, and the hemispheric formation that is the Americas, shape personhood? Can personhood be “lost”? Is personhood only for the living, or is it a question for the dead too? What forms of self-fashioning does personhood require, and how have these changed across space and time? How do individuals construct selves and public personas according to socially accepted standards? This course is designed to offer a broad and historically grounded understanding of key interdisciplinary debates and themes associated with understandings of personhood, its social implications, and the relationship between the embodied self and collective identities. Topics include the role of the nation state, the law, and science in defining persons; rites of passage in the life cycle of persons, particularly at the beginning and end of life; the legibility of personhood in relation to gender, race, class, and illness; incarceration and confinement and their relation to a “loss” of personhood; and transnational, institutional, and psychoanalytic productions of the person. Approaching the Americas from a hemispheric perspective, the course also aims to help students identify the methodological, ethical, and theoretical questions that come with using concepts such as person, individual, self, and subject and to assess the methodological and analytical advantages and/or disadvantages of one term over the other for specific research projects in specific fieldwork sites. Whom we consider a person, whom we label less than fully endowed, and the roles history, culture, and context play in the process are questions that inform some of the most urgent legal and political issues of our time. We look at texts in philosophy, anthropology, history, psychology, law, and popular culture.

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 850a / ENGL 982a, Sex and Citizenship  Jill Richards
A survey of the ways that gender/sexuality is organized through and against the nation-state, with particular attention to citizenship, rights discourses, and global migration. The course looks to establish a foundational understanding of the conjunctures between liberal governance and the regulation of reproductive, sexual, and family life. At the same time, our wider conceptual arc takes up more recent critical debates about the entanglement of sexual intimacy, race, and national belonging during the territorial expansion of empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this reconsideration of the geographies of sexual citizenship, we focus on British, Commonwealth, and postcolonial case studies in the Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Indian Ocean, and South Pacific. Texts include selections from legal history, travel narratives, life-writing, literature, the history of sexuality, sociology, anthropology, critical race theory, queer theory, and indigenous studies. Works by Mary Prince, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Saidiya Hartman, Mary Seacole, Ann Laura Stoler, Eve Sedgwick, Olive Schreiner, Jasbir Puar, Talal Asad, T.E. Lawrence, Audra Simpson, Glen Sean Coulthard, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Joanne Meyerowitz, Virginia Woolf, Karl Marx, Silvia Federici, Jean Rhys, Mahmood Mamdani, Lauren Berlant, Zoë Wicomb, Michel Foucault, Wendy Brown, Mohsin Hamid, Wilde v. Queensberry (1895), Maud Allan v. Pemberton Billing (1918).

WGSS 900a, WGSS Certificate Workshop  Joseph Fischel
Built around the WGSS graduate Colloquium and Working Group series, with the addition of several sessions on topics of interdisciplinary methodology, theory, and professionalization. Offered annually in either the fall or spring. Enrollment in one term of WGSS 900 is required of all students for completion of the certificate in WGSS. Graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.