

# WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

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Genders and sexualities are powerful organizing forces: they shape identities and institutions, nations and economies, cultures and political systems. Careful study of gender and sexuality thus explains crucial aspects of our everyday lives on both intimate and global scales. Scholarship in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is interdisciplinary and wide ranging, drawing on history, literature, cultural studies, social sciences, and natural science to study genders and sexualities as they intersect with race, ethnicity, class, nationality, transnational processes, disability, and religion.

Students majoring in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies take a series of core courses, develop an individual area of concentration, and write a yearlong or single-term senior essay. The program encourages work that is interdisciplinary, intersectional, international, and transnational. Individual concentrations evolve along with students' intellectual growth and academic expertise. Recent examples of concentrations include literature and queer aesthetics; transnational feminist practices; the intellectual history of civil rights activism; AIDS health policies; gender, religion, and international NGOs; women's health; food, sexuality, and lesbian community; and gender and sexuality in early education.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Twelve term courses are required and this major may be taken either as a primary major or as one of two majors. Requirements include two intermediate courses selected from WGSS 205, 206, 207, or 340. Majors are strongly encouraged to take these intermediate courses during their first two years. The major also requires two methodology courses, five courses in an area of concentration, the Junior Research Seminar (WGSS 398), and a two-course senior requirement. The area of concentration consists of at least five courses, the majority of which should be drawn from program offerings. Substitutions to the major requirements may be made only with the written permission of the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).

**Methodology courses** Given its interdisciplinary nature, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies necessarily relies on a wide range of methodologies: literary criticism, ethnography, visual analysis, historiography, and quantitative data analysis, among others. Each student is expected to acquire competence in at least two methodologies relevant to their concentration and planned senior essay. Students are advised to take the first of these courses during their first two years and to complete the two-course methods requirement in the junior year, in preparation for the senior essay.

**Junior research seminar** All students in the major must take WGSS 398, Junior Research Seminar, which provides majors the opportunity to examine, synthesize, and apply the interdisciplinary theory and methods to which they have been exposed while completing the intermediate course sequence and methodology requirement.

(Individualized alternatives are found for students who study abroad during the junior year.)

### SENIOR REQUIREMENT

**The yearlong senior essay** The two-term senior sequence consists of WGSS 490, Senior Colloquium, in which students begin researching and writing a senior essay, followed by WGSS 491, Senior Essay, in which students complete the essay. The senior essay is developed and written under the guidance and supervision of a WGSS-affiliated faculty member with expertise in the area of concentration. Students are expected to meet with their essay advisers on a regular basis.

**The single-term senior essay** Majors may opt to complete the senior essay requirement in an approved upper-level WGSS seminar in the fall or spring term, with the approval of the instructor, by writing a senior essay of twenty-five to forty-five pages in lieu of the course's normal writing requirements. Students who choose the single-term senior essay take one additional WGSS course of their choosing to fulfill the twelve-term-course requirement.

### SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisites** None

**Number of courses** 12 term courses (incl senior requirement)

**Specific courses required** WGSS 398

**Distribution of courses** 2 intermediate courses; 2 methodology courses; 5 electives in area of concentration

**Senior requirement** Senior colloquium and senior essay (WGSS 490, 491); or single-term senior essay in an upper-level seminar and one additional elective