WOMEN’S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

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M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) is an interdisciplinary program that 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, indigeneity, nationality, religion, ability, and other axes of power, difference, and zones of experience. The introduction of these perspectives into all fields of knowledge necessitates new research paradigms, organizing concepts and analytics, and critique.

The Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies offers a combined Ph.D. in conjunction with five partner departments and programs: African American Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, English, and Sociology. Students may only apply for the Ph.D. in WGSS in conjunction with their application to one of these five partnering departments or programs. Students already pursuing a Ph.D. in one of the partnering departments and programs may apply for transfer into the combined Ph.D. in WGSS in the first or second year of their degree study. Graduate students in other programs may also petition to pursue an ad hoc combined degree. They must do so during their first year in their Ph.D. programs.

There are no subfields, specified areas of study, or concentrations within the combined Ph.D. program, but 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 pursuing the combined Ph.D. in WGSS will determine their research and doctoral foci in coordination with their advisers and with the directors of graduate studies (DGS) in WGSS and the partnering department or program.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSFER INTO THE COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM**

Students in the first or second year of their degree study in American studies, anthropology, English, and sociology wishing to transfer into the combined Ph.D. in WGSS should submit a departmental transfer request form and a two- to three-page statement of interest describing why they wish to pursue the combined Ph.D. to wgss.dgs@yale.edu. Please indicate whether you have completed WGSS 600 and/or WGSS 900, and if not, when you intend to do so. Your statement of interest should also outline a plan of completion for any outstanding WGSS course requirements.

Interested students in their first year of other Ph.D. programs may apply to do an ad hoc combined degree with WGSS. They must do so before they have advanced to candidacy and must first get permission from their current DGS, after which they should submit a departmental transfer request form and prepare a two- to three-page written proposal describing why they wish to pursue the combined Ph.D. The proposal should indicate whether they have completed WGSS 600 and/or WGSS 900 and should include a plan of completion for any other outstanding requirements in both WGSS and their other program. They should submit both the form and proposal for review and approval by the associate dean as well as by the DGS in the relevant departments.

Interested students should submit their forms and statements of interest to wgss.dgs@yale.edu by December 15. The WGSS graduate admissions committee will inform applicants of its decisions by early March.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE**

As a default rule, students should assume that a WGSS or WGSS-affiliated faculty member should participate in any partnering program/department requirements involving faculty committee supervision or assessment. For example, if a program requires oral exams or a dissertation prospectus to be defended to a multiperson faculty committee, at least one member of the committee should be WGSS or WGSS affiliated faculty. If the partnering program/department requires students to construct multiple reading lists for oral and/or written exams, one such list should substantively include gender and sexuality scholarship. At least one faculty member of the student’s dissertation committee will hold a primary or secondary tenured or tenure-track appointment in WGSS.

In their first two years of study, students in the combined Ph.D. program will complete a minimum of twelve term courses. The WGSS combined Ph.D. student’s course of
study and research will be coordinated with the student’s adviser, the DGS of WGSS, and the DGS of the partnering department or program.

Students are required to complete the following 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 per term; students should enroll for two sequential terms, ideally in the same academic year)
- One elective. Typically, electives taken in the student’s partnering department will be cross-titled with WGSS or will substantively examine gender and sexuality.
- Students are also required to take at least one graduate-level methods course. Students are strongly encouraged to fulfill this requirement by taking WGSS 800, Methods in Gender and Sexuality Studies, but may also do so using the methods courses offered by their partner department. Students should consult with the WGSS DGS about their plan to fulfill the WGSS methods requirement.

WGSS combined-Ph.D. students typically teach or serve as a teaching fellow (TF) in their third and fourth years in the program, unless their dissertation research plans require other arrangements (funding permitting). WGSS combined-degree students will be given priority for TF slots in WGSS classes, and at least one of the courses for which they serve as a TF should have undergraduate WGSS numbers.

Students will be admitted to candidacy when they have fulfilled all requirements of both WGSS and the relevant partnering department or program. The scheduling and structure of qualifying examinations, prospectuses, and dissertations will follow the protocols of the partnering department. However, WGSS combined-degree students are strongly encouraged to hold a prospectus meeting and at least one post-approval meeting at which all members of their committee are present.

**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.