WOMEN'S GENDER AND SEXuality STUDIES (WGSS)

* WGSS 031a / AMST 031a, LGBTQ Spaces and Places  Scott Herring
Overview of LGBTQ cultures and their relation to geography in literature, history, film, visual culture, and ethnography. Discussion topics include the historical emergence of urban communities; their tensions and intersections with rural locales; race, sexuality, gender, and suburbanization; and artistic visions of queer and trans places within the city and without. Emphasis is on the wide variety of U.S. metropolitan environments and regions, including New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, the Deep South, Appalachia, New England, and the Pacific Northwest. Enrollment limited to first-year students.  HU

* WGSS 032b, History of Sexuality  Maria Trumpler
Exploration of scientific and medical writings on sexuality over the past century. Focus on the tension between nature and culture in shaping theories, the construction of heterosexuality and homosexuality, the role of scientific studies in moral discourse, and the rise of sexology as a scientific discipline. Enrollment limited to first-year students. WR, HU

* WGSS 036b / AMST 032b, Gender, Sexuality, and U.S. Empire  Talya Zemach-Bersin
This course explores the cultural history of America’s relationship to the world across the long twentieth century with particular attention to the significance of gender, sexuality, and race. We locate U.S. culture and politics within an international dynamic, exploring the interrelatedness of domestic and foreign affairs. While exploring specific geopolitical events like the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, and the Cold War, this course emphasizes the political importance of culture and ideology rather than offering a formal overview of U.S. foreign policy. How have Americans across the twentieth century drawn from ideas about gender to understand their country’s relationship to the wider world? In what ways have gendered ideologies and gendered approaches to politics shaped America’s performance on the world’s stage? How have geopolitical events impacted the construction of race and gender on the home front? In the most general sense, this course is designed to encourage students to understand American cultural and gender history as the product of America’s engagement with the world. In so doing, we explore the rise of U.S. global power as an enterprise deeply related to conceptions of race, sexuality, and gender. We also examine films, political speeches, visual culture, music, and popular culture. Enrollment limited to first-year students. HU

WGSS 105b / PHIL 105b, Strong Men, Fascism, and Patriarchy  Robin Dembroff and Jason Stanley
Fascist and patriarchal politics are intertwined. Why? In this course, we examine systems of gender inequality and far right nationalism from a philosophical perspective in order to more fully understand the intimate connections between them. HU
WGSS 117a / AFAM 117a / AMST 207a / MUSI 156a, Beyonce Makes History: Black Radical Tradition History, Culture, Theory & Politics through Music  

This class centers the 2010s and 2020s' sonic and visual repertoire of Beyonce Knowles-Carter (from 2013’s self-titled album through 2024’s "Cowboy Carter") as the portal through which to rigorously examine key interdisciplinary works of Black intellectual thought and grassroots activist practices across the centuries. Its aim is two-fold: to both explore and analyze the dense, robust and virtuosic aesthetics, socio-historical and political dimensions of Beyonce’s pathbreaking, mid-career body of work and to, likewise, use her aesthetics; the multi-dimensional form and content of her recordings; her boundary-transgressing performance politics; her history-making visual albums; her innovative concert films; her unprecedented pop music archival endeavors and more as the occasion to explore landmark Black Studies scholarship and Black freedom struggle scholarly and cultural texts (in history, Black feminist theory, philosophy, anthropology, art history, performance studies, musicology, political science, sociology, dance, American Studies, religious studies, archival studies etc.) that directly resonate with Beyonce’s sonic, visual and live performance endeavors. In short, this is a class that traces the relationship between Beyonce’s artistic genius and Black intellectual practice.  

HU 0 Course cr

WGSS 125a / AFAM 115a, “We Interrupt this Program: The Multidimensional Histories of Queer and Trans Politics”  

In 1991, the arts organizations Visual AIDS and The Kitchen collaborated with video artist and filmmaker Charles Atlas to produce the live television broadcast "We Interrupt this Program." Part educational presentation, part performance piece, the show was aired in millions of homes across the nation. The program, in The Kitchen’s words, “sought to feature voices that had often been marginalized within many discussions of AIDS, in particular people of color and women.” This course builds upon and is inspired by this aspect of Atlas’s visionary presentation, an aspect that used the show to produce a critically multicultural platform that could activate cultural histories and critical traditions from various communities. In effect, the course uses this aspect as a metonym for the racial, gender, sexual, and class heterogeneity of queer art and organizing. It conducts its investigation by looking at a variety of primary materials that illustrate the heterogeneous makeup of queer and trans politics. The course also draws on more recent texts and visual works that arose from the earlier contexts that the primary texts helped to illuminate and shape.  

HU RP 0 Course cr

WGSS 154a / ER&M 154a / FILM 154a / LAST 154a / PORT 154a, Advanced Studies: Women Filmmakers and Photographers of the Portuguese-Speaking World  

Women Filmmakers and Photographers of the Portuguese-Speaking World is a Portuguese advanced course that delves into the language and culture of the Lusophone world through the lens of women filmmakers and photographers. Organized into three interconnected units, namely, "Diasporas and (De)Territorialities", "Memories They Told Me", and "Reframing Other Existences", students explore how these authors bring forth other perspectives, including those of indigenous people, Afro-Lusophone women, immigrants, and LGBTQIA+ community, among others, challenging societal norms and dominant portrayals. It also explores how their films and photographs reconnect with cultural roots in Africa and Latin America, fragmented by patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. By exploring a variety of productions by photographers
like Yassmin Forte, Madalena Schwartz, Claudia Andujar, and filmmakers like Anna Muylaert, Carolina Paiva, and Lúcia Murat, among others, students investigate links between identities, memory, and language, enabling them to describe, interpret and make inferences about how cultural environments have been historically constructed and how these artistic productions reshape perceptions of our societies. By the course’s end, students have a deeper understanding of the Portuguese language and diverse cultural aspects within the Lusophone world. Conducted in Portuguese. Portuguese 140 or equivalent. L5, HU

**WGSS 200b / AMST 200b / HUMS 165b / SOCY 207b, Topics in Human Sexuality**

Joseph Fischel

In 1970, Yale professors and sexuality scholars Lorna and Philip Sarrel introduced what came to be their wildly popular lecture, “Topics in Human Sexuality.” The course, offered at the height of the sexual revolution and shortly after Yale University admitted women undergraduates, was multipurpose: to teach students about pressing, contemporary social problems around sex, gender, and sexuality; to help students learn about their bodies, sexualities, and relationships; to direct students to resources and information about their sexual and reproductive health; and to advance the mission of a liberal arts education, namely, the cultivation of well-rounded, critically engaged, curious, participatory young citizens. This iteration of the course is inspired by the Sarrels’ ambitions, even if we are unlikely to realize them in full. The course is offered in the spirit of a critical sexuality education, critical as in 1) theory- rather than practicum-driven, but nonetheless 2) urgent. As political movements that endanger transgender children, suppress sexual expression, and rescind reproductive rights gain traction, the course offers candid, careful focus on: abortion, sexual education, queer and trans kids, pornography, university sexual politics, hooking up, and breaking up. Along the way, we watch a season of Netflix’s “Sex Education” together. The class (nonexclusively) focuses on social and political problems in the contemporary United States, and examines those problems by drawing upon scholarship in Gender & Sexuality Studies, American Studies, Sociology, Psychology, and Public Law. HU, SO

*WGSS 202b / AFAM 239b / AMST 461b / EDST 209b / ER&M 292b, Identity, Diversity, and Policy in U.S. Education*  
Craig Canfield

Introduction to critical theory (feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, disability studies, trans studies, indigenous studies) as a fundamental tool for understanding and critiquing identity, diversity, and policy in U.S. education. Exploration of identity politics and theory, as they figure in education policy. Methods for applying theory and interventions to interrogate issues in education. Application of theory and interventions to policy creation and reform. WR, HU

**WGSS 204a / PLSC 203a, Women, Politics, and Policy**  
Staff

This course is an introduction to the way gender structures how we interpret the political world, exploring topics such as women’s access to power, descriptive and substantive representation, evaluation of the functioning of political institutions, and analysis of government policy. It also serves as an introduction to reading and producing empirical research on gender in the social sciences. SO 0 Course cr

*WGSS 205b, Bodies and Pleasures, Sex and Genders*  
Regina Kunzel

This seminar explores questions of embodiment -- its pleasures, perplexities, and pains - to interrogate sex, sexuality, and gender as analytical categories. Its aim is to evaluate formative concepts, theories, and debates within feminist, gender, and queer
studies, critical race studies, and history. We will consider how terms like “women” and “men,” “femininity” and “masculinity,” “homosexuality” and “heterosexuality,” and “gender” and “transgender” have structured people’s experiences and perceptions of bodies – their own and others’. We will interrogate the dynamic and often contested relationship between “gender” and sexuality,” and their constitution through other axes of power and difference, including race, class, and (dis)ability. So

* WGSS 209a / CLCV 216a / LITR 239a / MGRK 216a, Dionysus in Modernity
  George Syrimis
  Modernity’s fascination with the myth of Dionysus. Questions of agency, identity and community, and psychological integrity and the modern constitution of the self. Manifestations of Dionysus in literature, anthropology, and music; the Apollonian-Dionysiac dichotomy; twentieth-century variations of these themes in psychoanalysis, surrealism, and magical realism. HU

WGSS 212a, Monogamy and its Discontents  Staff
While monogamy is central to Michel Foucault’s formulation of normative sexuality that arose in the 19th century (the Malthusian couple as adult, monogamous, heterosexual, married, and reproductive), little attention has been paid to it as a particular historical form of intimacy. We investigate this structure of intimacy through theoretical, historical, ethnographic, literary, and visual materials and think about the various meanings of monogamy historically as well as transnationally. Monogamy is entangled with relations of private property, with colonial civilizational narratives, with scientific theories about human nature. Polygamy in return has historically been understood as religious and/or cultural difference, and as a remnant of pre-modernity. The course weaves together theoretical readings that equip students with the tools to understand some key concepts that we need for our discussion, such as private property; the private family; colonialism and (cultural) imperialism; law and liberalism; and bourgeois morality with readings that more directly address some of the key ways in which monogamy is imagined, understood and framed. We discuss the turn to a recent rise in nonmonogamy in the “West” as a radical and “liberated” alternative to life-long or serial monogamy, at times featuring a critique of the private family, which constitutes a curious contrast to the nonmonogamy of religious and cultural Others of the West. Understanding the contemporary discourses and industries (books, podcasts, therapists’ youtube channels) around polyamory and nonmonogamy as a 21st century strategic unity, we analyze how liberalism has framed our understanding of sexual liberation and discuss alternative approaches to freedom. HU 0 Course cr

* WGSS 217b / AMST 315b / ANTH 319b, Writing Anthropology: Digital Fan Communities  Staff
Are you a Twihard? BTS ARMY? A Chalamaniac? This course investigates the communities and practices that emerge around popular media. In this course we think critically about fan responses to popular media through fanfiction, fanvids, shipping, and online fandoms. Through which we explore how fan responses point to and rely on the questioning and rethinking of media texts, to reinvent them as powerful but covert means of access and transformation. We examine fandoms/online fan communities as addressing the needs of marginalized communities to adapt, expand, and challenge books, movies, music, and other media to meet their needs. This course engages
cultural practices as robust networks of critique through examinations of gender, race, sexuality, intellectual property ownership, and the production of fan labor.  WR, SO

* WGSS 218b / AMST 218b, Sex, Gender, and American Moderns  Scott Herring

What did being “modern” mean to those whose marginalized aesthetics negotiated sexual, racial, regional, national, and gender norms in the first half of the twentieth-century United States? This course functions as an intensive immersion into the creeds and concerns of recent scholarship regarding modes of U.S. modernity as the field overlaps with current forays into sexuality and gender studies. Via painting, photography, print culture, a “homosexual comedy,” oral history and other resources, we discuss the popularization of heteronormativity in US sex manuals; the emergence of LGBTQ subcultures within and without urban East Coast environments; queer feminist agency through experimental photography in Provincetown; slumming and sensationalism in the Chicago Loop; and modern crip intimacies in Connecticut. Students meet the artists of the PaJaMa collective; James Weldon Johnson’s Ex-Colored Man; avant-garde Pacific Rim poets such as José Garcia Villa; a Nepali American surrealist; and a bohemian of the Harlem Renaissance whose drawings are held at the Beinecke.  HU

* WGSS 226a / AMST 222a, Pop Sapphism  Karen Tongson

Lesbian popular culture, despite rare waves of visibility, is construed as generically niche and embalmed in past eras like the 1970s and 1990s. As we enter deeper into the millennium, the lesbian presence in pop—from music and literature, to film, TV, and other media—is revived through the more expansive sexual and aesthetic imaginary of “sapphism,” a term that signals the explicitly gay, as well as the more implicitly “queer coded.” Female-identified artists and creators, whether they’re out or not, inspire a sapphic pop culture comprised of both artists and a robust fan culture, that calls upon the historical archives and intimate reading practices of lesbian cultures and queer theory, including the resurgence of Sapphic poetry itself. This seminar revisits the key historical and aesthetic touchstones of “sapphism,” while engaging contemporary iterations of sapphic pop culture, from figures like K-Stew (Kristen Stewart), Janelle Monae, and a slew of “converted” reality contestants, to the controversies surrounding “Gaylorism” itself. The seminar teaches genealogical and historiographic approaches to sexuality studies, along with techniques of close reading and analysis in Queer Studies—especially recent books on lesbian aesthetics, as well as earlier iterations queer of color critique.  HU

WGSS 230a / ANTH 230a, Evolutionary Biology of Female Bodies  Claudia Valeggia

Evolutionary, biosocial, and situated perspectives on the female body. Physiological, ecological, social and cultural aspects of the development of female bodies from puberty through menopause and aging, with special attention to lived experiences. Variation in female life histories in a variety of cultural and ecological settings. Examples from both traditional and modern societies.  SC 0 Course cr

* WGSS 233a / FILM 341a / MGRK 238a, Weird Greek Wave Cinema  George Syrimis

The course examines the cinematic production of Greece in the last fifteen years or so and looks critically at the popular term “weird Greek wave” applied to it. Noted for their absurd tropes, bizarre narratives, and quirky characters, the films question and disturb traditional gender and social roles, as well as international viewers’ expectations of national stereotypes of classical luminosity—the proverbial “Greek light”–Dionysian
exuberance, or touristic leisure. Instead, these works frustrate not only a wholistic reading of Greece as a unified and coherent social construct, but also the physical or aesthetic pleasure of its landscape and its ‘quaint’ people with their insistence on grotesque, violent, or otherwise disturbing images or themes (incest, sexual otherness and violence, aggression, corporeality, and xenophobia). The course also pays particular attention on the economic and political climate of the Greek financial crisis during which these films are produced and consumed and to which they partake. HU

* WGSS 238b, Foucault and the Sexual Self  Igor De Souza
This course explores the main ideas and influence of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*. Alongside the methods and conclusions of the *HS*, we examine the implications of the *HS* for feminist studies and queer theory, and the approach of the *HS* towards ancient Greek sexuality. HU

* WGSS 239a / EDST 235a, Education and the Culture Wars  Talya Zemach-Bersin
Examination of the historical development and politics of the “culture wars” with a focus on how battles over the “soul of America” have focused on the American education system. Conflict over "American values” issues like abortion, gay marriage, and religion are compounded by legal battles over federal funding and school choice. Study of interdisciplinary readings from law, politics, history, and cultural studies. Preference for enrollment will be given to Education Studies Scholars.

* WGSS 258b / AMST 258b / ER&M 258b / EVST 258b, Wilderness in the North American Imagination: What Was the Wild?  Dolma Ombadykow
This course examines the history of natural science, with a particular attention to nineteenth and early-twentieth century colonial understandings of the wild, the civil, the self, and the other. The wild—whether the American West, the Gobi Desert, or the Amazon River—conjures visions of a place set apart by space, but also by time. In the western imagination, the wild is a decidedly historical—perhaps even prehistoric—place. Does the wild still exist, and what might the wild of the future look like? Centering critique from Black studies, Indigenous studies, gender and sexuality studies, critical race studies, and science and technology studies, this course asks: how have institutions like museums, zoos, the military, governments, and NGOs shaped our understandings of who, what, and when counts as wild? This course encourages students to think against dominant narrations of agriculture, conservation, natural resource extraction, tourism, and the promises of global commerce to attend to alternative formations of the natural. What roles do race, gender, sexuality, labor, and class play in our understandings of the wilderness? What does it mean for the wild to be populated, engineered, manicured, curated, or preserved? Each week, students will open class by introducing us to a place or a concept that pushes at the conceptual limits of the wild. Examples may be places or experiences of personal importance, like the family fish camp or an ancestral homeland, but equally permitted are explorations of, as examples, the rats of the New York City subway, the 1989 Exxon-Valdez oil spill, metastatic cancer, or microplastics. HU

* WGSS 260a, Food, Identity and Desire  Maria Trumpler
Exploration of how food—ingredients, cooking practices, and appetites—can intersect with gender, ethnicity, class, and national origin to produce profound experiences of identity and desire. Sources include memoir, cookbooks, movies, and fiction.
WGSS 282b / HSAR 282b / HSHM 237b, Renaissance Bodies: Art, Magic, Science
Marisa Bass
An introduction to issues surrounding the representation of the body in both art and
science, spanning from the late Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, and with a
particular focus on the Northern Renaissance. Topics include medicine, reproduction,
witchcraft, the gender spectrum, torture, race, disability, desire, dreams, and theories of
imagination and invention. Sections and assignments will make ample use of the Yale
collections. Previous experience with art history welcome but not required.  HU

* WGSS 291b / HIST 240b / RLST 347b / SOCY 331b, Sexual Minorities from
Plato to the Enlightenment  Igor De Souza
This interdisciplinary course surveys the history of homosexuality from a cross-
cultural, comparative perspective. Students study contexts where homosexuality and
sodomy were categorized, regulated, and persecuted and examine ancient and medieval
constructions of same-sex desire in light of post-modern developments, challenging
ideas around what is considered normal and/or natural. Ultimately, we ask: what has
changed, and what has remained the same, in the history of homosexuality? What do
gays and lesbians today have in common with pre-modern sodomites? Can this history
help us ground or rethink our sexual selves and identities? Primary and secondary
historical sources, some legal and religious sources, and texts in intellectual history
are studied. Among the case studies for the course are ancient attitudes among Jews,
early Christians, and Greeks; Christian theologians of the Middle Ages; Renaissance
Florence; the Inquisition in Iberia; colonial Latin America; and the Enlightenment’s
condemnation of sodomy by Montesquieu and Voltaire, and its defense by Bentham.  HU

* WGSS 298b / AFAM 326b / AMST 312b / ER&M 310b, Postcolonial Cities of the
West  Fadila Habchi
Examination of various texts and films pertaining to the representation of postcolonial
cities in the global north and a range of social, political, and cultural issues that concern
those who inhabit these spaces.  HU

* WGSS 305a / AFAM 315a, Black Feminist Theory  Gail Lewis
This course is designed to introduce you to some of the major themes in black feminist
theory. The course does so by presenting classic texts with more recent ones to give
you a sense of the vibrancy of black feminist theory for addressing past and present
concerns. Rather than interpret black feminist theory as a critical formation that simply
puts race, gender, sexuality, and class into conversation with one another, the course
apprehends that formation as one that produced epistemic shifts in how we understand
politics, empire, history, the law, and literature. This is by no means an exhaustive list
of the areas into which black feminism intervened. It is merely a sample of some of the
most vibrant ideological and discursive contexts in which black feminism caused certain
epistemic transformations.  SO

* WGSS 306b / AMST 314b / ER&M 314b, Gender and Transgender  Greta LaFleur
Introduction to transgender studies, an emergent field that draws on gender studies,
queer theory, sociology, feminist science studies, literary studies, and history.
Representations of gender nonconformity in a cultural context dominated by a two-sex
model of human gender differentiation. Sources include novels, autobiographies, films,
and philosophy and criticism.  RP
* WGSS 328a / AMST 428a / ENGL 332a / ER&M 448a, “I Don’t Like to Argue”: The Styles and Politics of Humility  Sunny Xiang and Minh Vu

What can academic writing do besides argue? Why does critical thinking so often compel an idiom of claiming, exploring, discovering, and mastering? What might writers strive for, if not newness, rigor, excellence, or even one’s own voice? In this class, we defamiliarize and repair the habits of mind and body that have been normalized by the university. Some of our time goes toward identifying the racial and colonial logics as well as presumptions about gender and ability that inform the conventions, genres, and styles of scholarly prose. For example, we contemplate the power relations and tonal effects embedded in the familiar maneuvers of advancing and defending arguments. Most of the class’s energy, however, is devoted to testing out less combative modes of inhabiting the page. We pursue these experiments not in the name of novelty but with the hope that our compositional practices can move us toward different values and different futures for writing, conversing, and living as subjects of the university. To guide us in this endeavor, we look to scholars who have critiqued the politics of knowledge by mobilizing alternative styles of knowing. Some, for example, have turned footnotes into an occasion for giving thanks instead of exhibiting mastery. Others have repurposed quotations and images in ways that challenge traditional regimes of evidence.  

* WGSS 335a / AMST 336a, LGBTQ Life Spans  Scott Herring

Interdisciplinary survey of LGBTQ life spans in the United States concentrating primarily on later life. Special attention paid to topics such as disability, aging, and ageism; queer and trans creative aging; longevity and life expectancy during the AIDS epidemic; intergenerational intimacy; age and activism; critiques of optimal aging; and the development of LGBTQ senior centers and affordable senior housing. We explore these topics across multiple contemporary genres: documentary film (The Joneses), graphic memoir (Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home), poetry (Essex Hemphill’s “Vital Signs”), fabulation (Saidiya Hartman’s Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments), and oral history. We also review archival documents of later LGBTQ lives—ordinary and iconic—held at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library as well as the Lesbian Herstory Archives.  

* WGSS 339b / ENGL 3185b, Fiction and Sexual Politics  Margaret Homans

Historical survey of works of fiction that have shaped and responded to feminist, queer, and transgender thought from the late eighteenth century to the present. Authors include Wollstonecraft, C. Bronte, H. Jacobs, C. P. Gilman, R. Hall, Woolf, Wittig, Walker, Anzaldua, Morrison, Kingston, Winterson, and Bechdel. Previously ENGL 385.  WR, HU  

* WGSS 340a, Feminist and Queer Theory  Craig Canfield

Historical survey of feminist and queer theory from the Enlightenment to the present, with readings from key British, French, and American works. Focus on the foundations and development of contemporary theory. Shared intellectual origins and concepts, as well as divergences and conflicts, among different ways of approaching gender and sexuality.  WR, HU  

* WGSS 343a / AFAM 352a / AMST 438a / ER&M 291a / LITR 295a, Caribbean Diasporic Literature  Fadila Habchi

An examination of contemporary literature written by Caribbean writers who have migrated to, or who journey between, different countries around the Atlantic rim.
Focus on literature written in English in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both fiction and nonfiction. Writers include Caryl Phillips, Nalo Hopkinson, and Jamaica Kincaid. HU

* WGSS 350a / AMST 300a, The Invention of Love  Igor De Souza
This course proposes a historical, theoretical, and cultural investigation of what we call “romantic love,” the kind of love we tend to associate with courtship, with relationships that include a sexual-erotic component, and with marriage. We begin with Denis de Rougemont’s controversial thesis that romantic love was invented around the 1200s in the courtly culture of Southern France. We examine manifestations of romantic love in medieval Arab cultures as precedents to the invention of courtly love. In the second part of our course, we turn to modern humanistic theories about romantic love. Among the questions that critical theorists and philosophers have posed, we consider: How is love related to desire? Is sexual desire an indispensable component of romantic love? Is romantic love ultimately a selfish, exclusionary act, or is it about renouncing the self, losing the self in the other? In the third part of our course, we apply the insights of parts 1 and 2 to discuss case studies of romantic love in the contemporary United States. In this section, we explore reining assumptions between romantic love and: marriage; monogamy; dating; the digital environment; queerness; age; and transnationalism.

* WGSS 354a / HIST 191Ja, Women, Gender, and Grassroots Politics in the United States after World War II  Jennifer Klein
American politics and grassroots social movements from 1945 to the present explored through women’s activism and through gender politics more broadly. Ideas about gender identities, gender roles, and family in the shaping of social movements; strategies used on the local, regional, national, and international levels. Connections between organizing and policy, public and private, state and family, and migration, immigration, and empire. WR, HU

* WGSS 364a / ER&M 236a / ITAL 337a / LITR 395a, Feminism without Women: Modernist and Postcolonial Textual Experiments  Serena Bassi
Antifeminist critics charge the feminist movement with having forgotten “real women’ in favor of inaccessible theories rejecting the supposedly incontrovertible fact that there are only two sexes and genders. This seminar turns the charge on its head by exploring a theoretical and literary canon that - by questioning the ontological status of the male/female binary - has transformed feminism into a capacious, radically inclusive, revolutionary 21st Century movement. The texts and the theories that we discuss put pressure on the very category of “woman” as they strive to rethink feminism as a non-identitarian world-making project. The class focuses on two movements that employ art and literature to push back against the idea of “women” as the monolithic subject of feminism: Italian vanguard modernism and Italophone literary postcolonialism. We discuss modernist and postcolonial novels, poems, essays, and performative art pieces together with classics of feminist, queer and postcolonial theory. We push our own political imagination further by asking ever more sophisticated questions about gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and the way these intersecting social formations mediate the way we see, experience, and represent our material and social reality. The course is taught entirely in English. No previous knowledge of Italian language, art, or literature required. Students seeking departmental credit for Italian do their writing and reading in the original language, and attend a discussion session in Italian. HU
* WGSS 388b / AFAM 349b / AMST 326b / HIST 115Jb, Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation
Crystal Feimster
The dynamic relationship between the civil rights movement and the women’s liberation movement from 1940 to the present. When and how the two movements overlapped, intersected, and diverged. The variety of ways in which African Americans and women campaigned for equal rights. Topics include World War II, freedom summer, black power, the Equal Rights Amendment, feminism, abortion, affirmative action, and gay rights. HU

* WGSS 390a / ER&M 360a / HLTH 370a / HSHM 432a / SOCY 390a, 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. WR, SO

* WGSS 407b / ANTH 308b, Feminist & Queer Ethnographies: Borders and Boundaries
Eda Pepi
This seminar gives students a storm’s eye view of contemporary crises, where borders are as volatile as the ring of a wedding bell or the birth of a child. Feminist and queer ethnographies explore the geopolitical lines and social divides that define and confine us. Manifesting through laws, social norms, and physical barriers, borders and boundaries shape our identities, turning the intimate act of living into a fiercely political one. We consider them as lived experiences that cross militarized lines – as the everyday realities of families, detention centers, workplaces, universities, and even nightclubs. Our readings trace the fluidity of borders, the extension of the global north’s influence, and the internal colonialism that redraws the landscapes of nations. Contemporary ways of bridging time and space are profoundly gendered, sexualized racialized, and class-specific, capable of materializing with sudden intensity for some and remaining imperceptible to others, morphing from ephemeral lines to seemingly permanent barriers. The course is an invitation to think beyond the map – to understand borders as something people live, challenge, and transform. Our intellectual battleground is the liminal space where geopolitics meets the raw human struggle for recognition, peeling back the layers of political theatre to witness the making and unmaking of our borderlands. Anchored by a “radical hope for living otherwise,” the seminar also aims to expand the intellectual horizons necessary for dreaming of, and working towards, the world to come. HU, SO

* WGSS 426b / ENGL 4844b, Virginia Woolf
Margaret Homans
A study of the major novels and other writings by Virginia Woolf, with additional readings in historical contexts and in Woolf biography and criticism. Focus on Woolf’s modernist formal experimentation and on her responses and contributions to political movements of her day, principally feminism and pacifism; attention also to the critical reception of her work, with emphasis on feminist and queer literary criticism and theory. Previously ENGL 344. WR, HU
* WGSS 430a / ANTH 441a / MMES 430a, Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East  Eda Pepi
This seminar explores the complex interplay between gender, sexuality, and citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa. We examine how they are both shaped by and shape experiences of nationality, migration, and statelessness. Highlighting how gender and sexual minorities, and the gendered regulation of life, more broadly, both animate and contest colonial legacies tied to a racialized notion of “modernity.” Through ethnography, history, and literature, students confront a political economy of intimacies that continuously reshape what it means to be or not to be a citizen. Our approach extends beyond borders and laws to include the everyday acts of citizenship that rework race, religion, and ethnicity across transnational fronts. We discuss how people navigate their lives in the everyday, from the ordinary poetry of identity and belonging to the spectacular drama of war and conflict. Our goal is to challenge orientalist legacies that dismiss theoretical insights from scholarship on and from this region by labeling it as focused on exceptional cases instead of addressing “universal” issues. Instead, we take seriously that the specific historical and social contexts of the Middle East and North Africa reveal how connections based on gender and sexuality within and across families and social classes are deeply entwined with racial narratives of state authority and political sovereignty on a global scale.  

* WGSS 431b / ANTH 451b, Intersectionality and Women’s Health  Staff
The intersections of race, class, gender, and other axes of “difference” and their effects on women’s health, primarily in the contemporary United States. Recent feminist approaches to intersectionality and multiplicity of oppressions theory. Ways in which anthropologists studying women’s health issues have contributed to social and feminist theory at the intersections of race, class, and gender.  

* WGSS 435b / HIST 444Jb / HSHM 418b, Queer Science  Joanna Radin and Juno Richards
Why are there so many studies involving trans brain scans? Can facial recognition technology really tell if you’re queer? Why is everyone so obsessed with gay penguins? For that matter, how did science come to be the right tool for defining and knowing sex, gender, and sexuality at all? How does that history influence our collective lives in the present, and what are some alternatives? This course gives students a background in the development of sex science, from evolutionary arguments that racialized sexual dimorphism to the contemporary technologies that claim to be able to get at bodily truths that are supposedly more real than identity. It introduces scholarly and political interventions that have attempted to short-circuit the idea that sex is stable and knowable by science, highlighting ways that queer and queering thinkers have challenged the stability of sexual categories. It concludes by asking how to put those interventions into practice when so much of the fight for queer rights, autonomy, and survival has been rooted in categorical recognition by the state, and by considering whether science can be made queer.

* WGSS 438a, Subjectivity and its Discontents: Psychosocial Explorations in Black, Feminist, Queer  Gail Lewis
Questions of subjectivity stand at the base of much feminist, black, queer scholarship yet how subjectivity is constituted, whether it is fixed or fluid, how it links to narratives of experience, and how it can be apprehended in critical inquiry is often left implicit. Beginning with a brief consideration of psychoanalytic conceptions of ‘the subject’,
‘subjectivity’ and their relation to social formations, this course examines some of the ways in which subjectivity has been theorized and brought under critical scrutiny by black diasporic, feminist and queer scholars. It draws on work produced in reference to multiple sites, including the UK, the USA and the Caribbean within the fields of psychoanalysis, social science, the humanities and critical art practice. It aims to critique the divide between ‘interior’ psychic life and ‘exterior’ social selves, as well as considering the relation between ‘freedom’ and subjectivity, including the extent to which ‘freedom’ might require rejection of ‘subjectivity’ as a mode of personhood.

* WGSS 461a / AMST 450a / ER&M 430a, Islam in the American Imagination
  Zareena Grewal
  The representation of Muslims in the United States and abroad throughout the twentieth century. The place of Islam in the American imagination; intersections between concerns of race and citizenship in the United States and foreign policies directed toward the Middle East. WR, SO

* WGSS 465b / HIST 447Jb / HSHM 467b, History of the Body
  Ziv Eisenberg
  What does it mean to have a “bad hair day?” How should you care for your skin? What happens when you eat a burger and drink wine? How are babies made? What happens when you die? The answers depend not only on who provides them, but also on where and when. This seminar examines historical production of systems of corporeal knowledge and power, as well as the norms, practices, meanings, and power structures they have created, displaced, and maintained. Structured thematically, the course familiarizes students with major topics in the history of the body, health, and medicine, with a particular focus on US history. WR, HU

* WGSS 490a, The Senior Colloquium
  Dara Strolovitch
  A research seminar taken during the senior year. Students with diverse research interests and experience discuss common problems and tactics in doing independent research.

* WGSS 491b, The Senior Essay
  Igor De Souza
  Independent research on, and writing of, the senior essay.