Women’s and Gender Studies Program

Undergraduate Minor

A strong and viable Women’s and Gender Studies Program is essential to the University’s mission to provide a high-quality liberal arts education.

The Women’s and Gender Studies Program offers an undergraduate minor and a graduate certificate with a curriculum of 39 courses in 10 academic departments. Our undergraduate minor and graduate certificate programs enhance any major and prepare students to think critically about gender as they become global citizens who value lifelong learning and social justice. We also offer six professional practice internships with local community organizations.

The Women’s and Gender Studies Program is a multidisciplinary community of scholars committed to a transformative analysis of gender as it intersects with class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability, age, nationality, and transnationality. We are engaged in innovative collaborative scholarship, teaching, and service that promotes new knowledge and socially responsible activism.

Reactions from alumni

“The WGS minor is a great supplement to any course of study because it helps people understand their position in society—educationally, vocationally, and personally. It helped me to understand issues macroscopically (systemically) and taught me about things that were left out of my traditional education.”

Breanna Mud’10

“I was in denial of social injustice. I believed staunchly in the bootstraps myth, which gave rise to a very close-minded way of seeing. It was a WGS minor, I have made such great leaps and bounds! I am excited to further knowledge of gender and history. I hope one day to (possibly) teach a women’s and gender studies course at a collegiate level.”

Neil Matsu’10

“One of the most outstanding courses I’ve taken was Women, Gender, and Society. I felt that the content, readings, lecture, group work, papers, and journal writing gave me a better understanding of myself and the issues that impact women around the world.”

Nicole Berg’04

“The entire program and all courses were valuable to me in all aspects of my life. Educationally, they have complemented my major. Vocationally, they have assisted me in my current job and will continue to help me when I apply for work after Illinois State. Finally, and more personally, I have fostered many strong new friendships using the knowledge I have gained.”

Debbie Armstrong’03

“I thought that each instructor and class was unique. Having professors from different fields of study allowed me to see women in many different ways…Women’s studies courses opened my eyes to other social situations throughout the world. They made me realize how much work there needs to be done to achieve gender and racial equality.”

Sarah Mae Grant’02

“I can’t imagine not having taken women’s studies classes. The information and experiences that I’ve had here have shaped me more than anything.”

Leah Bruno ’01

“Every women’s studies instructor I’ve had has been encouraging and challenging…Women’s studies courses were the ones—more than any other departmental offerings—that helped me synthesize everything else I have learned.”

Elizabeth Sawyer’00

Affiliated faculty

Art
Elizabeth Friedman
Melissa Johnson
Jin Lee
Melissa Oresky

Arts Technology
Shan Zeck

Biological Sciences
Christopher Horvath

Criminal Justice
Dawn Belcher
Seisa Kethineni
Jesse Kienert
Cara Rabei-Hemp

Education
Venus Evans-Winters

Economics
Sherrilyn Billger

English
Shushan Avagyan
Cheryl Hall
Lee Brasseur
Becca Chase
Kass Fleisher
Angela Hae
Cynthia Huff
Krishna Kumari
Manavalli
Rhonda Nicol
Paula Resler
Rebecca Sauders
Tim Thompson
Robert Seelinger
Trinie
Oren Whitsel
Kirstin Hoteling Zona

Family and Consumer Sciences
William Kohm

History
Kyle Cani
Ray Clemens
Linda Clemons
Louis G. Perez
Georgiia Tovatul Alina
Christine Varga-Harris
Amy Wood

Sociology
Tom Gerschick
Cinda Hunter
Marta Schmeeckle
Susan Sprecher
Richard Sullivan
Maura Toms-Morn
Chris Wellin

Theatre
Ann Hauge
Pete R. Poole
Janet Wollon

Women’s and Gender Studies
Alison Bailey
Becca Chase

Language, Literatures, and Cultures
Juliet Lynd
James Pancratz
Mary Trouille

Mellon Library
Vanette Schwartz

Music
A. Oforiwaa Adukonum

Philosophy
Alison Bailey
Christopher Horvath

Politics and Government
Ali Riaz
Julie Webber

Psychology
Eris DeSouza
Matthew Hesson- McHose
Karen Pfoert
John B. Pryor
Maria Riesie-Weber
Rocio Rivadeneira
Kim Schneider

Social Work
Cynthia Edmonds-
Cady
Jeanne Howard

Sociology
Tom Gerschick
Cinda Hunter
Marta Schmeeckle
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required Courses

WGS 120: Women, Gender, and Society

How systems of gender shape societies around the world; how individual and collective actions transform the gender systems of a society.

ENG 160: Women in Literature

Women's experiences in literature. A variety of genres and historical periods.

HIS 261: History of Women in the United States to 1865

The role of women in the economic, social, political, and cultural history of America from the colonial period to the Civil War.

HIS 262: History of the Women in the United States since 1865

The role of women in the economic, social, political, and cultural history of America from 1865 to the present.

PSY 264: Feminist Philosophy of the Person

Survey and critical examination of a variety of feminist contributions to philosophical topics such as gender, oppression, ethics, and epistemology. Formerly Feminist Political Philosophy.

Electives

ANT 270: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women, Sex Roles, and Gender

An examination of the position of women, their interrelationships with men, the assignment of male and female roles, and the conceptualization of gender ideology in various societies and cultures.

ANT 376: Archaeology of Gender

Exploration of various archaeological approaches to the interpretation of gender in past societies. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

CJS 307: Family Violence: Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Analysis of family violence in the U.S. and other countries. Emphasis on police and judiciary response, solutions, and treatment. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

CJS 339: Women in Criminal Justice

Historical and theoretical perspectives and contemporary trends concerning women and crime and processing of women by the criminal justice system.

COM/ENG/LAN 128: Gender in the Humanities

Examination of gender roles, norms, and stereotypes from a broad range of perspectives within humanities across centuries and cultures.

ECO 230: Economics of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, and Beyond

Differences in economic opportunities and outcomes, including the role of systems, institutions, culture, and preferences.

ENG/LAN 260: Cultural Expressions in Social Contexts: Women of Asia, Latin America, and Africa

Interdisciplinary study of varieties of women's cultural expressions within distinct social contexts including comparative emphasis on different regions of context.

ENG 260: History of Literature by Women

A historical overview of writing by women from early times to the present.

ENG 261: Women's Literature in a Global Context

Literature by women of diverse ethnicities to examine varieties of texts and their cultural construction.

ENG 360: Studies in Women and Literature

Studies in literature by or about women, focusing on stereotyping of male and female experience and developing feminist aesthetic theories.

FCS/HE/SOC 112: American Family: Change and Diversity

Historical and comparative exploration of activities of family formation, maintenance, and reconfiguration in America. Emphasis on issues of diversity.

FCS 222: Cultural Diversity in Dress

Interdisciplinary, comparative exploration of diverse cultures through dress and adornment.

FCS 233: Family Economic Resources

Economic description of the family emphasizing the family's financial, physical, and human capital investments over the life cycle.

FCS 327: Clothing and Behavior

Factors that influence behavior related to clothing selection and use. Emphasis on research. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

HIS 330: The Family in History

History of the family in Europe and America, viewing change from idealist, economic determinist, family systems, and psychodynamic perspectives.

IDS 121.39: Women by Women: Contemporary Women Playwrights

Exploration of plays that focus on the complexities of diverse female-to-female relationships by contemporary women playwrights. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

MUS 356.02: Women in Music: Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Studies in the relationship and contributions of music and musicians to the societies in which they live. Prerequisite: See ISU catalog.

PHI 202: Sex, Values, and Human Nature

Investigation of competing views about the nature of human sexuality, and their moral and social consequences.

POL 225: Women in Politics

The study of the role of women in the political process.

POL 337: Lesbian and Gay Politics

Explores LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) political movements in historical context and with reference to claims for citizenship. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

POL 338: Gender and Public Policy

Examination of how gender shapes and is shaped by public policy formulation and implementation in different political and state contexts. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

PSY/SOC 123: Human Sexuality

Basic psychological, sociocultural, and physiological elements of human sexuality.

PSY 305: Psychology of Women

Psychological research to place in scientific perspective the etiology and behavioral consequences of female- and male-oriented attitudes.

SOC 264: Minority Relations

Racial, national, and religious minorities, and women. Patterns of discrimination and prejudice, and change in intergroup relations.

SOC 265: Personal Relationships

Introductory course on theory, research, and methods in the study of a variety of social and personal relationships. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

SOC 341: Sociology of Gender

Explores the concepts, theories, and methods sociologists utilize to explain the differences in the social relations between and among women and men. Individual, interactional, institutional, and social change processes are examined. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

SOC 342: Sociology of the Body

Explores the concepts, theories, and methods sociologists utilize to study the body in social life. Special emphasis on non-normative bodies. Prerequisites: See ISU catalog.

SOC 366: Contemporary Social Movements

Theories, methods, and research on social movements in the United States and on traditional social movements, including the women's movement.

WGS 390: Interdisciplinary Research in Women's and Gender Studies

Students will research and write on an interdisciplinary topic of their choice relevant to women’s and gender studies. Arranges with assistant director.

WGS 391: Women's and Gender Studies Seminar

A critical examination of selected topics in women's and gender studies. May be repeated if topic is different.

WGS 392: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender/Queer Studies and Theory

Research in the interdisciplinary field of LGBT/Queer Studies emphasizing how queer theory informs a variety of academic disciplines.

WGS 398: Professional Practice: Internship in Women’s and Gender Studies

Supervised work experience in local, state, national, or international businesses, agencies, institutions, or organizations focusing on women's and gender issues. Arrange with assistant director.

Resource Center and Library

The Women's and Gender Studies Program is committed to helping our students succeed. Our resource center and library house an extensive collection of books, periodicals, and media resources. A listing of our current holdings is posted on our website. The center has Internet access and offers students a comfortable place to study and work on group projects.

Contact Information

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