WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES

Program Office: 763 Schermerhorn Extension; 212-854-3277; 212-854-7466 (fax)
http://irwgs.columbia.edu/

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Prof. Lila Abu-Lughod, 756 Schermerhorn Extension; 212 854 3693; la310@columbia.edu

Located within the Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality and taught in cooperation with Barnard College’s Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, the program in women’s and gender studies provides students with a culturally and historically situated, theoretically diverse understanding of feminist scholarship and its contributions to the disciplines. The program introduces students to feminist discourse on the cultural and historical representation of nature, power, and the social construction of difference. It encourages students to engage in the debates regarding the ethical and political issues of equality and justice that emerge in such discussion, and links the questions of gender and sexuality to those of racial, ethnic, and other kinds of hierarchical difference.

Through sequentially organized courses in women’s, gender, and sexuality studies, as well as required discipline-based courses in the humanities and social sciences, the major provides a thoroughly interdisciplinary framework, methodological training, and substantive guidance in specialized areas of research. Small classes and mentored thesis-writing give students an education that is both comprehensive and tailored to individual needs. The major culminates in a thesis-writing class, in which students undertake original research and produce advanced scholarship.

Graduates leave the program well prepared for future scholarly work in women’s, gender, and sexuality studies, as well as for careers and future training in law, public policy, social work, community organizing, journalism, and professions in which there is a need for critical and creative interdisciplinary thought.

Major in Women’s and Gender Studies

The requirements for this program were modified on September 22, 2014. Students who declared this program before this date should contact the director of undergraduate studies for the department in order to confirm their correct course of study.

Students should plan their course of study with the undergraduate director as early in their academic careers as possible. The requirements for the major are:

- WMST UN1001 Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies
- or WMST UN3125 Introduction to Sexuality Studies
- WMST UN3311 Colloquium in Feminist Theory
- WMST UN3514 Historical Approaches to Feminist Questions
- WMST UN3521 Senior Seminar I
- WMST UN3915 Gender and Power in Transnational Perspective
- Six approved Elective Courses on women, gender, and/or sexuality in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies.*

* Electives will be selected in coordination with the director of undergraduate studies to best suit students’ specific interests and to provide them with the appropriate range of courses, whether their focus is ethnic studies, pre-med, pre-law, sociology, public health, queer studies, visual culture, literature, or another area of interest. Students are encouraged to take a broad interdisciplinary approach. The director of undergraduate studies will help students fine-tune their academic program in conjunction with IRWGS courses, cross-listed courses, and other courses offered at Columbia.

Concentration in Women’s and Gender Studies

The requirements for this program were modified on September 22, 2014. Students who declared this program before this date should contact the director of undergraduate studies for the department in order to confirm their correct course of study.

The same requirements as for the major, with the exception of WMST UN3521 Senior Seminar I.

Special Concentration for Those Majoring in Another Department

The requirements for this program were modified on September 22, 2014. Students who declared this program before this date should contact the director of undergraduate studies for the department in order to confirm their correct course of study.

WMST UN1001 Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies; plus four additional approved elective courses on gender.

Fall 2019

WMST UN1001 Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies. 3 points.
An interdisciplinary introduction to key concepts and analytical categories in women’s and gender studies. This course grapples with gender in its complex intersection with other systems of power and inequality, including: sexuality, race and ethnicity, class and nation. Topics include: feminisms, feminist and queer theory, commodity culture, violence, science and technology, visual cultures, work, and family.

Spring 2019: WMST UN1001

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<th>Course Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>WMST 1001</td>
<td>001/00410</td>
<td>M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm</td>
<td>Rebecca Young</td>
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<td>53/120</td>
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WMST BC1050 Women and Health. 3 points.

Interdisciplinary introduction emphasizing interaction of biological and sociocultural influences on women's health, and exploring health disparities among women as well as between women and men. Current biomedical knowledge presented with empirical critiques of research and medical practice in specific areas such as occupational health, cardiology, sexuality, infectious diseases, reproduction, etc.

Fall 2019: WMST BC1050
Course Number Section/Call Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
WMST 1050 001/09909 M W 4:10pm - 5:25pm Rebecca 3 95/120
304 Barnard Hall Young

WMST BC2140 Critical Approaches in Social and Cultural Theory. 3 points.

Introduction to key concepts from social theory as they are appropriated in critical studies of gender, race, sexuality, class and nation. We will explore how these concepts are taken up from different perspectives to address particular social problems, and the effects of these appropriations in the world.

Fall 2019: WMST BC2140
Course Number Section/Call Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
WMST 2140 001/09904 T Th 11:40am - 12:55pm Kaegan 3 46/120
304 Barnard Hall Sparks, 304 Barnard Hall Alexander Pittman

WMST UN3311 Colloquium in Feminist Theory. 4 points.
Prerequisites: LIMITED TO 20 BY INSTRUC PERM; ATTEND FIRST CLASS An exploration of the relationship between new feminist theory and feminist practice, both within the academy and in the realm of political organizing.

Spring 2019: WMST UN3311
Course Number Section/Call Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
WMST 3311 001/00411 Th 4:10pm - 6:00pm Alexander 4 24/20
Room TBA Pittman

WMST V3312 Theorizing Activism. 4 points.
Prerequisites: Critical Approaches or Feminist Theory or permission of instructor. Helps students develop and apply useful theoretical models to feminist organizing on local and international levels. It involves reading, presentations, and seminar reports. Students use first-hand knowledge of the practices of specific women's activist organizations for theoretical work.

WMST UN3450 Topics in Sexuality and Gender Law. 3 points.
As society shifts in its views about sexuality and gender, so too does the law. Indeed, legal developments in this area have been among the most dynamic of the past couple of decades. Yet law does not map easily or perfectly onto lived experience, and legal arguments do not necessarily track the arguments made in public debate.

In this seminar, we will explore the evolving jurisprudence of sexuality and gender law in a variety of areas. Our goal throughout the semester will be to understand and think about these issues as lawyers do - with our primary focus on understanding and evaluating the arguments that can be made on both (or all) sides of any particular case, with some attention to the factors outside of the courtroom that might shape how courts approach their work. Related to this, we will also seek to understand how and why some of the jurisprudence has changed over time.

Fall 2019: WMST UN3450
Course Number Section/Call Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
WMST 3450 001/10573 Th 2:10pm - 4:00pm Suzanne 3 18/25
754 Ext Schermerhorn Hall Goldberg

WMST BC3513 Critical Animal Studies. 4 points.
"This course collaborates between students and professor, humans and animals, subjects and objects, to investigate the Animal Problem. What are non-human animals? How do we relate to them? How do we account for our animal nature while reconciling our cultural aspirations? What are our primary desires with respect to non-human animals?"

WMST UN3521 Senior Seminar I. 4 points.
The Senior Seminar in Women's Studies offers you the opportunity to develop a capstone research paper by the end of the first semester of your senior year. Senior seminar essays take the form of a 25-page paper based on original research and characterized by an interdisciplinary approach to the study of women, sexuality, and/or gender. You must work with an individual advisor who has expertise in the area of your thesis and who can advise you on the specifics of method and content. Your grade for the semester will be determined by the instructor and the advisor. Students receiving a grade of "B+" or higher in Senior Seminar I will be invited to register for Senior Seminar II by the Instructor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Senior Seminar II students will complete a senior thesis of 40-60 pages. Please note, the seminar is restricted to Columbia College and GS senior majors.

Fall 2019: WMST UN3521
Course Number Section/Call Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
WMST 3521 001/63377 W 2:10pm - 4:00pm Saida Hartman 4 3/20
754 Ext Schermerhorn Hall
WMST UN3525 Senior Seminar: Knowledge, Practice, Power. 4 points. Prerequisites: Permission of instructor. Enrollment limited to senior majors.
The Senior Seminar in WGSS offers you the opportunity to develop a capstone research project during the first semester of your senior year. The capstone project may be freestanding, or, with permission of the instructor, may be continued during the spring semester as a Senior Thesis. The capstone project must be based on original research and involve an interdisciplinary approach to the study of women, sexuality, and/or gender. You must work with an individual advisor who has expertise in the area of your project and who can advise you on the specifics of method and content. Your grade for the semester with be determined by the Senior Seminar instructor in consultation with your advisor.

WMST UN3813 Colloquium on Feminist Inquiry. 4 points. Prerequisites: WMST V1001 and the instructor's permission.
A survey of research methods from the social sciences and interpretive models from the humanities, inviting students to examine the tension between the production and interpretation of data. Students receive firsthand experience practicing various research methods and interpretive strategies, while considering larger questions about how we know what we know.

WMST UN3915 Gender and Power in Transnational Perspective. 4 points. Enrollment limited to 15.
Prerequisites: Instructor approval required
Considers formations of gender, sexuality, and power as they circulate transnationally, as well as transnational feminist movements that have emerged to address contemporary gendered inequalities. Topics include political economy, global care chains, sexuality, sex work and trafficking, feminist politics, and human rights.

If it is a small world after all, how do forces of globalization shape and redefine both men's and women's positions as as workers and political subjects? And, if power swirls everywhere, how are transnational power dynamics reinscribed in gendered bodies? How is the body represented in discussions of the political economy of globalization? These questions will frame this course by highlighting how gender and power coalesce to impact the lives of individuals in various spaces including workplaces, the home, religious institutions, refugee camps, the government, and civil society, and human rights organizations. We will use specific sociological and anthropological case studies, to look at how various regimes of power operate to constrain individuals as well as give them new spaces for agency. This course will enable us to think transnationally, historically, and dynamically, using gender as a lens through which to critique relations of power and the ways that power informs our everyday lives and identities.

WMST W4308 Sexuality and Science. 4 points. Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.
Examines scientific research on human sexuality, from early sexology through contemporary studies of biology and sexual orientation, surveys of sexual behavior, and the development and testing of Viagra. How does such research incorporate, reflect, and reshape cultural ideas about sexuality? How is it useful, and for whom?

WMST GU4325 Embodiment and Bodily Difference. 4 points.
At once material and symbolic, our bodies exist at the intersection of multiple competing discourses, including the juridical, the technoscientific, and the biopolitical. In this course, we will draw upon a variety of critical interdisciplinary literatures—including feminist and queer studies, science and technology studies, and disability studies—to consider some of the ways in which the body is constituted by such discourses, and itself serves as the substratum for social relations. Among the key questions we will consider are the following: What is natural about the body? How are distinctions made between presumptively normal and pathological bodies, and between psychic and somatic experiences? How do historical and political-economic forces shape the perception and meaning of bodily difference? And most crucially, how do bodies that are multiply constituted by competing logics of gender, race, nation, and ability offer up resistance to these and other categorizations?
WMST GU4350 Performing feminist activisms in Contemporary Latin America. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

This course explores different ways in which feminist artists and activists use performance to spark social change in Latin America. Using feminism and performance studies as critical lenses, this course addresses how performative actions can challenge patriarchal systems in neoliberal times. We begin the course by reviewing key texts to discuss the key terms “feminisms,” “performance” and “activisms.” Then, the course turns to an examination of contemporary feminist activisms in Latin America, including the #niunamenos movement in Argentina, the 2018 feminist tsunami in Chile and the work of Mujeres Creando in Bolivia. In each session, we will discuss the performative strategies activists use to denounce, protest and resist dominant discourses of power, neoliberalism and gender violence, searching to trace connections and fractures among different contemporary feminist activist movements across Latin America.

Spring 2019

WMST UN3915 Gender and Power in Transnational Perspective. 4 points.
Enrollment limited to 15.

Prerequisites: Instructor approval required
Considers formations of gender, sexuality, and power as they circulate transnationally, as well as transnational feminist movements that have emerged to address contemporary gendered inequalities. Topics include economic, global care chains, sexuality, sex work and trafficking, feminist politics, and human rights.

If it is a small world after all, how do forces of globalization shape and redefine both men’s and women’s positions as as workers and political subjects? And, if power swirls everywhere, how are transnational power dynamics reinscribed in gendered bodies? How is the body represented in discussions of the political economy of globalization? These questions will frame this course by highlighting how gender and power coalesce to impact the lives of individuals in various spaces including workplaces, the home, religious institutions, refugee camps, the government, and civil society, and human rights organizations. We will use specific sociological and anthropological case studies, to look at how various regimes of power operate to constrain individuals as well as give them new spaces for agency. This course will enable us to think transnationally, historically, and dynamically, using gender as a lens through which to critique relations of power and the ways that power informs our everyday lives and identities.

Spring 2019: WMST GU4300 Queer Theory/Visual Culture. 4 points.
This class will ask you to read a set of theoretical essays and social science studies in order to think deeply about sexuality, identity, desire, race, objects, relationality, being, knowing and becoming. We will consider sexuality, desire and gender not as a discrete set of bodily articulations, nor as natural expressions of coherent identities so much as part of the formulation of self that Avery Gordon names “complex personhood.” Over the course of the semester, we will explore new and old theories of queer desire alongside a history of queer cultural production.
WMST GU4506 Gender Justice. 3 points.
This course will provide an introduction to the concrete legal contexts in which issues of gender and justice have been articulated, disputed and hesitantly, if not provisionally, resolved. Readings will cover issues such as Workplace Equality, Sexual Harassment, Sex Role Stereotyping, Work/Family Conflict, Marriage and Alternatives to Marriage, Compulsory Masculinity, Parenting, Domestic Violence, Reproduction and Pregnancy, Rape, Sex Work & Trafficking. Through these readings we will explore the multiple ways in which the law has contended with sexual difference, gender-based stereotypes, and the meaning of equality in domestic, transnational and international contexts. So too, we will discuss how feminist theorists have thought about sex, gender and sexuality in understanding and critiquing our legal system and its norms.

Spring 2019: WMST GU4506
Course Number  Section/Call Number  Times/Location  Instructor  Points  Enrollment
WMST 4506  001/23048  M 2:10pm - 4:00pm  Katherine Franke  3  37/40
103 W & J Warren(Law & Business)

WMST GR6001 Theoretical Paradigms. 4 points.
This course will explore transnational feminist debates about gender-based violence and examine the critical concepts being developed within the scholarly literature to question this “common sense.” What are the elisions and exclusions in many common-sense understandings of these terms? Can we deepen the ways in which we engage with the manifestations and causes of such violence? We will proceed through close readings of the texts of the key feminist thinkers, researchers, and activists who are contributing to the critical analysis of the dynamics and history of this international agenda. We pay special attention to place-based research on the applicability and deployment of particular approaches to gender-based violence as found in human rights work, humanitarianism, philanthrocapitalism, and the proliferating organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, around the world that promote girls’ and women’s rights and freedom from violence. Case studies will focus mostly on the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa.

Spring 2019: WMST GR6001
Course Number  Section/Call Number  Times/Location  Instructor  Points  Enrollment
WMST 6001  001/28143  M 4:10pm - 6:00pm  Lila Abu-Lughod  4  21/20
754 Ext Schermerhorn Hall