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, 765
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.

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<tr>
<td>WMST 1001</td>
<td>001/09911</td>
<td>M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm 304 Barnard Hall</td>
<td>Jack Halberstam, Manijeh Moradian</td>
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organizing. An exploration of the relationship between new feminist theory and feminist practice, both within the academy and in the realm of political appropriations in the world.

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.

WMST BC1050 Women and Health. 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.

WMST BC2140 Critical Approaches in Social and Cultural Theory. 3 points.
BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Social Analysis (SOC I).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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<td>WMST 3521</td>
<td>001/63377</td>
<td>W 2:10pm - 4:00pm 754 Ext Schermerhorn Hall</td>
<td>Saidiya Hartman</td>
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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 will be
determined by the Senior Seminar instructor in consultation with your
advisor.

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<td>WMST 3525</td>
<td>001/09907</td>
<td>W 10:10am - 12:00pm 501 Diana Center</td>
<td>Manijeh Moradian</td>
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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.

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<td>001/09903</td>
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<td>Janet Jakobsen</td>
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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.

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<tr>
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<td>001/63378</td>
<td>Th 10:10am - 12:00pm 754 Ext Schermerhorn Hall</td>
<td>Selina Makana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24/25</td>
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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?

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<td>WMST 4308</td>
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<td>T 2:10pm - 4:00pm LJo18 Milstein Center</td>
<td>Rebecca Young</td>
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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 activism 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 activism 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 connectivities and fractures among different contemporary feminist activist movements across Latin America.

Spring 2020

WMST UN3522 Senior Seminar II. 4 points.

Individual research in Women’s Studies conducted in consultation with the instructor. The result of each research project is submitted in the form of the senior essay and presented to the seminar.
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 hesitatingly, 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.

WMST GR6001 Theoretical Paradigms. 4 points.
This advanced seminar examines materialist conceptions of labor and life as approached through feminist, black, anti-racist, indigenous, queer, postcolonial, and Marxist perspectives. We will trace the ways that labor and life as well as their constitutive relations have been understood in historical and contemporary radical critiques of capitalism, with a focus on gender, race and sexuality as analytical categories for understanding their shifting roles in structures and practices of social reproduction, the production and expropriation of value, the logic and exercise of violence, the organization of sociality and culture, and the practice and imagination of freedom, justice, and new forms and potentials of collective existence. Finally we will consider the limits and possibilities of different conceptions of "material life" for understanding politics today.