

Gender Studies

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How do ideas about gender roles and expectations vary over time and across place? What really is the sexuality spectrum and how can one begin to interpret it both accurately and equitably? Courses in Gender Studies approach questions like these from a range of academic perspectives, including anthropology, history, language and literature, politics, psychology, rhetoric, writing and public discourse, sociology, and visual culture, among others. Through a focus on gender identity, sexuality, and gendered representation as central categories of analysis, Gender Studies enriches students' understanding of the complexity of human experience. Although many of the field's lines of argumentation are inspired by feminism, Gender Studies courses take a broad variety of theoretical approaches to topics in women's studies, men's studies, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender studies. Courses also investigate the entanglements of knowledge, power, privilege, and exclusion, and the important ways that these dynamics influence and are influenced by the experience of gender and sexuality on a personal level and on a broader social scale.

Students are encouraged to work with their advisor to select complementary electives broadening their scope of view and providing training in disciplines of particular interest to them.

Gender Studies intersects with many other fields and pairs well with a range of second majors and minors. Students considering graduate study are strongly advised to pursue study of a second language and to minor in a related discipline.

Total credit requirements for a Gender Studies major: Students who enter Whitman with no prior college-level coursework in gender studies would need to complete 36 credits to fulfill the requirements for the gender studies major.

The Gender Studies major:

- 36 Credits
- Required Courses
 - Gender Studies 100, 210 (or RAES 210), 490 and 497 or 498
 - 3 credits in each of three foundations areas listed below: Gender Across Time; Gender in Global Context; Theory and Methods
 - A course may not satisfy two foundation areas
 - At least 12 credits at the 300-400 level
- Other notes
 - No more than 12 credits earned in off-campus programs and transfer credit
 - No more than 4 credits in independent study may be applied toward the major
- Senior Requirements
 - Gender Studies 490
 - Senior capstone project-Gender Studies 497 or 498
 - Oral examination
- Honors
 - Students do not apply for admission to candidacy for honors
 - Accumulated at least 87 credits
 - Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman.
 - Cumulative GPA of at least 3.300 on all credits earned at Whitman College
 - Major GPA of at least 3.500
 - Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program
 - Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course
 - Pass the senior assessment with distinction
 - Chair of the department will notify the Registrar of students attaining Honors no later than the beginning of week 12 of the semester.
 - An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day

The Gender Studies minor:

- 20 Credits
- Required Courses
 - Gender Studies 100
 - 8 credits at the 300-400 level
- Other notes
 - Students are encouraged to consult with a gender studies faculty member to plan a program which will meet requirements of special interest and intellectual coherence, and will include courses across academic departments.

The following classes qualify as gender studies foundations courses. GAT (Gender Across Time), GGC (Gender in Global Context), and TM (Theory and Method) indicate the specific requirements to which a course may be applied. A course used to satisfy one foundations requirement may not be counted toward another.

Classics/Environmental Studies 205 *Women & Nature in the Ancient World* (GAT)
Gender Studies 238 *Men and Masculinities* (GAT, TM)
Gender Studies/Rhetoric, Writing & Public Discourse 250 *Rhetoric, Gender & Sexuality* (TM)
Gender Studies/Global Literatures/Race & Ethnic Studies 320 *Trauma & its Aftermath: Narrative, Witnessing & Remembrance* (TM, GGC)
Gender Studies 328 *Queer Studies* (TM)
Gender Studies 330 *Affect Theory* (TM)
Gender Studies 331 *Feminism & Psychoanalysis* (TM)
Gender Studies/Politics 333 *Feminist & Queer Legal Theory* (TM)
Gender Studies/Anthropology 358 *Social Bodies, Diverse Identities: the Anthropology of Sex and Gender* (GAT, GGC, TM)
Global Literature 395 *Contemporary Literary Theory* (TM)

History 214 *Sex in the Casbah: Sex, Gender & Islam* (GAT, GGC)
History 225 *Cleopatra: History and Myth* (GAT)
History 254 *Social History of Stuff* (GAT)
History 259 ST: *Historicizing Kids* (GAT)
History/Classics 280 *The "Other" Greece & Rome* (GAT)
History 300 *Gender in Chinese History* (GAT, GGC)
History 319 *Women in Africa* (GAT, GGC)
History 370 *Gendered Lens on U.S. History* (GAT)
Politics 254 *Gender & Race in Law & Policy* (TM)
Politics 333 *Queer Legal Theory* (TM)
Politics 359 *Gender & International Hierarchy* (GGC)
Religion 304 *Muslim Bodies* (GGC)
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 380 *Rhetorical Bodies* (TM)
Sociology 258 *Gender & Society* (TM)

The following classes qualify as gender studies electives.

Art History and Visual Culture Studies 353 *Blues, Blood, Bruise: Blackness in Art*
Art History 355 *Indigenous Aesthetics: Native North American Art and Visual Culture*
Dance 218 *Somatics*
English 230 *Intro to Shakespeare: love, sex, & gender*
English 337 VT: *Love, Sex, and Power in the English Renaissance*
French 329 *French Masculinities*
French 320 *The Politics and Aesthetics of Love*
French 401 *French Feminism*
French 427 *Subjectivity & Otherness in Medieval/Renaissance Lit*
Film and Media Studies 220 *Identity, Gender, & Media*
Film and Media Studies 315 *Bad Objects*

Gender Studies/Hispanic Studies 426 *Queer Latinidades*
Global Literature 351/Hispanic Studies 451 *Maid in Latin America: The Image of the Domestic Worker in Contemporary Cinema*
Music 354 *Women as Composers*
Philosophy 235 *Philosophy of Feminism*
Philosophy 260 *Queer Friendship*
Philosophy 332 *Reproduction*
Politics 200 ST: *Gender, Race, and The 2020 Elections*
Politics 311 *Deservingness in U.S. Social Policy*
Politics 325 *Queer Politics & Policy*
Politics 365 *Political Economy of Care Work*
Psychology 239 *Psych of Women & Gender*
Psychology 309 *Science of Sexual Orientation*

Religion 291 *ST: Religion and Gender in Global
Context*

Religion 305 *Gender & Identity in Judaism*

Religion 358 *Feminist & Liberation Theologies*

Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 365

Rhetoric & Violence

Sociology 257 *Sociology of the Family*

SSRA 328 *Women & Sport*

100 Introduction to Gender Studies

Fall, Spring

Fall: Zalloua; Spring: McDermott

4 credits

This interdisciplinary course is designed to introduce students, particularly those intending to complete a gender studies major or minor, to questions in which gender is a significant category of analysis. Topics will include the construction of gender identity and sexuality and the relationship of gender to past and present social and cultural institutions, gendered representations in the arts and literature, and feminist and related theoretical approaches to various disciplines. Open to first- and second-year students; others by consent of instructor.

110-119 Special Topics

4 credits

This course explores selected topics in gender studies. Any current offerings follow.

210 Problems with Privilege

Spring

Simek

4 credits

This course engages the now widespread liberal activist slogan “check your privilege” so prevalent on U.S. college campuses. What does it mean today to “check” privilege? Is “checking privilege” enough? When consuming the news and educating ourselves in class, whose voices get to be heard? Who aren’t we hearing from? What questions haven’t we raised? How do we listen effectively? Intersectionality as theory and method responds to many of these questions. It posits that various structures of discrimination and privilege (such as sexism, racism, and colonialism among others) intersect, influencing our daily lived experience as well as our social institutions and policies. This course presents foundational concepts that allow us to understand power through debates in the field of Gender Studies, and a genealogy of intersectionality and its discontents. The course explores theories and methods based on intersectionality beyond a race/gender pairing, engages critiques of intersectionality, and facilitates a more nuanced understanding of challenges and opportunities surrounding social justice and identity through the lens of intersectional analysis. May be elected as Race & Ethnic Studies 210.

238 Men and Masculinities

Not offered 2020-21

4 credits

In her introduction to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir states, “A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man.” Feminists have long taken up the cause of breaking down male privilege rooted in assigning certain, naturalized characteristics to male bodies. But what does it *mean* to be a man, to be constructed and construed (or not) as masculine? How is masculinity experienced in variable ways across time and space? What are the underpinnings of toxic masculinity and how are dominant ideologies of “appropriate” masculinity challenged? What do alternative and non-dominant masculinities look like and how and why do they evolve? In addition to using this class to consider what it means to be masculine, we will examine the very emergence of masculinity studies and what the discipline brings to discussions and disruptions of the “masculine.”

250 Rhetoric, Gender and Sexuality

Fall

Bost

4 credits

This class examines the ways that rhetorical practices and theories rooted in gender and sexuality can and do create, reinforce, adjust and sometimes overcome sex and gender based bias in society. The nature of this bias is addressed as a rhetorical construct that continues to serve as a basis for social, political, and economic conditions of existence for many. In the class, we will critique communication in the media, daily discourse, the law, politics, and in personal experiences. The goal of this examination is to increase awareness of difference and bias in communication based on gender and sexuality, to challenge theoretical assumptions about what constitutes inequity, to analyze the rhetorical practices that constitute gender and sexuality, and to offer new perspectives from which to view gender-based rhetorical practices. May be elected as Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 250.

291, 292 Independent Study**Fall, Spring****Staff****1-4 credits**

Discussion and directed reading on a topic of interest to the individual student. The staff must approve the project.

Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

300-309 Special Topics**4 credits**

This course explores selected topics in gender studies. Any current offerings follow.

320 Trauma & its Aftermath: Narrative, Witnessing & Remembrance**Fall****Simek****4 credits**

Trauma has attracted critical attention as a limit case through which to explore the nature of selfhood, language, memory and power, and the ethical and political implications of representing violence. Taking contemporary examples of race- and gender-based violence, their intersections, and their specificities as a point of departure, students will examine debates in scholarship and activism over definitions of trauma, its personal and collective impacts, and the social, cultural, and political actions to be taken in its wake. We will pay particular attention to questions of narrative genre, medium and transmission, as well as the role of commemoration in projects to combat violence. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major or the Global Literature minor. May be elected as Global Literature 320 or Race & Ethnic Studies 320.

328 Queer Studies**Not offered 2020-21****4 credits**

Queer studies, in the guise of queer theory, developed in the early 1990s out of the conjunction of feminist theory, sexuality studies, and queer activism. This course introduces students to some of the key authors and texts in queer theory, as well as the next generation of works that brought about the establishment of queer studies as a field. It is recommended that students who take this class have previous college-level exposure to theoretical writing in either the humanities or the social sciences.

330 Affect Theory and Gendered Subjectivities**Not offered 2020-21****4 credits**

In this course students will examine the impact of the “affective turn” within gender studies. Affect theory complicates the boundaries between mind and body, stressing how social life—of which gender embodiment is a significant part—is irreducible to cognitive processes alone. It is particularly attentive to the role of emotions and feelings in the formation of gendered subjectivities. Affect—such as joy, pride, shame, and anger—exceeds the disciplining powers of consciousness and representation, pointing (back) to the body, to a reality that is viscerally felt. We will read and critically discuss some of the most important contributions in “Affect Theory” with an eye for gender and subjectivity formation.

331 Feminism and Psychoanalysis**Not offered 2020-21****4 credits**

This course explores feminism’s critical dialogue with psychoanalysis. We will be drawing on the works of Jacques Lacan and French Feminism—as articulated by its leading representatives Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Hélène Cixous—as well as those of queer feminists, such as Judith Butler, Lynne Huffer, Jasbir Puar, and Elizabeth Grosz. Particular attention will be given to the psychoanalytic critique of the subject and to questions of gender and sexual difference: Is sexual difference an ontological condition? What role does the unconscious play in the perpetuation of patriarchy? How are women and men interpellated as sexed subjectivities?

333 Feminist and Queer Legal Theory**Spring****J. Jackson****4 credits**

Broadly, this is a course on gender, sexuality, and the law. More particularly, this course will 1) explore the relationship between queer theoretical and feminist theoretical projects and will 2) consider how these projects engage legal doctrines and norms. In question form: Where do feminist and queer theories intersect? Where do they

diverge? How do these projects conceive of the law in conjunction with their political ends? How have these projects shifted legal meanings and rules? How have the discourses of legality reconfigured these political projects? These explorations will be foregrounded by legal issues such as marriage equality, sexual harassment, workers' rights, and privacy. Theoretically, the course will engage with issues such as identity, rights, the state, cultural normalization, and capitalist logics. We will read legal decisions and political theory in this course. May be elected as Politics 333.

358 Social Bodies, Diverse Identities: the Anthropology of Sex and Gender

Fall

Serin

4 credits

Sex and gender have been framing, analytical categories throughout the history of anthropology. This course explores why sex and gender are invaluable to understanding the human condition. Yet, "sex" and "gender" are not stagnant categories. Instead, they vary across time, place and researcher. Thus, while considering cross-cultural expressions of sex and gender in the ethnographic record, this course is also designed to examine theoretical developments in the field. May be elected as Anthropology 358. *Recommended Prerequisites:* Anthropology 201 or Gender Studies 100.

460 Queer Latinidades: Gender and Sexuality in the Americas

Not offered 2020-21

4 credits

This course analyzes articulations of queerness in contemporary Latin American and U.S. Latinx narrative. In the first half of the course we will sample queer narratives from the Caribbean and Latin America, and will conclude by attending to the narrative production of queer Latinxs in the United States. Our work will consist of examining the various narrative techniques that shape understandings of queerness across the continent, while tracing the configurations of race and class, ethnicity and nationality, and immigration and legal status that routinely intersect with queerness. Primary readings may be drawn from authors such as Ricardo Piglia, Pedro Lemebel, Luis Negrón, Rita Indiana, Reinaldo Arenas, Sonia Rivera-Valdés, Achy Obejas, John Rechy, Manuel Muñoz, and Ana Castillo, among others. Evaluation is based on class participation, oral and written assignments, and a final research paper. May be applied to the Narrative/Essay requirement for the Hispanic Studies Major. Satisfies the 400 level requirement for Hispanic Studies minor. Course is taught in Spanish. May be elected as Hispanic Studies 426. *Prerequisite:* Hispanic Studies 341, 342, 343, or 344 or consent of instructor.

490 Senior Seminar

Fall

Simek

4 credits

Senior Seminar engages students in sustained discussion of contemporary theoretical and topical issues in gender studies, as well as reflection on students' course of study. Coursework includes discussion and assignments related to the daily readings. Class time and assignments will also be devoted to conceptualizing the senior capstone project and carrying out its preparatory groundwork. Required of and limited to senior gender studies majors. Offered fall semester only. Fall degree candidates should plan to take this seminar in a semester preceding completion of the capstone project (not concurrently with their project).

491, 492 Independent Study

Fall, Spring

Staff

1-4 credits

Directed study and research on a topic of interest to the individual student. The project must be approved by the staff. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

497 Senior Capstone Project

Spring

Staff

4 credits

Execution of a capstone project putting into practice knowledge and skills developed over the course of study. Senior projects are designed in close consultation with faculty and may be completed individually or in collaboration with team partners. Projects will vary in structure according to students' interests and preparation. They may integrate or complement capstone work in a student's second major with the approval and supervision of both departments. In all cases, projects will involve original research, a scholar statement, and an oral defense.

Projects will be evaluated by the senior project director and two additional faculty committee members. Required of all senior Gender Studies majors. *Prerequisite:* Gender Studies 490 or consent of instructor.

498 Honors Capstone Project

Staff

4 credits

Students register for Gender Studies 497, not for Gender Studies 498. The registration will be changed from Gender Studies 497 to 498 for those students who attain honors in Gender Studies. Open only to senior Gender Studies majors.