

Gender Studies

Director: Nicole Simek, French and Interdisciplinary Studies
Susanne Beechey, Politics (on sabbatical, Fall 2023)
Matt Bost, Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse
Meiver De la Cruz, Anthropology and Gender Studies

Nina Lerman, History
Lydia McDermott, Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse
Zahi Zalloua, French and Interdisciplinary Studies

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 IRES 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 and 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
 - Gender Studies allows courses from other majors and minors to be applied to the Gender Studies 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 and 400-level
- Other notes
 - Gender Studies allows up to 8 credits from other majors and minors to be applied to the Gender Studies minor.
 - 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)
English 377/RWPD 380 *Rhetorical Bodies* (TM)
Gender Studies/Global Literatures/ Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies 230 *Unsettling Masculinities in French Fiction and Film* (GGC, TM)
Gender Studies 238 *Men and Masculinities* (GAT, TM)
Gender Studies/Rhetoric, Writing & Public Discourse 250 *Rhetoric, Gender & Sexuality* (TM)
Gender Studies/Global Literatures/ Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies 320 *Trauma & its Aftermath: Narrative, Witnessing & Remembrance* (TM, GGC)
Gender Studies 328 *Queer Desires* (TM)
Gender Studies 330 *Affect Theory* (TM)
Gender Studies 331 *Feminism & Psychoanalysis* (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 264 *People Called Female: US Perspectives* (GAT)
History 267 *Protest & Organizing: A History of U.S. Social Movements* (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 *Histories of US Genders and Sexualities* (GAT)
Politics 254 *Gender & Race in Law & Policy* (TM)
Politics 255 *Gender, Race and the Environment* (TM)
Politics 330 *Indigenous Feminisms in the Americas* (TM)
Politics 333 *Feminist and Queer Legal Theory* (TM)
Politics 335 *The Politics of the Body as Territory* (GGC)
Politics 359 *Gender & International Hierarchy* (GGC)
Religion 304 *Muslim Bodies* (GGC)
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 380/English 377 *Rhetorical Bodies* (TM)
Sociology 258 *Gender & Society* (TM)

The following classes qualify as gender studies electives.

Art History 353 *Blackness and the Arts*
Art History 355 *Indigenous Aesthetics: Native North American Art and Visual Culture*
Dance 218 *Somatics*
English 230 *Intro to Shakespeare: love, sex, & gender*
English 375 *VT: Feminist Theory*
Film and Media Studies 220 *Identity, Gender, & Media*
Film and Media Studies 315 *Bad Objects*
Film and Media Studies 366 *ST: Sex & Violence in Media*
Gender Studies 460/Hispanic Studies 426 *Queer Latinidades*
Global Literature 351/Hispanic Studies 451 *Maid in Latin America: The Image of the Domestic Worker in Contemporary Cinema*
History 397 *ST: Harem Histories*
Music 354 *Women as Composers*
Philosophy 235 *Philosophy of Feminism*

Philosophy 332 *Reproduction*
Politics 200 *ST: Gender, Race, and The 2020 Elections*
Politics 250 *Reproduction and the State*
Politics 311 *Deservingness in U.S. Social Policy*
Politics 325 *Queer Politics & Policy*
Politics 365 *Political Economy of Care Work*
Psychology 239 *Psychology of Gender*
Psychology 309 *Science of Sexual Orientation*
Religion 303/Anthropology 303 *Religion and Gender in Global Context*
Religion 387 *ST: Beloved Bodies: Gender and the Erotic in Islamic Literature*
Movements for Social Change
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 332 *Coalition, Identity, and Difference in Social Movements*
Rhetoric, Writing and Public Discourse 365 *Rhetoric & Violence*

100 Introduction to Gender Studies

Fall, Spring

Fall: De la Cruz; Spring: Simek 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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies 210.

230 Unsettling Masculinities in French Fiction and Film

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course provides a critical exploration of masculinity in French and Francophone film and fiction. In examining the politics of gendered and racial representations of masculinity, we ask: What types of desires and actions are associated with certain models of masculinity? How does France’s colonial heritage impact and inform the projection of its own masculinity and that of its formerly colonized others? How do writers, theorists, and filmmakers unsettle the fantasy of French masculinity? This course also takes up masculinity’s vexed relation to femininity, tracking how the ideological production of the latter is often premised on the former’s hegemonic stance. Short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. May be elected as Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies 230 or Global Literature 230.

238 Men and Masculinities

Fall

De la Cruz

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**Not offered 2023-24****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 Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies major or minor or the Global Literature minor. May be elected as Global Literature 320 or Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies 320.

328 Queer Desires**Not offered 2023-24****4 credits**

Queer Desires offers students a thorough exploration of historical and contemporary theoretical debates that have shaped the interdisciplinary field of queer studies. Accounting for transformations in the field, this course foregrounds dialogues between queer studies and critical race theory and disability studies and reveals the expansive intent of “queer,” from its constructionist version to its anti-social thesis to the dismantling of the desiring subject and its reparative dimensions. Students will be exposed to projects that use queer theories to understand and resist social inequalities and value representations, particularly at the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, embodiment, age, gender and sexuality. Topics and issues addressed include decolonizing queerness, the relationship between queerness and antinormativity, ableism and the relationship between disability and desire, visibility politics and activism, representations and regulation of sexualities and gender expressions, the consequences of those representations and what values they signify. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

330 Affect Theory and Gendered Subjectivities**Not offered 2023-24****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 2023-24

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?

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

Not offered 2023-24

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 prerequisite:* Anthropology 201 or Gender Studies 100.

460 Queer Latinidades: Gender and Sexuality in the Americas

Not offered 2023-24

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.