

Gender & Women's Studies

Course Descriptions Spring 2013

Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies GWS 207

**Professor Jamie Schmidt Wagman
W 3:00-4:15**

This interdisciplinary course introduces students to the field of gender and women's studies. The course will enable students to understand how gender impacts their everyday lives, social institutions, and cultural practices both locally and globally. Additionally, students will examine the significance and meaning of one's gender identity in different historical periods, the history of feminist movements, and transnational perspectives on feminism. Students will also discuss how gender intersects with other identities such as socio-economic class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, geography, and generational location. Lastly, students will examine and critique cultural representations and claims about women and gender identities. *Gen Ed.*

Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies GWS 220

**Professor Susan Alexander
TR 5:00-6:15**

This course will provide an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) studies. We will explore the historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, political, literary, artistic, and philosophical foundations of LGBTQ studies. We will study the emergence and transformation of LGBTQ identities, cultural practices, and political movements within the broader context of changes in social constructions of sexuality, as well as cultural, social, political, and economic transformations. Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, and class have shaped same-sex sexuality in different historical periods, with an emphasis on the United States. The aim of this course is to consider not only how individuals experience same-sex sexuality or transgress gender norms, but also how same-sex sexuality leads people to form communities and social movements. We will investigate the ways different cultural conditions sanction—in both senses, to restrict or make possible—the development of sexual identities and differences in order to understand the construction of gender and sexuality in society at large.

Independent Study GWS 497

Many faculty members are willing to direct independent study projects. Students interested should speak first to the Gender and Women's Studies faculty member who will guide the project, then contact Professor Stacy Davis to formalize the proposal and ensure proper registration.

Internship GWS 499

Practical off-campus experience in a Gender and Women's Studies related field at an approved site. Jointly supervised by a faculty member and a representative from the sponsoring agency. Open to junior or senior SDMs or Gender and Women's Studies minors who have taken at least two Gender and Women's Studies courses. Must be approved by Professor Davis. Graded S/U. May be repeated for up to three hours. A reflection paper appropriate to the nature of the internship will be required.

Cyberfeminism and New Media Practices**ART 366**

Using contemporary cybertheory and cyberpunk fiction as a foundation, students will be exploring the tools and techniques of new media through the lens of cyberfeminism. In the creation of digital art works through projects and assignments, we will be exploring the key issues of cyberfeminism, namely: the position of women working in technological disciplines; the unique experiences of women within technoculture; and the gendering of various technologies. Students will be introduced to a variety of digital media technologies and tools in their web-based creative projects, including but not limited to: website construction, generative/software art, gaming, hypertexts/textual aesthetics, podcasting, etc. Readings and projects will be augmented by lectures related to contemporary cyberfeminist artists presented through their videos, images of their work, websurfing, in-class and virtual discussions. This course is open to students from all disciplines. THEORY

Professor Krista Hoefle**TR 9:00-11:30****History and Criticism of Public Address****COMM 302**

This course is an introduction to rhetoric, rhetorical criticism, and public address studies. We will study, in a critical and analytical way, how public communicators (journalists, politicians, activists, celebrities and other public figures) use language and images to influence society. Every day, these communicators attempt to shape and reshape the meaning of people, events, issues, and ideas in society in order to influence our perceptions and beliefs about the world. The ability to better understand and critically analyze public communication is important because of the potential impact of such widely-distributed and widely-consumed discourse. The course pays particular attention to the rhetorical acts of women, including the speeches of 19th and early 20th century women's rights activists and the method of feminist rhetorical criticism.

Professor Michael Kramer**TR 9:30-10:45****Female Beauty****COMM 420**

This course will examine the cultural expectations and standards of female beauty as embodied and enacted through various discourses including: cultural, media, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Through studying the ways that female beauty is communicated through these discourses, students will come to a greater understanding of their own experiences of female beauty and formulate ways to move beyond and resist the dominant norms of beauty. The material will be approached from a feminist, critical perspective with theoretical readings from communication studies, feminist theory, and cultural studies, amongst other areas. Prerequisite: Jr. status or permission of instructor. THEORY

Professor Terri Russ**TR 11:00-12:15****Immigrant Women's Writing****ENLT 370.02**

Immigrant and second generation women writers in the U.S. have produced a rich body of literature since 1945, and particularly since the elimination of national origins quotas in immigration law in 1965. Their texts reflect the cultural and artistic influences they have inherited from their homelands and the ways in which they seek to negotiate between those traditions and American values. We will read a variety of genres of recent immigrant and second generation women's writing including novels, short stories, memoirs, poetry, and creative nonfiction, engaging with enduring questions about self, community, family, social responsibility, and identity. In discussions and written assignments, you will be encouraged to consider the value of broadening your definitions of "American" and what they consider to be "American literature." Moreover, because of the focus on women's texts in particular, you will be asked to consider how gender complicates cultural difference and the extent to which Western definitions of feminism and equality can inform our engagement with the texts.

Professor Ann Marie Alfonso-Forero**TR 9:30-10:45****History of Women in the U.S.****HIST 324**

Our major goal in this course will be to explore the history of women in the United States from a multicultural perspective. Categories of race, gender, and class will be investigated as complementary and interconnected aspects of the identities of North American women. Another goal of this course will be to develop your thinking skills so that you can master a variety of historical tasks. By the end of the course you should understand the methodologies and vocabulary of women's history. You will have analyzed historical documents pertaining to women in light of the frameworks women's historians have developed to understand the complex relations among race, class, religion, and gender. In the course of investigating your own heritage, you will come to understand how gendered identities have changed in response to economic, social, political, and cultural forces. (History elective, Women's History concentration and minor requirement, GWS minor requirement)

Professor Kelly Hamilton**MW 3:00-4:15**

Modern European Women
HIST 370

In this course, we will study how ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, and gender have shaped the identities of modern European women. Profound political, social, and economic changes reshaped European women's opportunities and expectations in our period. Emancipation and empowerment came slowly, with education, access to the work place, and legal rights, particularly economic and legal rights within marriage, playing crucial roles in determining the quality of women's lives. While the political, legal, and social structures that determined women's opportunities and social status will provide an important framework, the fabric of these women's lives will be our major concern. Thus, powerful cultural images and social norms that affected women's identities, including ideas concerning beauty, fashion, and behavior, will be important as well. The research project for this course will be an oral presentation of ten to fifteen minutes, accompanied by a five to six page essay. The oral presentation will prepare history majors for the History Department Senior Comprehensive, and the essay is suitable for inclusion in the Junior Portfolio. Students will have the option of writing a fifteen page research paper suitable for the long research paper for the Junior Portfolio as well. (History elective, Women's History concentration and minor requirement, GWS minor requirement)

Professor Kelly Hamilton
TR 2:00-3:15

Women from the Global South
HIST 375

The course begins by situating women from the global south in their historical context, and then explores diverse themes in the history of women in the regions that make up the global south, namely, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Selected topics will examine historical experiences of women from the global south and analyze their contemporary situations at both national and global levels. The approach keeps women in the three regions in view simultaneously as we explore how globalization of the world's economy has contributed to the production of women of the global south as different across different historical periods. We explore and critique various dualisms: such as, self and other, civilized and primitive, developed and developing, east and west, south and north, traditional and modern. Other themes to be discussed will include historical developments around class, race, and gender in the 21st century and how these shape the modern experiences of women in the global south. THEORY

Professor Edith Miguda
T 6:00-8:30

Gender and Politics in Modern South Asia
HIST 410

This course will introduce students to the changes and continuities in the lives of women in modern South Asia in the period from the 1800s to the present day, which covers the period of British colonial rule and the postcolonial careers of the nation-states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Using gender as a lens of examining the past, we will primarily focus on how debates concerning the "nature" and condition of women, as well as those surrounding notions of "masculinity" and "femininity," have shaped both the encounter between colonialism and nationalism and social and cultural change under the postcolonial regimes. Some of the questions that will come up for in-depth analysis are: what was the social status of women in pre-colonial India? Why was the "condition of women" such a central question to both British colonialism and Indian nationalism? How did education – both English and indigenous – impact the everyday lives of women? How did the concepts of love, marriage, sexuality and family evolve under colonial rule? Was Gandhi a "liberator" of Indian women? To what extent were South Asian women able to impact and shape gender issues on their own? How did South Asian women forget their own version of feminism, as distinct from Western feminism? How did the Partition of India impact women's lives? How have women risen to the position of heads of state (e.g., Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Sheikh Hasina) in the South Asian nation-states, something that has happened less often in the West? How have been women's lives affected by electoral democracy, religious fundamentalism, and globalization?

Professor Aparajita Sengupta
TR 3:30-4:45

Gender and Politics
POSC 365

This course will combine theoretical and empirical analysis of gender as a political issue. The first part of the course will examine the role that gender plays in the construction of global politics and how these gender roles may help to explain women's absence from positions of power. The second part of the course will examine a variety of global political issues such as war, human rights, development, and the environment through a gendered lens. The course will end by examining women's involvement in social movements and politics from below. THEORY

Professor Sonalini Sapra
MW 4:30-5:45

Psychology of Violence
PSYC 437

This course will cover many aspects of the psychology of violence. We will first examine how and why people aggress and under which conditions aggression may be heightened or lessened. Next, we will address the psychology of perpetrators and bystanders. In other words, what may lead one person to help and another person to harm. From there we will explore specific forms of violence including hate crimes based on ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and will discuss gendered violence such as sexual assault and domestic violence. Expanding upon domestic issues, we will next examine an international perspective of violence: civil wars, genocide, and political violence, specifically focusing on the role gendered violence and rape as a tool of war. Following these case studies, students will study the psychology of survivors and trauma before closing with research on conflict negotiations, reconciliation, and peace psychology. Students will read classic and modern psychological journal articles, paired with newspaper articles, memoirs, and films in order to better understand the processes that contribute to, or reduce, violence.

Professor Bettina Spencer
MW 3:00-4:15

Sexuality/Intimacy/Relationship
SW 341.01 & .02

This course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to examine human sexuality and intimacy within a lifespan, relational context. Students will address these topics through knowledge of the biological, social, spiritual, and psychological aspects of relationships, sexuality, and intimacy. We will also explore populations-at-risk—namely, those who are experiencing issues with intimacy, sexuality, and relationships. Perspectives from feminist literature will be used to strengthen the analysis. Psychosocial issues are emphasized.

Professor Toni Henke-Wheeler
W 6:00-8:30 & T 6:00-8:30

Sociology of Families
SOC 257.01 & .02

In this course, we will consider the various forms of families and their relationships to their social environments. For example, we will examine historical trends, economic pressures, and the impact of public policies. We will also consider life within families as we examine gender, childrearing, household labor, divorce, and family violence. Finally, we will always examine the ways in which family life varies because of gender, cultural differences, class position, race, and sexualities.

Professor Mary Ann Kanieski
TR 11:00-12:15 & 2:00-3:15

Social Stratification
SOC 360

Our studies together will focus on the question of social inequality. Together, we will be developing a deeper understanding about a few general questions: What are the most important scarce resources found in our society today? How are these scarce resources distributed? Why are these resources distributed the way they are in our society? How does the United States compare to other societies in terms of the distribution of scarce resources? Given the globalization of the nations and peoples of the earth, it will be important for us to focus some of our attention on social inequality as it exists in other parts of the world. Examination of the basic dimensions of cultural, social, and economic inequality found in our society today, particularly in regard to women and racial and ethnic minorities, will however be our primary concern. We will give consideration to the nature, causes, and consequences of social inequality, as well as to an examination and critique of social policies and programs impacting social inequality. To help guide us through the many and complicated issues involved, we will be applying the basic principles of the *sociological perspective*. We will be using both qualitative and quantitative research data on social stratification to investigate the relationships among social inequalities, class, race, gender. We will be analyzing social stratification as both a *condition* and a *process*.

Professor Henry Borne
TR 3:30-4:45



The Program in Gender and Women's Studies

The Saint Mary's College program in Gender and Women's Studies encourages students to analyze and analyze women's lives and constructions and performativities of genders. The program applies an inclusive and interdisciplinary approach to the study of women, gender identities, and sexualities. It is guided by feminist activism and feminist theoretical insight into different forms of power, inequality, and privilege. Students investigate the intersectionalities of gender, race, class, sexualities, and other identity categories from historical and contemporary transnational perspectives. The Gender and Women's Studies program embodies a commitment to women in all their diversities and reflects our conviction that women must actively define themselves and create knowledge.

Students who minor in Gender and Women's Studies or develop a Student Designed major enroll both in courses housed in the program and in courses offered in other disciplines. An SDM or a minor supports career choices in human services, activism and advocacy, education, law and public policy, business, and other fields calling for social and historical awareness, critical thinking, and engagement with social and cultural diversity.

Faculty who teach in Gender and Women's Studies represent the departments throughout the College. They share a commitment to helping students in our women's college develop the skills to interpret and to analyze systems of oppression and ultimately to work toward a more just society.

Student Designed Major

Gender and Women's Studies is an ideal focus for a student-designed major because it is an inherently interdisciplinary field. Yet the fundamental assumption of Gender and Women's Studies—that gender is a critical category, an intellectual tool for analysis and understanding—also provides a framework within which to organize specific interests.

If you are interested in pursuing the Student Designed major, you must declare your intentions by early in the spring semester of your sophomore year and submit a proposal which you will have prepared with the help and advice of a faculty sponsor. The Coordinator can provide you with guidelines for coursework in Gender and Women's Studies, as well as sample proposals from previous student-designed majors. For more information, or to discuss the possibilities, feel free to approach any Gender and Women's Studies faculty member or contact Prof. Stacy Davis (ext4700, 164 Spes Unica, sdavis@saintmarys.edu).

Requirements for the Gender and Women's Studies Minor

The minor consists of a minimum of 14 hours (5 courses), including:

Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies (GWS 207)

One course in feminist theory (such courses are noted on this brochure with "THEORY" after the description)

Three additional courses, no more than one in any one department with the exception of Gender and Women's Studies (GWS)

Why Minor in Gender and Women's Studies?

Gender and Women's Studies minors gain awareness of their own abilities, a keen sense of justice, and a self assurance that enables them to act reflectively in the world. Gender and Women's Studies leads students to raise questions about equity and fairness and to develop the self assurance which leads them to act constructively to improve community life. Because Gender and Women's Studies students have learned to see what is invisible to many others, they have unusually positive impacts on the societies in which they live.

If I focus on Gender and Women's Studies in college, what can I do after college?

Gender and Women's Studies minors apply their knowledge and understanding in a diversity of fields. A minor or major in women's studies supports career choices in human services, education, public policy, business, and other fields calling for social and historical awareness, critical thinking, and engagement with human diversity. Many graduates work for justice within society in service-oriented fields; still others apply their knowledge in the corporate world. Gender and Women's Studies minors have also entered graduate school in Law, Cultural Studies, English, Sociology, French, Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology.

