

Gender & Women's Studies

FALL 2014 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies

GWS 207

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.*

Professor Sonalini Sapra

TR 9:30-10:45

Gender and Environmental Justice

GWS 240

Environmental threats, gender inequity, and economic globalization have converged to give rise to powerful local and global environmental justice movements. The main purpose of this course is to provide a theoretical understanding and empirical perspective on the interconnections between the natural environment and social justice. That is, environmental hazards and illnesses will be understood in relation to race, class, and gender inequalities. One of the key concerns this course will examine is how certain groups of people are differentially impacted by environmental problems. For example, recent studies have shown that more toxic waste sites are built in communities of color, lead poisoning is more common among children of color, and the most dangerous uranium mining is done on Native American lands. In terms of gender, women do most of the domestic and agricultural work in the world, integrally relating them with environmental questions of health, food safety, and water quality. With a conceptual framework in place, we will focus on examining a series of environmental problems (industrial agriculture, the water crisis, global climate change, etc.) through a gendered lens. The course will end by looking at a range of transnational and local women-led environmental movements and the analytical insights they offer to development practitioners and policy-makers. Prerequisites: none.

Professor Sonalini Sapra

TR 11:00-12:15

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.

Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective ANTH 346

**Professor Laura Elder
TR 2:00-3:15**

By focusing on culture specific ideas and practices, anthropology provides a unique lens for understanding the socio-cultural construction of gender identity. As we explore gender identity cross-culturally, students will also discover their own culturally formed, taken for granted, notions of the role of gender and sexuality in human identity. Topics explored include: the saliency of the categories man and woman; the relationships between race and gender; the role of colonialism and neocolonialism in the representation of gender, sex and sexuality; and the role of gender in the family and the household, the realm of religion and the world of work. To assist these explorations we will examine ethnographic case studies on: the meaning of marriage for a young British Muslim woman in London; gender and sexual identities in Minangkabau, Indonesia; and women at work on Wall Street in New York City.

Cyberfeminism and New Media ART 366

**Professor Krista Hoefle
TR 9:30-12:00**

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

Public Communication COMM 369

**Professor Terri Russ
TR 5:00-6:15**

As a gender and women's studies course, we will be considering the numerous interconnections between gender and communication. We live our gender both through and within our communication. As gendered beings, when we communicate our gender influences how we communicate and how what we communicate is received. In addition to examining the role of gender in our communication, we will also consider how race, socioeconomic class, and sexuality work in connection with our gender to enable and constrain our communicative attempts. Through our work within a service agency specifically working with women, we will be able to come to a greater understanding of the ways that these social constructs play out in individual lives and impact identity.

Women of Genius ENLT 203

**Professor Thomas Bonnell
MWF 9:00-9:50**

At the turn of the last century talented women of every description were fighting to have a voice – in politics, in society, in marriage; over their education, their bodies, and their economic destiny. How that struggle found its way into the fiction and the drama of the era (roughly 1880 to 1920) is the focus of this course. A recurring motif is the woman of natural abilities – the woman with a “genius” for this or that calling – who attempts, against steep odds, to win a public audience for her talents, whether from the lectern, the stage, the pulpit, or print.

Postcolonial Women's Writing
ENLT 334

Professor Ann Marie Alfonso-Forero
TR 12:30-1:45

In this course we will examine examples of women's literature from Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean written after the end of British colonialism. These texts engage with the complicated histories of colonization and independence from which they emerge, reflecting the cultural, geo-political, religious, social, and economic contexts that inform the term "postcolonial." Because we are focusing on women's writing, we will pay special attention to how these texts contribute to an understanding of feminism that challenges Western perceptions of what that term suggests. Therefore, throughout our readings we will consider the various ways in which empire and postcolonial nationalism gave rise to a non-Western understanding of feminism and sexuality studies.

Novel Women
ENLT 341

Professor Thomas Bonnell
MW 11:00-12:15

This course charts the 18th-century origins in Britain of the predominant literary form of the last 275 years: the novel. Women played a key role in this genre from the start. Never before had women been so influential as writers, and their burgeoning numbers as readers were crucial to the market for the new form. Given their importance in the reading public, it made sense for many 18th-century novels to examine the lives of women characters, and hence to explore women's concerns. These characters and concerns will be our focus in the course, as we situate our discussions in the wider contexts of literary history and life in the 18th century.

Psychology of Adult Development
PSYC 302

Professor Rebecca Stoddart
TR 2:00-3:15

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the psychological development of adulthood, with a primary focus on personality, gender roles, and social development from late adolescence through mature adulthood/aging. One goal is to explore the psychological theories of adult development as they address the stages and processes contributing to psychological growth across the life cycle. A second goal is to examine commonalities and differences in the developmental life cycle of men and women as well as cultural meanings given to them. We will explore the psychological and/or social basis for the differences, as well as the sociocultural (e.g. ethnicity/race/social class/sexual orientation) effects on men's and women's development. A third and important women's studies goal is for you to develop a more informed awareness of the personal growth issues you are experiencing now and those that you will likely experience in the years to come.

We will use Erikson's psychosocial theory as the organizing structure for this course, and include Jungian theory as we explore the psychological changes and issues that emerge in mid-life. We will also examine critiques of the "Stage and Change theories of Adult Development," particularly in the context of women's lives. Beginning with an overview of central issues in adult development, we will proceed chronologically through the major life stages. Our study of theories of adult development will be enhanced by reading the personal journeys described by the authors of the books we're reading, and by keeping a journal of your responses to and reflections on the readings and class discussions. We will also use the Ramsay and Sweet book of exercises to explore other means of self-reflection.

Psychology of Violence
PSYC 437

Professor Bettina Spencer
TR 5:00-6:15

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 bullying, 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: terrorism, 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 memoirs and films, in order to better understand the processes that contribute to, or reduce, violence.

**Sexuality/Intimacy/Relationship
SW 341**

**Section 01: Professor JoAnn Burke
T 3:30-6:00
Section 02: Professor Brandyn Blosser
W 6:00-8:30**

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

**Contested Masculinities
SOC 222**

**Professor Susan Alexander
TR 11:00-12:15**

Women’s studies scholars, including sociologists, have devoted great attention to the varying, and sometime conflicting, versions of femininity. Drawing upon feminist research and empirical social science research, the field of men’s studies has been developing during the past two decades in order to analyze what it means to be a man in various historical, cultural, and social contexts. Today, men’s studies scholars understand that there is not a single form (hegemonic) of masculinity; rather there are multiple “masculinities” (e.g., race/ethnic group-based, sexuality-based, class-based, nationality-based, etc.). Masculinity is not understood as a one’s nature (inherent, biological traits) but as a performativity, a way of “doing” masculinities. Since the performativity of masculinities is constantly undergoing adaptation, newly developing forms of masculinities may be “contested” by the dominant culture. Furthermore, the images constructed of men in public contexts, like mass media, are perceived as both positive and negative – from caring and involved fathers to misogynistic “players” looking to score. As competing images of masculinity unfold on TV screens, in magazine pages, and in other public sites, scholars and the general public ask, what does it mean to be a man today? This course will introduce students to the topic of masculinity and men’s studies. Students will learn to identify and analyze the ways in which various forms of masculinity are performed in various social and cultural contexts both within the United States and in select other nations. Additionally, student teams will designed and conduct an applied research project on masculinity. THEORY

**Sociology of Families
SOC 257**

**Professor Mary Ann Kanieski
TR 12:30-1:45**

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.



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 or major in Gender and Women's Studies enroll both in courses housed in the program and in courses offered in other disciplines. A major 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.

The Gender and Women's Studies Major

Beginning in 2014-15, students may choose to major in Gender and Women's Studies. As an interdisciplinary field, Gender and Women's Studies gives students a framework within which to analyze different academic areas, subjects, and interests. The major consists of 25-28 hours, including:

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

GWS 350: Feminist Theory

GWS 360: Feminist Methods

5-6 additional courses in the following content areas: The Gendered Body; Intersectionalities of Gender, Race, Class, Sexuality; and, Transnational Perspectives on Gender

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 (ext. 4700, 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 or Major in Gender and Women's Studies?

Gender and Women's Studies students 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 students apply their knowledge and understanding in a diversity of fields. A minor or major in Gender and 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.