

# Gender & Women's Studies

## Course Descriptions Spring 2015

### Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies GWS 207

Section 01: Professor Jamie Schmidt Wagman  
MW 11:00-12:15

Section 02: Professor Ann Marie Alfonso  
TR 11:00-12:15

\*pending approval

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/SOC 220

Professor Susan Alexander  
TR 11:00-12:15

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 majors or 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.

**Interpersonal Communication  
COMM 200**

**Professor Marne Austin  
W 1:00-3:30  
\*pending approval**

This class will be an opportunity to delve into the world of examining, understanding, and rethinking relationships through feminist/gendered communicative processes. Through applied examination and practice of concepts learned in class, you will better understand the relationships of which you are a part and have an enhanced curiosity for the complex and dynamic influences of communication in them. Interpersonal Communication will inevitably explore issues of identity, culture, maintenance processes, and social influences and span relationships of family, social circles, romantic partners, and even those relationships of which we feel we are not a part. By participating in this adventure, you will learn not only important information that will enhance your academic experience; you will learn how to apply theory and the lessons learned in the classroom to real world situations while becoming an engaged contributor and participant in the diversity that exists within our communities. Through this experience, you will learn the importance of being an active agent in the world around us, starting with your myriad relationships, and feel motivated to continue your civic engagement with those both similar and different from us.

**History and Criticism of Public Address  
COMM 302**

**Professor Michael Kramer  
TR 9:30-10:45**

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 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century women's rights activists and the method of feminist rhetorical criticism.

**Masculinities in U.S. Media  
COMM 490**

**Professor Helen Ho  
TR 3:30-4:45**

This course serves as a broad introduction to masculinities and theories of masculinity, providing you with the opportunity to research a topic related to masculinity or masculinities in depth. We will discuss how masculinity is understood, defined, and socially constructed. By thinking through various representations of manhood as they appear in magazines, films, television shows, and advertising, we will consider how "manliness" is produced, articulated, enforced, and subverted, particularly as concepts of masculinity intersect with other identities like race and sexuality. THEORY

**Romantic Era Feminism  
ENLT 384**

**Professor Laura Haigwood  
TR 3:30-4:45**

Women writers of the romantic era did not call themselves "feminists," but their vindication of the rights of woman inspired all subsequent "waves." Responding to parallel political demands for democratic government and the abolition of slavery, Romantic women authors began a movement that – despite obstacles and backlashes –blazed a steady trail into the present day. We will begin by reading Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* to situate educated, Romantic era, Englishwomen in their time and place. Our central focus will be the life and work of Mary Wollstonecraft, whose career exemplifies persistent tensions between "sense" and "sensibility" in feminist discourse and feminine experience. We will also read her contemporaries for a wide range of perspectives on women's issues. The good news that good men side with feminists against patriarchal oppression will be demonstrated by William Godwin and John Stuart Mill, among others.

**History of Sexuality in the U.S.  
HIST 410**

This class will examine histories of sexuality, race, politics and power in the United States. Students will study themes such as histories of courtship and marriage, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender histories, histories of the body, and histories of contraception, reproduction and prostitution. We will discuss the varied debates that have shaped our national understanding of sexuality, and our use of texts, primary sources, fiction and nonfiction will help familiarize students with the process of historical interpretation and also help them gain a deeper understanding of the United States today. Our discussions will draw on critical race theory and feminist theory, and the course will enhance students' critical writing and speaking skills.

**Professor Jamie Schmidt Wagman  
TR 12:30-1:45**

**Latin-American Women Writers  
MLSP 429**

The main purpose of this course is to deepen the students' understanding of the historical and cultural transformations in Latin America through the experiences, artistic productions and testimonies of some of the women whose actions were crucial to social changes. This class presents different voices, perspectives and realities, through a multidisciplinary approach that includes literary texts as well as visual and performativity forms of expression: music, film, testimonies, paintings, installation art, photography, weavings and performances. Topics range from the human rights crisis produced by dictatorships, civil wars and gender violence to the challenges of creating national and personal identities.

**Professor Giannina Reyes-Giardello  
MW 11:00-12:15**

**Introduction to Feminist Philosophy  
PHIL 243**

This course is an inquiry into the meaning of gender and its philosophical implications. Questions of identity, knowledge, ethics, race, and global responsibility will be considered both from historical and contemporary perspectives. Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a social and political movement that seeks justice for women. We will be studying feminism from a theoretical background and examine the philosophical and intellectual commitments that underlie feminist projects. The first part of the course centers around what feminist theory is. The course will then move into investigating theories of gender difference and ways of conceiving female (and male) identity. We will then examine feminist critiques of moral, social, and political philosophy. Throughout the course, we will examine how feminist philosophy and inquiry is motivated by the quest for social justice. THEORY

**Professor Adrienne Lyles-Chockley  
MWF 11:00-11:50**

**Gender and Politics  
POSC 365**

This course connects gender politics to both comparative and international relations literature. 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. Some of the questions this section seeks to ask are: How important is it to have equal representation between women and men? Do women make a difference once in office? Do women engage in politics differently from men? The second part of the course will examine a variety of women's movements globally and their impact on political issues such as war, human rights, and development through a gendered lens. The course will end by examining women's involvement in transnational social movements and politics from below. THEORY

**Professor Sonalini Sapra  
TR 3:30-4:45**

**Becoming Women  
RLST 362**

Does "woman" exist? What does it mean when feminist theorists say "we have to become women"? What is the connection between religion, sex, and gender? This course reflects the way student interests have evolved during the past decade, especially relating to questions of gender identity in response to socio-political debates and the impact of popularized versions of the late Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* on young Catholic women. It addresses our "commitment to women in all their diversity and reflects our conviction that women must be active agents in defining themselves and creating knowledge."

**Professor Phyllis Kaminski  
TR 2:00-3:15**

Beginning with contemporary research and in solidarity with worldwide communities of women, we will explore how race, ethnicity, sex/gender, class, age, figure into religious understandings. In this religious studies/women's studies class, we will learn and discuss traditional theological positions, current Catholic teaching, contentious issues affecting women within, across, and beyond Christian denominations. Why do Catholics hold certain norms for sexual behavior? How and why does AIDS trouble these norms? Can someone be gay and Catholic? How do these issues affect women's being and becoming in other Christian denominations and beyond Christianity? To that end, we will discuss the *Good Sex Project*, an interfaith, interdisciplinary exploration of sexuality and justice. We will end with your hopes (statements/ vision/action plan) about what is most needed for your generation to become the kind of women you desire. THEORY

**Sexuality/Intimacy/Relationship  
SW 341**

**Section 01: Professor JoAnn Burke  
W 3:00-5:30  
Section 02: Professor Brandyn Blosser  
T 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

**Sociology of Families  
SOC 257**

**Section 01: Professor Henry Borne  
MWF 1:00-1:50**

A sociological analysis of families within contemporary American society. Diversity in family life related to class, race, and gender is considered. Topics include theories of the family, mate selection, changing roles of men and women, parenting, divorce, violence, and family policy.

**Section 02: 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 Gender and Women's Studies Department**

The Saint Mary's College Gender and Women's Studies department encourages students to analyze and analyze women's lives and constructions and performativities of genders. The department 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 department embodies a commitment to women in all their diversities and reflects our conviction that women must actively define themselves and create knowledge.

Students who major or minor 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](mailto: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.