

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Phone: 314-935-5102
 Email: wgss@wustl.edu
 Website: http://wgss.artsci.wustl.edu

Courses

WGSS 5000 Advanced Feminist Theory

The purpose of this course is to engage students with some of the most important debates within feminist theory. These debates will include those that have emerged among scholars across disciplines. We will also explore how major ideas about feminism and feminist objects of study circulate in the public sphere. Students will be introduced to foundational texts and recent work in the field. We will also explore the relationship between theory and practice.

Credit 3 units.

Typical periods offered: Spring

WGSS 5006 Advanced Topics in Trans Theories: Femme

In the current moment, femme is used to index a variety of gender and sexual expressions. This course explores the aesthetics and politics of femme through the lens of trans theories. A quick search for femme in relation to gender and sexuality will show that one of its origin stories is within lesbian communities often in relation to the butch/femme relationship. The lipstick lesbian is the figure who emerges here as exemplifying a kind of adherence to traditional forms of femininity even while being queer. Trans women are often criticized for attachments to similar forms of gender expression. Femininity is often derided as unserious or, worse, hopelessly entangled in the dynamics of heteropatriarchy. To be feminine, then, is often taken as a sign of a retrograde politics or submission to normative ideals of gender. This course will take up this problem as a way of beginning to think through what interventions femme might make into our ordinary ways of understanding gender and sexuality.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC BU: HUM EN: H

WGSS 5012 Seminar: Medieval Gender and Sexuality

Credit 3 units.

WGSS 5014 Queer of Color Critique

That sensation produces surplus, often uncontainable knowledge, is something that is beginning to be explored in various arenas of queer theory as an important component of queer of color critique. This seminar will explore different sensational arenas, the different possible critiques that they produce, and what this means for thinking about sexuality, gender, and queer theory. Throughout the course of the semester, we will explore sensation in multiple ways 1) as a diagnostic tool for understanding some of the different ways that race, gender, and sexuality intersect 2) as a way to trouble the dichotomy between interiority and exteriority to understand the ways in which orders of knowledge become imprinted on the body 3) as a mode of producing alternate forms of knowledge about gender, race, and sexuality. In addition to reading about different sensations and their relationships to politics and sexuality, this course will require students to think creatively as they attempt to write about sensation, sexuality,

and politics. Ultimately, the purpose of this class is to examine sexuality and sensation as collections of embodied and politicized experiences. Prerequisite: Introduction to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (L77 100B) or permission of instructor.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

WGSS 5017 Healing and Social Justice

Credit 3 units.

WGSS 5020 Critical Sexuality Studies

This seminar introduces graduate students with diverse interests to some key and core works in the field of critical sexuality studies. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the course conducts a critical inquiry into the historical precedents, theoretical frameworks, and contemporary currents necessary to understand the role of sexuality in organizing personal, social, economic, and political life. To this end, the course will give special attention to intersections of sexuality with gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, and ability/disability.

Credit 3 units.

WGSS 5085 Everyday Unruliness: Feminist and Queer Resistance

This course is interested in the ways ordinary people break rules, flout norms, and make trouble. We know that resistance manifests in social movements, militant activism, and direct confrontation, but it also comes through quieter acts of unruliness and noncompliance. Looking at power from below, readings focus on everyday interventions in systems of control. Garment workers threaten good pay or bum work, queers fail at reproductive heterosexuality, and shiftless people steal moments of leisure from a system that wants us either productive or dead. These acts may not be obviously political, but because people at the margins have so often been left outside (and also opt out) of formal politics, subtle resistance is particularly interesting for feminist and queer scholars. Everyday acts do threaten the status quo -- otherwise, why would they be so rigidly policed? But questions remain. Throughout the semester, we will ask the following: What counts as resistance? What are its ethics? When is a bad attitude an act of rebellion, and does it matter if that rebellion is conscious? Does survival constitute resistance for those not meant to survive? On the other hand, for those subjects whose active engagement sustains the status quo, is withdrawal the more radical choice? Does the refusal of sociality constitute a form of resistance? Or are there ways to forge communities of mutual care that erode the status quo rather than reproduce it? Prerequisite: L77 110B (Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) or permission of instructor.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

WGSS 5115 Gender, Religion, Medicine and Science

Have you ever wondered why some topics are argued using religion as a guide, while others may approach the topic from what is perceived as a strictly scientific point of view? This course explores how and why gender and sexuality tend to be at the center of debates that pit Medicine and Science against Religion. Using feminist and queer scholarship, this course explores five hundred years of rhetorical strategies related to defining, or regulating, gender and sexuality. We will consider how much debates have changed from sixteenth-century Europe to 21st century United States by asking when, why and how either Medicine & Science or Religion influenced social thought and laws. Finally, we will consider how, and if, contemporary debates on vaccines are either part of the long history of debating bodily autonomy (as is the case with the other topics addressed in class), or if the conflict between religion, medicine and science in the modern era is new and distinctly different from past rhetorical strategies. Prerequisite: Introduction to Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: ETH, HUM, IS EN: H

WGSS 5142 Feminist and Queer Research Methodologies

What does it mean to do research through the lens of feminist and queer politics? This course surveys key methodological approaches to feminist and queer research. Interdisciplinary at its core, it draws from methodological traditions across the humanities and social sciences while focusing on forms of inquiry that resist these boundaries. We explore how feminist and queer politics inform the work of knowledge production. We ask how scholars, organizers and artists engage and repurpose various research methodologies and how they reflect on the politics of power, experience, domination, and resistance in the research encounter. We ask who research is for, parsing the political stakes of scholarship that archives the stories of collective resistance, survival, collaboration, and domination, at the same time as it authorizes hierarchies of expertise, builds institutional power, and (too often) extracts from those studied. What might a redistributive approach to feminist and queer research look like? Prerequisite: At least 2 courses in WGSS, including Introduction to WGSS or Sexuality Studies at the 100 or 200-levels and one 300-level WGSS course, preferably in feminist or queer theory. This class is a writing intensive course. Waitlists controlled by Department; priority given to WGSS majors. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SC, WI
Typical periods offered: Fall

WGSS 5150 Feminist Literary and Cultural Theory

This course provides a historical overview of feminist literary and cultural theories since the 1960s and 70s, acquainting students with a diversity of voices within contemporary feminism and gender studies. Readings will include works of French feminism, Foucault's History of Sexuality, feminist responses to Foucault, queer (LGBTQ+) theory, postcolonial and decolonial feminism, feminist disability theory, and writings by US feminists of color (African-American, Asian-American, Latina, Native-American). The reading list will be updated each year to reflect new developments in the discipline. We will approach these readings from an intersectional and interdisciplinary perspective, considering their dialogue with broader sociopolitical, cultural, and philosophical currents. By the end of the course, students are expected to have gained a basic knowledge of the major debates in feminist literary and cultural studies in the last 50 years, as well as the ability to draw on the repertoire of readings to identify and frame research questions in their areas of specialization. The class will be largely interactive, requiring active participation and collaborative effort on the part of the students. Students will be encouraged to make relevant connections between the class readings, everyday social and political issues, and their own research interests. NOTE: This course is in the core curriculum for the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies graduate certificate. Prerequisite: advanced course work in WGSS or in literary theory (300 level and above) or permission of the instructor. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

WGSS 5165 From Mammy to the Welfare Queen: African American Women Theorize Identity

How do representations of identity affect how we see ourselves and the world sees us? African American women have been particularly concerned with this question, as the stories and pictures circulated about black female identity have had a profound impact on their understandings of themselves and political discourse. In this course we will look at how black feminist theorists from a variety of intellectual traditions have explored the impact of theories of identity on our world. We will look at their discussions of slavery, colonialism, sexuality, motherhood, citizenship, and what it means to be human. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC BU: HUM EN: H

WGSS 5170 Feminist Research Methodologies

Credit 3 units.

WGSS 5200 Feminist Political Theory

This course asks how feminist thinkers from various political and intellectual traditions critique, adopt and transform political theories of justice, citizenship, property and the state. To uncover how different feminist theories have been adopted in the struggle for political transformation and social justice, we will pursue two main lines of inquiry. The first asks how feminist thinkers from various traditions critique and engage the history of political thought within the social contract tradition. We will ask, in particular, how gender, race, slavery, colonialism and empire shape conceptions of citizenship and property. We will also examine transnational feminist critiques of the public/private division in the Western political theory canon as it impacts the role of women and the social construction of women's bodies. During the second half of the semester, we will ask how various transnational social movements have engaged and adopted feminist theories in efforts to resist state violence, colonialism, labor exploitation and resource extraction. In following these lines of inquiry we will draw from postcolonial, decolonial, liberal, Black, radical, Marxist and Chicana feminist perspectives. Part of our goal will be to uncover how various feminist theories treat the relationship between politics and embodied experience, how gendered conceptions of family life affect notions of political power and how ideas about sexuality and sexual conquest intersect with empire-building. Majors and minors in WGSS receive first priority. Other students will be admitted as course enrollment allows. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM EN: H

WGSS 5245 Transnational Feminisms

Credit 3 units.

WGSS 5350 Queer and Feminist Geographies

There is a tendency to see space and place as backdrops, mere stages where human social interactions simply play out. Yet when we fail to interrogate the processes behind the social production of space, we run the risk of naturalizing space as heteronormative and obfuscating its inherent exclusions. This upper-level seminar seeks to challenge such assumptions by treating space and place as dynamic formations that actively influence our identities, behaviors, and politics. Using queer and feminist perspectives within the realm of geography, we will explore how spaces, places, and boundaries are shaped, experienced, and contested through diverse gender identities and sexual formations. Questions driving our inquiry include: How do queer and feminist geographies intersect to shape landscapes- both urban and rural in the United States and abroad? What role do geographic spaces play in the construction of LGBTQ identities across different social milieus? And in what ways can queer and feminist perspectives contribute to decolonial and environmental justice movements? In addition to queer and feminist spatial theories, topics will include sexuality and place-making, transnational queer migrations, queer ecologies and environmental justice, and the queering of the public and private divide at the heart of spatial taxonomies in the West. By mobilizing queer and feminist forms of spatial analysis, this seminar will equip you with tools to identify the ways in which spaces, places, and boundaries can further social inequalities and the opportunity to theorize alternative geographies that promote inclusion and more just worlds. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

WGSS 5700 Ancient Greek and Roman Gynecology

This course examines gynecological theory and practice in ancient Greece and Rome, from about the 5th century BCE to the 3rd century CE. The task is complicated by the nature of our evidence. Our surviving textual sources are authored exclusively by men, mainly physicians. They have a pronounced tendency to conceptualize the health and disease in terms of a single body, which was male by default. They distinguished female bodies from male primarily in reproductive aspects. How exactly did these physicians understand diseases of

women and, as far as can be recovered, to what extent were their views represented among laypeople? What form did treatment take and what was the social status of practitioners, both that of our extant sources and female practitioners whose voices have largely been silenced by the textual tradition? We will approach the study of Greek and Roman gynecology, first from the perspective of Greco-Roman medical views, then from the point of view of contemporary Western biomedicine. The limited nature of our sources will allow students to read the majority of surviving material. These primary readings will be accompanied by current secondary scholarship that explores these fascinating and often frustrating questions about the female body in ancient medical thought. All primary materials will be available in English translation. There will be an option for students with a background in Greek or Latin to form a satellite reading group. The course does not assume familiarity with Greek and Roman medicine more broadly.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM, IS EN: H

WGSS 5720 Race, Reproduction, and Justice

Reproduction is biological, economic, political, and social. Of course, individuals reproduce, but when, how, why, and with whom we do (or do not) is also a matter of public policy and social concern. Drawing on readings from sociology, law and other fields that engage continually with these key questions: Why is reproduction an important site through which to understand sociology? How do statuses such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability influence people's reproductive possibilities? How have communities supported or resisted efforts at reproductive control? Why is reproductive justice central to these answers? Students will review theoretical pieces, empirical research, media and more to explore the answers. This course primarily focuses on the US but will expose students to global reproductive concerns. Class sessions include lecture, in-class discussion and online discussion, media analysis and other activities. This upper-level seminar presumes an understanding of the basic concepts in sociology such as sociological imagination and social construction. Prerequisite: successful completion of an introductory-level Sociology course or consent of the instructor. Graduate students should enroll in this 500-level offering.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC EN: S

WGSS 5980 Master's Thesis

An independent research and writing project under the direction of a member of the faculty in the Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Open only to students admitted to the JD/MA dual degree program.

Credit 2 units.

Typical periods offered: Fall

WGSS 5990 Advanced Seminar: History of the Body

Do bodies have a history? Recent research suggests that they do. Historians have tapped a wide variety of sources - including vital statistics, paintings and photographs, hospital records, and sex manuals - to reconstruct changes in how humans have conceptualized and experienced their own bodies. We will pay particular attention to the intersection of European cultural history and history of medicine since 1500. This course fulfills the History major capstone requirement as an Advanced Seminar.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

WGSS 5996 Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Elective

Credit 0 units. EN: H

WGSS 6996 Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Elective (GRAD)

Credit 0 units. EN: H