Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department (WGS)

College of Liberal Studies  
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www.uwlax.edu/womens-gender-and-sexuality-studies

The mission of the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Department is to empower students to think critically about gender and sexuality, challenge social inequality, and become ethical problem-solvers, preparing them for careers, engaged citizenship, and advanced degrees. We advance knowledge and critical conversations about social justice through teaching, research, community engagement, and service. We provide students with opportunities to develop research and communication skills and creatively use the knowledge and practices of our discipline.

The Department of WGSS offers an interdisciplinary curriculum that enables students to: examine the meaning of gender as a socially constructed category, explore the roles of institutional structures on all gender identities in national and international contexts; and critique the way society and knowledge, itself, has been organized. The program not only allows students to study the diversity of human experience by uncovering hidden histories but helps students understand themselves, their place in the world, and how social transformation is possible. Students have the opportunity to connect feminist theory with community needs through internships, involvement with the Women's Studies Student Association, and other campus and community leadership opportunities.

Major and minor

The department offers a 33-credit major (B.A. or B.S.) and a 21-credit minor in women’s studies. Courses with a focus on women, gender, or sexuality offered through other departments allow students to develop expertise in particular fields. The department provides excellent one-on-one advising about courses and career development, and strongly encourages and facilitates student participation in internships that provide practical experience applying concepts, knowledge, and skills.

Internships

- New Horizons Shelter and Women’s Center
- Bluff Country Family Resources
- 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection
- Essential Health
- American Association of University Women of La Crosse
- Self-Sufficiency Program

Additional internships are possible within and beyond the local area, including at organizations like Feminist Majority, Planned Parenthood, and National Organization for Women. Contact the Departmental Internship Coordinator if interested in applying for an existing internship or developing a new one.

Additional department features

Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP)  
www.uwlax.edu/self-sufficiency-program

The Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies sponsors the Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP), a pre-college college readiness initiative for low-income single parents. This free program provides a supportive learning environment in which to develop and practice academic skills. Classes meet weekly with childcare provided. Offered Fall and Spring semesters. Students interested in volunteer, service learning, and internship opportunities, may call Andrea Hansen (ahansen@uw.lax.edu), SSP Director, at 608.785.8733 or email.

Student organization

The mission of the College Feminists is to provide students as well as the La Crosse community with advocacy on women’s issues. WSSA also initiates activities for UWL students and the La Crosse community. College Feminists collaborate with many other student clubs on campus to provide rich educational opportunities outside the classroom as well as fun socializing.

Campus events

The WGSS Department sponsors or co-sponsors many programs about women and women’s concerns, gender, and sexuality. WGSS events are open to students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Career opportunities & occupational outlook

Entry level

WGSS graduates work in many careers in the arts, business, education, law, health professions, social advocacy, and social work.

Further education

The major qualifies students to pursue advanced degrees in women’s studies, gender studies, or sexuality studies, as well as a variety of related fields. The minor enhances qualifications for advanced degrees in many related fields.

Occupational outlook

WGSS evaluates how cultural definitions of gender have shaped most fields of study and most professions. It provides material and techniques to challenge systems of privilege and inequality, and to create more accurate and empowering models of people, culture and society. Because of its emphasis on communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving, WGSS courses and programs are valuable in a broad range of careers and in lifelong learning and civic engagement.

- Business, management, and personnel
  - Learn how gendered relationships affect business and criminal justice environments
  - Gain an understanding of federal and state equal opportunity legislation
  - Explore how gender affects leadership
- Psychology, social work, and health care
  - Explore assumptions and biases in therapeutic models
  - Gain an understanding of the common concerns experienced by female-identified clients, including: body image, stress related to role performance, self-worth, and responses to violence or abuse
• Explore social determinants of health and understand social service in a larger context
• Relate women’s health issues to the social construction of gender, race, class, and sexuality

Political science, law, and public policy
• Learn how women have been excluded from or under-represented in the political process and how they are working to achieve political empowerment
• Explore public policy issues and solutions relevant to women and social justice

Education
• Become aware of assumptions and biases in curricular models and pedagogy
• Learn about classroom behaviors that can limit students through stereotyping
• Explore teaching models, curriculum integration, and non-sexist teaching that works to empower marginalized groups

Lifelong learning, advocacy, and civic engagement
WGSS courses and programs can help everyone understand how the roles of people of all genders have been constructed in the past and present. They can help us imagine and create more empowering and inclusive possibilities in a world of rapidly changing roles and expectations, and can offer models for how to be a lifelong advocate for a more just society.

2018-19 Faculty/Staff

The following is the department’s faculty and staff as of the publication date of this catalog. This list will not be updated again until the next catalog is published in June.

Professor
Jodi Vandenberg-Daves (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/jvandenberg-daves)

Associate Professor
Deb Hoskins (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/dhoskins)
Mahruq Khan (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/mkhan)

Assistant Professor
Christina Haynes (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/chaynes)
Terry Glenn Lilley Jr. (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/tlilley)

Outreach Program Manager I
Andrea Hansen (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/ahansen)

Administrative Support
Kathy Thoen (http://www.uwlax.edu/profile/kthoen)

Affiliated Faculty
Faculty outside WGSS (http://www.uwlax.edu/Womens-Gender-and-Sexuality-Studies/Our-people/#qt-2)

Majors
• Women’s studies major - BA (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/womensgenderandsexualitystudies/major-ba)
• Women’s studies major - BS (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/womensgenderandsexualitystudies/major-bs)

Minors
• Women’s studies minor (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/womensgenderandsexualitystudies/minor)
• Social justice minor (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/womensgenderandsexualitystudies/social-justice-minor)

+ next to a course number indicates a general education course

Courses

WGSS 100 Cr.3
Gender, Race and Class in American Institutions
This course provides an introduction to how gender, race and class have intertwined over time to produce women’s social roles and status in American culture. The creation, transmittal, interpretation and institutionalization of gender roles will be examined using family and kinship, the educational system, the media, work, government and the health care system. The course provides a critical, interdisciplinary perspective on scholarship which omits or distorts the female experience. Offered Fall, Spring, Summer.

SOC/WGS 105 Cr.3
Introduction to LGBT Studies
This course will examine the cultural, legal, and political dimensions of LGBT life in the U.S. It will begin by exploring the social invention of heterosexuality and how personal and institutional interpretations of sexuality have historically informed the lives of LGBT people. The course also addresses class, racial and gender biases that especially confront queer communities of color in the U.S. Finally, the course looks at continued instances of hate crimes and homophobia against the backdrop of rights-based activism and the role that art and politics play in this interplay. (Cross-listed with SOC/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

WGSS 130 Cr.3
Women’s Diversity: Race, Class, and Culture
This course explores the diversity of women’s experience in America as it has been affected by race, ethnicity, class, and other factors, and the effects of gender on women of different groups. Issues that have united and divided women in movements for social change are also addressed. Offered Fall, Spring.

SOC/WGS 150 Cr.3
Introduction to Social Justice
Students in this course will examine the concept of social justice through an intersectional and multidisciplinary lens. Students will begin with a critical investigation of the connections between the individual, the local, and the structural as they relate to justice and inequality in society. Social justice strategies are then evaluated, in case study fashion, through the lenses of gender, race, and class structures. (Cross-listed with SOC/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Annually.
+WGS 212 Cr.3

**Search for Economic Justice**

Using humanistic and social scientific approaches, students will explore movements for economic empowerment as a critical dimension of justice in the increasingly global world. Through a mixture of face-to-face, online, and experiential methods, students will examine connections between the individual and larger systems and between the local and the global. They will critically analyze economic and political structures and movements as they pertain to gender, race, ethnicity, and class. The course will be informed by the perspectives of English, economics, political science, anthropology, and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. Students may only earn credit in one of the following: ANT 212, ECO 212, ENG 212, PHL 212, POL 212, WGS 212. Offered Annually.

WGS 225 Cr.3

**Women and Leadership**

This course investigates women’s leadership and develops students’ leadership skills. Students will examine women’s under-representation in formal public positions of power while also evaluating the strengths women can and do bring to leadership, and the emerging possibilities for women’s leadership capacity in a rapidly changing world. Special attention will be paid to women’s changing roles in the workplace. Students will critically evaluate leadership models, especially as they pertain to gender, race, and class. Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 240 Cr.3

**Contemporary Women’s Issues**

Contemporary women’s issues will provide the student with an overview of women’s studies scholarship from the late 1960’s to the present. Contemporary theory, social change movements, and women’s lives will be integrated in order to examine the relationship between theory and practice in women’s studies. Offered Occasionally.

WGS 250 Cr.1-3

**Topics in Women’s Studies**

Intermediate and interdisciplinary analysis of a social issue, idea or institution from the perspective of women and women’s studies. Repeatable for credit. Department approval is necessary to apply more than three credits toward the WGS minor. Offered Occasionally.

WGS 255 Cr.1

**Women in the Military**

This course will provide students with an understanding of the struggles and successes of women’s lives in the U.S. Military. Beginning with an historic overview of women’s changing roles in the military, it will proceed to analyze the reasons for the limitations to women’s equal participation. Finally, the course will recognize the accomplishments of women in the military. Offered Spring - Even Numbered Years.

ESS/PSY/WGS 259 Cr.1-3

**Girls and Women in Sport**

This course is an introduction to the involvement of girls and women with sport. It includes a historical perspective on women’s sport participation, cultural images of women athletes, teaching and coaching implications of current research, Title IX, and recreation/leisure approaches to physical activity. Course content may vary according to instructor. (Cross-listed with ESS/PSY/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

WGS 300 Cr.1-3

**Independent Study**

Topics to be selected by the individual instructor or by the student and instructor together. The topics must relate to women’s experiences and/ or issues. Repeatable for credit - maximum six. Prerequisite: WGS 100 or WGS 150. Consent of department. Offered Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer.

HIS/WGS 301 Cr.3

**Women in the Modern United States: 1890-Present**

This course introduces students to key issues in modern women’s history in the United States. It explores women’s experiences as workers, activists, consumers, citizens, and family members. It also examines the various ways in which generations of Americans have defined “woman’s place” and “women’s issues,” and raises questions about the possibility for defining common “women’s issues” today. (Cross-listed with HIS/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 303 Cr.3

**Social Justice Research Methods**

This course answers the question that most caring people want answered: How can we fix this problem? Students will engage in the process of strategizing, whatever the issue (gender bias, racism, homophobia, environmental degradation, disability bias), and whatever the setting (a workplace, neighborhood, campus, or beyond). Course activities organize around the processes behind social change: strategic analysis, organizing, action planning, and evaluation, developing students’ ability to create the knowledge necessary for complex problem-solving. Students learn and use the quantitative, qualitative, and critical research methods necessary to inform decisions at each step along a generalized pathway to change. Students going on to graduate school and students entering the workforce in a variety of fields like social work, community organizing, communication, and management will benefit from this course. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, EFN 205, ERS 100; plus nine additional credits in courses approved for WGS. Offered Fall.

HIS/WGS 305 Cr.3

**History of Motherhood in the United States**

This course considers motherhood in nineteenth and twentieth century United States history from a variety of perspectives. It explores women’s experiences as mothers, across lines of class, race, and relationship status. It also examines the politics of motherhood in US history, and considers both the restrictive and the empowering dimensions of ideologies of motherhood. (Cross-listed with HIS/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 308 Cr.3

**Gender, Justice, and Film**

Along with other forms of media, film helps to create, introduce, and reinforce cultural values, norms, and understandings. Using an interdisciplinary approach, this course will provide students tools with which to critically analyze film as a cultural product, with a specific focus on representations of gender and justice. Films to be viewed and analyzed will focus on issues such as interpersonal and gendered violence, parenting, immigration, economic justice, criminal justice policy, leadership, and the social construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality. While films will be the primary text in the course, each will be supplemented with the empirical and theoretical literature on the subject at hand. Prerequisite: one from the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, WGS 212, CST 110, EDS 206, EFN 205, ERS 100, SOC 110, SOC 120. Offered Annually.

HIS/WGS 315 Cr.3

**History of Feminist Thought**

An examination of the history of feminist ideas in the United States and the historical context, both western and international, from which they emerged. (Cross-listed with HIS/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.
SOC/WGS 316 Cr.3

**Gender, Sexuality, and Social Change in Religion**

This course examines the various gender roles, norms, mobility, restrictions and empowerment that people experience within religious traditions, for example: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Global case studies and engaging narratives focused on the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and religion will be considered. Special attention will be paid to feminist laypersons and religious leaders who are reformulating traditional understandings and practices, and in turn, negotiating their agency within secular and spiritual spaces. Prerequisite: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, SOC 110, or SOC 120. (Cross-listed with SOC/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

WGS 320 Cr.3

**Violence Against Women**

This course will examine from an interdisciplinary perspective, the connections between violence against women and the power distributions within our society. Three specific types of violence against women will be examined in-depth: sexual assault, incest and battering. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, or EFN 205. Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 321 Cr.3

**Sexual Violence in the United States**

This course will explore the history of sexual violence in the United States and the histories of organized responses to that violence. Special attention will be paid to how the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender impact the experience of, and public and political response to, sexual violence. Prerequisite: one from the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, PH 200, EDS 206, EFN 205, ERS 100, PSY 100, SOC 110, SOC 120. Offered Spring - Odd Numbered Years.

WGS 322 Cr.3

**Gendered Violence Prevention**

Gendered violence takes many forms such as sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, and intimate partner violence. In this course, students will review the empirical and theoretical literature on one or more of these forms (topics will vary) as well as the empirical and theoretical literature on prevention strategies. Students will then use that knowledge to design and develop a prevention program aimed at gendered violence. Prerequisite: one from the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, PH 200, EDS 206, EFN 205, ERS 100, PSY 100, SOC 110, SOC 120. Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 325 Cr.3

**Black Feminist Thought**

This course is designed to introduce students to Black Feminist theory. During this semester, we will explore how African-American women have been socially located in American society. We will read various texts (books, articles, etc.) to explore how theory works to explain power, oppression and liberation in the lives of African-American women. To accomplish this goal, we will focus our discussions on themes such as activism, identity, difference, representation, and possibilities of upward mobility as they pertain to the lived experiences of African American women. Offered Annually.

WGS 330 Cr.1-3

**Topics: Women, Gender, and Society**

Interdisciplinary analysis of a social issue, idea, or institution from the perspective of women and women's studies. Repeatable for credit maximum nine. Department approval is necessary to apply more than three credits toward the WS minor. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, WGS 212, ERS 100, EDS 206, EFN 205, SOC 110, SOC 120. Offered Occasionally.

WGS 331 Cr.3

**Images of Women of Color**

This course is designed to not only introduce students to representations of women of color in the United States but to also locate them socially in American society. We will discuss the origins of negative images of race and femininity and how these images have evolved over time. In addition, this course will examine various types of images (i.e. television, movies, print ads, etc.) and deconstruct how they challenge, reinforce and reproduce entrenched images of women of color. Students will also discuss how these women have challenged negative stereotypes and developed their own ways of constructing more accurate and complex representations. Offered Occasionally.

WGS 333 Cr.3

**The Gendered Body in History and Today**

This class explores historical and contemporary concepts of gender and the body. We will look at how these ideas also connect to other systems of privilege and inequality, and discuss ways that people have thought about social roles, social sanctions, and empowerment through ideas about the body. Topics will include the history of medical ideas about gendered bodies, cultural concepts of disability, race, and transgender identities, socially sanctioned violence against bodies, cultural representation of body ideals, gendered bodies in relation to health, sexual and spiritual ideals. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, WGS 212, ERS 100, EDS 206, EFN 205, SOC 110, SOC 120. Offered Spring.

SOC/WGS 337 Cr.3

**Globalization, Women, and Work**

This course examines the global and often exploitative experiences of women, migrating from one part of the world to another for work. As women leave their countries of origin, many find themselves working as nannies, sex workers, house cleaners and modern-day slaves in sweatshops. These work environments often create vulnerability, discrimination, and abuse of women within the private and public institutions of their host countries. The course will also use in-depth personal narratives and a focus on grassroots social movements to witness how women resist workplace policies and domestic laws to campaign for their rights, despite cultural and political constraints. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, EFN 205, or ERS 100. (Cross-listed with SOC/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 340 Cr.3

**Gender, Knowledge, and Power**

This course explores the connection between gender, knowledge, and power. Students in this course will learn to apply classic and feminist epistemological theory to questions such as how knowledge is socially situated, what it means to explore knowledge through a critical feminist lens, and how the production of knowledge is impacted by conceptions of gender, race, and class. Students in this course will learn about the scientific method and how feminist epistemological theory can strengthen, not weaken, objectivity. Ultimately, students will apply these lessons to the context of the formalized education system in the contemporary United States. In doing so, students will come to a better understanding of how women can “reclaim” their educations. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, EFN 205. Offered Alternate Years.
WGS 360 Cr.3  
Hip Hop Culture, Race, and Gender  
This course is designed to examine the history of Hip Hop and how it has evolved over time from a culture that gave voice to youth culture in New York City to a global phenomenon that, in many ways, has lost its way due to commercialism. In this course, we will discuss the origins of Hip Hop culture and its four basic elements (break dancing, rap, djing, and graffiti art). We examine how rap has evolved over time and how consumerism and capitalism have influenced Hip Hop culture. During the class, we will discuss various controversies that have arisen around the music, including criticism of its attitudes toward violence, femininity, masculinity, homosexuality, and educational achievement. Students will have the opportunity to analyze and deconstruct music lyrics, music videos, and movies. Offered Occasionally.

HIS/WGS 370 Cr.3  
The History of Black Women's Activism  
An historical overview of the thoughts, actions, and creative products of black women activists in the United States, from slavery to the present. Students will examine historical analyses, speeches, essays, economic activities, organizational styles, political issues, and various forms of artistic expression that women of African descent have produced in order to query, resist, and defy the interlocking oppressions of racism, sexism, and class-ism in the United States. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, EFN 205, or ERS 100. (Cross-listed with HIS/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

WGS 373 Cr.3  
Gender and Human Rights  
This course will provide an overview of transnational women's human rights movements in a variety of locations around the world; locations will vary with the instructor. Included in this overview will be the study of women's political participation as a human rights issue; women's bodily integrity as a human right; violence against women and reproductive sexual health and rights; human rights as a framework for social and economic and gender justice; and human rights as (quasi) legal accountability; UN agreements, treaties and venues of redress. Prerequisite: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, EFN 205, or ERS 100. Offered Fall - Odd Numbered Years.

WGS 374 Cr.3  
Women, Poverty and Public Policy  
The course analyzes the historical underpinnings to the creation and evolution of welfare with special attention paid to the ways gender, race, and class oppression have shaped welfare in the past and today. Wage differentials, occupational segregation, unpaid work, and gender violence are discussed in relation to the construction of poverty. How poverty affects the lives of poor women and their children also is explored. Current welfare policy will be analyzed and suggestions for reform based on current research is developed by the class. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, POL 205, PSY 318, or EFN 205. Offered Alternate Years.

SOC/WGS 375 Cr.3  
Lesbian Studies  
Examines the social construction of sexual orientation and its meaning for women and women's equality. The course draws on a range of sources, including scientific research, history, literature, psychological theory, and popular culture. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, WGS 150, or EFN 205. (Cross-listed with SOC/WGS; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

WGS 386 Cr.3  
Women of Color and Autobiography  
This course is designed to introduce students to non-fiction writing, focusing specifically on the autobiographical work of women of color. We will read a variety of different forms of autobiographical text. During this course, we will examine how intersections of race, gender, space, and identity are explored in these women's narratives. Through the readings, we will investigate the ethical and political obligations of minority writers. Also, we will investigate the interplay of identity formation and writing. Additionally, we will place these women's narratives into historical and social contexts to understand how these factors influence these women's texts. While reading these texts, we will write our own narratives as a method to investigate the lives of women. Offered Occasionally.

WGS 386 Cr.1-9  
Internship in Women's Studies  
The internship is an academically relevant field experience for majors and minors in women's studies which combine women's studies scholarship with practical experience. The field experience will be supervised by the women's studies staff. A maximum of three credits will be counted toward the minor. Repeatable for credit - maximum nine. Prerequisite: six credits of WGS courses; WGS major or minor. Offered Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer.

WGS 499 Cr.3  
Women's Studies Seminar  
Intensive interdisciplinary study of particular areas in women's studies. Topics will be chosen by the instructor and the students. Prerequisite: one of the following: WGS 100, WGS 130, or WGS 150; at least two other courses approved for the WGS major or minor; declared WGS major or minor. Offered Fall.