

GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES (GSS)

Courses and Descriptions

GSS 100 Introduction to Gender Studies 3 Credits

An introduction to the role of gender in human experience, examining the biological, historical, literary, artistic, and institutional manifestations of gender, and exploring the intersections of gender, sex, and sexuality.

GSS 110 Race, Class and Gender in Contemporary American Society 3 Credits

This interdisciplinary course analyzes the ways in which race, class, gender and ethnic relationships shape the experience of all persons in this society. It examines the categories of race, class and gender as social constructs that have been historically developed and sustained by economic, social, political, and cultural factors. Note: This course is cross-listed with MCS 110. Students may only get credit for one course: MCS 110 or GSS 110.

GSS 200 Introduction to Women's Studies 3 Credits

An interdisciplinary investigation of traditional and contemporary gender roles, and of women's status, identity, and potential. Required for minor.

GSS 212 Gender, War and Peace 3 Credits

Through readings in literature, history, political science, philosophy, and psychology, the course will explore critically the myths linking feminine gender with pacifism and masculine gender with aggression. Various perspectives on peace and war, the history of peace movements, and women's as well as men's participation in war will be considered.

GSS 230 Women In Literature 3 Credits

A range of literary presentations of the female experience and of the conditions of women's lives is explored. These works are placed in historical and social contexts in order to see behind and beyond traditional literary conventions. Cross-listed with ENG 230.

GSS 235 Current Feminist Issues 3 Credits

This course examines historical and contemporary debates about controversial issues involving women, gender, and equality. The course will highlight feminist concerns with race, class, sexuality, and gender norms, focusing broadly on society, culture, the economy, politics, and law. Students will learn to contextualize, analyze, and evaluate arguments on multiple sides of these controversies.

GSS 240 Sex and Human Nature 3 Credits

This course provides an introduction to the scientific study of human sexual behavior, mate choice, and reproduction. Questions of interest include: How is sex determined? How are males, females, and intersex individuals different biologically? How do individuals' sexual strategies tend to differ? Why do we experience sexual jealousy? Are humans actually evolved to form long-term pair-bonds? What determines sexual orientation? Answers to these questions will be considered in light of the reproductive science of humans and our evolutionary ancestors.

GSS 245 Popular Constructions of Gender and Sexuality 3 Credits

This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the constructs that society creates and maintains with relation to sexuality and gender. As we are increasingly confronted with images of gender and sexuality, it becomes vital to interrogate the origins of these images from a variety of disciplinary perspectives in order to analyze and critique these constructs. Students will be introduced to theoretical approaches to analyzing popular constructs of gender and sexuality from a variety of areas, including (but not limited to) the humanities, the physical sciences, and the social sciences.

GSS 300 Feminist Literary Criticism 3 Credits

This seminar explores the diversity within feminist literary analysis. Various national, ethnic and cultural standpoints are represented and the different as well as the common assumptions within feminist thought will be discussed.

GSS 309 Women in American History 3 Credits

Examines the roles, status, and influence of women from the colonial era to the present. Studies the origins and development of feminism, including legal, political, educational, economic, and sexual rights; and studies social feminism, including reform movements in such fields as abolition, prohibition, pacifism, child labor, and social welfare.

GSS 310 Special Topics 3 Credits

Studies in specialized areas of feminist scholarship. Topics change according to instructor and are listed in the course roster.

Prerequisite: one previous course in gender and sexuality studies or permission of instructor.

GSS 313 Gender and Ethics 3 Credits

An interdisciplinary seminar involving a concentrated study of recent works in feminist theory, with special attention to issues such as: Do men and women have different ethical perspectives and different styles of moral reasoning? How do the "ethics of care" differ from the traditional "ethics of justice?" Can the models of justice and care be integrated into a more comprehensive theory?

GSS 318 Gender and Communication 3 Credits

Focuses on interactive relationships between gender and communication in contemporary American society. It connects theory and research with practice to explore multiple ways communication in families, schools, media, and society in general creates and perpetuates gender roles. It is designed to heighten students' awareness of how we enact socially created gender differences in public and private settings and how this affects success, satisfaction, and self-esteem. Note: This course is crosslisted as GSS 318. Students may not get credit for both COM 318 and GSS 318.

GSS 319 Gender and Sexuality in American History 3 Credits

What makes a man, exactly, and what makes a woman? What kinds of sex are normal, and what kinds are abnormal? Who decides, and why? The answers to these questions are not fixed. Throughout American history, popular understandings of gender and sexual norms evolved in close relationship with the political, economic, racial, and social dictates of the time. This course will trace the evolution of ideas on sex and gender from the 18th century to the present using various historical sources including fiction and film, particular attention will be given to analyzing dominant models of proper behavior and the complex relationships of power enmeshed within them.

GSS 320 Sex, Gender, and Fairy Tales 3 Credits

From the early literary fairy tale by Italian authors, to 17th-century French women writers who named and popularized the genre, to the 18th- and 19th-century stories geared toward children, to Disney and beyond, students will analyze fairy tales to see what they tell us about gender and sexuality historically and today. Students will read classic fairy tales from around the world and look at feminist and queer retellings, examining how fairy tale themes and motifs permeate our culture.

Prerequisites: CMP 125 or BHP 150.

GSS 322 Witch Hunts: Femicide Through Centuries 3 Credits

We will look at the perceived definitions of “witch” and “witchcraft” in relation to establishing medieval to modern gender codes. Our detailed study of perceptions of witches and their practices will reveal the power dynamics, social constructions and definitions that aided in the demise of countless women labeled as “witches” throughout history. Considerable time will be spent in exploring the internal controversy within the field of witchcraft studies regarding the use of words such as “genocide,” “femicide,” and “gendercide.”

GSS 333 Gender and Sport 3 Credits

Typical thoughts of sport include ticket prices, player salaries, team rosters, and league standings; rarely is it viewed from a gender perspective. This course will go beyond the examination of Title IX to better understand the relationship between masculinity, femininity and sports. This course will examine various aspects of gender and sport, including media and gender representation, race and ethnicity, drugs and violence, men and masculinities, sexualities, policy and politics, the feminist critique of sport, the initiation rites and hazing in college sports, sports wagering, and the internationalization of sport, including but not limited to the Olympics and Paralympics.

GSS 350 Leadership and Community 3 Credits

Designed for all students whose future plans include community service, organizing, and leadership, this course will study organizing in response to domestic violence, discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality, sexual harassment, and other issues that are significant for women and/or the LGBTQ community. Building coalitions, skills for leadership, and strategies for effective organization will be covered in readings and in class discussions and students will practice what they have learned by volunteering in a local nonprofit organization.

GSS 375 Transgender Narratives 3 Credits

An introduction for Gender and Sexuality Studies minors and other interested students to the interdisciplinary field of transgender studies. Students will learn to distinguish between transsexual, transgender, transvestite, and intersex identities; to explore cross-cultural gender diversity; to recognize diverse subcultural expressions of gender, such as cross-dressing, camp, and drag; to identify long-standing stereotypes about trans people; and to understand trans people’s narratives about hormonal or surgical gender transition through literary and multimedia genres.

GSS 400 Seminar in Transcultural Gender and Sexuality 3 Credits

This seminar offers an opportunity for upper-level students to engage in a multidisciplinary study of the constructions of gender and sexuality in a variety of cultural contexts across the globe. Topics change according to instructor. Required for minor.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or senior standing.

GSS 490 Independent Study: Research and Creative Expression 1-4 Credits

Independent Research and Study allows juniors and seniors in good academic standing to investigate topics of interest under faculty supervision. Projects must be approved by the faculty member, department chairperson, and academic dean no later than the third week of the semester in which the project is to be conducted. Only one project can be scheduled in a semester, and for no more than four semester hours; up to 12 semester hours of independent research and study may be counted toward graduation. Note that individual departments may have additional restrictions.

GSS 491 Internship 1-4 Credits