Women’s and Gender Studies

Welcome to Women’s and Gender Studies! We are an inter-disciplinary program, and we offer an undergraduate major in WGS, and a minor in both WGS and LGBTQ Studies. We also offer a variety of cognates, including Introduction to WGS/Introduction to LGBTQ Studies. Aside from our core courses, our course offerings span over 12 departments. We also hold monthly lunch colloquia that are open to everyone in the UM community. To find out more about our program or to sign up for our newsletter, please send me an email at m.blofield@miami.edu.

Best,
Merike Blofield
Director.

MAJOR

A major in Women's and Gender Studies consists of at least 30 credits in Women's and Gender Studies courses (core or combined courses) with a grade of C- or better in each course and a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 in WGS courses. These credits must include at least 18 at the 300 level or above. All majors must complete WGS 201: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies, WGS 301: Feminist Inquiries, and at least two other WGS core courses.

All majors also have the option of completing WGS 501: Senior Research Project, which takes the form of an individual research project with a faculty member of the student's choice. The student is responsible for finding an appropriate faculty member who is available to supervise the project and then must seek formal approval from the program director before proceeding with the project. The student must produce a substantial written report or research paper, the format of which will vary according to the nature of the project. Women's and Gender Studies majors with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 in WGS courses and an overall GPA of at least 3.0 may earn departmental honors by completing WGS 505: Honors Thesis instead of the senior research project, following the same guidelines. Most students writing an honors thesis as part of their WGS major will take WGS 505 twice (for a total of 6 credits).

MINOR

A minor in Women's and Gender Studies consists of at least 15 credits in Women's and Gender Studies courses (core, co-listed, and cross-listed) with a grade of C- or better in each course and a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 in WGS courses. These credits must include at least 9 at the 300 level or above. All minors must complete WGS 201: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies, WGS 301: Feminist Inquiries, and at least one other WGS core course. The student may not take more than 3 credit hours of individual studies without the approval of the program director.
LGBTQ Studies MINOR
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer

The LGBTQ Studies minor is designed to allow students to explore sexuality and sexual minorities from a variety of perspectives. The minor will provide students with an introduction to a broad array of LGBTQ issues, including visual and performing arts, literature, languages, history, social science, various theories, public policy and the law, families and other types of intimate relationships, crime, popular culture, and LGBTQ identities and communities. This widely interdisciplinary field addresses work in a broad range of scholarly disciplines, including biological and cultural studies, literature and anthropology, the health sciences, history, and the visual arts. It ranges from archival research to the elaboration of queer theory, from the analysis of constitutional law to questions of public health, from the study of popular culture to investigations into the development and social construction of sexual identity.

A minor in LGBTQ Studies consists of at least 15 credits in LGBTQ Studies courses (requirements, core, and combined courses) with a grade of C- or better in each course and a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 in LGBTQ courses. All minors must complete WGS 201: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies and WGS 202: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies. The remaining course work must include at least 9 credit hours at the 300 level or above in LGBTQ themed courses and no more than 6 credit hours in any one department or program. The student may not take more than 3 credit hours of individual studies without the approval of the program director.

COGNATES

Women’s and Gender Studies also has several cognates, including “Women’s and Gender Studies” (people and society), “LGBTQ Studies” (people and society), A Cross-Cultural and Historic Examination of Sexuality (people and society), “Gender and Politics” (people and society), and “Gender, Literature and the Fine Arts” (arts and humanities).
FALL 2017

**WGS 201 Intro to Women’s & Gender Studies (Writing credit)**
Section E: MWF 12:20pm-1:10pm  
Section O:TR 9:30am-10:45am  
Instructor: Dr. Claire Oueslati-Porter

When your mother announced that she was pregnant with you, the first question she was probably asked was, “Are you having a boy or a girl?” In this course, we will examine the local and global significance of gender as it intersects with class, race and ethnicity. We will ask many questions: Why is it women who do most of the world’s work, but who own little of the world’s wealth? Why are stay-at-home fathers ridiculed? Why, in a time of increased transgender visibility and celebrity, are U.S. transgender women so often the targets of violence? As we investigate the challenges that women politicians face, we will focus on the surge in women entering politics since the 2016 presidential election. We will assess gendered double-standards, such as the fact that it is women who are often expected to avoid being raped, rather than men being expected not to rape. This course uses social science research to separate false perceptions from realities, in order to better understand why gender continues to shape our social institutions.

**WGS 202: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies**
Section D: MWF 11:15am-12:30pm  
Instructor: Dr. Claire Oueslati-Porter

As an introduction to the LGBTQ Studies minor, this class will be multidisciplinary, and will require challenging reading, engaged discussion, and on-going written responses. We will examine how contemporary sexual and gender identities have been historically, culturally, and politically constructed, how other times and places have thought differently about these forms of human variation, and how these ideas continue to be in transformation. We will think through some key current questions in contemporary queer global politics: should states recognize and regulate gender, and if so, how? Is gay marriage about equality or assimilation? How should we nurture the autonomy and well-being of intersex people? How might the growing and vulnerable LBTQQIAA population in the global south best be supported by those of us in the global north—and what might we have to learn from them?

**WGS 301 Feminist Inquires (Writing credit)**
Section J: MW 5:00-6:15 PM  
Instructor: Dr. Sumita Dutt

This course studies the ways in which feminist inquiry transforms our understanding of key issues across the curriculum. Reading classic and contemporary feminist scholarship from a diversity of disciplinary backgrounds we will address questions of rights, equality, nature of oppression and difference. We will discuss the dynamic, historical and changing nature of feminist contributions to the understanding of what constitutes work, inscriptions on the body, sex, sexualities, gender(s) and masculinities. Drawing on interdisciplinary feminist texts in history, anthropology, literary theory and literature, films, visuals, primary documents such as speeches and manifestos, the course will enable us to appreciate the diversity of feminist scholarship and activism that animate feminist inquiries.
**WGS 315 Gender, Race and Class**
Section S: TR 3:30pm-4:45pm
Instructor: Dr. Sumita Dutt

This course interrogates common sense thinking about gender, race and class drawing on readings, documentaries, blogs, memoirs and fiction from the social sciences and humanities. We will explore the ways in which intersections of gender, race, and class shape society and the lived experiences of individuals and groups within it. The focus of such critical readings will be the United States and its institutions such as family, education, economy, public policy, and the media. We will analyze how these categories intersect, as well as create inequities and build solidarities and resistance movements for change over historical time and in specific cultural contexts. Class readings, lectures and discussions will be from an intersectional and multidisciplinary perspective.

**WGS 335 LGBTQ Communities**
Section O: TR 9:30am-10:45am (combined with SOC 335)
Instructor: Dr. Robert Johnson

Sociology of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer communities and identities. This course examines the history, methods, theory and concepts of social science research on these topics over the last half century and examines contemporary issues.

**WGS 350 Special Topics: Sista Soul Food (Writing credit)**
Section S: TR 3:30pm-4:45pm/ Combined with Composition 306
Instructor: Dr. Rachel Panton

Upon entry into the U.S., black slave women introduced their African foodways into American culture as evidenced by the Gullah Geechee culture in the Carolinas. At the same time, slave women who were sold further inland lost much of their indigenous foodways and were forced to make do with the scraps (hog maws, fatback, pig ears, pig feet, chitterlings, etc.) from their owners. In both cases, black slave women were central to the survival of black communities whether they were cooking in the kitchen in the big house, growing their own crops, controlling the poultry market, or prescribing herbs and tonics for healing through rootwork. Today, many Black women face high numbers of diabetes, hypertension, cancer and a host of other diseases, which many blame on a post-slave diet or a loss of indigenous cuisine. Through slave narratives, academic articles, and contemporary commercial memoirs we will trace the culinary agency of black women and examine our current state of affairs.

**WGS 350 Special Topics:Bollywood and Beyond: Religion, Gender &Politics in South Asian Film Writing credit**
Section C: MWF 10:10am-11:00am/Combined with HIS 313
Instructor: Dr. Sumita Dutt

This course studies themes in Indian society through the lens of Indian cinema – both Bollywood and the regional film industry. The important themes covered are: the complex narratives of religious iconography, myths and faith, caste, gender, sexuality, and the challenges of tradition, customs, and “globalized” modernity in India.
WGS 350 Special Topics: Sociology of Gender
Section Q: TR 12:30pm-1:45pm/Combined with SOC 380
Instructor: Dr. Linda Belgrave

Together, we examine the phenomenon of gender in society, through a sociological lens, using sociological theory (feminist and other) and research. Although we will cover sex (the biological side), our focus is on the social, including topics such as the social construction of gender (and challenges to this construction), gender identity, doing gender, embodiment, gender discrimination, and the like, as we pursue these through various social institutions such as the family, the educational system, the media, the world of employment, and more. While we focus primarily on women, we will also address men and other genders. Finally, because people live and do gender simultaneously with doing race, class, and more, we will also examine intersectionality.

WGS 350 Special Topics: Women, Media, and Popular Culture
Section 33: MW 11:15 am-12:30 pm/Combined with CIM 408/AMS 327
Instructor: Dr. Kerli Kirch

Women, Media, and Popular Culture examines gender representation in film, television, and other American media from the perspective of feminist theory and cultural studies. The course is taught from a cultural studies perspective where students will gain skills in critical analysis and media literacy. In addition to exploring how gender is portrayed in media texts, the course will also introduce how gender issues are studied through production and reception analysis. As a result of this course, the students will explore the many ways that women have been portrayed – and how they have portrayed themselves – within popular culture. Furthermore, they will also become familiar with the ways in which Hollywood representation has been shaped by formal systems and institutional forces.

WGS 350: Special Topics: Territorios feministas: colectivo e individualidad
Section H long : MW 3:35-4:50 pm/ Combined with SPA 330
Instructor: Dr. Elena Grau-Lleveria
IN SPANISH

La introducción al tema del curso se establece con lecturas que exponen los dos territorios de adquisición de poder: la colectividad “mujeres” tradicional (donde las demandas se hacen a partir de los tradicionales roles que se les asignan a las mujeres) y la individualización. Desde estas lecturas iniciales, se estudia un corpus de producción artística donde nos vamos a concentrar en la visibilidad que se da en estas obras a experiencias y vivencias de “mujeres” que habían permanecido fuera de la creación artística canónica o se habían expuesto desde una perspectiva masculina.

WGS 350 Special Topics: Women’s America
Section H: MWF 3:35pm-4:25pm/Combined with HIS 261
Instructor: Dr. Sybil Lipschultz

This course looks at the history of American women from the American Revolution to Reconstruction. We will examine mothers and daughters of the revolution, women and the law of slavery, abolition and women’s rights, the first independent women’s movement and the legal status of women throughout the period.
WGS 350 Special Topics  
Section F: 1:25pm-2:15pm/Combined with ENG  
Instructor: Dr. Catherine Judd

WGS 405: Gender and Sexualities in the Middle East and North Africa (Writing credit)  
Section P: TR 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM/Combined with ARB 315 and APY 418  
Instructor: Dr. Claire Oueslati-Porter

This course offers an anthropological point of entry into the study of gender and sexuality in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Through ethnographic and sociological readings, we will analyze the social construction of gender and sexuality in the MENA. We will seek to answer many questions, including: How are Moroccan women workers challenging gender norms? How do transgender people in Oman maintain community acceptance? While women’s formal workforce participation is low in the MENA, what forms of hidden informal labor to women perform? How do gay men in Lebanon traverse class and ethnic boundaries? In what ways is motherhood a political act for Palestinian women? How are Middle Eastern and North African feminists using social media to combat sexual harassment? Through this course, students will learn the value of using anthropological theory and ethnographic method to better understand gender and sexuality in the often misunderstood Middle East and North Africa.

WGS 410 Gender, Sexuality and the Law  
Section H: MW 3:35pm-4:50pm  
Instructor: Dr. Maria Sevilla

This course will explore the intersection between gender, sexuality, and the law, including how these come together in individuals’ private lives, workplace, educational settings, civic life, and the international arena. Using a combination of landmark supreme court cases, scholarly sources, personal narratives, and news articles, we will explore the ways in which legislation and cultural constructs affect individuals of all genders, and look at practical ways to face possible challenges ahead.

WGS 469 LGBTI Politics (Writing credit)  
Section O:TR 9:30am-10:45am/ Combined with POL 469  
Instructor: Dr. Louise Davidson Schmich

Across the globe today, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex citizens face very different legal situations. This class has two primary goals. First, we will explore the empirical variation in public policies towards various issues of interest to LGBTI citizens. Second, we will examine the social scientific literature on social movements and try to identify the factors which have helped or hindered LGBTI rights activists’ efforts to improve the legal status of LGBTI citizens. Students will have the opportunity to do their own research on LGBTI activism of their choosing and present their findings to their classmates. Your final grade will be based written analysis of course readings, a research paper and presentation, and class participation.
WGS INDEPENDENT STUDIES, THESES, INTERNSHIPS

WGS 499: Independent Study
Instructor: As arranged by student.
Section: As arranged by student and instructor.

A study of the student’s choice, and arranged in conjunction with a WGS instructor, of an issue focusing on gender and sexuality. Content varies. Contact Merike Blofield, the WGS Program Director, at m.blofield@miami.edu for more information.

WGS 501: Senior Research Project (Writing credit)
Instructor: As arranged by student.
Section: As arranged by student and instructor.

A student-initiated research project with a faculty member of the student’s choice and approved by the program director. Contact Merike Blofield, the WGS Program Director, at m.blofield@miami.edu for more information.

WGS 505: Senior Honors Thesis (Writing credit)
Instructor: As arranged by student.
Section: As arranged by student and instructor.

Women’s and Gender Studies majors with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 in WGS courses and an overall GPA of at least 3.0 may earn departmental honors by completing an honors thesis instead of the senior research project. Candidates for departmental honors are responsible for finding a faculty member who is willing to serve as a thesis advisor and then must complete a thesis proposal of approximately 400 words, which must be approved by the thesis advisor and the program director. Most students will take this course twice, for a total of six credits. Contact Merike Blofield, the WGS Program Director, at m.blofield@miami.edu for more information.

WGS 590: Women’s and Gender Studies Internship
Instructor: As arranged by student.
Section: As arranged by student and instructor.

An internship in a community organization focusing on issues of gender or sexuality. Students arrange the internship and propose an exhibit, project, term paper, or other materials that will be presented for academic credit to a faculty sponsor for approval prior to beginning the internship and to the program director at the end of the internship. Contact Merike Blofield, the WGS Program Director, at m.blofield@miami.edu for more information.