

# WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES (WGS)

The department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies provides an opportunity for research and dialogue on a broad range of topics related to feminist contributions as well as to the fundamental fields of human knowledge and achievement and interdisciplinary studies of feminisms, masculinity, sex, gender and sexuality. A student intending to major or minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies should consult the chair of the department, preferably during their first or early in their second year.

## Contact Information

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department (<http://college.wfu.edu/wgs/>)  
Tribble Hall A105, P.O. Box 7365  
Phone 336-758-3758

## Programs

### Major

- B.A. in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

### Minor

- Minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

## Courses

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

#### WGS 101. Window on Women's, Gender and Sexual Studies. (1.5 h)

An opportunity to experience and reflect analytically in writing on the diverse cultural and intellectual life of Wake Forest, with an emphasis on women's, and gender, and sexuality studies events and topics.

#### WGS 121. Feminist Leadership Project. (1.5 h)

Explores the principles of feminist leadership to deepen self-awareness about personal leadership skills and gain tools for creating feminist social change. This highly interactive class welcomes students who are new to feminist thought/activism as well as those seeking to deepen their engagement with feminism. Pass/fail only.

#### WGS 122. LGBTQ Center Change Agents Leadership Project. (1.5 h)

Open to participants in the LGBTQ Center's Change Agent program. Participants will explore principles of identity development (individual and community), queer and feminist theories of leadership and change, understanding gender and sexuality as frameworks for community organizing and social change, and development and implementation of a final change related project. Pass/fail only. P-POI.

#### WGS 123. The Feminist Book Society. (1.5 h)

A reading course designed to introduce students to classic and contemporary feminist texts. Emphasis on close reading, discussion, and writing. May be repeated for credit if texts differ.

#### WGS 125. Prepare. (1.5 h)

Provides students with an overview of the social, emotional, and legal issues related to sexual violence, and teaches them to design and implement educational programs on this topic. Pass/fail only.

#### WGS 150. Perspectives in Gender and Sexuality. (3 h)

Introduces feminism as a lens of analysis; gender, sexuality, and other social categories as social constructs; sexism, heterosexism, and other social systems as systems of oppression; and intersectionality as a lens of analysis. Topics of the course will vary based on the instructor. (D)

#### WGS 214. Gender and Sexuality in World History. (3 h)

Introduces the global and historical breadth of gender and sexual systems. Foundational and current approaches to cross-cultural historical analysis of masculinity, women's rights, and differences between LGBTQ identities and other models. Also listed as HST 114.

#### WGS 221. Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. (3 h)

Introduces many of the key topics, debates, and theoretical paradigms in the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Addresses questions such as: What are gender and sexuality and how do gender and sexual norms influence the lives of people in society? What is the relationship between gender and sexuality and other social categories such as race and class? What is power and how is power distributed differently according to gender, race, class, and sexuality? The course strives to train students in analytical thinking and presses them to think critically about gender and sexuality in the past, present, and future. (CD)

#### WGS 222. Introduction to Sexuality Studies. (3 h)

Provides an interdisciplinary grounding in the foundations of queer culture and studies, with a critical interrogation of sex, gender, sexuality, pleasure, and embodiment in popular culture, literature, health, science, and politics. (CD)

#### WGS 224. Readings in Queer Theology. (1.5 h)

This seminar-style reading course surveys classic and new works in queer theology. Queer theology transgresses dominant constructions of gender identity and sexuality; and as such, it can be seen as an expression of the Christian gospel that subverts human understandings of life, community, and the divine. The course explores biblical and Christian theological perspectives on sexuality, social constructions of sexuality, and issues such as power, marriage equality, and sexual ethics.

#### WGS 230. Studies in Gender and Literature. (3 h)

Addresses ways in which gender and literacy practices intersect in various cultures and historical periods. Attention will be paid to the role of literature in formulating, subverting, or resisting gender norms. May be repeated for credit if topic differs.

#### WGS 234. Sexual Revolution! Gender and Sexuality in the United States, 1950-1980. (3 h)

Examines how conflicts around gender and sexuality played out from the 1950s to the 1970s in both the popular and high culture of the time: in bestselling novels and poems as well as canonical literature, and in television as well as in experimental film. We will consider the 1950s twice: once through the art produced at that time, and then through art produced about the 1950s after mainstream gender norms had shifted.

#### WGS 251. Race and Ethnic Diversity in America. (3 h)

Different race and ethnic experiences are examined through an institutional approach that examines religion, work, schooling, marriage patterns, and culture from cross-cultural perspective. Grand theoretical schemes like the "melting pot" are critiqued for their relevance in an age of new cultural expectations among the many American ethnic groups. Also listed as AES 251. (CD)

#### WGS 271. Making Sense of the News Through a Feminist Lens. (1-3 h)

Inquiry into news literacy from a feminist perspective, with the intention to identify gender bias and consider questions of empowerment, exclusion, consumerism, and how to navigate the digital landscape to distinguish verified, reliable news from propaganda.

**WGS 301. Feminist Political Thought. (3 h)**

Introduction to feminist thought and its implications for the study and practice of political theory. Topics include feminist critiques of the Western political tradition and schools of feminist political theory. Also listed as POL 277. (CD)

**WGS 302. Feminist Philosophy. (3 h)**

Examination of feminist approaches to philosophical theorizing. Topics may include feminist critiques of the scope and methods of mainstream philosophy, feminist approaches to ethics, epistemology and philosophy of language, and feminist conceptions of the self, sexuality, and moral agency. Also listed as PHI 379. P-One PHI course or POI.

**WGS 305. Transgender History, Identity and Politics. (3 h)**

Explores the experiences of and responses to transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGI) people in nineteenth-and twentieth-century America. We will examine how scientific/medical authorities, legal authorities, and everyday people have understood and responded to various kinds of gender non-conformity. Same as HST 371. (CD)

**WGS 306. Queer Public Histories. (3 h)**

Explores how public history projects (oral histories, museums, archives, documentaries) document gay, lesbian, and queer communities in the U.S. Discusses how historical and contemporary LGBTQ stories have been collected and examines the various queer identities that emerge through this process. Same as HST 372.

**WGS 309. Environmentalism, the Humanities, and Gender. (3 h)**

Survey of the global spread of Environmentalism, with an emphasis on its evolution as a disciplinary field that includes eco-feminism and feminist perspectives on the environment. Topics include the investigation of women's roles in environmental history and the construction of global environmental narratives. Also listed as HMN 292.

**WGS 310. Gender, Power and Violence. (3 h)**

A research-centered study of various issues related to violence, power, and gender in American society. Emphasizes sociological analysis of competing theoretical explanations of violence with respect to race, class, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. (CD)

**WGS 318. Film Lab in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. (1.5 h)**

Viewing, dissecting, and analyzing films. Fosters the skills to create complex cinematic analyses and explore feminist theoretical issues related to spectatorship.

**WGS 319. Women Playwrights. (3 h)**

Examination of selected plays and/or performance texts by women. Focus varies, for example, looking at works by contemporary American women or early women dramatists such as Hrosvitha, Sor Juana, and Aphra Behn. Also listed as THE 373. (CD)

**WGS 322. Feminist, Womanist, Murjerista Theologies: Constructive Perspectives on Christian Thought. (3 h)**

Examines major topics in Christian theology from African American (womanist), Latina/Hispanic (mujerista), and queer perspectives.

**WGS 326. Telling Women's Lives: Writing about Entrepreneurs, Activists, and Thought Leaders. (3 h)**

This course will use an interdisciplinary approach to address fundamental issues of female leadership by examining recent developments in long- and short-form narratives about women (biography, essays, profiles) and employing journalistic tools to interview and write profiles of women entrepreneurs, activists, and thought leaders. Also listed as ENT 326.

**WGS 329. Politics of Gender and Sexuality: Cross-Cultural Perspectives. (3 h)**

Examines cultural constructions of gender and sexuality from a cross-cultural perspective and the relationship between feminism and cultural rights activism through time. Emphasizes how varied forms of feminisms are constituted within diverse social, cultural, and economic systems. Students consider how feminists are negotiating positions at the intersection of cultural and human rights. Also listed as ANT 329.

**WGS 330. Gender and the Politics of Health. (3 h)**

Examines the intersections of gender, medicine, health, and illness, with a focus on the U.S. context. Topics include: reproduction, mental illness, breast cancer, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS, among others. We explore the following questions: How have women and men interacted differently with the field of medicine, as healers, patients, and subjects of medical research? How do social and cultural norms about gender influence the definition of illness categories? What role does medicine play in defining and enforcing the boundaries of what is considered socially acceptable in terms of gender? How does gender as a social role affect health outcomes?

**WGS 332. Men, Masculinity and Power. (3 h)**

Offers an introduction to the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of masculinity studies. Students will explore the social, historical, and cultural construction of masculinity and male roles (as fathers, sexual and romantic partners, and workers) and how these constructions differ according to race, class, sexuality, etc. In addition, the course will examine how norms about masculinity simultaneously empower men as a group and many individual men, while also disadvantaging many individual men and regulating the behavior of all men. Students will explore possibilities for challenging hegemonic forms of masculinity and for creating new types of masculinity.

**WGS 333. Sexual Politics in the United States. (3 h)**

Explores the politics of sexuality in the United States. Drawing on feminist scholarship, queer theory, and lesbian, gay, and transgender studies, we will explore different historical and theoretical approaches to thinking about issues of power and sexuality. We will discuss sexual identities and cultures, state regulation of sexuality, sexual commerce, and cultural representations of sexuality, among other topics. Throughout we will examine how other social categories such as race, class, gender, and disability intersect with the politics of sexuality.

**WGS 345. Girls Gone Wild: A Century of Misbehavior. (3 h)**

Analyzes what made girls and women "bad" and "wild" in the twentieth-century United States, and how such judgments changed over time. Engages closely with novels, short stories, movies, comics, podcasts, and an opera with an eye to what behaviors were considered appropriate, and how they interrelated with sexual attraction, with economics, and with love. We examine the relationship between being configured as a sexual object (a recipient of desire) and a sexual subject (a possessor of desire), and come to a critical understanding of how the "proper" and "improper" forms of both were constantly in flux. We ask how race, ethnicity, and queerness interacted with hegemonic concepts of beauty and desire, and whether "masculinity" and "femininity" are necessarily attached to men and women. We read theories of sex and gender, examine concepts of projection and male hegemony, and ask how men as well as women are shaped by rules of appropriate behavior.

**WGS 346. Visual Narratives: Image, Sequence, Story. (3 h)**

Investigates the relationship of image, sequence, and story in typography, comics, woodcut novels, and photographic books, and film, as well as fiction and poetry with unusual visual elements, and then asks how these various elements offer different visual and textual expressions of sexuality. Students will conduct formalist analyses and further investigate visual narrative through creative exercises with the goal of developing an aesthetic sensibility and a technical vocabulary that enable them to discuss visual narrative with precision. Please note that some visual narratives will include graphic scenes of sexuality. Same as ENG 345.

**WGS 347. Joan Didion/Edmund White: Personal/History. (3 h)**

Examines Didion and White, two of the most important American writers of the past fifty years. Both are known for their journalism as well as their fiction, and their interest in U.S. cultural and political history, especially in terms of gender and sexuality, permeates their novels. This course analyzes three works by each author, developing themes from motherhood, sexuality, imperialism, rebellion and AIDS.

**WGS 349. Invert, Pervert, Bull Dagger, Queen: U.S. Queer Fiction in the 20th Century. (3 h)**

Explores the history of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, the transgendered, and other queers through fiction by and about them written over the last century in the United States. We also consider biography, artifacts of popular culture, comics, drama, and film. Topics include the relationship between homosexual desire and queerness in a broad sense; LGBTQ children; biological and psychological understandings of sexual orientation; and how social construction informs sexual identity and desire.

**WGS 358. Mothers and Daughters. (3 h)**

A course that examines literature, psychology, and feminist theories on motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship.

**WGS 362. Feminism and Theatre. (3 h)**

Introduces students to the intersection of theater and feminism and experience its interdisciplinary lineage and academic interventions. Students will learn and apply feminist theory, which looks beyond the conventional theater for a continuum of performance that includes play, ritual, sport, everyday life and social roles, as well as performance art, global and intercultural performance. Engaging with various feminist theoretical approaches from radical and liberal feminism to intersectional and transnational feminism, students will be encouraged to critically examine race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality expressed on and offstage.

**WGS 363. Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Korea. (3 h)**

Examines gender and sexuality in Korean TV, film, K-pop, protests, and everyday performances, focusing on diverse socio-political issues within and beyond the Korean Peninsula. Topics include: the evolution of feminism, #metoo movement, LGBTQ cultures, sex work, aging, plastic surgery industry, postcolonial and post-Korean war conflicts, and transpacific affinities. (CD)

**WGS 364. Women of Color, Feminisms, and the Politics of Resistance in the U.S. (3 h)**

Examines historical and contemporary issues and current events affecting the lives of African American, Asian American, Latina, and Native American women. Exploring major theoretical and practical viewpoints in women's studies scholarship, the course will reveal the importance of intersectionality between race, gender, sexuality, class, and/or ethnicity in the everyday lives of multicultural women. Through arts-based civic engagement projects and activities, this course will also encourage students to formulate their own language of resistance against multiple forms of oppression. (CD)

**WGS 365. Transnational Asia and Asian American Feminism. (3 h)**

Analyzes historical, socio-political, and cultural events as well as contemporary issues structuring the lives of Asian American women and queer community. Students will learn intersectional and transnational feminist approaches to examine race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and kinship in Asian American art and activism.

**WGS 377. Special Topics. (1.5-3 h)**

Includes such women's, gender and sexuality studies topics as gender issues in the twenty-first century, critical approaches to women's issues, and the emergence of feminist thought. May be repeated for credit if topic differs.

**WGS 380. Sexuality, Law, and Power. (3 h)**

Explores a wide variety of issues related to sexual identity and orientation by looking at the ways in which the law can constrict social development as well as act as a catalyst for change. Examines how religion and popular morality shape the law and are shaped by it.

**WGS 381. Gender and the Law. (3 h)**

Examines how the law affects women's lives in a number of contexts. Considers a number of different areas, including but not limited to employment, education, family responsibilities, violence against women, and other issues affecting women's bodies, including pornography and prostitution. The class will also review a number of feminist legal theories and issues relating to the intersection of gender with race and class.

**WGS 383. Race, Gender, and the Courts. (3 h)**

Examines the impact of state and federal court cases upon the evolution of race and gender relations in the U.S. from 1789 to the present. Each case is placed within the political, economic and social historical context for the given time periods. Race includes Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino Americans. This class will analyze government intervention, inaction, and creative interpretation. Same as HST 358.

**WGS 388. South Asian Women: Religion, Culture and Politics. (3 h)**

Using a feminist and post-colonial perspective, and taking into account the histories, experiences, and lives of South Asian women, this course, examines the intersection of religion, race, and gender from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. It focuses on issues of representation and identity formation, recognizing how categories such as "South Asian" and "woman" become tools for a simultaneous understanding of both culture and gender, creating a place for both oppression and empowerment. Same as REL 388.

**WGS 396. Independent Study. (1-3 h)**

Independent projects in women's, gender, and sexuality studies which either continue study begun in regular courses or develop new areas of interest. Course may be repeated, but a maximum of 3 hours may apply to the minor. By prearrangement.

**WGS 397. Public Engagement in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. (1.5, 3 h)**

An opportunity for students to engage in work and research that is shared with the broader public, either on campus or in a local community. A maximum of 3 hours may apply to the major or minor. P-POI.

**WGS 398. Theory and Practice of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. (3 h)**

Examines the major themes and terminology in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, with focus on its diverse and multicultural expressions through time. Themes to be explored include schools of feminism, interlocking systems of oppression and the connection between theory and practice.

**WGS 399. Research Seminar in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. (3 h)**

A capstone, research-centered course in which students complete a significant research or creative project of their choosing situated within the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

## Faculty

**Chair** Simone M. Caron

**Professor** Shannon Gilreath

**Associate Professors** Wanda Balzano, Kristina Gupta

**Assistant Professors** Jieun Lee, Jeff Solomon

**Part-Time Assistant Teaching Professor** Angela Mazaris

**Visiting Associate Professor** Jayati Lal

**Visiting Assistant Professors** Rachel Corbann