Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) at Washington University provides students with advanced training in issues of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, and disability. Whether they come from a gender and sexuality studies background already or are looking to supplement their work in another field with a gender and sexuality studies perspective, this program helps students to explore the issues that matter to them. In addition to solidifying students' abilities to educate others in gender and sexuality issues and to integrate intersectional approaches with varied social issues and workplace challenges, this program can help students to develop specializations in a subfield appropriate for their individual plans and goals.

An understanding of gender and sexuality is central to discussions of law, social work, public health, economic inequality, business, and human rights. This program will prepare students to have the breadth and specialized knowledge that is increasingly needed and looked for in the workplace. Students will learn to think intersectionally — to understand the ways in which multiple identities interact with structural, social, and cultural inequalities — and to pursue interdisciplinary approaches to problems confronting the contemporary world.

Joint Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is a truly joint program in which students, under close mentoring by WGSS and law faculty, take a carefully selected set of courses tailored to the student's interest in the Law School and in the Graduate School. This program is designed to prepare lawyers with a deep understanding of the cultural impacts of gender and sexuality in the workplace, in policy, and in law.

Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Our graduate certificate program allows students in PhD programs to enhance their disciplinary studies with a concentration in gender studies.

This program offers graduate certificate students an opportunity to meet and work with graduate students in other departments. Graduate certificate students are on the program's mailing lists, and they are invited to participate in a variety of events, including special guest lectures, conferences, faculty searches and informal gatherings.

In WGSS, graduate certificate students may engage in a teaching pedagogy opportunity if they so wish. The teaching pedagogy opportunity in WGSS takes place over two semesters. During the first semester, students undergo teaching preparation in which they observe the class that they will teach; they are mentored by the instructor, and they attend instructor meetings devoted to examining content and pedagogy. In addition, they develop a syllabus — often in consultation with their WGSS teaching mentor and their department adviser — that is reviewed carefully by WGSS faculty. These students may be undergoing mentored teaching experiences in their own departments during this first semester. During the next semester, students teach the WGSS course, and they are observed by WGSS faculty and, in some cases, by faculty in their own departments. These faculty use a rubric for their assessment that is made available to the student; students receive a written assessment that they then discuss with the observing WGSS faculty member. Sometimes students are observed and assessed more than once. Participation in this program broadens students' teaching experiences and their credentials for future job opportunities.

The following departments are involved in this program: Anthropology, Art History, Education, English, German, History, Philosophy, Political Science, and Romance Languages and Literatures.

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Faculty

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Professor Emerita
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Susan E. and William P. Stritz Distinguished Professor of Women's Studies
PhD, Brandeis University
(Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; History)

Additional Program Faculty
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Professor
PhD, University of Missouri-Columbia
(Romance Languages and Literatures)

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Master of Arts in WGSS curriculum includes courses that are home-based in WGSS as well as courses that are cross-listed with WGSS and taught by feminist and gender scholars on the university faculty. The required courses are listed below and are designed to meet the 32-credit requirement for the Master of Arts in Arts & Sciences. Courses in the advanced seminar categories should be chosen in consultation with the WGSS adviser.

Students opting to write a master's thesis should complete 30 units of course work and the thesis. Students opting not to write a thesis should complete 32 units of course work. During their final semester of courses, students take a comprehensive written examination that will test their competence in the field of study. The examining committee will consist of the director of graduate studies, the student's adviser, and one other faculty member who is either core or affiliated with WGSS.

Advanced Theory and Research (9 credits):
- WGSS 501 Advanced Feminist Theory
- WGSS 417W Feminist Research Methodologies
- WGSS 429 Feminist Political Theory
- WGSS 419 Feminist Literary and Cultural Theory

Advanced Seminars in Race/Ethnicity (3 credits):
- WGSS 421 From Mammy to the Welfare Queen: African-American Women Theorize Identity
- WGSS 4XX Gender, Ethnicity, and Queer of Color Critique (course to be developed)

Advanced Seminars in Gender/Sexuality (3 credits):
- WGSS 406 Queering Theory: Collaborating, Solidarity, and Working Together
- WGSS 419 Feminist Literary and Cultural Theory
- WGSS 4102 Everyday Unruliness: Feminist and Queer Resistance

Advanced Seminars in Transnational Feminist and Gender Analysis (6 credits):
Master of Arts Program Requirements

The required WGSS courses are designed to meet the credit requirements for the Master of Arts in Arts & Sciences. Courses in the advanced seminar categories should be chosen in consultation with the WGSS adviser. The proposed curriculum includes courses that are home-based in WGSS, courses that are cross-listed with WGSS and taught by feminist and gender scholars on the faculty, and courses that are offered by the Law School.

The Master of Arts in WGSS requires 32 credit units, including at least 21 units from specific areas, with the remainder satisfied through elective courses in the student’s area of interest; a 2-credit master’s thesis is optional. For the Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in WGSS, particular courses in the upper-class Juris Doctoris curriculum offer opportunities for such electives, but these courses must be taken for a grade; courses offered pass/fail or for credit only will not count toward the 32 credits required for the Master of Arts in WGSS. (Note: Should students decide to start a PhD program, they will need 36 credits at the master's level.)

Students opting to write a master’s thesis should complete 30 units of course work and the thesis. Students opting not to write a thesis should complete 32 units of course work.

During their final semester of courses, students take a comprehensive written examination that will test their competence in the field of study. The examining committee will consist of the director of graduate studies, the student's adviser, and one other faculty member who is either core or affiliated with WGSS.

Advanced Theory and Research (9 units):
- WGSS 501 Advanced Feminist Theory (3 units)
- WGSS 417W Feminist Research Methodologies (3 units)
- WGSS 502 Critical Sexualities (3 units)

Advanced Seminars in Race/Ethnicity (3 units):
- WGSS 421 From Mammy to the Welfare Queen: African-American Women Theorize Identity (3 units)
- L77 WGSS 4XX Gender, Ethnicity, and Queer of Color Critique (course to be developed)

Advanced Seminars in Gender/Sexuality (3 units):
- WGSS 406 Queering Theory: Collaborating, Solidarity, and Working Together
- WGSS 419 Feminist Literary and Cultural Theory
- WGSS 4102 Everyday Unruliness: Feminist and Queer Resistance

Advanced Seminars in Transnational Feminist and Gender Analysis (6 units):

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- WGSS 418C Sexuality and Gender in East Asian Religions
- WGSS 437 Transnational Feminisms
- WGSS 49MB Advanced Seminar: Women and Gender in Modern Caribbean History
- WGSS 429 Feminist Political Theory
- WGSS 457 Gender and Modernity in Latin America

Electives in the Student’s Area(s) of Interest (9-12 credits):
Any additional advanced seminars from the above categories, or History and Theory:
- WGSS 475 Reformers and Radicals: Feminist Thinking Through History

Literature
- WGSS 4231 Topics in American Literature I
- WGSS 455 Topics in Korean Literature and Culture: Gender in Korean Literature and Film
- WGSS 4611 The Shaping of Modern Literature: Queer Historical Fiction
- WGSS 482 Reading Seminar: Gender and Chinese Literature: Writing Women of Imperial China

Gender Violence
- WGSS 427 Technology and Feminist Practice: Gender Violence Prevention Tools

Thesis Procedures
Students who choose to write a thesis will determine a subfield of focus during the first year of study. During the second year, in collaboration with their advisers, students will develop a thesis project or a practicum with a substantial writing component.

Joint Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Students entering this four-year program spend their first year taking the required the 1L courses in the Law School. As a result, a law student might decide to apply for the joint-degree program after entering law school.

Students in the program fulfill the usual JD requirements, including one ethics course, one upper-class writing course (seminar), 6 units of experiential credits in designated courses, and 67 units of law classroom credits. Because the upper-class JD curriculum may vary from year to year, students should choose their electives in consultation with their Law School advisers. Students in the joint Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in WGSS program may take courses from Arts & Sciences during their second through fourth years.
• WGSS 418 Sexuality and Gender in East Asian Religions (3 units)
• WGSS 437 Transnational Feminisms (3 units)
• WGSS 439 The Arab & Muslim Americas: Feminist Perspectives (3 units)
• WGSS 49MB Advanced Seminar: Women and Gender in Modern Caribbean History (3 units)
• WGSS 429 Feminist Political Theory (3 units)
• WGSS 457 Gender and Modernity in Latin America (3 units)

Electives in the Student's Area(s) of Interest (9-12 units):
These electives can be chosen from any of the advanced seminars from the above categories or from the following Law School courses, which must be taken for a grade to count toward the 32 credits required for the Master of Arts; students should discuss this with their WGSS adviser:
• LAW 590D Children's Rights Clinic (up to 8 units)
• LAW 508C Domestic Violence & the Law (2 units)
• LAW 590D Employment Discrimination (3 units)
• LAW 548 Family Law (4 units)
• LAW 8295 Feminist Theories/Feminist Judgments (3 units; seminar)
• LAW 8275 Implicit Bias, Law, & the Legal Profession (3 units; seminar)
• LAW 609S-01 The Law of the Fourteenth Amendment (2 units)
• LAW 784 Regulating Sex: Historical & Cultural Encounters (2 units)
• LAW 602D Sexuality & the Law: Theory & Practice (3 units)
• LAW 802B & LAW 802C Supervised Instruction: Law, Gender, & Justice (3 units, pass/fail, by selection only; can only count toward the JD portion of the program)
• Semester-in-practice externship (up to 12 units; specific placements only)

The following WGSS courses can also be taken as electives:

Gender Violence
• WGSS 427 Technology and Feminist Practice: Gender Violence Prevention Tools (3 units)

Thesis Procedures

Students who choose to write a thesis will determine a subfield of focus during the first year of study. During the second year, in collaboration with their advisers, students will develop a thesis project or a practicum with a substantial writing component. Students who do not complete the Master of Arts portion of the joint-degree program are not eligible for the graduate certificate in WGSS. Students must earn grades of B or higher in the Graduate School courses for those courses to count toward the Master of Arts in WGSS.

Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Graduate students interested in the graduate certificate in WGSS should first apply for admission to the Washington University department in which they wish to obtain an advanced degree. After being admitted, each student should notify their department adviser and the WGSS program director of their plans to obtain the WGSS certificate. In addition, each student should submit an "Application for Admission to Certificate Program" form to the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences office, with a copy also given to the WGSS office. The earlier that the WGSS department knows these students are, the earlier these students can be included in mailings about program activities, lectures, conferences and other events. Certificate application forms are available in the Graduate School office.

The graduate certificate in WGSS requires the completion of five courses, at least two of which must be drawn from 400-level or above home-based WGSS courses. The other three required courses must be drawn from 400-level or above home-based or cross-listed WGSS courses or from other program-approved, gender-based courses; students will consult with the program director for approval. Since the certificate requires three courses beyond those required for a student's home degree, participation in the certificate program may require an extra semester of graduate classes. Those students who are not interested in the certificate but who want to concentrate on gender within their disciplines to enhance their credentials and enrich their training may do so by pursuing a graduate minor in accordance with the policies of their individual departments. Other students may participate in WGSS courses without commitment to a concentration.