

GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

Gender and Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary program committed to the study of the range of questions raised by the categories of gender and sexuality, considered historically, materially, and cross-culturally. Courses in the program investigate gender and sexual variance, gender and sexual roles and socialization, and gender and sexual bias, as they intersect with race, class, disability, religion, and nationality.

Students choosing a concentration, minor, or independent major in Gender and Sexuality Studies plan their programs in consultation with the Gender and Sexuality Studies director. Members of the Gender and Sexuality Studies steering committee serve as their individual mentors. All students in the program take an introductory course and the junior seminar, "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality." Other courses in the program allow students to explore a range of themes, approaches, and methodologies, including gender studies; feminist theory, queer theory, and trans studies; LGBTQIA+ history; transnational and third-world feminisms; women of color feminism and queer/trans of color critique; and science and technology studies.

Concentration and Minor Requirements

Six courses distributed as follows are required for the concentration:

- An introductory course (including equivalent offerings at Swarthmore College or the University of Pennsylvania).
- The junior seminar: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sex and Gender (alternating fall semesters between Bryn Mawr and Haverford).
- Four additional approved courses from at least two different departments, two of which are normally at the 300 level. Units of Independent Study (403) may be used to fulfill this requirement.
- Of the six courses, no fewer than two and no more than three will also form part of the student's major.

Requirements for the minor are identical to those for the concentration, with the stipulation that no courses in gender and sexuality will overlap with courses taken to fulfill requirements in the student's major.

Neither a senior seminar nor a senior thesis is required for the concentration or minor; however, with the permission of the major department, a student may choose to count toward the concentration a senior thesis with significant content in gender and sexuality. Students wishing to construct an independent major in gender and sexuality should make a proposal to the Committee on Independent Majors.

GSST B108 Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies (1 Unit)

This course will introduce students to major approaches, theories, and topics in gender and sexuality studies, as a framework for understanding the past and present—not only how societies conceive differences in bodily sex, gender expression, and sexual behavior, but how those conceptions shape broader social, cultural, political, and economic patterns.

AFST B202 Black Queer Diaspora (1 Unit)

This interdisciplinary course explores over two decades of work produced by and about Black Queer Diasporic communities throughout the circum-Atlantic world. While providing an introduction to various artists and intellectuals of the Black Queer Diaspora, this course examines the viability of Black Queer Diaspora world-making praxis as a form of theorizing. We will interrogate the transnational and transcultural mobility of specific Black Queer Diasporic forms of peacemaking, erotic knowledge productions, as well as the concept of "aesthetics" more broadly. Our aim is to use the prism of Blackness/Queerness/Diaspora to highlight the dynamic relationship between Black Diaspora Studies and Queer Studies. By the end of this course students will have a strong understanding of how systems of power work to restrict the freedoms of Black Queer and Trans communities, and how Black LGBTQ people have lived, organized, and created in spite of and in response to these oppressions. This interdisciplinary undergraduate upper-level course will utilize academic texts accompanied by poetry, fiction, film, television, and visual art to understand Black Queer and Trans subjectivities.

ANTH B287 Sex, Gender, Biology and Culture (1 Unit)

This 200-level anthropology course is an introductory survey of topics in sex, gender, biology, and culture, approached through an intersectional feminist interdisciplinary biocultural anthropological lens. In this course, we delve into the variations of gender in the US and globally, explore the interplay between gender and sex, and examine concepts of biological sex, intersexuality, and sexuality. Students will also explore contemporary issues and research areas where anthropologists and human biologists investigate the intersection of sex and gender. This includes discussions on hormones, sports, and the brain, as well as examinations of sex and gender among non-human animals. This course offers students a unique amalgamation of biocultural anthropology, cultural anthropology, biology research, gender studies, feminist science studies, and health science. Through this course, students will develop skills to discern and assess scientific information and claims and construct a critical feminist toolkit for analyzing scientific knowledge. They will apply these skills to evaluate a diverse array of sources, ranging from peer-reviewed articles to popular media, websites, podcasts, and documentaries. Moreover, students will utilize queer feminist theories to cultivate this intersectional perspective, honing their abilities in analytical and critical thinking. Upon completion of the course, students will leave with enhanced confidence in articulating nuanced thoughts on the complex intersections of sex, gender, sexuality, science, and society.

ENGL B223 The Help: Asian American Literature & Care Work (1 Unit)

This course surveys Asian American literature and cultural productions that feature the work of care: jobs, whether official or unofficial (such as mothering, nursing, and nannying) that are essential, yet so often undercompensated and overlooked. We will examine how Asian American immigration history has led to the burgeoning of industries around care work. We will see how narrative and fiction portray the troubling entanglements between economic structures, race and gender roles, and personal feeling in the labor of care. This course operates under the premise that an attentiveness to how care unfolds is essential to creating a more just world. Collectively, we will not just talk about care as an abstract set of ideas but concretely practice it with one another in the space of our classroom.

ENGL B261 Colonizing Girlhoods: L.M.Montgomery and Laura Ingalls Wilde (1 Unit)

This class explores what we can see anew when we juxtapose two iconic figures of North American children's literature: L.M. Montgomery's Anne Shirley and Laura Ingalls Wilder's fictionalized self-portrait, Laura Ingalls. Both characters have risen to mythic proportions in their respective countries, and are powerful signs in an international culture industry. After setting up key eighteenth-century concepts and contexts for what French historian Philippe Ariès calls the "invention of childhood", we will explore the ways in which images of young girls have been deployed as the benign faces of ruthless imperialism, reading through the entirety of each original series. We will track the geographical movement of both heroines, with particular attention to different spatial narratives of nationhood and empire-building, whether manifest destiny in the U.S., or what critic Northrop Frye has termed the "garrison mentality" of Canadian culture. Here we'll be especially attentive to commonalities in how both authors produce class-stratified and racialized notions of girlhood, as well as divergences in how both countries, each still framed to varying degrees as the "infant nation" of Great Britain, yield new and evolving discourses of girlhood.

ENGL B331 Queer Theory (1 Unit)

Queer theory emerged in the early 90s as an academic field committed to studying queer experiences of gender, sexuality, and desire. Early queer theorists established the field's opposition not just to heterosexual privilege, homophobia, and the normal but also to so-called proper objects of analysis and critique. In this class, we study the history, present, and future of this field, and we interrogate its power at a moment when some of its basic assertions are being disregarded and teachers in some states risk their jobs if they acknowledge the existence of LGBTQ+ people. Texts will include movement documents, manifestos, poems, artworks, and films in addition to works of theory by writers like Anzaldúa, Berlant, Butler, Ferguson, Halberstam, Love, Muñoz, Puar, Rubin, Sedgwick, Spillers, Warner, and others.

HIST B303 Topics in American History (1 Unit)

This is a topics course. Course content varies. Recent topics have included medicine, advertising, and history of sexuality. Course may be repeated for credit.

ITAL B202 Racconti transnazionali a confronto: patriarcato, migrazione e transculturalità (0.5 Unit)

This course focusses on the development of the short story, and particularly on its changing form through the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Students will analyze Italian novellas through in-class discussions and take-home assignment. They will start by reading some short stories by Boccaccio's Decameron and will then focus closely on 19th century Rosso malpelo and L'amante di Gramigna by Giovanni Verga and on Terno secco by Matilde Serao. Moving towards 20th and 21st centuries, we will examine racism, immigration, and patriarchy in context with the reading of women writers such as Sibilla Aleramo, Elsa Morante, Natalia Ginzburg, Elena Ferrante, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anna Maria Ortese, Dacia Maraini, Donatella Di Pietrantonio. Our 21st-century examples will also include Roberto Saviano's Il contrario della morte and Valeria Parrella's Il premio. To stimulate classroom discussion and provide useful insight into the wide variety of Italy's socio-cultural specificities, the texts will be supplemented with selected background information including scholarly criticism, visual media, and media reception. The course is highly interactive and, at times, adopts the mode of a creative writing workshop. Students will thus be asked to comment their and other colleagues' work by discussing points of strength and weakness. This process will facilitate the preparation for and successful drafting of the papers. It will also encourage students to learn how to analyze and self-assess their own essays. The stories will be read in Italian. Prerequisite: ITAL 102 or permission of instructor.

SOCL B307 Transnational Queer Politics (1 Unit)

As people and ideas traverse national, cultural, and social borders, how are gender and sexuality negotiated and redefined? This course uses queer politics and practices as an entry point to examine transnational processes such as global diffusion, international organizations, colonialism, global capitalism, and neoliberalism. Instead of taking gender and sexual categories like "gay," "lesbian," and "trans" for granted, we will use a feminist and queer sociological approach to interrogate how gender and sexual categories are produced, maintained, and reconfigured in non-western societies. Furthermore, we will consider how to address the limits of global LGBT rights discourse, social movements, and politics through postcolonial and intersectional lenses. Together, we will cultivate critical tools to assess the relationships between gender, sexuality, and globalization and how these processes influence the lived experiences of queer/trans individuals worldwide. Prerequisite: At least one course in the social sciences.