Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies

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Gender, sexuality and women’s studies provides a broad interpretation and view of diversity, including the interdisciplinary, cross-cultural examination of women’s perspectives and experiences, masculinity and femininity, and heterosexuality and alternate sexualities as culturally constructed and socially experienced.

- Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/gender-sexuality-womens-studies/gender-sexuality-womens-studies-ba/)
- Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) with a concentration in health and science (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/gender-sexuality-womens-studies/gender-sexuality-womens-studies-ba-concentration-health-science/)
- Gender, sexuality and women’s studies, minor in (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/gender-sexuality-womens-studies/gender-sexuality-womens-studies-minor/)
- LGBT+ and queer studies, minor in (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/gender-sexuality-womens-studies/LGBT+queer-studies-minor/)

GSWS 201. Introduction to Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An interdisciplinary and cross-cultural introduction to the perspectives and core concerns pertaining to gender, sexuality and women’s studies.

GSWS 202. Introduction to Trans Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Introduces students to the field of transgender studies. Introduces students to trans identities, communities and politics and explores the historical and contemporary production of gender norms and the institutions and mechanisms that police those norms.

GSWS 205. Introduction to LGBT+ and Queer Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Stresses intersectional approaches to LGBT+ and queer studies. Introduces students to a broad field of study across disciplines, cultures and historical periods.

GSWS 236. Women in Literature. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 112 or both ENGL 295 and HONR 200. An introduction to literature by and/or about women. Crosslisted as: ENGL 236.

GSWS 291. Topics in Women’s Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a total of 6 credits. An in-depth examination of specialized areas of interest in women’s studies. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester.

GSWS 301. Feminist Theory. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Pre- or corequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. This course will introduce students to areas of generative struggle and critique within feminist theory. Will examine these conflicts not as moments of danger, but as constituting a key genealogy of feminism. Will be structured around important debates that constitute this genealogy of feminist theory, including: early woman of color critiques of the notion of “universal sisterhood,” debates over the “proper object” of feminist inquiry, post-structuralist approaches to theorizing the subject, queer theory’s shift toward a “subject-less critique” and transnational feminist praxis.

GSWS 302. Trans Theory and Activism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GSWS 202. Examines the production and policing of gender norms, both historically and in the contemporary moment. Offers students the opportunity to delve more deeply into the field of trans studies, reading key new works in the field and developing their own substantive research projects.

GSWS 304. Sociology of Families. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101 or ANTH 103/INTL 103. The family in its social and cultural context. Analysis of child rearing, marriage, kinship, family crises and family change in various societies around the world. Crosslisted as: ANTH 304/SCOT 304.

GSWS 305. African American Family in Social Context. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101. A socio-historical examination of the development of the family system of Americans from Africa. Focuses on large-scale (macro level) processes such as changes in the major mode of economic production and in political systems and the corresponding changes in black family structure and functioning. Presents the theoretical material on African-American families and social change that prepares students for further study of the family as a social institution and for the study of family policy. This course is designed to meet the needs of upper-division social science majors. Crosslisted as: AFAM 305/SCOT 305.

GSWS 309. Gender and Global Health. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines how health policies produce and regulate gendered bodies and sexualities. Topics may include how colonial medicine and health policies of detection, diagnosis, surveillance, quarantine and confinement were implemented as methods of social control. Analyzes continuities between colonial medicine and more contemporary interventions that in the name of individual and communal health attempt to shape proper sexualities and gendering. Crosslisted as: AFAM 309/ANTH 309/INTL 309.

GSWS 316. Women and the Law. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course will introduce students to the history, politics and status of women under the American legal system. Topics to be covered may include equal protection, sexual violence, the particular rights of women of color and lesbians, reproductive rights of women of color and lesbians, reproductive rights, women criminals and women in the legal profession. Crosslisted as: POLI 316.

GSWS 318. Politics of Race, Class and Gender. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the racial, class and gender influences on the history and development of political values, conflicts, processes, structures and public policy in the United States. Crosslisted as: AFAM 318/POLI 318.
GSWS 319. Women and American Politics. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course analyzes the participation of women in American politics. Attention is given to both women's historical and contemporary roles in politics, their participation as voters and citizens, and their behavior as candidates and office holders. Additional topics may include workplace, family and education issues and reproductive rights. Crosslisted as: POLI 319.

GSWS 333. Gender in Society. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101 or permission of instructor. Explores different theoretical approaches to gender and its intersections with other sources of inequality including sexuality, race, class and age. Possible topics include masculinities, gender and the body, and how gender operates in various institutional settings, such as the economy and the family. Crosslisted as: SOCY 333.

GSWS 334. Sociology of Women. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101 or consent of instructor. This course will examine the position and status of women across societies and the social forces that maintain existing patterns and arrangements. The integration of family and work in women's lives will be emphasized. Crosslisted as: SOCY 334.

GSWS 335. Psychology of Women. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Overview of issues in psychology relevant to women. Topics include: research methods of women's issues; sex-role socialization; women and hormones; psychological androgyny; personality theory and counseling strategies for women; women and language; women and violence; and rape and abuse. Crosslisted as: PSYC 335.

GSWS 336. Violence Against Women. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101 or GSWS 201. An examination of violence against women from a global and local perspective with a primary focus on violence perpetrated against women in the U.S. Requires a minimum of 20 hours of community service. Crosslisted as: SOCY 336.

GSWS 339. History of Women in Europe I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of European women from antiquity to the Enlightenment. A major focus will be primary sources by and about women. Crosslisted as: HIST 339.

GSWS 340. History of Women in Europe II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of European women from the French Revolution to the present. A major focus will be primary sources by and about women. Crosslisted as: HIST 331.

GSWS 341. History of Gender and Sexuality in America I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Analyzes historical changes in gender and sexuality from the first colonial settlements through the Civil War. Explores the changing relation of femininity and masculinity to families, economics, politics, religions, race and culture for the wide variety of peoples who inhabited, immigrated to or were forced to migrate to America and the subsequent United States. Crosslisted as: HIST 365.

GSWS 352. Feminist Literary Theory. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 211, 215, 236, 291 or 295. The study of contemporary feminist thought and feminist approaches to analyzing literature and culture. This course examines the history and development of feminist theory as a methodology in the humanities, explores several of the major theoretical trends of the past 30 years and examines applications of feminist theory to specific works of literature. Crosslisted as: ENGL 352.

GSWS 353. Women Writers. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated once when a different group of writers is studied. Prerequisite: ENGL 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 211, 215, 236, 291 or 295. A study of selected literature written by women and about women writers. Crosslisted as: ENGL 353.

GSWS 354. Queer Literature: ____. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of six credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 201, ENGL 202, ENGL 203, ENGL 204, ENGL 205, ENGL 206, ENGL 211, ENGL 215, ENGL 236, ENGL 250, ENGL 291, ENGL 295 or NEXT 240. A study of queer literature. Considers issues of history, theory, aesthetics, politics, authorship and/or interpretive communities and examines the intersection of social identities with particular attention to race/ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, class and/or nationality. Topics will vary by section. Crosslisted as: ENGL 354.

GSWS 355. Queer Cinema. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Theoretical focus on cinematic works about and/or by those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer. Examines concepts of gender, sexuality and women's studies through analysis of selected works in the medium of film as well as engages with theoretical texts in the field.

GSWS 356. Open Minds. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Experiential seminar held at a local correctional institution that connects students to inmates as learning partners. Examines the history and development of American prisons in context, supplementing theoretical studies with the lived experiences of inmates.

GSWS 366. Women and Global Politics. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of women and global politics, providing both a feminist re-examination of traditional international-relations theories and a comparative analysis of the political, legal and economic status of the world's women. The impact of women on global political institutions such as the United Nations will be addressed as well as other feminist and grass roots means of taking political action. Crosslisted as: POLI 366/INTL 368.

GSWS 371. Women in Islam. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200, RELS 108, GSWS 201 or ENGL 215. Critical study of the roles and rights of women in Islam. Crosslisted as: RELS 371.

GSWS 372. Global Women's Spirituality. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the spiritual writings of women in various cultures and religious traditions. Crosslisted as: RELS 372/INTL 372.

GSWS 373. Gender and the Bible. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 108 or GSWS 201 or RELS 301 or RELS 302; and ENGL 215 or UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Studies the Hebrew and Christian scriptures with emphasis on gender. Attention to traditional, feminist, womanist and postcolonial interpretation. Crosslisted as: RELS 373.

GSWS 380. Lesbian and Bisexual Women. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course examines the lives of contemporary lesbian and bisexual women from psychological, sociological, developmental, political and cultural perspectives. The intersection of race, class, ethnicity, religion, age, disability and locale with lesbian/bisexual identity will be explored.
GSWS 382. Gender, Crime and Justice. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: CRJS 181 or permission of instructor. Examines the role of gender as it relates to crime and justice. Special attention will focus on the gendered experiences of practitioners, offenders and victims within the criminal justice system in terms of processing, adjudication and institutional responses. Crosslisted as: CRJS 382.

GSWS 390. Forced and Coerced Labor in Africa and the Americas. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines a broad range of forced and coerced labor in Africa and selected parts of the Americas, including the United States, Canada and the Caribbean, from around the 17th century to the 20th century. The role that gender and race played in slavery and coerced labor will be given particular attention. Crosslisted as: AFAM 390/HIST 380.

GSWS 391. Topics in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of 12 credits. An in-depth examination of specialized areas of interest in gender, sexuality and women's studies. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester.

GSWS 392. Women's Health Care Across the Life Span. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course is intended for upper-level undergraduate students. Introduces students to the health issues that affect women throughout the life span. The impact of physiological, psychological, cultural and political factors upon women's well-being will be addressed.

GSWS 393. Feminist Research and Methods. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Completion of STAT 210 (or equivalent) is strongly recommended. Explores the implications of feminist theorizing across disciplinary and cultural contexts for both methodology and epistemology. Examines how knowledge and power intersect, how gender theory and feminist politics influence research, how the knower influences knowledge production and how social location shapes inquiry.

GSWS 401. Topical Senior Seminar. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: 21 credits in gender, sexuality and women's studies or permission of the instructor. Students are required to produce a senior research project on a topic related to the theme of the seminar.

GSWS 409. LGBTQ Health and Wellness. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GSWS 201; and UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Examines LGBTQ health and wellness, broadly defined. Examines core health issues, such as physical and mental health disparities, health care access, wellness practices and policy/care systems dimensions. Focuses on multiplicative marginalization and how race, ethnicity, class, gender, rurality, poverty, immigration and adolescence, among other factors, impact core health issues.

GSWS 414. Psychology of Women's Health. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Overviews the psychological research on women's health. Topics include health behavior change, personality and individual differences, cognitive factors, disease-specific behaviors and interventions. Crosslisted as: PSYC 414.

GSWS 450. Black Feminist Thought. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Theoretical focus on black feminist thought, spanning the first wave of feminism in the U.S. from the late-19th and early 20th century onward. Though primarily U.S.-focused, this course examines black feminist thought globally, as well as that of lesbians, transgenders or queer individuals, foregrounding topics such as race, gender, class, sexuality, activism, liberation, labor and social movements. Also examines the history and development of black feminist thought, considers it as a methodology in the humanities and social sciences, explores several of its major theoretical trends of the past 100 years and examines its applications to cultural phenomena and current events.

GSWS 451. Narratives of Asian American Sexualities. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines representations of gendered Asian American sexualities in literature (novels, short stories, an autobiographical novel, poetry and a play), as well as visual texts (graphic novels, films and video). Pays particular attention to how the texts participate in and challenge the constitution of Asian American subjectivities in the contexts of (neo)colonialism, neoliberal restructuring and the emergence of pan-Asian and feminist movements in the United States.

GSWS 452. Language and Gender. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of relationships between gender and language focusing on such issues as differences between the ways women and men use language, relationships between language and power and ways in which language reflects and reinforces cultural attitudes toward gender. May not be used to satisfy the literature requirement of the College of Humanities and Sciences. Crosslisted as: ENGL 452/LING 452.

GSWS 453. Western Religions, Women and Social Justice. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: UNIV 200 or HONR 200; and RELS 108, GSWS 201 or WRLD 210. Explores the experience and portrayal of women in the three Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Study focuses on how these religions and their texts bear upon the social, economic, political and spiritual lives of women. Special attention is given to the impact of globalization and religious fundamentalism on women. Crosslisted as: INTL 453/RELS 453.

GSWS 457. Women, Art and Society. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A re-examination of a variety of issues concerning women, art and society: the position assigned women within the history of art as it relates to historical place and the aesthetic values of the canon, the gendering of style, patronage, audience, and gaze. Through a survey of images of and by women, as well as through an analysis of art historical and critical texts, this course addresses the question: "How are the processes of sexual differentiation played out across the representations of art and art history?" Crosslisted as: ARTH 357.

GSWS 491. Topics in Women's Studies. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a total of 12 credits. An in-depth examination of specialized areas of interest in women's studies. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester.

GSWS 492. Independent Study. 1-4 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. Variable credit. Maximum of 4 credits per semester; maximum total of 4 credits in all independent study courses. Open generally to students of only junior and senior standing who have acquired at least 12 credits in women's studies courses. Determination of the amount of credit and permission of the instructor and coordinator must be obtained prior to registration for the course.
GSWS 493. Internship. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1, 2 or 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum total of 6 credits. Prerequisites: internship credit is limited to students with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 and junior or senior status. Directed internship, local or abroad, or other approved study-abroad experience with the objective to provide real-life experience. Determination of the amount of credit (based on hours or effort required) and permission of departmental internship coordinator must be obtained prior to registration for the course. Graded pass/fail.