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)

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 206. African American Family Relationships. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Focuses on the African-American family from the 1940s to the present. Examines the values and the interpersonal/role relationships that are involved in forming and maintaining African-American families in the contemporary United States. Topics include dating and sexual relationships, marital relationships, parent-child relationships and relationships with members of the extended family. Crosslisted as: AFAM 206/SOCY 206.

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 Social Theory. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Pre- or corequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. This course examines the major theoretical traditions and thinkers of feminist theory from the works of early liberal feminists like Wollstonecraft to the present thought of postmodern and lesbian feminists like Wittig. It examines arguments about human nature, the origins and effects of patriarchy, the conflict between equality and gender difference and feminist critiques of traditional theories of knowledge.

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/SOCY 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/SOCY 305.

GSWS 309. Global Women’s Health. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores issues in women’s health from a national and international perspective with an emphasis on the experiences of women in the African diaspora. Theories in medical anthropology are employed to examine key themes. 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 330.

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. American Women's History I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Students will analyze
historical changes in the social, cultural, political and economic position
of women in America from the colonial period through the 1848 Seneca
Falls Convention. Methods include reading, lecture and discussion.
Topics include differences and similarities of women's experiences
across lines of class, race and ethnicity, the struggle for suffrage
and social reform, shifting gender roles and changing employment
opportunities. 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. Prerequisite: ENGL 201,
202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 211, 215, 236, 291 or 295. A study of queer
literature. Considers issues of history, theory, aesthetics, politics,
authorship and interpretive communities and examines the intersection
of social identities with particular attention to race/ethnicity, sex, sexual
orientation, gender expression, class and/or nationality. 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 grassroots 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. Africa and the Americas: Slavery, Gender and Race. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines various aspects
of slavery in Africa and selected parts of the African diaspora, including
the United States, Canada and the Caribbean, with special emphasis on
the role played by race and gender. Topics will include African conditions
of servility, the trans-Atlantic trade in enslaved Africans, and chattel
slavery, demography, labor, law, discipline, abuse, resistance and status.
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 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, transgendered 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 452. Language and Gender. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 211, 215, 236, 291 or 295. A study of relationships between gender and language by 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. Prerequisites: ARTH 103, ARTH 104 and UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Open to School of the Arts majors only. 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.